

2007

An exploration of the impact of teachers' instructional practices in teaching phonemic awareness to kindergarten and first grade students

Gwendolyn Jackson Longmire

Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, gwendolyn318@yahoo.com

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_dissertations



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Longmire, Gwendolyn Jackson, "An exploration of the impact of teachers' instructional practices in teaching phonemic awareness to kindergarten and first grade students" (2007). *LSU Doctoral Dissertations*. 262.

https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_dissertations/262

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at LSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in LSU Doctoral Dissertations by an authorized graduate school editor of LSU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact gradetd@lsu.edu.

AN EXPLORATION OF THE IMPACT OF TEACHERS' INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES IN
TEACHING PHONEMIC AWARENESS TO KINDERGARTEN AND FIRST GRADE
STUDENTS

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Educational Theory, Policy and Practice

by
Gwendolyn Jackson Longmire
B.A., Southern University, 1995
M.Ed., Southern University, 1997
Ed.S., Louisiana State University, 1999
May 2007

DEDICATION

To God and my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, to whom I owe everything. “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future (Jeremiah 29:11 NIV)

And foremost, to my grandparents: Paten Carter, Sr., Mary Louise Franklin Carter, Brazillia Douglass Jackson, and the late Webb Jackson, Sr. Thank you for instilling in me the fear and love of God. Also, thank you for encouraging me to attain the highest educational level possible and to never give up. This degree is in honor of how you sacrificed, so that I could excel at the highest level.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank almighty God and his son, Jesus Christ, for giving me the opportunity to accomplish this major task, the wisdom and knowledge to be diligent in order to accomplish this great milestone in my life, and for keeping me on the right path. There are so many individuals that I wish to express my appreciation to for their encouragement, guidance, prayers, and support. These acts of love sustained me through everything. I could not have done it without you.

In particular, I would like to give my utmost admiration, appreciation, and respect to Dr. Earl Cheek, my major advisor. I will never forget your caring heart, encouragement, leadership, patience, and wisdom. To the members of my committee: Dr. Pamela Blanchard, Dr. Hugh Buckingham, Dr. Paul Mooney and Dr. Jim Wandersee: you shared such valuable insight and knowledge that helped me to reach this point in my life. For this, I thank you. To the parents, teachers, principal, and district personnel who made this study possible, I thank you from the bottom of my heart. I would like to express my gratitude to my family and friends. I could not have done it without you. A special thank you to: my mother: Velethea, my aunts: Chris, Deborah, and Lequeda, my mentors: Lesa, Ms. Joyce, Ms. Lois, and Dr. Henderson, and my spiritual family: William, Debra, and Benita Bacote. Thank you for encouraging, helping, listening, and praying. I will never forget everything you have done for me.

Last, but not least, I want to give thanks to my husband, Stephen Christopher Longmire, Sr., for encouraging me when I was about to give up. I love you and I thank God that he brought you into my life.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	vi
CHAPTER 1	
INTRODUCTION	
Introduction.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	2
Purpose of the Study.....	3
The Setting.....	3
Significance of the Study.....	4
Research Questions.....	5
CHAPTER 2	
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	
Introduction.....	6
Defining Phonemic Awareness and Its components.....	6
Best Practices of Phonemic Awareness.....	8
Phonemic Awareness Activities.....	12
Summary.....	21
CHAPTER 3	
METHODOLOGY	
Introduction.....	23
Framework of the Study.....	26
Biases.....	28
Trustworthiness.....	29
Summary.....	29
CHAPTER 4	
RESULTS	
Introduction.....	31
Summary of Qualitative Data.....	33
CHAPTER 5	
DISCUSSION	
Introduction.....	100
Findings.....	101
Limitations.....	133
Conclusions.....	133
REFERENCES.....	138

APPENDIX

A PERMISSION LETTER TO DISTRICT.....	143
B PERMISSION LETTER TO PRINCIPAL.....	144
C PERMISSION LETTER TO TEACHER.....	145
D TEACHER CONSENT LETTER.....	146
E PERMISSION LETTER TO PARENT.....	147
F PARENT/STUDENT PERMISSION FORM.....	148
G CHILD ASSENT FORM.....	150
H QUESTIONNAIRE.....	151
I IRB APPLICATION.....	153
VITA.....	159

ABSTRACT

This ten week study examined the impact of the teachers' instructional strategies in teaching phonemic awareness to kindergarten and first grade students. Three questions were explored. These questions were: (a) How do teachers determine the appropriate instructional strategies to use in teaching phonemic awareness?, (b) What are the similarities and differences that each teacher demonstrates in implementing appropriate instructional strategies in teaching phonemic awareness?, and (c) How have the teachers' efforts in implementing a Reading First program been rewarded? The participants in this study are two first grade teachers, two kindergarten teachers, and one kindergarten and first grade reading interventionist.

Qualitative methods of single, cross case analysis were utilized for this study with data sources that included: field notes, responses from questionnaires, and the researcher's observations. During the 90 minutes of uninterrupted reading instruction, the teachers were required to teach explicit and systematic phonemic awareness from the prescribed method in the reading manual.

The prescribed method consisted of verbatim scripts of: what the teachers should say, how the teachers should say it, and the answer for the students' response. Data gathered showed that teachers used explicit and systematic instructional strategies when teaching phonemic awareness from the prescribed reading series; however, some teachers used additional instructional strategies to teach phonemic awareness. There were differences and similarities that were prevalent across grade levels. The differences of the instructional strategies consisted of utilization of hand motion and other techniques and using phonemic awareness in context. The similarities of the strategies utilized included sounding out individual phonemes, segmenting phonemes, phoneme counting, and adding, deleting, and substituting phonemes.

The teachers were intrinsically motivated by their students' progression. The teachers' ability to impact phonemic awareness instruction is indirectly a result of their desire to be adequately prepared to deliver phonemic awareness instruction. The students' satisfactory progress in attaining the appropriate reading level suggests that the teachers positively impacted instruction.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in the reading achievement of students. The current educational reform movement wants to close the achievement gap between minority and non-minority students. The National Reading Panel Report (2000), although highly criticized, has had a tremendous impact on federal public policy, specifically with the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, which has been instrumental in requiring states to stress accountability, especially in the area of reading. An integral part of this reading initiative of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act is Reading First.

Reading First is a program that is designed to help states, schools and districts address the reading levels of its students and to make sure that they are reading on level by the end of third grade. It is a formula grant program based on the number of children that come from families below the poverty line. The funds allocated must be used to ensure that K-3 teachers have the necessary skills to teach scientifically, research based instructional programs (designated by the federal government and state departments of education) and are able to use diagnostic, screening, and classroom-based instruments to measure the students and monitor their progress.

This component of No Child Left Behind has given the districts and states the opportunity to implement assessments, instructional programs, intervention strategies, materials, and professional development that are research based. Although the No Child Left Behind Act focuses on five critical areas of reading instruction, only one critical area: phonemic awareness, was investigated in this study.

According to the National Reading Panel (1999), instruction in phonemic awareness involves teaching children how to focus on manipulating phonemes in spoken syllables and

words. The National Reading Panel selected phonemic awareness for review and analysis because correlational studies identified phonemic awareness and letter knowledge as the best school entry predictors of how well children learn to read during the first two years of instruction.

There is much interest surrounding phonemic awareness among administrators, supervisors, teachers, and parents. There is also much debate about how its acquisition can improve a student's ability to read. However, it should be noted that phonemic awareness does not constitute a complete reading program. Phonemic awareness provides children with the fundamental knowledge of the system of alphabet letters and phoneme sounds.

Statement of the Problem

The failure of schools to educate children in the basic skills in reading is alarming. With the resources available to them, the students should be better readers than they are. For the past thirty-five years, billions of dollars have been given to states/districts to help disadvantaged and at-risk learners. The money was provided through supplemental assistance in Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965 (ESEA), and was used to compensate educational programs for impoverished and low-achieving students. In a study by Share et al. (1984), kindergarteners were assessed on many measures when they entered school, including phonemic segmentation, letter name knowledge, memory for sentences, vocabulary, father's occupational status, and parental reports of reading to children. These researchers examined which of these measures best predicted how well the children would be reading at the end of kindergarten and at the end of first grade. The results showed that phonemic awareness was the top predictor along with letter knowledge.

This qualitative research project is designed to explore the similarities and differences of phonemic awareness instruction among educators at Nancy Elementary School (pseudonym) in

the Christopher Parish School District (pseudonym), and to examine the instructional strategies in kindergarten and first grade classrooms.

Purpose of the Study

This research project is designed to analyze and describe the phonemic awareness strategies in one Title I school in Christopher Parish. During the 2002-2003 school years, this school was in School Improvement I as determined by the Louisiana State Department of Education. Each of the case studies at Nancy Elementary school served as a single case analysis and a separate section will address the cross-case analysis. The purpose of the study is to gain an understanding of the strategies and activities used by teachers in the classroom, and if they are helping students to learn to read.

The Setting

District

The Christopher Parish School District is a small rural district located approximately 25 miles from a large metropolitan center in Louisiana. There are nine schools in the district that serve a student population of about 5000 students. Out of the nine schools, one is an alternative school, where students who have major disciplinary issues are assigned for a minimum amount of time. Seventy-six percent (76%) of the student population in this district are African Americans, with a special education subgroup population of sixteen percent (16%), and eighty-six percent (86%) of the total student population eligible for free and reduced lunch. Many of the students in the parish live in poverty and single parent households. According to the United States Bureau of Census (2002), the poverty level of Christopher Parish is 32.06%, which is well above the state average of 17.5%. Many of the students are labeled as at-risk learners, therefore, emphasizing their below level ability in reading instruction.

School

Nancy Elementary School is Pre-K through eighth grade and is located in a rural setting. Nancy School has an enrollment of 800 students with a racial ethnic composition of 43.5% African American, 55% Caucasian, 2% Hispanic, 0% Asian, and 0.2% Indian. This school did not reach its growth target in the 2002-2003 school year, and was placed in School Improvement One (I) with a School Performance Score of 82.9 out of a possible score of 180. For the 2003 to 2004 school year, the school was given the distinction of Recognized Academic growth for reaching their growth target with a School Performance Score (SPS) of 86.9. The accountability results for the 2004-2005 school year reported that the school's School Performance Score was 90.8. Nancy Elementary had the distinction of Exemplary Academic Growth. The school is in its second year of Reading First implementation and addressing the 5 critical components of reading, which are phonemic awareness, fluency, phonics, vocabulary and comprehension.

Significance of the Study

French & Feng (1992) suggest the importance of assessing phonemic awareness in the screening process for Kindergarten entrance and older students who are failing or at risk in literacy. If children do not hear sounds in words, they will more likely be at risk for learning to read and write. Phonemic awareness training could prove to be a preventative measure, rather than relying on remedial reading programs once failure is established. This intervention should be implemented in the early years if it is to be effective (French & Feng, 1992); however, one prominent expert believes that teachers lack the basic knowledge to teach phonemic awareness concepts and skills (Moats, 1994).

Children who lack phoneme awareness skills as a precursor to learning to read are at risk for developing learning disabilities and need explicit instruction if they are to become skilled readers and spellers (Alexander, et al., 1991; Brady, et al., 1994).

This study is meaningful because it examined the effects of teaching phonemic awareness instruction, the strategies employed by teachers, and the differences and similarities of instruction among the teachers. Also, attentive listening, accurate documentation, and clear reporting were an integral part of this exploration of what occurs in a school to promote reading instruction. Once these attributes are formulated, the findings can be utilized to improve instruction, improve teacher training, and help at-risk students improve in their ability to read more efficiently.

Research Questions

The following questions will structure and guide this research study:

1. How do teachers determine the appropriate instructional strategies to use in teaching phonemic awareness?
2. What are the similarities and differences that each teacher demonstrates in implementing appropriate instructional strategies in teaching phonemic awareness?
3. How have the teachers' efforts in implementing a Reading First program been rewarded?

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Because of the psychological and physical nature of phonemes as well as the nature of human attention, few children acquire phonemic awareness spontaneously (Adams et al., 1998). As educators, we must make a conscious effort to make sure that teachers understand the meaning of phonemic awareness and how to incorporate phonemic awareness instruction into our daily routines. Children need direct explicit phonemic awareness instruction to help them learn to read. According to Adams (1990), without direct instructional support, phonemic awareness eludes roughly 25% of middle-class first graders and substantially more of those who come from less literacy-rich backgrounds (p. 329).

Defining Phonemic Awareness and Its Components

According to Abbot, Walton, & Greenwood (2002), phonemic awareness refers to an understanding of how spoken language is linked to written language. Specifically, it is the ability to distinguish and then to manipulate the individual sound units, or phonemes, in words. For example, the word “cat” has three phonemes c-a-t. The word “this” also has three, th-i-s. Phonemic skills range from the simple ability to hear the basic sounds of words to the more complex skills of manipulating letter sounds through addition, substitution, or deletion (Adams, 1990). For example, if a child is able to say the individual sounds in the word bat (b-a-t), the child has performed a phonemic segmentation task. According to Chard & Dickson (1999), phonemic awareness is the ability to hear and manipulate sounds in spoken words. In order to help a person who is not literally sound in phonemic awareness terminology, a specific set of words have been defined by the Reading Coherence Initiative.

According to Sebastian Wren's Glossary of Reading-Related Terms (Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2000) the following terms: alphabetic principle, blending, onset, phonograms, phoneme, phoneme awareness, rime, and segmentation are defined as:

1. Alphabetic Principle understands that spoken words are decomposed into phonemes, and that the letters in written words represent the phonemes in spoken words when spoken words are represented in text.
2. Blending is combining parts of a spoken word into a whole representation of the word. For example, /p/ /oo/ /l/ can be blended together to form the word pool.
3. An onset is the part of the syllable that precedes the vowel of a syllable. In the case of multi-syllabic words, each syllable has an onset. For example; the onset of the word pill is /p/. (Contrast with rime).
4. Phoneme is the vocal gestures from which words are constructed in language, the smallest unit of speech that serves to distinguish one utterance from another (e.g. sat and mat are distinguished by the initial phoneme.)
5. Phoneme Awareness is a subset of phonological awareness; the knowledge that spoken words consist of a sequence of individual sounds, and the understanding that phonemes are rearranged and substituted to create new words. There are finite sets of phonemes, which are arranged and rearranged to create an infinite set of spoken words.
6. Phonograms are the succession of letters that represent the same phonological unit in different words, such as at in cat, bat, mat, sat
7. A rime is the part of the syllable (not a word), which consists of its vowel, and any consonant sounds that come after it. (Contrast with onset.)
8. Segmentation is the breaking down of the spoken word into word parts by inserting a

pause between each part. Words can be segmented at the word level (in the case of compound words), at the syllable level, at the onset-rime level, and at the phoneme level.

According to the International Reading Association (1998), the term phonemic awareness is frequently used interchangeably with the term phonological awareness. To be precise, phonemic awareness refers to an understanding about the smallest units of sound that make up the speech stream (phonemes). Phonological awareness encompasses larger units of sound as well, such as syllables, onsets, and rimes.

Best Practices of Phonemic Awareness

Phonemic awareness can be taught to children, and studies suggest that because it is an indicator of reading and writing, it should indeed be included in reading/writing programs at early levels (Ball & Blackman, 1991; French & Feng, 1992; Partridge et al., 1991; Yopp, 1995). Although some research supports the premise that phonemic awareness must be taught systematically and formally (Adams, 1990; Ball & Blachman, 1991; Eldredge & Baird, 1996), other studies refute this belief, maintaining that phonemic awareness should be incorporated into language rich, meaningful activities (Chapman, 1996; Yopp, 1995). Other research shows that children without rich preschool experiences require more direct, systematic training in phonemic awareness (Adams, 1990; Juel, Griffith, & Gough, 1986).

Phonemic awareness develops both inventive writing and an understanding of the alphabetic principle, because it focuses on the individual sounds of words (Griffith, 1991). A child's level of phonemic awareness can be determined by their inventive spellings. By examining a child's phonemic awareness, then it may be possible to estimate what level they are on. In order to spell words, students must be able to hear the phonemes in words, especially when they are called out to them and as they say them. On a more involved level, phonemic awareness is the ability to manipulate sounds—segmenting, blending, deleting and inserting

phonemes in words (Castle, Riach & Nicholson, 1994). We should be encouraging inventive spelling and independent writing from an early age in order to develop phonemic awareness (Chapman, 1996).

In Patridge's (1991) study, the research suggested that children who wrote daily scored higher in their inventive spelling ability than children who wrote only once a week. This study used language experiences, and daily writing, to develop phonemic awareness in children's inventive writing. Writing is especially beneficial in developing phonemic awareness because it provides opportunity to segment sounds and convert them into written language (Griffith, 1991). "While writing, young children directly confront the problem of representing spoken language with written language, and must out of necessity develop the ability to segment phonemes" (Griffith, 1991, p. 231).

According to Orton (2000), many children, especially those who come from environments where literacy experiences are fostered, acquire phonemic awareness without formal instruction. Opposition from groups such as the National Association for the Education of Young People (1988) and the International Reading Association (1986) maintain that skills taught in isolation are not developmentally appropriate. Rather, it is felt that phonemic awareness can be taught in context through language centered, developmentally appropriate activities.

In her case study examining literacy teaching and learning in a first grade program with a holistic language basis, Chapman (1996) described how phonemic awareness was taught through rich literacy experiences within the context of genuine, purposeful reading and writing activities. She affirms there is ample opportunity to teach phonemic awareness in this way instead of as an isolated skill. Chapman (1996) is quick to explicate, however, that children cannot be left to attain phonemic awareness independently. She contends that informed teacher guidance is a necessary piece in the informal acquisition of phonemic awareness. "Brandon was not left to his

own devices to discover how written language works. Rather, his teacher used his writing to direct his attention to the sounds in words and to apply his knowledge of letter-sound relationships increasingly demanding ways as appropriated to his stage of development” (Chapman, 1996, p.37). Two studies, Castle, et al. (1994) and Eldredge & Baird (1996), suggest that early training in phonemic awareness has an effect on reading and writing growth. French & Feng (1992) describe an early training phonemic awareness program that is developmentally appropriate for a whole language classroom.

French & Feng (1992) indicate the need for phonemic awareness being included in the screening process for Kindergarten entrance and older students who are failing or at risk in literacy. If children don’t hear sounds in words, they will probably be at risk for learning to read and write. Phonemic awareness training might prove to be a preventative program instead of resorting to remedial reading programs once failure is established. This intervention needs to be implemented in the early years if it is to be effective (French & Feng, 1992). By using an assessment tool that focuses on segmentation or activities associated with phonemic awareness, the status of students who are at risk of learning to read and write can be determined.

Yopp (1995) suggests that teachers assess young children’s ability to segment words into phonemes. The assessment tool she has developed is called the Yopp-Singer Test of Phoneme Segmentation. She believes that phonemic awareness should be a part of a literacy program; it could be incorporated into a holistic program, but focus on sounds in language, such as stories, songs, rhymes, and games.

One group of researchers (Castle, Riach, & Nicholson, 1994), suggest that although many children will acquire phonemic awareness in holistic language settings, children who demonstrate a weaknesses in phonemic awareness upon entry into school may benefit from supplementary instruction in phonemic awareness, and are more likely to require Reading

Recovery services by first grade. “Put more positively, research suggests that the provision of extra phonemic training for children with low levels of such skill may give them a better prognosis” (Castle et al, 1994, p. 357). Other research suggests that children without rich preschools experiences, require more direct, systematic training in phonemic awareness (Adams, 1990; Juel, Griffith, & Gough, 1986).

Ball & Blachman (1991) compiled data that indicated that children, who receive phonemic awareness training, particularly, word segmentation, outperformed children that received only holistic language instruction. “This data indicate that the phoneme segmentation instruction provided in this study was effective in teaching groups of kindergarten children to segment words into phonemes, and that children who received this instruction were able to generalize the segmentation training to novel items” (Ball & Blachman, 1991, p. 62).

In a study conducted by Liberman, et al. (1974) an emerging body of research reported that phonemic awareness was a strong predictor of subsequent reading achievement and that children with reading challenges often had exhibited poor phonemic awareness skills. If there is some type of program that is used to measure the growth and progress of phonemic awareness strategies, then the effectiveness of reading instruction can be determined. Supplemental and interventional programs can address the needs of students who do not read at the appropriate level. A tool used to measure the growth of students and their progress is the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS; Kaminski & Good, 1996). According to Kaminski & Good (1996), three key subtests of DIBELS, which deal with phonemic awareness and early literacy skills, are sufficient to measure student growth in early literacy. These three key subtests are onset recognition fluency (beginning sounds), letter recognition fluency, and phonemic segmentation.

Although some research supports the premise that phonemic awareness must be taught systematically and formally (Adams, 1990; Ball & Blachman, 1991; Eldredge & Baird, 1996) other studies refute this belief, maintaining that phonemic awareness should be incorporated into language rich, meaningful activities (Chapman, 1996; Yopp, 1995). While phonemic awareness is not common among all kindergarten children, by the end of first grade the majority of the children have acquired an awareness of phonemes in words (Yopp, 1995). Skills and strategies are the key to improving reading achievement for all students. If this is so, there should be experienced teachers who know how to incorporate phonemic awareness activities and to help improve reading achievement. Kindergarteners should know letter and sound recognition. First grade students should know how to segment and blend words. There should be lessons and programs to help teach phonemic awareness. One of the programs that may help in teaching effective phonemic awareness strategies is called Phun with Phonemic Awareness: Learning to Manipulate Sounds and Letters (Abbott, 1999). Once learners gain the use of phonemic awareness skills; they began to link oral and written language, thus enabling them to become readers.

However, research indicates that experienced teachers often lack the basic knowledge of phonemic awareness concepts and skills (Moats, 1994). Most kindergarten teachers lack the expertise needed to teach phonemic awareness skills to their students. Teachers should be teaching students how to segment phoneme sounds and to blend separate phonemes into words. Also, districts, schools, and local educational agencies should be conducting in-service programs on how to teach teachers to introduce phonemic awareness concepts to primary-grade teachers.

Phonemic Awareness Activities

There are a variety of strategies and activities that are beneficial in teaching phonemic awareness. Different vehicles can be utilized to incorporate these strategies into instructional

lessons. These vehicles consist of poems, nursery rhymes, read aloud books, songs, and riddles. With the help of these strategies, students can learn to manipulate and segment sounds. The efficient utilization of phonemic awareness strategies can help students be successful in learning to read.

According to Orton (2000), there are instances where different activities could be used in the classroom to promote the phonemic awareness. For example, the following conversation about a familiar nursery rhyme could foster awareness in the young listeners.

Teacher: Hey diddle, the cat and the fiddle. What about those two words: diddle, fiddle?

Student: They rhyme

Teacher: That's right. Now listen again and let's see if we can find any other words that rhyme.

The following activity could be incorporated into a language program with substituting initial consonant sounds.

Teacher: David is our leader today. Who can tell us what sound is heard at the start of "David"?

Student: I hear a "d" (child gives the sound of "d" not the letter name.)

Teacher: Yes, now let's all say David and hear the "d" sound. (children say "David" and listen for the initial sound.) We're going to take turns trying out a "d" sound at the beginning our names. First say your name the right way, and then try saying your names with a "d" sound.

John, why don't you begin.

John: My name is John Don.

Kate: My name is Kate Date.

This activity continues until all children have had an opportunity to try out their names with the new sound. The ability to segment sounds in words is a major component of phonemic awareness, and it can be easily worked into the daily writing program. With teacher guidance, children begin to isolate sounds in their writing.

In the following interaction, the teacher encourages independence for the child, yet she also provides needed support, so that the child attempts the hearing and recording of more complex words.

Teacher: Say “turkey” again. Are you hearing any sounds?

Student: T-ur-k-ey. I hear an R! (child writes R)

Teacher: Any other sounds?

Student: T-ur-k-ey. I don’t know.

Teacher: Listen Ashley, while I say it slowly. T-ur-K-ey (teacher emphasizes the “K” sound).

Student: Oh, I hear a “c”.

Teacher: Yes, it could be a “c”, but this time it’s the other letter that makes a “c” sound.

Student: Oh, I know, it’s “k”. (child writes “k”)

Teacher: There’s one more sound at the end, Ashley. Say “turkey” and see if you can hear it.

Student: ‘t-ur-k-ey”. Oh. I know! It’s “e” (child writes “e”)

Teacher: Good for you, Ashley! Great listening!

Orton (2002) feels that children develop phonemic awareness very naturally; however, there are some children who require more formalized programs to develop phonemic awareness, just as there are children who do not learn to read as easily as others. It would be wise to identify those children considered to be at risk, and provide them with additional support in phonemic awareness acquisition.

According to Edelen-Smith (1997), some phonemic awareness activities that can be used in kindergarten and first grade classrooms at different developmentally appropriate levels are:

1. Focus on literature that deals playfully with speech sounds through rhymes. In *There’s a Wocket in My Pocket* (Seuss, 1974), initial sounds of everyday objects are substituted as a child talks about the strange creatures around the house, such as the “zamp in the

lamp”. Children can make up their own strange creatures in the classroom such as the “zuk” in my book.”

2. Exposure to rhymes leads naturally to use of phonograms and the creation of word family charts. A story that leads naturally to a word family chart is *Tog the Dog* (Hawkins & Hawkins, 1986), which is constructed so that as each page is turned, a different letter lines up with the rime “og.” For example, when Tog takes a jog, the letter “j” lines up with the “og”
3. Bradley and Bryant (1993) used an activity called “Odd Word Out,” which could be done with or without pictures. Four, words, three of which rhyme, are presented by the teacher (e.g., weed, bead, pill, seed). The child determines which word is the odd one that doesn’t belong with the others. The game of concentration or memory is a good practice activity for rhyme recognition.
4. To reinforce letter names, Blachman (1991) played “post office”—the children select a picture, say the initial sound of the picture, and identify the letter represented by the first sound by “mailing” it in the appropriate pouch.

Yopp (1992) suggested the use of song games and presented an example to the tune of “If You’re Happy and You Know It, Clap Your Hands”:

If you think you know this word, shout it out!

If you think you know this word, shout it out!

If you think you know this word,

Then tell me what you’ve heard,

If you think you know this word, shout it out!

The teacher says a segmented word such as /k/-/a/-/t/, and the children respond by saying the blended word (pp. 700-701).

Also, Yopp (1992) suggested the use of songs in sound matching activities. One of several examples she presented uses the tune “Old MacDonald Had a Farm”:

What’s the sound that starts these words?

Turtle, time, and teeth.

(Wait for a response from the children.)

/t/ is the sound that starts these words:

Turtle, time, and teeth.

With a /t/, /t/, here, and a /t/ there,

Here a /t/, there a /t/, everywhere a /t/, /t/.

/t/ is the sound that starts these words:

Turtle, time and teeth! (p. 700)

Because words and syllables are being emphasized more than individual phonemes, there should be activities that involve counting the number of words in a sentence or syllables in a word can be used as initial steps leading to isolated phoneme synthesis and segmentation (Lundberg, Frost & Peterson, 1988). This is accomplished by having students listen to a sentence being read and having them to count how many words are in the sentence or let the students read the sentence and count the number of words they read. They can denote this by placing markers on a chart or using counters to place how many are there. Also, students can clap their hands or tap on their desk to signify how many syllables are in a word. Visible, manipulation of sounds also helps to clarify and guide counting and segmentation tasks for beginners (Lewkowicz, 1980).

Segmenting refers to the act of isolating the sounds in a spoken word by separately pronouncing each one in order (Ball & Blachman, 1991; Spector, 1992; Wagner et al., 1993).

Yopp (1988) stated that segmenting sounds in a word is one of the more difficult simple

phonemic tasks for children to perform. Lewkowicz (1980) and Yopp (1992) suggested starting with isolated productions of initial phonemes as precursors to segmenting entire words. Children who lack phoneme awareness skills as a precursor to learning to read are at risk for developing learning disabilities and need explicit instruction if they are to become skilled readers and spellers (Alexander, Anderson, Heilman, Voeller, & Torgesen, 1991; Brady, Fowler, Stone, & Winbury, 1994). As stated by Lewkowicz (1980), “Children should be familiarized with speech sounds in isolation before they attempt to detect sounds within words” p. 694.

Flett and Condermann (2002) suggest the following 20 activities to promote phonemic awareness:

1. Teach nursery rhymes.
2. Teach simple poems and finger plays that use rhyming words.
3. Draw attention to rhyming words as they occur in normal classroom interactions.
4. Read stories that contain rhymes.
5. Play the “I Spy” game using the initial sounds of words as the clues (Fisher, 1993).
6. Create a sound box in your classroom.
7. Have students to sort picture cards based on the initial sound in the name of the picture.
(Fisher, 1993)
8. Extend the picture card activity into spoken language. (Fisher, 1993)
9. Develop students’ ability to split syllables into their smaller phonemes by breaking off the first phoneme in a syllable or word.
10. Play “change a name.” While sitting in a circle, select a student and change his or her name by deleting the initial sound. (Betty becomes Etty and Tom becomes Om).
Extension by substitution- Betty becomes Metty or Tom becomes Dom: Chard & Dickson, 1999)

11. Play phoneme deletion games by omitting a sound in a word.
12. Use and build on student's phonemic knowledge during transition times. e.g. All students whose names begin/end with /k/ line up.
13. Play an alphabet sound game.
14. Modify the song "Old MacDonald Had a Farm: into a fun game for students to work on identifying beginning, middle, or ending sounds in words. (Yopp, 1992).
15. Play "guess the word game." (Small group of students will sit in a circle with picture cards in the center. Teacher will say the word in snail talk (slowly)—stretching out phonemes. The student has to look at the picture and guess which word. The group will be signaled and they will give the word in unison. (Chard & Dickson, 1999)
16. Play the push up game as the students become more advanced with blending and stretching words. Use a penny (button), and rectangle divided into one-inch square boxes for each sound of the word. The students push a penny (button) to signify the sound of word as it is said. Students have to say the word slowly /m/ /a/ /n/ and the fast way--man.
17. Have students clap and count the syllables in a variety of words to assist children in learning the concept of syllables.
18. Demonstrate tapping on the tabletop or desk for each phoneme heard when stretching out a word to assist students in recognizing the individual phonemes in words.
19. Teach phoneme substitution by asking students to change the initial, middle, or ending sound in a word.
20. Present phoneme substitution tasks in a riddle format to fill those spare moments before lunch or while students return from recess.

The report of the Committee on the Prevention of Reading Difficulties in Young Children (Snow et al., 1998) recommends that kindergarteners have some basic phonemic awareness by the end of their kindergarten year. Every Child Reading: An Action Plan of the Learning First Alliance (1998) identifies phonemic awareness as one of the most important foundations of reading success and recommends that its development be addressed in prekindergarten and kindergarten. Experts want phonemic awareness activities that are developmentally appropriate for children (International Reading Association & National Association for the Education for the Education of Young Children, 1998). Mattingly (1984) encouraged classroom teachers to provide their students with linguistic stimulation in the form of storytelling, word games, rhymes, and riddles in order to facilitate phonemic awareness. However, Griffith and Olson (1992) argue that phonemic awareness activities will not be helpful unless they can be placed in a context of real reading and writing.

Phonemic awareness can be a more powerful predictor of reading progress than IQ (Adams, 1990; Hurford et al., 1993,) and kindergarten children's phonemic awareness can predict their levels of reading and spelling achievement 1, 2, and even as many as 11 years later (Lundberg, Olofsson, and Wall, 1980; MacDonald & Cornwall, 1995; Torgesen, Wagner, & Rashotte, 1994; Tunmer, Herriman, & Nesdale, 1988). The better a young child is at segmenting words into their individual sounds, the better they are likely to read, and further the reading process (Blachman, 1991; Catts, 1991; Fox & Routh, 1983, Griffith & Olson, 1992; Juel, 1988. According to Liberman & Shankweiler (1985), the ability to analyze, sequence, and remember individual sound in words is critical to the reading process.

According to Smith (1998), nearly 20 studies have demonstrated that when children who are weak in phonemic awareness receive appropriate instruction (even if only for 15 –20 minutes per day for as little as 7 weeks), they improve much more rapidly in reading and spelling than do

control groups, especially when instruction is linked with letter-sound and word learning (e.g., Blachman, 1991, 1994; Tangel & Blachman, 1992, 1995; Vandervelden & Siegel, 1997).

Research suggests that phonemic awareness activities have the best chance of spurring reading and spelling achievement when the auditory activities are coordinated with letter-sound and word learning (Bradley & Bryant, 1985; Hatcher, Hulme, & Ellis, 1994).

Edelen-Smith (2002) gives instructional guidelines for planning phonemic awareness activities. The guidelines are:

1. Identify the precise phoneme task on which you wish to focus and select developmentally appropriate activities for engaging children in the task. Activities should be fun and exciting—“play” with sounds, don’t “drill” them.
2. Be sure to use phoneme sounds (represented by / /) and not letter names when doing the activities. Likewise, remember that one sound may be represented by two or more letters. There are only three sounds in the word cheese /ch/-/ee/-/z/. You may want to target specific sounds/words at first and “practice” beforehand until you are comfortable making them.
3. Continuant sounds (e.g., /m/, /s/, /l/) are easier to manipulate and hear than stop consonants (e.g., /t/, /g/, /p/). When introducing continuants, exaggerate by holding on to them: rrrrrring; for stop consonants, use iteration (rapid repetition): /k/-/k/-/k/-/k/-/k/atie.
4. When identifying sounds in different positions, the initial position is easiest, followed by the final position, with the medial position being most difficult (e.g., top, pot, letter).
5. When identifying or combining sound sequences, a CV (consonant-vowel) pattern should be used before a VC (vowel-consonant) pattern, followed by a CVC (consonant-vowel-consonant) pattern (e.g. pie, egg, red).

According to the International Reading Association position statement (1998), many researchers suggest that the logical translation of research to practice is for teachers of young children to provide an environment that encourages play with spoken language as part of the broader literacy program. Nursery rhymes, riddles, songs, poems, and read-aloud books that manipulate sounds may be used purposefully to draw young learners' attention to the sounds of spoken language. Guessing games and riddles in which sounds are manipulated may help children become more sensitive to sound structure of their language.

Some suggestions that the International Reading Association gave for good reading instruction that will lead to the development of phonemic awareness and success in learning to read in the 1998 position statement are:

1. Offer students a print-rich environment within which to interact.
2. Engage students with surrounding print as both readers and writers.
3. Engage children in language activities that focus on both the form and content of spoken and written language.
4. Provide explicit explanations in support of students' discovery of the alphabetic principle.
5. Provide opportunities for students to practice reading and writing for real reasons in a variety of contexts to promote fluency and independence.

Summary

In conclusion, phonemic awareness is a very important part of learning how to read. Various levels of research have demonstrated that phonemic awareness is an important indicator of success in learning to read. According to Yopp (1992) support for phonemic awareness should occur in prekindergarten, kindergarten, and first grade and should include these abilities:

1. attend to the separate words of sentences (i.e. rhyming songs)

2. break up words into syllables (i.e. clapping syllables)
3. detect and generate rhymes
4. engage in alliterative language play (i.e. listening for or generating words that begin with a specific initial phoneme)
5. blend phonemes to make words (i.e. /t/-/o/-/p/= top)
6. make new words by substituting one phoneme for another (i.e. change the /m/ in “mat” to /c/)
7. identify the middle and final phonemes of words
8. segment word into phonemes (i.e. dog= /d/-/o/-/g/)

In order for phonemic awareness to be successful in kindergarten and first grade classrooms, strategies and activities must be utilized and teachers must be trained to use these strategies.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This ten week study examined the impact of the teachers' instructional strategies in teaching phonemic awareness to kindergarten and first grade students. Three questions were explored. These questions were: (1) How do teachers determine the appropriate instructional strategies to use in teaching phonemic awareness?, (2) What are the similarities and differences that each teacher demonstrates in implementing appropriate instructional strategies in teaching phonemic awareness?, and (3) How have the teachers' efforts in implementing a Reading First program been rewarded? The participants in this study are two first grade teachers, two kindergarten teachers, and one kindergarten and first grade reading interventionist.

As a participant observer at the site selected, the opportunity to conduct an in-depth exploration of how phonemic awareness activities are being taught in the classroom was compelling. Permission was obtained from the school system to: (1) observe the classroom setting, (2) record the observations through audio tapes, (3) distribute questionnaire to teachers involved, and (3) peruse necessary documents.

According to Stake (1995), a case study is the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within the important circumstances. In qualitative case study, researchers seek greater understanding of a situation with the intent of appreciating the uniqueness and complexity of the case, its embeddedness and interaction with its contexts.

As a result of the school system being awarded a Louisiana Department of Education Reading First grant, the teachers were required to utilize state approved materials to teach phonemic awareness strategies, which at this site were the reading series, *Harcourt Trophies*.

Harcourt Trophies was developed based on scientific research that demonstrates the importance of teaching children to recognize, think about, and manipulate the sounds in spoken language. Phonemic awareness instruction in this basal program includes an array of activities such as: phoneme isolation, phoneme identity, phoneme blending, phoneme counting, phoneme segmentation, phoneme substitution, etc. These activities lay the groundwork for teaching children to read and spell (Blachman, Ball, Black & Tangel, 1994; Juel, 1988; Vellutino & Scanlon, 1987).

Also, the use of the prescriptive method of teaching from the reading series was paralleled in all of the observed classrooms. During the 90 minutes of uninterrupted reading instruction, the guidelines of utilizing the prescribed method were mandated in the district's Reading First grant. The teachers were required to teach explicitly and systematic from the reading series, as it was designed. Therefore, all strategies that correlate to phonemic awareness were taught as spelled out in the teaching manual. The prescribed method consisted of verbatim scripts of: what the teachers should say, how the teachers should say it, and the answer for the students' response. All of this was found in all of the areas of the *Harcourt Trophies* reading manual.

Nancy Elementary has a reading content leader, also known as a reading coach, and a reading interventionist, who supports this reading series, that addresses the five critical components of reading. According to Dole (2004), a reading coach "supports teachers in their daily work" (p.462). The school reading content leader's major responsibility and role is to: (1) conduct school-level professional development, (2) participate in professional development and meetings, (3) coordinate the program implementation, (4) mentor teachers (5) coordinate testing, (6) collect and analyze data, and (7) coordinate supplemental and intervention services. The reading content leader directs the reading interventionist, who provides intense, supplemental

instruction to struggling readers outside of the classroom. Also, the reading interventionist assists the classroom teacher with professional development activities.

In addition to providing Nancy Elementary School with a reading content leader and reading interventionist, the district has mandated a number of professional development activities for the teachers at all levels—state, district, and school. The teachers, content leader, reading interventionists, and administrators participate in mandatory state and regional trainings that include: *Dynamic Indicators for Basic Early Literacy Skills for Success (DIBELS)* and *Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS)* training. Also, the teachers discuss reading strategies and skills at whole faculty study groups, grade level meetings, reading focus team meetings, etc. The weekly, job-embedded study groups are conducted by the reading content leader, who provides training in the specific area of reading instruction.

The whole faculty study groups result in increase of teacher knowledge, review of data, and plans for improvement. The teacher has the opportunity to discuss and share ideas that may be beneficial in improving reading skills. These training sessions have a direct or indirect effect on the phonemic awareness instructional techniques that are used in the classroom. The goal is to provide ongoing, data driven, job-embedded professional development that will ensure that all teachers acquire the necessary training to meet the needs of the population and for the guidelines “highly qualified” status as defined by NCLB and the state accountability system.

According to Louisa Moats (2003), *LETRS (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling)* provides educators with a core understanding of language structure and helps them gain in-depth instructional information to complement their teaching practices. Rather than replacing the core basal reading program, LETRS provides in-depth knowledge of reading instruction by addressing each component—phoneme awareness; phonics, decoding, spelling, and word study; oral language development; vocabulary; reading fluency;

comprehension; and writing—as well as the foundational concepts that link them. The program consists of modules that present reading research findings about learning to read in the key areas of phonemic awareness and other critical areas of reading. LETRS is delivered through a combination of print materials (modules), technology (Interactive CD-ROMs), and professional development (institutes).

Framework of the Study

Creswell (1998) defined qualitative research as “an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting” (p. 15). Qualitative research is the most appropriate method if the researcher is attempting to assess a process over a period of time or if the researcher wants to delve into the views of the participants (Creswell, 2002).

For this study, intense observation involved two kindergarten teachers, two first grade teachers, and the kindergarten and first grade reading interventionist. Data collection involved the use of primary sources such as observations, field notes, and questionnaires. Participants were selected through the approval of the institutional review board (IRB), parish superintendent, principal of the school, classroom teacher, and the participant’s parents and/or guardian.

The instructional strategies of phonemic awareness may include one or more of the following: (1) phoneme isolation, (2) phoneme blending, (3) phoneme counting, (4) phoneme segmentation, (5) phoneme substitution, (6) phoneme deletion, (7) phoneme adding, (8) phoneme manipulation, (9) distinguishing phonemes, and (10) syllable syllabication. After a summary is given of each teacher’s strategies relative to one or more of these areas, an in-depth discussion of the results and emerging themes ensues.

A particular focus in this study was to determine the similarities and differences among the five participants, and if the mandated strategies hindered or enhanced the use of instructional strategies. Summaries of the information that ascertained through classroom observations were generated. Also, there was some actual dialogue that transpired between the participants' (teachers/students) that documents specific phonemic awareness strategies that were observed in the classrooms. This provides a broader view of whether phonemic awareness strategies are a part of instruction in these elementary classrooms.

The major method of analysis for this study was Spradley's Developmental Research Sequence (DRS) Method (1980). This particular method utilizes the investigator as an observer. This type of study was selected so meaning could be derived in a holistic view/framework. The use of a qualitative study ensures that descriptive, narrative reporting can be used for further study in a particular area. Participant observation was utilized for the observations. According to Spradley's conceptualizations of participant observation (1980), the observer is also the ethnographer informant. During the spring 2006 semester, the observations were conducted during a ten week period where the researcher was the observer during the 15 to 30 minute time frame. An observation of the learning and teaching activities of phonemic awareness in the classroom, and the general patterns of the students were recorded in field notes.

Field notes are the written account of what is seen, heard, experiences, and thought in the collection process. Also, it reflects the data collected in a particular setting. In a case study, the field notes are a very important component of the data collection process. The field notes were the primary recording tools of the research. These notes included participant observation, document analysis, and questionnaires. The field notes are in summary form, so they may be accessible for later review.

During the course of the study, descriptive observation methods were used to guide the researcher in the appropriate direction in which themes emerged. The nine dimensions of the Developmental Research sequence are designed to suggest conclusive descriptive observations within social situations. Spradley (1980) states:

In a most general sense, these dimensions can serve as guides for the participant: space: the physical place or places; actor: the people involved; activity: a set of related acts people do; object: single actions that people do; act: single actions that people do; event: a set of related activities that people carry out; time: the sequencing that takes place over time; goal: the things people are trying to accomplish; feeling: the emotions felt and expressed. (p. 78)

Spradley's Developmental Research Sequence in Participation Observation (1980) was utilized in analyzing observations and questionnaires. In Spradley's Developmental Research Sequence, there are three levels of analysis. They are domain, taxonomic, and componential analysis for each individual case study analysis. The Domain analysis consists of a cover term, semantic relationships, and the included terms that form the specific domain. The Taxonomic analysis consists of a cover term, domains, semantic relationships, and included terms. The componential analysis determines the degree of contrasts.

Biases

There has been an ongoing struggle in the research community among qualitative researchers related to study bias; especially, when the researcher is a stakeholder in the culture of the study. As a researcher involved in a specific study, there are three aspects of which an audience should be aware. Bogdan and Biklen (1998) suggest the following three statements. First, "qualitative studies are not impressionistic essays made after a quick visit to a setting or after some conversations with a few subjects" (p. 33-34). Second, "the researcher's primary goal is to add to knowledge, not to pass judgment on the setting" (p. 33). Finally, "qualitative

researchers guard against their own biases by recording detailed footnotes that include reflections on their own subjectivity” (p. 33).

A researcher is in the field constantly completing observations that are challenged by the data being collected. Therefore, if prejudices or biases occur, the collected data is there to challenge them. The researcher becomes a part of the community; therefore, becoming a part of the community and learning from it. The field notes from the observations serves as adequate documentation of what occurred during the study and to clear up any misconceptions that may be lingering.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in a study is crucial. There will be activities that will “increase the probability that credible findings will be produced” (Lincoln and Guba, 1985 p. 301). These activities will include, but are not limited to persistent observation and triangulation of data. Persistent observation will increase the probability of emerging themes throughout the study. Persistent observations will “identify those characteristics and elements in a situation that are most relevant to the problem or issue being pursued and focusing them in detail” (p. 304). According to Bogdan and Biklen (1998), triangulation of data is defined as many sources of data that are better in a study than in a single source because multiple sources can lead to a fuller understanding of the phenomena being studied. The triangulation of data can be established by using different sources such as: observation results, questionnaire results, etc. In particular, during this study, phonemic awareness activities were identified, and a sense of trust was developed between the researcher and the participants over time.

Summary

Qualitative research generates details and valid data that contributes to an in-depth understanding of what the researcher wants to explicate. The importance of this study is to

provide the reader with collected data and research to reveal the use of phonemic awareness strategies in a kindergarten and first grade classroom. The qualitative approach minimizes disruption in the classroom, and the researcher becomes part of the cultural environment, is viewed as a trusted member, and studies the participants as they use phonemic awareness activities during instruction.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Introduction

For this study, the population consisted of five educators, forty-two kindergarteners, and forty-two first grade students from a rural elementary school in Christopher Parish. During the ten week period of March 1, 2006 to May 19, 2006, the researcher observed the instructional practices of the five educators. In the school setting, there were three sections of kindergarten and five sections of first grade classes with their own assigned teacher. Due to the time requirements of Reading First and the weekly focus group meetings, two classes in each grade level were chosen. As stated in Chapter One, Reading First is a program that is designed to help states, schools and districts address the reading levels of their students, and to ensure that they are reading on level by the end of third grade. Instruction is to be based on scientifically, research based instructional programs (designated by the federal government and state departments of education), and is to be evaluated using diagnostic, screening, and classroom-based instruments that measure and monitor the student's progress.

The specific criteria that governed the selection of the participants were the accessibility to the classrooms and parental permission. According to the Reading First grant guidelines, each classroom teacher must adhere to 90 minutes of uninterrupted instruction in the classroom with the Harcourt Trophies reading series as the method of delivery. Thus two kindergarten and 2 first grade teachers were chosen as well as the reading interventionist was selected because she was the only interventionist that serviced both the kindergarten and first grade students.

In order to develop an eclectic view of the instructional strategies used, the observer reviewed a copy of the reading manual as the teacher taught the phonemic awareness lesson, which served as a monitoring tool for awareness of the specified delivery of instruction. Each

participant was observed at least 24 days on an alternating schedule. In each classroom, phonemic awareness activities were observed from 15 to 30 minutes. When a teacher was absent, the corresponding grade level teacher was observed and an alternate day was assigned to the absent teacher.

During the observations, the kindergarten and first grade teachers addressed particular areas according to the reading series. The daily routine of the *Harcourt Trophies* kindergarten reading series involved the following sequence: the morning message, phonemic awareness, sharing literature, phonics, regular, shared or interactive writing, etc. The first grade *Harcourt Trophies* reading series sequence consisted of: the morning message, sharing literature, phonemic awareness, phonics and spelling, pre-reading strategies, high frequency words, etc. Although the reading program had multi-faceted skills that were incorporated during instruction, the researcher only concentrated on the area where phonemic awareness was prevalent. As iterated in Chapter One, the research project was designed to analyze and describe the phonemic awareness strategies in one Title I school in Christopher Parish.

One or more of the phonemic awareness activities taught by the each teacher was addressed in this section of the study. The sections include the particular phonemic awareness skill, a brief synopsis/statement of what occurred during the lesson, and/or actual dialogue that correlates with activities.

While observing the teachers, it should be noted that each lesson began with the morning message. The morning message consisted of the teacher asking students' specific question about particular topics. The specific topic discussed was utilized to formulate sentences relevant to student experiences or prior knowledge. These sentences were written by the teacher, with student assistance. The complexity of the sentences depended on the particular topic that was

discussed. These sentences for the morning message were placed on chart paper. The sentences could range from, “Today is Tuesday” to “Shirley likes to read books after school.”

Phonemic awareness skills and activities consisted of: (1) phoneme isolation: medial, (2) phoneme substitution, (3) phoneme isolation: initial, (4) phoneme blending, (5) phoneme counting, (6) syllable syllabication, (7) phoneme segmentation, and (8) phoneme manipulation. The following summaries will depict the phonemic awareness activities and instructional practices used by the participants.

Summary of Qualitative Data

Instructor A (Kindergarten)

Instructor A has thirty years of teaching experience. According to the questionnaire, she is using these phonemic awareness strategies because: “We were told by our supervisor to use the manual as is. I really don’t have a choice. I did add the spelling of words to challenge my students. They were getting tired of doing the activity the same way all the time.” During the observation, the teacher does follow the manual; however her tendency to deviate is evident in her activities. Although she utilizes the prescribed phonemic awareness activities, she does go into more detail than the book.

The following lesson consists of phoneme isolation in the middle of the word. The lesson starts as the teacher is completing the morning message. As the teacher wrote the morning message, she had the students sound out words.

Teacher: Let’s write the word there

Teacher: Let’s sound it out /th/ /e/ /r/

Teacher: there.

Teacher: Which letters make the /ar/ and /ou/ sound?

Students: a-r and o-u

Teacher: Let's write town

Teacher: /t/ /ow/ /n/.

The morning message included the segmenting of words and identifying phonemes, but the dialogue below addresses the phonemic awareness activity according to the reading manual.

In this dialogue, the teacher asks students to break the phonemes up into individual phonemes and to find the middle phoneme sound.

Teacher: I need you to listen. I have a Rabbit and his name is Fluffy. Fluffy is going to say the word, break them apart and say the middle sound.

Teacher: The word is vet. I want to see your fingers. Break the word into sounds.

Students: /v/ /e/ /t/.

Teacher: What sound is in the middle?

Students: /e/

Teacher: Somebody tell me who makes the /e/ sound.

Student: e

Student: /n/ /o/ /t/,

Teacher: What is the middle sound you hear?

Student: /o/

Teacher: luck

Teacher: That middle sound.

Students: /u/

Student: /l/ /u/ /k/

Teacher: Sound in middle.

Student: /u/

As the teacher asked students to sound out words, they used their fingers determine out the sounds and the middle sound.

Although this is in the same lesson, the teacher had the students perform a segmenting task by saying the individual sounds in the words. The teacher gave the student the word. The student had to perform the segmenting task.

Teacher: wet

Student: /w/ /e/ /t/

Teacher: nap

Student: /n/ /a/ /p/

Teacher: sell

Student: /s/ /e/ /l/

Teacher hen

Student: /h/ /e/ /n/

Teacher: red

Student: /r/ e/ d/

Teacher: desk

Student: /d/ /e/ /s /k/,

Teacher: tip

Student: /t/ /i/ /p/

Teacher: yet

Student: /y/ /e/ /t/.

The teacher guided instructional level of the students was addressed by the teacher changing the strategy of how instruction is delivered. In some instances, the children segmented the words

“the” and “in” and in another instance the student completed both tasks: segmented the phonemes and identifying the middle sound.

In this reading activity, the students completed the morning message, and had to spell the word school to place in the message. Also, the teacher sounded out words, identified the number of sounds and the number of letters in the word.

Teacher: Brady, spell school

Brandon: s-c-h-o-o-l.

Teacher: /skooll/, /s/ /k/ /oo/ /l/. It has 4 sounds, but 6 letters. S is a sound by itself. Ch makes the /k/ sound. /ooll/ makes the /oo/ and /l/ sound. Very good, Brady. We spelled school by sounding it out. (The teacher used fingers to demonstrate to students how to sound it out)

Upon completion of the morning message, the teacher proceeded to the phonemic part of the lesson that encompasses phoneme substitution.

Teacher: Listen to my rhyme and repeat the rhyme after me.

Dancing, Dancing dinosaur,

Dancing, Dancing on the floor,

Dancing, Dancing on my shoe,

Dinosaur, I'll dance with you.

Teacher: What sound do you here in dance and dinosaur?

Jenny: /d/

Teacher: Change the /d/ to a /m/. What will the silly word say?

Students: mance and minosaur.

Teacher: Change /d/ to /v/.

Student: vance.

Teacher: Change the /v/ to a /j/

Student: jance

Teacher change the /j/ to a /g/

Student: gance.

The students had to substitute the initial phonemes of words in the rhyme and substitute other phonemes.

In the morning message, the teacher had the students sound out the word “story” to write on the board. The teacher and the students sounded out each individual phoneme of the word “story”. The students used their fingers to distinguish between the phonemes.

Teacher: Let’s use our fingers.

Teacher and student: /s/ /t/ /or/ /e/. It has four sounds.

Student: (using fingers). I know how it is spelled. s-t-o-r-e.

Teacher: You hear an “e”, but it should be a “y”. Sometimes we will have tricky words in the English language and we just have to know these things. It is a “y”. Now, it has to say stories, so we are going to have to change the “y” to an “i” and add -es. This is just one of our rules.

The isolation of an initial phoneme was the focus of this lesson. The lesson was explicitly detailed in the manual.

Teacher: Zebra starts with /z/.

Zebra starts with /z/.

I hear /z/ in zebra.

Zebra starts with /z/

Zebra starts with /z/

Teacher: What’s the letter?

Students: z

Teacher: What’s the sound?

Students: z

Teacher: Listen to my word. You will have to give the sound.

Teacher: The word is fish.

Students: /f/

Teacher and Students: Fish starts with /f/.

Fish starts with /f/.

I hear /f/ in fish.

Fish starts with /f/.

Students: /f/

The rhyme continued with each word being placed in the designated position, and the student giving the initial sounds of the word. This activity continued with the teacher saying the words: bus, water, cake, guard, market, lion, visitor, nurse, teacher, scientist, and hammer. Also, the students had to say the words; however, the teacher called on individual students to give the initial phoneme. The teacher taught the lesson the way it was depicted in the book, except for one minor change. After the second word fish, she called on individual students to give the initial phoneme.

The teachers and students completed the morning message on a chart. The words “takes” and “bus” were a part of the morning message, and were sounded out with each phoneme. The morning message consisted of aspects of phonemic awareness, which consist of counting graphemes (letters), segmentation, the counting of phonemes, and the identification of letters from sounds.

Teacher: What about the word takes. Sound it out. Let me see your fingers

Students: /t/ /a/ /k/ /s/.

Teacher: It has 4 sounds. First we have to start with take. Why do we need the “e”

Student: So the “a” will make its sound.

Teacher: So the “a” will make its sound. If we don’t have an “e” (Teacher covered up “e” with her finger), it will be /t/ /a/ /k/, tac.

Teacher: (wrote word on the board) Guys, we have an “e” at the end of takes. Before you put the “s”, that “e” is silent. You don’t hear it, but it’s there.

Teacher: Break up the word bus. What sounds do you hear in bus?

Student: /b/ /u/ /s/

Teacher: /b/ /u/ /s/. What are my letters?

Students: b-u- s, bus

Teacher: Very good.

This is the beginning of the phonemic awareness activity that deals with phoneme isolation. The teacher read a rhyme. The students had to tell the teacher the initial phoneme of a particular set of words.

Teacher: Let’s see how well you can listen.

Teacher: Zoom! To the garden Zany Zebra did go.

And ate the zinnias all in a row.

How many zinnias are now left to grow?

Zero.

Teacher: Let me see how well you can listen. Let me say some words. You tell me the sound you hear at the beginning. I will repeat the sound. I want you to listen to the word. Zero

Students: zero.

Teacher: What sound do you hear?

Student: /z/

Teacher: zebra

Students: zebra

Teacher: What sound do you hear?

Students: /z/

Teacher: Zany

Student: Zany

Teacher: What sound do you hear?

Student: /z/

Teacher: Zoom. What sound do you hear?

Student: /z/

Teacher: zoo

Students: /z/

Teacher: zinnia

Student: /z/

The students repeated the word after the teacher and gave the initial sound of the phoneme in isolation.

This phonemic awareness activity contained phoneme blending. The teacher segmented the words into individual phonemes, and asked the students to blend the phonemes together to make the words. The teacher did not complete this phonemic awareness activity the way it was stated in the manual. The manual had the words in sentences. It asked the students to blend the sounds to finish the rhyme. Also, it asked to use the rabbit puppet, which was not utilized. The students blended the phonemes to make words.

Teacher: I will say the sounds and you will tell me the word. /h/ /a/ /t/ Mick

Mick: hat

Teacher: /w/ /e/ t/

Nate: pet.

Teacher: /kw/ /a/ /k

Student: quack

Teacher: /v/ /a/ /n/

Student: van

Teacher: /r/ /u/ /n/

Student: run

Teacher: /m/ /u/ /g/

Student: mug

Teacher: /kw/ /i/ /t/

Student: quit

Teacher: /m/ /i/ /ks/

Student: mix.

Phoneme counting was the focus of this particular lesson. The students said the word, segmented the word, and counted the number of sounds.

Teacher: Now, I want you to listen for the number of sounds. I will say the words. You may use your fingers.

Teacher and Students: sun, /s/ /u/ /n/,

Teacher: 3 sounds.

Teacher: If I want you to spell it, what would it be?

Student: s-u-n.

Teacher: Carl, if

Carl: /i/ /f/, 2

Teacher: Spell it.

Carl: i-f

Teacher: mix

Teacher: /m/ /i/ /x/, 3, m-i-x

Teacher: cut, Rose

Rose: /c/ /u/ /t/ -3, k-u-t

Teacher: Could be k-u-t, but this /k/ sound is c.

Teacher: James, six

James: /s/ /i/ /ks/, s-i-x

Teacher: How many sounds?

James: 3

Teacher: quit, Ally

Ally: /kw/ /i/ /t/. 3 sounds. q-i-t.

Teacher: Remember /kw/ sound is qu. Q and u are married; they are always together. They go together.

Teacher: up

Student: /u/ /p/, 2

Teacher: wax, Elton

Elton: /w/ a/ /ks/, 3

Teacher: Jim, quack

Jim: /kw/ /a/ /ck/, 3

In addition to segmenting the word and counting the number phonemes (sounds), some of the students spelled the words. Also, teacher distinguished the /k/ sound in cut was a “c “not a “k”.

The morning message included the words: season, swim, and summer. In the message, the teacher had students to differentiate between the syllables in the words. The students clapped their hands to break up the syllables in the words. This particular lesson deals with syllable segmentation.

Teacher: How many syllables in season?

Students: 2.

Teacher: Break summer into syllables.

Students: (clapped hands) Sum-mer.

Teacher: Good. We broke it into 2 syllables.

Teacher: How do we spell swim?

Brady: (using fingers to break down word) /s/ /w/ /i/ /m/. It has 4 sounds.

Teacher to everybody: I want to see fingers and hear sounds. (Teacher wrote swim on chart paper.)

Teacher: Now, I am going to call on students (use of sticks in a cup) to break words into parts.

Take the word swimming. (used chin, fingers, and hand claps to depict that swimming has 2 syllables) (swim-ming).

Teacher: You can use your chin, your fingers or clap your hands. We are not counting sounds.

We are counting syllables. Swim-ming (2).

Teacher: little, Jim,

Jim: lit-tle, 2

Teacher: flying, Macy

Macy: /f/ /ly/ /ing/, 3. (student was using fingers)

Teacher: Clap it.

Macy: fly-ing 2

Teacher: seahorse, Sloane

Sloane: sea-horse 2

Teacher: water, Ada

Ada: wa-ter 2

Teacher: dolphin, Nate

Nate: /d/ o/ /p/

Teacher: not sounds. Syllables. word parts. Clap

Student (clapped): dol-phin, 2 times

Teacher: splashing, Nyles

Nyles: (clapped), splash-ing, 2

Teacher: move, Chase

Chase: /m/ o/ /v/, 3.

Teacher: Did I say sounds or syllables?

Student: Syllables. Clap it.

Chase: (clapped) move, 1

Teacher: crawling, Nancy

Nancy: craw-ling, 2

Teacher: Michelle, seashell

Michelle: sea-shell, 2

Teacher: Elton, octopus

Elton: 3 (used fingers and said word to himself, oc-to-pus)

Teacher: what

Wilton: what, 1

Teacher: wave, Jesse

Jesse: /w/ /av/.

Teacher: clap.

Jesse: /w/ /a/ /v/, 3-

Teacher: not sounds.

Teacher: wave. How many parts? Syllables.

Jesse: 2.

Teacher: Listen up here. Don't worry about what someone else is telling you. /w/ a/ /v are 3 sounds. (used fingers). Wave (clapped) is 1 syllable.

Mitchell: seaweed

Mitchell: 2

Teacher: porpoise

Student: por-poise 2

Teacher: ocean, Amy

Amy: o-cean, 2

Teacher: sailboat, Mike

Mike: sailboat, 1, sail-boat, 2

Teacher: Good you corrected it. You thought about syllables. Good.

Teacher: Chase, angelfish

Chase: (clapped) an-gel-fish, 3

The teacher assisted the students that had difficulty transitioning from counting syllables and sounds. With some students, she had them to clap their hands or use their fingers. She used the strategy that was best suited for each student called on.

The process of deleting the phoneme at the beginning of a word was evident in this activity. Teacher gave the students the word and asked them to say the word with the beginning

phoneme. After doing a few together as a group, the teacher called on individual students to delete the phoneme.

Teacher: Say gate without /g/

Students: ate

Teacher: man without /m/

Students: an

Teacher: goat without /g/

Students: oat

Teacher: rug without /r/

Students: ug

Teacher: get with /g/

Students: et

Teacher: cup without /k/

Students: up

Teacher: gold without /g/

Students: old

Teacher: By yourself now

Teacher: Nellie, ham without /h/

Nellie: am

Teacher: Sue, cat without /k/

Sue: at

Teacher: Sarah, sit without /s/

Sara: it

Teacher: Michelle, band without /b/

Michelle: and

Teacher: Mitchell, fun without /f/

Mitchell: un

Teacher: Aja, nut without /n/

Aja: ut

Teacher: These are some extra.

Teacher: Jesse, pig without /p/-

Jesse: ig

Teacher: Nyles, Chet without /ch/-

Nyles: et

Teacher: Norbert, peg without /p/-

Norbert: eg

Teacher: Cameron, red without /r/-

Cameron: ed

Teacher: Meg, job without /j/

Meg: job

Teacher: Very good.

The students had to segment the sounds of the word and count the number phonemes.

The teacher used a bell to ring the bell for each sound in the word as they segmented. (The bell was not a part of the lesson)

Teacher: My hands are up. /r/ /u/ /n/ has 3 sounds. I will pass this bell around so when can hear the sounds. After you use it, pass it down. Everybody gets a turn. (Bell is not a part of the lesson parts).

Teacher: bug, Brady

Brady: 3.

Teacher: Nyles, up

Nyles: u/ /u/ /p/

Teacher: Use your fingers

Nyles: /u/ /p/, 2.

Teacher: Cameron: go

Cameron/g/ /o/, 2

Teacher: Amy, leg /l/ /e/ /g/, 3

Teacher: Elton- ad- /a/ /a/ /d/, Put down bell. Use your fingers.

Elton: /a/ /d/, 2

Teacher: Nyles, gum

Nyles: /g/ /u/ /m/ 3

Teacher: Sheila, in

Sheila: /in/ /n/

Teacher: Sounds

Sheila: /i/ /n/, 2

Teacher: Michelle, hot.

Michelle: /h/ /o/ /t/, 3

Teacher: Rosa, met

Rosa: /m/ /e/ /t/, 3

Teacher: Chase, yours is sit.

Chase: /s/ /i/ /t/, 3

Teacher: James, pup,

James: /p/ /u/ /p/, 3

Teacher: Nila, sun

Nila: /s/ /u/ /n/, 3

Teacher: Mike, but

Mike: /b/ /u/ /t/, 3

Teacher: Wilton, mug

Wilton: /m/ /u/ /t/.

Teacher: Use fingers.

Wilton: /m/ /u/ /g/, 3

Teacher: on

Wilton: /o/ /n/, 2

Most students used the bell to segment the words and to count the phonemes. However, in order to get the correct number of phonemes, some students had to be prompted to use their fingers for counting.

Instructor: A-1 (Kindergarten)

This instructor has seven years of teaching experience. According to the teacher's questionnaire, she stated that: "The manual gives very good strategies to follow and that is the strategies I use." During the observations, this teacher utilized the phonemic awareness strategies in the book. There is some deviation from the phonemic awareness activities; however, it is not a severe deviation. For the most part, the phonemic awareness strategies correlate with the reading series. The following information contains information about the utilization phonemic awareness strategies in classroom instruction

In the activity below, the teacher called on individual students. The teacher supplemented the manual by asking students for the initial, middle, and ending phonemes of a word. The words

were given to the students to identify the phonemes (sounds) and give the number of phonemes that are heard.

Teacher: Use your fingers

Students: /n/ /o/ /t/

Teacher: What is the sound at the beginning?

Students: /n/.

Teacher: Sound in the middle.

Students: /o/.

Teacher: Sound at the end.

Students: /t/

Teacher: There are three sounds in the word not /n/ /o/ /t/. A sound at the beginning; a sound at the middle; and a sound at the end.

Teacher: Terri, dot

Terry: /d/ /o/ /t/, 3

Teacher: red, Carl

Carl: /r/ /e/ /d/-, 3

Teacher: pen, Tamara

Tamera: /p/ /e/ /n/, 3

Teacher: pet, Ada,

Ada: /p/ /e/ /t/ 3

Teacher: Ed, Jake

Jake: ed

Teacher: I want the individual sounds. What do we say first? /e/ /d/.

Student: /e/ /d/.

Teacher: How many sounds?

Jake: 2

Teacher: Two sounds. Very good.

Teacher: vet, Dan

Dan: /v/ /e/ /t/-3

Teacher: at, Travis

Travis: /a/ t/, 2

Teacher: net, Tess

Tess: /n/ /e/ /t/, 3

Teacher: men, Chance

Chance: /m/ /e/ /n/, 3

Teacher: dig, Ashton

Ashton: /d/ /i/ /g/, 3

Teacher: bag, Jesse,

Jesse: /b/ /a/ /g/, 3

Teacher: in, Ainsley

Ainsley: /i/ /n/, 2

The morning message included sentences about what happened over the weekend.

Students completed a sentence as the teacher wrote a sentence for the morning message. The sentences contained the words: weekend and went. The students segmented one of the words and the recognized the initial sound of the other.

Teacher: What sound does weekend have?

Students: /w/.

Teacher: Segment went.

Student: /w/ /e/ /n/ /t/.

Teacher: write “went” (student began to write word on dry erase board.)

Teacher: /w/ /en/ /t/.

The phonemic awareness lesson consisted of the students identifying the middle phoneme in isolation. The teacher wanted the students’ undivided attention.

Teacher: Eyes on me. Listen for middle sound in these words. What are the middle sounds in the words hen /heen/, let /leet/, and men /meen/?

Students: /e/

Teacher: (singing)

Old MacDonald had a farm

And on his farm he had some words: hen and let and men

With an /e/ /e/ here and an /e/ /e/ there,

Here an /e/, there an /e/, everywhere an /e/ /e/

/e/ is the sound in the middle of these words: hen and let and men.

Teacher: What’s the sound?

Students: /e/.

The teacher proceeded to sing the Old MacDonald song with the assistance of the students. The teacher put the words and the middle sound in the song. The students repeated the rhyme for each of the words below and they identified the middle sound of each set. (Students were very involved in the singing of the Old MacDonald song.) This strategy coincides with Yopp (1992) who suggested the use of songs in sound matching activities.

Tan, bag, cat /a/

Fix, sit, pig /i/

Dog, sock, fox /o/

Rug, tub, bus, /u/

Teacher: Let's sound out bus.

Teacher and students: /b/ /u/ /s/.

Teacher: Good.

This phoneme segmentation task is extra practice with a few words. The teacher and students segmented a word. After the group segmented the word run, the students had the opportunity to segment the phonemes on an individual level.

Teacher: Everyone. rug

All students: /r/ /u/ /g/

Teacher: Jet-Kyle

Kyle: /j/ /e/ /t/

Teacher: sit, Tim

Tim: /s/ /i/ /t/

Teacher: tub, terry

Terry: /t/ /u/ /b/

Set- Jim /s/ /e/ /t/

Teacher: Dog, Nellie

Nellie: /d/ /o/ /g/ (used fingers to segment)

Teacher: Tyra, segment sock

Tyra: /s/ o/ /ck/.

Teacher: (Pointing to a student) Segment hen

Student: /h/ /e/ /n/

Teacher: hat, Jax

Jax: /h/ /a/ /t/

Teacher: Last one. Everybody, sun

All students: /s/ /u/ /n/.

The morning message was completed. In the message, a student's name was a part of it. The students were told to clap out the number of syllables. The name was Jeremy. The students clapped the name and said that it had 3 syllables. However, in the lesson the students blended phonemes.

Teacher: I'm going to blend some sounds slowly. You are to slowly put them together and tell what the word is.

Teacher: /p/ /e/ /t/ , /ppeett/

Students: pet

Teacher: /m/ /e/ /t/, /mmeett/

Student: met

Teacher: /s/ /a/ /d/, /ssaadd/

Student: sad

Teacher: Ally, come and write sad. Remember /ssaadd/ (used arm movement).

Ally: wrote sad on the board.

Teacher: Dan. Harvey, write it for me.

Harvey: wrote, De.

Teacher: Listen to what I am saying /ddaann/. (The teacher circled her mouth with her finger for short "a" sound).

Harvey: wrote Dan

Teacher: jen /jjeenn/. (Teacher pointed to student.) /j/ /e/ /n/

Student: (Student wrote the word, "Jen")

Teacher: mud /mmuudd/ Nancy.

Student: wrote mo,

Teacher: What letter says /u/

Student: u.

Teacher: nodded head. Student used arm to sound out word /m/ /u/ /d/

Student: mud.

Teacher /w/ e/ /b/

Students: web

Teacher /g/ /e/ /t/

Students: get

Teacher: Going on a word hunt. What's this word? /d/ /e/ /n/

Students: den

Teacher: Going on a word hunt. What's this word? /b/ /e/ /d/

Students: bed

Teacher: Going on a word hunt. What's this word? /f/ /e/ /d/

Students: fed

Teacher: Going on a word hunt. What's this word? /l/ /e/ /d/

Student: lid.

Teacher: Dax. Let's sound out /l/ /e/ /d/. Now, let's sound out /l/ /i/ /d/-lid. See the difference. /l/ /eee/ /d/. /l/ /iii/ /d/

Student: nodded head for yes

In this activity, the student had to find the new word after the phoneme was substituted. Even though the initial activity was phoneme substitution, the teacher included segmenting as a part of the lesson with the pocket chart, the sound boxes, and the color coded magnets.

Teacher: Listen to the word red. /r/ /e/ /d/, What do you hear at the beginning?

Students: /r/

Teacher: O.k., now instead of /r/ say /l/. What is the new word?

Students: led /l/ /e/ d/.

Teacher: Use your fingers.

Students: /l/ /e/ /d/, led

Teacher: den /d/ change to /t/

Nellie: ten

Teacher: wed /w/ change to /f/, new word

Student: fed

Teacher: get /g/ change to /v/, Ashley

Ashley: vet

Teacher: men /m/ change to /p/, Tyra

Tyra: pen

Teacher: Ben /b/ change to /j/, Willie

Willie: Jen

Teacher: ten /t/ change to /h/, Trace

Trace: hen

After this activity, the teacher drew three sound boxes on the dry erase board, and used color coded magnets so students could segment the words and have hands on opportunity to segment word. As the students segmented the words, the students pulled down each magnet that represent the letter and the sound it makes. For example the first word was pet. The students sounded out the word pet /p/ /e/ /t/. As the student sounded out each sound, the magnet was placed in the sound box.

blue magnet	green magnet	red magnet
/p/	/e/	/t/

The teacher called on different students to come to the board, and place the magnets in the boxes. The words the students sounded out were: ten, set, fed, red, wet, hen, bed, get, lid, and let.

This activity included the teacher deleting the initial phoneme from a word. In addition to deleting initial phonemes, the students segmented words.

Teacher: Say pan, say pan without the /p/.

Students: an

Teacher: say rap without the /r/

Student: ap

Teacher: Say lip without the /l/

Student: ip

Teacher: Say fog without the /f/

Student: og

Teacher: Say cap without the /c/

Student: ab

Teacher: Say pick without the /p/. Cade

Cade: ick

Teacher: Harvey, say tug without the /t/

Harvey: ug.

Teacher: We are going to write some words. Sun and bun

Teacher: segment bun.

Student: /b/ /o/ /n/

Teacher: /bbuunn/

Student: /b/ /u/ /n/

Teacher: good.

Teacher: Ally, fun

Ally: /f/ /u/ /n/.

Teacher: spell it.

Ally: f-u-n

The teacher put the alphabet cards (b, f, n, r, s, t, and u) in a pocket chart. Also, the teacher put the cards r, u, and n in the pocket charts.

Teacher: O.K. we will blend some words together.

Teacher: Dax. blend run.

Dax: /r/ /u/ /n/

Teacher: put s, u, and n cards in the box.

Students: /s/ /u/ /n/.

The teacher changed s to b.

Teacher: sound it out

Students: /b/ /u/ /n/

Teacher: put “f”

Students: /f/ /u/ /n/

The teacher directed additional students to change alphabet cards in different location to make new words. Different students were called on to blend the words into individual phonemes. Also, the teacher wrote the vowels: a-e-i-o-u on the board.

Teacher: pointed to individual alphabet a-e-i-o-u.

Students: /a/ /e/ /i/ /o/ /u/

The teacher asked the students what to describe the sounds they hear in “wake” and “breakfast”. Also, students identified a sound in the middle of a word. Also, the teacher asked students to give her words that had /g/ at the beginning.

Teacher: What sounds do they hear in the word wake?

Student: /w/ /a/ /k/.

Teacher: What sound do I hear in breakfast? /b/ /r/ /br/ breakfast

Teacher: Look at these cards. What is the letter?

Student: u and g

Teacher: give me a word that says /u/.

Student: Jug.

Teacher: /u/ is in the middle.

Cade: sug, in the middle

Ally: bug, in the middle. Give me a word that has /g/ Ally

Ally: goat.

Asa: grapes /g/

Carle’: grapes /g/

These students will isolate phonemes that have a /g/ or and /u/ at the beginning. This is addressing initial phonemes in words.

In order to hear the /u/ sound in this particular word, a student segments /um/ /bre/ /la/.

Teacher: Thumbs up if word begins with /u/ and thumbs down if it doesn’t.

Teacher: up,

Students: thumbs up

Teacher: under

Students: thumbs up

Teacher: him

Students: thumbs down.

Teacher: umbrella.

Students: thumbs up

Teacher: us

Students: thumbs up

Teacher: Words that begin with /g/ thumbs up. Those that do not; Thumbs down.

Teacher: go

Students: thumbs up

Teacher: find

Students: thumbs down

Teacher: get

Students: thumbs up

Teacher: like

Students: thumbs down

Teacher: guess

Students: thumbs up

Teacher: gone

Students: thumbs up

Teacher: good

Teacher: Do thumbs up if they hear /u/ at the beginning and clap if they hear /g/ at the beginning.

/u/ thumbs up; /g/ clap.

Teacher: up

Students: thumbs up.

Teacher: get

Students: clap

Teacher: Ready, umbrella

Students: thumbs up

Teacher: up

Students: thumbs up

Teacher: gas

Students: clap

Teacher: game

Students: clap

Teacher: gift

Students: clap

Teacher: under

Students: thumbs up

Teacher: geese

Students: clap

Teacher: us

Students: thumbs up

Teacher: golf

Students: clap

Teacher: good

Students: clap

In this activity, the teacher gives students two words and asked for the same initial sound that is heard in both words. The teacher called on individual students and they gave the initial phoneme.

Teacher: name the beginning sound they hear in both words.

Teacher: gum, get, Jeremy/

Jeremy: /g/

Teacher: Rug, rabbit, Carle'

Carle': /r/

Teacher: mat, more, Trish

Trish: /m/

Teacher: house, horn, Ally

Ally: /h/

Teacher: dog, dust, Chance

Chance: /d/

Teacher: game, gift, Cade

Cade: /g/

Teacher: big, barn, Ada,

Ada: /b/

Teacher: cat, cow, Amie

Amie: /c/

Teacher: Listen, I am going to say two words. Both words have the have the same beginning sound. If it does, you will tell me the sound. If they don't, you won't tell me anything.

Remember there will be two words.

Teacher: goose and gift, /g/; begin with the same sound /g/; give and goose, Ally

Ally: /g/

Teacher: pig, cat. Are they the same, Chase

Chase: no

Teacher: game goat- Carle'

Carle: /g/

Teacher: sun, soup Dax /s/

Dax: no, YES

Teacher: us, umbrella, Josh, Are they the same?

Josh: yes

Teacher: gas, wax. Are they the same?, Tad

Tad: no

Teacher: new top

Student: no

Teacher: Sound is /n/ and top /t/, no

Teacher: house, hill, Joe

Joe: no-

Teacher: /hhhouse/ and /hhhill /h/

Joe: h, yes

Teacher: under, up, Ann

Ann: nod of head, yes /u/ u

Teacher: dig, dime, Trish,

Trish: /d/

Teacher: umpire, until, sound of /u/. Are they the same?

Students: No ma'am; yes ma'am

Teacher: /u//u/umpire/, /u/ /u/ /until/, Yes, they are the same.

Teacher: kangaroo, king, Alice

Alice: /k/

Instructor B (First Grade)

This teacher has 15 years of teaching experience. According to the teacher's questionnaire, she is using these phonemic awareness strategies because: "Reading First dictates what strategies we are to use." During observation, the teacher does follow the prescribed plan. There is little deviation from phonemic awareness. However, the deviations present were for clarification purposes. Her activities are very short, precise and to the point. Although she addresses the phonemic awareness strategies outlined in the manual, she does not alter her strategies. A morning message is presented to the students, but the teacher does not include phonemic awareness strategies in the morning message.

The lesson below depicts the beginning phoneme being substituted.

Teacher: Say the word wouldn't

Students; wouldn't.

Teacher: change the beginning to /k/

Students: couldn't

Teacher: go: change /g/ to /s/

Students: so

Teacher: low: change /l/ to /t/

Teacher: tow

Teacher: and: change /a/ to /e/

Students: end

Teacher: high: change /h/ to /fl/

Students: fly

Teacher: as: change /z/ to /sk/

Students: ask

Teacher: blow: /o/ to /oo/

Students: blue

In this lesson, the teacher segmented the individual phonemes of the words and the students gave the word that was segmented. At the end of the phonemic awareness lesson, the teacher asked students to get out their dry erase boards and told them to write the word right. She asked the students to identify the middle sound.

Teacher: I going to say sound. You say the word.

Teacher: /k/ e/ /p/

Students: keep

Teacher: /l/ /ee/ /n/

Students: lean

Teacher: /n/ /e/ /d/

Students: need

Teacher: /l/ /igh/ /t/

Students: light

Teacher: /r/ /igh/ /t/

Students: right

Teacher: /t / /ee/ /m/

Students: team

Teacher: /t/ /igh/ /t/

Students: tight

Teacher: /n/ /igh/ /t/

Students: night

Teacher: /h/ /igh/

Students: high

Teacher: Get out your dry erase board. Write the word right. This is my right hand. What middle sound do you hear in right?

Student: i

The teacher proceeded into the phonic and spelling part of the lesson by writing the spelling words on the dry erase board.

The lesson consisted of phoneme isolation in which she asks for the middle phoneme in a word. The teacher called out the word, and had the students tell them the middle sound.

Teacher: Tell me the vowel sound you hear. Sleep

Students: /e/

Teacher: don't

Student: /o/

Teacher: den

Students: /e/

Teacher: and

Student: /e/

Students: /a/

Teacher: /a/

Teacher: snow

Teacher: /o/

Teacher: flakes

Student: /a/ Teacher: play

Students: /a/

Teacher: seat

Students: /e/

In this lesson the teacher gave the students a word and the middle phoneme is substituted with the phoneme that is the long “i” sound.

Teacher: Change /i/ in chilled to /i/

Students: child

Teacher: mailed: If I change /a/ mail to a /i/. What is it?

Students: mild

Teacher: Change /i/ in grinned to /i/

Students: grind

Teacher: Change /a/ paint to /i/. What is my word?

Students: pint

Teacher: pint. Good

Teacher: Change /e/ in blend to /i/

Students: blind

Teacher: Change /ou/ in round to /i/

Students: rind

After the phonemic awareness activity, the teacher proceeded to conduct the word building component of the lesson.

This lesson consisted of matching and isolating phonemes. The students put the hands up if they heard the long “o” sound, and hands down if they didn’t.

Teacher: I'm going to say some words (shared literature poem). I want hands up if you hear the long o and hands down if you don't

Teacher: one

Students: hands down

Teacher: snow

Students: hands up

Teacher: window

Students: hands up

Teacher: you

Students: hands down

Teacher: proves

Students: hands down

Teacher: know

Students: hands up

Phoneme substitution is the focus of this phonemic awareness lesson. The teacher asked students to place the phoneme (long o) into the middle of a word.

Teacher: I'm going to say sound you will change the word. Mild change "i" to o

Students: mold

Teacher: "i" in tilled to o

Students: told

Teacher: mist "i" to o

Students: most

Teacher: see: e to o

Students: so

Teacher: held, e to o

Students: hold

Teacher: guild: 'i' to an o

Students: gold

Teacher: past: a to o

Students: post

Teacher: filled: i to o

Students: fold

Teacher: build: i to o

Student: bold

Teacher: Get out your boards. Write the word old. /oolld/. Put o-l-d on the apple Neil. Good.

Teacher what sound does long o make.

Students: /o/

This phonemic awareness activity consists of the student changing the initial phoneme of a word to another phoneme. This strategy is known as phoneme substitution.

Teacher: I'm going to say a word. Change the 1st letter.

Teacher: get: change /g/ to /w/

Students: wet

Teacher: here: change /h/ to /ch/

Students: cheer

Teacher: there: change /th/ to /wh/

Students: where

Teacher: safe: change /f/ to /l/

Students: sail

Teacher: floor: change the /or to /ar/

Students: flare

Although it is changing the ending phoneme from /s/ to /j/, it is still categorized as phoneme substitution.

Teacher: ace: change /s/ to /j/

Student: age

Student: bus; change /s/ to /j/

Students: badge

Teacher: pace: change /s/ to /j/

Students: page

Teacher: less change /s/ to /j/

Students: Ledge

Teacher: case: change /s/ to /j/

Students: cage

Teacher: fuss: change /s/ to /j/

Students: fudge

Teacher: Get out a piece of paper. Write page on your paper.

Put page on the apple Mason.

This started the building of words with cards. Student changed specific letters cards at the teachers request to form new words. Teacher: All words have c or g. C is /s/ or /k/.

G is /g/ or /j/. all had the /j/ Soft C makes what sound?

Students: /s/

Teacher: Soft g makes what sound?

Students: /j/

The teacher addressed the /g/ /j/ (soft) /k/ and /s/ (soft c) sounds in the word building activity.

Phoneme blending is evident in the lesson. The teacher segmented the words and the students had to blend the words. All of the words were long vowel words.

Teacher: O.k. I'm going to segment slowly. Listen as I segment tail /t/ a/ /l/

Students: tail

Teacher: tail

I'm going to segment the following words from the poem and you're going to blend them together and tell me the word.

Teacher: /m/ /ar/ /k/

Students: mark

Teacher: /s/ /e/ /m/ /z/

Students: seems

Teacher: /j/ /us/ /t/

Students: just

Teacher: /s/ /a/

Students: say

Teacher: /b/ /i/ /g

Students: big

Teacher: /w/ /i/ /z/

Students: wise

Teacher: /a/ /n/ /d/

Students: and

Teacher: /h/ /e/ /d/

Teacher: o.k.

In this lesson, the teacher asked students to distinguish between particular sounds. The teacher said some words and the students had to tell her the vowel sound that was heard. The students had to distinguish between the phonemes.

Teacher: I'm gonna say some more words and you will tell me the vowel sound you hear in each one. What do you hear in the middle of toot? /oo/

Student: /oo/

Teacher: What makes that /oo/ sound?

Students: o-o

Teacher: What do you hear in the middle of road?

Students: /o/.

What two letters make that long o sound?

Student: o-a.

Teacher: o-a. Good

Teacher: What do you hear in the middle of noon?

Students: /oo/

Teacher: /oo/

Teacher: What makes that sound?

Students: /o/o

What do you hear in the middle of roam? What makes that o sound?

Students: /o/

Teacher: yes

Teacher: What do you hear in the middle of boot?

Student: /oo/

Teacher: /oo/

Teacher: proof

Student: /oo/

Teacher: /oo/

Teacher: hoot

Student: /oo/

Teacher: roast

Student: /oa/

Teacher: Roost:

Student: /oo/

Teacher: This week we have been talking about words that have what.

Students: two o's

Teacher: two o's in the middle

Teacher: Get out your notebook.

This phonemic awareness activity consisted of phoneme manipulation, where the ending phoneme is changed in a word to make a new word.

Teacher: O.k. We're gonna change snail. Change /l/ in snail to a /k/

Students: tail, tail

Student: Snake

Teacher: Thank you

Teacher: Change /n/ in gun to /l/

Students: null

Teacher: Nope. You're not listening. Change /n/ in gun to /l/

Student: gull.

Teacher: Thank you. Kasey.

Teacher: Change the /t/ in dot to a /g/.

Student: dog.

Teacher: /dogg/

Teacher: Change the /m/ in moon to a /s/

Students: moose

Teacher: Change the /p/ in cap to a /t/

Students: cap

Teacher: Change /t/ in hot to a /p/

Students: hop

Teacher: Change the /p/ in peep to a /k/

Students: peek

Teacher: Change the /v/ in sleeve to /p/

Students: sleep.

Teacher: sleep

Phoneme addition in this activity consisted of adding a beginning phoneme to an onset

Teacher: If I add -oom to /b/, what do I have?

Students: boom

Teacher: O.k. add -oot to /sk/

Students: scoot

Teacher: o.k. add -oot to /r/

Students: root

Teacher: /h/

Students: hoot

Teacher: /b/

Students: boot

Teacher: O.k., Now we are going to do –oom

Teacher: /r/

Students: room

Teacher: /d/

Students: doom

Teacher: /z/

Students: zoom

Teacher: good

Instructor B-1 (First Grade)

This instructor has been in the profession for a total of six years. According to her questionnaire response, she chose phonemic strategies because: “The teacher’s manual provides a guide for each lesson. I use additional strategies I learned from different workshops on phonemic awareness.” During the observations, the teacher deviated from phonemic awareness activities by utilizing other strategies, such as hand movements and the slinky. With the slinky, the teacher extends it with each segmented sound in the word, and brings it back together when the word is pronounced. Before each phonemic awareness activity, the teacher completes the morning message and the literature sharing component of the lesson. As these two things are finished, the teacher does not include phonemic awareness strategies in any of these areas.

The following lesson required the children to complete a phonemic awareness activity that incorporated the use of kinesthetic and tactile strategies. In order to introduce what’s the student’s task, the teacher uses her hands and a slinky to sound out the phonemes in words. After the word phonemes are segmented, the word is repeated.

Teacher: I’m going to sound out some words from the story. /s/ /a/ /l/ (use of hands), sail.

Teacher: swam, Do it with me.

Teacher and students: /s/ /w/ /a/ /m/ (use of hand)

Teacher: Do it again.

Teacher and students: /s/ /w/ /a/ /m/. (use of the slinky by the teacher)

Teacher: dog

Students: /d/ /o/ /g/, dog

Teacher: licked

Students: /l/ /i/ /k/ /t/, licked

Teacher: moose

Student: /m/ /oo/ /s/, moose

Teacher: looked

Students: /l/ /oo/ /k/ /t/, looked

Teacher: purred

Students /p/ /ur/ /d/, purred

In this particular lesson, the students identified initial phonemes with long a in them

Teacher: Tell me the sound at the beginning of the word. It is the first sound.

Teacher: aid. The sound I hear at the beginning is /a/

Teacher: ate

Students: /a/

Teacher: arm, Jeremy

Jeremy: /a/

Teacher: ape, Maddie

Maddie: /a/

Teacher: age, Jacoby

Jacoby: /a/

Teacher: ace, Derrick

Derrick: /a/

This is the end of the phonemic awareness part of the lesson. The next part is the beginning of the phonics and spelling lesson, which occurred on the same day. The teacher molded the word chain for the students. She used the slinky to break up the phonemes in the word. The teacher asked the students to get out their individual slinky. They sounded out the words with the slinky.

Teacher: chain, sound it out,

Students and Teacher: /ch/ /ai/ /n/, chain

Teacher: First word. day. Take out your slinky.

Teacher and Students: /d/ /ay/, day

Teacher: sail

Teacher and student: /s/ /ai/ /l/, sail

Teacher: say.

Teacher and students: /s/ /ay/, say

Teacher: pail

Teacher and students: /p/ /ai/ /l/, pail

Teacher: pay

Teacher and students: /p/ /ay/, pay

Teacher: play

Teacher and students: play /p/ /l/ /ay/.

Teacher: Put slinky in your bag and put it up.

The lesson addresses the substitution of phonemes in words. Although the lesson does not ask the teacher to specify which letters to take out and put it, the teacher altered the lesson and did it.

Teacher: We will be talking about words from our story. You will change the middle sound. For example, If I take peg, take out the “e” and put an “i”, what would my word be?

Students: pig.

Teacher: hone; take out the “o”, put in “e”, Chester

Chester: hen

Teacher: gas, take out the “a” put “oo”, Ray

Ray: goose

Teacher: limb, take out the “i”, put in “a”, Jenna

Jenna: lamb

Teacher: deck, take out “e”, put in “u”,

Teacher: /d/ /e/ /ck/, Put a “u”

Jeff: duck

Teacher: gate take out “a” and put “oa”

Andy: goat

Phoneme isolation is the next part of the lesson. It focuses on long i words.

Teacher: Listen to the sounds in might. What vowel sounds do we have in might? /i/

Teacher: high, Jason

Jason: /i/

Teacher: light, Alton

Teacher: Say it.

Alton: /i/

Teacher: /fr/ /igh/ /t/, Megan

Student: /i/

This part goes into spelling and phonics. The teacher told the students the several ways to spell long i sound (i, i-e, igh). Also, she wrote words on the board. With the word high, she started the following dialogue.

Teacher: How many sounds do you hear in the word high?

Jared: 4

Mary: 3

Teacher: How many letters will I use to write the word high?

Student: 4

Teacher: How many sounds?

Student: 2

Teacher: Why?

Student: Because -igh is one sound.

Teacher: Very good did you hear Ray, because -igh is one sounds.

Teacher: Take out your dry erase board. When you get your dry erase board, Write this (high)

Teacher: I am going to sound it out first. Then you.

Teacher: /h/ /igh/. High (Teacher pointed to each sound with her hand and then she slides it under as she blended the word together.)

Student: /h/ /igh/ high

Teacher: change “h” to an “n”. add “t”. Word should look like this (night). Teacher completed words in a pocket chart, while students wrote on dry erase board.

Teacher /n/ /igh/ /t/, night

Students: /n/ /igh/ /t/, night

There were additional words formed on the chart, which students wrote them on their dry erase board, and segmented as well. The same system proceeded until the word building activity was completed. The words were: light, right, might, and bright.

Teacher: Clean your boards

Teacher: write the word light

Teacher: /l/ /igh/ /t/, How many sounds do we have in the word light, Chester

Chester: 3

Teacher: How did you spell light? Jacoby

Jacoby: l-i-g-h-t, 5 letters

Teacher: Tell me why did I use five letters, Mia

Teacher: Alton can you help her out. Different students started raising their hands)

Teacher: Zane.

Zane: because -igh is one sound.

Teacher: I used five letters because -igh is one sound.

Teacher: One more word. Erase. Clean your boards

Teacher: write the word night

Teacher: /n/ igh/ /t/, How did you spell the word Jason?

Jason: n-i-g-h-t

Teacher: Jeff, How many sounds in the word night.

Teacher: Use your fingers

Student: /n/ /igh/ /t/, He held up three fingers.

Teacher: How many letters?

Student: 5

Teacher: Why Hadley?

Hadley: because “igh” is one sound

Teacher: What sound does it make?

Students: /i/ (long i)

This next lesson consisted of counting phonemes. The teacher used the words from the poem in the shared literature section.

Teacher: I am going to say some words in the poem. You going to say the words tell me how many sounds are in the words. We are going to clap the words. How every many claps is the number of sounds

Teacher and students: rain /r/ /ai/ /n/, 3

Teacher: go

Teacher and students: go /g/ /o/

Teacher: away

Teacher and students: /a/ /w/ /ay/, 3

Teacher: other

Teacher and students: /o/ /th/ /er/, 3

Teacher: play

Teacher and students: /p/ /l/ /ay/, 3

Teacher: come

Teacher and students: /c/ /o/ /m/, 3

Teacher: day

Teacher and students: /d/ /ay/, day, 2

Teacher: to /t/ /o/, 2

Teacher and students:

Students clapped the sounds in the word. The next part of the lesson focus on the long a sound with phoneme addition

Teacher: I will give you a sound. Add long “a” in front of the sound I give you. Add long “a” before the /m/.

Students: /m/

Teacher: the sound is /t/. Add long “a” to /t/, Amy

Amy: /ate

Teacher: Sound is /s/. Add long “a” to /s/

Students: ace

Teacher: sound is /j/. Add long “a” to /j/

Students: age

Teacher: I will say a sound. Add the long “a” sound to the end of the word. After the consonant (Teacher wrote the letter on the board and drew an arrow to depict where long “a” sound would go)

Teacher: What sound does long “a” make?

Students: /a/

Teacher: Long “a” after /d/, Ray

Ray: day

Teacher: Add long “a” after /p/, Mia

Mia: pay

Teacher: Add long “a” after /m/, Kia

Kia: may

Teacher: Add long “a” after /s/

Students: say

Teacher: We are going to come up her and build words.

Teacher: what are the two ways to write long “a”, Joe

Student: “ai” and “ay”

Teacher: What part of the word will I find it? Derrick

Derrick: at the end

Teacher: Where will I find the “ai”?

Alton: beginning/middle

This is the beginning of the phonics and spelling lesson. (Teacher put the word card for the word, “day” on the chart).

Teacher: Kia, What is this word?

Kia: day

Teacher: /d/ /ay/, day; Jacoby, How many sounds?

Jacoby: 2

Teacher: letters, Alton

Alton: 3

Teacher: Kia, take away the “d” and put a “s”; Let’s sound it out.

Teacher and students: /s/ /ay/, say

Teacher: Kaylin, take away the “y” add “il”, sail; /s /ai/ /l/, sail

Student: /s/ /ai/ /l/, sail

The teacher continued with this lesson with words: pail, pay, and play. The students segmented the words into sounds.

Instructor C (Reading Interventionist)

This instructor has been in education for twenty-seven years. Her position, allows her the opportunity to work with students who have supplemental needs according to their ability level.

If their needs are at the strategic or intensive instructional level, then those students will receive supplemental services. Their instructional services are determined by their DIBELS assessments.

During the observations, the teacher worked with her group of students on different activities. The kindergarten group utilized the use of phoneme segmentation, initial phonemes, phoneme isolation, etc. The teacher utilizes materials that are approved by the Reading First grant. As stated in Chapter One and Chapter Three, Reading first requires scientifically based instructional programs (designated by the federal government and state departments of education) that utilizes diagnostic, screening, and classroom-based instruments to measure and monitor the progress of students in the five critical areas of reading instruction.

The majority of the lessons included the identifying of vowels and their sounds as well as consonants and their sounds. At times, words were segmented and phoneme isolation of whether the sound is in the beginning, middle, or end. In most instances, the graphemes and phonemes were prevalent. Therefore, the dialogue presented below depicts what was evident in most cases when observing Instructor C.

This particular phonemic awareness strategy consists of consonants (graphemes and phonemes)

Teacher and students: The B says /b/ in boy and bat.

Teacher: What this letter?

Christopher and Carle': c

Jake: fee.

Teacher and students: And the C says /k/ in cat.

Teacher: What's my letter?

Students: D

Teacher and students: The D says /d/ in dish and dog.

Teacher: What's my letter?

Students: F

Teacher and students: And the F says /f/ in fish and frog

Teacher: What's my letter? What's this letter? We have problems with this one.

Teacher and students: Now the G says /g/ in goat and girl.

Teacher and students: And the H says /h/ in hat and her.

Teacher and students: And the J is the /j/ in jacket.

Teacher and students: The K is the /k/ in kite.

Teacher and students: L, L is the /l/ in little.

Teacher: What letter?

Student: M

Teacher and students: And M, M is the /m/ in mat.

Teacher: I am not hearing yall.

Teacher and students: The N says /n/ in nail and nap.

Teacher: What my letter?

Students: B

Teacher and students: And the P says /p/ in pig and pat.

Teacher: What's my letter? Nancy, what is my letter?

Nancy: R, /r/.

Teacher: r

Teacher and students: Now the R says /r/ in rabbit.

Teacher and students: The S says /s/ in sip and snap i.t

Teacher and students: The T is the /t/ in turtle and top.

Teacher: What's my letter?

Students: V.

Teacher and students: The V is the /v/ in vase and vowel.

Teacher: What's my letter?

Students: W

Teacher and students: The W is /w/ in /w/, /w/, wet.

Teacher: What's my letter?

Carle': W

Jack: Y

Teacher: Y

Teacher and students: The Y says /y/ in yellow and yet.

Teacher: What's my letter?

Students: Z

Teacher and students: And the Z says /z/ in zoo.

Teacher: What is it?

Students: Z.

Teacher and students: Now that you know what to do. Next time you should try it to.

Teacher: o.k. let's go over our letters. (Letter cards were used at this time.)

Teacher: What is this? Look at me.

Jack: B

Teacher: Let me hear you.

Students: B

Teacher: B says what

Carle': B says, /b/

Teacher: Good. C says what?, Jack

Jack: /k/

Teacher: What letter is this?

Teacher: D.

Teacher: What sound does D make?

Carle': /d/, Let me hear you.

Students: /d/.

Teacher: What's my letter?

Students: F /f/.

Teacher: What does F say?

Students: /F/

Teacher: What letter is this?, Nancy

Nancy: G.

Teacher: Good Nancy.

Nancy: Can I get something.

Teacher: No, not right now.

Teacher: G says what.

Jack and Carl: /g/

Teacher: G says what?

Students: /g/ /g/.

Teacher: What is it?

Nancy: I.

Teacher: H. Look at it. What is it?

Students: h.

Teacher: It says /h/. What does it say?

Students: /h/.

Teacher: What letter.

Jack: J.

Teacher: Good job, Jack. It says what.

Jack: /j/.

Teacher: Good job Jack. Like in Jack huh.

Jack: (Nod of head). Yeah.

Teacher: What is this letter/

Student: K

Teacher: Good job Christopher, K. K says what?

Christopher: /k/ /k/

Teacher: /k/ /k/. Nancy, it is not talking time. We go through this everyday. It's not talking time.

Student: (Card was being shown by teacher) L

Teacher: L says what?

Students: /l/

Teacher: What letter?

Students: M

Teacher: M says what

Students: /m/

Teacher: What letter?

Students: N

Teacher: N says what?

Students: /n/, /n/

Student: P.

Teacher: P says what?

Students: /p/

Student: R.

Teacher: R says.

Students: /r/, /r/

Students: S

Teacher: S says.

Students: /s/

Students: T

Teacher: T says.

Student: /t/

Student: V

Teacher: And it says.

Teacher and students: /v/ /v/

Student: W

Teacher: W says

Teacher and Students: /w/ /w/ /w/.

Student: Y

Teacher: Good job. Y says what?

Teacher and students: /y/ /y/ /y/.

Students: Z

Teacher: Z says

Students: /z/

The lesson consists of the singing of a song for vowel sounds and hand motions for each vowel sound.

Teacher: Good job. Good job. Good. Now we get to say a-e-i-o-u are vowels (use of hand motions during this song.)

Teacher and students: A-E- I-O-U are vowels.

Teacher and students: A-E-I-O-U are vowels.

Teacher and students: A-E-I-O-U are vowels.

Teacher and students: Every word has at least one vowel.

Teacher: What is it?

Student: A.

Teacher and students: Aaaaaa apple, Aaaaaa apple, Aaaaaa apple

Teacher: Come on

Teacher and students: Aaaaaaa, apple

Teacher: What is my letter?

Teacher and students: Eeeeeee edge, Eeeeeee edge, Eeeeeeeeee edge, Eeeeeee edge

Teacher: What's my letter?

Students: I

Teacher and students: Iiiiiiii itch, Iiiii, itch, Iiiiiiii, itch, Iiiii itch

Teacher: What's my letter?

Students: O.

Teacher and students: Ooooooo ox, Ooooooo ox, Ooooooo ox, Ooooooo, ox

Teacher: What is my letter?

Students: U

Teacher and student: Uuuuuuu, up, Uuuuuu up, Uuuuuu up. Uuuuuu up.

Teacher: O.k., What's this letter?

Students: A.

Teacher: A says what?

Student: /A/ /a/ carrying that apple.

Teacher: What's my letter?

Student: E.

Teacher: E says

Teacher and students: /e/ /e/ /e/,

Neva: Neva says that to.

Teacher: Neva does start with an e. Neva has an e in her name. But it doesn't say /e/. It has the beginning sound of /n/. It has to say /e/, like edge of table (hand motion).

Student: I

Teacher and students: "i" says: /i/ /i/ /i/ /i/.

Teacher: Like we are itching (hand motion).

Student: O

Teacher: it says /o/

Teacher: /o/ /o/ like that octopus.

Teacher: U says .

Teacher and students: /u/ /u/

Teacher: /u/, like in up. Good job.

Neva: like sun.

Teacher: Like what.

Neva: Sun

Teacher: Sun. "u" sound in sun. What does /sun/ start with?

Neva: /s/

Teacher: What letter is that?

Students: S.

Teacher: Very good.

Teacher: What does sun/n/ end with.

Student: /n/. Very good, Neva.

This is the beginning of the reading of the book with the initial phoneme sound of short “i”. In this activity, the students read over and listened to the story, *Injured Insect*. Also, there are instances where words are segmented and distinguished between the beginning, middle, and ending sounds.

Teacher: O. K., We have new book today. Neva

Neva: I

Teacher: Very good. I. Injured insect.

Teacher: Say with me /i/ /i/ /i/.

Teacher: /i/ /i/ /i/, injured

Students: /i/ /i/ /i/, injured

Teacher: /i/ /i/ /i/, insect.

Students: /i/ /i/ /i/, insect.

Teacher: How do you think he got injured?

Neva: He got stepped on.

Teacher: You are right, Neva. He got stepped on. Let’s look at the insects on this page. They are a bee, a little fly. How did insect get injured?

Student: Ball bounced on it.

Teacher: Let’s say the sound in insect, /i/ /i/ /i/.

Students: /i/ /i/ /i/

Teacher: Turn the page.

Teacher: What does this say?

Students: Listen look and say.

Teacher: What will we listen look and say?

Students: /i/

Teacher: Let's do a picture walk.

Neva: /i/ /i/ /i/.

Teacher: O. k. Let's listen to our story.

Teacher: Book helps us practice /i/ sound.

Teacher and students: Injured insect, /i/ /i/ /i/ , Injured insect, /i/ /i/ /i/. Injured insect, /i/ /i/ /i/

Listen look and say, /i/.

Teacher: What letter says /i/ ?

Students: i

Teacher: What letter says /i/?

Jack: i.

Teacher: I says /i/ /i/ /i/ . When I say igloo, Do you hear /i/ sound?

Students: Yeah.

Teacher: When I say pig, Do you hear the “i” in word pig? Listen /p/ /i/ /g/. Do you hear /i/ sound?

Students: Uh Huh.

Teacher: Where do you hear /i/ sound? Beginning, middle our end, Jack. Do you hear it at beginning or end?

Jack: Beginning

Teacher: What do you hear at the beginning of pig?

Students: /p/

Teacher: You hear /p/ at beginning. Do you hear /i/ in the middle?

Students: Nod of the head for yes.

Teacher: Very good. Neva, Tell me do you hear the /i/ sound when I say /w/ /i/ /g/.

Neva: Nodded head.

Teacher: Where do you hear the /i/ sound?

Neva: /w/ /i/ /g/ in the middle.

Teacher: Good. In the middle. What did you hear at the beginning of wig?

Neva: /w/.

Teacher: What do you hear at the end of wig?

Neva: /g/

Teacher: Very good.

Teacher: Now we get to play our sound bag game. What are we listening for today? What is it Christopher?

Christopher: L.

Teacher: What's my letter?

Students: L. What does L say?

Students: /l/

Teacher: What's my letter? Come on.

Students: J.

Teacher: What sound does it make?

Students: /j/.

Teacher: What's my letter?

Students: Z

Teacher: z says what?

Students: /z/.

Teacher: What's my letter?

Students: W.

Teacher: W says what?

Teacher and Students: /w/ /w/ /w/.

Teacher: O.k. Neva reach in. What is it?

Neva: Jet.

Teacher: What do you hear when I say jet.

Neva: /j/ /j/ /j/.

Teacher: /j/.

Teacher: What letter says /j/?

Neva: J

Teacher: Good girl. Put it over there.

Teacher: What is it Jack?

Jack: lion

Teacher: What to you hear in /l/ion? Don't tell him.

Jack: /l/ /l/

Teacher: What letter says /l/?

Jack: /l/.

Teacher: Good job.

Teacher: Carle'

Teacher: That's a zigzag? What do we have her?

Carle': Z

Teacher: What sound?

Carle: /z/.

Teacher: What letter?

Students: Z.

Teacher: Good. Now I will start with Jack. Reach in.

Jack: Log

Teacher: /l/og. What do you hear?

Jack: /l/

Teacher: What letter says /l/?

Jack: L

Neva: lion and log rhyme

Teacher: They do not rhyme. They just begin with the same sound /l/.

Carle: (pulled object out of bag) wagon.

Teacher: Way to go. What do you hear /wwagon/?

Carle: /w/

Teacher: O.k., Let's go over.

Teacher: What is our letter?

Students: L

Teacher: What sound does L make?

Students: /l/.

Teacher: What did we find with /l/ sound?

Students: log and lion.

Teacher: O.k., What was this letter?

Student: J

Teacher: J says what?

Students: /j/ /j/

Teacher: like

Neva: jet

Teacher: What letter is this?

Students: Z

Neva: zigzag

Teacher: What sound?

Students: /z/

Teacher: What letter is this?

Student: W

Teacher: What is sound?

Students: /w/ /w/

Teacher: What letter again, Carl.

Carl: W

Teacher: What is it? Neva

Neva: W

Teacher: /w/ like watermelon and wagon. Very good.

This lesson consists of students going over the alphabet and their initial phonemes.

Teacher: We finished all of our books. The ABC book is all the letters of the alphabet. ABC is the first few letters aren't they. We just call them our ABC's.

Teacher: Let's look at our ABC book. Let's go over our letters.

Teacher and Students: A, Ants on the apple, /a/ /a/ /a/.

Teacher and Students: Busy Baby /b/ /b/ /b/.

Teacher and Students: C, Coughing Camels, /c/ /c/ /c/.

Teacher and Students: D, Dirty Dog, /d/ /d/ /d/.

Teacher and Students: E, Eddie the egg, /e/ /e/ /e/.

Teacher and Students: F, Funny Fish, /f/ /f/ /f/.

Teacher and Students: G, Goat and Goose, /g/ /g/ /g/.

Teacher and Students: H Hairy Horse, /h/ /h/ /h/.

Teacher and Students: I, Injured Insect, /i/ /i/ /i/.

Teacher and Students: Jumping Jelly beans, /j/ /j/ /j/.

Teacher and Students: K, Kevin the King, /k/ /k/ /k/.

Teacher and Students: L, Lazy Lizard, /l/ /l/ /l/.

Teacher and Students: M Messy Monkey, /m/ /m/ /m/.

Teacher and Students: N, Noisy Nancy, /n/ /n/ /n/.

Teacher and Students: O, Ollie the Octopus, /o/ /o/ /o/.

Teacher and Students: P, Purple Pig, /p/ /p/ /p/.

Teacher and Students: Q, Quarreling Queens, /kw/ /kw/ /kw/.

Teacher and Students: R, Racing Rabbit, /r/ /r/ /r/.

Teacher and Students: S, Silly Surfer, /s/ /s/ /s/.

Teacher and Students: T, Two teddies, /t/ /t/ /t/.

Teacher and Students: U, Ugly Uncles, /u/ /u/ /u/.

Teacher and Students: V, Visiting Vets, /v/ /v/ /v/.

Teacher and Students: W, Worry Worm, /w/ /w/ /w/.

Teacher and Students: X, Says what?

Students: /ks/

Teacher and Students: Ox and Fox, /ks/ /ks/ /ks/.

Y, Yawning Yaks, /y/ /y/ /y/.

Teacher and Students: Zany Zebra, /z/ /z/ /z/.

Teacher: O.K. Good job.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the impact of the instructional strategies of the teachers who teach phonemic awareness, and to analyze the similarities and differences that each teacher exemplified in teaching these strategies. During the ninety minutes of uninterrupted instruction, the teachers implemented explicit phonemic awareness instruction through prescribed methods. The guidelines of utilizing the prescribed methods were specified in the district's Reading First grant. The prescribed methods consisted of verbatim script of what the teachers should say; how the teachers should say it, and what the students' response should be when answering. Although the lessons had prescribed methods, the teachers used strategies gleaned from their experiences throughout their professional careers.

In the *Harcourt Trophies* manual, the prescribed method dealt directly with phonemic awareness, and it clearly stated which strategy was intended to teach segmenting, identifying phonemes, or blending. The students were explicitly taught to manipulate sounds in phrases and words, and to make connections between the letter (grapheme) and sound (phoneme). According to Adams (1990), phonemic skills range from the simple ability to hear the basic sounds of word to the more complex skills of manipulating letter sounds through addition, substitution, or deletion. This was clearly evident in the observations of Instructors A, A-1, B, B-1, and C. All the teachers utilized the skills that are relative to teaching phonemic awareness; however this occurred at varying levels. The answers to the research questions will be intertwined into the comparison and contrast sections of the instructors. The research questions are:

1. How do teachers determine the appropriate instructional strategies to use in teaching phonemic awareness?
2. What are the similarities and differences that each teacher demonstrates in implementing appropriate instructional strategies in teaching phonemic awareness?
3. How have the teachers' efforts in implementing a Reading First program been rewarded?

Findings

The following narrative describes the relationship between the instructor's answers to questions in the questionnaire and their actual instructional practices. There were ten questions on the questionnaire. The questions are as follows:

Question One: Why are you choosing the strategies that you are using in teaching phonemic awareness?

Question Two: At this time, how do you compare/contrast current strategies in teaching phonemic awareness and phonics to the old strategies?

Question Three: Do you think that phonemic awareness strategies currently being used are reworded and new names given to them? If so, please explain.

Question Four: What type of professional development have you received in phonemic awareness and phonics? Please differentiate between the professional development that is phonemic awareness and phonics.

Question Five: How do you view your professional development opportunities in relation to phonemic awareness and phonics? Did you welcome the opportunities? Did you value the professional development? Please explain.

Question Six: How do you view phonemic awareness and phonics in a Reading First program?

Question Seven: When you are preparing lesson plans, what strategies do you utilize that include phonemic awareness? Please explain.

Question Eight: Do you implement phonemic awareness activities into other lessons? If so, please explain.

Question Nine: Were you adequately prepared and trained to utilize phonemic awareness strategies to improve instruction? Please explain.

Question Ten: How have your efforts in implementing a Reading First program been rewarded?

With some of these questions, an expansion of the teachers' answers to the questions was directly related to the instructional practices observed.

Instructor A (Kindergarten)

Instructor A is a kindergarten teacher with 30 years of classroom experience. The following questions and answers coincide with instructional strategies that are prevalent in the classroom.

Question one: Why are you choosing the strategies that you are using in teaching phonemic awareness?

Instructor A's response was: "We were told by our supervisor to use the manual as is. I really don't have a choice. I did add the spelling of words to challenge my students. They were getting tired of doing the activity the same way all the time."

In observing, it was noted that the teacher used the strategies that were noted in the manual; however, she also utilized strategies that were different from the manual. The teacher's deviation was evident in the morning message and the activities. The teaching style of Instructor A was explicit. In the morning message, the students segmented words and identified the phonemes in the word. The students had the opportunity to break the phonemes up into individual sounds.

Also, an activity consisted of having the students locate the medial and initial phoneme sound. In one instance, the teacher used a stuffed animal to depict how the students would break a word apart, and say the middle sound in a word. Instructor A gave the students an opportunity to use their fingers to segment the words (breaking up the phonemes into individual phonemes) and to locate the middle sound. The teacher called on individual students to identify the phoneme.

In another activity, Instructor A gave the students a word. With this word, the students' had to perform the segmenting task. The segmenting task was for the word, "wet". Instructor A gave the students the word and they segmented the word as /w/ /e/ /t/. This activity continued until all of the words were properly segmented. The entire class was inclusive in this strategic activity; however Instructor A transitioned from identifying the middle sound to the students identifying the middle sound. Although this deviation was very evident, it was beneficial to the students.

Additionally, an activity dealt with the deletion of the beginning phoneme of a word. For the first few prompts, the teacher and the students completed them together. For one of them, the teacher told students, "Say gate without the /g/". The students responded by saying, "ate".

Another strategy required that the students identify the initial phoneme in isolation. The teacher sang a rhyme and placed particular words in it. The students had to identify the initial phoneme in isolation. This activity started off with everyone participating, but toward the end, the teacher called on individual students to give the initial sound of the phoneme.

Instructor A completed an activity where she read a rhyme to the students, which was about a dinosaur. The students had to listen to and repeat the rhyme, and then the student had to substitute the initial phoneme with another phoneme.

Even though Instructor A used the manual, she also used additional strategies to help the students grasp the concept. For her grade level, the activities were challenging and appropriate. Question two: At this time, how do you compare/contrast current strategies in teaching phonemic awareness and phonics to the old strategies?

Instructor A's response: "The students are more aware of the sounds-each one, not just the beginning or ending. They are listening for the changes in the words. They are making a better connection with sounds becoming words."

In this particular question, the instructional implication was observed when the teacher and students completed the morning message. The morning message was a part of the daily routine in the reading lesson. During an observation, the teacher asked a student to spell out the word, school. The student spelled the word correctly; however, the teacher elongated the word school /skooll/ and segmented it /s/ /k/ /oo/ /l/. Instructor A told the students that the word had four sounds and six letters. Also, she differentiated between the sounds in words with her fingers. She stated that, "S is a sound by itself, "ch" makes the /k/ sound, /ooll/ makes the /oo/ and /l/ sound.

Another activity with the morning message consisted of the teacher and student sounding out the word "story". The students and teacher sounded out the individual sounds in story. /s/ /t/ /or/ /e/. A student said, I know how it is spelled. Student stated, "s-t-o-r-e." The teacher addressed how tricky the English language was and how instead of an "e", it is a "y". An additional concept was brought out. This concept was that it should say "stories", and that we change the "y" to an "i" and add -es.

During another phonemic awareness activity, the students had to sound out the word "takes". The students and teacher sounded out the word, takes. Instructor A asked the students to use their fingers. They sounded out the word, /t/ /a/ /k/ /s/. The teacher told students that it has

four sounds. As the teacher was writing “takes” on the board, she told that they would have to have start with the word “take” before they could get the word “takes”. The teacher asked the students, “Why do we need the “e””? A student responded, “So the “a” will make its sound. Instructor A told the student that he was correct. Also, she covered up the “e” with her finger and told the students that without the e it would be /t/ /a/ /k/, tac. After this, she addressed them and told them that it has an e at the end of the word before they “s” is added to the word. She told them that they don’t hear the “e”, but it’s there.

In this same morning message, the teacher asked the students to divide the word, bus. The students’ response was /b/ /u/ /s/. Then she asked the students, “What were the letters?” The students gave the letters, b-u-s.

Question three: Do you think that phonemic awareness strategies currently being used are reworded and new names given to them? If so, please explain.

Instructor A’s response: “Yes, for the most part. We always taught the letters and sounds, but it was in more isolation. The kids are reading words earlier, making the association that sounds become words. Words have meaning.”

In an activity, the teacher asked the students complete a phoneme blending activity. The teacher modeled for the students. The teacher had the students listen as she segmented words into individual phonemes. After segmenting the individual phonemes, the teacher had the students blend the phonemes together to make a word. The teacher gave a student /h/ /a/ /t/. The students blended the phonemes together and responded by saying hat. The teacher continued to call out words, and the students segmented them.

Although this activity was in the book, the teacher changed the delivery of instruction of this particular activity. The students were supposed to blend the words to finish a rhyme with the use of the rabbit puppet; however, the teacher did not utilize the strategy in the way it was stated

in the manual. Instead of following the rhyme, the words were utilized to complete the phoneme blending part of the activity. Some of the other words blended consisted of: pet, quack, mug, ran, mix.

Question six: How do you view phonemic awareness and phonics in a Reading First program?

Instructor A's response: "Phonemic awareness and phonics are essential to any successful reading program. The children are given the keys to unlock the sounds of any word. But we can not overlook the importance of comprehending what is read. The old Ginn series was excellent for phonics, but the students had great difficulty comprehending. I hope we're not making the same mistake. So much emphasis is on decoding."

Although Instructor A makes reference to not overlooking comprehension, she does respond that phonemic awareness and phonics are essential to any successful reading program, and provide children with the keys to unlock the sounds of any words. This is evident in a lesson where the particular focus was phoneme counting.

In this particular lesson, the students said the word, segmented it, and counted the number of sounds. For example, the teacher gave the word "sun" to the students. The students sounded out the word sun /s/ /u/ /n/. The teacher told the students that it has three sounds. After telling the students the number of sounds, she asked them to spell it. A student spelled it as s-u-n.

When this particular modeling opportunity was over, the teacher called on individual students to give them a word. The individual students segmented the words, spelled them, and told the number of sounds. Also, because of student difficulty with the word quit, the teacher addressed the "qu" sound /kw/ in quit. She told students that the q and u were married and they were always together. In addition to that, the /k/ sound in cut was addressed because a student spelled it k-u-t. The teacher told students the /k/ sound in cut is actually a "c" not a "k"

Also in another activity, the teacher asked the students to identify the number of phonemes in a word by counting the number of phonemes. The teacher gave the students the word run. The teacher said, “The sounds of run are /r/ /u/ /n/. It has 3 sounds.” The teacher gave the students a bell and told them that they would have to pass it down so that each person could ring the bell for the sound that they hear. The teacher gave students different words, and the students rang the bell and identified the number of sounds in the word that was given to them. The teacher gave the student the word leg. The student used the bell and said, “/l/ /e/ /g/, 3.” “Also, she gave a student the word, go. The student used the bell and said, /g/ /o/, 2.

However, with one of the students she gave them the word “up”. The student used the bell and said /u/ /u/ /p/. Instructor A said, “Use your fingers.” The student used her fingers and said, /u/ /p/, 2. Another student had the word, ad. The student responded /a/ /a/ /d/. The teacher told the student, “Put down the bell. Use your fingers.” The student said, /a/ /d/, 2.

The students decoded the words and indicated the number of sounds. When the students had difficulty determining how many sounds were in the words, the teacher prompted the students to use another strategy that would be beneficial.

Question four: What type of professional development have you received in phonemic awareness and phonics? Please differentiate between the professional developments that is phonemic awareness and phonics.

Instructor A’s response: “LETRS training by the state department-phonemic awareness and phonics.”

Question five: How do you view your professional development opportunities in relation to phonemic awareness and phonics? Did you welcome the opportunities? Did you value the professional development? Please explain.

Instructor A's response: "As teachers we must know what we are expected to teach. I was taught to read with phonics. The training was a great refresher course. I had also attended Spaulding training and Project Read training. I feel confident using these methods—teaching phonics. If I had not had these trainings, I would greatly appreciate the parish and state providing these training sessions. Some people in our workshops had no idea what was going on. They did not have a phonics background."

When integrating the instructor's responses to questions four and five, she does indicate that *LETRS (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling)* training was provided from the state in reference to phonemic awareness and phonics. Although the teacher appreciates the opportunity of the professional development provided, she speaks of trainings such as Spaulding and Project Read. The teacher stated that she felt confident in using the methods in teaching phonics. She made reference to people not having the phonics training and had not idea what was going on.

With this being stated by Instructor A, the observations suggest that using fingers to segment, the clapping of hands and hitting of the chin to identify syllables, or the use of a bell to identify the number of sounds, could have been essential components of previous trainings; however, this could not be substantiated due to the researcher's inexperience in Spaulding and Project Read.

Question seven: When you are preparing lesson plans, what strategies do you utilize that include phonemic awareness? Please explain.

Instructor A's response: "We must use what is in the book. Each lesson begins with writing a morning message. I put a lot of emphasis on having the students listen for the syllables and then the sounds to identify the letters to write. I do go into more detail than what is in the book. I

want them to see the correlation between what they hear and the letters to write—how different letters or combinations of letters make the sound.”

During the observations, it was noted that the teacher asked the students to differentiate between the numbers of syllables in three words during the morning message. The words were: season, swim, and summer. The teacher asked the students to clap the number of syllables in each word. The words season and summer had two syllables. With the word swim, she had them to break the word into sounds. It consisted of /s/ /w/ /i/ /m/. The teacher stated that it had four sounds.

After the morning message and the use of identifying syllables, the teacher called on individual students to divide “swimming” into syllables. Instructor A told the students that they could use their chin, fingers, or the clapping of hands to depict the syllables in swimming. The students answered that swimming had two syllables. The teacher called on other students to respond, but encountered some difficulty.

With one student, she gave her the word, flying. The student started using her fingers to find the syllables, but she said, /f/ /ly/ /ing/, 3. The teacher told the student to clap it. The student clapped it and said, fly-ing, 2. Instructor A gave a student the word “dolphin”. The student started to segment the word by saying /d/ /o/ /p/. After noticing this, the teacher said, “Not sounds. Syllables. Word parts. Clap”. The student clapped, “dol-phin” and said, “2”.

The teacher gave another student the word, “octopus”. This student used his fingers to say the word to himself. After using his fingers, the student responded, “3”.

It was evident that the students were aware of the difference between sounds and syllables; however, the teacher used other methods of getting the students to identify the syllables. There were two students that identified with the use of clapping, and another student

that identified with using their fingers. During instruction, it was noted that the delivery of instruction was different for students when the need arose

Question nine: Were you adequately prepared and trained to effectively utilize phonemic awareness strategies to improve instruction? Please explain.

“Yes, I had a strong phonics background. I always did have trouble breaking words into syllables. I hear the parts, but sometimes I’m not sure where to draw the line to separate the parts. It’s a good thing I ‘m teaching the younger ones!”

Although Instructor A acknowledges her difficulty with dividing words into syllables, she utilizes the strategies of hand clapping, and the use of fingers to help the students differentiate between the numbers of syllables in words. This was evident when she was working with students who had difficulty. Also, she used these strategies as well as the use of ringing a bell to address the number of sounds in a word.

Question ten: How have your efforts in implementing a Reading First program been rewarded?

“All my students, even the lowest, are reading when they leave kindergarten. Its’ a great sense of accomplishment! All the hard work on both our parts has paid off. The progress is remarkable. I’ve learned some things about myself, not always good. I’ve become more vocal about what I know works or does not. I try to do as told, but have to do things my own way. I am proud of myself for getting a backbone. After 30 years, I feel I am able to teach children to read, write, and understand what they are reading. For two years, 100% of my class has passed DIBELS. I know I don’t know everything, but whatever I’m doing is working and I’m proud of my kids and myself.”

The teacher believes that her reward is that all of her students are reading when they leave her classroom. This accomplishment has paid off with hard work. This teacher utilized different strategies during the phonemic awareness activities from the prescribed method

provided by the teacher's manual; however, it was noted that there was a usage of strategies that were not prevalent in the manual, such as: hand clapping, bell ringing, chin tapping, and the use of fingers. Although the concept of phoneme segmentation, phoneme isolation, phoneme deletion, phoneme counting, and phoneme substitution were not taught in the exact way that is stated in the manual, her students have been successful in learning these concepts.

Instructor A-1 (Kindergarten)

When observing Instructor A-1, the answers that were given to certain questions on the questionnaire coincided with some instructional practices seen during the observation.

Question one: Why are you choosing the strategies that you are using in teaching phonemic awareness?

Instructor A-1's response: "The manual gives very good strategies to follow and that is the strategies I use."

Question seven: When you are preparing lesson plans, what strategies do you utilize that include phonemic awareness? Please explain.

Instructor A-1's response: "I use what is in the teachers' manual. I feel this is a great manual with wonderful ideas."

During the lesson, Instructor A-1 utilized phonemic awareness activities and strategies from the book. The phonemic awareness activities correlated with the activities in the book; however, there was some deviation. In the morning message, the teacher wrote sentences with the words, "weekend" and "went". The teacher asked the students to indicate the sound that weekend had. The student said, "/w/." Also, she asked the students to segment went. The students said, "/w/ /e/ /n/ /t/."

This addition was not an introductory part of the lesson; however, the teacher stated that the students would have to listen to the middle sound in these words. Instructor A elongated the

middle sound in the words, hen /heeen/, let /leeeet/, and /meeeeen/. The teacher asked, “What is the middle sound in these words?” The student said, “/e/.” Also, during this activity the teacher sang the song Old MacDonald with the assistance of the students. The teacher put the words and the middle sound in the song. The students repeated the rhyme for each set of words and identified the middle sound for each set.

In another activity, Instructor A-1 asked the students to complete a phoneme segmentation task with a few words. The teacher and students segmented the word rug /r/ /u/ /g/. After completing one of the words together, the teacher called on different students to segment the words. The students segmented the words. When one student was called on to segment the word, dog /d/ /o/ /g/, the student used her fingers to segment it. The student did this without any prompting from the teacher. The students segmented the words without any problems. The teacher called on the students, and they segmented the words verbally.

An activity consisted of the teacher deleting the initial phoneme from words. The teacher asked the students say a word. They would say the word without the initial sound. This activity continued until it was finished.

In another activity, the students were given several words. If the words had /u/ at the beginning, they would give a thumbs up. If they did not have /u/ at the beginning, they would put their thumbs down. Also, the students were given several words, and they had to put their thumbs up for the words that begin with /g/ and thumbs down if they do not begin with /g/. Within the same time frame, the students were to clap if words have a /g/ at the beginning, and thumbs up if the word has an /u/ at the beginning. This activity was completed with the whole group.

The final activity consisted of the students being given two words. If the words had the same initial phoneme, they were to pronounce the phoneme that they heard. If the two words do

not have the same initial phoneme, then the students are to say no. Instructor A-1 said, “gum, gut” , and called on a student. The student said, “/g/.” The teacher said, “pig, cat. Are they the same?” Student said, “No.”

Question two: At this time, how do you compare/contrast current strategies in teaching phonemic awareness and phonics to the old strategies?

Instructor A-1’s response: “The new strategies have lots of hand and finger motions to sound out words. The old way was more handouts and worksheets.”

In one particular activity, the teacher called on individual students to identify the individual phonemes in a word and give the number of phonemes. In this activity, Instructor A-1, deviated just slightly. The teacher used her fingers and gave the students the word “not”. She sounded out the word /n/ /o/ /t/. She asked students, “What is the beginning sound?” Students’ said, “/n/”. Teacher asked, “Sound in the middle.” Students’ said, “/o/.” Teacher asked, “Sound at the end”. Students said, “/t/”.

After segmenting the phonemes and having the students tell the individual phoneme sounds in the beginning, middle, and end of the word, the teacher reiterated it and told the students that “not” has three sounds. In conjunction with this reiteration of the beginning, initial, and medial phonemes, the teacher called on individual students and gave them a word. The students had to segment the phonemes in the word and then say how many sounds were in the word.

Instructor A-1 sang the song, “Going on a word hunt.” A student was asked to identify the word, /d/ /e/ /n/. “The student had to say the word that the teacher segmented, and answered “den”. During the lesson, a student had difficulty with /l/ /e/ /d/. The student said, “lid.” The teacher and the student sounded out led /l/ /e/ /d/ and lid /l/ /iii/ /d/. The teacher said to the student, “See the difference. /l/ /eee/ /d/, /l/ /iii/ /d/. The student nodded his head.

Question three: Do you think that phonemic awareness strategies currently being used are reworded and new names given to them? If so, please explain.

Instructor A-1's response: "Yes, Many of these strategies are also found in Project Read which has been around for a long time."

Question nine: Were you adequately prepared and trained to effectively utilize phonemic awareness strategies to improve instruction? Please explain.

Instructor A-1's response: "Yes, I have been through lots of training which makes me feel comfortable in teaching these strategies."

In this activity, Instructor A-1 had a morning message with a student's name in it. The teacher asked the students to clap of the number of syllables in the name, Jeremy. The students clapped the name and said, "It has three syllables." Also, the teacher told the students that she would be slowly blending some words. They would have to put them together, and indicate what the word is. The teacher segmented the word /p/ /e/ /t/ /ppeett/. The students said, "pet."

Although the progression of the lesson was observed, Instructor A-1 deviated from the concept of the lesson. The teacher said the word, "sad", segmented it, and blended the word, but she asked a student to come to the dry erase board, and write the word on the board. The teacher reiterated the word /ssaadd/ to the student. The student used her arm to tap out the spelling of the word. The student wrote s-a-d on the board. She had another write, "Dan". The student started to write, "De". The teacher reiterated /dadaaan/. The teacher used her finger and circled her mouth for the sound of /a/. After teacher used this particular method, the student wrote the word, "Dan". This continued with two more words until the teacher returned back to segmenting words, and asking the students to identify the words.

The phonemic awareness activity consists of having to recognize the new word after the initial phoneme was substituted. Instructor A-1 gave the word red, /r/ /e/ /d/. The teacher asked

the question, “What do you hear at the beginning?” The students said, “/r/.” The teacher said, “Now instead of /r/ say /l/. What is the new word?” The student said, “led, /l/ /e/ /d/.” Teacher asked students to use their fingers. Students said, “/l/ /e/ /d/, led.” The teacher said another word, “den”. She told student to change the /d/ to a /t/. The student said, “ten”. This continued until the lesson was finished.

Instructor A-1 drew three sound boxes on the dry erase board with three different color magnets. The students were asked to segment words that were pronounced. As students were called, they segmented the words and placed the magnets in the sound boxes as they sounded them out. The students sounded out the word pet /p/ /e/ /t/. For each phoneme that was segmented, the student placed a magnet into a sound box. This continued until all words were given to individual students.

In another activity, Instructor A-1 put alphabet cards (b, f, n, r, s, t, and u) in a pocket chart. The cards r, u, and n were placed in the pocket chart to make a new word. The teacher stated to the students that they were going to blend some words. She asked a student to blend , “run”. The student blended run /r/ /u/ /n/. The teacher put the s, u, and n cards in the chart. The students sounded out /s/ /u/ /n/, sun. At this time, the teacher changed the “s” to “b”. After changing the card, the teacher asked the students to sound it out. The students said: /b/ /u/ /n/, bun. The teacher directed additional students to change alphabet cards in different locations to make new words. Other students were asked to use individual phonemes to make a word.

Question 10: How have your efforts in implementing a Reading First program been rewarded?

Instructor A-1’s response: “I think the Reading first program is very rewarding. I feel that it is even teaching the weakest readers how to read. I have been rewarded by seeing how far my students have come in their reading skills. The look on their faces when they read is priceless.”

Instructor A-1 believes that the student's progress is her reward. During this study, the teacher used other strategies that were not prescribed in the manual to ensure that students could segment phonemes, identify initial, middle, and ending phonemes, phoneme substitution, and phoneme deletion. Furthermore, it is evident that the teacher's instructional practices have an impact on how students are performing in phonemic awareness.

It is apparent that Instructor A-1 utilizes the strategies that were in the manual, but she also used other strategies that assisted with segmenting words, identifying phonemes, and deleting phonemes.

Instructor B (First Grade)

Instructor B answered some questions that are being addressed in relation to the instructional practices that were observed by the researcher.

Question one: Why are you choosing the strategies that you are using in teaching phonemic awareness?

Instructor B's response: "Reading First dictates what strategies we are to use."

Question seven: When you are preparing lesson plans, what strategies do you utilize that include phonemic awareness? Please explain.

Instructor B's response: "I use whatever strategies are given. I feel our manual covers the skills needed to learn to read."

During the observations of Instructor B, it was observed that she strictly followed the lessons in the manual. All the students said the responses to the phonemic awareness activities in unison. The majority of the time the activities were completed as whole class participation. The teacher rarely taught phonemic awareness activities to individual students.

In one lesson, the beginning phonemes were being substituted. The teacher said, "Say the word wouldn't." The students said, "Wouldn't." The teacher told the student to change the

beginning to /k/. The students said, “Couldn’t.” The teacher proceeded to the next word. She said, “Go, change /g/ to /s/.” The students said, “So”. The lesson continued with the teacher giving the students a word and the initial sound of a new word. The students said the new word.

In one lesson, the teacher gave the students segmented words. The students were required to blend the word together and pronounce the word. One of the words the teacher segmented was /n/ /igh/ /t/. The students said, “night”. There were additional segmented words that were given to the students to blend together, which they did.

Instructor B said a word and the students had to identify the phoneme that was in the middle. The teacher asked them to tell her the vowel sound they hear in sleep. The students said, “/e/ (long e).” The teacher proceeded to call out other words, and the students were required to give the middle sound of the words.

In another lesson, the teacher gave the students a word, and the middle phoneme was substituted with the long “i” phoneme. Instructor B told the students to change the /i/ in chilled to /i/ (long i). Students said, “child”. The teacher said, change the /e/ in blend to /i/ (long i). The students said, “blind.”

In another activity, the students put their hands up if they heard the long “o” sound, and put their hands down if they did not hear the long “o” sound. Also, the teacher asked the students to substitute the middle phoneme in a word. The teacher gave the student the word, mild. The teacher said, “Change the “i” in mild to “o” (long o).” The students said, “mold.” Change the “i” in mist to “o” (long o). Student said, “most.” This proceeded until the activity was completed.

This phonemic awareness activity consisted of changing the initial phoneme to another phoneme. The teacher stated the word, and asked the students to substitute the first letter of another letter. Instructor B said, “Get, change the /g/ to /w/.” The students said, “wet.” The teacher said, “Here. Change /h/ to /ch/.” Students said, “cheer.” The teacher gave more words for

the students to change the initial phoneme and substituting it for another one. After finishing with the initial phoneme, the teacher started changing the ending phoneme from /s/ to /j/ in some words. An example is when the teacher gave the word, ace. The teacher said, “Change the /s/ to /j/.” Student said, “age.” The students and teacher completed the activity with all of the words that the teacher asked to be changed from the ending phoneme from /s/ and /j/.

In the following lesson, the teacher segmented a word into its individual phonemes. She asked the students to blend the word together, and tell her the word they blended. A word that the teacher segmented was /t/ /ai/ /l/. The students blended the word and said the word “tail”. The teacher gave student other words to blend. After blending different words, the students proceeded to another activity.

This activity required the students to manipulate ending phonemes. For example, the students had to change the /l/ in snail to a /k/. Some of the students in the class said, “tail.” One student said, “snake.” The teacher said, “Thank you.” The teacher asked students to change the /n/ in gun to /l/.” Some students said, “null.” Teacher said, “Nope, you’re not listening. Change the /n/ in gun to /l/. Student said, gull. Teacher told the student, “Thank you, Kasey.” The teacher said, “Change the /t/ in dot to a /g/.” The students said, “Dog.” This activity continued with other words where the students had to manipulate the ending sounds.

The last activity that correlated to the manual required students had to add an initial phoneme to an onset. The teacher had the rime “-oom”. The teacher said, “Add -oom to /b/, what do I have.” The students said, boom. Teacher said, “Add -oot to /r/.” Students said, “root.” The students had other initial phonemes to add to -oom and -oot. Instructor B gave additional phonemes (initial) to add to the rimes -oom and -oot.

Question two: At this time, how do you compare/contrast current strategies in teaching phonemic awareness and phonics to the old strategies?

Instructor B's response: "The new strategies incorporate more hands/arm movements. We use letter cards. We move and switch letters to change the words. The old way was reciting vocally and worksheets."

Question three: Do you think that phonemic awareness strategies currently being used are reworded and new names given to them? If so, please explain.

Instructor B's response: "Some of the strategies used today can be found in Project Read."

Teacher stated that some activities could be found in Project Read.

Question nine: Were you adequately prepared and trained to effectively utilize phonemic awareness strategies to improve instruction? Please explain.

Instructor B's response: "Yes, I have had many hours of training on phonemic awareness."

For questions two, three, and nine, Instructor B talks about the countless hours of training, the strategies found in Project Read, and the new strategies such as: hand movements and arm movements. Although Instructor B speaks of these strategies, they were not observed attributes in her lessons teaching phonemic awareness. For the most part, Instructor B used the manual and the activities in it. She was precise and to the point. Even though she addressed the manual's phonemic awareness lesson, there are instances where small deviations were noted, however, they did not alter the delivery of instruction relative to the prescribed method. These deviations were for clarification purposes, not to alter strategies.

After one blending activity with phonemes, she asked the students to take out their dry erase board and write the word, "right". She asked students, "What sound do you hear in the middle?" The students said, "i (long i)." Also, after another activity, the teacher asked the student to get out their dry erase board, and write the word "old" on it. The teacher elongated the word old /oollldd/. She told a student to put the letters, o-l-d, on the apple (chart). The teacher asked the students, "What sound does long o make?" Students said, "/o/."

After a lesson, the teacher asked the students to get out a piece of paper and write “page” on the paper. Also, she told a student to put the word “page” on the apple (chart). The students completed a word building exercise that was not related to phonemic awareness, however at the end of the lesson, the teacher said, “All words have c or g. C is /s/ or /k/. G is /g/ or /j/. All the words had the /j/ sound. The teacher said, “Soft c makes what sound? The students said, “/s/.” The teacher said, “Soft g makes what sound.” Students said, “j”.

In this lesson, the teacher asked the students to distinguish between sounds in words. The teacher stated the word and the student distinguished the phoneme. The teacher asked, “What do you hear in the middle of toot?,” Students said, /oo/. Teacher said, “What makes the /oo/ sound?” Student said, “o-o”. Teacher asked, “What do you hear in the middle of road?” Student said /o/ (long o). Teacher asked, “What two letters make that long “o” sound. Student said, o-a. The teacher is specifically addressing the /oo/ sound of o-o and the long “a” as in o-a.

Question ten: How have your efforts in implementing a Reading First program been rewarded?
Instructor B’s response: “I see tremendous gains in Reading from the beginning of first grade to the end. Even the weakest readers learn to read. I have not been rewarded by anyone but myself and my students. Seeing the students make gains is my reward.”

The teacher discusses the tremendous gains of the students from the beginning of the first grade to the end, and how even the weakest reader learned how to read.

Instructor B-1 (First Grade)

Instructor B-1’s responses on the questionnaire correlated very strongly with the instructional strategies that were observed by the researcher.

Question one: Why are you choosing the strategies that you are using in teaching phonemic awareness?

Instructor B-1's response: "The teachers' manual provides a guide for each lesson. I use additional strategies I learned from different workshops on phonemic awareness."

Question two: At this time, how do you compare/contrast current strategies in teaching phonemic awareness and phonics to the old strategies?

Instructor B-1's response: "Today's strategies include movement such as using hands and slinkys to sound out words."

Question three: Do you think that phonemic awareness strategies currently being used are reworded and new names given to them? If so, please explain.

Instructor B-1's response: "Yes, many strategies used today can be found in 'Project Read' which was developed many years ago."

Question four: What type of professional development have you received in phonemic awareness and phonics? Please differentiate between the professional development that is phonemic awareness and phonics.

Instructor B-1's response: "Reading First-Whole faculty study groups-both phonemic awareness and phonics. Project Read- phonemic awareness and phonics."

Question five: How do you view your professional development opportunities in relation to phonemic awareness and phonics? Did you welcome the opportunities? Did you value the professional development? Please explain.

Instructor B-1's response: "Each opportunity to participate in workshops was greatly appreciated and many techniques were added to classroom instruction."

Question six: How do you view phonemic awareness and phonics in a Reading First program?

Instructor B-1's response: "I do not believe you can have a reading program without phonemic awareness and phonics."

Question seven: When you are preparing lesson plans, what strategies do you utilize that include

phonemic awareness? Please explain.

Instructor B-1's response: "I use what is recommended by the teacher's manual and the strategies learned in workshops."

Question nine: Were you adequately prepared and trained to effectively utilize phonemic awareness strategies to improve instruction? Please explain.

Instructor B-1's response: "Yes because of "Project Read" training and "LETRS" training."

Instructor B-1 utilized the strategies/activities that are in the manual; however she deviated when it came to using the slinky and the accordion type hand movement. She discussed the trainings sessions that she had attended, and it is highly likely that some of these strategies came from these trainings. Also, she believes that phonemic awareness is essential to a reading program.

During observations, the teacher utilized strategies that were beneficial for students to segment the phonemes in words. Each time a word needs to be segmented, Instructor B-1 uses her slinky or her hand like an accordion. In one activity, the teacher sounded out the word, /s/ /ai/ /l/. The teacher used her hand like an accordion. As she said each sound, she pulled her hands apart. After the word is blended, she brings her hands back in to a clasp and repeats the word.

In another activity, the teacher uses the word /s/ /w/ /a/ /m/. The teacher used the slinky to pull the word apart. The slinky is stretched for each phoneme. As it is stretched for each sound it is blending, it is pulled back together. The teacher and student blended other words. The teacher modeled each time for the students. After modeling, she and the students sounded the words together and repeated the word.

In another lesson, students were asked to identify the initial phonemes with the long "a". The students indicated the sound in the beginning of the word. She reiterated that it was the first sound. One of the words that the teacher said was, "aid". She said, "The beginning sound I hear

is /a/ (long a). The next word that the teacher said was, “ate”. The students said, “/a/”. After modeling one for the students and working together, the teacher called on the individual students that gave her the beginning sound.

This lesson involves spelling words which the students were required to sound out. Each student used their individual slinky to sound out the spelling words. For example, the teacher gave a word, “day”. The teacher and the students segmented the word /d/ /ay/. After segmenting the word, they repeated the word. Each time the students went over spelling words, the students used their slinky or their hands like an accordion.

In another activity, there was a substitution of the middle phoneme in a word. For example, the word was, “peg”, take out the “e” and put an “i”, what would the new word be? The students said, “pig.” The lesson continued with the teacher calling on individual students to change the middle sound of the word and say the new word.

Also, the teacher asked the students to listen to the sounds in “might”. The teacher asked, “What vowel sounds do we have in might. /i/ (long i). The teacher gave the word “high” to a student. The student responded with long /i/. The word “fright” was given to a student. Before the student could respond, the teacher segmented the word as /fr/ /igh/ /t/. The student responded by saying /igh/ (long i).

After this activity, the teacher told the students there were several ways to spell the long “i”: sound, which she proceeded to write on the board (i, i-e, and igh).

After writing the word “high” on the board, the teacher asked, “How many sounds do you hear in the word high?” One student said, “four”. Another one said, “Three.” The teacher asked, “How many letters will I use to write the word high?” A student said, “four”. The teacher asked, “How many sounds?” Student said, “two”. The teacher asked, “Why?” The student said, “because -igh is one sound.

After completing this activity, the teacher asked the students to take out a dry erase board and write words on the board. As the students wrote words and changed different letters, Instructor B-1 asked students to sound out the words (/l/ /igh/ /t/), determine how many sounds (three) and how many letters make the word (l-i-g-h-t: five letters). One student used their fingers to figure out the number of sounds in the word night /n/ /igh/ /t/, and the other students recognized the similarity between “night” and “light”.

In another lesson, the students counted the number of phonemes in a word. For example, rain /r/ /ai/ /n/, 3. The teacher and students said the word, segmented the words to count the phonemes and stated the number of phonemes. The students segmented the words by clapping the sounds in the words.

Question ten: How have your efforts in implementing a Reading First program been rewarded?

Instructor B-1’s response: “I feel the students are advancing with reading skills and have seen an improvement in oral reading fluency. I have watched students progress from below benchmark to benchmark.”

The teacher stated that she had watched students progress from below benchmark to benchmark, which are designated according to the DIBELS assessment. She felt that she had been intrinsically rewarded by student progress in advancing their reading skills.

Instructor C (Interventionist)

Question one: Why are you choosing the strategies that you are using in teaching phonemic awareness?

Instructor C’s response: “The state has mandated the strategies that can be used in Reading First.”

Question two: At this time, how do you compare/contrast current strategies in teaching phonemic awareness and phonics to the old strategies?

Instructor C's response: "It is now more explicit and systematic."

Question three: Do you think that phonemic awareness strategies currently being used are reworded and new names given to them? If so, please explain.

Instructor C's response: "Many of the strategies were used in the past, but it is now more explicit."

Question four: What type of professional development have you received in phonemic awareness and phonics? Please differentiate between the professional development that is phonemic awareness and phonics.

Instructor C's response: "LETRS training, Interventionists training, RFSG, viewed videos.

Question five: How do you view your professional development opportunities in relation to phonemic awareness and phonics? Did you welcome the opportunities? Did you value the professional development? Please explain.

Instructor C's response: "All training has been valuable. They have helped me by making me more aware of the latest strategies and motivating me to try new things."

Question seven: When you are preparing lesson plans, what strategies do you utilize that include phonemic awareness? Please explain.

Instructor C's response: "letter/sound recognition, segmented words by phonemes; identify beginning, middle, ending sounds, blended sounds into words."

Question ten: How have your efforts in implementing a Reading First program been rewarded?

Instructor C's response: "I have seen children that I feel would never have made the progress that they have, had it not been for the Reading First program."

With instructor C's responses to questions one through five and numbers seven and ten the instructional strategies that are discussed below will refer to all of the questions. The teacher

provides supplemental services to the students who are at the strategic and instructional levels according to their DIBELS assessment results.

During the observations, Instructor C worked with a group of students in the area of phoneme segmentation, initial phonemes, and phoneme isolation. In one activity, the teacher asked the students to identify letters of the alphabet and give the sound of the word.

The teacher presented the consonants. For example, the teacher and students said, “the b say /b/ in boy and bat.” The teacher asked, “What’s my letter?”, The students said, “B”. The teacher and students sang the song with every letter in the alphabet that is a consonant (a song). As the students and teacher sang the song, the teacher used the word cards to ask, “What was the particular letter/sound?”

In this activity, the teacher and students discussed all the consonants. The teacher used letter cards to demonstrate to the students, who were required to identify the consonant and its sound. The teacher called on individual students to state the letter and the corresponding sound. Instructor C depicted the letter card “D”. The teacher asked the student, “What letter is this?” The student responded, “D”. The teacher asked, “What sound does “D” make?” A student said, “/d/.” The other students repeated the /d/ sound as the card was shown. This continued until all cards were utilized and the sounds were given by the students.

The teacher and students sang a song “A-E-I-O-U are vowels”. The students sang the song and stated the short vowel sounds for each word. The students used a hand movement for each letter. While singing the song, the teacher showed each letter and asked, “What is this letter?” The students said the corresponding letter as they were completing the hand motions.

After singing the song, the students and teacher went over the short vowels. For example, the teacher asked students, “What is this letter?” The student said, “E”. The teacher said, “E says.” Students stated, /e/ /e/ /e/. The student says, “Neva says this too.” The teacher told student

that her name (Neva) has an “e” in it , but it doesn’t say /e/. It had the beginning sound of /n/. She told the student, “It has to say /e/, like the edge of the table. (Teacher used the hand motion). The teacher depicted the card with an “i” on it. The teacher wanted to know what does the I say. The students and the teacher said /i/ /i/ /i/. The teacher said, “Like we are itching.” She used the hand motion for /i/.

The students had the beginning sound of /i/ in the book, *Injured Insect*. The students completed a picture walk of the story before reading it in unison. The students and teacher read the book, *Injured Insect*, “/i/ /i/ /i/”. The students complete the chorus, “Injured insect, /i/ /i/ /i/ 3” times before saying listen, look and say /i/. The students listened to the book on tape and followed along with it. The initial phoneme of the word had major emphasis on it. The students completed the remaining alphabet I through Z. This procedure was completed each day.

In this activity, the students segmented pig, /p/ /i/ /g/. The teacher asked the students whether they heard the /i/ sound. The students differentiated between the beginning and middle sound in the word. Also, a student in the group was given the word wig in phonemes /w/ /i/ /g/. The teacher had the students differentiate between the beginning, middle and ending sounds in the word.

Students completed an activity where which required pulling objects from a bag, and identifying the beginning sound of the objects. The objects included a jet, lion, zigzag, log, wagon. The students identified the beginning sounds of the words and the letters. A student pulled out a log. Instructor C said “/l/og. What do you hear? The student responded, /l/. The teacher asked, “What letter says /l/?” Student responded, “L.” Another student said, “lion” and “log” rhyme. The teacher explained to the student the lion and log do not rhyme, but they begin with the same sound, /l/

Cross Case Analysis of Instructors A and A-1

Both teachers had five or more years of teaching experience. Teacher A had been teaching 30 years and Teacher A-1 had been teaching for seven years. Most of the teaching for phonemic awareness occurred on the rug in front of the chalkboard/dry erase board. Both instructors taught from the prescribed method in the reading series. The students made connections of sounds to words through segmenting of phoneme, phoneme isolation, phoneme blending, phoneme counting, and syllable segmentation. Each teacher completed a morning message with the students; however, they differed in scope.

During every morning message, Instructor A required the students to sound out phonemes in words, segment words, and assist with writing some of the words on the chart/dry erase board. With Instructor A, the morning message consisted of students sounding out and segmenting words, counting the sounds, and naming the letters that go with the sounds. The teacher deviated from the prescribed method of teaching in order to ensure that students were learning the individual phonemes, how to blend words and segmenting.

Instructor A's Response to question seven on the questionnaire was: "We must use what is in the books. Each lesson begins with writing a morning message. I put a lot of emphasis on having the student listen for the syllables and then sounds, to identify the letters to write. I do go into more detail that is in the book. I want them to see the correlation between what they hear and the letters to write- how different letters or combinations make the sound."

During the morning message, Instructor A had the students to clap their hands to find the syllabication of the words and the use of their fingers to segment, blend, and spell words. Consequently, these particular strategies were not a part of the Harcourt Trophies reading series, but Instructor A applied these strategies in her instruction to help students sound out, identify,

and segment phonemes into words. After the morning message, the teacher continued with the phonemic awareness component of the lesson that is suggested in the book.

Although instructor A-1 utilized a few finger movements and the use of a sound box, it was not to the same degree as Instructor A's deviation from the manual.

Instructor A-1 slightly deviated from the manual in one or two instances, but not entirely. The teacher was pleased with the manual's phonemic awareness strategies in the lesson. Most of her instruction correlated with the explicit phonemic awareness activities in the manual. It is evident in her response to question seven on the questionnaire. Her response was: "I use what is in the teacher's manual. I feel this is a great manual with wonderful ideas." The activities of Instructors A and A-1 correlated, but their delivery of phonemic awareness instruction differed. However, all students got the necessary phonemic awareness skills.

Cross Case Analysis of Instructors B and B-1

There are twenty-one years of teaching experience between these two teachers. Instructor B had 15 years of teaching experience, and Instructor B-1 had six years of teaching experience. In both classrooms, the first grade students had the opportunity to learn skills from the prescribed method of phonemic awareness instruction. This prescribed method of instruction could be found in the reading series, *Harcourt Trophies*. According to Orton (2002), children develop phonemic awareness naturally; but some children require more formalized programs to develop phonemic awareness.

During the ninety minutes of uninterrupted reading instruction, the students completed the morning message every morning. In observing the morning message, it was noted that phonemic awareness was not integrated into this activity. In this particular section of the lesson, both teachers completed the morning message routine in a manner that was consistent with the manual. After the morning message was completed, the teacher continued the next phase of the

reading lesson, which is the sharing of literature; however, the sharing of literature segued into the phonemic awareness component of the lesson. At times, the literature selection dictated the words that were used in the phonemic awareness section of the lesson.

With the phonemic awareness activities, Instructor B-1 followed the arrangement of the book; however, the students used hand motions and a slinky to sound out words. Instructor B-1 always modeled for the students the correct procedure for sounding out the individual phonemes in word. After the teacher modeled for the students, students individually segmented the phonemes; and then as a group. With each skill that was taught, Instructor B-1 always used this three-tiered composition of modeling, doing, and doing it all together.

Even when phoneme segmentation was not a part of the particular phonemic awareness lesson, Instructor B-1 always found a way to incorporate this into the lesson. This teacher transcended the strategies of phonemic awareness into word building and the spelling of the words. During 90% of the observations, Instructor B-1 deviated from the prescribed method of teaching in order to make sure that students were learning to identify the individual phonemes, blend words, and segment word. On the questionnaire, Instructor B-1's response to question number seven was: "The manual provided a guide for each lesson, but I use additional strategies I learned from different workshops on phonemic awareness". Her knowledge of phoneme awareness strategies is evident in the delivery of instruction.

Instructor B strictly adhered to the manual, and did not utilize other strategies for teaching phonemic awareness. During the ninety minutes of uninterrupted instruction, she used the phonemic awareness component of the teaching manual. Her reasoning for implementing this is found in her questionnaire response to question one, "Reading first dictates what strategies we are to use".

Although she adhered to the requirement of the manual, and utilized the prescribed method of incorporating phonemic awareness strategies, she deviated only for clarification purposes. Although Instructor B did not read verbatim from the text in the reading manual, she frequently repeated what was in the manual.

Case Analysis of Instructor C

The groups taught by Instructor C and consisted of one to four children on any given day. Instructor C taught groups outside of the regular classroom setting. Instructor C's strategies always included identifying phonemes, identifying graphemes, phoneme sounds (with hand movements), and some phoneme segmentation; therefore, dialogue and activities paralleled each other. The teacher used songs and letter cards for identifying the letters and the phoneme sounds. If students did not understand, the teacher clarified for the students.

The students sent to Instructor C were those students who were on the strategic or intensive level according to the DIBELS assessment results. She utilized hand motions for short vowel sounds, and emphasized explicit and systemic instruction. Although Instructor C did not teach from the manual, she utilized materials that were approved by the Louisiana Department of Education's Reading First grant; however, Instructor C utilized these materials to the fullest. This particular instructor felt that her various training sessions were valuable, and that she was aware of the latest strategies available.

Cross Case Analysis of Instructors A, A-1, B, B-1, and C

Instructors A, A-1, B, B-1, and C have at least five years of teaching in an elementary classroom. Each of these instructors incorporated at least one or more of the following phonemic awareness strategies: phoneme blending, phoneme counting, phoneme isolation, phoneme manipulation, phoneme segmentation, and syllable syllabication. The instructors incorporated some type strategy to segment words, blend words, or blend phonemes. Instructor A utilized

strategies that included, but were not limited to: clapping of hands for the number of syllables in a word, use of fingers to segment and identify sounds and syllables, saying a word and placing a hand under the chin to feel the number of sounds in the word being repeated, and ringing a bell to identify the number of sounds in word. Instructor A-1 utilized strategies where she elongated words, a few finger movements for segmenting, and the use of a sound box to identify the number of sounds in a word.

Instructors A, A-1, B, and B-1 used the prescribed methods in the *Harcourt Trophies* reading manual. Instructor C utilizes strategies gained from different workshops, professional developments, and professional experiences. Although Instructors A, A-1, and B-1 utilized strategies from the reading manual, they utilized other instructional strategies that were beneficial to their students. Instructor B utilized only the instructional strategies that were in the book.

Instructor A utilized the morning message to bring out concepts that pertained to phonemic awareness, such as segmenting words. Although Instructor A-1 incorporated some phonemic awareness activities into the morning message, it was not to the extent of Instructor A. Instructor C utilized songs to go over consonants sounds and vowel sounds. The majority of her lessons focused on phoneme isolation.

According to responses from the questionnaire, all five instructors felt that they were adequately prepared to teach phonemic awareness, and that the new strategies being used today are beneficial. All involved felt that the professional development workshops were appreciated and the techniques were helpful. They valued the professional development portion for phonemic awareness.

Additionally, they believed that they are rewarded by the progress of their students in reading achievement; however, they have no other recognition for their efforts. All the teachers

participated in Reading first trainings that included: whole faculty study groups, LETRS training, and DIBELS training.

Limitations

The size of the population was a limiting factor. During the 2005-2006 school year, the Christopher Parish School district implemented small teacher/pupil ratio due to the Reading First program. In an effort to increase student academic achievement, the students had 90 minutes of uninterrupted instruction in the classrooms, therefore, impacting other instructional activities in the classroom.

The length of the study was adequate; and was conducted over a ten week period. This was ample time to conduct the research study; however, it would be advantageous to expand this study to include additional groups or compare this instructional setting to one that adheres to a more balanced perspective in the teaching of reading.

The amount of time spent in the classroom was limited, since the phonemic awareness part of the lesson consisted only for 15 to 30 minutes of the entire 90 minute lesson.

Conclusions

This study was utilized to find the actual outcome of the utilization of phonemic awareness instructional practices on students' achievement in an elementary classroom setting. Most studies are geared toward the utilization of assessment instruments and quantitative data to determine efficiency. This study was conducted to find instructional strategies from a qualitative perspective.

In this study, the observations brought out similarities and differences among Instructors A, A-1, B, B-1, and C. The patterns observed and analyzed revealed that Instructors A, A-1, B, B-1, and C all used an explicit and systematic way of teaching phonemic awareness to the students. The similarities were depicted in the consistency of teaching being dictated by the

specific directions in the teacher's manual. Without deviation, these instructors, A-1, B, and C strictly adhered to lesson activities, which often addressed skills in isolation. However instructors A and B-1 followed the same directions, but incorporated additional strategies to enhance the lesson. Instructor A incorporated strategies in context via the morning message. According to Griffith (1991), writing is especially beneficial in developing phonemic awareness because it provides opportunities to segment sounds and convert them into written language. When the morning message was developed, Instructor A utilized the writing aspect of it to teach the conversion of segmented sounds into written language. Also, to further to enhance the lesson, Instructor B-1 used kinesthetic/tactile strategies to help students make connections (i.e. slinky and accordion type hand movement.) In addition, Instructor A-1 used phonemic awareness in context through songs and nursery rhymes. With the exception of Instructor C, all other instructors conducted a morning message.

Instructor C taught groups of four to five students away from the regular educational setting. The lessons consisted of identifying phonemes, identifying graphemes, phoneme sounds (with hand movements), and some phoneme segmentation. Due to working with groups, the dialogue and activities paralleled each other. Instructor C used songs and letter cards for identifying the letters and the phoneme sounds. Instructor C did not utilize the Harcourt trophies manual for delivery of lesson. The students segmented words, identified letters, counted the number of sounds in words and counted the number of syllables.

Although teachers utilized the reading manual, the strategies were utilized to varying degrees and the differences were evident in the observations. The teachers utilized strategies in the manual where the activities dealt with: 1) phoneme isolation: medial, initial and ending (2) phoneme substitution, (3) phoneme isolation: initial, (4) phoneme blending, (5) phoneme counting, (6) syllable syllabication, (7) phoneme segmentation, (8) phoneme manipulation (9)

identification phoneme sounds, and many other activities; however the instructional strategies differed. Instructors B, B-1, and C did not use it in context with the morning message as Instructor A did.

Instructors A, A-1, B and B-1 utilized the methods from the manual; however Instructor B adhered strictly to the manual. A few deviations were noted for Instructor B, but these deviations did not alter the strategies; they were for clarification purposes and not to alter strategies. Instructor B-1 deviated by using the slinky and the accordion type hand movement to segment words, identify individual phonemes, and blend words. Also Instructor B-1 incorporated the strategies in the spelling and phonics lesson components. Instructor A and Instructor A-1 used the phonemic awareness strategies of instruction in context with the morning message. In some instances, the students had to segment sounds and convert the sounds to words; however, Instructor A-1 did not utilize phonemic awareness strategies to the extent as Instructor A. However in lessons, Instructor A-1 utilized nursery rhymes and other songs to identify phonemes and for phoneme segmentation.

Instructor A utilized strategies that included, but were not limited to: clapping of hands for the number of syllables in a word, use of fingers to segment and identify sounds and syllables, saying a word and placing a hand under the chin to feel the number of sounds in the word being repeated, and ringing a bell to identify the number of sounds in a word. Instructor A-1 utilized strategies where she elongated words, a few finger movements for segmenting, and the use of a sound box to identify the number of sounds in a word.

The research by Adams (1990), Ball & Blachman (1991), Eldredge & Baird (1996) supports the premise that phonemic awareness must be taught systematically and formally. The studies by Chapman (1996) and Yopp (1995) refute this belief, maintaining that phonemic awareness should be incorporated into language rich, meaningful activities. Although these

researchers support the premise of the way phonemic awareness is taught; however their research does not coincide with the premise that the teachers' knowledge of instructional strategies and the implementation of these strategies are directly related to student reading achievement.

Additional similarities were exhibited in the instructors' areas of experience, participation in professional development activities, and the explicit way of teaching phonemic awareness strategies. On the questionnaire, all five teachers felt that they were adequately prepared to teach phonemic awareness. All had at least five years of teaching experience and they valued the training that was received. The practices of the teachers indicated an explicit method of teaching phonemic awareness. All teachers involved were adequately trained to provide instruction, which resulted in a positive impact on the teachers' instructional practices in teaching phonemic awareness to kindergarten and first grade students. They participated in whole faculty study groups, LETRS training, DIBELS training and other trainings that they thought were beneficial.

The qualitative aspect of the data with observations and the questionnaire support the findings that phonemic awareness strategies are prevalent in the kindergarten and 1st grade classrooms in this school. Although, there are varying levels of instructional programs, the use of the prescribed program from *Harcourt Trophies* and additional strategies that are incorporated into the phonemic awareness activities and lessons ensure that students successfully learn phonemic awareness strategies in this particular setting. Based on this study, both prescribed methods and additional strategies (combined strategies) implemented by the teachers have a positive impact on phonemic awareness instruction.

All of the teachers were intrinsically rewarded by the progression and the level of their students' performance; however, the findings suggest that the students' instructional level is indirectly affected by the teachers' professional development. Furthermore, the teachers' ability

to impact phonemic awareness instruction is indirectly a result of their desire to be adequately prepared to deliver phonemic awareness instruction. Being adequately prepared through professional development utilizing appropriate instructional strategies, along with the satisfactory progress of the students in attaining the appropriate reading level suggest that the teachers are impacting instruction in a positive way.

REFERENCES

- Abbott, M. (1999). *Phun with phonemic awareness: Learning to manipulate sounds and letters*. Unpublished manuscript. Juniper Gardens Children's Project, Kansas City, KS.
- Abbott, M., Walton, C., & Greenwood, C. R. (2002). Phonemic Awareness in Kindergarten and First Grade. *Teaching Exceptional Children, 34*(4) 20-26.
- Adams, M.J. (1990). *Beginning to read: Thinking and learning about print*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Alexander, A., Anderson, H., Heilman, P.C., Voeller, K.S., & Torgensen, J.K. (1990). Phonological awareness training and remediation of analytic decoding deficits in a group of severe dyslexics. *Annals of Dyslexia, 41*, 193-206.
- Ball, E.W., & Blachman, B.A. (1991). Does Phoneme Awareness Training in Kindergarten make a Difference in Early Word Recognition and Developmental Spelling? *Reading Research Quarterly, 26* (1), 49-66.
- Bradley, L., & Bryant, P.E. (1985). *Rhyme and reason in reading and spelling*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Brady, S., Fowler, A., Stone, B., & Winbury, N. (1994). Training phonological awareness: A study with inner-city kindergarten children, *Annals of Dyslexia, 44*, 26-59.
- Castle, J.M., Riach, J., Nicholson, T. (1994). Getting Off to a Better Start in Reading and Spelling: The Effects of Phonemic Awareness Instruction Within a Whole Language Program. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 86* (3), 350-359.
- Catts, H.W. (1991). Facilitating phonological awareness: Role of Speech and Language Pathologists. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools, 22*, 196-203.
- Chapman, M.L. (1996). The Development of Phonemic Awareness in Young Children: Some Insights from a Case Study of a First-Grade Writer. *Young Children, 51* (20), 31-37.
- Chard, D.J. & Dickson, S. . (1999). Phonological awareness: Instructional and assessment guidelines. *Intervention in School Clinic, 34* (5), 261-270.
- Dole, J. A. (2004). The changing role of the reading specialist in school reading reform. *The Reading Teacher, 57*, 462-471.
- Edelen-Smith, P.J. (1997). How Now Brown Cow: Phoneme Awareness Activities for Collaborative Classrooms. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 33*, 103-111.
- Eldredge, J.L., & Baird, J.E. (1996). Phonemic Awareness Training Works Better than Whole Language Instruction for Teaching First Graders How to Write. *Reading Research and Instruction, 35*(3), 193-208.

Every child reading: An action plan of the Learning First Alliance (1998, Spring/Summer). *American Educator*, 22, 52-63.

Fisher, P.E. (1993). *The sounds and spelling patterns of English*. Morrell, ME: Oxton House.

Flett, A. & Conderman, G. (2002). 20 Ways to Promote Phonemic Awareness. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, 37 (4), 242-245.

Fox, F., & Routh, D.K. (1983). Reading disability, phonemic analysis, and dysphonetic spelling: A follow-up study. *Journal of Clinical Children Psychology*, 12, 28-32.

French, V.L & Feng, J. (1992). Phoneme Awareness Training with At-Risk kindergarten Children: A Case Study (*ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 361 120*).

Glaser, B.G, & Straus, A.L. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Hawthorne, CA: Aldine de Gruyter.

Griffith, P.L. (1991). Phonemic Awareness Helps First Graders Invent Spellings and Third Graders Remember Correct Spellings. *Journal of Reading Behavior*, 23(2), 215-233.

Griffith, P.L., & Olson, M.W. (1992). Phonemic awareness helps beginning readers break the code. *The Reading Teacher*, 45, 516-523.

Hatcher, P.J., Hulme, C., & Ellis, A. (1994). Ameliorating early reading failure by integrating the teaching of reading and phonological skills. The phonological linkage hypothesis. *Child Development*, 65, 41-57.

Hurford, D.P., Darrow, L. J., Edwards, T.L. Howertown, C.J., Mote, C.R., Schauf, J.D., & Coffey, P. (1993). An examination of phonemic processing abilities in children during their first-grade year. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 26, 167-177.

International Reading Association. (1998). *Phonemic Awareness and the teaching of reading: A position statement*. Newark, DE: Author.

International Reading Association and the National Association for the Education of Young Children. (1998). *Learning to read and write: Developmentally appropriate practices for young children: A joint position statement of the International Reading Association (IRA) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children*. Newark, DE: Author.

International Reading Association, Early Childhood and Literacy Development Committee. (1986). IRA position statement on reading and writing in early childhood. *The Reading Teacher*, 39 (8), 822-824.

Juel, C. (1998). Learning to read and write: A longitudinal study of 54 children from first through fourth grades. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 80, 437-447.

Juel, C., Griffith, P.L., & Gough, P.B. (1986). Acquisition of Literacy: A Longitudinal Study of Children in First and Second Grade. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 78, 243-255.

Kaminski, R., & Good, R. (1996). *Dynamic indicators of basic early literacy skills (DIBELS)*. University of Oregon. Eugene, OR.

Lewkowicz, N.K. (1980). Phonemic Awareness training: What to teach and how to teach it. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 72, 686-700.

Liberman, I.Y., & Shankweiler, D. (1985). Phonology and the problems of learning to read and write. *Remedial and Special Education*, 6 (6), 8-17.

Liberman, I.Y., Shankweiler, D., Fisher, F.W., & Carter, B. (1974). Explicit syllable and phoneme segmentation in the young child. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, 18, 201-212.

Lincoln, Y.S., & Guba, E.G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage.

Lundberg, I., Frost, J., & Petersen, O.P. (1988). Effects of an extensive program for stimulating phonological awareness in preschool children. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 23, 263-284.

Lundberg, I., Olofsson, A., & Wall, S. (1980). Reading and spelling skills in the first school years predicted from phonemic awareness skills in kindergarten. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, 21, 159-173.

MacDonald, G.W., & Cornwall, A. (1995). The relationship between phonological awareness and reading and spelling achievement eleven years later. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 28, 523-527.

Mattingly, I. (1984). *Reading, linguistic awareness, and language acquisition*. In J. Downing and R. Valtin (Eds.), *Language awareness and learning to read* (pp. 9-25). New York: Springer-Verlag.

McBride-Chang, C. (1995). What is phonological awareness? *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 87, 179-192.

Merriam, S.B. (2001). *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Moats, L.C. (1994). The missing foundation in teacher education: Knowledge of the structure of spoken language. *Annals of Dyslexia*, 44, 81-102.

Moats, L.C. (2003). *LETRS: Language essentials for teachers of reading and spelling, Book 1*. Longmont, CO: Sopris West Educational Services.

National Association for the Education of Young Children (1988). NAEYC position statement on developmentally appropriate practice in the primary grades, serving 5 through 8 year olds. *Young Children*, 43 (2), 69-80.

Orton, J. (2000). Phonemic Awareness and Inventive Writing. *The New England Reading Association Journal*, 36 (1), 17-21.

Patridge, M.E., & Others. (1991). *The Effects of Daily Opportunities to Draw and Write on Kindergarten Children's Ability to Represent Phonemes in Their Spelling Inventions*. Denver, Colorado: Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Association for the Education for Young Children. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 345 209).

Share, D., Jorm, A., Maclean, R., & Matthews, R. (1984). Sources of individual differences in reading acquisition. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 76, 1309-1324.

Smith, C.R. (1998). From Gibberish to Phonemic Awareness Effective Decoding Instruction. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 30 (6), 20-25.

Snow, C.E., Burns, M. S., & Griffin, P. (1998). *Preventing reading difficulties in young children*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Spector, J.E. (1992). Predicting progress in beginning reading: Dynamic assessment of phonemic awareness. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 84, 353-363.

Stake, R.E. (1995). *The Art of Case Study Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
von Wright, G. (1971). *Explanation and understanding*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Tangel, D.M. & Blachman, B.A. (1995). Effect of phoneme awareness. *Journal of Reading Behavior*, 27, 276-286.

Torgesen, J.K., Wagner, R.K., & Rashotte, C.A. (1994). Longitudinal studies of phonological processing and reading: *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 27, 276-286.

Tunmer, W.E., Herriman, M.L., & Nesdale, A.R. (1988). Metalinguistic abilities and beginning reading. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 23, 134-158.

Wagner, R.K., Torgesen, J.K., Laughon, P. Simmons, K. & Rashotte, C.A. (1993). Development of young readers; phonological processing abilities. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 85, 83-103.

Yopp, H.K. (1988). The validity and reliability of phonemic awareness in tests. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 23, 159-177.

Yopp, H.K. (1992). Developing phonemic awareness in young children. *The Reading Teacher*, 45, 696-703.

Yopp, H.K. (1995). A Test for Assessing Phonemic Awareness in Young Children. *The Reading Teacher*, 49 (1), 20-29.

Vandervelden, M.D., & Siegel, L.S. (1997). Teaching phonological processing skills in early literacy: A developmental approach. *Learning Disabilities Quarterly*, 20, 63-81.

APPENDIX A

PERMISSION LETTER TO DISTRICT

Mr. Superintendent
XXXXXX Parish
XXXXXX, LA

Dear XXXXXXX:

I am requesting approval to conduct a dissertation research project at XXXXXXXX School for the purpose of studying effective phonemic awareness instruction in the kindergarten and first grade classrooms.

Currently, I am a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at Louisiana State University and in my third year as XXXXXXXX at XXXXXXXX School. I have completed my coursework and continuing my dissertation research for a doctorate in reading.

The following data collection procedures will be used: teacher observations, principal and teacher questionnaires. Also, I will use archive data, such as: school improvement plans, lesson plans, assessment measures, student data, etc., to help in my data analysis.

With the conduction of my research, the instructional time at the school will not be hindered or interrupted. My major professor, Dr. Earl Cheek, will help guide my study and it will take approximately 6 to 10 weeks to complete in the fall 2005 and spring of 2006 semesters. All information will be confidential and pseudonyms will be used in reporting the findings. Upon approval from the graduate school, I will submit to your office a report of the findings.

At your earliest convenience, please forward a response to this letter, so that I can submit the appropriate documentation to the department of Curriculum and Instruction and the Graduate School. Your assistance in this matter would be greatly appreciated. If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact me. I look forward to hearing from you and obtaining an approval letter.

Educationally yours,

Gwendolyn Jackson
Doctoral Candidate

APPENDIX B

PERMISSION LETTER TO PRINCIPAL

Principal
XXXXXX School
XXXXXX, LA

Dear XXXXXXXXXXXX:

I have received approval from Mr. XXXXXXX to conduct a dissertation research project at XXXXXXX School for the purpose of studying effective phonemic awareness instruction in kindergarten and first grade classrooms.

Currently, I am a Ph.D. candidate in the department of Curriculum and Instruction at Louisiana Sate University and in my third year as an XXXXXXX at XXXXXXX. I have completed my coursework and am continuing my dissertation research for a doctorate in reading.

The following data collection procedures will be used: teacher observation, principal and teacher interviews, and surveys. Also, I will use archive data, such as: school improvement plans, lessons plans, assessment measures, student data, etc., to help in my data analysis. During my research, instructional time will not be interrupted or hindered.

It will take approximately 6 to 10 weeks to complete my study. It will take place in the spring of 2006. All information will be confidential and pseudonyms will be used in reporting the findings.

At your earliest convenience, please respond to this letter, so that I can submit the appropriate documentation to the department of Curriculum and Instruction and Graduate School. Your assistance in this matter would be greatly appreciated. If you have any questions or concerns, fell free to contact me. I welcome the opportunity to discuss my research with you and any questions that you, the staff, or teachers at the school may have. I look forward to hearing from you and obtaining an approval letter.

Respectfully,

Gwendolyn Jackson
Doctoral Candidate

APPENDIX C

PERMISSION LETTER TO TEACHER

Teacher
XXXXXXXX School
XXXXXX, Louisiana

I have received approval from Mr. XXXXXX and Mrs. XXXXXX to conduct a dissertation research project at XXXXXX School for the purpose of studying effective phonemic awareness instruction in the kindergarten and first grade classrooms.

Currently, I am a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at Louisiana State University and in my third year as XXXXXX at XXXXXX. I have completed my course work and continuing my dissertation research for a doctorate in reading.

It will take approximately 6 to 10 weeks to complete my study. It will take place in the spring of 2006. All information will be confidential and pseudonyms will be used in reporting the findings. During my research, instructional time will not be interrupted or hindered.

At your earliest convenience, please complete the consent form that is attached to this letter and return it, so that I can submit the appropriate documentation to the department of Curriculum and Instruction and Graduate School. Your assistance in this matter would be greatly appreciated. If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact me. I welcome the opportunity to discuss my research with you and answer any questions that you may have.

Respectfully,

Gwendolyn Jackson
Doctoral Candidate

APPENDIX D

TEACHER CONSENT FORM

Principal Investigator: Gwendolyn Jackson
(225) XXX-XXX
Available: Monday-Friday
8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

I understand that the title of this project in which I am participating is the Impact of Teachers' Instructional Practices in Teaching Phonemic Awareness Strategies to Kindergarten and First Grade Students. It will be conducted in my elementary school setting. The purpose of this study is to determine/describe effective phonemic awareness strategies used by teachers in a Kindergarten and First Grade Classroom.

I understand that there will be a total of _____ visits made to my classroom during a ten week period. These visits will last from forty-five minutes to an hour and may include interviews with me. Field notes and audio-taping will be conducted where the conversations can be transcribed later. Lesson plans will be reviewed. Also, I am aware that the investigator will review other documents such as: the DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) results and those required by the school system and are publicly available.

I understand that the benefit of this study is to help to provide a more in-depth understanding of effective phonemic awareness strategies. My participation in this study is voluntary. I may change my mind and withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of any benefit to which I may otherwise be entitled. I understand that my identity will not be disclosed in this study.

The study has been discussed with me and all my questions have been answered. I may direct additional questions regarding study specifics to the investigator. If I have any questions about subjects' rights or other concerns, I can contact Robert C. Matthews, Chairman, Institutional Review Board, (225) 578-8692. I agree to participate in the study described above and acknowledge the researchers obligation to provide me with a copy of the consent form if signed by me.

Subject Signature

Date

APPENDIX E

PERMISSION LETTER TO PARENT

Dear Parent:

My name is Gwendolyn Jackson. I am one of the XXXXXXXX at XXXXXXXX. Currently, I am a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at Louisiana State University and in my third year as an assistant principal at XXXXXXXX. I have completed my course work and continuing my dissertation research for a doctorate in reading.

I have received approval from Mr. XXXXXXXX, Mrs. XXXXXXXX, and your child's teacher to conduct a dissertation research project at XXXXXXXX School for the purpose of studying effective phonemic awareness instruction in the kindergarten and first grade classrooms.

It will take approximately 6 to 10 weeks to complete my study. It will take place in the spring of 2006. All information will be confidential and pseudonyms will be used in reporting the findings. During my research, instructional time will not be interrupted or hindered.

At your earliest convenience, please complete the consent form that is attached to this letter and return it, so that I can submit the appropriate documentation to the department of Curriculum and Instruction and Graduate School. Your assistance in this matter would be greatly appreciated.

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact me Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at (225) 659-2437. I welcome the opportunity to discuss my research with you and answer any questions that you may have. Thank you in advance for your cooperation in this matter.

Respectfully,

Gwendolyn Jackson

APPENDIX F

PARENTAL/STUDENT PERMISSION FORM

PROJECT TITLE: Impact of Teachers Instructional Practices in Teaching Phonemic Awareness to Kindergarten and First Grade Students

PERFORMANCE SITE: XXXXXXXX XXX School

INVESTIGATOR: Gwendolyn Jackson
Available for Questions: M-F
8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
(225) XXX-XXXX

PURPOSE OF STUDY: The purpose of this research study is to describe and analyze the effective phonemic awareness strategies that occur in the kindergarten and first grade classroom.

INCLUSION CRITERIA: Children enrolled in Kindergarten and First grade classrooms.

EXCLUSION CRITERIA: Children not in Kindergarten and First grade.

DESCRIPTION OF STUDY: During a ten week period. A total of ___ observations will be made in each classroom. This study will include observing phonemic awareness lessons, reviewing literature pertaining to phonemic awareness, data collection using observations and surveys (field notes, audio-taping). Also, the individual students and classroom teachers DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) test scores will be analyzed. With observation and analysis of DIBELS results, it is important that meaning can be generated and conclusions about effective phonemic awareness strategies can be comprised.

BENEFITS: Students will participate in the regular classroom setting without interference. The identification of effective phonemic awareness strategies will be beneficial to all students.

RISKS: There are no known risks.

RIGHT TO REFUSE: Participation is voluntary. A student will become part of the study if both the student and parent agree to the student's participation. At any time the student or the student's parent may withdraw from the study without penalty or loss of any benefit to which he might otherwise be entitled.

PRIVACY:

The investigator may review the school records, DIBELS test scores, and other information of participants in this study. Results of this study may be published, but no names or identifying information will be included for publication. Subject identity will remain confidential unless law requires disclosure.

SIGNATURES:

I give permission for my child, _____, to participate in Ms. Jackson's study. I understand that she will observe the classroom my child is in and may talk with my child. She will collect information, make audio-tapes, and write a report on her findings. I understand that my child's identity will remain confidential.

This study has been discussed with me and all my questions have been answered. I may direct additional questions to the investigator. If I have questions about subjects' rights or other concerns, I can contact Robert Matthews, Chairman, Institutional Review Board, (225) 578-8692. I will allow my child to participate in the study described above. I also acknowledge Ms. Jackson's obligation to provide me with a signed copy of this consent form.

Parent's signature

Date

The parent/guardian has indicated to me that he/she is unable to read. I certify that I have read this consent form to the parent/guardian and explained that by completing the signature line below he/she has given permission for the child to participate in the study.

Signature of Reader

Date

APPENDIX G

CHILD ASSENT FORM

I, _____, agree to participate in this
dissertation project.

Child's Signature

Age

Date

APPENDIX H
QUESTIONNAIRE

Name: _____ Position: _____
Grade Level: _____
Number of Years of Teaching Experience: _____

Please fill out the questionnaire in detail. Additional sheets may be attached to answer questions.
PLEASE EXPLAIN EACH QUESTION IN AS MUCH DETAIL AS YOU CAN!

1. Why are you choosing the strategies that you are using in teaching phonemic awareness?
2. At this time, how do you compare/contrast current strategies in teaching phonemic awareness and phonics to the old strategies?
3. Do you think that phonemic awareness strategies currently being used are reworded and new names given to them? If so, please explain.
4. What type of professional development have you received in phonemic awareness and phonics? Please differentiate between the professional development that is phonemic awareness and phonics.
5. How do you view your professional development opportunities in relation to phonemic awareness and phonics? Did you welcome the opportunities? Did you value the professional development? Please explain.
6. How do you view phonemic awareness and phonics in a Reading First program?
7. When you are preparing lesson plans, what strategies do you utilize that include phonemic awareness? Please explain.
8. Do you to implement phonemic awareness activities into other lessons? If so,

please explain.

9. Were you adequately prepared and trained to effectively utilize phonemic awareness strategies to improve instruction? Please explain.

10. How have your efforts in implementing a Reading First program been rewarded?

APPENDIX I
IRB APPLICATION

IRB #: 3203

LSU Proposal #: _____

Revised: 04/15/2005

LSU INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) for HUMAN RESEARCH SUBJECT PROTECTION

Study Office: 203 B-1 David Boyd Hall
Louisiana State University
Institutional Review Board
203 B-1 David Boyd Hall
225-578-8692
578-8692 FAX 6792

APPLICATION FOR EXEMPTION FROM INSTITUTIONAL OVERSIGHT

Unless they are qualified as meeting the specific criteria for exemption from Institutional Review Board (IRB) oversight, ALL LSU research/projects using living humans as subjects, or samples or data obtained from humans, directly or indirectly, with or without their consent, must be approved or exempted in advance by the LSU IRB. This Form helps the PI determine if a project may be exempted, and is used to request an exemption.

Instructions: Complete this form.

Exemption Applicant: If it appears that your study qualifies for exemption send:

- (A) Two copies of this completed form,
- (B) a brief project description (adequate to evaluate risks to subjects and to explain your responses to Parts A & B),
- (C) copies of all instruments to be used. If this proposal is part of a grant proposal include a copy of the proposal and all recruitment material.
- (D) the consent form that you will use in the study. A Waiver of Written Informed Consent is attached and must be completed only if you do not intend to have a signed consent form.
- (E) Certificate of Completion of Human Subjects Protection Training at <http://cme.cancer.gov/clinicaltrials/learning/humanparticipant-protections.asp>. (Unless already on file with the IRB.)

to: ONE screening committee member (listed at the end of this form) in the most closely related department/discipline or to IRB office.

If exemption seems likely, submit it. If not, submit regular IRB application. Help is available from Dr. Robert Mathews, 578-8692, irb@lsu.edu or any screening committee member.

Principal Investigator Gwendolyn Jackson **Student?** YES Y/N

Ph: (225) 936-2297 **E-mail:** gjacks2@lsu.edu **Dept/Unit** Curriculum & Instruction

If Student, name supervising professor Dr. Earl Cheek **Ph:** (225) 578-6012

Mailing Address P.O. Box 992, Zachary, LA 70791 **Ph:** (225) 936-2297

Project Title An exploratory study of teachers' instructional practices in teaching phonemic awareness to kindergarten and first grade students.

Agency expected to fund project none applicable

Subject pool (e.g. Psychology Students) k and 1 elementary students and teachers

Circle any "vulnerable populations" to be used: (children <18; the mentally impaired, pregnant women, the aged, other). Projects with incarcerated persons cannot be exempted.

I certify my responses are accurate and complete. If the project scope or design is later changed I will resubmit for review. I will obtain written approval from the Authorized Representative of all non-LSU institutions in which the study is conducted.

PI Signature Gwendolyn R. Jackson **Date** 11/22/05 (no per signatures)

Screening Committee Action: Exempted Not Exempted _____ **Category/Paragraph** _____

Reviewer Kristin Gansle **Signature** Kristin Gansle **Date** 12/12/05

Part A: DETERMINATION OF "RESEARCH" and POTENTIAL FOR RISK

This section determines whether the project meets the Department of Health and Human Services (HSS) definition of research involving human subjects, and if not, whether it nevertheless presents more than "minimal risk" to human subjects that makes IRB review prudent and necessary.

1. Is the project involving human subjects a systematic investigation, including research, development, testing, or evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge?

(Note some instructional development and service programs will include a "research" component that may fall within HSS' definition of human subject research).

YES

NO

2. Does the project present physical, psychological, social or legal risks to the participants reasonably expected to exceed those risks normally experienced in daily life or in routine diagnostic physical or psychological examination or testing? You must consider the consequences if individual data inadvertently become public.

YES Stop. This research cannot be exempted—submit application for IRB review.

Continue to see if research can be exempted from IRB oversight

3. Are any of your participants incarcerated?

YES Stop. This research cannot be exempted—submit application for IRB review.

Continue to see if research can be exempted from IRB oversight.

4. Are you obtaining any health information from a health care provider that contains any of the identifiers listed below?

A. Names

B. Address: street address, city, county, precinct, ZIP code, and their equivalent geocodes. Exception for ZIP codes: The initial three digits of the ZIP Code may be used, if according to current publicly available data from the Bureau of the Census: (1) The geographic unit formed by combining all ZIP codes with the same three initial digits contains more than 20,000 people; and (2) the initial three digits of a ZIP code for all such geographic units containing 20,000 or fewer people is changed to '000'. (Note: The 17 currently restricted 3-digit ZIP codes to be replaced with '000' include: 036, 059, 063, 102, 203, 556, 692, 790, 821, 823, 830, 831, 878, 879, 884, 890, and 893.)

C. Dates related to individuals

i. Birth date

ii. Admission date

iii. Discharge date

iv. Date of death

v. And all ages over 89 and all elements of dates (including year) indicative of such age. Such ages and elements may be aggregated into a single category of age 90 or older.

D. Telephone numbers;

E. Fax numbers;

- F. Electronic mail addresses;
- G. Social security numbers;
- H. Medical record numbers; (including prescription numbers and clinical trial numbers)
- I. Health plan beneficiary numbers;
- J. Account numbers;
- K. Certificate/license numbers;
- L. Vehicle identifiers and serial numbers including license plate numbers;
- M. Device identifiers and serial numbers;
- N. Web Universal Resource Locators (URLs);
- O. Internet Protocol (IP) address numbers;
- P. Biometric identifiers, including finger and voice prints;
- Q. Full face photographic images and any comparable images; and
- R. Any other unique identifying number, characteristic, or code; except a code used for re-identification purposes; and
- S. The facility does not have actual knowledge that the information could be used alone or in combination with other information to identify an individual who is the subject of the information.

YES Stop. This research cannot be exempted—**submit application for IRB review.**

Continue to see if research can be exempted from IRB oversight.

Part B: EXEMPTION CRITERIA FOR RESEARCH PROJECTS

Research is exemptable when all research methods are one or more of the following five categories. Check statements that apply to your study:

1. In education setting, research to evaluate normal educational practices.

2. For research not involving vulnerable people [prisoner, fetus, pregnancy, children, or mentally impaired]: observe public behavior (including participatory observation), or do interviews or surveys or educational tests:

The research must also comply with one of the following:
either that

a) the participants cannot be identified, directly or statistically;

or that

b) the responses/observations could not harm participants if made public;

or that

c) federal statute(s) completely protect all participants' confidentiality;

or that

3. For research not involving vulnerable people [prisoner, fetus, pregnancy, children, or mentally impaired]: observe public behavior (including participatory observation), or do interviews or surveys or educational tests:
- all respondents are elected, appointed, or candidates for public officials.
-

4. Uses only existing data, documents, records, or specimens properly obtained.

The research must also comply with one of the following:

either that:

- a) subjects cannot be identified in the research data directly or statistically, and no-one can trace back from research data to identify a participant;

or that

- b) the sources are publicly available
-

5. Research or demonstration service/care programs, e.g. health care delivery.

The research must also comply with all of the following:

- a) It is directly conducted or approved by the head of a US Govt. department or agency.

and that

- b) it concerns only issues under usual administrative control (48 Fed Reg 9268-9), e.g., regulations, eligibility, services, or delivery systems;

and that

- c) its research/evaluation methods are also exempt from IRB review.
-

6. For research not involving vulnerable volunteers [see "2 & 3" above], do food research to evaluate quality, taste, or consumer acceptance.

The research must also comply with one of the following:

either that

- a) the food has no additives;

or that

- b) the food is certified safe by the USDA, FDA, or EPA.
-

NOTE: Copies of your IRB stamped consent form must be used in obtaining consent. Even when exempted, the researcher is required to exercise prudence in protecting the interests of research subjects, obtain informed consent if appropriate, and must conform to the Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects (Belmont Report), 45 CFR 46, and LSU Guide to Informed Consent. (Available from: OSP or

[http://appl022.lsu.edu/osp/osp.nsf/\\$Content/LSU%20IRB%20Documents](http://appl022.lsu.edu/osp/osp.nsf/$Content/LSU%20IRB%20Documents))

HUMAN SUBJECTS SCREENING COMMITTEE MEMBERS can assist & review:

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES:

Dr. Noell * (Psych) 578-4119
Dr. Geiselman * (Psych) 763-2695
Dr. Beggs (Socio) 578-1119
Dr. Honeycutt (Comm. Stu.) 578-6676
Dr. Dixit (Comm Sc./Dis) 578-3938
Dr. Copeland* (Psych) 578-4117

MASS COMMUN/SOC WK/AG:

Dr. Nelson (Mass C) 578-6686
Dr. Archambeault (Soc Wk) 8-1374
Dr. Rose (Soc Wk) 578-1015
Dr. Keenan* (Hum Ecol) 578-1708
Dr. Belleau (Hum Ecol) 578-1535
Dr. Osborne (Mass C) 578-9296

ED/LIBRARIES/INFO SCI

Dr. Kleiner (Middleton) 578-2217
Dr. Culross (Education) 578-2254
Dr. Landin* (Kinesiol) 578-2916
Dr. MacGregor (ELRC) 578-2150
Dr. Gansle (Curric & I) 578-7213

BUSINESS

Dr. McKee (Marketing) 578-8788

(* = IRB member)

VITA

Gwendolyn Jackson Longmire is a native of Newellton, Louisiana, in Tensas Parish. She graduated with honors in 1991 from Newellton High School. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in elementary education (1995) and her Master of Education degree in administration and supervision (1997) at Southern University A & M College in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. In 1998, she received her Education Specialist degree in curriculum and instruction from Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Gwendolyn is a member of a number of professional organizations and loves working with children and teachers. After teaching for several years, Gwendolyn obtained an administrative job in the Iberville Parish School system and served in that capacity until August 2006. Presently, she is employed in the Zachary Community School System. She will receive her Doctor of Philosophy degree from Louisiana State University on May 18, 2007