2010

Analysis of Teacher Efficacy and Perspectives about Literacy Implementation in Selected Elementary Schools

Joy Rene' Abernathy-Dyer  
Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, jabern3@lsu.edu

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

Part of the Education Commons

Recommended Citation
https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_dissertations/1298

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.
ANALYSIS OF TEACHER EFFICACY AND PERSPECTIVES ABOUT LITERACY IMPLEMENTATION IN SELECTED ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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
Joy Rene’ Abernathy-Dyer
B.A., Southern University and A&M College, 1998
MEd., Southern University and A&M College, 2000
Ed.S., Louisiana State University, 2002

December 2010
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is a pleasure to thank those who made this dissertation possible.

I owe my deepest gratitude to God for knowledge, wisdom, understanding and comprehensive insight. Without His guidance, my very being and this dissertation would not have been possible. He has given me the gift of teaching and I am forever grateful for the purpose and promises that have afforded me many opportunities in this journey called life.

I would like to sincerely express appreciation to my committee chair, Dr. Earl Cheek, who discovered the gift of a researcher and writer that was blooming inside of me. Your attitude and open door has made this process most rewarding from the preliminary of this study. Your expertise and supervision in literacy research and instruction will always be instrumental to me and the field.

A special thank you to my committee members, Dr. C. Teddlie, Dr. M.M. Sulentic-Dowell, Dr. R. Mitchell and Dr. A. Dawson, for offering assistance in structure and keeping me focused. Your time, effort and dedication to this study, has been monumental.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank my husband, Corey for the encouragement, unconditional support and sustainability throughout this process. Your persistence in time and prioritizing helped to make this project possible.

In addition, a thank you to my family and special acquaintances, who taught me to believe in myself and whose enthusiasm for greatness had a lasting effect.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.................................................................................................................. ii

LIST OF TABLES................................................................................................................................... vi

LIST OF FIGURES............................................................................................................................... viii

ABSTRACT............................................................................................................................................ ix

CHAPTER
I. INTRODUCTION..........................................................................................................................1
   Background of the Problem ...........................................................................................................1
   Statement of the Problem .............................................................................................................4
   Purpose of the Study.....................................................................................................................5
   Research Questions......................................................................................................................6
   Setting of the Study......................................................................................................................7
   The Pelican School District Plan ...............................................................................................11
   Nature of the Study......................................................................................................................13
   Assumptions and Limitations.....................................................................................................15
   Definition of Terms....................................................................................................................16
   Summary......................................................................................................................................19

II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE..............................................................................................21
   Documentation.............................................................................................................................21
   Teachers and Standards-Based Reform.....................................................................................21
   Need for Standards-Based Reading Reform..............................................................................25
   National Reading Panel Report and Reading First Initiatives..................................................26
   Teacher Beliefs and Reform Implementation.............................................................................32
   Teacher Efficacy and Role in Curriculum Implementation.........................................................33
   Models That Shape Teacher Expectations................................................................................35
   Teacher Efficacy, Student Standards, and Literacy Characteristics..........................................38
   School Success and Teacher Efficacy.........................................................................................44
   Factors that May Influence Teacher Efficacy...........................................................................46
   Conclusions..................................................................................................................................50
   Summary......................................................................................................................................50

III. MATERIALS AND METHODS.............................................................................................51
   Spradley’s Developmental Research Sequence..........................................................................51
   Design and Methodology...........................................................................................................52
   Significance of the Study..........................................................................................................62
   Selection of Participants: Sampling Techniques........................................................................65
   Reading First Schools for the Study..........................................................................................67
   Non-Reading First Schools for the Study..................................................................................71
   Data Analysis..............................................................................................................................74
   Summary......................................................................................................................................79
IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION ........................................................................................................80
  Chapter Design..........................................................................................................................80
  Reading First Hollow Brook Teacher: Ms. Young .................................................................81
  Interview with Hollow Brook Principal Davis and Reading Coach .........................................84
  Interview with Reading First Hollow Brook Teacher: Ms. Young ...........................................88
  Observation of Ms. Young at Reading First Hollow Brook .....................................................95
  Reading First Willow Lane Teacher: Mrs. Brown ...............................................................102
  Interview with Willow Lane Principal Peters and Reading Coach ........................................105
  Interview with Reading First Teacher: Mrs. Brown .............................................................111
  Observation of Mrs. Brown at Reading First Willow Lane ....................................................118
  Non-Reading First Winding Trail Teacher: Mrs. Hill .........................................................124
  Interview with Winding Trail Principal Shaw and Reading Coach ......................................126
  Interview with Non-Reading First Winding Trail Teacher: Mrs. Hill ...................................131
  Observation of Mrs. Hill at Non-Reading First Winding Trail ............................................136
  Non-Reading First Green Meadows Teacher: Mrs. Wells ...................................................143
  Interview with Green Meadows Principal Harris and Reading Coach ..................................145
  Interview with Non-Reading First Green Meadows Teacher: Mrs. Wells ............................154
  Observation of Mrs. Wells at Non-Reading First Green Meadows ......................................163
  Summary ................................................................................................................................169

V. FINDINGS, LIMITATIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH .....................172
  Findings ...................................................................................................................................172
  Data Analysis with Literacy Administrators ..........................................................................173
  Data Analysis with Reading First Teachers ...........................................................................186
  Data Analysis with Non-Reading First Teachers ..................................................................193
  Teacher Efficacy and Practice ...............................................................................................201
  Summary .................................................................................................................................220
  Limitations and Implications for Future Research .................................................................227

REFERENCES .................................................................................................................................232

APPENDIX
A. APPENDIX TABLES ...............................................................................................................239
B. INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD TO CONDUCT STUDY ..................................................241
C. PRINCIPAL PERMISSION TO CONDUCT STUDY AND USE PREMISES .........................243
D. TEACHER PERMISSION TO CONDUCT STUDY AND CONSENT FORM .........................244
E. QUESTION FOR PRE-OBSERVATION SURVEY ................................................................245
F. QUESTIONS FOR PRE-OBSERVATION INTERVIEW .........................................................247
G. MID-STUDY TEACHER SURVEY .........................................................................................249
H. QUALITATIVE QUADRANT- KEY OBSERVABLES .......................................................259

I. PLANNING AND EVALUATION TOOL FOR EFFECTIVE SCHOOL WIDE
   READING PROGRAMS ............................................................................................260

J. ADDITIONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS ..............................................................287

VITA ..........................................................................................................................288
LIST OF TABLES

Text

1. Eight Dimensions of Teacher Efficacy .................................................................36
2. Key Demographics of Participating Schools ........................................................67
3. Hollow Brook Elementary Demographics ..........................................................68
4. Willow Lane Elementary Demographics ............................................................70
5. Winding Trail Elementary Demographics ...........................................................72
6. Green Meadows Elementary Demographics ......................................................73
7. Dimensions of Teacher Efficacy .................................................................81
8. Ms. Young’s Classroom Demographics Pre-Study ...........................................84
9. Mrs. Brown’s Classroom Demographics Pre-Study .......................................105
10. Mrs. Hill’s Classroom Demographics Pre-Study ............................................126
11. Mrs. Well’s Classroom Demographics Pre-Study ............................................145
12. Year’s of Experience: Literacy Administrators .............................................174
13. Reading First Schools ......................................................................................181
14. Non Reading First Schools ...............................................................................182
15. Hollow Brook ....................................................................................................184
16. Willow Lane .....................................................................................................184
17. Winding Trail .....................................................................................................185
18. Green Meadows .................................................................................................185
19. Summary of Teacher’s Experiences (RF) .......................................................187
20. Summary of Teacher’s Experiences (NRF) .......................................................193
A1. Reading First versus Non-Reading First Data ................................................................. 239
A2. Data Collection Time Line (Spring, 2008) .................................................................. 240
LIST OF FIGURES

1. A School Based Model for Teacher Expectations .................................................................35
ABSTRACT

Each teacher has a set of beliefs and knowledge as it relates to teaching and learning. In this study, we examine “How do the ways in which teachers perceive mandated literacy implementation impact their classroom instruction?” Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore some of the issues that attempts to change teachers’ instructional practices in the classroom and seeks to reveal some of the issues that influence as well as hinder instructional reform within that setting.

This qualitative case study uses observations, interviews and questionnaires to highlight teacher efficacy from four first grade teachers and classrooms through the use of Spradley’s Developmental Research Sequence - DRS (1990). Additionally, teachers and Literacy administrators’ responses are analyzed using information according to Ashton’s Eight Dimensions of Teacher Efficacy (1984). These categories are revealed and connected to specific beliefs as tasks are revealed throughout the study to analyze what literacy administrators believe are important characteristics for teachers to exhibit, the role that teachers play in determining what occurs in their classroom as well as what teachers believe are essential in the instructional phases of teaching reading.

Each teacher possess varying degrees of efficacy and perceptions that impacts literacy instruction within their classroom. Consequently, teachers ultimately teach what is mandated to achieve desirable student outcomes even when they do not agree with the methods or processes wholeheartedly. Additionally, teachers’ value information gained from colleagues and peers in determining what they think of themselves as teachers, choices made and actions they take with their students.

Teachers play an important role in fostering and implementing change in literacy reform, more specifically in the classroom. Hence, teachers benefit from participating
with the planning in all stages of implementation and take pride in the performance of
their students. The information gained from this study could assist in setting up
professional development, serve as a guide for providing warranted support for student
learning and teacher knowledge, and fostering considerations for including teachers in the
important stages regarding the planning and implementation of classroom literacy
instruction.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Instructional change is a prevailing concern of among policymakers at the federal, state and local levels, and is a primary concern of both administrators and teachers in efforts to increase student achievement, primarily in the area of reading. Despite attempts at alignment at both the state and local levels, teachers strive individually to make sense of the policies, often without changing personal practices. Teachers ask common questions about standards-based education such as “Why are our students still not learning to read even though so many attempts have been made about standards-based reading reform and instruction?” or “What is standards-based reading reform,” and “What does it mean for me and for my students” abound.

Teachers ask questions (a) to determine how much standards-based education differs from their current practices, (b) to determine what changes they will have to make, and (c) to judge whether the changes are worth the effort. The present ethnographic study was an effort to holistically understand the use of scripted instruction by examining how it may influence teachers’ approach to literacy instruction. Aspects of teacher effectiveness as they may interact with a teacher’s approach to reading instruction were also explored. The following sections are intended to further identify the gap in the knowledge and the relevant phenomenon to be studied.

Background of the Problem

As we approach the 25th anniversary of the release of A Nation at Risk (1983- retrieved from Center for Education Policy, March 2005), a report often associated with the beginning of the standards movement, it would be reasonable to assume that
standards-based education is well understood and commonplace in classrooms across the country. Research, surveys, and anecdotal evidence reviewed for this study, however, show that teachers around the United States (U.S.) vary in the understanding and acceptance of standards-based education. Some teachers are angry, frustrated, and ready to reject standards-based education, while others have embraced it and have reaped benefits for students and themselves (Block and Pressley, 2002). Although some teachers reject standards-based education in one study, many (two-thirds of those surveyed) acknowledge that standards have changed for the better as reform efforts in education are delivered in school.

As former U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley noted in his annual State of American Education address (2000- Retrieved from National Conference of State Legislatures, 2005), it is important to have a “midcourse review and analysis to make sure everybody understands what the standards movement is all about” (p. 7). Such clarity is necessary to support teachers as they struggle with the realities of implementing standards in the classroom. Participants at the 2001 National Education Summit (Linn, 2003) echoed that observation. They described the reform movement as at “a midway point.” Although they agreed that “a lot of pieces are in place,” they also acknowledged that it is time to get to “the heavy lifting of keeping standards in place, defining exactly what they mean, figuring out what happens if kids and educators don’t meet standards, and providing the resources and support to help meet the standards” (p. 3). It is no surprise, then, that Public Agenda’s “Reality Check 2000” concluded, “Talk about standards is ubiquitous, but teaching patterns often remain the same” (p. S-8).
Multiple interpretations of what the outcomes of standards-based education should be, and a variety of state approaches to standards-based reform were found in the literature and were reviewed in Chapter 2 of the present study. Such approaches influence the actions that districts take (The Nations Report Card, 2005). In a recent study conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (2004), only one-third of teachers surveyed said they were well prepared to implement higher literacy standards. The Nations Report Card emphasized that “standards-based reform requires a long-term commitment on all facets of education” (p. 11). Even when there is surface agreement on what should be done, variations in the way teachers perceive the task create huge differences in execution of any program or curriculum implementation.

In 1997, the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) accepted the task of formulating a report that would outline research-based information on various approaches to teaching children to read. The NICHD commenced to form a panel of “experts” known as the National Reading Panel. These leading advocates in reading, together with the Secretary of Education, reviewed over 100,000 research articles dating back to 1966. This immense task set the stage for future planning in organizing similar data; however, qualitative studies were excluded and most panel members lacked a literacy background (Allington, 2003).

Regarding literacy instruction, targeted skills and instructional approaches have changed over the century; however, the teacher’s role in the classroom has remained much the same. The teacher has the primary role for accelerating reading growth of elementary school readers. Barone and Morrow (2003) noted that a “recent study of schools in 32 nations found that the most critical element in building an effective reading
program is the teacher.” The U.S. educational school system relies on efficient teachers to provide the most effective, successful reading instruction to improve students’ education. During a time of reform and accountability, school districts closely monitor teachers' instructional decisions, practices, and classroom environments. Yet, the question remains: How do the ways in which teachers make sense of policy context, school site, content, and student demographics that affect the ways in which they implement policy?

Statement of the Problem

Across the U.S., teachers of all ages and experiences deliver reading instruction in a variety of ways. Students require different emphasis and teaching styles from classroom teachers to sufficiently meet individual student learning styles and needs during reading instruction. Reading teachers must be able to link the mastery of sub-skills, such as reading as a process of identity construction, which creates not only a text, but shapes the person who reads that text. Student comprehension processes are emphasized beyond the actual act of learning to read (Stahl & Hayes, 1997). Teaching requires educators to deliver effective reading instruction with specific characteristics that are critical for providing and implementing what is considered to be an “effective reading program.”

Although others may infer the thinking that goes into a teacher's behavior, only the individual teacher can accurately explore the nuances, beliefs, interpretations of words, and perceptions that may trigger their behavior; therefore, the task begins with self-reflection. Because thinking processes as well as experiences are unique to each individual, teachers have different perceptions of the same situation. Yet, educators often begin discussions with the assumption that everyone perceives a given situation in the
same way (Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 1998). "Solutions" are proposed when, in fact, a problem exists only in the minds of a few. How eager would one be to implement a "solution" to a nonexistent problem? There is a gap in the knowledge about the ways in which teachers perceive mandated literacy implementation and the affect of it on classroom instruction.

**Purpose of Study**

Several studies have shown that individual beliefs and values of teachers play a vital role in shaping the objectives, goals, curriculum, and instructional methods of schools (Duffy-Hester, 1999; Hoffman, 1998; Morrow, Tracey, Gee Woo & Pressley, 1999; Rivkin & Hanusheck, 1998; Rosenshine & Stevens, 1986; Sanders & Rivers, 1996; Terry, Minor, Onwueglouzie & Witcher, 2002). Results of research studies show such beliefs and values can spell success or failure for any reform effort imposed by a school or district. A school may publish its goals, objectives, and standards to represent its intended purposes and subject matter coverage; however, any uniformity outside of published lists is largely mythical. The purpose of this study was to explore some of the issues resulting from attempts to change teachers’ instructional practices in elementary classrooms, issues that may influence as well as hinder instructional reform.

Teacher expectations and factors that affect teacher behavior were explored throughout the study, which was conducted in two public school schools receiving Reading First assistance, and two designated as Non-Reading First schools. The reason for pursuing the study in four different schools was to observe teachers in somewhat different environments within one school district that may be managed by similar, but altered policies. To address the gap in the knowledge cited in the previous section, two
perspectives were explored to determine if there was a difference in teaching characteristics that may or may not have included school funding or implementation of literacy instructional practices. Since the Reading First and Non-Reading First sites adhered to a somewhat varied set of rules and regulations regarding literacy guidelines and implementation, an exploration of any distinction between the two sectors regarding teacher thinking, behaviors, and variability in practices was deemed an appropriate approach to the gap in the knowledge.

Research Questions

Arising from the purpose of the study in a previous section, the following questions were used as a guide to establish the methodology of the study.

1. According to Literacy Administrators, what is the relationship between teacher’s beliefs about standard, prescribed reading instruction and their practices in an elementary classroom setting?

2. What role, if any, do teachers play in developing the how’s and why’s of literacy instruction in their classroom?

3. What factors do teachers believe are essential for providing effective reading instruction in an elementary school setting? How do these factors affect reading instruction in the elementary classroom?

Setting of the Study

The setting for the study was a capital city in the southern U.S. over 200 years old incorporated in 1817. The city has strong ties to cultural activities and industry, but the Chamber of Commerce reports the base of the economic activity stems from education, followed by agricultural, chemical, government, and health professions. The city has a
population of approximately 510,000 people who live and work within the vicinity of city center (U.S. Census, 2000). The most recent census report reported the median family income of the community as $38,155 (U.S. Census, 2000).

District Overview

As a result of growing concern over poor student achievement in reading, major improvements in curriculum, programs, and the study of effective instructional techniques, the Pelican School District implemented a change effort and, consequently, became the focus of the present study (District Accountability Plan, June 2005). The district school is the third largest system in Louisiana and consists of 54 elementary schools. Nine of the schools are labeled as Reading First Schools, and 47 are identified non-Reading First Schools (Appendix Table A1). The district is comprised of about 45,000 students and comprises 17 middle schools, 14 high schools, and 54 elementary schools. Of the students, 78.9% are African-American, 14% are White and 8.1% are students designated as other in terms of ethnic backgrounds. As a result of being one school away from being a district in decline (District Summer Reading Institute, 2007), the district found direction in the parameters of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation.

The commitment to improving the area of literacy stems from data that showed, as of June 2006, almost 50% of students in the district did not meet proficiency standards in the four content areas of (a) Reading/Language Arts, (b) Mathematics, (c) Science and (d) Social Studies, and there was an average 30 point achievement gap between subgroups. Efforts within the adopted Reading Initiative (2005) influenced the following changes.
1. By fall of 2006, all teachers had to meet the definition of “highly qualified.”

2. By fall of 2006, all schools had to have an aligned curriculum with a formative and summative assessment system that helps teachers guide and improve instruction.

3. By fall of 2006, all high schools had to offer an Honors and Advanced Placement (AP) curriculum and/or Dual Enrollment courses, and qualified students had to be identified and encouraged to take these rigorous courses.

4. By spring of 2008, all third (3rd) grade students had to read on or above grade level.

Student Achievement Programs

Growth in student achievement continues to be gradual in the district and minimal in the area of literacy in grades K-3. This problem has been researched and studied, especially with regard to those programs shown to produce substantial increases in student achievement in reading (NCLB, 2001). From the successes of those programs, Pelican School District identified the essential components of effective reading programs within the K-3 Reading Initiative plan. Administrators implemented the following expectations in the first year of the program (2006-2007). The school district:

1. Recognizes the specific levels of student progress, needs and strengths through ongoing analysis of student achievement data. The use of such data is continuous and a focus of the reading program.

2. Ensures close collaboration among teachers. Teachers are expected to work as teams through grade level team meetings, Instructional Management Team collaboration, implement effective instructional techniques as outlined in the scripted, reading program and develop data-driven practices and procedures for those who are not achieving.
3. Implements aligned curriculum based on state and or national standards, adopt and implement research-based effective instructional practices and provide ongoing professional development.

4. Uses the reading coach that assists teachers in literacy instructional implementation.

5. Utilizes literacy materials that support the curriculum and effective teaching.

Reading Instruction

Reading Coordinators within Pelican School District responded to goals that were promoted throughout interactions within the schools and emphasized on a daily basis (Accountability & Strategic Plan, 2006).

1. Increase K-3 achievement in reading.

2. Increase teacher knowledge of reading.

3. Improve instructional practices in reading, and continue to develop a model supporting reading instruction and learning that can be sustained and replicated by other elementary schools to improve student literacy achievement.

4. Develop links with institutions of higher education to improve preparation of future elementary school teachers for teaching reading

During the past few decades, reading instruction from a national and district perspective has evolved from an emphasis on decoding and rote memorization of text passages to a dependency on students’ reading of self-selected literature to instill an appreciation for reading and to allow the reader to develop decoding, vocabulary, and comprehension strategies in a naturalistic environment (Darling-Hammond, 1996; Fuller & Brown, 1975; Wilson & Wineburg, 1988; Using Research & Reason, 2004).
More recently, publications such as the *Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching Children to Read* (2000) and *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998), which was based on a report by the National Research Council, have generated a renewed interest in the role of phonics instruction in literacy programs. The National Reading Panel found that systematic phonics instruction is beneficial for students through sixth grade, and that systematic phonics instruction is particularly effective in improving the reading achievement of low ability readers and students from low SES homes. Reports have prompted teachers, administrators, and educational policy makers to examine the emphasis placed on phonics in literacy instruction.

**Scripted Reading Instruction**

The foundation for implementing a scripted reading program rests upon the assumption that a target behavior can be analyzed or divided into specific tasks. Instruction is then sequenced so students are taught each component of the task associated with the target behavior. Following scripted instruction, the teacher models the desired behavior, provides practice and feedback at each step, and assesses whether re-teaching is needed. Teacher behaviors such as hand signals, pointing, and exact words or phrases to speak are also specified. Stahl and Hayes (1997) reported this type of instructional approach is characterized by instruction that (a) is taught in isolation, not in a meaningful context, (b) is highly teacher directed, and (c) is viewed as unnatural, not automatic, requiring systematic instruction.

The components of scripted instruction have been elaborated in research by members of the *Direct Instruction* community in laboratory and classroom settings (Carnine, Silbert, & Kameenui, 1997). Presentation techniques include: (a) small group
instruction; (b) unison oral responding that incorporates wait time and a “respond” signal so that lower-performing students are not preceded by faster students; (c) rapid pacing with short breaks; (d) carefully watching and listening to students’ oral responses; (e) diagnosing and correcting errors through six steps (praise, model, lead, test, firm up, delayed test); and (f) motivation that begins as extrinsic reward, including physical contact, verbal praise and behavior incentives, but is gradually supplanted by intrinsic motivation (Carnine, Silbert, & Kameenui). Becker, Engelmann, Carnine, and Magg (1982) listed various recommended motivational strategies, or incentives. They included rapid feedback, competition, task engagement, and other non-extrinsic incentives, as well as rewards such as points gained on assessments and progress reports.

Decoding is taught through a sequential approach where words are sounded out by identifying sounds, blending them, then identification of the word. Sounding out precedes learning sight words. Word identification is first taught out of context so students do not rely on non-phonic cues. Fluency - reading smoothly, rapidly, and expressively - is not stressed until accuracy is attained (Pukulsiki, 1994).

The Pelican School District Plan

A scripted and prescribed reading program was adopted and placed in all elementary schools that targeted the goals of the District’s Reading Initiative (2006). In the eight Reading First Schools, the program adopted was in compliance with the five components of reading as identified by the National Reading Panel (2000). Teachers were expected to function within 105 minutes of protected reading instruction daily (Appendix Table A2), after which students who are still showing skill deficits in reading, were instructed with additional instructional sessions facilitated by the program’s trained
interventionists—those who assist teachers and reading coaches with reading instruction. The materials were also scripted and aligned with the core reading program and thereby implemented in a more intensive manner.

The Non-Reading First Schools functioned under somewhat similar, but different frameworks for achieving instructional tasks. Two reading programs were combined to address the implementation of the reading initiative. One program addressed the phonemic awareness and phonics components, while the other program was intended to provide the instructional base aimed at meeting needs in the areas of fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. The augmented programs were both scripted and prescribed; however, the phonemic awareness and phonics components were monitored rather intensely, being that the basal program had been in the system for over 5 years and therefore, not in need of intense personnel training or additional attention. As a result, some viewed the structure of the disjointed materials as problematic and quite challenging to implement. The task of connecting two different reading programs into a complete reading program, along with limited levels of support, caused several major issues with providing consistent instruction and professional development. Teachers noted limitations with reading coach assistance and delays in receipt of timely information as it related to reading and personnel assisting with small group instruction.

The transition from teaching students to read through authentic literature, and small grouping of leveled text known as Balanced Literacy, caused some teachers to express issues of disconnectedness with teaching from the new literacy perspective. Feppon and Dahl (1998) argued Balanced Literacy is a framework designed to help all students learn to read and write effectively. The program is based on the premise that all
students can learn to read and write. This balance between reading and writing is to allow students to receive the teaching needed to reach grade level status, while allowing them to work at a level that is not frustrating for them. Feppon and Dahl further argued:

During many daily reading and writing experiences, children are taught about letters, sounds, words and how they work. Listening and speaking are also emphasized in this integrated language approach. (p. 12)

Teachers implementing literacy instruction using this approach were to integrate reading into teaching language arts. The framework for literacy lessons, formerly used in the Pelican District until 2006, consisted of a number of elements that provided massive amounts of reading and writing on a daily basis. These authentic opportunities for reading and writing were arranged on a continuum based on teacher support. Some reading and writing tasks were modeled by the teachers. Others were accomplished with only support from teacher, leading to a few that were done independently by students (Hoffman, 1998).

Nature of the Study

Selection of a research methodology, whether quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-method, arises from insight into the features of each method as it pertains to the research problem. Several methods of data collection were considered. A purely quantitative design results in exact numerical measurements (Cooper & Schindler, 2006). This method was deemed inappropriate for the proposed study. The purpose of the study was to collect data with both qualitative and quantitative methods, and as the gap in the knowledge was a phenomenon where the variables and patterns were unknown (Creswell, 2008) a holistic picture of the phenomenon was required to add to the knowledge.
Nix (2001) argued:

It is the researcher’s responsibility to provide the depth of description and opportunity for interpretation by interactants through formal and informal interviews and observations; however, the reader is responsible for taking that information and making it personally relevant to the reader’s setting. (p. 20)

Merriam (1998) argued that the qualitative researcher must have (a) a tolerance for ambiguity, (b) must possess an investigative nature, and (c) must possess sensitivity to personal prejudices. The researcher should be a good communicator, and have some knowledge of the subject matter under study. “Data extracted from interviews are subject to the limitations imposed on all instruments which rely on language for conveying and extracting meaning, namely, the reliability and validity of subjective data” (Coffin, 1997, p. 7). The proposed ethnographic study relied, in part, on the experiences of the participants (Patton, 2002). Ethnography is a qualitative research method used in the social sciences. Data are collected through participant observation, interviews, questionnaires, and/or the examination of related materials to develop a holistic picture of the phenomenon under study (Richardson, 2000).

The Dimensions of Teacher Efficacy (Ashton, 1984) was implemented to assess the experiences of elementary, first grade teachers in the Pelican School District, whose teachers are required to follow a scripted basal reading program. Duffy-Hester (1999) reported:

Scripted reading instruction is reading instruction where the commercial reading program, not the classroom teacher, determines what the teacher says during instruction and/or the particular lessons and the pace at which the lessons are
taught (so many lessons taught in so many days). The teacher's role is to execute the plan of the commercial program without making major adjustments for the instructional needs of the children in the classroom. (p. 32)

The scripted reading framework provided a view of teacher interactions with program mandates through a critical lens. The following three characteristics, as they connected to the teachers' situation, redefined, restricted, and subsumed, embedded in the theory, were used to describe the situation of mandates and systematic tactics used by the district and used to provide a focus on teacher reactions. These terms were then related to Ashton’s (1984) Dimensions of Teacher Efficacy.

To reveal the perceptions from both the Reading First and Non Reading First Schools, data was collected in four elementary classroom settings within the Pelican School District. Observations took place in classrooms during the Literacy block, which included scientifically-based Reading Phonics instruction, whole group instruction, and small group, differentiated instruction. The goal was to observe the instruction as a participant observer, with care not to interrupt the daily routine of the classroom activities, as well as to obtain information from the teacher perspectives regarding views about literacy instruction, and themselves as a teacher. The study encompassed approximately 10-12 weeks beginning in spring 2008.

Assumptions and Limitations

The following assumptions and limitations were pertinent to the study. It was assumed that participants will respond honestly to the survey and interview questions, and that the Pre-Observation Survey and Mid-Study Survey would retain nearly equivalent validity/reliability indicated in the research literature and be representative of
teacher efficacy. It was assumed that the persons completing the surveys and participating in the interviews would understand the questions being asked and have experience with the phenomenon of interest (teacher efficacy and perspectives as related to literacy instruction in their classrooms).

The sample for the proposed study was limited to four first grade teachers from four schools in a Louisiana school district (two Reading First schools and two Non-Reading First schools), and literacy administrators, which included four principals and four reading coaches/contacts. Despite the confidentiality and anonymity provisions of the research, participant responses may have been biased if participants felt they had to respond in a socially acceptable manner. Study results were limited by the honesty of the respondents to survey questions, interview information, and occurrences noted from the observation, which may be influenced by extraneous factors that cannot solely be controlled by the researcher including, but not limited to (a) personal events resulting in halo effect or negative emotion bias, (b) time of day variations of respondent ratings and circumstances (c) temperature and weather related factors, (d) amount of time available to complete survey questions, and (e) individual experiences with the subjects related to the survey and information gathered from the observations (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Nardi, 2003).

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined for clarification in succeeding sections of the discussion. The general subject was the implementation of scripted reading instruction. The specific subject was a holistic exploration of the results of that implementation.

*Comprehensive Curriculum-Literacy Initiative*
Curriculum designed in response to mandates outlined in NCLB and National Reading Panel Report to improve literacy teaching and learning.

*DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills)*

The DIBELS are a series of subtests assessing phonological awareness (recognizing initial sounds and segmenting sounds within works), alphabetic principle (decoding nonsense words), and oral reading fluency (reading rate), with a retell fluency measure accompanying the oral reading fluency measure with each word from the text retold counted to determine the student’s retelling fluency score. Each of the DIBELS assessments is a timed one minute assessment. This assessment can predict future reading success. The Data System is managed by University of Oregon, College of Education, since 2000, and was developed by Dr. Roland Good, III and Dr. Ruth Kaminski.

*Edusoft Assessments*

End of Unit assessments that are prescribed and administered at the end of each instructional unit.

*Instructional Management Team (IMT)*

IMT are teams of teachers who represent each content area and provide support through professional development, modeling, and reciprocal feedback to increase teacher competency and student achievement.

*Likert Scale*

The Likert scale is a type of psychometric response scale often used in questionnaires, and is the most widely used scale in survey research developed in 1932 by Rensis Likert. When responding to a Likert questionnaire item, respondents specify a level of agreement to a statement.
**Literacy Observation Tool (LOT)**

The LOT is the primary tool used to observe the literacy environment, interactions, and status of instruction in the Reading First schools, and a tool used to note characteristics of literacy implementation within the classroom (use of resources, student interactions and teacher behaviors and actions). LOT is primarily used in Reading First Schools.

**National Reading Panel Report**

The National Reading Panel Report was created after review of decades of reading research to identify key skills and methods that have been proven to support reading success.

**90-Minute Block Implementation Tool**

The tool is an observation method used to note happenings within a Non-Reading First classroom. It provides feedback and documentation for occurrences within the classroom literacy instructional session.

**Reading First**

Reading First is a Federal grant awarded to states as a result of NCLB legislation of 2001 to provide additional resources for school districts that report poor achievement in Reading.

**Scripted and Prescribed Reading Program**

This instructional program is highly teacher directed with an emphasis on following scripts in a specific order with how’s, when’s and why’s instruction should be
facilitated. The curriculum is carefully aligned with what students should know, when they should know it, and uses scientific-based methods for assessing progress.

**Teacher Efficacy (TE)**

This term used to describe how a teacher views the ability to be a successful teacher, and provides a way to explore teacher’s beliefs, actions and the impact on curriculum implementation and student achievement.

**Three Tier Reading Model**

The model implements three levels of reading instruction to ensure individual student needs are being addressed (a) core instruction on grade level, (b) strategic instruction for those who need additional support outside of the reading block, and (c) intensive instruction provided for those who need intense support in addition to the grade level instruction and small group instruction at a lower teacher: student ratio. The latter usually occurs for students who have significant skill deficits in learning to read.

**Quarterly Support Team**

The team is a group of administrators and district personnel who conduct observations and provide feedback on a quarterly basis throughout the school year. The goal is to improve student achievement, teacher competency, and facilitate support for the district’s initiatives known as the Strategic Plan.

**Summary**

The teachers of reading must be able to link sub-skills, such as reading to the process of identity construction that shapes the person who reads. The student’s ability to comprehend word on a page encompasses factors beyond the actual act of reading (Stahl & Hayes, 1997). Teaching requires educators to deliver effective reading instruction with
specific characteristics that are critical for providing and implementing what is
considered to be an “effective reading program.” The purpose of the study was to explore
the ways in which teachers perceive mandated literacy implementation impacts classroom
instruction.

Chapter 1 was a presentation of the problem of integrating reading instruction into
classrooms with children who manifest diverse approaches to comprehension. The
purpose of the study and the primary research question were cited. The research design
was outlined and will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3. The following chapter is
a discussion of the many aspects of reading comprehension research and teacher
approaches to the teaching of reading. Chapter 3 provides the experienced investigator
with enough data to replicate the study. The research approach and design are detailed;
the participants and data collection tasks are outlined, as is the method of analysis of the
data. As well, ethical considerations and internal and external validity are discussed.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Teachers deliver reading instruction in a variety of ways because students require different emphases and teaching styles from the classroom teacher to sufficiently meet individual learning styles and needs during reading instruction. Reading teachers need to link the mastery of sub-skills that students bring to the reading process with reading instruction because the comprehension process goes well beyond the actual act of teaching one to read (Stahl & Hayes, 1997). Teaching requires educators to deliver effective reading instruction with a variety of delivery methods that critical to implement what is considered to be an “effective reading program.”

Documentation

Scholarly books, seminal journal articles, and research documents were reviewed through such data searched included ERIC, TCrecord.org, Journals@Ovid, ProQuest, ProQuest Digital Dissertations, National Institute of Child Health and Human development, and Reading.org. Approximately 57 current scholarly articles pertaining to teacher efficacy, teacher beliefs and perceptions, teacher practice, teacher reform, teacher effectiveness, teacher and student motivations, literacy reform and practice, researched-based literacy instruction, teacher quality and effective elementary literacy instruction for the time period 1984-2009.

Teachers and Standards-Based Reform

The effort to improve student learning by setting high standards for achievement began in the U.S. more than two decades ago. The progress thus far, although limited, has been very encouraging, with evidence of increasing student achievement. In a study by
the U.S. Department of Education (2005), it was reported teachers affirm support for high standards and public accountability as a promising pathway for improving student learning and capacity to be productive members of society. They also agree this progress needs to be extended with important mid-course corrections. The U.S. Department of Education recommended teachers, state, and local policy makers work together to ensure: (a) alignment of reading standards, curriculum, and assessments; (b) adequate professional development for teachers and principals; (c) sufficient resources and support for each child to meet higher reading standards; (c) communication about the importance of standards and accountability; and (d) balanced and comprehensive accountability systems.

In the early days of the movement, standards seemed important because they provided learning goals for students and a measure against which to align various components of the education system (curriculum, instruction, assessment, teacher preparation, and professional development) (Block & Pressley, 2002). In addition, standards were intended to focus on what students learned, rather than when they learned it. In an effort to redefine and enhance student learning many stakeholders felt that a shift in focus would allow teachers to more easily accommodate various learning styles and rates of learning. In this and other ways, it was hoped that standards would guide instructional practice and encourage teachers to use the most effective strategies. Although standards are still viewed as important because of the role they play in bringing consistency and coherence to education programs, standards are increasingly viewed as a means to hold students, teachers, and principals accountable. This increased emphasis on accountability has had unforeseen and unwanted consequences for teaching and learning
as evidenced by comments from teachers in relevant research studies (National Center for Education Statistics, 2005).

The idea behind the standards-based reform movement is clear. When states and school districts set standards defining what students should know and be able to do, it focuses educational systems on priorities and actions to improve. States, districts, and schools can incorporate curricula aligned with the standards and adopt assessments aligned with standards and curricula to measure student performance. Teachers can understand what they need to teach and need to know. Well-designed assessments can assist teachers in identifying what assistance students’ need, where teaching appears strong, and whether additional training or materials may be needed (Block & Pressley, 2002). When tests and other indicators are used in a balanced and comprehensive accountability system, they can measure progress, recognize excellence, and trigger supports and intervention for schools and school systems that have failed to improve student achievement.

All stakeholders must work together to increase student learning (Block & Pressley, 2002). Knowing whether children measure up to common standards assists parents and other stakeholders to hold school systems accountable and identify when additional resources are needed. A standards-based system with high expectations and accountability for all students and educators is an ambitious undertaking, and the nation is in the early stages of reaping intended results. States and districts no longer vary widely in the implementation of standards-based improvement efforts. To date, virtually all states have set standards in the core academic subjects. Most have instituted testing
In January of 2002, President Bush signed the NCLB act into law. This law was the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1994, and had within it a broad spectrum of changes to the federal role in public education. It included accountability provisions that required states to test all students, and sanctions on schools related to low student performance on such tests. It also required states to provide additional educational opportunities for students in schools under sanction. The following elements are common in the understanding of the law.

1. The law will provide an accountability system to identify which schools are doing a good job with their students.

2. The law will enhance the opportunities for students who are in danger of not learning the skills that are needed in reading and mathematics.

3. The law will enhance the capacity for all students to become proficient.

4. The law will reduce the achievement gaps seen among students in a variety of subgroups.

Each year, the standards will be reinforced, repeated, and expanded to give a broader picture of the manner and the extent to which the law has effected student achievement. In 2009, administrators responsible for implementation of the NCLB are beginning to apply sanctions and add requirements to education practice in low achieving schools. States are beginning to increase the percentage of students achieving proficiency and subsequent identification as successful. States are moving to expand assessment
programs to include all grades from 3 to 8 and high school. Any or all of these factors may have an impact on student education in the years to come.

As a response to the mandates, the new criteria raised numerous questions for policymakers in the area of reading in the effort to develop the literacy curriculum and define proven instructional practices to ensure student success. Based on research from the report of the National Reading Panel (NPR, 2000), the standards associated with reaching achievement were developed within the context of NCLB. It was noted that many children struggle with learning to read, while teachers and parents find that the impact of reading failure creates negative and long term effects on school performance. The NPR panel reviewed a series of reading research and identified key skills and methods that have been proven to promote reading success. As a result, the understanding of “what works” has been fashioned by on-going reviews and assessment through the notion of “scientifically based research.”

Need for Standards-Based Reading Reform

The first tenet of standards-based education is that learning goals, called standards, are specified (McCombs, Kirby, Barney, & MaGhee, 2004). Standards, simply defined, are statements of what students should know and be able to do. In a non-standards-based classroom, individual teachers may not be clear about what they think students should know or the best way to implement instruction. Some teachers argue that standards can create holdbacks and restrict the “teachable moments,” while others view achievement standards as a means of communicating and informing others teaching the same grade or course have the same ideas about what students should learn. Some teachers would decide what to teach by going through textbooks from cover to cover.
Others’ base decisions on individual preferences, and in some cases, what they know best. One purpose for the standards movement was to address this lack of articulation among teachers at the same grade level, within buildings, and across districts. As one teacher interviewed noted:

When I worked at the elementary school in another district, it was interesting listening to teachers say: “This child came from this school; this child came from this [other] school” (McCombs, Kirby, Barney, & MaGhee, 2004, p. 8).

They could tell which schools focused more on reading, which focused more on writing, and which focused more on standardized tests. It was further communicated that by using standards based education, and the standards and benchmarks, it would not matter what third grade classroom the child was in (McCombs, Kirby, Barney, & MaGhee, 2004). Even though some teachers appreciate the consistency that standards can bring to an education program, many do not know about this benefit, or do not appreciate the implications. Before teachers commit time and energy to making the shift to fully embracing standards-based education, they need to understand what standards-based education comprises. They also need concrete reasons for making the shift, and given time to make adequate adjustments (Block & Pressley, 2002).

**National Reading Panel Report and Reading First Initiatives**

The NRC was instrumental in providing the foundation of the research in the publication, *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). The text summarized research literature that made claims about identifying critical skills, ideal classroom and environmental settings, and key interactions that would aid in
assisting a student to acquire primary reading skills (NRP, 2003). The expanded efforts of NICHD and NPR led to the following goals.

1. To comprehend a rich but diverse research and data
2. To communicate the findings to inform parents, teachers, educators, publishers and others who are involved in the instruction of children
3. To provide advice by compiling and transferring the findings at conferences and other learning events.

The rising demands for literacy and higher order thinking skills has been cited as one factor that is responsible for the reading difficulties found in students. The most significant changes concern teachers, testing, and accountability. As for teachers, the NCLB requires that Title I schools hire only “highly qualified” teachers for all subjects, and that veteran teachers in such schools demonstrate they are “highly qualified” by 2005–2006 (NCLB, 2001). The Act also reaches beyond Title I schools and requires that all teachers of “core academic subjects” (English, reading, language arts, math, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography) in Title I schools must be “highly qualified” by 2005–2006. Pursuant to the NCLB and accompanying regulations, teachers are considered “highly qualified” if they are fully certified and have demonstrated competency in the subjects they teach. Competence is assumed if the teacher majored in the subject in college, or alternatively, if it can be demonstrated by passing a state test, or for existing teachers, by convincing state evaluators that they know the subject areas (NCLB).

One of the outcomes that serve as a companion to NCLB and the NRP is the research-based federally-funded program known as Reading First. Under the Reading
The five skills that have been supported through Reading First and the NPR are critical to the implementation of funding. Programs that are funded must include descriptions and materials that support the following skills that have been deemed to increase reading proficiency (NPR, 2000)

- Phonemic Awareness
- Phonemes
Phonemes are the smallest units comprising the spoken language. English consists of about 41 phonemes. Phonemes combine to form syllables and words. A few words have only one phoneme, such as a (a) or oh (o). Most words consist of a blend of phonemes, such as go (g-o) with two phonemes, check (ch-e-ck) with three phonemes, or stop with four phonemes (s-t-o-p). Phonemic awareness refers to the ability to focus on and manipulate these phonemes in spoken words.

- **Phonics Instruction**

  Phonics instruction is a method of teaching reading that stresses learning how letters correspond to sounds, and how to use this knowledge in reading and spelling. Phonics instruction can be provided systematically. Systematic phonics instruction occurs when children receive explicit, instruction in a set of pre-specified associations between letters and sounds. Children are taught how to use these associations to read, typically in texts containing controlled vocabulary.

- **Fluency and Expressiveness**

  Reading fluency is one of several critical factors necessary for reading comprehension, but is often neglected in the classroom. If children read out loud with speed, accuracy, and proper expression, they are more likely to comprehend and remember the material than if they read with difficulty and in an inefficient way. Two instructional approaches have typically been used to teach reading fluency. One, guided repeated oral reading, encourages students to read passages out loud with systematic and explicit guidance and feedback from the teacher. The other, independent silent reading encourages students to read silently on their own, inside and outside the classroom, with little guidance or feedback from their teachers.
• Vocabulary Development

Vocabulary development has long been considered important for reading comprehension. The NPR concluded that vocabulary should be taught both directly and indirectly. Repetition and seeing vocabulary words several times is also important. Learning in rich contexts, incidental learning, and the use of computer technology all help children develop larger vocabularies. A combination of methods, rather than a single teaching method, leads to the best learning. As with vocabulary development, text comprehension is improved when teachers use a combination of reading comprehension techniques such as question answering, question generation, and summarization. When students are able to use them successfully, they perform better in recall, answering questions, generating questions, and summarizing texts (NRP, 2000).

• Comprehensiveness

First, reading comprehension is a complex cognitive process that cannot be understood without a clear description of the role that vocabulary development and vocabulary instruction play in the understanding of what has been read. Second, comprehension is an active process that requires an intentional and thoughtful interaction between the reader and the text (text comprehension instruction). Third, the preparation of teachers to better equip students to develop and apply reading comprehension strategies to enhance understanding is intimately linked to student achievement in this area.

A gain in reading achievement, a reduction in the number of children reading below grade level, and an increase in the percentage of children who are reading on or above grade level provides an assessment of the effectiveness of Reading First programs.
Testing in grades 1-2 and 3-8 must be tested annually to review for renewal of funds. This is deemed as an indicator of factors that support the efforts of NCLB, the NRP, and evidenced based- research. The following list describes characteristics that support the prevailing effort to promote key components for Comprehensive Literacy Standards that the Pelican School District has adopted, as based on U.S. Department of Education (2005) recommendations.

1. Employs proven methods for increased reading achievement

2. Integrates instruction, assessment, professional development, parental and community involvement

3. Provides high quality Professional development in reading

4. Include measurable goals and benchmarks to reach the goals and continuing assessments are key tools that drive instruction

5. Provides support for teachers, administrators, and leaders throughout the implementation of reading initiatives and practices

6. Solicits high quality external support to evaluate and refine teaching practices

7. Employs reading programs that are sound and provide evidence of significant student achievement

The expected outcome, as shown in the data presented within the previous report and the NRP, show students with the most notable achievement gains were exposed to the following factors, as adapted from the NRP (2003) and the NCHID (1998).

1. Congruent aligned and individualized reading instruction.

2. Use of multiple strategies for decoding while reading.

3. Instruction matched reading level.
4. Reading closely linked with writing on a daily basis.

5. Students encouraged to be self-motivated through a variety of high interest texts.

6. Multisensory instruction used as a means to enhance instruction and support literacy development.

7. Engaged in modeling, reflexive reading practices, read orally and often, and strong teacher scaffolding and multiple opportunities to practice the act of reading.

Teacher Beliefs and Reform Implementation

Teacher beliefs in effectiveness consistently predict desired student outcomes. Bandura (1993) reported it is believed that the achievement impact of Teacher Efficacy (TE) arises from goal-setting and attribution processes. Teachers who anticipate that they will be successful set more challenging goals for themselves and their students accept responsibility for the outcome of instruction, and persist through obstacles. Bandura’s findings suggested student achievement of cognitive and affective goals can be enhanced by strengthening TE. The hypothesis that school improvement will flow from enhanced TE has been tested in a variety of skill-development projects with mixed results. It is proposed that skill-development approaches be augmented by attending to teacher beliefs (particularly about the mutability of intelligence) and to conditions of teacher work.

In 1989, Rosenholtz (in Bandura, 1993) described research on TE as being in its “infancy.” Understanding of the origins and outcomes of teachers’ beliefs about effectiveness has grown substantially since then, but the use of these findings in teacher development programs has not. As stated previously, the purpose of the present study is to highlight findings that surround what influences TE as a mechanism for how teachers impact literacy curriculum implementation. The first of the following sections provides a
definition of TE, and is an outline of its roots in social learning theory, distinguishing it from related notions. The second section is a review of evidence of a consistent association of TE with student outcomes and presentation of an argument for interpreting these correlations within a causal chain. The final section describes teacher development strategies that have been or could be used to strengthen teacher beliefs as competent literacy instructors, and provides an argument that these strategies must be augmented with attention to teacher beliefs and conditions of teacher work.

Teacher Efficacy and Role in Curriculum Implementation

TE is a type of self-efficacy that can be distinguished from related constructs such as outcome expectancy, locus of control, and self-concept. TE measures the extent to which teachers believe efforts will have a positive effect on student achievement. TE as a form of self-efficacy, and as defined by Bandura (1993), is an individual judgment of the ability to complete future actions. Appraisals are based on personal interpretations of past actions, rather than on external criteria. Over time, these interpretations stabilize as persistent, but not static, performance expectations. Expectations can be modified by new information, especially judgments about the results of subsequent efforts of oneself or peers undertaking similar tasks. Verbal persuasion (attempts by peers or supervisors to convince subjects that they are competent to perform the target actions) and physiological responses (physical symptoms communicating an inability to perform effectively) also contribute to expectations about future performance.

In Bandura’s theory (1995), self-efficacy is a regulatory mechanism that influences behavior in four ways: (a) through cognitive processes, (b) through the adoption of loftier goals, (c) increased goal commitment, and (d) the expectation that
goals will be achieved despite setbacks along the way. Through motivational processes, high self-efficacy subjects take responsibility for the outcome of actions, and attribute success and failure to efforts rather than to factors beyond their control. Through affective processes, those with high self-efficacy develop coping strategies enabling them to turn off negative thoughts that lower performance. Through selection processes, self-efficacy shapes lives by influencing the selection of activities and environments.

In *Social Foundations of Thought and Action: A Social Cognitive Theory* (1986), Bandura further contended that human development reflects the complex interaction of the person, the person's behavior, and the environment. The relationship between these elements is called *reciprocal determinism*. A teacher’s cognitive abilities, physical characteristics, personality, beliefs, attitudes, and other factors influence both behavior and environment. These influences are reciprocal. A person's behavior can affect feelings about self and attitudes and beliefs about others. Similarly, much of what a student knows comes from environmental resources such as television, parents, and books. Environment also affects behavior because what a person observes can powerfully influence what that person does. In a classroom setting, a person's behavior also contributes to the environment in the following categories.

Teachers must provide a chance to observe and model the behavior that leads to a positive reinforcement and desired outcomes. Educators must encourage collaborative learning, since much of learning happens within important social and environmental contexts. A learned behavior often cannot be performed unless there is the right environment. Educators must provide the incentive and the supportive environment for
the behavior to happen as otherwise, assessment may not be accurate and future outcomes may be made based on false judgments.

Models That Shape Teacher Expectations

Proctor (1984) developed a model of the teaching/learning process that highlighted the importance of teacher expectations for student learning.

Figure 1. A school based model for teacher expectations.

This model is a visualization of the variables or factors of schools and classrooms thought to be under the influence of educators. In the early years of schooling, where teacher expectations are not yet based on documented performance, or performance can change dramatically from one year to the next, it appears that teacher expectations can produce
achievement variations among students. As children progress into later childhood and adolescence, it appears that teacher expectations generally sustain, solidify, and magnify preexisting achievement differences. Ashton (1984) argued there are two components to teacher expectations to further communicate the notion: the teacher believes that, in general, students can learn the material, and the teacher believes that these particular students can learn under his or her direction. Ashton reported eight dimensions to the development of teacher efficacy as shown in Table 1 on the following page.

Table 1

Eight dimensions of Teacher Efficacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIMENSIONS OF TEACHER EFFICACY</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. A sense of personal accomplishment</td>
<td>The teacher must view the work as meaningful and important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Positive expectations for student behavior and achievement</td>
<td>The teacher must expect students to progress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Personal responsibility for student learning</td>
<td>Accepts accountability and shows a willingness to examine performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Strategies for achieving objectives</td>
<td>Must plan for student learning, set goals for themselves, and identify strategies to achieve them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Positive affect</td>
<td>Feels good about teaching, about self, and about students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Sense of control</td>
<td>Believes (s) he can influence student learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Sense of common teacher/student goals</td>
<td>Develops a joint venture with students to accomplish goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Democratic decision making</td>
<td>Involves students in making decisions regarding goals and strategies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


TE influences teacher behavior through goal-setting processes. Proctor, Ashton, and Bandura reported the expectation that one will be successful encourages the adoption of
more challenging goals and increases persistence. In contrast to those with low self-efficacy, individuals who anticipate they will be effective set higher standards of performance for themselves, accept responsibility if the standards are not met, and respond to failure with renewed effort. These individuals persist because they believe that diligence will be rewarded with success. One would predict from these theories and studies that teachers with high self-efficacy would set higher goals for instruction.

Empirical evidence indicates that teachers with higher TE set more ambitious goals. Brookhart and Loadman (1992) found that teachers beginning careers with high confidence in the ability to perform various teaching functions were more likely to report that the reason for teaching content was to foster student development. In contrast, low TE teachers believed that the purpose of teaching was to cover the literacy curriculum. Weinstein (1989) found that pre-service candidates with high personal TE chose instructional strategies based on the power to increase student learning, while the low TE candidates selected methods in terms of the potential to reduce noise and confusion.

Evidence that high TE teachers have loftier aspirations can be implied from teacher decisions about practice. High TE teachers are more willing and likely to implement new instructional programs, leading to the acquisition of new teaching skills. The result is that teachers with high TE are more likely to use instructional strategies that are powerful, but difficult to acquire, such as small-group techniques, cooperative learning, and activity-based methods. These teachers are less likely to rely on approaches such as whole-class teaching that are weaker, but easier to adopt. High TE teachers are also more likely to involve parents in school conferences, volunteering, and home
monitoring. If high TE contributes to teacher learning and using more powerful teaching strategies, then student achievement is likely to be higher, as cited by Slavin (2005).

Many of the findings linking teacher practices to TE are based on self reports. Some subjects may be over-reporting the use of strategies perceived to be desirable, or they may be implementing in inappropriate ways. The risk is somewhat offset by evidence that pre-service and experienced teachers with higher TE receive higher ratings from supervisors. Slavin (2002) argued that good teaching can be taught and learned by observation and practice. “An outstanding teacher does nothing that any other teacher cannot also do - it is just the question of knowing those principles of effective teaching and how to apply them” (p. 10).

Teacher Efficacy, Student Standards, and Literacy Characteristics

Bandura (1993) found causal attributions are closely linked to self-efficacy. Individuals with high self-efficacy, in contrast to those with low self-efficacy, attribute the outcomes of actions to themselves rather than to factors beyond their control. From this theory, one could predict that teachers with high professional efficacy would set higher standards for students, would make students accountable for behavior, and would persist until the students had met goals.

Available research supports these predictions. Personal TE has been consistently linked to pupil-control ideology, particularly in pre-service training. Wilson and Wineburg (1998) reported teachers with high personal TE tend to promote student autonomy, are more likely to confront student management problems than to respond permissively, and are more successful at keeping students on task. Those with high general TE have more confidence in classroom-management techniques and rate
management problems as less severe (Bandura, 1995; Braun, 2004; Bullough & Stokes, 1994; Scheiner & Carver 1994). They are more humanistic in orientation and less reliant on custodial methods to control a class. If TE contributes to achievement-oriented student-management strategies, then higher achievement is likely to be the result.

Higher TE teachers may be more successful in producing student achievement because they attend to the needs of lower-ability students more closely. Ashton (1986) found that low TE teachers concentrated efforts on the upper-ability group, and they had less regard for lower-ability students, viewing them as potential sources of disruption. In contrast, high TE teachers had positive attitudes toward low achievers, built friendly relationships with them, and set higher academic standards for this group than did low TE teachers. Midgley (1989) observed that TE had a bigger impact on low than on high achievers, suggesting that lower-ability students are less certain about personal competence and are more likely to be influenced by teacher expectations.

High TE Teachers

There is consistent evidence that high TE teachers are more willing to develop programs for special-needs pupils within classrooms, rather than referring these cases to special services. Although these findings are based on teacher responses to hypothetical case studies, Leu and Kinzer (2002) argued teachers who exhibit high levels of effectiveness in literacy instruction have been identified as having the following characteristics:

- Possesses insights. Insightful teachers use appropriate materials, methods, and management to ensure literacy instruction is optimal.
- Teaches decoding skills. Integrates a systematic program that includes
phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonic knowledge, context use strategies and fluency.

- Uses exceptional works of literature. Offers students a variety of text types that are linked to background knowledge and personal experience.
- Integrates reading and writing. Reading and writing are taught together in most instances to develop the language process and support literacy.
- Uses vocabulary knowledge to aid in comprehension. Vocabulary instruction builds background knowledge to increase reading achievement.
- Teaches reading comprehension. Enhances comprehension through instructional strategies as well as accessing background knowledge.
- Teaches reading using different kinds of texts. Uses different strategies to read different types of text.
- Uses good assessment strategies. Monitors student progress through use of reading assessment such as DIBELS, individual skills assessments, and interest surveys.
- Meets individual needs. Provides small group instruction, and work stations that address various learning styles and skills.
- Organizes and manages classroom environment. Provides an environmental system that promotes literacy learning for all involved.
- Integrates computer and technology in literacy instruction. Uses technology that prepares and enhances all facets of communication that ultimately aid in promoting multiple literacy's.
Engages in professional development and evidence of state-of-the-art competencies are displayed in teacher behaviors and responses during implementation of literacy instruction both in and outside of the classroom. Although the characteristics are limitless (Block & Pressly, 2002; Collins & Cheek, 1999; Darling-Hammond, 1996; Fontus & Pinnell, 2001; Fuller & Brown, 1976), most teachers of the magnitude described in the previous text have been echoed in the mandates that are outlined in the literacy reforms present in today’s elementary classrooms (Krashen, 2005; Proctor, 1984; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 2005; Strickland, Gankse, & Monroe, 2002; Taylor, 1999; U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

By increasing expectations for lower performers and providing greater instructional support, high TE teachers may create changes in student perceptions of their academic abilities. As student efficacy becomes stronger, students may become more enthusiastic about schoolwork and more willing to initiate contacts with the teacher, processes that impact directly on achievement. Evidence that TE has a delayed impact on student achievement (one study found that teacher efficacy correlated with achievement in the spring, but not the fall) is congruent with this view.

Bandura (1995) contended that the most important source of information about self-efficacy is personal experience. Individuals generate expectancies about future performance based on interpretations of how well they have handled similar tasks in the past. If students are successful, teachers would feel competent and would anticipate being successful in the future. There is not much evidence to confirm or deny this view, and the evidence is ambiguous. TE is higher in higher-achieving schools, suggesting that TE is a consequence of student achievement. Orderly behavior of students is one of the strongest
predictors of TE. Teachers who report that student misbehavior and class-cutting are having a disruptive effect on classrooms have lower TE scores. Teachers in low-achieving schools with disadvantaged or disruptive student populations are more likely to become estranged from the craft than teachers in schools with college-bound students (Slavin, 2005).

In the two decades since the concept of TE was first introduced into the area of educational research, studies have found evidence supporting the importance of the construct in an educational context. A significant relationship was discovered to exist between TE and student achievement (Campbell, Hombo, & Mazzeo, 2000, Darling-Hammond, 1996; Midgley, Feldlaufer, & Eccles, 1989). It has been determined that a teacher's sense of efficacy, "the extent to that teachers believe they can affect student learning" (Braun, 2004, p. 173) is perhaps the most significant predictor and contributor of teacher influence on student achievement (Center for Education Policy, 2005; Midgley, Feldlaufer, & Eccles, 1989).

Ashton and Webb (1982, 1986) recognized the importance for teachers to possess a high sense of efficacy, referred to as TE. Teachers demonstrating a high sense of TE are consistently found to display greater skills of organization, instruction, questioning, explaining, providing feedback to students having difficulties and maintaining students on task. Low efficacy teachers on the other hand display a more custodial than humanistic approach to classroom management, spend significantly more time in whole group work as opposed to small group, individualized instruction, feel angered and threatened by misbehavior and experience difficulty in maintaining students on task (Ashton & Webb, 1982, 1986; Bandura, 1993, 1995).
Identifying Low TE Teachers

It is of paramount importance to the teaching profession and in the best interests of students that those individuals who engage in ineffective teaching practices be identified, with the intention that the ineffective behaviors be modified (NCLB, 2002). The context in which this would be of greatest educational benefit ideally would be at the pre-service teaching level before the individual assumes sole responsibility for classes. The extent to which TE influences student achievement is directly related to the beliefs the individual teacher hold about their abilities in any given context regardless of the number of years of teaching. An 'inefficacious' individual does not necessarily lack the skills or knowledge to perform an action. Rather, they lack belief in their ability to implement such skills or knowledge, consequently rendering both ineffective (Berman, McLaughlin, Bass, Pauly, & Zellman, 1997).

The TE construct can also be described bi-dimensional, consisting of TE and personal efficacy. TE is an individual's belief that teaching is instrumental in promoting and increasing student motivation and achievement. Personal efficacy is a teacher's belief in the ability to have a positive effect on student learning. These two dimensions can operate independently. For example, a teacher may recognize that clear explanations will aid student understanding of a concept (TE). They may, however, lack belief in the ability to perform such a behavior (personal efficacy). Further, an individual's belief in performance ability is partly, if not largely, related to their level of optimism (Bandura, 1996).

The value of optimism is that it influences an individual's ability to persevere with difficult tasks and sustain the effort required to overcome obstacles (Bandura, 1996).
An optimistic individual is more confident that life events will run due course smoothly. When they do not, they have belief in their ability to overcome adversity in the face of failure. It follows that individuals who lack a high sense of optimism are more likely to "abort their efforts prematurely when difficulties arise" (p. 12). From this it is suggested that an individual's optimism level may be a possible correlate of his or her sense of efficacy.

School Success and Teacher Efficacy

One major domain of teacher belief systems that is by no means extensive in the research is teacher belief about 'teacher' and what they consider to be effective teaching. The fundamental importance of an individual's belief about what they define as effective teaching is that it represents components of the teacher's aspired identity. It is understood that to be a successful classroom practitioner it is essential to have a firm teacher identity because only in this condition will the complexities of the teaching and learning relationship be fully appreciated (Bullough & Stokes, 1994). Within the school context, the beliefs that an individual holds about 'teacher' and their own identity will influence behavior with regard to the 'orientation' they choose to adopt, be it one that emphasizes interpersonal relations, management/organization, instruction, or a combination of these.

Teachers’ school experience, formal teacher training, and practicum are the three main forces that influence teacher educational beliefs (Fuller & Bown, 1975; Linn, 2003). Within the specific classroom context, these forces also influence the preservice teacher 'orientation' (Weinstein, 1988). Interpersonal relations are consistently
found to be the main focus of pre-service teachers who view this orientation as necessary when working with children (Book, Byers, & Freeman, 1983). This perception is viewed as problematic by Book, Byers, and Freeman as the cognitive function of affecting student academic achievement appears to be denied. Further, the affective interpersonal relation focus is not perceived as a valuable one considering the 'intellectual content' required as a basis of school education, especially at the high accountability stages to produce readers in K-3. The potentially harmful nature of this educational belief is illustrated by Book Byers, and Freeman who stated that "the view of teaching as an extended form of parenting may be the nemesis which diminishes a teacher's valuing of pedagogy courses and professional attitudes" (p. 10).

Teachers throughout training are consistently found to display high levels of confidence, although higher at some times than others (Bullough & Stokes, 1994; Keller, 1987; Weinstein, 1989, 1990). Studies consistently confirm that teachers who have high levels of unrealistic optimism before practicum tend to become more realistic, although still confident, after the practicum experience and into years of teaching p (Bullough & Stokes, 1994). Many criticize this confidence, suggesting it implies a sense of arrogance on the part of those teachers who disregard the need for professional knowledge. While it is acknowledged that a highly overestimated sense of personal efficacy may in some cases be harmful, Bandura (1995) suggested that positive, or perhaps overestimated self-appraisals, should not necessarily be viewed as a "cognitive failing or character flaw to be eradicated" (p. 12) as they can, in fact, benefit the individual. Extra effort may be required and expended to overcome situations that prove to be more challenging than the usual routine, thus extending the individual's performance. Of greater danger is when an
individual lacks a sense of optimism and consistently underestimates capabilities; hence, they "rarely set aspirations beyond their immediate reach nor mount the extra effort needed to surpass their ordinary performance" (p. 12). This illustrates the parallel that exists between high levels of optimism and confidence and one's sense of personal efficacy.

Factors that May Enhance Teacher Efficacy

If TE is consistently associated with desired student outcomes, and if a defensible argument can be made that TE has an independent effect on these outcomes, it might be possible to increase student achievement by strengthening TE. A unidirectional model might pose two questions: have interventions been devised that increase TE, and if so, does increasing TE contribute to higher student achievement in reading. It might be argued that, as teachers acquire more skills, the perception of themselves as competent professionals would increase, particularly if they experience success in the classroom as they apply new skills. Several investigators have designed interventions to increase TE and its impact on curriculum initiatives/implementation. Some school districts have patterned professional development activities that promote the following skills.

- Combining Skill Development with Teacher Beliefs

Skill-development approaches to strengthening TE might be enhanced by encouraging reflection on teacher beliefs and practices, thereby addressing the cognitive underpinnings of teacher expectancies. One strategy might be to approach TE through teacher attributions. There is substantial evidence that high TE is associated with internal attributions. If teachers reflect on their impact on student learning, they might become more willing to take responsibility for the outcomes of instruction, strengthening TE.
This increased confidence could be the result of teachers’ recognizing that they are becoming more skilled in the craft.

- **Building Collaborative School Cultures**

  Wilson and Wineburg (1988) found that teachers who interacted more frequently with peer coaches (from their own schools and with expert teachers from other schools) had higher general TE. It was also reported that teachers who engaged in joint work, sharing important instructional decisions (such as lesson preparation) with other teachers or with learning-disability specialists, had higher TE. TE was higher among teachers who were more aware of the expectations of teachers in grades above and below them. Curriculum coordination within the school and within the district is positively associated with TE.

- **Teacher Efficacy and Conditions of Teacher Work**

  Skill-development approaches to strengthening TE might be more effective if they were part of a broader effort to redesign conditions of teacher work. Ashton and Webb, (1994) found these strategies might be of two types: attempts to build on the positive impact of restructuring, and mechanisms to reduce the negative effects of externally imposed change.

- **Redirecting Supervisory Practices**

  By coordinating, supervising, and rewarding teachers, principals might be able to influence teacher appraisals of their performance, heighten the exchange of vicarious experience, and engage in verbal persuasion. There is some evidence that this is the case (Allington & Walmsley, 1995) as revealed in the following quote:
Leadership actions positively correlated with TE include emphasizing accomplishment, increasing teachers’ certainty about the worth of their practice, being responsive to teacher concerns, promoting an academic emphasis in the school, and providing supervision perceived to be useful by teachers. The relationships between perceived TE and leadership behavior are especially strong when individual efficacy is aggregated to the school level. Because these findings are co-relational, it is not clear whether the principal’s contribution to school TE occurs by changing existing staff or by attracting different teachers to the school. It is also possible that principals might adjust their behavior in response to the expectations of their teachers: high TE teachers might elicit supportive practices from school administrators (Bandura, 1993, 1995).

- Reducing Negative Effects of Externally Imposed Change

Several studies have found that state or national efforts to improve schools can have a negative effect on TE. Scheiner and Carver (1994), in one of two studies investigating the effect of reform on TE, found that a statewide minimum competency testing program reduced teacher autonomy and feelings of success. They had to cut important topics and adopt a pace that was inappropriate for students. The tests demanded high preparation time, reducing teacher-student interaction time. The testing program increased the tendency of some teachers to attribute student failures to external forces beyond their control. TE declined, except for a small group of teachers with classes similar to those of the developers and who shared the curriculum conceptions of state organizers.
Increasing Participation in School and District Decision Making

Giving teachers a greater role in decision making is an affirmation of their competence. This might influence teacher perceptions of past effectiveness and increase expectations of future success. Having a greater role in school decision making is consistently correlated with TE. Since increasing participation in school decision making influences teacher satisfaction, it is no surprise that TE is higher in schools with satisfied teachers, as measured by commitment to teaching, willingness to stay in the profession, satisfaction with current role, and willingness to re-choose teaching as a career. Participation in decision making is associated with increased productivity only when it focuses on instructional rather than managerial decisions (Linn, 2004).

Bullough and Stokes (1994) connected the ideas that have been discussed thus far, as well as provided support for the present study.

1. Each teacher has a set of beliefs about the nature of knowledge and how students acquire it. For example, there are volumes of educational research on individual differences among students. Despite this, there is little evidence U.S. teachers consider those differences during lesson planning or actual instruction. Instead, some focus on fast delivery of content, which may, in fact, produce quantity rather than the quality.

2. Each teacher has a set of beliefs and assumptions about the nature of learning and about students in general. Jerry frequently disciplines students for making "too much noise." He believes "quiet" is a requirement for learning. In one teacher's classroom, students are enthusiastically arguing about an issue. Does this mean no learning is taking place? If a teacher consistently acts on the belief that silence promotes learning, are there some cases where learning is actually inhibited rather than supported?
3. Each teacher has a personal set of values that determine the priorities operating in the classroom. The importance of the TE construct in an educational setting has significance beyond the impact it has on student achievement. It may also hinder or further the professional development of teachers who believe themselves fit or unfit to deal with the many challenges that teachers face daily, one being the implementation of curriculum mandates (Brookhart & Freeman, 1992).

Conclusions

Given that the sense of efficacy is a cognitive mechanism governing one's behavior (Bandura, 1993) it follows that one's beliefs (also a process involving the shaping of one's thoughts) is equally instrumental in determining how one behaves. Beliefs are antecedents of behavior, whether they are general beliefs or beliefs pertaining to the notion that one can successfully execute an action. Therefore it is necessary to determine whether these educational beliefs of teachers are (I) identifiable, (ii) developmental (do one's beliefs change or alter with experience and/or time), and iii) directly related to teacher efficacy. Moreover, the importance in identifying the teacher educational beliefs is that they may, like teacher efficacy, be one of many potential predictors of how successful implementation of a literacy curriculum may be.

Summary

In the following, the methodology of the study and the rationale of the geographical location and population sample selection will be discussed. In addition, the chapter will include the interview procedure and the appropriateness of the qualitative phenomenological method of the research study. The method of the analysis of the data will be summarized, as well as ethical considerations and internal and external validity.
CHAPTER III

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Based on the gap in the knowledge, and as a result of the review of literature as shown in Chapter II, studying teacher efficacy in two Reading First and Non Reading First schools was warranted. To provide structure to the methodology, Ashton’s text (1984), referenced in Bandura’s *Perceived Self-efficacy in Cognitive Development and Functioning* (1995) was employed. Ashton’s *Eight Dimensions of Teacher Efficacy* was the framework for collecting, organizing, and analyzing the data:

1. Teacher accomplishments.
2. Teacher expectations for students.
3. Teacher personal responsibility for student learning.
4. Teacher use of strategies for achieving objectives.
5. Teacher positive affect.
6. Teacher sense of control.
7. Teacher sense of common goals (school, students and self).
8. Teacher reign in democratic decision-making.

The discussion outlined in Bandura’s study “*Social Foundations of Thought and Action: A Social Cognitive Theory*, (1986) in Chapter 2, provided insight by providing the use of broader categories identified as curriculum related and instructional-based, as well as the addition of assessment factors.

Spradley’s Developmental Research Sequence (DRS)

The research design for the present study was fashioned by the workings and studies of James P. Spradley (1980) author of *Participant Observation*, and the
Developmental Research Sequence. Spradley, a well-established ethnographer in the field of anthropology, developed a system of approaches to guide ethnographers through the process of producing quality, holistic research products. A well-respected community member of the field, Spradley compiled years of data to permit researchers to understand the concept of “participant observation” within the case study research field.

Design and Methodology

The design for the present study was an exploratory, qualitative ethnographic case study. A case study is a method for learning about a complex instance, based on a holistic understanding of that instance obtained through extensive description and analysis of the instance taken as a whole and in its context (Patton, 2002). A qualitative study was deemed appropriate because the design is a method used to understand both procedures and mandates geared towards changing instruction, but also how participants, in the present study, elementary teachers, perceive accountability measures.

Stake (1995) argued that one might think like an artist and embrace the many facets of realities that might arise from a question. This process may emerge and evolve as the researcher tells the story or interprets the case in context (Stake). One would identify the issues brought in by the researcher (etic), and those defined by the individuals involved in the study (emic) on a constant basis. Yin (2002), on the other hand, prefers to employ the use of hypotheses intended to be used as a guide to explain a particular instance. Such designs and discoveries that result provide the uniqueness of conducting case study research.

Ethnographic designs allow discovery of phenomena without statistical data reduction that may obscure meaningful distinctions. With complex clinical phenomena,
qualitative methodologies take on added importance. When teachers begin to reflect, they emphasize heterogeneous perspectives. Qualitative designs are clearly preferable because quantitative designs may miss the uniqueness of individual perceptions.

Ethnography is a qualitative research method rooted in anthropology that is an attempt to describe people’s perceptions of meanings and events within the context in which they take place (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Spradley, 1979). Rather than form questions that will largely predetermine the answers, this approach generates hypotheses from participant "rich descriptions." Ethnography requires that investigators learn from people as "informants," rather than regard them as "subjects" (Spradley, 1979). Teachers become informants for ethnographers, who attempt to bridge the participant’s "meaning world" with a professional audience's meaning world through an ethnographer's meaning world (Miles & Huberman, 1984).

The ethnographer reports the detailed descriptions and interpretations that participants use to describe a particular setting. Everyone, including the ethnographer, co-creates a therapeutic system for change (Mehra, 2001). Everyone in the culture of a therapeutic setting is a co-researcher and co-collaborator. Objectivity is not an assumption, and the researcher usually assumes the role of participant-observer, interacting with informants over an extended period of time (Spradley, 1979; Strauss, 1987). Clarity of the researcher role and explicit articulation of researchers biases when reporting results are crucial (Bogden & Biklen).

Ethnographic research is unique in that the goal is theory development rather than theory testing. Theoretical concepts are generated directly from the detailed interviews with and observations from the participants themselves within the setting of interest.
Hypotheses are not predetermined, but generated at the end of the ethnographic study after all data have been gathered and analyzed. Typical data collection techniques in ethnographies include both participant and non-participant observations in the form of field notes and transcribed interviews from informants. Use of multiple sources provides researchers with "triangulated" data sources. Typically, triangulation includes the use of multiple data sources, data collection techniques, analysis methods, and investigators to enhance the reliability and validity of study findings (LeCompte, Pressissle & Tesch, 1993). Data analysis methods involve transcribing, coding, and categorizing field notes and interviews. Data analysis methods commonly used include the following: domain analysis (Spradley, 1979), constant comparative method in the grounded theory approach (Norblit & Hare, 1988; Strauss & Corbin, 1990), and discourse analysis (Glaser, 2001).

There are twelve complete steps in Spradley’s Participation Observation, all of which will be used throughout the course of the research.

- Social Situation

The first step in the study involved identifying the social situation. The study was conducted in two Reading First schools and two Non-Reading First Schools located in Louisiana. The results and discussion were analyzed through the completion of questionnaires, observations, and formal interview. The focus of the study was based on four first grade teachers selected from each of the schools. An additional component included interviews with the principals, discussions held in grade level meetings and review of Quarterly Support Team summary visits. The study was designed in such a way to observe the characteristics of an effective first grade reading teacher on a daily basis. Activities noted within the study consisted of a variety of techniques and
approaches that included, but not limited to, verbal communication, modeling, assessment, participation in professional development activities, and self-efficacy. The social situation was the school, primarily the classroom setting. The setting was defined by Spradley (1980) as a “single social situation,” which involves numerous activities that fall under the general event of characteristics and beliefs found within teacher efficacy. The single social situation ensured the simplicity of the study focusing on the practices and justifications for the actions exhibited by the teacher. The involvement of a single social situation significantly narrowed the scope of the study, in the interest of time, and was conducted throughout the course of an instructional day over a 10 week period.

The purpose of the present study was to capture a real sense of teacher’s perceptions of the new literacy curriculum, how they use the curriculum to guide instruction, and what changes, if any, they engaged in to improve teaching practices as related to the implementation of the new curriculum. The design of the study was also intended to (a) explore at the ways in which teachers make sense of their space (policy context, school, content, and students, and how this affects the ways in which they implement instructional policy, (b) explore how professional development is structured to bring about fundamental changes in practice, and (c) note how teacher interactions provide insights that bring about change in literacy reform efforts. To conduct ethnographic research, it was important to become “part of the culture” of the classroom by remaining unobtrusive. One of the most unobtrusive positions in a classroom setting involved sitting, recording, and observing from the back of the classroom, keeping students focused on the interactions stemming from the classroom teacher.
One reason for choosing a first grade teacher’s classroom setting as the social situation was the importance of being granted unlimited access to conduct the study. As a Reading Coordinator within the Pelican School District, unlimited access also provided numerous activities to participate freely within the school with other members of the first grade faculty and students. Spradley (1980) noted that this research situation as a “limited-entry that requires permission from one or more persons before conducting the research” (p. 49). Permission was acquired through approval of the Louisiana University Institutional Review Board (Appendix B), principals from the Reading First and Non-Reading First Schools (Appendix C), and each teacher from participating classrooms (Appendix D).

- Participant Observation

  The researcher assumed the role of participant observer in the classroom. As an observer and District Reading Coordinator, the primary goal was to keep a detailed record of every possible angle of the classroom that involved people, environment, and activities. The participant role for the study involved becoming a member of the classroom. The study was approached from an insider/outsider perspective. As an insider, interviews were conducted find the characteristics that teachers believe are essential to provide effective reading instruction in a first grade classroom setting. As an outsider, the roles changed. Observation took place from an outsider perspective as the focal point to view the students, teachers, and the classroom environments as objects. The responsibility of the researcher throughout the qualitative study was to alternate between an insider and an outside, experiencing both worlds from two distinct perspectives.
• Ethnographic Record

The field notes reflected an ethnographic record for later analyses. Spradley (1980) stated “a description of a culture, an ethnography, is produced from an ethnographic record of the events of a society within the given period of time, the ‘events of society’ including, of course informants’ response to the ethnographer, his queries, test and apparatus” (p. 64). The language to be observed and recorded was *concrete language* focused on the specific detail of the situation as much as possible. A tape recorder was used to record each teacher’s verbal language and communicative patterns when permissible and necessary. Notes on activities and interactions were recorded to assist the observer to remember characteristics that were displayed during reading instruction and classroom interactions. The type of field notes included contained a variety of condensed notes, as well as an expanded summary. The note taking system was intended to record key words and important phrases without the need to transcribe a word-for-word account from each observation. The expanded account allowed the researcher to fill in the gaps of information after exit from the scene of the research. This technique provided the researcher with more participant time during the observation. A field work journal was of critical importance during the study. The journal contained data that associated ideas, feelings, experiences, and problems that arose during the study. It was an important source of information that revealed trials and errors of certain research encounters.

• Descriptive Observation

The basis of the present study was the question-observation method, both of which relied on the other. During the process of the study, descriptive observation methods were used to develop a list of questions that guided the subsequent research.
The nine levels of the Developmental Research Sequence Method (DRS) were employed when making conclusive descriptive observations within every social situation. Spradley (1980) contended:

In a most general sense, these dimensions can serve as guides for the participant observer: *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:* set of related activities that people carry out; *time:* the sequencing that takes place over time; *goal:* the things that people are trying to accomplish; *feeling:* the emotion felt and expressed. (p. 78)

Utilizing the nine dimensions as the foundation for the study narrowed the research to a more explicit scope of detailed observation. During the descriptive observations, recurrent activities and comments were noted that were taking place on a daily basis, which assisted in the evolution of themes for later use.

- **Data Analysis**

  Throughout the course of the study, field notes and observations accumulated, after which it was necessary to find cultural patterns within the ethnographic records. Within the cultural patterns it was important to establish relationships between the social situation and the perceived actors, places, and activities. Finding the relationships and patterns during the analysis stage provided a general idea about possible areas for potential, prospective research. The questions, interviews and observations assisted in the analysis between the teachers, both in the Reading First and Non Reading First environments, helping to further define the teacher efficacy possessed by each teacher.
• Focused Observation

The establishment of patterns among field notes created a focused observation within the study. Spradley (1980) defined a focus observation as “a single cultural domain or a few related domains, and the relationships of such domains to the rest of the cultural scene” (p. 10). The focus of the observation encompassed an in-depth investigation concentrating on one specific problem. The investigation included details of what characteristics constituted the perceptions of a first grade reading teacher in the Reading First and Non-Reading First school sectors. During the ethnographic focus, suggestions were taken from the informants to situate and characterize the “why’s” and “how’s” of the teachers. After compiling a list of focused observations, each domain of Ashton’s *Eight Dimensions of Teacher Efficacy* (1984) was organized and highlighted each as major sub-points.

• Taxonomic Analysis

Once each characteristic of teacher efficacy, as noted by Ashton (1984), had been organized, it was important to examine each sector more intensely. A taxonomic analysis divided each dimension of teacher efficacy into specific categories or subsets to represent variances in which each was related to another. The taxonomic analysis involved each dimension that was used within the elementary setting to constitute the actions and beliefs of the teachers in the classroom. From each domain, subsets were categorized about each domain to further broaden the study.

If one teacher expressed positive feedback to promote good classroom management and a positive environment, positive affect was analyzed and classified as positive and negative feedback. Once the taxonomy was complete for each characteristic
presented by the teacher, patterns and relationship emerged across specific subsets. Spradley (1980) stated that “taxonomy, then differs in one respect: it shows the relationship among all the included terms in the domain. Taxonomy reveals subsets and the way they are related to the whole” (p. 114).

- Selected Observations

Selecting observations point involved choosing detailed, explicit focal points during the study. One method of choice was using the interview process. The study consisted of two different types of interview forms: formal, and informal. The formal interviews were conducted and initiated between the participant and the subject using a set of predetermined questions (Appendix E). The technique was implanted with the teachers and principals from each school. The interview consisted of questions that dealt with experiences, methods, workshops, professional in-services, peer coaching, and overall ideologies of the reading initiative. In some cases, a tape recorder was used with the granted permission of the participants. If at any time the participants became uncomfortable with the taping of dialogue, the participant’s rights were protected and respected.

The informal interview consisted of questions that occurred during the course of participant observation. The particular questions arose when involving participants in casual conversation, in reference to specific interactions within the classroom, or dialogue used during grade level meetings. Informal interviews did not require tape recording.

Another form of selected observation was to construct dyadic questions, which involved contrasting between two members of the same domain. When exhibiting a
positive effect, the two members of subsets of this category involved the verbal and non-verbal feedback that revealed how the teacher felt about self and the students. Subsets were analyzed by listing the ways that two participants contrasted between one another. This became a springboard for the discovery of new data to collect in the field. The dyadic question process also became quite useful when comparing and contrasting the interview process with actual teaching interactions in the classroom.

- Componential Analysis

Each domain in the DRS method has attributes that set each member apart. Spradley (1980) noted “whenever an ethnographer discovers contrasts among the members of the domain, these contrasts are best as attributes or components of meaning” (p. 133). Each attribute was represented through a paradigm chart, explicitly demonstrating the categories in a systematic manner. The first column of the chart contained the domain being studied (Aston, 1984). The second, third and fourth columns all represented attributes’ distinguished characteristics that set each other apart from each category (categories may include differentiated instructions, whole group instruction, interventions, workstations, team teaching, assessments). The chart defined and contrasted the differences within each category of the domain, assisting with the task of identifying which domains were of utmost important to use within the study.

- Cultural Themes

The concept of theme was embedded within each culture’s roots. The basis of cultural theme was to discover that every culture was made up of members, values, symbols, and language. Cultural themes usually apply in recurrent activities and can be located in two or more domains. Themes can be discovered through contrasting among
domains, reoccurring expressions, or even through similar relationships that connect with
other domains. Themes were established during the research study through research
immersion to expose new relationships among domains. Spradley (1980) contended that
to find universal themes within a study, one can study certain scenes such as “social
conflict, cultural contradictions, informal techniques of social contrail, managing
impersonal social relationships, acquiring and maintaining status, and solving problems”
(p. 150).

- Cultural Inventory

The last step of the Developmental Research Sequence Method was to take
cultural inventory. The first process of taking cultural inventory was to constantly and
consistently read and review field notes, ethnographic records, and journals on a frequent
basis. A summative list of all cultural domains was of assistance when developing an
outline for the study. The most recurrent domains were focal points for the research, and
the ethnographic records provided details to enhance each domain. Within the cultural
inventory, sketches displaying the physical features and spacing of each school setting
were entered into the record. Finally, miscellaneous data gathered through the course of
the research (class demographic, pictures, lesson plans, and teaching resources, agendas)
was organized to display the overall cultural scene to the audience members.

Significance of the Study

The significance of the present study was to expose factors that impact changes in
the classroom practices of teachers. The study was focused on the assumption that what a
teacher believes about literacy and teaching literacy is integrally related to the quality of
reading being taught in the classroom (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000). In addition, the
attitudes about literacy and preparation of the classroom teacher itself may affect the teacher’s attitudes to the teaching of reading, which in turn have a powerful impact on the atmosphere and ethos of the elementary classroom (McCombs, Kirby, Barney & Magee, 2004). Also notable is the importance ascribed to the teacher’s reflective practice concerning the teaching and learning of literacy, and implementation of change in the classroom.

Throughout the study, the teacher’s perspectives of the district’s newly adopted literacy program were observed and analyzed. Teachers were interviewed and surveyed regarding their philosophy and beliefs of the strictly enforced initiatives. Four teachers were observed throughout the study, two first grade teachers from two Reading First schools, and two first grade teachers from two Non-Reading First Schools.

In an effort to improve the academic achievement of elementary school students, mandates outlined in the NCLB (2001) called for a more comprehensive educational agenda. As such, many local school districts answered the call by seeking to provide a curriculum that would satisfy federal, state, and local initiatives. Increasingly, in the Pelican School District’s improvement efforts, teachers have been called upon to reinvent themselves and their practices. Schools and teachers are now being held accountable for students. Learning and instructional improvement is closely tied to adopting the belief that all students can learn. This complex idea of instructional reform has been outlined in the contents known as the Comprehensive Curriculum (CC), more specifically, by the new Literacy Initiative.

With the growing consensus that schools can no longer allow student to fail, the Reading Initiative was adopted and fully implemented in August 2006 after a review of
the standardized testing data. The data revealed that, despite the many efforts to improve student achievement in reading, writing, math, science and social studies, the students were failing. This would cause the local sanction to be one school away from being labeled “A School District in Crisis.” The Pelican School District revised the current reading curriculum and accountability plan in response to the findings. The program would be comprised of four main elements:

1. Indicators and standards of student achievement,
2. Annual School performance reports,
3. The School Improvement (Strategic) Plan (2006)
4. Sanctions and Recognition

The Literacy Initiative outlined a set of learning outcomes that would specify what students should know and be able to do at the end of each grade level. An alignment of curriculum contents (activities), instructional practices, and assessment measures became the driving forces behind the implementation of the curriculum. These efforts were essential in noting how well the instructional program improved literacy instruction and learning for all students. The results were intended to allow schools to examine the success of the literacy program on different segments through the use of benchmark assessments. One was known as Dynamic Indicators of Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS). These assessments were administered by teachers at the end of the prescribed benchmarking period and used to examine if students were mastering skills necessary in the development of a reader. In some cases, the Edusoft assessment was administered at the end of particular teaching units to note academic achievement. Teachers were
expected to follow a pacing guide that imitated “good classroom instruction” so that students would progress at the expected norm outlined in the curriculum.

With the standards, data-driven school improvement (strategic) plans, and assessments, many attempts have been made to encourage K-3 teachers to adopt the new Literacy Initiative that promotes performance based instruction. The challenge to adapt to new teaching practices ultimately lies in the hands of the teachers. It is important to realize that, even within the seemingly “complete” nature of the new Literacy Initiative, teachers are still able to mediate policy in ways that are not necessarily intended in the initial planning for curriculum reform. As a result, the present study explored the implementation of instructional reforms in an elementary school setting by assessing how teachers have made sense of the policies.

Selection of Participants: Sampling Techniques

An implicit relationship may exist between teacher beliefs about the role of the teacher, levels of optimism bias, and teacher efficacy. The present study was an effort to highlight the educational beliefs and levels of optimism of some teachers as variables possibly affecting teacher efficacy levels at the elementary level. The present study is a presentation of findings from the questions posed from the beginning, those that emerged, and information that highlights the findings whenever possible.

Themes derived as a result of using the Reading First, and Non-Reading First programs may add to the validation of the outcomes from them. Key factors that were considered throughout the study were:

1. Explore links between literacy curriculum and what was observed.
2. Explore issues that attended to attempts to change teacher’s instructional practices in classrooms and schools.
3. Explore what hindrances at achieving results.

4. Relate why, and how high stakes accountability environments are still fashioned in context at the local level by what teachers actually do to implement the new literacy policy.

5. Provide insight to an evaluation intended to highlight the impact of teachers on implementation of the new Literacy Initiative.

Four schools were selected to participate in the study using characteristics that define incorporating cases that manifest the phenomenon intensely, but not extremely, as in intensity case sampling (Patton, 2002). Schools exhibiting the traits that may be found among a variable group of schools were selected for participation (Reading First Schools vs. Non-Reading First Schools). Hollow Brook Elementary and Willow Lane Elementary are currently receiving funding and functioning as Reading First Schools. Green Meadows Elementary and Winding Trail Elementary are schools that shadow the Reading First model in similar aspects, but are labeled Non-Reading First Schools due to lack of complete funding for staff and resources. Through the use of intensity sampling and stratified purposeful sampling (Patton, 2002), the District Curriculum Coordinator was asked to suggest schools with integrity and good intentions for the purposes of the present study. The four first grade teachers were chosen on the same basis with recommendations from the principals. Table 2 is a summary of key demographics for each of the four schools involved in the study. Information gathered reflected the grades, status, school performance score, growth label and ranking as identified by academic assistance from the beginning of that particular school year. At the time of
Study, this is the data the school would use to drive the instructional goals in the school improvement plan.

Table 2

Key Demographics of Participating Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Grades/Reading First?</th>
<th>Magnet Status</th>
<th>School Performance Score</th>
<th>Growth Label/Growth Target</th>
<th>Academic Assistance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hollow Brook</td>
<td>K-5/ Y</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>71.5</td>
<td>Minimal Academic Growth/ 5.6</td>
<td>Academic Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willow Lane</td>
<td>Pre-K -/Y</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>57.3</td>
<td>Minimal Academic Growth/ 7.8%</td>
<td>School Improvement 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winding Trail</td>
<td>K-5/ N</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>School in Decline/3.1</td>
<td>Two Stars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Meadows</td>
<td>Pre-K-5/N</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>Exemplary Growth/3.0</td>
<td>Three Stars</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Reading First Schools for the Study

Hollow Brook Elementary School

One of the Reading First schools chosen to become a part of the present study will be referred to as Hollow Brook Elementary School. It is located on the lower south side of the city in an area known as “the Valley.” Hollow Brook is an elementary school that offers Kindergarten to fifth grade, has approximately 508 students enrolled, and is comprised of 9% White students, 78% African American students, and 13% Hispanic and Other ethnic groups. The regular education program services about 451 students and has an Exceptional population for 57 students. The low socioeconomic area of town has been known for its high crime rates and as being a major drug traffic area. Hollow Brook has a
staff of 27 teachers. Over 32% of staff members hold a Master’s degree or higher. Due to low teacher retention, over one third of the teaching staff is new to the school. In an effort to create a sense of school spirit and teacher moral, the Principal has implemented a teacher incentive program that promotes assisting teachers with classroom discipline issues, highlights a teacher-of-the-month and provides a monthly staff breakfast and appreciation refreshment station for teachers and faculty members. Table 3 is a summary of the demographics of the school district.

Table 3

Hollow Brook Elementary Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>% of minority</th>
<th>% free of reduced lunch</th>
<th>% of mobility</th>
<th>% of attendance</th>
<th>% of truancy</th>
<th>% of suspension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hollow Brook</td>
<td>91% of 508</td>
<td>94.5%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Despite the high disadvantages that plague the area, the performance level of the school has been labeled as minimal academic growth concomitant with the state average. Hollow Brook Elementary has an extensive tutoring program for parents and families that was been implemented by Title I funding provided by the district since the 2001-2002 school session. Principal Davis is experiencing her ninth year as Principal of Hollow Brook Elementary. The challenges at the school have been overwhelming at times, and stem from an enormous number of student behavior issues, high teacher absences, and high teacher turn-over rates.
Willow Lane Elementary School

The second Reading First school chosen to take part in the present study will be known as Willow Lane Elementary School. This centrally located school is housed within one of the oldest communities found in the Pelican School District. Willow Lane is one of the larger elementary schools in the district with a student population averaging about 567-600 children on any given day. This PreK-5 grade school is comprised of 7% White students, 79% African American students, and 16% Hispanic and Other ethnic groups. The regular education program services about 485 students and has a special program that provides exceptional student services for the visually impaired, learning impaired, and mobility impaired students comprising 57 students. The low-middle class socioeconomic area is not necessary known for any particular trends other than that of being one the most transited areas for families relocated as a result of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Currently, Willow Lane has a regular education teaching staff of 21 teachers with over 58% of staff members holding a Master’s degree or higher. Additional nine teachers are on staff to service the exceptional student population. One teacher has obtained the status of being Nationally Board Certified (NBCT, 2006), while one teacher is in the middle of the process to obtain the status as well. Most of the grade level teams were complete and established at the beginning of the school year, with the exception of three vacancies in fifth grade, first grade, and second grade. This dilemma, together with the shortage of substitutes, would be the springboard for high teacher pupil ratios and low teacher moral, in some cases. Further, the fact that over 60% of the teaching staff is new
causes major deficits in teacher competency levels and struggles in student achievement.

Table 4 illustrated the basic demographics of the school.

Table 4

Willow Lane Elementary Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>% of minority</th>
<th>% free of reduced lunch</th>
<th>% of mobility</th>
<th>% of attendance</th>
<th>% of truancy</th>
<th>% of suspension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Willow Lane</td>
<td>90% of 567</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The school is adequately staffed with a principal, assistant principal, secretary, and front office clerk. Ancillary classes include music, fine arts, physical education, and foreign language. Principal Peters is a 4th year administrative leader of Willow Lane Elementary. She believes that cultivating a strong faculty and staff is the key to overcoming the odds present in the day-to-day school.

Regardless of the overwhelming amount of student transited rate, teachers try to regroup and adjust instruction to ensure that all students are given an opportunity to learn. As a result, the school has been awarded the label of minimum academic growth and recipient of academic assistance as outlined in the latest school performance score summary (State of Louisiana Department of Education, 2006)). Willow Lane is funded school wide through its Title I funding and functions under the parameters as outlined by the law to connect the school, community, and parents as a unified unit. The school has four community partners, a parent liaison, two instructional specialists, and two members of the faculty who function as support personnel. A parent resource center is housed on
the campus and provides educational assistance and remediation for parents in need of literacy and parenting skills. The site is taking the community involvement component of the school improvement plan to facilitate workshops for parents and the community in an effort to circulate awareness and increase partnerships. At Willow Lane Elementary, the mission statement is:

Working with parents and the community to provide a nurturing environment, this promotes learning as a lifelong process and enables each child to be an educated, confident, self-directed, positive member of an ever-changing global society.

Non-Reading First Schools for the Study

Winding Trail Elementary School

The first Non-Reading First School chosen to become a part of the present study will be referred to as Winding Trail Elementary School. It is centrally located in a small, suburban area in the city. Winding Trail is an elementary school that offers K-5 grades. Winding Trail has approximately 466 students enrolled comprised of 15% White students, 71% African American students, and 14% Hispanic and Other ethnic groups. The regular education program services about 269 students and has an exceptional population for the remaining students. Green Meadows has a staff of 23 teachers with over 42% holding a Master’s degree or higher. The performance level of the school has been labeled as academically above the state. Winding Trail is in its second year being deemed as a Title I School, which qualifies the school to partake in the federal funding to promote school growth. Table 5 is a summary of the school demographics. The information compiled in the table was based on day one of beginning of the study. However, due to high student mobility, the numbers changed daily.
Table 5
Winding Trail Elementary Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>% of minority</th>
<th>% free of reduced lunch</th>
<th>% of mobility</th>
<th>% of attendance</th>
<th>% of truancy</th>
<th>% of suspension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Winding Trail</td>
<td>65% of 466 students</td>
<td>68.5%</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Although the school’s performance score is well above the state’s average scores, the slight decline in last year’s testing data at Winding Trail categorizes the score of 93% as a school in decline. Each year, teachers are encouraged to pursue obtaining a National Board Teaching Certification (NBCT, 2006). Three teachers have been awarded the honor and one teacher is now in the process of obtaining the prestigious status as well. Despite the decline, Winding Trail has received two stars for the category of Academic Assistance.

“Seasoned Educator” is the term most teachers at Winding Trail use to refer to Principal Shaw. Principal Shaw has invested well over 30 years in Pelican School District. She takes pride in her role as Principal despite the crime within the proximity of the school. Students are encouraged to work hard and do their best whether they participate in the gifted or regular curriculum program.

Green Meadows Elementary School

Green Meadows Elementary was one of two Non- Reading First schools chosen to become a part of the present study. Green Meadows is an elementary school that offers
Pre-K to fifth grade. The school has approximately 452 students enrolled, who comprise 35% White students, 51% African American students, and 16% Hispanic and Other ethnic groups. The Magnet attracts students because of the strong emphasis on the Arts. Students at Green Meadows Elementary must apply and be accepted after the applications are reviewed. Students are enrolled based on a “lottery” system; students who qualify are placed in a pool of names are accepted based on selection. Table 6 is a summary of the demographics of the school.

Table 6
Green Meadows Elementary Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>% of minority</th>
<th>% free of reduced lunch</th>
<th>% of mobility</th>
<th>% of attendance</th>
<th>% of truancy</th>
<th>% of suspension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Green Meadows</td>
<td>67% of 452 students</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Green Meadows Elementary has a staff of 25 teachers with over 55% holding a Master’s degree or higher. The performance level of the school has been labeled Exemplary Growth, which has an attachment of three stars. This is Green Meadows first year being deemed as a Title I School, which qualifies the school to partake in the federal funding to promote school growth.

The focus on the Arts allows students to take special program-specific classes in dance, music (vocal and instrumental), visual arts and dramatic arts. Students are engrossed in the parameters surrounding the Arts curriculum and participate in several programs throughout the year that display the program’s efforts. Principal Harris, a 26
year veteran and fifth year principal who considers herself fortunate to be principal at such a prestigious school. She can often be found interacting with students and teachers during instructional time. Principal Harris finds that her staff is very knowledgeable and willing to do what is asked of them on most occasions. That is makes her life as a principal rewarding because she can focus on student learning, not teacher resistance.

Data Analysis

To investigate the relationship between teacher efficacy, beliefs, and curriculum, the participants were administered a questionnaire consisting of instruments measuring each variable. The Pre-Observation Survey and Reading Coordinators Site Visit tool (Appendix E) will be used to document observations, classroom environment and activities involving the literacy curriculum implementation. The Planning and Evaluation Tool for Effective School-Wide Reading Programs devised by the University of Oregon College of Education (Appendix I) was instrumental in providing a structure to measure elementary school-wide reading initiatives and implementation, as well as for developing the Mid Study Survey (Appendix G). The Questions for the Pre-Observation protocol (Appendix F), Question for the Pre-Observation Interview (Appendix E), and the fixed response measure for teachers' beliefs and survey (Appendix G) were developed based on Weinstein's (1989) open-ended questionnaire to examine beliefs and actions. These forms were used in conjunction with artifacts such as “teaching moments” and “student responses/reactions” as noted by the observer and peers. Also, additional questions that emerged from the study were used at the end of the study (Appendix J). Some of the questions required teachers to respond on a five-point Likert scale from 'well below average' to 'well above average.'
In the Reading First Schools, recorded observations and the Reading Coordinators checklists were used to conduct classroom observations. These guides assisted to further communicate the purpose and rationale of the study’s findings. These tools were used in combination with the questionnaires and surveys to illustrate what was observed during each designated time period. The information was analyzed to note similarities and insight into the variances of each setting. The observer used an adapted version of the Qualitative Observation Quadrant (Appendix H) to list and report findings in summary with the adaptation from What Makes Professional Development Effective?: Analysis of a National Sample of Teachers (2002) document.

Biases

The challenge in qualitative research is bias in some cases. By participating and observing in the “social situation” (Bodgen & Biklen, 1998), the researcher gains insight and is driven by the data. The researcher does not pass judgment, but adds to the knowledge and becomes a member of the cultural community by learning from others. Assumption is not engaged in; rather, the researcher is challenged by the information gained through observations, artifacts and interactions as they occur.

Bodgan and Biklen (1998) suggested three aspects for the audience to consider as the ethnographer becomes immersed within a specific study. The issue of bias in qualitative research is an important one, and demands special attention and multiple discussions (Bogdan & Bilkin). The ethnographer is participating in a social setting for a prolonged amount of time. The subjects and activity therein will constantly be challenged by the data alone. Geertz (1973) suggested:
If you want to understand what a science is you should look in the first instance not at its theories or findings and certainly not at what its apologists say about it; you should look at what the practitioners of it do. (p. 5)

This perspective reflects a common ethnographic value and research strategy that is described as one "which tries to stay close to the phenomena by avoiding as much as possible all abstraction and imposition of constructs, and by relating always the object of study to the experiences of the subject who does the studying." (p. 7)

"The researcher’s primary goal is to add to knowledge and not pass judgment on the setting" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 35). The aim of the present study was not to make any broad-scale, universally applicable teaching implications for designers and instructors who are implementing the literacy curriculum, but to bring forth for further exploration and reflection some critical issues that emerged in experiences and behaviors of the first grade teachers within the elementary school setting. Finally, “qualitative researchers guard against their own biases by recording detailed instances that include reflections of their own subjectivity” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 35). The field notes and ethnographic record also provided snapshots of the cultural community and learning among its members.

The researcher was charged with the responsibility to describe and explain the findings of the teachers and the curriculum through personal reflection and narratives—always "staying close to the phenomena" (Geertz, 1973). The focus was to stay close to the phenomenon of researcher bias and subjectivity as may be identified through the data. Regarding objectivity, it is important for the researcher to be straightforward about any personal bias. Objectivity is most important when it comes to the data collection guarding
against seeing only data that conforms to ideas, or the manipulation of data to fit
preconceptions, and in presenting the conclusions. Geertz, (1973) also contended that “a
researcher may have an agenda in the form of wanting to help the studied group with a
problem, or wanting to right an injustice. This is legitimate as long as the data collected
and used for that purpose was unbiased, unmanipulated and true” (p. 25).

Trustworthiness

Establishing trustworthiness throughout the study is of great importance for the
researcher/investigator and the participants. The following techniques were used to
ensure credibility in a naturalistic setting, techniques found in Lincoln and Guba


- Member checks. Noting characteristics that are prevalent in similar environments
  and among peers within observed situation
- Peer debriefing. Discussions and conversation among peers, subjects and
  observer.
- Reflexive journal. Notes and dialogue scribed during observations by the
  observer and pen.
- Negative case analysis. Important to qualitative study in that it uses two or more
cases/subjects (Reading First Site and Non-Reading First Site in this case) to run
the study and receive data from the observations and artifacts.
- Persistent observations. Identifying those characteristics that are most relevant to
  the issue being pursued and focusing on them in detail.
- Thick descriptions. Descriptions that give detailed characteristics of the observed
  environment, participants and subjects at hand.
Triangulation. Use of multiple sources of gathering data to lead to a fuller understanding of the phenomena being studied (The four first grade teachers at two different schools) (Bodgan & Biklen, 1998).

Patton (2002) advocates the use of triangulation by stating “triangulation strengthens a study by combining methods. This can mean using several kinds of methods or data, including using both quantitative and qualitative approaches” (p. 247). Patton further contends that if the validity or trustworthiness can be maximized or tested then more “credible and defensible result” may lead to generalizability, which is one of the concepts suggested by Slavin (2005) as the structure for both doing and documenting high quality qualitative research. The quality of a research is related to the generalizability of the result, and thereby to the testing and increasing the validity or trustworthiness of the research.

In this view, Patton (2001) explained the judging validity and reliability within the realism paradigm relies on multiple perceptions about a single reality. Fetterman and Pitman, (1986) argued “The view that all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context” (p. 93 ). Lincoln and Guba (1985) further acknowledged that the issues of reliability, validity and trustworthiness, quality and rigor are meant to be important to the research in any paradigm. This makes the research equally “defensible” in establishing confidence in the findings. Hence, the participant observer situates himself to ensure that the pureness of the qualitative study could take on the characteristics as such.
Summary

To investigate the relationship between teacher efficacy, beliefs, and possible impact on the literacy implementation, the participants were interviewed periodically at grade level and individually to address questions that emerged throughout the study. The importance of this qualitative study was to provide the reader with collected data and research to discover what teachers’ beliefs and actions were within classroom-teacher efficacy. Chapter 3 defined the methods and procedures used to accomplish the goal of the proposed study. As qualitative ethnographic approach was deemed the most appropriate method to inquire into the research problem. A review of the population sample, data collection and analysis procedures, instrumentation and reliability and validity were described. Chapter 4 will present the data derived from the research study.
CHAPTER IV
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of the present study was to explore factors of teacher efficacy and perspectives related to literacy implementation in an elementary school setting. The framework of the qualitative ethnographic study was based on questions, observations, and interviews implementing Ashton’s Eight Dimensions of Teacher Efficacy (1984) as a guide. Data that were collected was based upon the literacy curriculum of the Pelican School District. To capture the essence of teacher efficacy, four first grade teachers were the participants: two from Reading First Schools identified as Hollow Brook and Willow Lane, and two from Non-Reading First Schools identified as Winding Trail and Green Meadows. The study was completed over a period of 10 weeks in the selected schools to ensure equitable observation time in both settings.

Chapter Design

The following chapter is arranged by each school selected for the study and the data collected from the participants from that school. The discussion under each school is organized by items 1-8 from the Dimensions of Teacher Efficacy shown in the following Table 7. Data is reported as collected for each participant at the schools. The schools will be organized and analyzed in the following order:

- Hollow Brook Elementary
- Willow Lane Elementary
- Winding Trail Elementary
- Green Meadows

Observations, interviews and surveys will be combined to discuss outcomes
Table 7

Dimensions of Teacher Efficacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EIGHT DIMENSIONS OF TEACHER EFFICACY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. A sense of personal accomplishment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Positive expectations for student behavior and achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Personal responsibility for student learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Strategies for achieving objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Positive affect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Sense of control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Sense of common teacher/student goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Democratic decision making</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reading First Hollow Brook Teacher: Ms. Young

The year has been quite interesting for the participating teacher from Hollow Brook Elementary. Teacher A, Ms. Young, is a first semester first grade teacher at the school. This 24 year old African American is new to the school, as well as the school district. Ms. Young holds a degree in elementary education and is currently working on a Master’s degree to prepare to become a school administrator. Due to an urgent need to fill a first grade position, Principal Davis hired Ms. Young after the first meeting. The need for a first grade teacher was critical for Principal Davis. The year began with one teacher, then another was required when the first one left, and Ms. Young was interviewing for the position.
Ms. Young is the third teacher to grace the parameters of this first grade classroom. The classroom has been plagued with a series of behavior problems and gaps in continued, solid instruction. Ms. Young was committed to taking on the challenge even though two past teachers failed at the task. Ms. Young has been able to maintain the management of classroom behavior, learned the daily schedule and how to teach and control first graders. In addition to learning the curriculum, Ms. Young has also been learning how to implement the new Literacy Initiative’s reading program.

Ms. Young walked into a classroom that was disorganized and chaotic. Instructional materials were scattered across the teacher’s desk and there was no sign of grades or any system of organization. That was Ms. Young’s first day. The first goal in Ms. Young’s opinion was to get focused and make it through the day. As impossible as the day would seem, something wonderful happened at 8:45 a.m. that would cause some of the children to “come to order.” At that time, the reading coach would come in the door and proceed to assist Ms. Young with reading instruction. Two teachers in the classroom brought things into focus.

Ms. Young reported that as she was new to the system, all of the materials and procedures seemed overwhelming and too much to learn in one day. One of the areas that were really enforced at the school was instruction regarding the reading block. Because Ms. Young did not attend the summer Reading Institute held by the District, the entire notion of the reading program was quite overwhelming for her to grasp.

The best approach to learning the program, Ms. Young decided, was to read the manuals, observe the reading coach model lessons, and take “crash” courses during and after school and at grade level meetings to try to catch up. Ms. Young was ambitious in
her attempts to establish behavior routines and a management system. She believed that, once students became familiar with the new management system, the instruction would be more effective.

Ms. Young can often be found spending instructional time correcting incorrect behavior or reviewing classroom rules. Students were placed in pairs of two and divided into rows. This seemed to lessen the focus on inappropriate behavior and student disengagement. Unfortunately, due to the lack of an assigned teacher, many of the students were having a hard time adjusting to the new pace. Ms. Young welcomed any assistance and help with classroom instruction or assistance in management.

Ms. Young was chosen to participate in the present study because she was a first grade teacher new to the teaching profession. The lack of knowledge and experience are challenges present daily in Ms. Young’s classroom. She did not have a philosophy about how to teach, let alone how to teach reading in a first grade setting. Due to the nature of the school, many community and social issues plague the school on a constant basis; however, the positive atmosphere and supportive administration aids in maintaining an instructional setting conducive to learning. The Reading Coach and Principal worked with Ms. Young because they wanted to see the class become a stable, safe, and productive learning environment. The fully secured campus was monitored on a consistent basis to deter crime. This high crime area is known for its reputation of drug trafficking, high drop out rates and illiteracy rate. Many of the families live in subsidy housing and very few are employed. Many students walk to school and are primarily responsible for making it to school on their own. The principal and teachers make many
home visits and do most of the parent-teacher conferences whenever they can get in touch with the parents. Table 8 summarizes Ms. Young’s students.

Table 8

Ms. Young’s Classroom Demographics Pre-Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Size</th>
<th>Levels Achievement</th>
<th>Racial Makeup</th>
<th>DIBELS Benchmark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B__ G__</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 students</td>
<td>6 students are</td>
<td>25 students</td>
<td>42% of the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 boys</td>
<td>receiving resource</td>
<td>are of African</td>
<td>students are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 girls</td>
<td>and Exceptional</td>
<td>American</td>
<td>reading on or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>student Services</td>
<td>decent; 1</td>
<td>above grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>student is bi-</td>
<td>level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>racial</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interview with Hollow Brook Principal Davis and Reading Coach

As the instructional leader of the school, Principal Davis was asked to reflect upon the Dimensions of Teacher Efficacy (Ashton, 1984) regarding the instruction of literacy on her campus, specifically with the first grade curriculum. The 29 year educator participates on many committees that focus on the improvement of literacy instruction as well as those that involve the community and school networks.

- Dimension 1: A Sense of Personal Accomplishment

Principal Davis commented, “Teachers need to be acknowledged for the things that they are doing right. It seems as if no one is noticing the good, but rather takes pride in highlighting our area of weaknesses.” Principal Davis contended teachers are overwhelmed and need positive feedback on a continuous basis with the literacy initiatives. She remarked that several of the District Leaders are not aware of just how much teachers are doing to help students become better readers.

- Dimension 2: Positive Expectations for Student Behavior
As one enters the halls of Hollow Brook Elementary, several posters promoting positive behavior and success are apparent. Principal Davis believes that the environment plays an important role in the success of students, as well as faculty members. She stated that “Most of our children come from homes that do not lend itself [sic] to positive feedback and praise. We all know that students function best when they feel safe and appreciated.” The school does have boundaries; however, the manner in which students encounter those boundaries is in a welcoming, non-threatening manner. As far as literacy is concerned, students are given an opportunity to monitor progress both in and out of the class as displayed by the literacy data walls. The reading expectations are set and acknowledged on a quarterly basis. Rewards are given to those that attempt, meet, and exceed those expectations.

- Dimension 3: Personal Responsibility for Student Learning and Strategies for Achieving Objectives

About 8 years ago, Principal Davis became the Administrator of Hollow Brook Elementary. It was during that time the school was at risk of becoming Academically Unacceptable (School Report Card, 2006). Since that time, many efforts to reform instruction have changed in literacy and the other content areas. In 2010, the school is a Reading First School with various components that address teacher competency and student achievement. Principal Davis volunteered to become a Reading First School because she knew that “changes needed to be made and this was just the vehicle to help get us there” (Principal Davis and Reading Coach Interview, February 22, 2008).

This comment reveals that Principal Davis takes responsibility for student learning because she truly believes the Reading First Model works. The Reading Coach also agrees the structure of the literacy curriculum has been the best thing that has
happened to the school over the past year and a half. She felt the strategies outlined in an explicit and direct manner help teachers become more precise and effective during literacy instruction. This is why teachers engage in weekly professional development activities during grade level meetings. The Reading Coach facilitates the meeting along with the National Reading Consultant on a monthly basis. Teaching strategies to promote the five components of reading are discussed and further clarified.

- Dimensions 5 and 6: Positive Affect and A Sense of Control

Principal Davis and the Reading Coach both agree that teachers feel good when the results from the tests (both formative and summative) reveal progress. If any area of reading instructional delivery is giving them difficulty, teachers know a network for collaboration that offers support rather criticism is available for help. Monthly walk-throughs are done during the reading block after which strengths and weaknesses are addressed and the teacher gets recommendations for improvement. These recommendations are outlined and specific so this reduces the unknown and the amount of stress when teachers are planning for future reading lessons.

The Reading Coach believes that classroom management, organization and effective planning along with the delivery of literacy instruction, helps a teacher acquire a sense of control

“The Reading program offers the support so that teachers will know what to do and how to do it. If there are any areas of concern, my role is to help the teacher develop ways of making the instruction purposeful and effective. Two years ago, we did not have feedback to this degree. We planned differently and more autonomously. Now, teachers are given specifics
on how to manage their class. Faculty members such as myself the math content trainer, the Science Specialist and the Social Studies specialist, are here to help walk them through the process. Teachers now realize the control they have with the structure of the literacy block as well as the instruction in other content areas. Furthermore, I have noticed that our behavior problems, during this uninterrupted literacy time, is almost down to zero” (Principal Davis and Reading Coach Interview, February 22, 2008).

- Dimensions 7 and 8: Sense of Common Teacher/Student Goals, And Democratic Decision Making

The Reading block is a combination of whole group, small group, and individual instruction. Teachers are now branching out to make individual decisions when it comes to literacy workstations. The principal and Reading Coach expressed that teachers have been in-serviced on the options for selecting activities within the program. The resource bank that has been set up allows teachers to choose approved activities based on the skill that the students need. Teachers are comfortable selecting these activities and providing more than one choice during differentiated instruction. This definitely takes the guesswork out of what is instructionally appropriate and fit for the work stations.

Principal Davis reported:

“We have to give our teachers credit and allow them to have a role in making instructional decisions for their students. With the tools and training we provide, it is easier for a teacher to become successful. I’ll admit, the task of managing a classroom is overwhelming, but if we assist teachers when they reach a road block, it allows them to see how doing things correctly and more efficiently helps the students. The Reading coach has been most instrumental in assisting teachers
on how to use the data to help them drive instruction. Our data walls are in constant metamorphosis. Teachers are literally driven to want to move students in reading achievement because they know the cause of problems for struggling readers and they have the tools to help students on site. If teachers don’t have what they need, I go and get it. I believe if we ask teachers to do something, we should give them all the resources needed to make it happen. This is why I am always volunteering to pilot new programs and purchase materials that have been proven to help students learn to read and succeed in school” (Davis and Reading Coach Interview, February 22, 2008).

Principal Davis continued:

“Programs will forever be around, but programs don’t teach children; Teachers do! So my teachers are encouraged and given the opportunity to engage in making decisions on the operation of their class; it definitely makes for a happier teacher. However, when teachers do not take the initiative to make the decisions or choose not to participate, it shows. It is then the Coach and I become more proactive with that teacher by giving support through extra professional development activities, scheduling visits and modeling. We encourage more feedback from their grade level team and show how it can work.”

Interview with Reading First Hollow Brook Teacher: Ms. Young

Ms. Young is definitely a teacher who is overcoming the odds with her class this year. She has been an inspiration because she continues to highlight the good when she has every right and opportunity to say what is not so encouraging. Ms. Young is
enthusiastic and very eager to offer information regarding teaching literacy and her perspective on the literacy curriculum for first grade.

- **Dimension 1: A Sense of Personal Accomplishment**

  Our interview began with a conversation about her class and the sense of personal accomplishment as a first grade reading teacher. She attributed most of her success to the wonderful impact gained during the student teaching experience:

  “I was fortunate enough to student teach at a school that was already mimicking the Reading First Model. It was there that I learned how to use data as a tool towards student achievement. Although I was only there one semester, my supervising teacher allowed me to interact with the planning, organizing and delivery of most reading lesson. Hence, I became very familiar with the model and it was not as difficult to move into the position as a full time teacher. I felt so relieved to have been offered a position at a Reading First school because of this experience. I have been able to go above and beyond what is expected in this type of atmosphere; I feel a step ahead” (Young’s Personal Interview, January 22, 2008).

- **Dimension 2: Positive Expectations for Student Behavior and Achievement**

  Ms. Young acknowledges and embraces the support of Principal Davis for being a key factor in the school’s vision and efforts:

  “I believe that the principal sets the tone as to how a school will function. Our principal is all about the business of learning. She sets high expectations for us and in turn we set high expectations for our students. We are not allowed to give excuses, because excuses do not produce results. The leadership we have at our
school has focus and vision. The majority of our students come from homes that are not structured or lack a system of routines. Teachers at our school are taught to hold high expectations for both behavior and academics. Our Time out room moderator and Dean of Students assist us by offering sessions for students that are frequently misbehaving.”

Although the behavior of the students has long been recognized as a significant factor in classroom management, Ms. Young believes that it is the teacher that sets the tone for the students by establishing objectives and goals and keeping everyone informed and on task.

“With our students, I try to come across with positive words of encouragement. Often times, I involve the students when making classroom rules so that they feel ownership, thus holding them accountable when a rule is broken. We have three major Rules that govern our class: 1. Treat others the way you would like to be treated. 2. Raise your hand before speaking 3. Tell the teacher if you have a problem.

Most of my behavior issues arise during recess or free time. The literacy block is so structured that students are always on task and those who are not following the rules quickly find themselves alone or not having as much fun learning” (Young’s Personal Interview, February 22, 2008)

- Dimensions 3 and 4: Personal responsibility for Student Learning and Strategies for Achieving Objectives

During our interview, I noticed that Ms. Young references the many opportunities to take initiative and responsibility for meeting an array students needs.

“Our first grade team is constantly looking for ways of teaching a concept so that
the student learns what it is they need in order to become a reader or put into practice good reader’s strategies. The first grade curriculum involves teaching the basics of phonemic awareness in the beginning of the year to practicing fluency and comprehension in oral reading by the end of the year. We are given opportunities to meet in grade level and visit other classrooms/schools during the literacy block to see how it works from others. Therefore, I learn best by observing the successes and failures and it helps me know exactly how to teach a concept. This type of learning goes beyond a textbook; rather it gives us hands on practice which I can say helps develop my teaching. Students can achieve more because we have a plan that is not only organized, but we know it is proven to work, based on successful practices.”

Ms. Young further expressed that she trusts the program’s quality and the leadership from her colleagues and reading coach.

“I must say that I depend on their expertise a lot. If they were not here, I don’t know how I would manage all the tasks that we are expected to do in literacy on a daily basis. I know I am not as experienced as all the others, so I have to ask more questions and hope that the answers I am given are the ones I need. I know they (answers; feedback) are, that is a great part of my confidence.”

- Dimensions 5 and 6: Positive Affect and Sense of Control

Ms. Young feels good about what she is teaching:

“Reading First is like a shot in the arm. We have been taught that several professionals in the area of reading and others in fields of research came together to bring to the forefront the best tools for teaching students how to read. I am
confident that if they (the committee) found that strong and solid instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension will give students the best instruction in reading; this is what I will follow. There is nothing like feeling that you are doing the right thing for these children. Supposedly, if other methods only assisted those that were destined to read, now we are using the explicit teaching model to reach all. No assumptions are made; we can teach those that are on the right track and remediate those that need extra support. (Young’s Personal Interview, January 22, 2008).

- Dimensions 5 and 6: Positive Affect and Sense of Control

Throughout our interview, Ms. Young talked about how as a teacher, she must have control and be the leader of the class. She believes that this is accomplished by organization and following the program as outlined.

“I can teach with my eyes closed with this program. Not literally, but the manual is easy to get the hang of. Don’t get me wrong, I spend a lot of time planning and preparing for each day’s lesson, but it is worth it. I plan the lessons for reading with my whole group instruction and small group instruction. I often wonder how some teachers do it without preparation. Without planning, I am sure there will be multiple consequences; for one, the interventionist who comes to help during the reading block will not have anything to go on. My students would not have meaningful activities (station activities that include ‘hands-on’ interaction with sounds, fluency activities in the listening station that interests boys and girls, while modeling good reading, computer activities that are animated but teach vocabulary etc…) that they can do in the literacy centers and valuable time will be
wasted trying to figure out what to do while I am sure the students would probably become unruly and not learn. To have control with delivery of instruction and my class is important to me in more ways than one: Good teaching goes hand and hand with routines and management” (Young’s Personal Interview, January 22, 2008).

- Dimensions 7 and 8: Sense of Common Teacher/Student Goals and Democratic Decision Making

Bandura (1995) argued that a teacher that recognize and makes a change in teaching practice is the direct function of personal teaching efficacy. Personal teaching efficacy, the belief that a teacher holds about his or her ability to make a positive difference in a student's ability to learn, affects the amount of effort that a teacher will expend in persistence and show in the face of obstacles.

Evident in talking with Ms. Young is that she has instilled her beliefs in her students. She talks about how making good choices will result in desirable outcomes (cooperation in literacy work stations will increase the likelihood of enjoying the entire time for recess). During transitions students join in singing positive chants and classroom motivation statement such as ‘Busy, busy, busy as a bee, watch me, watch me and see, see, see.’ Mrs. Young states that her students are very verbal and enjoy participating in music and movement.

Mrs. Young also keeps folders with various skill traces available for parents and administrators. Mrs. Young visits with the students to review the folders and explains to the students why the information is important and how they can work harder to read more and do better on activities. Although this system is not mandated, Ms. Young chooses to include the folder concept as an added source of documentation and data for instruction
and as quick reminder for students to see where they stand and the goals they need to reach. She understands that students are expected to accomplish certain skills per 9 weeks as evidenced by the unit tests; however, she finds that the extra activities found within the folder are optional and allows her to make more choices available for students to master a skill.

“I try to choose activities that my students can relate to. My boys are fond of sports and cars and the girls are drawn towards fairytales and dolls. It is necessary for me to find literature with these themes both fiction and non-fiction. My principal and reading coach are very supportive in that if we show interests in materials we want to use with our students, they will use funding or find ways of getting it for us. We also have input with the way materials of instruction are purchased; I hear that some teachers from other schools do not even know when these materials are ordered.”

Ms. Young continued:

“I believe that those teachers that show an interest in making good decisions and learning through professional development, such as myself are afforded these privileges. Those that do not, lose their opportunity to give insight. Not because someone is leaving them out, but because time is limited and administrators appreciate efforts of those that are putting forth an extra effort. I appreciate my experience in being able to have a say at my school when it comes to my grade level” (Young’s Personal Interview, February 22, 2008).

Mrs. Young was very enthusiastic and eager to help her entire grade level at any length. She always checked with her principal to make sure she was doing her best.
Observation of Ms. Young at Reading First Hollow Brook

The observation data obtained from Ms. Young’s class was compiled in combination with classroom observations, grade level meetings, and the mid-study survey information that was collected. In doing such, one is able to identify Ashton’s Eight Dimensions of Teacher Efficacy (1984) by examining Characteristics and Effective Literacy Teacher factors as outlined by several gurus in the field of literacy and instruction (Block & Pressely, 2002; Collins & Cheek, 1999; Darling–Hammond, 1996; Fontus & Pinnell, 2001; Fuller & Brown, 1976.) Bandura (1995) contended one can gain valuable insight about individuals from firsthand accounts generated from performance, and interpretations of literacy instruction.

- Dimensions 1 and 2: A Sense of Personal Accomplishment and Positive Expectations for Student Behavior and Achievement

On most days at 8:25 am, Ms. Young can be found corralling her students from the cafeteria in anticipation of the Reading Block that begins at 9:00; however, the preparation for class begins long before the 7:55 am arrival time for teachers. Ms. Young must prepare materials and review the various lessons that will take place. Each student is given a smile, as well as a vibrant “good morning” while students put away materials and begin working on the morning message.

The morning message is on the overhead projector and many of the students are orderly and ready to work. A few students are picked up by the reading interventionist so that a group of students can be introduced to the day’s skills to be taught in reading. Ms. Young commented this is important because it gives students a “jumpstart” in learning the concept. It definitely makes the time during the whole-group core instruction easier for all to participate. For example, Ms. Young contended that “just getting started” is half
the battle in accomplishing all that she has to for the day. She has to manage to teach the whole group of students for 45 minutes, facilitate small group instruction for 3 rotations of 15 minutes totaling another 45 minutes and an additional 15 minutes to wrap up and review the skills (Young’s Personal Interview, January 22, 2008).

Ms. Young followed the “I do” “We do” and “You do” model to help all students achieve at their various levels. For example, during one particular observation, Ms. Young would tell the students the meaning of the word “vacation,” then, she would guide the students in a discussion about various vacations they or someone they know may have taken, and finally students would write sentences about something they would do on a vacation after reading the text, “My family Vacation.”

The reading environment in Ms. Young’s classroom is designed to promote success in literacy. Students are given an opportunity to work in groups of four at the learning stations. Each of the five components of reading is identified along with folders including work to be completed on a daily basis (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension). One of the management pieces that is clearly identified during the class is the heavy emphasis on rules and expectations. Being that this school is a “Positive Behavior Support” (PBS) school, Ms. Young incorporates statements that are positive and encourages the students to think on their own. For example, on one occasion a student became angry after misplacing his pencil. He proceeded to accuse the other students in his reading center of taking the pencil. Ms. Young, in turn, referred the student to the pencil bank while she quickly reviewed the four-steps of PBS 1. Ask, 2. Think, 3. Take a deep Breath, 4. Make the right decision. Ms. Young encouraged to student to return to his station and continue working on his task.
The classroom functions very similar to a manufactory. Ms. Young uses the Skills and structure of the literacy block to teach and interact with students while keeping the focus of the product in mind, both in whole group and small group instruction. The Positive Behavior Support system is evident throughout the school and in Ms. Young’s class. She refers to the model often to remind students of the compact for behavior. Students are taught to be responsible and independent for their learning by the management system referred to as the “Behavior Cards.” Each student begins the day on Green, which represents good behavior. Yellow represents 1 to 2 warnings. Red represents 3 to 4 warnings and a note home. Students have access to the cards and are instructed to pull the cards when they do not follow directions.

The center rules are also a vital part in managing the literacy work stations. The rules are reviewed before the rotation begins, and Ms. Young also demonstrates each center activity before the students proceed in working on the activity.

The Small Group Rules are:

1. Stay on task.
2. Use inside voices.
3. Work collectively with group members.
4. Ask “3” (in your group) before you ask me.
5. Do not interrupt teacher while she is working with a small group.
6. Remain in your learning station until timer rings.

As referenced in our interview, Ms. Young finds that setting the expectations prior to releasing students to their center, is key. She stated that “If the students do not feel like they can be successful with the activity, they will give up easily and disturb
others. Therefore, I must strategically organize groups with academic appropriate activities.” Ms. Young believes that this helps eliminates behavior problems as well (Mid-Study Survey). Many opportunities are afforded students to practice these rules without major disruptions. Some interruptions were due to ill students, obsessive behavior over center materials, and in one particular case, a substitute being present that would alter the flow of centers.

- Dimensions 3 and 4: Personal Responsibility for Student Learning and Strategies for Achieving Objectives

One of the goals of the Reading First model is for teachers to teach explicitly and directly with their students by not assuming students already know information about what is being taught. Ms. Young often accomplished this by using “Think Alouds.” A “Think Aloud” is a dialogue that the teacher says out loud to demonstrate thinking that students should do when reading or completing a task. Each of the stories requires teachers to set the stage by teaching the vocabulary prior to the actual reading and instruction of skills in the text. Ms. Young follows this model that usually stems from the morning message for the day. She finds that teaching in this manner helps the students build knowledge and insight into the story. One story, entitled “A Visit to the Doctor” was used during one of my observations that demonstrated the model.

Ms. Young introduced one of the vocabulary words, (reluctant) for the model. She told students that reluctant means “putting off doing something because of fear or doubt.” Next, she would give the students an example of when she felt reluctant:

“I am reluctant to go Wal-Mart on the weekends due to the large crowds and long lines. Therefore, I like to go shopping early during the week on a Monday or Tuesday when it seems to be less people shopping. She proceeds to tell them that
the story “A Visit to the Doctor” is about a little boy who is reluctant to go to the doctor because of fear. Finally, Ms. Young asks a few students to share something that they have been reluctant to do using complete sentences. One little boy said, “I am reluctant to sleep in my bed because of the dark.” One girl said, “I am reluctant to go to the dentist because one time the dentist had to pull my tooth and I was scared...”

Several opportunities for discussion are given to students. This strategy is discussed and emphasized at grade level meetings to increase oral language and give students exposure to words before, during, and after reading during literacy centers. During one grade level meeting, the reading coach practiced with the teachers so that they would know how to guide and monitor student responses, as well as follow through the routine explicitly. Each teacher had an opportunity to practice “Think Alouds” and identify the sections of the literacy lessons that would use this format. Teachers were involved in this activity and planned accordingly.

- Dimensions 5 and 6: Positive Affect and Sense of Control

Ms. Young definitely shows her personality and sense of control while teaching. Not only does she use the “Think Aloud Model” for teaching, but she also uses it for management and behavior. Ms Young uses phrases such as: “Ms. Young likes the way the blue group is working in their center. All students have completed their activities and now they are practicing quizzing each other using the high frequency words chart,” and “When you are finished your comprehension activity, place it in your green folder and you may choose one of the text to listen to on tape.”
While working with a teacher-directed group, Ms. Young told the students to “give your neighbors a silent applause for blending the words correctly. Always use the chart to find out what center you should go to next.” One clap would be used to signal for students to stand and push in chairs, another clap would be used to signal move to the center, and a bell would be used to let students know when to begin and end a center rotation. Ms. Young stated that she spent several days, along with help from the reading coach, to train students on the procedures for transitioning from whole-group to small group and independent work activities.

- Dimensions 7 and 8: Sense of Common Teacher/Student Goals and Democratic Decision Making

One of the areas that show a sense of common teacher and student goals was most often connected with assessment and the monitoring of progress. It was as if both Ms. Young and her students were trying to reach the common goal of reading success. Each student has a progress folder that Ms. Young would use to house differentiated activities for the various levels of reading. The DIBELS data and Progress monitoring data was used to determine the intervention activities, but the pre- and post assessments administered from the reading series were used to help vary the skills in the literacy workstation rotation. During the grade level meetings, Ms. Young and her two first grade colleagues would use a portion of the planning times to review, choose, and make activities for the classes using similar students’ profile. This would help them by sharing ideas and clarifying how the activities would look and work in the class.

The teachers had to take the time to determine if the activity would match the student’s needs. This became a tedious process because sometimes the activity would have a description that would not necessarily be the skill needed. This would require the
teachers to go into a discussion and review other activities from the program that would be a better fit. The reading coach would remind the teachers to make sure that the product or outcome met the learning goals and objectives. During class, students could also choose activities after the reading block to practice reading skills. Accelerated Reader and Library reading program encourages the students to read.

*Volunteers in Public Schools* (VIPS), also have a list of students needing extra help in reading, and works with them on skills as well. This is also a form of planning that Ms. Young takes time to do because she wants the time to be well-spent versus “just another volunteer doing whatever they please” (Young’s Personal Interview, January 22, 2008). The school also promotes progress and achievement in reading by allowing students to choose a book character to study, and then during Celebrate Literacy Week, students get to dress up as the character and participate in wacky and fun activities. This gets the students, teachers and community members involved in the various activities and contests that are sponsored by this week.

Because Ms. Young chose to be on the District’s Reading Textbook Adoption Committee, she also had to spend several hours reviewing the content for the first grade curriculum. She stated that the programs looked very promising, especially the updated version of the program that they are currently using in the Reading First Schools. Ms. Young stated that the literacy workstations are very explicit, and the literature collection contains a variety of non-fiction and fiction selections along with readymade activities.

“Many of my concerns have been addressed in the majority of the programs that are up for adoption, 1. More selections for African American boys and girls, 2. High interest text, 3. Varied options of reading materials for each level, 4.
Assessment tools that correlate with DIBELS 5. And Teacher manuals that correlate each component of whole group, small group, individual and intervention instruction.” “It has taken a lot of extra time to survey these programs, but the access to the materials and firsthand account of what is “out there” is invaluable.”

She continued:

“I don’t mind teaching my students what it is I need to teach them, but If I am to do the complex tasks, I need all the tools {including a full program} to do it; This is overwhelming, yet exciting and it takes all of the guess work out of teaching for me… It is a lot of work, but I cannot stress how good it feels to be prepared. My only request would be for a textbook and teacher manual that would include all of the planning materials in one place. This would help eliminate the time involved in gathering components of the program, so that we can plan in our lounge and not have to lug it around” (Young’s Personal Interview, January 22, 2008).

Reading First Willow Lane Teacher Mrs. Brown

Mrs. Brown, is an eleventh year teacher, and teaches first grade at Willow Lane Elementary. Mrs. Brown was hired by the Principal Peters as a second grade teacher in 1996; however, due to the influx of first grade students during the 2005-2006 school year, Principal Peters moved Mrs. Brown to the first grade. After many years as a second grade teacher, Mrs. Brown is now in her second year as a first grade teacher.

Mrs. Brown is a 40 (plus) year old African American female who is a non-traditional Elementary Education graduate from one of the largest Historically Black University’s in the area surrounding Pelican School District. After many years of
working in the banking business, Mrs. Brown decided to make a career move. That decision led her to enroll back in college and pursue her life-long dream of becoming a teacher. The journey would be a challenge at times, being that she was the mother of two children also enrolled at the same university.

Mrs. Brown’s former background with the Balanced Literacy (Hoffman, 1998) surely would be challenged during the year. Just as she had begun to understand the “laws” of teaching first grade literacy with concepts she combined with her expertise as a second grade teacher, the curriculum changed and she would be engrossed with implementing the newly adopted literacy program in Pelican School District.

Principal Peters, however, is very confident that her teachers will do what is needed to fulfill the teaching requirements as outlined. She thinks that all of the training and preparation for implementing the program is beneficial, but will take a few years before it is fully accepted and implemented. She sees herself as the instructional leader and one of the most important teacher resources the school has for teachers. In an effort to increase awareness among the teachers, parents, and community, Mrs. Peters has formed informational “work-sessions” for parents and students so the transition within the philosophies of teaching reading would be explained and encouraged. As a ninth year principal, Mrs. Peters understands the importance of keeping parents, teachers and the community informed of major changes in instructional approaches and philosophies.

One of the challenges for Mrs. Brown with her class this year is that over half of her students are from another district due to a major hurricane that evacuated most the students to this area in 2005. Many of these students missed the first half of their Kindergarten year, which causes them to be behind. Students in this class are known to
miss many instructional days, and their parents are still undecided on where home will be as many of them are still living with family members from the area. This has caused a major frustration to resonate with Mrs. Brown because not only is she trying to adapt to the new teaching style for literacy instruction, she also has the massive task of trying to “catch-up” students who are often absent. She feels there is much to do all the time and this causes her to get off track of the suggested pacing guide; however, she is beginning to realize that if her students miss days, there is nothing she can do but try to review in small groups and seek assistance from interventionists.

Mrs. Brown was chosen to participate in this study because she is a first grade teacher in a school with a transit and low socio-economic population. Because of the large size of the school, the school has a reading coach who attempts to model and facilitate grade level meetings on a bi-weekly basis. Mrs. Brown struggles at times during instruction due to the unfamiliarity of the reading program and pressure to keep up with instructional pacing. Mrs. Brown relies on collaboration with her grade level team to learn how to implement and strategize for maintaining organization within the classroom. She has a fear of not doing everything “exactly right,” which may show lack of confidence at times during instruction.

This school does have a Reading Coach that was fully funded by the school district. The Coach is expected to assist teachers as needed with implementing the new reading program. Coaches attend bi-weekly trainings and conduct grade level meetings. Mrs. Brown’s class varies in socio-economic status. Many of the students live in low income housing with a few who are considered to be from low-middle class income families. Parental support varies from student to student. The amount of parental
involvement usually depends on whether or not the student is progressing in a satisfactory manner as found by the parents.

Table 9

Mrs. Brown’s Classroom Demographics Pre-Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Size</th>
<th>Achievement Levels</th>
<th>Racial Makeup</th>
<th>DIBELS Benchmark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B___ G___</td>
<td>6 students are receiving resource and or Exceptional student services</td>
<td>15 students are African American; 5 students are of Hispanic or other ethnic group; 1 student is white</td>
<td>57% of students are reading on or above grade level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 students</td>
<td>9 boys</td>
<td>13 girls</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interview with Reading First Willow Lane Principal Peters and Reading Coach

- Dimension 1: A Sense of Personal Accomplishment

Principal Peters and the Reading Coach are both new to the school, but not to Pelican School District. Principal Peters admits that the bulk of the year has been spent trying to secure materials for all of the classrooms. Principal Peters contended that she is still working on areas to increase teacher moral so that her teachers will feel a sense of accomplishment.
“This is very challenging. I came to this school at the beginning of this year and I was immersed in the literacy plan and Reading First model. Because I was trained and worked in a more affluent city and school district, I was not familiar with the likes of teacher shortages and lack of teacher motivation. Therefore, I am working on helping teachers to reflect on the positive in an effort to boost confidence and ultimately a sense of personal accomplishment. However, being that this usually stems from an external point of reference, I can only hope that what I do actually helps teachers to realize this. I try to be visible and supportive by visiting classrooms often, providing notes of encouragement and recognizing gains and support in literacy data. Honestly, being that reading is a big part of our school, I use the model as a vehicle to drive instruction and substance in other subject areas” (Principal Peters and Reading Coach Interview, February 22, 2008).

From the Reading Coach perspective, she finds that reading sets the tone and model for the school. She tries to instill a sense of personal accomplishment by highlighting the successes through literacy data and grade level meetings.

“I believe teachers are rewarded, not only when students achieve but, when others (like their peers) can acknowledge and provide support amongst themselves. I use my role as an instructional leader to help drive this point. Anything I can do (make copies, demonstrate a lesson, work with an intervention group or plan alternate lessons for modeling a strategy), I try to do it and allow the teacher to see it and make it their own. It is the little things that teachers appreciate. Their time is so valuable, but so little. They feel part of a time when I assist.”
• Dimension 2: Positive Expectations for Student Behavior and Achievement

Both Ms. Peters and the Reading Coach agree that in order to have effective instruction, classroom management and discipline are key. Principal Peters commented:

“When I took the position as principal (Peters and Reading Coach, personal interview; February 22, 2008), I begin to put a school wide discipline plan into action. I knew that discipline has always been an issue for most teachers because of a lack of classroom management. The literacy block and its structure helps to support my vision. Our school is a Positive Behavior Support school that uses alternate thinking patterns to help our students think through their choice in behavior. All of our teachers, administrators and volunteers are given in-service on the protocols used so that anyone at any given time can help students manage their behavior.”

Principal Peters continued:

“We (Principal and Coach) try to have our Time Out Room moderator to assist with the Literacy Block so, very few kids, if any are visit the TOR room during the literacy block. We try to reward good behavior by preventing it before it occurs. Just as teachers plan for instruction, they must also plan for behavior management. We are visible to monitor the classrooms and remove uncooperative or disruptive students immediately. However, we only do this if absolutely necessary. During literacy block, we still try to move these students to another instructional setting being that all personnel teach and assist during this time” (Principal Peters and Reading Coach Interview, January 22, 2008).
Principal Peters also agreed that the bulk of their students are “territorial,” so she tries to help them avoid altercations by rewarding students with “Behavior Bucks” for satisfactory behavior. Students can retrieve these “bucks” during any period of the day and these “bucks” can be traded for prizes at a monthly celebration party. The Reading Coach supports that the teachers are given opportunities to set expectations with instruction in literacy instruction. Class profiles are used to celebrate the successes and implement action plans for expectations using Progress Monitoring probes and data. Teachers are asked to think about how students will learn the skills. Motivation is an area revisited often. “I want teachers to remember how their students learn best.”

- Dimensions 3 and 4: Personal Responsibility for Student Learning and Strategies for Achieving Objectives

To insure that teachers are following the Reading First Model and teaching with fidelity, each faculty member has to sign a “Quality of Assurance” form that signifies their commitment to the students and the program. The Principal and Reading Coach admitted that initially, three teachers were reluctant to sign the document due to the overwhelming requirements and fulfillments included in the document. Implementing this document creates a compact among the state, school, and teachers in an effort to help students become better readers.

After much coaxing, the remaining teachers reluctantly signed the document. This poses a great concern for Principal Peters because she knows that teachers are put in an awkward position, but it had to be done. “I had to explain to teachers that we are functioning on under a state program and they should think of it in terms of the students.”

The format requires “buy-in” from all personnel to plan and fully implement the program. Teachers are involved in weekly meetings and state meetings for instructional
and professional development. Teachers are often asked to reflect on questions such as “Are students given substantial instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension and vocabulary?” “Are the students helped to utilize multiple strategies, rather than using only once?” “What concerns are posed with motivation and fulfillment of activities and interactions within the literacy block?” (Principal Peters and Reading Coach Interview, February 22, 2008).

- **Dimensions 5 and 6: Positive Affect and Sense of Control**

  Proctor (1984) works reveal that categories of interrelated factors in individual teacher practice as a result of staff development opportunities are the teachers’ pre-training and philosophy of teaching, characteristics of teachers’ immediate task and classroom environment, and dimensions of the school context. In turn, it can be a determining factor of receptiveness and response to curriculum and instruction. Principal Peters contended that such is evident in her school:

  “We have a wide range of teacher enthusiasm at our school. I know that our literacy instructional demands are great. However, I wonder if our teachers feel good about the teaching that they are doing or if they are doing it because it is what the “must” do to be in good standing at our school. It is a challenge to try and motivate when teachers feel overworked and underappreciated. I have asked our Reading Coach to provide opportunities for teachers to share celebrations during grade level. I really cannot say to what extent teachers feel good about teaching, but I know it is there. Some teachers only complain about the complexity of trying to “get it all in.” Others share bright ideas that have helped to
motivate them as teachers (duty free lunch, visiting other 1st grade classrooms and receiving assistance with instruction from coach and peers).

Principal Peters continued:

Teachers are influencing student learning and it is evident by the charts and graphs of student work in the planning lounges and in the décor of the new schools. Whether teachers realize this or not, students are making gains and it is because of them. This is the second year for this school at this new site. The former facility was inadequate for students and teachers due to a hazardous building. So we have tried to entice teachers to take advantage of the new and renovated structure. Each class has state-of-the-art technology along with new furniture and cheerful accents” (Principal Peters and Reading Coach Interview, February 22, 2008)

- Dimensions 7 and 8: Sense of Common Teacher/Student Goals and Democratic Decision Making

Teachers are given intense instruction on how to facilitate instruction. The school is staffed with a reading coach and receives visits from a reading consulting firm. Training focuses on the main reading strategies that should be addressed within curriculum:

- Use Decoding/Phonics
- Make and Confirm Predictions
- Create Mental Images
- Self-Corrected
- Look For Word Bits and Parts
- Read Aloud
- Reread Aloud
• Sequence Events/Summarize

• Make Inferences

Grouping is a major part in this process. Students are given instruction in whole group, small group, and individually. Principal Peters stated that:

“We are working towards 100%” in this area. Teachers like their control and we are finding it hard for teachers to do this (whole, small & individual grouping) daily. It is not that they don’t believe it is good for the students, but because they make claims that it is very hard to fit it all in. In the 105 minutes literacy block, we want teachers to offer opportunities for students to choose activities at time as well as receive well-planned and prescribed instruction. We want kids to enjoy this time so that they can learn and love to read. “Are we there yet? No, but we are moving in that direction.” (Principal Peters and Reading Coach, Interview, February 22, 2008).

Interview with Reading First Willow Lane Teacher: Mrs. Brown

• Dimension 1: A Sense of Personal Accomplishment

Mrs. Brown is a very “vocal” teacher who loves to voice her opinion and perception with respect to teaching. She agrees that she is accomplished as a person first, and then a teacher. Mrs. Brown believes her students are directly impacted by the teaching that she chooses to deliver to them:

“I will admit, the Reading format that we follow is overwhelmingly involved. I feel most accomplished when I can teach the full block and meet all the time segments (25 minutes of whole group, four 15-minutes of small group(X’s 4 groups) and 20 minutes of closure). Eighty percent of my life is spent focusing on
my occupation as a teacher. So, quite naturally, if I am successful at my job, it makes everything else in my life go smoothly. It is as if the biggest task in my life affect my mood and how I feel about myself. I have to take a lot of time trying to get it right, I always feel like I am trying to “catch up” or “get it right”. So it rewarding when the planning pays off and someone, other than just myself, can realize it too” (Brown’s Personal Interview, January 22, 2008).

- Dimension 2: Positive Expectations for Student Behavior and Achievement

The school is the primary source of structure, discipline, and achievement to which the students are exposed. The community is surrounded by crime, and the students are subject to violence and neglect stemming from unstable homes, and a lack of attention and nurturing. Mrs. Brown reported these factors must be dealt with using care and understanding.

“I usually try to talk with my students about home and how they perceive what “being good is.” As teachers, I think we make a huge mistake by giving students all of these rules to follow and most students do not understand what rules mean and why they are important. I find that kids like boundaries, but only when they find those who care and help them understand. Of course, like every other teacher, we have classroom rules, but I have to relate the rules to everyday common that students can associate with. For example, if a student steals another student’s pencil, I relate it to the same as someone taking and X-Box tape or basketball. This is what our students deal with at home with neighbors and the reality of their life; it is important to them….Just as teaching them how to read is important to us…We understand the benefit, so this is what we promote.”
Mrs. Brown finds that the structure of the literacy block helps to decrease the number of behavior problems in class for that time period.

“Many kids do not care about learning if they cannot do the work. So many times I have seen this over the years. They like it if it is fun. I am not sure if students really understand why it is so important to learn how to read other than what I tell and show them. I am not sure if I am creative enough in this area. I do know that rules are not enough and I am constantly looking for ways to make them meaningful and purposeful for them. In my opinion, I find that so much of my time is spent focusing on teaching with fidelity and following the plans, that transferring message to the students somehow gets lost. I often think, “Why should they care when everything else in life is so negative.” I can only hope that what I attempt to do in my teaching will influence them. I believe it will and can”

(Brown’s Personal Interview, January 22, 2008)

- Dimensions 3 and 4: Personal Responsibility for Student Learning and Strategies for Achieving Objectives

Mrs. Brown participates in the bi-weekly grade level meeting. She admitted that she does her best planning at home because the reading Coach usually facilitates the meetings, leaving little time for actual planning.

“We usually talk about the reading process, our groups and the weekly focus strategy, but it is not enough. I always leave school with a boat load of work to check and arrange groups. One of the good things is that I can plan in peace. I enjoy working with my grade level, but I find that I am always offering suggestions and rarely getting help from my team. The Reading Coach says that
it is impressive and I should feel proud for “jumping right in” instead of taking a back seat.”

Mrs. Brown volunteers to participate in first grade level meetings with other first grade teachers in Reading First schools within the district. Teachers use the meetings to bring ideas and make literacy activities to share. She agrees that this forum is helpful to her in gaining insight from teachers other than those from her school.

“We learn how to rotate center activities as well as practice how to teach more explicitly. I can say that I use the activities since they are approved and all ready to go. It is nice to meet and share with other teachers from around the district. I feel that the comradely helps affirm why and how we do what we do in the manner in which we do it in a Reading First School. Our coach attends and meets with us as well. Although it is after school when I am most drained, I push myself to go. I hope they keep it up. It is probably the only time I feel like I am communicating and receiving feedback from those who know the curriculum”

(Reading Coach and colleagues) (Brown’s Personal Interview, January 22, 2008).

- Dimensions 5 and 6: Positive Affect and Sense of Control

One of our conversations began with talking about the impact of teachers on student achievement and their behavior. Mrs. Brown agrees that the teacher has the ability to “build-up” or “tear down” any child’s academic and social demeanor:

“Let’s face it, if I am having a bad day, I can basically choose how I will react to having a bad day; I can speak in a mean or aggravated tone or I can yell at the students for everything both good and bad. This can also be reflected in the way I deliver instruction (unprepared, not following the skill patterns or not meet with
groups). On the other hand, I can choose to put my personal feelings aside and give students a fair and fully involved lesson.”

Mrs. Brown continued:

“Sometimes as teachers, we can take out our frustration on students because of a conflict or disagreement with a co-worker or principal. It important to keep it separate; but it is hard. For example, we get lots of visits from the State department, District Administrators and other teachers…it gets to be bothersome at times and I think that in some cases it causes unnecessary distractions. Have you ever heard of “too much help?” The efforts are appreciated but sometimes I find that I don’t have enough time to digest it all.”

On the subject of interruptions, Mrs. Brown shares that the literacy block is structured; however, excessive visitors can be overwhelming. She contended, “I have to tune them out and try not to show it on my face.” Mrs. Brown feels as if she has a sense of control over the class even though many components of the literacy curriculum are scripted. She finds that the monitoring keeps her on her toes, even when she finds that the strategy or teaching focus is not the best way to teach a skill:

“Resisting a model or being reluctant to do what I am asked to do is not an option. It will only get me an action plan which will require more work and documentation. I have enough to do already. So, this is my job and I need to make it the best so my students will succeed” (Brown’s Personal Interview, January 22, 2008).

The District’s Reading First schools use the Core program assessments to analyze student progress on targeted skills and strategies. As of date (Mid-Year 2008),
the district reported a 9% gain in achievement (74%-83% on skills assessment).

This means that first graders are moving in the direction that is desired on assessments.

- Dimensions 7 and 8: Sense of Common Teacher Student Goals and Democratic Decision Making

The notion of grouping students is not new to Ms. Brown; however, the constraints of what is acceptable are new. Mrs. Brown agrees that this form of teaching is stressful, but doable.

“Now as a teacher, I have to be informed of what is happening in the classroom. It wasn’t that I never was aware, but I am being asked to produce evidence to others and have it readily available for anyone to come and see. I honestly admit, on most days, I feel numb to my own ideas and creativity; …like a programmed robot. The fun for our students is sometimes taken away and I think that it is sad. I believe that when achievement is made, we (teachers) should be able to take a few moments to celebrate who they are by incorporating holidays, themes and especially cultural celebrations. This is important because I know in my heart, I am their (the students) number one resource for positive and valued outside experiences and with the way the curriculum is set up, there’s just not enough time in the day.”

One of the areas that Mrs. Brown finds frustration with is the conflicting goals that are present with instruction. She finds that sometimes activities that are not the best format to instruct students.

“It aggravates me to know end when the consultant and coach literally discount areas that are presented as options in our text for my delivery. The text has been
presented to us as the “Bible”, yet when I try to use it there is always a problem. For example, when the text presents options for the literacy work stations, it has to be directly related to the text or story, not other content areas. However, since Science and Social Studies are limited in 1st grade, I believe that this is an optimal time to kill two birds with one stone. So, my “choice” in choosing options that are in the text are quickly taken away. Now, what should I do? Sometimes I feel like a robot waiting to be programmed….It is so much to do; I just want to do it right but at the same time, if you give me something to use, it should be used in every conceivable way. The limitations on what you can and cannot do are overwhelming. On some days I understand why this is so and on other days, it just doesn’t make sense” (Brown’s Personal Interview, January 22, 2008).

Another factor that gives Mrs. Brown grief is timing for different components. If they run 1 minute over with whole group instruction, she feels as if the world is coming to an end. Mrs. Brown reported when the consultant comes in to model a lesson she always runs over the time limit. However, if she does it, it is cited as “it is not her regular class” more often.

“I think that even when the positive is acknowledged, it is so hard for me to refocus because we are always going to be sited on something. I understand constructive feedback, but I wonder if it is all about the students are if this just personality and teacher conflicts. Overall, I find that our students enjoy being able to take time every now and then to be kids and choose what they like to do (computer, pretend time, free play etc.). As with anything, there are pros and cons. Pros: same program, consistency, helps with monitoring, more people on
same tasks, materials, new computers/programs. Cons: pacing, lack of time re-teaching, timing, flaws in curriculum, lack of personnel or assistance to assist with large number of students needing one-on-one instruction” (Brown’s Personal Interview, January 22, 2008)

Observation of Mrs. Brown at Reading First Willow Lane

The day starts out eventfully (occasional student altercations, late arrivals, disgruntled parents, bus and cafeteria mishaps) on most mornings. The school is the hub for most students; it tries to keep them together and on track despite the negative outside or social influences.

“One particular morning as I arrived early (7:40 am), very few cars were in the parking lot with the exception of the principal, custodian and secretary. The gates surrounding the school were being unlocked as a police officer approached the school in his unit. I wasn’t sure what happened at the moment, but I remained in the car until around 7:50 am in anticipation of teachers and faculty arrival at 7:55 am. The officer was still in the office speaking with the principal about someone allegedly breaking into the gym and stealing materials the night before. Can you believe that the accused culprits were in first and second grade? Apparently, the students were playing on the playground and decided to check and see if doors were unlocked, and when they found one, they just helped themselves to the school. Manipulatives and math materials were among the stolen items. Needless to say, the principal was very disturbed as it seemed like the typical norm, dealing with unexpected societal issues on a daily basis.”

- Dimensions 1 and 2: A Sense of Personal Accomplishment and Positive Expectations for Student Behavior and Achievement
Once in the building, one can find a very modern facility with a newly renovated entry-way along with up-to-date classrooms and meeting labs. The school is so big that each of its three wings has a teacher’s lounge, grade level planning/meeting room, and computer lab. Mrs. Brown’s classroom is located on the first grade hall. The room is equipped with a White board and six computers. The desk along with all of the instructional materials, are nearly new to match the newly painted walls and sparkling floors. Sunshine enters freely through the clear, bright windows during the morning. The classroom is quiet, and so are the halls.

On most days, the author took time to tour the school until Mrs. Brown unlocked her classroom. Although, she does not arrive at the school prior to 7:55 am, Mrs. Brown usually stays and works about an hour after students are dismissed. She prefers to work during the afternoon because she has to drop off her younger daughter in route to school in the morning.

Mrs. Brown takes her job seriously and rarely can she be found absent. The reading coach reported “Mrs. Brown is the most vocal and reliable teacher we have on the first grade team (Principal Peter’s and Reading Coach Interview, February 22, 2008) this was definitely a delightful compliment for Mrs. Brown to hear. She was very appreciative of the compliment and replied that “she only wanted to do her job and do it well. It is simply too much to plan for an absence and too hard to catch up!” (Brown’s Personal Interview, January 22, 2008).

During instruction, Mrs. Brown can be often found using phrases that encourage and acknowledge her student’s successes. Students respond with similar gestures and routine chants to help promote a fun atmosphere. For example, Mrs. Brown will say,
“Who’s the best group of first graders at “Hollow Brook Elementary school?” And the students will reply “We are, we are, we are, yes we are by far!” Doing reading groups is where most documentation of personal accomplishments and positive expectations of student behavior are found. Students are assigned to groups for differentiated instruction during this time. Mrs. Brown prepares for the group activities prior to leaving for the afternoon on a daily basis. The folders contain a behavior contract especially made for rotation time along with skilled work and directions for the literacy product.

The conduct slip includes five areas for students to address:

1. I behaved well and finished all of my work.
2. I did not finish my work because….
3. I worked well with others.
4. I learned how to …. 
5. I would like to do more activities like this again.

Mrs. Brown likes this system, because it helps her to stay on track with the progress and products of the literacy centers. Students usually respond to the behavior contract in a positive manner because they know time from extracurricular activities and free time will be spent working on unfinished reading tasks if misbehavior is an issue. Mrs. Brown sets the tone for the class by reviewing each center and explaining why it is important to complete the task(s). When meeting with her small group she constantly emphasizes why and how they can become a good reader.

The DIBELS Assessments, Phonics Screeners, Fluency Checks and Unit Assessments are tools that are used to form groups. Mrs. Brown keeps a folder on each child with the data and rotates the students accordingly. Sometimes, a group of students may remain in
the same group for a few weeks at a time, but in most cases the groups change as does the skill and focus on a weekly basis.

The author noticed that in some cases, this presents a challenge for the students because they may spend the first minutes of their center time adjusting and visiting with new group members. Mrs. Brown constantly revisits the rules and reminds the students that free time is not a part of center time.

The schedule for Mrs. Brown is very structured and she has been encouraged not to stray away from the schedule. The students are guided by the schedule through the use of a timer. The schedule is

- 8:45 am - 9:10 am is whole group instruction
- 9:10 am - 10:10 am is differentiation instruction/ small group
- 10:10 am - 10:30 am is closure and review with whole group

- Dimensions 3 and 4: Personal Responsibility for Student Learning and Strategies for Achieving Objectives

Mrs. Brown tries to integrate responses to reading and writing during each content area even with her first graders as is evident by the work in the folders for each student. Even though student writing may not be developed, at least Mrs. Brown can pull the students work and dialogue with them about what the image is meant to be. She can be often found reviewing what is written individually with the students while teaching the conventions of writing.

Each assessment is compiled by the teacher and given to the school’s reading Coach to create a school progress report. The literacy assessment data is updated on a monthly basis with strengths, weaknesses and recommendations for each to use as a guide to improving literacy instruction. Accountability and Reading First expects
teachers to use the data to ultimately drive their instruction. Academic language and content area words and High Frequency words Circle pocket chart provides opportunity to use words and view them from multiple perspectives:

1. Define the word using your own words
2. Draw a picture
3. Use the word in a sentence
4. Synonym/ Antonym
5. Look the word up in the dictionary (guide words)
6. Multiple or Other meanings

Each week, carefully selected words are introduced, reviewed, and taught explicitly. An example of this occurring during a class observation was done using the word “resolved”. Mrs. Brown collected a group of math cubes and made the statement: “I am collecting the number of math cubes that I will need to solve the math problem. This means that I am grouping the cubes in one location.” She also said, “We were able to solve the problem without arguing on the playground. In other words, “to resolve” means to come to a solution or conclusion to a problem or concern.”

Mrs. Brown asked the students to browse the book for unfamiliar/uncertain words and look at the pictures to try and figure out what the story was about. Students were found actively looking in the book in search for unfamiliar words. Mrs. Brown shared examples of the word in relationship to words that students already know. She then referenced the word to the prediction and prior knowledge discussion that came before it. The closure of the mini-lesson assisted the students on how to understand an unfamiliar word (pictures, read ahead, use words around word…)
On one particular day, Mrs. Brown was facilitating a small group on blending words. Mrs. Brown reminded the group of the sounds that they already knew, making sure to distinguish vowels (both long and short) along with the consonants. This session lasted about 15 minutes during the 105 minute block of time. Other students in the classroom were engaging with text by listening to audio tapes while following along with the printed story. Some students rotated throughout the centers “Crusin’ the Room,” reading the words found in the vocabulary center, as well as words that were presented in the main selection for the week. “Fluency checks” with partners were part of the differentiated instruction for the high group. Students were interacting with the text timers and fluency charts. Each student read the text, charted the number of words per minutes and practiced to improve the time.

The writing center was not in use during the rotation of the differentiated instruction rotation due to the parameters outlined for a Reading Block. Mrs. Brown prepared the center and the focus was to review overused words in writing and how to find others through instruction ex. “Big, said, small, good, I.” She explained that her Language Arts block would carry over after the 105 minutes of uninterrupted reading instruction. Process writing has to be done outside of the block unless it directly relates to the skills and content addressed in the story and lesson focus.

Mrs. Brown shared the rules for her success in managing centers by referring to a chart in her class. Students are reminded to exhibit these behaviors while working in groups. They included: “What should my group look like when we are working?” Talking, smiling, heads together, nodding and working on tasks, sounds like success,
positive comments and taking turns and sharing. Each picture has gestures and visual cues to help communicate the concept.

Non-Reading First Winding Trail Teacher: Mrs. Hill

Mrs. Hill is a gifted first teacher at Winding Trail Elementary School. As a 34 year veteran, she has seen the curriculum transition through the years, but not as much as this year has shown. Mrs. Hill considers herself blessed to be a gifted teacher and to work with students who are above grade level in most cases. Due to the new reading initiative, Mrs. Hill has been summoned to teach the first grade level reading program instead of teaching the second grade curriculum, as done in years past. This major change in instructional practices has had its pro’s and con’s from the perspective of Mrs. Hill.

The new reading curriculum focuses on teaching phonetic principles and bridging the gap between sounds and letters - a skill that most students seem to already have by the time they get to first grade gifted. Although most students can read the word, many of the students have shown that the explicit teaching of word knowledge is beneficial to knowing how to read and pronounce more difficult words.

Principal Shaw reported Mrs. Hill is a dynamic teacher who has held the title of “Teacher of the Year” in Pelican District and acquired many accolades in the teaching profession. She is a National Board certified teacher and has been a member of the faculty for 19 years. Mrs. Hill has attended, as well as facilitated, professional development workshops in the areas of gifted instructional practices, literacy, and technology. The notion of having someone to dictate what she has to teach, when she has to teach it, and how to teach it, does not sit well with Mrs. Hill. She is basically teaching
the new reading program, but she firmly believes her students do not need it and it is a waste of time. Mrs. Hill believes that she may not be able to teach in this manner for many more years.

Mrs. Hill often mentions that her students are smarter than the book because their sentences and responses are always better than the suggestions given in the teacher’s manual. During some preliminary visits to her class, the author found that the students were not bored and were definitely doing a great job. Mrs. Hill was very vocal and she said that “I wish the consultants could see what MY students are doing; they would understand why teaching literacy in this manner is not necessary for them.”

Principal Shaw admits that she supports Pelican District in efforts to implement the new reading program, but she basically gives the teachers “free reign” to instruct students in a broader manner; therefore, following the manual exactly as written is not monitored closely. She feels that remaining supportive, but not enforcing requirements, is the best way to suppress confusion and negative vibes towards the program. Principal Shaw shares this view primarily because she does not have a reading coach. She finds it difficult to monitor the reading program without the day-to-day monitoring that is given by the reading coach. She appointed her instructional resource teacher to serve as a literacy contact person. The task of disseminating information and debriefing teachers is becoming quite overwhelming to fulfill in addition to her regular job responsibilities.

Mrs. Hill believes that the motivation of “Does this program really work?” is what all teachers desire to know, which keeps her teaching, even when she really does not believe in the method of facilitation. Mrs. Hill was chosen to participate in this study because she is a veteran teacher with many years experience and a wealth of knowledge.
and teaching experience. Her class is a first grade transitional class in Pelican School District that expected to fully implement the new reading program with limited instructional support, being that the school is a Non Reading First School. This is partially because the school did not receive funding to have a reading coach and there are no additional instructional personnel on staff to fully comply with lesson recommendations for the scripted and mandated program.

Many of the students in Mrs. Hill’s class come from affluent and middle-class working families. The students receive strong parental support and are exposed to a wide variety of learning experiences outside of school. Many of the students participate in extracurricular activities, such as dance, drama, music and sports.

Table 10
Mrs. Hill’s Classroom Demographics Pre-Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Size</th>
<th>Achievement Levels</th>
<th>Racial Makeup</th>
<th>DIBELS Benchmark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14 students</td>
<td>1st grade Gifted</td>
<td>8 White students</td>
<td>97% of students are reading on or above grade level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 boys</td>
<td></td>
<td>5 African American students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 girls</td>
<td></td>
<td>4 Hispanic and Other Hispanic or Other ethnic group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interview with Winding Trail Principal Shaw and Reading Coach

- Dimension 1: A Sense of Personal Accomplishment
Principal Shaw and the Reading Coach attributed their combined 70-plus years of service as educators as the factors that help them capture the real sense of personal accomplishment. Principal Shaw commented:

“I have worked in many places and have not found a more dedicated, accomplished and established group of teachers. Our teachers have been driven by data and the needs of students long before the district mandated and implemented strategies for doing such. There is a really good spirit in the atmosphere within our school that not only highlights the achievement of our students, but acknowledges the work that teachers are doing to help make it happen. Our teachers are self-motivated to go above and beyond the required. Hence, this is why our staff is honored to have a total of eight Nationally Board Certified Teachers at our school. Four of our teachers that received this honor specialized in the area of Literacy and Learning. I believe that these accomplishments speak for themselves” (Principal Shaw and Reading Coach Personal Interview, February 20, 2008).

The Reading Coach has been at the school for over 12 years serving as a Reading Specialist. Prior to becoming the reading coach, she generally worked with students; now, her focus is primarily the professional development and support of classroom teachers of literacy.

“It is easier for me to distinguish the strengths and weaknesses of the teachers while working in this capacity. Many of our teachers were apprehensive about the new Literacy Initiative, but once they realized it was something they were already accustomed to it made more sense. They were really able to see how the
instruction and assessments help to guide instruction. The accomplishments of the students helped to boost the morale of the teachers as well as confirm the things they were doing right and those that needed to be altered. It makes our good teachers even better” (Principal Shaw and Reading Coach Interview, February 20, 2008).

- Dimension 2: Positive Expectations for Student Behavior and Achievement

One of the areas that helped promote excellence in student behavior and achievement is the re-structuring of the Time-out-Room policies and the re-thinking of the role of the Dean of Students. The principal commented:

“Teachers had gotten into the habit of writing up students for minor offenses rather than those that really should to be written up. (“Not having a sharpened pencil” vs. “Hitting a classmate with a pencil” or “Not having homework vs. taking someone else’s homework). We are very aware of the importance of instructional time and kids can’t learn and teachers can teach it too much time is being spent writing TOR forms. So, our TOR is very structured in that students will still be instructed using grade appropriate content. Our Dean of students reinforces these rules and assists in the classrooms. Students that are repeat offenders are sent to the discipline center.”

Principal Shaw continued:

“Students are rewarded for great behavior and high academic achievements with field trips, ice parties and or lunch with the principal. The legacy of high student achievement is displayed in the foyer of the school. It is filled with numerous
student awards and plaques of the District’s former Elementary Students of the Year.”

- Dimensions 3 and 4: Personal Responsibility for Student Learning and Strategies for Achieving Objectives

About 5 years ago, Winding Trail Elementary took part in a grant that was geared towards training/mentoring teachers while interacting with students at the school setting. Teachers took part in summer long-training, and had to interview and apply for a position to teach at this school, all on a volunteer basis. Each grade level was awarded a mentor teacher, and the school was given a master teacher that would facilitate the professional development for that site. The process was very intense, and teachers had to commit to a long list of tasks that included attending the national training, video conferencing, and peer evaluations. This program has given teachers the tools they needed to ensure that the instructional component is fully meeting the needs of the learners in each class.

“Teachers are now reflecting in their journals and using the teaching strategies to help students in reading and all of the other content areas. Each teacher is observed a total of four times throughout the year and formally evaluated twice a year. This has really helped the “crème-of-the-crop” to rise and become even better educators” (Principal Shaw and Coach interview, February 20, 2008).

The strategies used for achieving teaching objectives include student-to-student practice with a skill, as well as doing before and after skills “think alouds” with the teacher.

- Dimensions 5 and 6: Positive Affect and Sense of Control

Classroom management is a subject that receives optimal attention this year when measured by the interview responses. Principal Shaw commented:
“One of the areas that we have had to reevaluate is factors that contribute to making classroom management successful, regardless of the students that we have at our schools. Our teachers are very conscious of the students that they teach and instructional format is key when teaching. Reading and Mathematics are the two core subjects that we use as the vehicle for maintaining an orderly classroom. We begin with our teachers and making sure that teachers have what they need to remain positive in all situations.”

Principal Shaw continued:

“In my opinion, our teachers strive to maintain smoothness and momentum in class activities. They do this by giving clear instructions and hold students responsible for carrying them out, as well as provide frequent feedback. Our mentor and master teacher program promotes instruction that is well planned out and discourages idling talking and unengaged activities. We find that this is helpful when trying to keep the entire class occupied at all times and especially when dealing with students on a one on one basis” (Principal Shaw Interview, February 20, 2008).

Principal Shaw commented:

“Staff members such as our Dean of Students and Time out Room moderator help to promote classroom safety and wellness. Thus, creating a school where students feel safe to learn both physically and emotionally. We have zero tolerance for misbehavior and bullying throughout our school-wide discipline plan. Repeat offenders are removed immediately and are not welcomed back until they can
prove to us that the behavior is no longer a threat to our classroom instruction—period” (Principal Shaw and Reading Coach Interview, February 20, 2008).

- Dimensions 7 and 8: Sense of Common Teacher/Student Goals and Democratic Decision making

In response to the question, Principal Shaw commented:

“We have a group of teachers that have been well trained and have proven to go above and beyond what the district has required with the new literacy initiatives. However, during our meetings, teachers have expressed a sense of disconnect with the mandates that are present with our new initiatives. Teachers find that the motive is a good one, but it does not apply to them when it comes to good first teaching.”

Principal Shaw continued:

“For example, teachers at our school are accustomed to facilitating thematic projects and incorporating field experiences to help students become better readers in Science and Social Studies. However, the curriculum does not allow for such integration in the manner in which it is presented. Teachers feel as if some students are being “Left Behind” because their learning is disjointed and not maximized. It is difficult for our teachers to adjust to teaching in this manner when students want more and need more, yet time in the pacing and scheduling does not allow for such exploration. Some teachers find that we are spending far too much time with the struggling students that we have taken all of the excitement out of learning for those who can handle more.” (Principal Shaw and Reading Coach Interview, February 20, 2008).

Interview at Non-Reading First Winding Trail with Mrs. Hill

- Dimension 1: A Sense of Personal Accomplishment
As the author began to interview with Mrs. Hill, she noticed that Mrs. Hill was rather hesitant to begin for fear of not giving the “answers” that the author might be looking for. The author quickly put that doubt and concern to rest by assuring Mrs. Hill that she was not in search of “ideal answers,” but rather seeking out what makes her the great teacher that she is. She was assured that the answers given would be a form of understanding her as a teacher in relationship to the literacy instruction that she facilitates on a daily basis.

Mrs. Hill has been an educator for well over 34 years, and she has accomplished great things. After obtaining her “Plus 30 certification,” she continued to work in the classroom because that is where she felt the most accomplished. Mrs. Hill referred to herself as a life-long learner. She supports learning and attends professional development both at school and after school so she can be current on the new trends and initiatives that are required by the district.

“The moment I feel that I do not need to learn something new, will be the day that I retire for the last time. This is why I enjoy being a mentor teacher and supervising teachers to up and coming teachers. They help me to “stay on my toes” with the new concepts in teaching. I count it a blessing to have been around for such a long time… I have seen literacy instruction change over the decades and return back to the basics (teaching phonics and word origins.) (Hill’s Personal Interview, February 13, 2008) We incorporated many hands on activities and made most of our teaching materials. Today, most of it is pre-made or packaged and ready to use” (Hill’s Personal Interview, February 13, 2008).

• Dimension 2: Positive Expectations for Student Behavior and Achievement
Mrs. Hill believes that interaction with colleagues, parents and others contribute to making a complete learning situation. She begins the year by personally conferencing with each parent prior to the beginning of the school year. This has become more and more of a challenge due to lack of knowing exactly who would be in the class early during the summer months. Mrs. Hill attributes the challenge to helping parents realize the importance of learning and communicating early on. She invites the parents to bring their student on a tour of the school and classroom. This is an early practice that Mrs. Hill has been doing since she began teaching.

“Teachers and parents working together to improve a student’s learning capabilities and behavior is another way to set expectations and provide opportunities to set goals. If I am unable to control something when it comes to student behavior and achievement, I find that having a healthy relationship with a student’s family helps to reinforce following rules and learning progress” (Hill’s Personal Interview, February 13, 2008).

Mrs. Hill takes this personally and considers herself a veteran teacher that can give advice on how to “win-over” difficult students. She finds that working in this manner has influenced other teachers to do the same. Teachers on her grade level work as a team and time-out facilitators for those that continue to be behavior problems.

Ashton (1984) found teaching can be defined as an instructional process involving implementing strategies designed to lead learners to attain certain goals. Mrs. Hill agrees that strategies used in her class must be those that contribute to teaching the “whole child.” She notes that the difference today in that statement is that “the whole child” has changed.
“Students today are faced with challenges of society more than we were (absent of parents - particularly the father, presence of violence, lack of nutrition and presence of abuse, assumed responsibility of a care taker for younger siblings). My first goal is to make sure students are healthy, safe from harm, engaged, supported in every undertaking and challenged to do more. Our kids can do more” (Mrs. Hill Personal Interview, February 13, 2008).

Mrs. Hill continued:

The NCLB reported mandates puts into place elevated expectations of educating every child. However, this has become such a challenge and I feel that in most cases schools are working in isolation in trying to meet the demands of the policy (NCLB). One good thing, however, is that reading instruction is being revamped to help meet the challenges of every subject area. I find the progress that our nation would like to see is not matching the unprecedented levels of achievement which causes teachers to “second-guess” their ability to teach the type of student that is present in every school and classroom.”

Mrs. Hill’s school has set up learning communities that are designed to help teachers understand, analyze, and manage student and teacher behaviors. She believes that a teacher must believe in a practice or solution before starting it. The framework allows teachers to talk about how to correct a student’s behavior and impact academic achievement in relationship to correcting their own (behavior).

*Dimensions 5 and 6: Positive Affect and Sense of Control*

Mrs. Hill refers to herself as an effective and proactive teacher who spends a great deal of time on preventing problems rather than solving them. She feels that literacy is
the “hub” that stabilizes every content area in every grade, but especially in first grade. Mrs. Hill takes pride in her classroom and teaches her students to respect their learning environment. She finds that if the teacher acts in a respectful manner, then her students will do the same. Mrs. Hill supports being prompt, consistent and reasonable with her students at all times.

“I believe that there are times when all teachers are faced with troubles that occur during a literacy block; however, by having a plan in place will make things go over easy. I like to think of my classroom as a business where everyone is involved. Materials are organized on shelves and bookcases that are easily accessible by students. I believe that this is essential to having control and preventing off-task behavior and unnecessary injury. A good teacher must take all of these things into account so that they can have complete control of their classroom and avoid as many unnecessary interruptions as possible” (Hill’s Personal Interview, February 13, 2008).

Mrs. Hill further contends that she feels like she holds the key to teaching the students and if she doesn’t do it, who else will? However, she would like to have everything she needs (resources, materials and books for all) in order to do it. This is a sore spot with Mrs. Hill. Assessments and test that reveal understanding using a variety of exercises helps Mrs. Hill obtain control of what students need to learn. She tries to create lessons using the core program and interventions to address the varied levels of learning.

- Dimensions 7 and 8: Sense of Common Teacher/Student Goals and Democratic Decision Making

The sense of common teacher/student goals became very apparent throughout the course of our conversations and interview. Mrs. Hill developed and enforces a code of
conduct in the classroom. Students are aware of the code of conduct and this helps facilitate the management of activities and literacy rotations. She uses the communication and relationship that was developed early on with parents as a way to enforce classroom management.

“Even though over half of my parents are employed outside of the home, many can come to the school on any given moment to help support their students in behaving correctly or achieving more when it comes to reading. This is so important for students to know that their parents care about their learning as well. Thinking Maps are instrumental in helping students learn at our school. We started implementing Thinking Maps about five years ago beginning in Pre-K. Students are now able to choose the type of thinking map that will help them think in a more organized manner. We use these graphic organizers to help us think more profoundly about what we read as well as how we behave. Students like choices, but they must be taught how to choose wisely. Usually, students are given choices within a particular group when rotating in a literacy work station. I love to use the same strategy when students are analyzing their discipline; it helps them to distinguish between what is acceptable and not acceptable behavior.”

Observation of Mrs. Hill at Non-Reading First Winding Trail

At 6:30 am on any given morning, one can find the likes of Mrs. Hill approaching the front door of Winding Trail Elementary. She knows that the doors are locked, but because of daily routine of coming “before school,” the building custodian awaits and assists with Mrs. Hill’s belongings.
• Dimension 1: A Sense of Personal Accomplishment

Upon entering the classroom, one finds signs of the personal accomplishments of Mrs. Hill. She has a “teacher’s corner” that is adorned with her framed degrees, certificates of certifications, and plaques that have been awarded for various achievements. Mrs. Hill’s class is very orderly and has a sense of “home.”

The theme of the class is “A Frog Pad.” A sign stating “Welcome to Our Pad” is featured on the classroom’s main entrance door. Each station is identified by a lily pad with statements such as “We Have a Really Neat Pad,” “We “LEAP” towards success,” and “I wish you a “Hoppy” and “Successful” day. Mrs. Hill takes pride in her class by using bright colors and promoting a cheery atmosphere. Students are greeted each day by classical music, a book of their choice and the fragrance of a lit, scented candle. Students are reminded of the daily routines to choose a book, place book sacks in designated area, and submit a daily conduct folder in the box on the teacher’s desk labeled “Homework Folders.”

• Dimension 2: Positive Expectations for Student Behavior and Student Learning

The behavior plan is visited each day and students are given a daily conduct grade. Mrs. Hill prepares the folders and blank conduct sheets for students to use on a daily basis. The Learning Objectives and Grade Level Expectations are posted on the board each morning for the students to see. Daily Math activities and Journal prompts are written on the dry erase board so students can work on these tasks while the daily logistics of managing a class take place (Roll call, Lunch Count and checking notes to/from home).
Mrs. Hill reminds the students of what should be done upon entering the class. A few students are called to the “teacher table” before 8:30 am so Mrs. Hill can do “Progress Monitoring” for her intensive students. Students are tested on skills that she has been facilitating in the reading intervention groups. Mrs. Hill tests her struggling readers on a weekly basis, her approaching basis students are tested every 2 weeks and her grade level and beyond grade level students are tested about once every 6 weeks.

- Dimensions 3 & 4: Personal Responsibility for Student Learning and Strategies for Achieving Objectives

Progress monitoring the students on a frequent basis helps Mrs. Hill plan for instruction: whole group, small group, and individually. Skills that are in need of review are taught from a series of programs. One program is Language for Learning. This program promotes the use of Oral Language. Students are encouraged to listen and provide feedback based on directives or conversation cues. Five students in Mrs. Hill’s classroom are using this program. Another program is used for some students that need phonics and phonemic awareness. Students can be found working with work parts, substituting sounds at the beginning and end of words, and reviewing word families. These skills are reviewed daily in an effort to help build foundational skills so that students will be prepared to understand new vocabulary and comprehend text.

During whole group instruction, Mrs. Hill uses two programs to address phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. Although these are the primary teaching sources, Mrs. Hill opts to incorporate stories and activities from another previously used program in the District. When asked “Why?” Mrs. Hill replied:

“I just don’t feel like these two programs are helping to address all the GLE’s that I am responsible for teaching. I understand that students need background and
foundational skills that are taught through phonemic awareness and phonics. However, vocabulary and comprehension are the ultimate goals of reading and kids need more practice; It is just not enough. I like for my students to have multiple opportunities to build fluency with authentic pieces of texts” (Hill’s Personal Interview, February 13, 2008).

Students move from whole group to differentiated group instruction. While in these groups, the students read a small book and review comprehension questions with the teacher. After, students are guided through a series of activities that are connected with the skill for the entire week.

Students read text connected to Science, Social Studies and Math in each center. The preparation for this type of instruction takes a lot of time, which is why Mrs. Hill arrives so early every day. On one particular day, students were making flashcards of the Social Studies and Science words for studying at home. This helped make the interaction with the vocabulary more meaningful across content areas. Students extended the activity to complete sentences using words that describe transportation: bicycle, truck, bus, plane, boat, car and walking.

Posters that display “Thinking Maps” were posted right above the chalkboard that included daily objective. Mrs. Hill always has folders with duplicates of the thinking maps for students to use throughout the course of the day. On observation day, students were guided in creating a “Tree-Map” to identify transitional words that are found in the story. The skill later carried over to the writing, by which students were encouraged to re-write a story using the correct sequence and transitional words.
Students also use maps to monitor behavior. One particular map was entitled “My Behavior.” The diagram had each child to write or draw their behavior in the center. On the left of the diagram students listed reasons for their behavior and on the right, students listed consequences for their behavior. Mrs. Hill walked through the plan with her students, and the parents as well to orchestrate a plan for improvement. A “Behavior Binder” stored documentation for reviewing purposes.

A circle map was being used in one of the centers for students to define number concepts. In the outside of the circle they could include sets of that number, word problems, and whose answer is that number. A piece of literature about geometric shapes further carried the concept of comparing and contrasting. The text was about a girl who went on tour downtown in search of geometric shapes found among buildings and the architecture. Students worked together using a Bubble Map to put descriptive phrases and properties in the outside of the bubbles. This served as a great way for students to “see” and identify basic information about the math concepts while reinforcing a story plot.

- Dimensions 5 and 6: Positive Affect and Sense of Control

Mrs. Hill can be found reinforcing exemplary behavior by giving positive statements, and by the comments stated on student work that is displayed in the class. Specific modeling and feedback is evident on a daily basis. Prior to reading the poem entitled “Spaghetti! Spaghetti!” Mrs. Hill showed t students a picture of the boy eating a plate of spaghetti. She read the title out loud and explained that the poem is a story about a boy who enjoys spaghetti. She then asked, “Have any of you ever eaten spaghetti or any kind of pasta?”
One little boy said, “Yes, I like spaghetti, but it is messy.” A little girl shared that she likes Spaghetti O’s with meatballs. Mrs. Hill then shared that spaghetti can be made in different kinds of ways. The students and Mrs. Hill continue to talk about how spaghetti tastes, moves, and smells. Some the words that Mrs. Hill emphasizes are wiggle, slishy and sloshy.

“Very good boys and girls, as we can see, spaghetti is a real hit with most of us, let’s read the poem and find out what this little boy loves so much about his favorite food- spaghetti! But before we read, on let’s talk about a few words that you may come across during our read-aloud: Sprinkle, What do you sprinkle on your spaghetti? Well, when I eat spaghetti I like to sprinkle or scatter parmesan cheese on top. It is usually so good that I like to gobble it up or eat it quickly.”

“Me too,” shouted two or three students. Mrs. Hill proceeded to read the poem aloud, stopping after every two stanzas to ask questions and model think alouds for students to hear and respond to. She really brought the poem to life by using exaggeration and emphasizing rhyming words.

She obviously is controlling instruction using GLE’s to analyze concept mastery by talking about the poem, reading the poem with expression, and finally, asking the students to respond by asking if they thought the poem was funny, and if they liked spaghetti as much as the boy in the poem does. The GLE’s are posted and referred to daily. During this particular lesson, the following GLE’s were emphasized:

1. Standard 1: Reading and Responding (Determining meanings of words, Identify rhyme and story elements and connect ideas)
2. Standard 6: Compare and Contrast story elements (Genre, Various types of literature)

3. Standard 7: Demonstrate understanding of information in grade appropriate text (Main ideas, connections to real life situations, raising questions to obtain clarification)

- Dimensions 7 and 8: Sense of Common Teacher/Student Goals and Democratic Decision Making

One of the areas evident in Mrs. Hill’s class is how the connection of common teacher and student goals makes an impact on decision making. About once every 2 weeks, Mrs. Hill demonstrates a lesson from one of the four content areas for a group of teacher mentees. The teachers share the information about each child on an individual basis by noting how the students respond/react, before, during, and after the instruction is given. This explains why some groups meet daily, while more advanced students only meet with Mrs. Hill about three times per week. Similarities in learning styles are discussed, and each teacher plans for these student’s independent instructional opportunities. Mrs. Hill plans for the most intensive students while her colleagues plan independent instructional activities for the on-and-above average students. This makes it easier to plan and manage how differentiated instruction is done in the class. Some lessons are transcribed or videoed for playback in the future. The discussion level at these meeting surpassed all others that the author attended. The students actually can move from one level of instruction to another by simply changing classes during small group time based on need. The transitions constantly change, making effort and progress
more tangible for the students and teachers. (Hill’s Personal Interview, February 13, 2008)

Teachers use leveled thinking maps to guide discussions and before, during, and after reading activities. These also help to extend ideas during small group instruction. Individual data binders are created and accessible for each student. This takes a lot of time to create, but it creates a tangible record for each student over a period of time.

Non-Reading First Green Meadows Teacher: Mrs. Wells

Many teachers would love to work in the classroom of Teacher D, Mrs. Sue Wells. She is a ninth year teacher at one of the higher performing schools in Pelican School District. This youthful, Caucasian, 34 year old teacher has taught first grade for the entire time that she has been at Green Meadows Elementary. Mrs. Wells’ classroom is quite cheery and full of exuberant and eager students. The perfectly arranged desks are in a “U” shape and students are seated and always ready for instruction.

With a smile on her face, Mrs. Wells states that the program is working far better than she ever imagined. She admits that during the summer training, she did not pay much attention to what she was being taught because of the systematic and explicit manner in which instruction was outlined. Mrs. Wells had been accustomed to working from a thematic standpoint with her students. She could not understand how it would all work out. It really did not matter to her what the district mandated; teaching students to read through the use of thematic units was the best way she found to facilitate learning and address all the students need to know. It just did not make sense to take an hour out of each instructional day to teach phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and
comprehension is isolation. As the year began to unfold, she found that the students were still learning and they were learning to own their language.

Principal Harris is a fifth year principal at the school. The author can always expect a welcome and assurance that all teachers will follow the program as written. She has been spotted observing in many classrooms and engaging in the facilitation of grade level meetings. She believes that her school, regardless of the achievement label, has a mission to fulfill. The mission begins with fulfilling the mission of the District, the school, and then tricking down to the classroom. Principal Harris remarked “If the program is mandated by the district, we must follow it. If our kids are mastering the concepts, then we teach the next thing that they need to know and continue that cycle until they are reading fluently.” As the instructional leader, Principal Harris encourages her teachers to follow the program as written. Even though the school does not have a reading coach, the Curriculum Integration Specialist acts in the role of a Reading Coach. She attends all meetings and helps to communicate specific classroom activities to the principal. Mrs. Harris makes sure that materials and resources are completely distributed and accessible to teacher. Incentives such as teacher luncheons featuring a teacher of the month help to promote teacher moral and acknowledge the positives in teachers.

Mrs. Wells was chosen to participate in this study because she teaches in an ideal setting with a very involved principal. She is a first grade teacher who had an opportunity to participate in the Summer Reading Institute and follows the manuals as they are presented in the manual to the best of her ability. Her perceptions of the program are changing and she now understands how learning should occur in the first grade
literacy classroom. Mrs. Wells is very inviting and strives to carry the “warmth” of the school environment throughout her personality and classroom interactions.

Mrs. Well’s students come primarily from the middle class status. Parents play a key role in the education of their students as evidenced by the 95% family membership in the Parent Teacher Organization. Several of the school’s programs require parental participation in production of programs and technology and resource support.

Table 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mrs. Well’s Classroom Demographics Pre-Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 girls</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interview with Green Meadows Principal Harris and Reading Coach

The name, Green Meadows Elementary, describes the climate, teachers, students and administrators of the school. Each day begins with a smile and welcoming greeting from the secretary and office staff. Teachers and principal usually arrive early each day. It definitely embodies the characteristics of a happy place.
Dimension 1: A Sense of Personal Accomplishment

Without bragging, Principal Harris and the Reading Coach both agree that working at Green Meadows Elementary is a privilege. Principal Harris commented:

“Teachers are generally happy and overjoyed to be a member of our faculty. Our expectations are extremely high and they should be. Teacher candidates that apply and interview are already aware of the unique curriculum and student profiles that are present here. Most of our teachers have excelled in their quest to become an educator by obtaining multiple degrees and certifications prior to apply here. We are proud to say that we have a plethora of teachers who are Nationally Board Certified” (Principal Harris and Reading Coach Interview, February 20, 2008)

The Reading Coach commented:

“I have been a teacher here for over eight years and just the idea of functioning in the capacity as a reading coach has given me a boost of confidence. The reading program, in addition to our established “Arts” curriculum, has definitely fine-tuned the type of instruction that takes place here. I feel accomplished along with my colleagues for being a part of such a major undertaking. The reading program makes everyone better at instructing our students. Teachers are more accountable, therefore more conscious of how direct instruction makes our students more “solid” (Reading Coach, Interview)

From the perspective of both the principal and reading coach, they feel that their teachers are very competent at managing both the emotional and academic needs of their students. They agree that a teacher’s beliefs and perspective on teaching literacy, influences their approach to teaching, their professional identity, and their interactions
with colleagues, parents, students, and other professionals. They also agree that as the instructional leaders of the school, it is important of them to convey the message of how everyone can make the students better readers, thinkers and beyond.

- Dimension 2: Positive Expectations for Student Behavior and Achievement

The expectations are great and only afforded to just a handful of teachers and students alike. The principal and coach like to believe that the teaching profession requires a positive work relationship with the public. As such, teachers must realize that it is necessary to contend with their students along with the instructional duties that are attached with the job.

“Many of our students are selected to attend our school based on a talent or skill that they possess with the fine arts. Therefore, if they are chosen, it is understood that misbehavior is not an option. Our students are given many positive reinforcements to “make the right decision.” The core teaching time (reading, math, science and social studies) is very important. We protect that time. We understand that students must be given a quality education first and foremost. Then and only then, are we able to extend their learning by allowing them to experience the full arts curriculum” (Principal Harris and Reading Coach Interview, February 20, 2008).

A time out moderator meets with the parents and students at the beginning of the year to give an overview of behavior expectations. We stress the importance of discipline and the positive or negative effects that it may have on participation in extracurricular activities offered at the school.
Many of the students come to the school with an exceptional GPA. Administrators constantly revisit standards and remind students of the importance of the core subject areas. Students and teachers alike are rewarded with outings and “free time” for excelling in any of the major content areas. Performance in any of the arts productions serve as milestones for accomplishments that students and teachers achieve as well.

The Reading program plays a major role in the delivery and facilitation of instruction. Some teachers were apprehensive about the approach for literacy instruction at first. This is partially due to the fact that many of students come to the school reading. The principal and reading coach shared the importance of building a strong foundation in early stages of reading (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency). Many of the students could “read,” but were lacking in being phonologically aware and understanding of more complex comprehension. Principal Harris commented:

“Don’t get me wrong, we have our share of problems (overachievers, cruelty to classmates and unnecessary competition….) However, we try to address the problems immediately with the resources we have available and in an effort to avoid losing instructional time” (Principal Harris and Reading Coach Interview, February 20, 2008).

- Dimensions 3 and 4: Personal Responsibility for Student Learning and Strategies for Achieving Objectives

Principal Harris (Principal Harris and Reading Coach Interview, February 20, 2008) found that a teacher’s beliefs and emotions are an integral part of how teachers view their roles as teachers. Many teachers at Green Meadows display illustrations of care, sensitivity, and professionalism in the achievement of their students. Hence, it is
believed that this also helps students excel in their interactions in the arts. The
demonstration of the relationships formed among teachers and students is shown through
the positive interactions, nurturing classroom environment and increases in student
progress.

“Some to the strategies used at our school involve interdisciplinary skills to cover
all of the GLE’s. During our faculty meetings, the teacher of the arts and each
grade level meet in order to plan and maximize instructional routines. For
example, we use book studies and video conferencing often to bring new ideas for
making this a reality. Reading is the subject that serves a springboard for
mastering all other grade levels. Students are taught how to read, then we focus on
reading to learn and lastly, making connections and reading to perform.”

Principal Harris continued:

“One good example is learning how to analyze word origins in reading. Teachers
then expose students to reading a particular genre that relates information about a
particular era. Students explore the lifestyles, events and forms of lively hood
that is portrayed. It is then extended through the study of the visual art, culture
and festivals of the era, dance, music and culminates with a dramatic arts
performance. This is truly teaching the whole child to be and interact. The impact
of the Reading program is evident” (Reading Coach Interview, February 13,
2008).

Any new program presents challenges. One of the challenges that were brought about
due to the parameters of the literacy program was an uninterrupted block of instructional
time. Principal Harris remarked:
“It became a “monster” with scheduling and making sure each class also received and equitable amount of time engaging in the Arts. Hence, many of our Arts teachers had to become reading teachers. We have spent countless of hours training and providing insight on the new approaches to teaching reading. In return, the teachers have become better at teaching their craft in a more explicit manner. It has definitely carried over into their instruction. Our Arts teachers use many of the direct teaching strategies to gage and monitor students’ understandings and processing of information. Yes, our schedules were altered greatly, but we reaped the benefit of gaining more well-trained teachers.”

Teachers can be seen using think alouds, facilitating more literacy enriched learning stations, and monitoring the types of books students select for reading during independent reading time.

- Dimensions 5 and 6: Positive Affect and Sense of Control

  Principal Harris believes that she is the forerunner in fostering a climate of positive behavior and displaying a sense of control.

  “I let the teachers know that I am right there with them. I have to constantly be a cheerleader and say, “Come on, we are doing this for the children and it is important.” Many times the preparation and management of a school wide visual/play production, causes some of our teachers to slack on delivering the core instruction. When students get out of hand and teachers become too frustrated I have to stop and start going into my ‘coaching’ mode and say things like, we can’t be defeated. We just have to do this. Trust me; students need every bit of this
reading instruction. It will pay off” (Principal Harris and Reading Coach, Interview, February 20, 2008).

Teachers are reminded that they are the ones in control. It may take extra hours beyond the work day to figure it out, but it can be done. The principal and the reading coach can be found in the classroom modeling or observing and facilitating the grade level meetings on a consistent basis. Their schedules and logs as well as daily routines communicate this clearly. They believe that whatever is monitored and modeled gets done. Another level of support is peer evaluations.

The Reading Coach added:

“There’s a whole lot more we can do for these children to get to know them with things about life than can ever be learned from a book. We are fortunate to have the arts to help us do this. One of the toughest things is too balance looking out for these kids and try to develop them into a well rounded individual. We have the potential and control to making this happen. I constantly remind our teachers not to pass this opportunity by.”

- Dimensions 7 and 8: Sense of Common Teacher/Student goals and Democratic Decision Making

One of the approaches that the school chooses to use to help bridge teacher/student and democratic decision making goals is through book studies. Currently, the staff is completing a text designed to identify and diagnose reading difficulties in students. Teachers have been engaging in discussions that help them understand why some students who seemingly are able to read struggle in other content areas. These book studies are initiated by the principal and reading coach.
Although the district mandated that each kindergarten through third grade student be screened using DIBELS, Green Meadows took the initiative to implement the screening test with their fourth and fifth grade students. It was amazing to the principal how some students were slipping through the cracks and becoming incapable of comprehending text later on during life. Thus, this serves as the rationale for using the screener beyond the third grade.

The text used in the book study also helped the school to put their mission into perspective:

1. A model for the reading diagnosis and instructional planning was created for the school in addition to the district mandates.

2. Teachers were in-serviced on the knowledge of print. A look at the development and role of assessment was analyzed using grade level expectations in relationship to class profiles.

3. Oral reading was also emphasized in regards to how teachers should analyze and instruct.

4. A major emphasis was placed on vocabulary and its importance in the development of comprehension.

5. Writing also became a major focus for the school. The creative writing teacher trained our staff on how writing brings all components of reading together.

6. The final phase included information on how to use assessment data to form groups, select materials and develop appropriate instructional strategies.
7. Communicating the findings to colleagues, students and parents help to created joint decisions about what students should be encouraged to do. The coach found it helped teachers check the accuracy of what they were learning about their students.

Each teacher has begun to make a student portfolio. This has supported the efforts of reading achievement in great part with communicating to parents why literacy instruction in this manner is so important across grade levels. Teachers have found that showing actual student work provides a summary for the parents so that they can see their children’s strengths and weaknesses in reading and writing.

It has also been helpful in determining assignments and roles for school-wide productions involving the arts. Students vary in interest and capabilities. Some are better at speaking while others are bettering and producing gestures. The principal finds that this approach has helped teachers understand the importance of the development of a diagnostic skill and become an expert in providing high-quality instruction through the experimentation of putting a book study into practice. Principal Harris commented:

“It (the arts and cross-curriculum focuses) teaches our teachers why and how to be more accountable. We stress that they are not just teachers, but active learners and we should do whatever it takes (attending practices after school for a play, assisting with the symphony performance or accompanying a group of students on a trip to visit a dance studio and performance). Teachers must put forth an effort to make a difference.”

Principal Harris and the Reading Coach believe that if the passion to help students’ leaves, then the teacher should leave also. Principal Harris argued: “There is too much at
stake to take a chance of losing the great opportunities and experiences afforded to Green
Meadows” (Principal Harris and Reading Coach Interview, February 20, 2008).

Interview with Non-Reading First Green Meadows Teacher: Mrs. Wells

Mrs. Wells is one of the most enthusiastic first grade teachers the author interviewed. She can always be found with books in hand and interacting with students as peers. Even during lunch and planning time, her focus is always on student achievement. After 9 years of teaching at Green Meadows, Mrs. Wells feels as if she has a great wealth of knowledge about student needs both academically and socially, in first grade.

- Dimension 1: A Sense of Personal Accomplishment

To develop a more accurate picture of the context of the school and to explore how the teacher envisions his or her classroom, the interview began by asking Mrs. Wells to talk about some of her personal accomplishments. The commencement of the conversation began with how she made a decision to become a teacher and later evolved into how teaching completes her.

“As a daughter of a second grade teacher, I grew up “living school.” Education and learning has always been a major factor in my life. My mom, father and maternal grandmother were all teachers. So quite naturally, I would fit right in. However, it wasn’t until my sophomore year as a Sociology major that I decided to pursue a degree in education. Of course, my family was happy, but I was just “okay” with the decision. I realized that I might as well teach rather than earn a degree in Sociology and not really have a clear path on what I would do after.”

Mrs. Wells continued:
“I believe that teaching at my school is definitely a personal accomplishment as well as an honor. Many people are just working for a living, but I can truly say that I enjoy the impact that I have on our students. Being able to teach in one location for so many years has afforded me the opportunity to watch my students and peers develop. Students want to be here and it definitely makes it easier to work here, it is a pleasure. What a great feeling to have landed a career that is fulfilling. Being that I do not have any children of my own, I think I take teaching to heart. I am glad I decided to pursue a career in teaching”
(Well’s Personal Interview, February 13, 2008).

- Dimension 2: Positive Expectations for Student Behavior and Achievement

The first grade curriculum is one that is full of foundational skills geared towards preparing students for the rest of their educational career. Students begin the year learning to read and progress into the mode of reading to learn by the end. Mrs. Wells reported: “You come up with all these idealistic things and you are like” All these kids are so precious. I just want to do so much for them. Then when you realize all the things you are supposed to be doing and the responsibilities you have gets you sidetracked.”

Mrs. Wells admits that she has to constantly recommit herself to the tasks. She also realizes that the easiest way to do both at the same time is to set positive expectations as a teacher. Reading has always been the vehicle used to help conquer this awesome task in Mrs. Well’s first grade classroom.

“The school’s motto is “Excellence Everyday!” Although I admit that balancing the demands of teaching duties with time devoted to reminding students of their role as a student here is great, we are expected to do it daily. Our time is so
limited due to the hectic teaching schedule, parents and students understand that reading on and beyond grade level is a must in order to participate in the many activities offered at our school.”

Rules are posted throughout the school and each grade level must keep “current” goals and class work posted in the corridors of their hallway (respect yourself, neighbor and all school property, walk orderly and quietly in hallways, do your best at all times both in class and during all activities). There are many trophies, plaques, programs and pictures that denote achievement for Principal’s Lists and performances done at the school. This serves as a symbol of the great bequest that each partaker should uphold for the schools legacy to continue.

Although behavior is not a major issue at Green Meadows, focusing on the importance of behaving in a favorable manner is communicated in every discipline. Students and parents know that a successful stay at the school is contingent on maintaining a decent GPA. Mrs. Harris remarked:

“"It is saddening when students have to leave the school because of an unfavorable academic standing; I hate to see students in this situation. It has never happened to anyone in my first grade class, but in higher grades. For this reason, I try even harder to make sure students know what they need to know before they need to know it. Parents welcome this idea and it usually helps to share the mission and our passion for teaching throughout the school year.”

Mrs. Harris continued:

“All students are not “Straight A” students. However, each student is encouraged to do their best with the gift and talent that they have been given. Therefore,
teachers in all areas must be aware and have access to this information in order to
make it a reality” (Well’s Personal Interview, February 13, 2008).

- Dimensions 3 and 4: Personal Responsibility for Student Learning
  and Strategies for Achieving Objectives

Throughout the interview, the author noticed how Mrs. Wells strives to build
relationships with her students. These descriptions were consistent with how she
perceived herself in regards to self and approaches in the classroom.

The Reading Block begins at 8:30 am. Mrs. Wells feels that conferencing prior to
the beginning of the block helps to develop oral language. About five students are seen
each day. This major task makes mornings hectic, but Mrs. Well’s thinks that it gives her
an opportunity to give at least five students a few minutes of individual attention. The
support of colleagues, assistance with student interns, and parent volunteers are usually in
the classroom to help assist students with updating portfolio and to review learning
contracts. The augmentation of the District’s Reading program is the model that is used
to guide literacy instruction. The expansion of oral language through the arts helps to
drive the vehicle to comprehension.

One of the strategies that teachers use to help bring a teaching concept into reality
is through the use of faculty book studies. Mrs. Well’s likes the idea of studying in this
common manner. One of the books that help refine the way she teaches literacy this year
is entitled, *Good-Bye Round Robin, 25 Effective Oral Reading Strategies by Rasinski and
Opitz*. She praises the books for the attention to the importance of Oral Language in
acquiring literacy. Mrs. Wells acknowledges how she is better at attending to each
student because of this book.
“It’s easy to learn how to implement. I now know understand the strategies that I am teaching and why. Students are taught how to choose, share, and question books in a more systematic way. We take it a step further by teaching students how to interpret character’s feelings and communicate this to others when reading aloud. The connections are invaluable to nurturing the performance nature in all of our students” (Well’s Personal Interview, February 13, 2008).

Videos and recorded texts are often used to reinforce story elements, character, voice, and connections with writing. Mrs. Well’s expressed why these routines are needed for interacting with literature. She supported the holistic philosophy to teaching reading prior to skills based because she thought it to be “more engaging.” Now, Mrs. Wells understands the value of teaching in alignment to key district policies.

“We no longer teach what and when we would like to teach it, but now we teach literacy in a way that makes explicit links between reading and writing. We are now able to see the uniformity across grade levels, disciplines and throughout the entire school. In the past, I tended to assume my students understood a concept, now I have multiple sources that assist in determining any level of competencies. Students are still getting multiple meanings and we (teachers) are better equipped in knowing why and how to enhance the meaning in text and content” (Well’s Personal Interview, February 13, 2008).

- Dimensions 5 and 6: Positive Affect and Sense of Control

Mrs. Wells believes that her attitude towards teaching is the key to creating and maintaining control. She noted that she and her colleagues teach in an ideal situation, but they still have control as to what the extent of the learning experience will be. Mrs.
Wells acknowledges that changes in literacy instruction at her school were viewed as an unwelcome entity at first. However, because all of the teachers wanted to remain in good standing at the school, they suppressed the feelings of “resistance” and gave it a try. Some teachers did this in a very “joyful” manner, while others did it in a “grudged way.”

“I believe most teachers felt like they were being dictated what to teach rather than given an opportunity to teach skills in the order in which they preferred. But when you really look at it, the district’s goals went from teaching in general to teaching specifics. We now have scripts that read, “I think the character likes to visit her grandma because she met a new friend who lives across the street.” In past years, we would probably read something in a teacher’s manual that would say, “Teach the learner how to identify a character’s opinion.”

Mrs. Well’s found “A sense of control is expressed through what a teacher does with what she has.” At Green Meadows, teachers are given support from the principal, the reading coach, the community, and each other. The Principal attends bi-weekly book studies and evaluates teachers on their effectiveness of implementing the strategies that are discussed. Memos are written that express expectations. Students are encouraged to go to both the school and public library. The environment is full of print ranging from process writing to responses to literature, art, music and drama. Multisensory approaches that promote the use of gestures in expressing oneself is highly encouraged and in full use at Green Meadows.

- Dimensions 7 and 8: Sense of Common Teacher/Student Goals and Democratic Decision Making

The workload is great, but worth it. Teachers are invited to meet students and parents during a Pre-Open House meeting that takes place a week before school begins.
Students are taken on a tour of the school and teachers can begin sharing grade level expectations at this time. Several videos of past performances are set up for viewing in the auditorium and common areas. An overview of each core content is given along with a list of supplies and materials that will be needed during various point so the year.

Mrs. Well’s admitted that this was difficult to do at the beginning of the year because of her apprehensiveness to the new way of teaching. Of course, parents had questions and about reading program and the determination of the teaching format. She had to convince herself at first due to program structure, training, and previously taught literacy strategies. Then, it was easier to communicate with parents. She stressed that although students are above average, the skills can be beneficial for all. Many of the foundational skills of identifying sounds, letters, and word knowledge were important in helping students in the future as readers.

“However, too much work in planning and not enough time to really do it all is always staring me in the face. I will be happy when we use one program; right now I feel that we are scattered and bouncing all over the place to be systematic. The format seems like a contradiction to how they (the district) really want us to teach- in order.”

As far as students are concerned, students are given choices in selecting roles to play, books to read, songs to sing, art to display, and dances to dance. Mrs. Wells finds that she has more opportunities to offer for student learning than the district has offered to support her learning. She believes that she is more knowledgeable about teaching reading in the manner than she does because of her school and her personal quest to try and understand why this way of teaching is best.
“I feel that if teachers “believe” that their professionalism is appreciated and taken into account when decisions regarding teaching are made, there will be far less resistors. Yes, it is a major change, but I know that teachers that are more competent, equipped with all the teaching tools in one place, feel less frustrated. I know that is I how view it.”

Mrs. Wells added:

“If I can choose the best program for reading instruction, it would be one that is all in one package offering varying forms of leveled instruction for each child is ideal. Although a district can choose the skills, format and delivery for instruction, I believe that all of this should be in a place where a teacher can choose from the likes of this; it should not be limited to “this set only.” Otherwise, it is hard to say that I have a “real voice” is choosing what to teach and teaching students how to really have a say in what they learn.”

Mrs. Wells continued:

“First grade is the grade that students really learn how to read. I am at advantage; I can move my students into reading to learn. It is extended through readers’ theater, visual arts, dance and music…. Computers are in every class and a lab is directed by a full time computer lab teacher. Sometimes we feel “boxed in”, but then I realize it is up to me to express that not all boxes are the same…so we make the most of it every day.”

Mrs. Well’s believes that the students who are ESL and those that lack prerequisite reading skills benefit from the explicit instruction. The explicit instruction is written in the manual for teachers.
“There is lots of practice for our struggling readers which we never really had before. We no longer assume that students who come to school here do not have issues with learning to read. Last year, we knew most of our kids could read under the ‘old definition’ of reading. Now, the evidence proves that how they learned to read and why teaching in this manner is the best way. This is a good difference. We track more with DIBELS, Edusoft, and end of unit tests, fluency checks, and assessment benchmarks (as follows):

1. Stress oral language
2. Environment
3. Colleagues
4. Challenges and work load
5. Reading Coach
6. Proactive principal weekly meetings and memos
7. Reading Coach support- Book study, most beneficial Goodbye Round Robin (by T. Rasinski) emphasis in oral language
8. “Real collaborative planning”
9. Minus social and discipline problems not true but different, over powering parents, divorce, depression, life happens
10. Abundance of administrative and parental support- due to lack of discipline and extracurricular activities.”

“We take surveys and use profiles to enhance those interest identified by the magnet program, students, parents and former teachers. Now, we look at assessment surveys and try to collaborate with the Arts teachers on areas that students need extra
practice or reinforcement. Reader’s Theatre helps with our DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency and Music helps with Phonemic Awareness and Phonics, while Comprehension has become a part of every subject.”

Observation of Mrs. Wells at Non-Reading First Green Meadows

Ms. Wells admits that the teacher she is today is quite different from the teacher she was 5 years ago. Although she considered herself to be a “good” teacher, today she is able to communicate with student data why that is the case (Personal Interview, February 13, 2008). Ms. Wells was and still is a firm believer in the Balanced Literacy approach to teaching reading. However, since the district has mandated the new systematic and explicit implementation of instruction, she has made the transition to teaching in this manner.

Ms. Wells admits that one area of concern with the new approach to reading is that she finds limited time to allow students to read independently. She enhances this opportunity by expanding guided reading time with the use of chapter books that usually encourages independent reading. Books ranging from first grade to fifth grade level can be found in the guided reading area. Students read both in and out of the designated group time.

- Dimensions 1: A sense of Personal Accomplishment

Ms. Well’s expressed that it was very difficult to put her feelings of opposition to the reading program aside and give the new implementation full attention. This also raised questions from the perspective of parents who felt that teaching phonics explicated to “readers” was also a waste of time. It was not until students began to respond decoding the text more independently that Ms. Wells saw benefits of this type of facilitation. This
served as a great springboard for communicating the benefits in teaching in the manner in which the district mandated. Mrs. Wells began to take ownership after much training, research, and first-hand experience of the effects of teaching phonics more explicitly.

When one enters the classroom, one will still find posters and phrases reminding students of traits of good readers along with tips for attacking words, and word origins. Mrs. Wells also believes that a stronger emphasis in phonics instruction is the best way to address her academically above-average students. It helps the students attack multi-syllable words, which in turn helps to enhance comprehension and increase vocabulary usage.

Evidence of phonics instruction includes word/sound spelling cards with letter and sound correspondences along with picture clues are strategically placed across the main chalkboard area in front of the room. Students also have access to the audio/CD recordings that helps with the authentic sounds and letter associations which accompany the word/sound spelling cards. Charts are updated weekly with newly acquired vocabulary words.

- Dimension 2: Positive Expectations for Student Behavior and Achievement

Many of the charts and displays in the classroom are related to reading. Students are constantly reminded of the goals and achievements encouraged by the Accelerated Reader program on a weekly basis. Students are challenged to read from a particular genre and book reports are assigned on a monthly basis.

Some book reports include making a book jacket, dioramas, comic strip, and present in first person from a main character’s point of view. Previous reports are on
display in the classroom library area. Each student is given an assignment/report to be
submitted within 2 weeks of studying a literature selection.

One of the assignments was entitled “Possible Questions.” Students were asked
to generate questions that would help aid with comprehension of the text that they would
be reading next. During the reading of the text, students noted whether or not their
questions were answered while reading or if they needed to re-read or do further research
on this topic. The topic that students seem to be investigating during this 2 week period
was transportation. Finally, students created a visual representation to help communicate
what they have learned on the topic of transportation. Ms. Wells stated that she finds this
the best way to integrate content area subjects and reading.

Another activity that seems to be well-liked by the students is “I am Thinking of a
Word.” activity. The students have to guess the words based on clues and concepts. For
example, Ms. Wells would say:

“I am thinking of a word we discussed in our study of transportation. An example
of this word is to transport a large number of people using one source. An
example of this word is, “Used to fly passenger in the air.” A non example of this
word is to travel “Using a road map.” “Any Ideas?”

Then one little boy would say, “Airplane!” excitedly. Ms. Wells led the group in a
discussion of the history of airplanes and how important airplanes are to transportation in
today’s society.

- Dimensions 3 and 4: Personal Responsibility for Student Learning
  and Strategies for Achieving Objectives

Evidence of responsibility for student learning and strategies for achieving
objectives can be found throughout the management, content, and instructional
framework of the class. Ms. Wells sends learning contracts home on a weekly basis that outlines homework assignments, unit themes and weekly assessments. Reading, Math, Social Studies, Writing and The Arts are also followed-up on the teacher’s website. Parents can communicate and respond to various components of the curriculum as needed. Ms. Wells finds that this is a useful tool to help assist in the delivery of lesson content. It also keeps down on confusion and questions that may arise when parents are not informed. Ms. Wells spend 2 to 3 hours updating and responding to messages at least twice a week.

- Dimensions 5 and 6: Positive Affect and Sense of Control

Mrs. Wells attributes the positivity and eagerness for students to learn to the overall climate and expectations of the school. The school is adorned with murals depicting children who are happily engaged in learning. Students are challenged to give “positive” comments do journaling and verbal interaction. Most students enjoy writing notes so journaling and note-writing is a big hit in Mrs. Well’s class. This school-wide incentive is promoted in an effort to help boost writing skills and encourage acknowledging positive behavior. Students can often be found “passing” notes during several times of the day. Mrs. Wells allows the students to do this under one circumstance, “Only write what you would not mind being read to the class.”

Music and transition gestures are used in combination to the literacy rotation chart to signal transitions from activity to activity. Students rely on the music and gestures to help them stay on task and on schedule. Mrs. Wells also uses a timer program on the Smart Board to help with the time and behavior management. In lieu of sending unengaged/defiant students to the Time Out Room moderator, Mrs. Wells prefers to keep
students in an “in-class TOR.” Students are still required to produce work and may join
the rest of the class once they refocus and agree to follow classroom procedures.

• Dimensions 7 and 8: Sense of Common Teacher/Student Goals
  and Democratic Decision Making

  Mrs. Well’s believes that common teacher/student goals are important to
achieving high expectations. Students are given opportunities to share in attaining
reading goals throughout the course of the day, not just during reading. Students are
often given the opportunity to visit the library (Wednesday 2:00-2:30 pm and each
afternoon before the dismissal of school). Mrs. Wells and the students often dialogue
about the books that are selected from the library. Some comments include:

  “How are you enjoying the book?”
  “Would you recommend this book to another classmate?”
  “Are you finding some words difficult to pronounce or read?”
  “Don’t forget to make an appointment for us to read two paragraphs together.”

  Students are given choices to share ideas orally with students and the teacher.

  Many of the student teacher interns participate in assisting with the retelling and
comprehension of the texts. Ownership is encouraged through the use of bookmarks.

  Students can make bookmarks once a different book is selected. This allows students to
keep track of the number of books that they have read. Checks are placed on the back of
the bookmarks to help students keep track of how many times they talked about the book
with another classmate or adult.

  Students are encouraged to talk about the stories that they read. Mrs. Wells
makes special attempts to re-visit stories and read similar versions of the text; she finds
that students feel “recognized” when she acknowledges the efforts of good reading.
Students sometimes read along and talk about what they like, what they noticed, and how the book makes them feel. (Personal Interview, Spring 2008) Parents are also given updates on the web through “class favorites” located under the reading link.

Aside from having access regularly paid interventionists, Mrs. Wells chooses to use her interns and student teachers to help with students that may need additional instructional support. Materials and activities chosen, are no longer left up to them, but rather given from resources found within the Comprehensive Curriculum. These activities are chosen based on what the assessments reveal, which are closely linked to the grade level expectations and sequence of the scripted program. This is different from years past in that these apprentices could usually choose a thematic unit or creative idea and teach in any order or sequence. Interns begin by observing Mrs. Wells during her small group instruction and gradually assume the responsibility for teaching the scripted material from various components selected from the reading lesson.

Mrs. Wells makes a special effort to try to connect last year’s version of the reading workshop by beginning with a mini-lesson, teaching the focus skill and providing opportunities for students choose books to read, once the small group is finished. She recognizes that just because one piece of text is used to teach a skill to a small group, another piece of text that interest the students can be pre-selected for students to read for pleasure. Students are then given time to ‘read’ without distractions, enjoy time to talk with classmates, journal, write letters to the teacher—which leads into mini lessons for the writer’s workshop. Mrs. Wells finds that having high expectations stemming from the district, administrators, parents, and students is important. She believes that she has
earned the right to teach here and will follow what is required but teach far beyond the bare minimum like in years past.

Summary

Essentially, it can be summarized that each school had a standard, and attempted to do what was interpreted to be the best reading instruction on varying levels of the playing field (school, administrators, teachers, students, instructional materials and execution). As the data began to unfold, it became obvious of the difference in the demographics and teacher perspectives. Both Young and Brown were teaching in Reading First Schools and had the least amount of experience. These schools had a low school performance score and received additional instructional support. Hill and Wells on the other hand, had been teaching first grade in their schools for several years, were holders of advanced degrees, participated in school professional development opportunities, and had commendable school performance scores. It was also noticeable in the level of students that these teachers were instructing. About half of the students in the Reading First classes were reading on or above grade level at the beginning of the year, while well over 90% of the students in the Non Reading First schools had already met the goal at this time.

Testing data indicated students achieved both because of instruction and teachers willingness to implement the reading program with fidelity. Although two distinct frameworks were employed for the discussion of the research, each teacher individually communicated their beliefs and uniqueness in working with students. The views expressed by all four teachers, suggests that it is teaching is a passion, and the truths
about teaching are a combination of teacher knowledge and what teachers come to believe as “what works well” with their students.

Each school principal believed in the importance of looking at each teacher in the natural setting of their perspective classrooms. Interactions among teachers, students, and literacy leaders helped to develop an understanding of practices in reading instruction. Observations, interviews, and site visits allowed understanding and exploration of details that unveiled discoveries from one teacher to the next.

The instruction that was observed in all four first grade classes reflects similar dynamics in the teaching of the skills of learning to read (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension). The consistency in this area was altered, however, due to the differences of materials in the Reading Firsts schools versus the materials in the Non-Reading First Schools. This notion was being addressed at the District Level by formulating a team to adopt a comprehensive reading program that all schools will use in the future to deliver reading instruction.

The principals and reading administrators were very supportive at all levels of the study. The Reading First principals were more of the instructional leaders with the reading coach, than in the situation of the Non Reading First principals. It was found that the principals of the Reading First schools had stricter guidelines to follow and implement, which ultimately guided the literacy instruction in their schools. A letter of assurance and signatures to participate in the Reading First model remained on file and the threat of losing funding always was an unwelcome thought in their minds. All four principals had confidence in their teachers’ ability to carry out the district’s reading plan whether the implementation was monitored closely in the Reading First schools or
loosely in the Non-Reading First Schools. Hence, teachers in the Non-Reading First schools were allowed to combine skills and add more of their teaching preferences in their reading lessons because slightly disjointed reading program and assessments.

Teachers in all four schools possessed levels of competencies that reflected their individual teaching styles while incorporating the model of reading instruction for the district. It was also noticed that the teachers went beyond the program to provide rigor, critical thinking opportunities, and extensions to the reading program whenever possible. In the Reading First Schools, materials were not an issue due to an abundance of funding. However, in the Non Reading First Schools, teachers were expected to “fill-in” gaps of instruction with the use of materials that were similar in skills and context. Overall, the teacher’s efforts were geared towards making certain that students were equipped with the foundational skills needed to become successful readers regardless of the student level or circumstances surrounding the schools where they worked.
CHAPTER V
FINDINGS, LIMITATIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Findings

This study was an analysis of teacher efficacy and perspectives related to literacy implementation in an elementary school setting through the use of Ashton’s Eight Dimensions of Teacher Efficacy (1984):

1. A sense of personal accomplishment.
2. Positive expectations for student behavior and achievement.
3. Personal responsibility for student learning.
4. Strategies for achieving objectives.
5. Positive affect.
6. Sense of control.
7. Sense of common teacher/student goals.
8. Democratic decision making.

The review of literature was a discussion of characteristics of teacher efficacy as a guide to identify teacher efficacy. Four first grade teachers of reading in elementary classrooms, two in Reading First, and two in Non Reading First Schools, were observed on their philosophy and literacy instruction as outlined by the data received. During descriptive observations, behaviors and activities were noted on a daily basis, which assisted in identifying patterns and the establishment of developing associations.

The resulting data answered questions regarding teacher efficacy and perspectives related to literacy implementation in an elementary school setting:
1. According to Literacy Administrator’s, what is the relationship between teacher’s beliefs about standard, prescribed reading instruction and their practices in an elementary classroom setting?

2. What role, if any, do teachers play in developing the how’s and why’s of literacy instruction in their classroom?

3. What factors do teachers believe are essential to providing effective reading instruction in an elementary school setting? How do these factors affect reading instruction in the elementary classroom?

The following paragraphs are a discussion of each of the three research questions.

**Question 1: According to Literacy Administrator’s, what is the relationship between teacher's beliefs about standard, prescribed reading instruction and their practices in an elementary classroom setting?**

**Data Analysis with Literacy Administrators**

The feedback received from the literacy leaders all confirm that teachers often rely on personal educational experiences as the model for good instruction often resulting in teachers teaching in the manner that they were taught. Interview and reading implementation surveys were administered to the literacy leaders (principals and reading coaches) to visit the actual happenings in the classroom from their perspectives. The consensus of the literacy leaders all reflect that teachers have a high degree of willingness; however, the challenging demands of teaching students is a major undertaking requiring high levels of commitment and competency in the area of literacy instruction. Collectively, the literacy administration of all four schools had a combined total of 166 years of expertise to offer students.
Table 12

Years of Experience: Literacy Administrators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Principal/ Years of experience</th>
<th>Coach/ Years of experience</th>
<th>Total Years of experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hollow Brook</td>
<td>29 years</td>
<td>11 years</td>
<td>40 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willow Lane</td>
<td>8 years</td>
<td>12 years</td>
<td>20 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winding Trail</td>
<td>34 years</td>
<td>36 years</td>
<td>70 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Meadows</td>
<td>24 years</td>
<td>12 years</td>
<td>36 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL Years Exp.</strong></td>
<td><strong>95 years</strong></td>
<td><strong>71 years</strong></td>
<td><strong>166 years of experience!</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Depending on how their role is defined, the literacy administrators involved in the study realize that teachers need support from administration and in teaching reading in the elementary classroom. The degree of assisting teachers includes providing feedback to teachers, modeling effective teaching techniques and strategies, advising and supporting teachers to improve lesson design and implementation (materials, planning, instruction, and assessments), conducting workshops that teach new strategies, developing academic plans based on school goals, and others. Attending to these tasks requires the literacy leaders to analyze where teachers and instruction are and where they need to be to see student literacy achievement manifest. The evolving themes that were consistent in identifying the relationship between teacher’s beliefs about standard,
prescribed reading instruction and their practices in an elementary classroom setting according the literacy leaders follow.

- Review of reading goals and highlighted support in these areas are:
  
a. Positive expectations for student behavior and achievement.
  
b. Personal responsibility for student learning and strategies for achieving objectives.
  
c. Sense of common teacher/student goals and democratic decision making.
  
d. Positive expectations for student behavior and achievement.

In both the Reading First and Non Reading First Schools, the literacy leaders agreed that teachers need support from the leadership to develop and implement expectations in teaching and learning. In the two Reading First schools, (Hollow Brook and Willow Land) the literacy leaders signed assurance forms and had to secure signatures from 100% of the faculty members to receive the funding to support the Reading First model. Their signatures signified a commitment to teaching in a systematic format as well as to attend faculty and district professional development. These areas were consistently referenced in both the Reading First and Non Reading First sites that were used in the study.

One of the tools used to articulate the needs of positive expectations for student behavior and achievement was the literacy administrator’s completion of the Planning and Evaluation Tool for Effective Schoolwide Reading Programs. Literacy administrators in all four schools completed the form highlighting the level of effectiveness of such pedagogies in the reading classroom. Areas of perception were given based on goals and objectives, assessment, instructional programs and materials,
instructional time, grouping for differentiated instruction, administration and organization and opportunities for professional development. The areas that were fully implemented in the Reading First Schools were the goals and objectives and administration of goals based on the resources provided by the Reading First Grant.

The degree of professional development and use of instructional materials as intended were only partially implemented. High teacher turn over and high mobility of students was cited as posing a challenge to remain positive and following through on creating high student expectations, especially with new teachers and mobile students. As a result, the Reading First Literacy Administrators are working to train teachers quickly about development of a thorough understanding and working knowledge of grade-level instructional priorities and effective practices. They find that they are constantly “starting over” to get the message across to teachers, which also means that some teachers will not get as much attention as others, causing a gap in knowledge, follow-up, and moving forward with new information.

In the Non-Reading First Schools, most of these areas were all fully implemented due to the requirement that teachers meet rigorous standards prior to accepting a position at the schools. The dual partnership with the mentor programs and arts programs afford teachers opportunities to enhance knowledge beyond what was mandated or offered at the school. The establishment of goals and student achievement are fully articulated through teacher portfolios and administrative support. According to the perceptions reported, the only area that seemed to need extra support was grouping for differentiated instruction, and scheduling due to limited personnel available to actually meet these groups. These schools have to be “creative” and use the staff currently in place. The Non Reading First
Schools did not receive extra funding for additional intervention personnel; therefore, interventions do not occur systematically as ideally intended.

Although the same goals are present at both schools, it was evident that teacher buy-in is extremely important in the beginning, versus after an implementation format is decided upon. The Reading First Teachers are given the goals, while the Non-Reading First teachers are involved in the planning and matching of goals of reading instruction, given the materials and format of combining two programs. Perhaps teachers from one setting can be paired with a teacher from another setting to see if the environments and process of initiating a plan can help ease the challenges of meeting expectations and continuing with high student achievement.

- Personal Responsibility for Student Learning and Strategies for Achieving Objectives Leads to a Sense of Common Teacher/Student Goals

Through the many observations and interviews, it is certain that teachers are ultimately responsible for student learning, while the strategies for achieving objectives are initiated by the district and the literacy administrators. The Reading First Literacy administrators are committed to making this a reality by the partnership that they have established with the National Reading Consultant. The consultant meets with the grade level teams and work to help teachers analyze the class data and customize the reading instruction for the levels in their class. Teachers are also given the opportunity to write goals for their learning and what they would like their students to achieve. Collectively, strategies for achieving those objectives are chosen from the reading program and those suggested by the national consultant’s bank of strategies to match instructional and teaching skills.
Many procedures for taking responsibility for student learning and achieving objectives have been in place at the Non-Reading First Schools for years. The programs offered at these schools continue to require teachers to update their professional portfolios based on student outcomes in literacy. Prior to the districts mandates, teachers would only use Edusoft test, Developmental Reading Assessments, and a combination of textbook/program assessment or teacher-made tests. Teachers and students were trained on portfolios to monitor progress and reading levels. The difference now is that teachers are using the prescribed tests that accompany the textbook, Comprehensive Curriculum and DIBELS scores. Teachers are now analyzing if students possess the foundational skills needed to become a successful reader instead of just using running records (comprehension and meaning checks). Teachers are now able to “screen” all students (both readers and non-readers) to gain insight on possible deficits and those pre-requisite skills that are already mastered stemming from phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension.

All four schools have data walls that depict the trends of mastery of skills. Grade level meetings are very structured and reflective. Each teacher is expected to bring a sample of student work that reflects mastery or non-mastery of a skill to grade level planning meetings. Together, teachers strategize to see if the problem lies with the student’s ability, or if instruction of the teacher lacks clarity and depth in delivery of content. If so, the goal then becomes to revisit those areas that present a deficit for the entire class, plan for further instruction through intervention or design literacy workstations that reinforce practicing with the skill. Additional data is also in place to monitor the impact of the interventions and determine if any adaptations need to be made.
to the facilitation, type and frequency of intervention. Interventions are staffed and monitored more in the Reading First Schools.

The Reading First schools received funding because of low performing scores due to low student achievement. According the Reading First Principals, students come to schools with varying degrees of challenges and stakeholders need to assist teachers in overcoming these obstacles and teach, regardless of the student. Agreeing to more support and structure has provided a standard that teachers can follow to become a better teacher in this type of learning environment. Many of the efforts put into professional development infuse classroom management techniques and multiple strategies that are designed to reach the most difficult students. It is agreed that if the teacher is not fluent in teaching practices, student learning is affected, thus layering the problems of directly relating to student achievement.

- Sense of Common Teacher/Student Goals and Democratic Decision Making.

The Literacy Administrator’s participation in this study resulted in the finding that assisting teachers in creating classroom management and discipline procedures are key in the process of teaching reading. The question that seems to arise is: “How does a teacher, who is likely to have several different learning styles, extreme behavior issues and varying degrees of ability address these needs simultaneously?”

One of the key frameworks that the school district has adopted is the Three-tier Reading Model:

- Tier One

All students receive the grade level instruction during the uninterrupted reading-block. Teachers are expected to facilitate whole group and small group instruction that
incorporates the five components of reading. In DIBELS (Good & Kaminski, 2000) students are referred to as “Benchmark” (those that meet grade level expectations).

- Tier Two

Students who fall slightly below grade level in reading receive additional instruction after the reading block. This usually results in 30 minute lessons that focus on building skills that the students need to read more fluently. In DIBELS (2000), these students are referred to as “Strategic” (those students needing additional instruction beyond grade level content).

- Tier Three

Students who lack a significant set of skills, and those that are at extreme risk of reading failure receive an additional 60 minutes of intense instruction. The instruction is usually below grade level and students are monitored with targeted instructional goals that are tested every 2 weeks. In DIBELS (2000), students who fall into this category are “Intensive” (those who need intense and rigid support towards meeting grade level expectations in reading).

The protocol is used in trainings so teachers can plan instructional goals with, and for, students, so that instructional time can be maximized and used to monitor student progress. Literacy administrators agreed that teachers who understand and use this model, are more proficient at developing and maintaining goals. In terms of summarizing and identifying strengths and weaknesses on the spectrum of teachers’ beliefs and teaching practices in the area of reading, the Literacy Administrator’s found the following strengths and weaknesses, as shown in Table 13.
Table 13

Reading First Schools:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
<th>Next Steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hollow Brook</td>
<td>A core instructional program with documented research-based efficacy is adopted and implemented school wide.</td>
<td>Program is partially implemented with fidelity due to extra training needed to train new teachers; Teachers and students are transit and this causes gaps in knowledge and quality of instruction.</td>
<td>Continue to re-visit concepts in grade level; Provide extra support in areas of Reading First program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(RF)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willow Lane</td>
<td>Core program is in place with support from National Reading First consultant offering expertise in how to transfer knowledge from teacher to students using data and good instructional materials. Assessments play a major role in decision making.</td>
<td>Consistency in follow-through of strategies learned; Teachers are still learning how to communicate the findings of student progress. Also, teachers need to use quick and informed judgements when organizing groups for differentiated instruction. This presents concerns in grade level priorities and effective practices</td>
<td>Pair established teachers with strategic teachers. Reading Coaches will continue to transfer and provide examples of how organize groups to optimize instruction. Visits to other classes/sites that are implementing practices effectively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(RF)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 14

Non Reading First Schools:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
<th>Next Steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Winding Trail</td>
<td>Assessments are in place and used to determine what students need. These are articulated across grade levels. Teachers are stable and are committed to professional development by participating in a teacher enhancement program throughout the year. Teachers also conduct action research with own students throughout the year to examine transfer of knowledge and teaching practices</td>
<td>Core program is not comprehensive. Teachers find it challenging to teach the concepts from two programs: The SBRR program is for phonemic awareness and phonics and the fluency, vocabulary and comprehension are taught in isolation with older program. Teachers are at varying levels with differentiating instruction among students.</td>
<td>Examine ways to enhance content with GLE’s for connectivity. Continue to review lesson and student content in grade level and prioritize differentiating instruction.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(Table 14 Continued)

| Green Meadows (NRF) | School wide goals are understood and used in teaching. The school has a plan to help teachers become more efficient at reading instruction. Multiple disciplines are involved in planning and lesson facilitation | Due to constraints of multiple disciplines, scheduling becomes an issue with meeting additional student groups. | Collaborate across disciplines to ensure GLE’s are covered in more than just reading class. Facilitate book studies that stress strategies that are effective in teaching students how to read in other content areas. |

Literacy Administrator’s beliefs about the quality of the reading program and implementation status was also articulated in the findings related to key elements through the use of the Planning and Evaluation Tool for Effective Schoolwide Reading Programs (2003). The categories were geared towards analyzing the quality of implementation based on what was actually taking place at each school. The status of instruction and the impact on student achievement, along with additional information that supports what the literacy administrator’s find essential to being successful, were rated based on the current school year at the end of the study, as shown in the following Tables 15, 16, 17, and 18. The information gathered depicts characteristics of reading instruction that developed over time according to the literacy administrators.
Table 15

Hollow Brook (RF)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Goals/ Objectives/ Priorities</td>
<td>7/14</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Assessment</td>
<td>20/20</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Instructional Practices and Materials</td>
<td>12/22</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Instructional Time</td>
<td>14/14</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Differentiated Instruction/ Grouping</td>
<td>9/10</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. Administration/ Organization / Communication</td>
<td>12/12</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. Professional Development</td>
<td>8/8</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Score:</strong></td>
<td>82/100</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16

Willow Lane (RF)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Goals/ Objectives/ Priorities</td>
<td>7/14</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Assessment</td>
<td>16/20</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Instructional Practices and Materials</td>
<td>16/22</td>
<td>872%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Instructional Time</td>
<td>14/14</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Differentiated Instruction/ Grouping</td>
<td>8/10</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. Administration/ Organization / Communication</td>
<td>12/12</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. Professional Development</td>
<td>7/8</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Score:</strong></td>
<td>80/100</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 17
Winding Trail (NRF)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Goals/ Objectives/ Priorities</td>
<td>14/14</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Assessment</td>
<td>20/20</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Instructional Practices and Materials</td>
<td>22/22</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Instructional Time</td>
<td>14/14</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Differentiated Instruction/ Grouping</td>
<td>7/10</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. Administration/ Organization / Communication</td>
<td>12/12</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. Professional Development</td>
<td>8/8</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Score:</strong></td>
<td>97/100</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 18
Green Meadows (NRF)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Goals/ Objectives/ Priorities</td>
<td>12/14</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Assessment</td>
<td>20/20</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Instructional Practices and Materials</td>
<td>18/22</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Instructional Time</td>
<td>14/14</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Differentiated Instruction/ Grouping</td>
<td>10/10</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. Administration/ Organization / Communication</td>
<td>12/12</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. Professional Development</td>
<td>6/8</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Score:</strong></td>
<td>92/100</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Through careful thought and reflections, Literacy Administrators all agreed that this school survey, in combination with the Quality Support Team summaries, would help in planning for next year’s implementation and recommendation of summer trainings from which teachers and staff could benefit.

**Question 2. What role, if any, do teachers play in developing the how’s and why’s of literacy instruction in their classroom?**

**Data Analysis with Reading First Teachers**

How teachers view their competency as literacy teachers is a crucial part of the ultimate learning experience for students. Constant changes in curriculum, administration, colleagues, and students contribute to a feeling of helplessness on the part of the teachers (Pinnell, 2006). A feeling of “competence and power,” or self-efficacy, as framed by Pinnell, is necessary if teachers are to avoid discouragement and depression. Pinnell suggested that to counteract these negatives, teachers need to be proactive. Teachers need to understand how learning takes place. Good materials, programs, or instruction will not succeed if teaching is not based on a sound theory or set of beliefs about how learning occurs, and if the theory is not put into action. “Everything teachers do in the classroom proceeds from this set of beliefs and understandings, whether they are conscious of it or not” (Pinnell, 2006, p. 78).

As revealed with the Reading First Teachers involved in the present study, a comprehensive reading program was mandated in the schools and teachers signed an assurance agreeing to follow the curriculum guidelines. As a result of observations and interviews, the areas that seem to emerged in the role that teachers play in literacy instruction follow.
1. A Sense of Personal Accomplishment.

2. Personal responsibility for student learning and strategies for achieving objectives.

3. Positive Affect and Sense of Control.


The Reading First teachers participating in the study were both fairly new to teaching first grade. Ms. Young is a first year first grade teacher, and Mrs. Brown is a second year first grade teacher. Many of their experiences with the curriculum and students were formatted around the ideals of what the system mandated for teaching reading. Teaching experience is summarized in Table 18.

Table 18
Summary of Teacher’s Experiences (RF)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Years of Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hollow Brook</td>
<td>Teacher A: Young</td>
<td>1st year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willow Lane</td>
<td>Teacher B: Brown</td>
<td>11 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- A Sense of Personal Accomplishment

The Pre-observation survey, interview, observations, and Mid- Study survey highlighted how teachers worked at implementing the program within the parameters of what was expected at each school. As a first year teacher, Ms. Young is excited to be teaching in a Reading First school because she is already familiar with the framework from her student teaching experience. She finds that being a “step ahead” in the
background knowledge is an advantage. Mrs. Brown, on the other hand, was at her
school previously as a second grade teacher before the Reading First Initiative was put
into place. She finds that it is more challenging to learn how to teach a new grade level
and follow the format at the same time. Mrs. Brown relates her sense of personal
accomplishment to fulfilling all of the teaching requirements that she is expected to do,
while Ms. Young relies on the fact that her grade level team provides expertise in
teaching reading and offers support in every endeavor. Both of these teachers spend
countless of hours practicing the craft of teaching students.

At the end of the year, both teachers were elated to see the progress of their
students and felt that hard word had paid off. Ms. Young was proud to announce that her
class reached 90% benchmark (18 students) on the Spring DIBELS assessment, making
her number one on her grade level team. When asked if this made her a good teacher, she
responded “I am a good teacher that is striving to get better. I guess if my students
continue on the path of achievement in the years to come, I can say that I had a part in
that.” Ms. Young also stated that if the program is working for her students and they are
learning, then the results will show. Students would be learning to read, and she would
have fulfilled her task.

Mrs. Brown believed that she never had a problem with teaching in this manner,
but the task of learning to do so was overwhelming for her to deal with. The school was
in constant “training” mode, several visitors were on campus on a daily basis, and she felt
as if she was always “on.” Aside from social issues and student discipline concerns, the
class was constantly changing in size and in levels, making it hard to keep up. Mrs.
Brown said she can support any teaching method that will work for her students, but she
also has to feel comfortable with implementing a program correctly (instruction, classroom management, differentiated instruction is on point, assessments and student success is evident). Mrs. Brown admitted that teaching in this manner is not always fun, and the only concern she has is that sometimes it is difficult to excite the students if she is not excited. Sometimes students tend to look bored or get restless. At any rate, at the end of the year, Mrs. Brown’s class only consisted of 14 of the original children from the beginning of the year. She believes that the 14 scores give the true depiction of what she was actually able to claim from her instruction, i.e., 87% Benchmark (12 students). Both Young and Brown Benchmark levels supersede the district’s goal of reaching 80% of students reading above grade level by the end of the year (District Data and Mid-Study Survey, February 25-29, 2008).

- Personal Responsibility for Student Learning and Strategies for Achieving Objectives

The Reading First teachers repeatedly referred to the huge personal responsibility that involved in student learning and achievement of objectives. Whether they agree totally with the curriculum or not, it is important to do the job well. One of Young’s pre-observation interview responses was “Yes, I may be new and slightly inexperienced, but I am going to do the best job that I can. Because, what’s the point? If you are just going to do half a job, there is no point in trying to do it (January 13, 2008).

Both Ms. Young and Mrs. Brown showed consistency in the implementation of instructional strategies. This was done almost simultaneously because the literacy program implemented included daily lesson plans and unit pacing guides. Days were included for assessments, review, re-teaching and extensions. Weekly grade level
meetings were also used to discuss the rate of learning versus each teacher’s rate of
instruction. Each teacher was given a window of 3 to 5 days (teachers should be no more
than 3 to 5 days behind or ahead of the curriculum without warranted justification). Ms.
Young admitted that she likes the strict schedule, even though it is challenging.
However, Mrs. Brown is still adapting her pacing and finds that it is “just too much” to
juggle and try and fit everything in.

According to the Mid-Study survey (February, 2008), both Young and Brown
reported that they teach strategies, rules, and vocabulary while showing the importance of
the subject in everyday life on a daily basis. They also agree that they fully cover the
course curriculum as prescribed by the respective schools and the district every day. This
format is primarily done by teacher-led instruction, and students respond orally to
questions elicited by teacher matter covered in class or homework. Students can also be
found working in small groups on a daily basis.

Although students work on hands-on activities (doing lab activities or using
manipulatives daily), both Young and Brown find that students are only allowed to
design or implement personal inquiries and questions, or infer, during class about one to
two times weekly, such as engaging students in critiquing/evaluating their own or other
students’ class work or homework. Journal and reflections about reading are done in both
Young and Brown’s classes almost on a daily basis. Listening to guest speakers or going
field trips relevant to the material studied in classes rarely or never happens.

On an average, Young reported that she spends less than half of her planning time
revising current lessons/ curriculum units, learning to facilitate literacy work stations, and
interacting with other teachers at her school to coordinate lessons and activities. Brown,
on the other hand, spends over 50% of her time planning and preparing in these areas. Responding to e-mails from parents, students, and administrators, and writing grants to secure funding for new programs and/or equipment does not occur with either teacher. (Mid-Study Survey, February 2008)

- Positive Affect and Sense of Control

When surveyed about confidence and feelings as related to teaching, Young and Brown are greatly confident that they are knowledgeable about reading, and that they have the ability to advise students about the importance of reading. They feel moderately confident in their ability to determine the depth, breadth, and pace of coverage of material that they are teaching. Young and Brown also reported that they are greatly motivated to expand on the instructional techniques and hands-on materials. In addition to these feelings, they consider themselves “a reading expert” in the teaching field of reading.

Most importantly, Young and Brown agree that they are preparing students for the kind of expectations they (the students) will encounter in real-life settings. It was found that making a difference in the lives of students in terms of their choices for further education, and as a responsible citizens describes the extent these teachers regard their perception of themselves as a teacher. Young responded that she typically covered 75% of the program and administers the test that the publishers include sometimes. As a result of this, Young noted dissatisfaction with the problem solving skills and the lack of quality that the review questions and problem sets presented in the program. She finds that the program does not provide enough challenging suggestions for discovery, further reading, and other assignments. Hence, the range, depth and interdisciplinary connections between subject areas suffer greatly, in her opinion, causing Ms. Young to
creatively use extension programs and activities in accordance with the Reading First
guidelines/ materials to reach her students (Mid-Study Survey, February, 2008).

Brown covers 97% of all the components and frequently uses all of the tests that
the publishers included in the program. She believes that the reading level is appropriate
for most of her students and concepts are explained clearly. Brown agrees that questions
and problem sets are strong and provide coverage, depth, and interdisciplinary
connections between subject areas. Brown and Young strongly agree the content found
within the program is considered interesting by most students that they teach.

- Democratic Decision Making

Initially, teacher contributions were considered unimportant upon placement of
the literacy program and format when implemented at Young and Brown’s schools.
However, as the initiative began to unfold, teachers were given more opportunities to
learn and express their opinions and concerns regarding the program. Both Young and
Brown participate in weekly grade level meetings with their principal, reading coach, and
grade level team. A National Reading Consultant attends occasionally and assists the
teachers with analyzing student assessment data, reviewing explicit models of instruction,
and choosing activities to include in literacy work stations.

In addition to participation at school, Young has participated in in-service
workshops, after school work shops, served as grade level chair, made observational
visits to other schools, conducted individual or collaborative research on a self-selected
topic, and shared in the decision making for the new reading textbook adoption
committee. Young reported that she is highly interested in school as well as district
instructional reforms that relate to literacy and student learning. According to Brown,
participation in grade level meetings and observational visits to other schools are the vehicles that she primarily shares in democratic decision making.

Data Analysis with Non-Reading First Teachers

The Non Reading First teachers used in the study were acclimated to teaching first grade. Mrs. Hill is a 34\textsuperscript{th} year first grade teacher veteran, and Mrs. Wells is a ninth year first grade teacher. Many of their experiences with the curriculum and students were formatted around the ideals of what the system mandated for teaching reading in an effort to “mimic” the Reading First Model.

Table 20
Summary of Teacher’s Experiences (NRF)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Years of Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Winding Trail</td>
<td>Teacher C: Hill</td>
<td>34 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Meadows</td>
<td>Teacher D: Wells</td>
<td>9 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As with the Reading First teachers, the Non Reading First teachers offer key variations in teacher learning and implementation within the classroom. The teachers’ efficacy and beliefs through the use of the Eight Dimensions of Teacher Efficacy (Ashton, 1984) demonstrate how these teacher practices influence the pedagogical change.

- A Sense of Personal Accomplishment

The Pre-observation survey, interview, observations, and Mid-Study survey also served as important tools that reveal information on how Mrs. Hill and Mrs. Wells worked at implementing the program within the parameters of what was expected at their
schools. Both Wells and Hill were in agreement that teachers are ultimately faced with the decision of what actually occurs in the classroom, whether success or defeat.

Being the most seasoned teacher participating in this study, Hill has dedicated the majority of her life teaching students. As reported earlier, Mrs. Hill can be found working in her classroom by 6:00 am each morning and well into the evening. She feels most accomplished at the beginning of each school year when her former students are doing well in the next grade level. In the personal interview, Mrs. Hill shared that “It is nothing like seeing the fruits of all of your hard work coming past.” She has learned a lot and feels that retiring and returning to work after 30+ years is a major accomplishment; “sitting down or turning the light out on knowledge” was not an option (Hill and Wells, Personal Interviews, February 13, 2008).

Wells, like Hill, feels most accomplished when she is able to personalize the learning for her students and it actually works (Mid-Study Survey, Administered February 25-29, 2008). Wells also contends that each teacher has a personal set of values that determine the priorities operating in their classroom, and therefore, values have significance beyond student achievement. She follows the curriculum as outlined, but she also finds herself following her students throughout their elementary schooling and beyond. Wells admits that, for this reason, she is very hard on herself as a teacher because of the teaching impact that is made on her students’ lifelong education.

- Personal Responsibility for Student Learning

Hill and Wells both realize that the responsibility for student learning ultimately lies in their hands. Although both of their schools are higher performing, they find that
these students are more of a challenge to teach because students are in constant
competition and needing more. Hill made reference to this notion in her interview,

“Many people think that oh, you teach there, it must be nice. Yes, it is nice, but
we work just as hard to keep accelerating our kids. Therefore, as teachers we
must stay current and search for what we can do for our kids to avoid plateau and
being complacent.”

Wells responds to the call to meet this challenge on a daily basis. As reported on the
mid-year teacher survey, she makes a concerted to integrate the curriculum with other
subjects, teach strategies that support rules of the language and learning vocabulary, and
encourages her students to explore alternative explanations or methods for problem
solving on a daily basis. Hills, however, makes an effort to this on a daily basis, but due
to high demands of students needing instructional intervention, the schedules only allow
her to do most of these tasks almost daily. Both Wells and Hill strive to follow the
curriculum as outlined by the district, guide teacher-led discussions, and student-led
learning approximately 4 to 5 days a week.

Students in both Wells and Hill’s classes are given opportunities to work on
hands-on activities (doing lab activities or using manipulatives) and reflect on their
learning by writing in a notebook or journal almost daily. Wells and Hill find that the
limited resources at their schools causes them to be more creative because what others
have “pre-made” must be adapted and created using what they have available (limited
copies of text, missing components of the program- stories, word cards, worksheets and
aligned assessments). Many of the student-produced books are done using basic supplies
stemming from scraps of paper, construction paper in an abundance of dull colors, pencils, crayons, markers, and bulletin board paper.

Wells and Hill spend about 50% of their planning time adapting current activities and improvising for pieces that are missing. Both teachers rely on parental help for planning and preparation for classroom activities. Only about 10% of their time is used to contact community resources, scheduling speakers, and field trips.

Wells uses the internet over 50% of the time to retrieve resources and collect new ideas, while Hill only uses the internet 10% of the time. Most of Hill’s time is spent more with colleagues communicating face-to-face and bringing ideas to the table from professional books versus using the internet to find alternative strategies for teaching content and collaboration with colleagues. Although Wells and Hill spend little or no time writing grants to secure funding for new programs and or equipment, over 50% of their planning and preparation time largely includes interacting with other teachers at the school to coordinate lessons and activities.

At the end of the year, both Hill and Wells classes were primarily made up of the same students that entered at the beginning of the school year. Hence, both teachers note that 80% of their students were reading on and beyond the current grade level. Hill’s class had 99% of her students reading above grade level (12 out of 13) and Wells had 100% of her students reading on or above the current grade level. Hill notes that she only lost one student during the entire year, while Wells class dynamics remained the same (18 students). Hill attributes the outcomes to teaching real-life connections through reading and that fact that it is easier to do this when a teacher has a small number of students to work with. Wells feels as though her students are achieving at leaps and
bounds due to the exposure to the arts and opportunities for students to experience literature beyond the four walls of the classroom.

- Positive Affect and Sense of Control

Without consciously taking up the role, policymakers often become teachers of their new ideas, and practitioners become learners of these ideas. Policymaker’s faith in policy coherence appears to rest on the pedagogical theory that learners (teachers) are likely to get and enact congruent messages about instruction. Recent instructional reforms, however, propose to fundamentally transform how practitioners engage students with material, what students encounter as subject matter, and the way they learn. Certainly, these proposals require changes in surface dimensions of practice (Grouping arrangements, classroom materials). They will also necessitate changes in other aspects of practice, including the way students interact with each other and the teacher, the way teachers treat student’s ideas and thinking, and what is valued as knowing. Hence, the importance of teacher attitudes and control in this change proves to be invaluable in the process (Mid-Study Survey, February 25-29, 2008).

In the case of Hill and Wells, an exploration that is grounded in one district’s coherent education policy gives insight that supports ambitious learning goals that influence teacher’s practice. Wells reports that she typically covers 90% of student content, while Hills covers 75% of the content on a frequent basis. Both of these highly opinionated teachers feel that the reading level of the material is appropriate, provides good review questions and challenging suggestions for discovery, further reading and other assignments. However, it is interesting that Hill and Wells agree that they are not sure when it comes to the programs ranking in coverage of the right range of topics,
satisfactory in covering the topics in depth, if the content presented makes interdisciplinary connections between subject areas, and whether or not it is considered interesting by most of the students that they teach.

When asked to indicate how confident they feel about teaching reading under the new Literacy Initiative, Hill and Wells report that they are greatly confident in their knowledge about the application of reading to everyday life, their ability to advise students about the importance of reading and the ability to determine the depth, breadth, and pace of coverage of the teaching materials. Wells further reports that she is greatly confident in her ability to develop appropriate and authentic assessment tools for her students, while Hill reports that she is only moderately confident in this area. Both are moderately confident in their ability to mentor beginning teachers and slightly/not at all confident in their ability to make presentations at teacher in-services and professional meetings. Additionally, Wells is moderately confident in her ability to incorporate technology into her teaching, while Hill reports that she is greatly confident (Mid-Study Survey, February, 2008).

- Democratic Decision Making

Although performance of the change-agent role was critical to changing the behavior of teachers, both Hill and Wells made several necessary changes over the course of the school year to incorporate the reading plan while making data-informed changes for the betterment of students in their classes. Thus, they felt empowered to make changes because they were able to justify their actions and understand why teaching in this manner was desired by the district.
Many roadblocks (teaching from a scripted and sequential program, using obsolete textbooks and augmented curriculum to get desired “outcomes” and the lack of follow-up on how to merge the two programs) came as a result of functioning in this way and were a barrier to implementation of diagnosis and prescription of the “scripted” program. It was difficult, at first, for many of these teachers at these schools to make the transition to a resource mode, which is, working with teachers to justify their ideas instead of trying out ideas with children without the need for justification. The monitoring and training by the district was less frequent for these schools, but the district tried to provide training in how to function as a reading teacher, and thus it was a matter of sink or swim concerning this aspect of their responsibilities. Hill and Wells demonstrated that they were determined and able to make the transition to this teaching mode, and both of these teachers had previous experiences working with teachers in other disciplines to make sure that students were exposed to the necessary skills both in and out of the classroom (Mid-Study Survey, February 25-29, 2008).

Both Hill and Wells were grateful to have supportive instructional leaders and clearance to follow-through with “teachable moments” once the mandated curriculum expectations were implemented. Although Wells and Hills have not been involved in developing or piloting a new curriculum, made visits to conduct observations in other schools, or served as representatives for the school/district on an instructional reform project, they have been fortunate enough to conduct individual and collaborative research on topics that interest them. Many of the professional development activities and research was done using their students as subjects along with the assistance of the mentor
and student teachers assigned to their classes. Hence, the decisions made on how to move forward with their students usually consisted of information gathered from teacher observations, good assessment data, creating an environment full of literacy opportunities and follow-up with concepts.

Question 3: What factors do teachers believe are essential to providing effective reading instruction in an elementary school setting? How do these factors affect reading instruction?

To understand the variance in practice among the four classrooms involved in this study, one must understand something about these teachers’ opportunities to learn about their reading instruction and practice. Certainly, the district mobilized an extensive array of opportunities for teachers to learn about reconstructing their practice, including workshops in reading, new instructional materials and curricular guides. To understand teachers’ learning opportunities, however, one must focus on more than the “curriculum” (workshops, curriculum guides, and curricular materials) that district administrators mobilize to help them change. What teachers understand from these opportunities is shaped by prior knowledge, beliefs, and experiences (Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 1990; Porter, Floden, Freeman, Schmidt, & Schwille, 1988; Mehra, 2000; Stake & Easley, 1978). Just like students, teachers’ opportunities to learn about reconstructing their teaching are shaped in important ways by what they bring (knowledge, dispositions, and commitments) to their learning (Ashton, 1984; Knobloch, 2009, Fetterman & Pitman, 1986). One must look at more than the district’s extensive reform efforts.
The roles of these reading teachers varied significantly among the projects and among the schools within projects. In some schools, the reading teachers were the decision makers regarding instructional activities in their schools; in most schools, they organized any formal in-service training sessions. In some schools they assisted with diagnostic testing (DIBELS) and assigned students to groups. In others, they simply were on the “receptive end” and given the charge to “follow through on the tasks.” In some instances, however, the reading teachers performed more than one of these functions.

Teacher Efficacy and Practice

Collectively, with teachers and staff members, Pelican School District is moving toward actions in the following areas.

1. Participates in development of new curriculum (comprising aims, content, didactic recommendations, recommended equipment and teaching aids, as well as teachers' profiles, distribution of new curricula to schools, publishing of appropriate brochures, guides and recommendations for implementation of the curricula).

2. Monitors and evaluates the curriculum and school practice adjustments to new requirements and possibility of their realization.

3. Prepares and formulate specific solutions at a particular level of education, monitors and assesses how those solutions match with the achievements of reform goals through introduction of verified solutions into pedagogic context.

4. Trains the instructional leaders, reading coaches, teachers and professional associates for implementation of the new curriculum (seminars, advisory sessions, development projects, and preparation of handbooks, recommendation of literature, periodicals and websites).
5. Assesses the quality of teaching and gives support to preparation of school
development plans (School Improvement Plans).

6. Conducts research for its own needs for the betterment of implementation
purposes.

7. Monitors and evaluates introduced changes and gives feedback to decision-
making bodies and institutions in school system,

8. Initiates plans to revisit the curriculum.

9. Organizes a Teacher Advisory Panel that meets monthly with District
Administrators to voice teacher concerns and input ranging from teacher equity, student
achievement and suggestions on how to improve the curriculum to so that teachers can
make the most of their time in the classroom (Pelican School District Five Star Plan,
2009).

Because reformers propose such fundamental changes in practice, some variance
should be expected because some teachers learn faster than others and have more
experience. Some teachers have much more to learn to reconstruct their practice than
others. Taking a closer look at the democratic practices these teachers exhibit helps to
learn about their practice and the changes that they deem appropriate to the content, pace,
and adjustments for their students while teaching reading.

NOTE:
The individual teachers will be summarized using the themes noted on the next to their
description based on the analysis already written and those still needing to be discussed.

In this study, the triangulation of data (interview questions, observations and
surveys) obtained through the application of naturalistic inquiry methods has, as Guba
(1990) writes, "allowed an investigation of phenomena within and in relation to their naturally occurring contexts" (p. 3). The stories that the artist/respondents tell are not taken on face value alone, but are contextualized within what Spradley called a "relational theory of meaning" (p. 96). Similarly, Bruner's (1992) argued that stories shape action because they embody compelling motives, strong feelings, vague aspirations, clear intentions, or well-defined goals. Bruner explained that these "narratives" are acted out, "make" events, and "make" history. They contribute to the reality of their participants (Rosaldo, p. 129).

Giroux, (1993) concluded “If you believe that schooling is about somebody's story, somebody's history, somebody's set of memories, a particular set of memories, a particular set of experiences, then it is clear that just one logic will not suffice” (p. 14). Giroux (1993) also reported that principles can be illustrated with a "sense of voice, with somebody's story,” and that these stories can become the basis for analyzing a whole range of considerations that are often hidden within the stories (p. 16). Giroux commented "experience never simply speaks for itself. The language that we bring to it determines its meaning" (p. 17). There is the need for educators and cultural workers to become "border crossers" engaged in an effort to create alternative social spheres.

Spradley (1979) articulated this need in a similar way, through their insistence on the importance of the researcher allowing the story to be told.

Results of the present study, with its focus on the impact of teacher efficacy as it relates to literacy instruction, reinforces the need for interviews as a strategy to be used whenever the researcher wishes to uncover the emergent narrative of the respondents "lived experience.” When triangulated with the other ethnographic methods used in this
study, these narratives provided a valuable framework for the purposes of disclosing the agency or 'motivated reality' of the respondents. Hence, Spradley's (1979) method of semantic analysis enables the researcher to seek validity through verification. For the purposes of the present study, it is felt that the combination of a "thick description" of the reality of the respondents, combined with the triangulation of emergent data obtained through the other methods outlined (observations and questionnaires) could provide a rich and verified narrative of the practice of art as 'lived' by the respondents (Guba & Rosaldo, 1990).

Guba and Rosaldo, 1990) contended that through "triangulating" a range of naturalistic inquiry methods, studying a phenomenon along a number of independent methodological vectors with 'truth' explained as the points at which the content in each vector converge, the researcher is able to report on truly emergent data. Natural data is only obtained by the immersion of the inquirer in the culture or cultural phenomenon being studied. Paradigm -level problems of truth and objectivity are lessened by conducting inquiry into complex human activity within natural settings, using more qualitative data methods, grounding theory in the inquiry itself rather than specifying causal explanations a priori, and by recognizing the proper place of discovery processes. Consequently, results bring about the following outcome for each teacher.

- **TEACHER: A- RF – Hollow Brook (YOUNG) “TEAM PLAYER”**

  According to Webster’s Dictionary (11th edition), n. team work is a joint action by two or more people, in which each person contributes with different skills and express his or her individual interests and opinions to the unity and efficiency of the group in order to achieve common goals. From the observations to the interviews and classroom
interactions, Ms. Young could be considered as one with high teacher efficacy and works hard as a team player at her school. She realizes that it takes a combination of sorts to achieve her goals. Number 1: Building a Learning Community; Isolation is not an option. In her exit interview, Young consistently referred to the support and collaboration surrounding her.

“I find myself fortunate to be able to learn from the best… we are the best at what we do. I have to admit that my students are not the smartest, but we (principal, teachers, parents) are getting there together. If I make a mistake, I know that I am not being judged, but realize that I am not alone. We don’t hide anything; if something is not working, it is brought to the table, discussed and then we talk about what we could do better next time. I really believe that this is new for many of the teachers on my team.”

A typical day on the job for Ms. Young is to teach from start to finish. She knows that she has to meet with all of her students at some point, but the “at risk students” is what she focuses on more.

“It has been proven to me that the simple dialogue and conversations found within our teaching materials is what these kids lack… It is not as if we (teachers) did not know this, but the reality of actually talking with these kids and knowing what skills to address was not the norm. We were taught to meet with kids on their level, but we basically did what we wanted to do with them… No one asked questions and assumed that because they saw a small group, we were doing what was best for kids.”
In the grade level meetings, Young and her colleagues share successes and complement each other when a particular strategy actually works. Although Young is only a first year teacher, she often leads the dialogue and shares what she learned and experienced while student teaching at a Reading First School. The teachers listen and actually use the opportunities as a springboard for reshaping future interactions with their students. Young shared that first grade is one of the most important grades because students learn how to read:

“Students are immersed in oral language, shared literature, phonemic awareness, word work, applied phonics to spelling, explicit vocabulary instruction, practice in fluency and ultimately comprehension.”

Young thinks of herself as a “clean slate.” She understands that the district is in the middle of a paradigm shift when it comes to teaching reading in this manner (explicitly). Therefore, the challenges of changing practices in reading instruction are not as difficult for her. She relies on what is basically expected of the district, school, and grade level team as stepping stones and a formula for how students will learn how to read.

“I basically came into this profession with an expectation that I would teach students, but not necessarily knowing how this would occur. My first instinct would lead me to think all students would be on the same level and that I would teach lessons that would revolve around themes that I selected and deemed appropriate. I would quickly learn from my student teaching experience that this would not be the case.” (End of study Interview, May 2008)
Young believes that the consistency of the routines used for teaching reading and the reliance on data to drive instruction is definitely why students are given a better opportunity to learn. However, time and management of all of the other content areas can be overwhelming at times. When asked “What changes in your school and district do you think could have the greatest influence on your students’ success?” Young shared these thoughts.

“In a perfect world of teaching, all of the curriculum content would be connected and structured teaching would occur beyond the 105 Minute protected block of reading. I find it difficult to make connections in other subject areas when the content is from one extreme to the other. But, I just do the best I can do. We use the bulk of our planning timing focusing on reading and I admit that some of the other subject areas fall by the waist side… I try to remember that if they can’t read, it would be difficult for the students to function or even begin to understand the more involved concepts.”

Young finds that on-going professional development to support this manner of teaching is important. She welcomes more, but understands that time and management of cross-campus collaboration can be quite challenging to do on a constant basis. She likes that many of the sessions occur before or after school. When asked if she would attend in the absence of receiving a stipend, she answered, “Yes, if it is something that would benefit me as a teacher and assist in making activities that are new and exciting for my students in literacy centers.” When asked if she could change anything about her job what she would change and why, Young replied:
“I would change the negative connotation that the public and other schools have about my students and the school. Kids are kids no matter what side of town they are from. We are teaching to the best of our ability using the latest technology and materials that have been proven successful in the efforts of student achievement. Yes, we may have a large group of struggling readers today, but each day we are decreasing that number by what we do in and outside the classroom. It goes beyond reading, writing and arithmetic… We have to take on the responsibility of making sure our kids are safe, nurtured and have a sense of belonging… it is not what they get from home. In short, we like to be recognized for the small gains and I am just not sure others are made aware of the good things that are going on at our school. I know that we are not a five star school yet, but we are well on our way. Give us time!”

Young has proven that a strong belief in students and actually teaching what they need on a daily basis has to begin with the teacher first. (End of Study Interview, May 2008)

- TEACHER: B- RF (Willow Lane) BROWN “SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST”

Webster’s Dictionary (11th edition) defines the phrase “Survival of the Fittest” as survival: n. a process resulting in the evolution of one best adapted to the environment; one (fittest) who is able to obtain and utilize resources; a concept of human society, postulating that those who are eliminated in the struggle for existence are unfit.

Ms. Brown has endured many challenges in her quest to become the teacher that she “should be.” She admits that she is not there yet, but it is all about doing what one can do to make it throughout the day. Also, Brown would be considered one who has a medium degree of teacher efficacy because although she plans, prepares, and carries out
instruction for her students, she feels that she is being controlled and is not in control. This is how Brown described her typical day:

“Each day brings about different things for me as a teacher. I find that we (the teachers at our school) have a hardworking staff that is always adapting and changing to meet the demands of those who need to see it for that day. I care for the students and their well-being. However, I feel that we are a part of an experiment-trying all of these measures to make sure that kids learn how to read. It is as if we are under a microscope all the time. At times it gets to be frustrating, but I try not to take it out on the kids. On most days I know what I should be doing, but I constantly “rethink” my actions in fear that someone is going to say that I am “not on schedule” or “pacing” is off. I understand that we are under time constraints, but on most days I find that my teaching is not natural, but so scripted that I forget about the students unintentionally.”

The philosophy that Brown once possessed was one that included children spending a lot of time reading and engaging in activities that promote comprehension. She admits that she really didn’t know much about the process of teaching kids to read through skills, but she engaged them in activities that she now realizes were not leveled or best for struggling readers. Now, her philosophy involves teaching the beginning phases of reading with giving students lots of practice. Even though it is challenging, Brown admits that using the data from weekly tests and observations from classroom interactions help her students. She expected this year to be challenging just by the mere fact that she was new to this grade level.
“Don’t get me wrong, the support and extra knowledge is priceless, but I think that there are too many people (principal, reading coach, fellow colleagues, reading consultants, district administrators) to give directives and not enough people to follow-up the talk. It gets to be a juggling act, if one person comes to your class to see one aspect of a lesson and makes a determination based on 15 minutes without finding out what it should look like. I believe clarifications need to be made about who is offering support and who is evaluating. For example, I may have a student who is experiencing a hard time focusing because of a parent who is incarcerated. So if this child comes into my classroom upset, I have to take time to talk with them or send for the guidance counselor. If this happens to take place during the reading block and I am due to be observed; my observation suffers without a chance for me to give an explanation. It is counted against me… Tell me, how am I suppose to deal with what the students need academically when there is a social and emotional situation on the line…? This becomes complicated.”

When asked about the outcomes that she is striving for with her students in reading, Brown reports that she wants her students to have a fair chance at learning to read beyond the script. She also says that in 10 years from now, her students should be able to pick up any book and be able to read and enjoy it. Several comments in regards to challenges were noted by Brown throughout the study. It seems as if Brown understands her role to teach students, but finds that teaching has too many boundaries in this district.

“Lesson pacing and re-teaching are constant challenges to me as a first grade teacher. I am expected to teach what is considered grade level appropriate, change
groups often, re-teach what is not mastered and not miss a beat. Sometimes, I get caught up in the pacing and speed up when I should slow down and vice versa. I understand that we shouldn’t take too long on one subject, but on some days the students seem more interested in a topic that could be science related; and yet I can’t adapt my lesson to or connect the information to science because it is reading time!!"

Another challenge is limited time actually reading. Brown contends that she knows that she is teaching grade level appropriate text, but sometimes she wishes that one could read a chapter book to the students just for enjoyment.

“Sometimes I feel like we are drilling the skills and students are not enjoying the learning. Our students have enough drama at home only to come to school to be bored out of their minds. Sometimes, I bore myself and then I realize okay, what I can do to make this lesson more exciting without going too far to the left…talk about challenging…”

Brown reports that classrooms with more technology, smaller class sizes and assessments that are not directly reported to the district and more professional learning in-service days would be ideal. She finds that planning time is now being taking over by Pd (professional development), so she never gets a break from work. This causes increased time for planning at home. Brown said that she signed the commitment to work in a Reading First School to teach best practices in reading, but students need more like time to participate in organized play, to go on a field trip every once in awhile, and time to talk with their peers. There is just not enough time to fit it all in. However, regardless of Mrs. Brown’s dissatisfaction and feeling of being overwhelmed with the program as a
whole, the students still manage to learn and made gains in learning to read. Ironically, Brown agrees with the district new literacy initiative, but she just wishes that she had more time to observe other teachers, to team teach with another colleague, and have a first grade specific reading coach who would be able to offer support versus a coach who had to spread themselves so thin. Brown stated:

“We have so much to learn and so little time to practice, while at the same time attending to our students. I believe that each grade would benefit from a reading coach on staff just for their grade level. Haphazard modeling and support that consist of telling, but not showing is hard to envision. Especially with a major reading initiative such as this one.”

Consequently, Brown would like to work in a school that would service a mixture of kids ranging from low to high with choice stations and reading curriculum that is strategically connected to Science, Social Studies and Math. She finds that the reading series is full of good content, but it does not necessarily lend itself to teaching other subjects and making connections. Brown’s ideal reading program would include the five components of reading with literacy stations and tools to expose students to real-life situations and offer opportunities for field trips to deprived students.

When asked what she would change about her job, Brown suggested that would like for the district to offer support with teaching high achieving students using the current model. She finds that support is given for struggling students and that it is very difficult to spend the same amount of time with those students who are working above grade level content. They need to be challenged, too. She wanted to stress that if
interventions worked, our strategies to teach would need to change as well to meet the needs of those students.

- **TEACHER: NRF -Winding Trail  HILL “TRENDSETTER”**

Through the coding and interpretation of data, Hill could be described as a “Trendsetter” in the field of teaching. According to Webster’s dictionary (11th edition), the term trendsetter originates from the terms “trend” and “setter.” As a noun, a trendsetter is someone that is an early adopter of a given company, product, or technology; in politics, fashion, art and other fields. As the most seasoned teacher in this study, Hill referred to the reading initiative as one that was fashioned by earlier concepts in teaching and reading many years ago. It was not anything totally new, but updated and one that incorporated the basic foundations of language in teaching students how to read.

Believing that teaching takes much preparation, organization, and reflection, Hill’s typical day has been described as one that begins early and ends late. Hill reports to work before most of the teachers at her school because she feels that so much preparation is needed to teach all of the subjects her students. Because the programs are so augmented (one program to teach phonemic awareness, phonics and fluency, and another program to teach vocabulary and comprehension) Hill reports that she must try to connect the literacy skills using some materials that she has been using for a while. She stated:

“*My students need practice reading in order to become successful at reading. I find that we are short on materials, yet we are expected to follow a pacing guide that is unrealistic for these first graders. I teach what they ask me to teach, but I*
also pull leveled text and decodable readers to try and teach the basic skills and offer more connected text.”

Each day, the teachers begin with morning routines that include oral language development and the 90 minute reading block. Hill extends her reading block and tries to incorporate writing lessons that are related to the reading content and math. Hill does small group instruction inside of the reading block and in the afternoon when students return to their literacy centers. Hill finds that her role and philosophy about reading has changed slightly. She believes that the five components of reading are important to teach, but she does not necessarily think that a reading block is a natural fit for all that the students have to acquire in first grade.

“I think that the 90 minute reading block concept is good. However, in some cases, I believe that it “boxes” some teachers into believing that once the reading block is over, so is reading. If this is the case, it is not good. I have always taught reading all day long. It is necessary for 1st graders to be engaged in literacy activities in all content areas. So, I follow the program, but sometimes I may start out teaching the reading skills and connect it to the Science and Social Studies lesson if it is appropriate.”

One of the major changes that Hill reports is that it is hard for her to be “on a clock” when teaching the program. Formally, Hill could teach any component in any manner without time constraints. For example, it is now recommended that whole group instruction last no longer than 35 to 40 minutes to be quickly followed by small group instruction (15 minutes for 3 rotations) and a 5 to 10 minute closure and review. Despite the restriction of time, Hill still finds that teaching the five components of reading and
making additional time for the teacher to model fluent reading orally (chapter book, Weekly Reader, or short stories) is a good method to follow.

In Hill’s class is the district’s adopted reading material, but Hill has collections of text from other programs that helps her with themes based on seasons, holidays, culture, safety, community and famous Americans. Hill also believes that the assessments that are provided by the district do not give her enough information on the progress of her students. Hill stated:

“I think that the Edusoft tests that are based on the grade level expectations (gle’s) and the weekly tests that are found within the reading series do not match the instruction totally. I like to know where students are more frequently than every six to eight weeks. We are expected to instruct from the English/Language Arts Comprehensive Curriculum, the Open Court Phonics Program and the Harcourt Collections series and administer a test based on GLE’s is all over the place. We need a curriculum that is comprehensive and aligns instruction weekly with assessment rather than piecing parts that are mix-matched. In order to really find out what my students know, I create tests that include the main skills from ELA, reading and writing that tests each component in small chunks so that my students are not “burnt out” on testing. So in essence, I get more information in one setting that trying to coordinate the results of all of those tests. It is a challenge to make, but I can administer this test and understand what I should do with my students in their small groups. The district’s tests are a pain to give, but we do it so that we can say that we do to get the results, but the data does not mean as much because we are teaching the next unit by then.”
In a perfect district, Hill would rather have a complete program that includes reading, writing, all materials associated with the program from computer programs, model lessons for students to use, teacher friendly manuals and tests that spiral with data that can be input into the computer, and readymade center activities to target similar skills for students to practice from the same program. Teachers would also need to be trained well in advance (during the summer months) and given opportunities to set up classrooms with the centers in mind. Leveled books and informational text related to Science and Social Studies would also be connected. Virtual field trips would be welcomed. Hill agrees that phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension should remain a part of the instructional framework. She recalls teaching the components before it was considered “Scientifically-based Reading Practices” even when it wasn’t required. She commented:

“I am also certified in early childhood and we understand that oral vocabulary and language development go “hand-n-hand”. It is like, before a child can walk, they may have to crawl. So, these components would continue to be stressed and practiced. The difference now is that I have a pacing guide and order or in which to present the content.”

Hill is confident that as veteran teacher, if she is given all the materials, her students will learn to read (End of Study Interview, May 2008).

- TEACHER: D NRF (Green Meadows) WELLS “ENCOURAGER”

Wells, better known as the ‘encourager’ is considered to have emerging levels of efficacy: One level can be categorized as high as it relates to how confident she is as a teacher, but the other one can be considered as medium due to the new reading
implementation and familiarity with the program as she would like to be. One of a kind, Wells as an “encourager” can be described as n.: one who inspires, influences with courage and hope; an encourager also gives support to help one move forward with confidence (Webster’s Dictionary, 11th edition). Wells is one teacher who admits that she was extremely reluctant to teach the “prescribed” reading plan in the very beginning. It wasn’t until she realized that the plan was actually good for students, even though her students were not at all struggling.

“At first, I was like, “My students are already readers and we are not having major problems with teaching.” No one really explained the research behind teaching in this manner and I found that teaching from two programs to accomplish the goal of one was not well thought out. We were basically given a one day in-service on the Open Court program and told that we would have consultants to visit us twice in the upcoming year to monitor our progress. Well of course this was new and very uncomfortable, as our scores were not at all in need of fixing or questionable. “

As time went on and I begin to teach phonemic awareness and phonics, I noticed that even with little to minimal effort given to following the manual, my students begin to read earlier in the year and understood the language (rules, patterns, high frequency words). So what would normally take me one semester to accomplish, only took me a few months. I saw my students change, and then I begin to change. I knew immediately knew why this was a program good for all students. A typical day at Wells’ school, includes students being exposed to the reading,
writing, mathematics, science, social students and the fine arts. The day is scheduled from bell to bell, which does not leave additional time to do extra interventions in reading. Thankfully, the vast majority of the students attending the school are on or above grade level.”

Wells admits that she still liked balanced literacy, so she taught from the mandated programs, but like Hill, Wells still was able to expose her students to novels and set up literature circles. She said that she was finally convinced when she got feedback from her parents stating that they loved the practice with phonics and the decodable texts that reinforced the skill they were working on in class.

Well’s philosophy teaching before the new reading initiative was focused on accelerating and exposure to text versus step by step phonics and phonemic awareness instruction. She assumed that her students were equipped with a strong language foundation, so to teach in this manner was thought to be beneath the students and what they actually need.

“As a grade level chair, I wrote the reading lesson plans so I became the spokesperson for the “new” way of teaching students. Although the two programs required extra preparation to teach. After we saw that the progress in students, the format and routines became a breeze.

It was realized that all of these skills were taught by the teachers in years past, but the difference now is that there are now pacing guides and routines on how to teach the skill (End of Study Interview, 2008).

Wells believes that teaching in this manner combined with balanced literacy approaches would make be the perfect curriculum for her students. She understands the
importance of building a good foundation for learning to read, but she finds that time spent actually reading is not enough. Wells is usually ahead of the district’s pacing guide and she doesn’t always teach the stories found in the basal. Instead, she prefers to correlate the skills using activities that match the grade level expectations and teach from short stories and novels later during the year.

Wells agrees that they have a few struggling students too, but the challenges are tackled by exposing students to a variety of text and the strong partnership that parents engage in with the home reading program. Students are given text based on their levels and parents agree to work with the students on nightly reading and responding. It is important to the family that the student’s grade point average remains in good standing so that students can maintain their enrollment. Wells noted:

“We have to think of our small groups differently… there is not enough additional time in the day or staff to work with intervention groups so we usually try to meet the needs in our small group and engaging the parents in our action plan.”

Ideally, Wells would love to see a literacy program that would take into consideration the whole child. Being that the Arts is the focus of the school; Wells finds that literacy selections that employ science, social studies, mathematics, and the Arts would work best for her school. The school currently works extremely hard on making the connections (End of Study Interview, May 2008).

To enlighten, at one, somewhat gross level of analysis, all four teachers in the present study appeared to be teaching in ways that were roughly in line with The district’s policy messages about reading. Taking a closer look at the teachers’ practice by comparing tasks and discourse patterns across classrooms, the author
documented a slight variance in the way the district’s aligned policy messages played out in teaching. Young and Brown’s practices stemmed from extensive training, the agreement to teach in this manner by placing their signatures on a commitment form, and participation in modeled and observed lessons based on Reading First guidelines. In the Reading First Classrooms, the task and discourse patterns observed were similar than those found in Hill and Wells’ classroom. Both Hill and Wells teachers’ practices represent the range of variance in task and discourse patterns across the four classrooms. Hill and Wells were given “somewhat” of an option to fully implement the program as intended and did not have to do intervention groups or small groups because the need may not have been as great.

Summary

The diagnostic/prescriptive approach to reading instruction is currently being advanced as an effective means of improving reading achievement in schools across the country. The basic idea of this approach is to rationalize the teaching of reading by providing teachers with a hierarchical sequence of well-defined reading skills around which to organize their reading instructional program. Reading experts differ on what this sequence of reading skills should be, but, in general, the skill hierarchies that have been developed specify that teachers should begin with simple reading readiness skills and build progressively up to more advanced vocabulary, word analysis, and comprehension task (Becker, McLaughlin, Bass, Pauly & Zimmerman, 1986; Bogdon & Biklen, 1986; Block & Pressley, 2002). Once some hierarchy of skills is selected, the diagnostic/prescriptive approach involves specifying diagnostic tests for each skill in the hierarchy, administering these tests to children to diagnose their reading skill
deficiencies, and finally prescribing specific reading activities to children on an individual basis based on the results of these tests. As discovered in Pelican School district, all teachers across the district were expected to teach according to the guidelines outlined in the newly adopted prescribed program.

Theoretically, the diagnostic/prescriptive approach leads to reading improvement through logical ordering and individualization of the sequence of reading activities presented to students. One important function of this manner of teaching stemmed from using the reading coaches to serve as change agents in assigned schools to support teachers in transitioning their instructional methods to meet the structured demands of teaching reading (Reading First Schools). In this role, reading coaches worked both formally and informally with the teachers on a one-to-one basis to interest them in adopting the diagnostic/prescriptive approach and in finding solutions to individual problems during implementation. The formal in-service training and the tangible elements of the principal and coach generally appeared to have served significant role in changing teacher behavior. In the Non Reading First Schools, teachers working together with the principal, and the reading coach had decided and been able to implement the diagnostic/ prescriptive approach solely on the basis of the formal in-service training and whatever written instructions were provided.

It is noted that the initial training the Reading First principals received training simultaneously with extensive follow-up and support from the district. The minimal training that the Non-Reading First Principals received, and input into how the teachers would teach reading, was probably a factor in the way each group of teachers perceived the newly adopted reading initiative. All four principals were confident that their
teachers were important factors in delivering the reading instruction as outlined by the district. In addition to this, teachers reported that they felt ultimately responsible for teaching the students, assigning students to reading/intervention groups, and making good decisions in teaching reading. However, when it came to what curriculum would be used, all teachers simply were on the “receptive end” and given the charge to “follow through on the tasks.”

In the case of the Non-Reading First Schools, the first grade reading teachers were not monitored as closely by the district when it came to lesson delivery, formation of intervention groups, and topics of professional development at grade level. As success was achieved, all four teachers shifted their efforts to learn more about the district’s reading initiative and tried to make it work in their classrooms. The Reading First teachers used the closely monitored guidelines, while the Non-Reading First teachers combined the new guidelines with ideas that they used in the past and made the change to the diagnostic/prescriptive approach. Initially it was more of a challenge for the Non-Reading First teachers because they were expected to follow the district’s plan using two programs with missing components, versus fully implementing the content of the plan with a fully outfitted program that was furnished in the Reading First Schools. Although all teachers seemed apprehensive about what was expected at first, they were all willing to learn and would have appreciated having a “say” in the rollout of the new initiative, as well as time for more research on the development of the mandate prior to the start of school.

All four teachers spent considerable time “working” towards needs of the school by listening to those who seemed successful, becoming familiar with the new initiative on
a greater level, and discovering how this new way of teaching reading would ultimately impact student achievement. Each teacher in the study felt some sense of success and accomplishment in fulfilling the goals in reading for their students (End of Year DIBELS data and Assessments). They all felt that it took them just about the entire school year to change all of their teaching practices, and each teacher had suggestions on how to embrace the reading mandates for next year (Non Reading First Teachers and Reading First teachers, May 2008).

All of the teacher participants adopted some form of the diagnostic/prescriptive approach had changed either because of working with the reading coach and consultant on a one-to-one basis or forced into changing by the mandates outlined by the new implementation authority structure of the new reading initiative. After presentation of the formal elements of in-service held by the district, the first grade teachers typically started to achieve change by working with their principal and/or reading coach (if assigned), grade level teams, and working with their students to implement diagnosis and prescription in their classrooms.

To understand the variance in practice among the four teachers’ classrooms, one must understand something about these teachers’ opportunities to learn about their reading instruction and practice. Certainly, the district mobilized an extensive array of opportunities for teachers to learn about reconstructing their practice including workshops in reading, new instructional materials, and curricular guides. To understand teachers’ learning opportunities, however, one must focus on more than the “curriculum” (workshops, curriculum guides, and curricular materials) that district administrators mobilize to help them change. What teachers understand from these opportunities is
shaped by their prior knowledge, beliefs, and experiences (Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 1990; Porter, Floden, Freeman, Schmidt, & Schwille, 1988; Schwille et al., 1983; Stake & Easley, 1978). Just like students, teachers’ opportunities to learn about reconstructing their teaching are shaped in important ways by what they bring (knowledge, dispositions, and commitments) to their learning (Ball, 1995; Jennings, 1996; Spillane, 1995). We must, then, look at more than the district’s extensive reform efforts. We must also explore who these teachers were as learners about language arts teaching, especially their personal resources—commitments, dispositions, and knowledge—for learning.

The Reading First teachers and Non Reading first teachers’ dispositions to learn about revising their reading instruction varied slightly from one another. Although all teachers were committed to reconstructing their instructional practices, the way they arrived at the knowledge was different. The Reading First teachers were given the information and received on-site assistance, while the Non Reading First teachers felt as if they were being told to do the program with minimal say or support on how to work with all levels of students. They reported that new ideas and dramatic changes in their practice left many unanswered questions, and lacked a rationale for doing such in the beginning. As time went on, teachers began to understand the new initiative and its purpose; thus, making the transition in teaching methods was embraced. Wells reported “I’m always trying to improve,” she explained, “that’s just something that I do.” Wells, like the other teachers on her campus, was committed to learning more about teaching reading (Wells personal interview, Spring 2008)

Wells partakes in a teacher-advance program in education. Hence, at the time
of our study, Ms. Wells, in the abstract, was very interested in reflecting on her reading instruction, but like many veteran teachers, she tries to remain calm when dealing with a variety of teaching concerns, mostly classroom management and how to juggle the district’s mandates and the program guidelines. Hill, in contrast, believed that she had little space in her life to seriously consider nuances of her reading instruction. She commented that most teachers were still playing catch-up, needing to learn what she already knew because of her school and on-site education. These dispositions influenced the manner in which these two teachers viewed the district’s reform efforts.

Although they both attended the same district workshops about reading, they interpreted these opportunities differently. Mrs. Wells thought a main focus of these workshops were reading and saw them as a valuable opportunity for learning new ideas about her teaching. In contrast, Hill said she did not find district workshops as helpful because they explained practices she perceived to be “what I already do.” She commented:

“I already do a lot of these things, so therefore, I try to put a “spin” on the concepts to appeal to my students and teaching style within the parameter of the school’s requirements and what our principal allows us to bring into the classroom” (Hill’s personal interview, February 2008).

Hence, it is revealed that all four teachers exhibited levels of teacher efficacy and related those factors through the interviews, survey, and observation. Each teacher ultimately taught the curriculum in sequence and as outlined to the best of their ability. The end result in the levels of their students was key in how they felt about themselves as teachers. Interestingly enough, all four teachers had students reading at or above first
grade and only a few students did not meet the end of the year (study) goals. Teacher ideas about the reading instruction emerged as they became more familiar with the program and were able to associate how reading instruction should be implemented similarly with what they believed.

In the end, we noted that Young had the most confidence in the program “as is” and expressed that she was willing to learn and gain all that she could. Her eagerness to please the administrators and instructional leaders at her school was the key to motivating and giving her students instruction based on what they needed using what given. Brown on the other hand, had to work out the challenges of being monitored and working in a new grade level on top of learning the new reading program. Her issues stemmed from dealing with the nuances of working her way balancing classroom management while instructing the students according to the strict pacing guide. Hill discovered that this way of teaching reading was very similar to her philosophy once the year emerged. She constantly referred to materials and strategies that mimicked the outline of the new program that was part of her routines in years past. Hill felt as if the district was not as straightforward about the rationale behind the new instructional program, which left a lot for teachers to assume initially. However, Wells, like Hill, also embraced this format of teaching, and found a way to incorporate more literature response opportunities for students. Both Hill and Wells felt as if materials and the message should have been differentiated in the initial training to allow teachers to situate their thinking and practice in fulfilling the mandates of the district’s new reading plan.

All four teachers agreed that the plan offered “good first teaching” opportunities and that “The Reading First Model” can and should be adapted for each individual
school. Although materials were not an issue in the Reading First Schools, it became quite the challenge for Non Reading First Schools to carry out due to the lack and inequitable distribution of materials. (Note: the Non Reading First Schools were expected to use two programs to teach the concepts. The phonemic awareness and phonics program was distributed as new and was completely furnished. However, the fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension program parts were expected to be instructed using a 6 year program that was already in schools. Hence, pieces were missing and not replaced. Teachers were expected to combine all of the skills and fill in the gaps using the Comprehensive Curriculum as a third source to meet the required GLE’s.)

Another interesting factor that became apparent during the study was how the Dimensions of Teacher Efficacy (Ashton, 1984) begin to overlap and merge as the responses and observations began to develop. The subjects involved in the study seem to tap into two or more of the dimensions during their participation and deepened as their understanding developed. From the surveys, observations, and interviews, most of the information received helped to capture the true essence of each participant – regardless of the school and years of experience.

Limitations and Implications for Future Research

There are a few limitations to this study that suggest direction for future research. First, the relatively small sample of teachers consisted of four first grade teachers, four principals, and four reading coaches/contacts from Pelican School district, which is a relatively large district. Although the subjects offered information that varied due to Reading First Policy and Non- Reading First policy, the population represented a small fraction of the district’s entire profile. Adding to this concern was the fact that
observations were only made in first grade classrooms. Although first grade is considered to be the most important grade that impacts the student in moving from learning to read to reading to learn, there is certainly value in expanding the study to include teachers of regular, gifted, and exceptional students.

Future versions of this study could be included to better distinguish specific abilities within the construct of teacher efficacy as it pertains to teaching reading to students in grades K-5. Additionally, all participants in this study were chosen based on grade placement, principal recommendation, and willingness to participate. Future research needs to examine the beliefs of all teachers and offer opportunities to express specific teacher needs and input as it relates to implementing literacy initiatives.

Another limitation of the study pertains to the wording of the items - specifically, items found in the Mid-Study Survey that asked teachers to rate how likely they were to perform or participate in a certain tasks as a teacher. Connections were not always made with what was chosen and what was actually observed during the selected observation moments. The researcher had to rely on the information given and triangulate the data (interviews, observations, surveys) to identify the emerging themes that were present in the study.

Additionally, a study of this caliber would possibly be more informative if the time frame commenced at the very beginning of the school year (including an analysis of teacher efficacy prior to in-service) and followed throughout the school year. This would give the informant a broader spectrum to understanding how teachers view the instructional practices related to reading at varying points of the school year.
Lastly, a study of this interest could possibly give a better picture to the researcher if all of the instructional materials used to teach the model were the same. Although the structure and routines were basically identical, the fact that Non Reading First Teachers had to use bits and pieces of a program to be in compliance caused uncertainty in delivering the instruction as outlined. Therefore, these teachers longed for a program with all parts present while the Reading First teachers struggled to get everything in and wished that they had time to expose students to more content of interest while incorporating other subject areas using their teacher prerogatives.

In summary, implementation of the diagnostic/prescriptive approach appeared to occur through a process of infiltration by the reading plan to teachers into the social structure of the school rather than through formal training activities. Questions that seem to emerge from the study include the following:

1. Which is more important—content or process, discipline or self-esteem, student respect for the teacher or mutual respect?

2. How do you rank the most important factor from moment to moment? For example, if you notice a child sleeping in your class when you’re in the middle of explaining teaching a key skill or concept, what do you do? Stop what you’re doing and wake the child up so she won’t miss the content of today’s reading lesson, or continue the lecture?

3. Would it matter which child it was (low socioeconomic status, affluent background, mentally or emotionally challenged)? How would the interest level of the rest of the class influence your decision? In other words, what do you value most highly at that moment in time?
4. How could the district offer support that is valuable to you teaching the best practices in reading instruction? Would this include input from you or would you rely on the experts in the area and have confidence that what they recommend is good enough for you and your students?

As in the case the four teachers in this study, teachers in general are very inquisitive and long to know “Why?” when it comes to curriculum and instructional decisions regarding their students. Each teacher adapted their perspective of the new curriculum due to district mandates within the literacy initiative, but the change became more apparent once the discovery of ‘why’ was made in progress with the students. Hence, teachers can serve as great informants and motivators of a program when they approve and disapprove using first hand experiences. Future studies in the area of reading instruction, teacher efficacy and teacher impact on student achievement could provide research that examines a teacher's sense of efficacy that is directly affected by perception of control over instruction in the classroom, indirectly affected by faculty influence on school instructional policy, and directly affected by perception of student ability to learn. The data can be used to indicate that teacher efficacy is affected by teacher beliefs about students' ability to learn, faculty influence over school policy, and faculty beliefs about student behavior. Teacher efficacy studies in these areas can also serve as a springboard to the development of related groups that state to what degree teachers are involved in decisions regarding curriculum and student grouping for instruction. Also, a study of magnitude could ask about specific student variables is asking the participant to imagine a particular student when responding to items rather than considering her or his ability to achieve an outcome for the classroom as a whole. Future versions of the study should
consider student variables as dependent variables rather than some imagined student the
teacher may not have in her or his classroom.

Because teachers do influence students through their beliefs, attitudes, and
values—their individual mental "maps"—is it not time to bring those things into
consciousness? How many of our fellow teachers could put their most deeply held beliefs
and values about education into words? How many are aware that other teachers,
principals, or supervisors may not share those beliefs and values? Just because everyone
uses words such as thinking, understanding, learning, or teaching, there is no guarantee
those words have the same meaning for each person. It is your own beliefs and values
that influence your work, not necessarily what is printed in the pages of a manual in
every case. Who better to explore the geography of the mental landscape than educators?
We are.

An individual’s beliefs, values, and metaphors, and the meaning people attach to
words and actions generally exist outside of conscious awareness. On a day-to-day basis,
these factors drive our behavior automatically, without our attention. That’s not all bad.
Imagine what it would be like if you had to stop and consciously go through the decision-
making process for every action in your life.

The point is a teacher’s behaviors frequently spring, not from higher-level
thinking processes, but from habit and beliefs he/she may exhibit. Until we identify those
behaviors and its “companions” with teachers, our field can continue to allow studies like
this study, reveal what may be the habitual factors that an unconsciously influence on our
students and why teachers believe what they practice.
REFERENCES


Briefing Paper, Los Angeles: The CRESST Line, UCLA.


Harvey, Stephanie, and Anne Goudvis. (2000). *Strategies That Work: Teaching Comprehension to Enhance Understanding*. York, ME: Stenhouse,.


Mehra, B. (2001). Research or personal quest: Dilemmas in studying my own kind In B. Merchant & A. I. Willis (Eds.), *Multiple and intersecting identities in qualitative research* (pp. 69-82). Mahwah, NH: Lawrence Erlbaum.


APPENDIX A: APPENDIX TABLES

Table A1

Reading First versus Non Reading First Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Reading First Schools (RF)</th>
<th>Non-Reading First Schools (NRF)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading Coach</td>
<td>Mandated</td>
<td>Optional/ Literacy contact Person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90- minute uninterrupted Reading Block</td>
<td>Mandated and Strategic; monitored intensely; Increased to 105 minutes and must be addressed before lunch</td>
<td>Encouraged and monitored loosely; can be staggered throughout the day; based on school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Teachers Trained on Assessment Techniques</td>
<td>DIBELS tests Mandated for each faculty member</td>
<td>Assessment Team Consisting of five or more certified personnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Tier Intervention Model</td>
<td>Full implementation including On level, below level and severely below level instruction; Trained Intervention Personnel</td>
<td>On level instruction mandated; Other levels optional- Teachers and other staff provides intervention if applicable and possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balanced Literacy Approach to Reading Instruction</td>
<td>Balanced with heavy emphasis on Phonemic Awareness and Phonics</td>
<td>Balanced Literacy with options for Phonics-based instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modeling</td>
<td>Strong support and staff development weekly, Use of IMT, Reading Coach, Coordinator, Principal and National Reading Consultant</td>
<td>Staff development and monthly trainings; Use of IMT primarily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Reading Coordinator</td>
<td>On-site as often as needed; Works with Principal and Reading Coach daily</td>
<td>Visits are periodically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-Site Professional Development</td>
<td>Reading Coach available daily; Staff meetings incorporates trainings by needs</td>
<td>Literacy contact person accessible, but not required to provide additional staff development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quarterly Support Team</td>
<td>Visits and provides explicit feedback on atmosphere and instruction</td>
<td>Visits and provides explicit feedback on atmosphere and instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Resources</td>
<td>Federally funded and supplemented using Scientifically Based Research Materials</td>
<td>District funded; Resources are limited and needs are replenished by district or school site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Tools for Observations</td>
<td>Literacy Observation Tool (LOT)</td>
<td>90 Minute Block Implementation Tool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEEK</td>
<td>Dates</td>
<td>Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>January 14-18</td>
<td>Administer Pre-Observation Questionnaire to (4) 1st grade teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>January 14-18</td>
<td>Observe in (2) Reading First Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>January 14-18</td>
<td>Conduct Interview with Reading First Teachers at Hollow Brook and Willow Lane Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>January 23-30</td>
<td>Observe in (2) Reading First Schools in the two identified 1st grade classrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>February 11-15</td>
<td>Observe in (2) Non Reading First Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>February 13</td>
<td>Conduct Interviews with Non-Reading First Teachers at Green Meadows and Winding Trail Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>February 18-22</td>
<td>Observe in (2) Non Reading First Schools in the two identified 1st grade classrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>February 20</td>
<td>Conduct Interviews with Principal and Reading Coach at 2 Non Reading First schools and Review school data and reports (i.e. QST)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>February 22</td>
<td>Conduct Interviews with Principal and Reading Coach at 2 Reading First schools and Review school data and reports (i.e. QST)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>February 25-29</td>
<td>Observe in (2) Reading First Schools and (2) Non Reading First Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Conduct Mid-Study survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>March 17-20</td>
<td>Observe in (2) Reading First Schools in the two identified 1st grade classrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>March 31-Apr. 4</td>
<td>Observe in (2) Non Reading First Schools in the two identified 1st grade classrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>April 14-18</td>
<td>Observe in (2) Reading First Schools in the two identified 1st grade classrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>April 21-25</td>
<td>Observe in (2) Non Reading First Schools in the two identified 1st grade classrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>April 28-May 2</td>
<td>Observe in (2) Reading First Schools in the two identified 1st grade classrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>May 5-9</td>
<td>Observe in (2) Non Reading First Schools in the two identified 1st grade classrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>* End of Study Wrap-up and interview analysis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL TO CONDUCT
STUDY

REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN EBR: SUMMARY AND INFORMATION

1. Study Title: ANALYSIS OF TEACHER EFFICACY AND PERSPECTIVES
   ABOUT LITERACY IMPLEMENTATION IN SELECTED ELEMENTARY
   SCHOOLS

2. Performance Site: Louisiana State University and Agricultural and
   Mechanical College – (2) Reading Firsts and (2) Non Reading Firsts
   Elementary Schools in East Baton Rouge Parish School System

3. Investigators: The following investigators are available for
   questions about this study, M-F, 8:00 a.m. - 4:30
   p.m.

   1. Dr. Earl Cheek 225.578.6867
   2. Joy Abernathy-Dyer 225.603.5494

4. Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this research project is to explore some of the
   issues that:

   • Attend attempts to change teachers’ instructional practices in the elementary classroom,
     and
   • Seek to unpack some of the issues that influence as well as hinder instructional reform
     within that setting. Hence, the primary questions will reveal:
   • What is the relationship between teacher’s beliefs about standard, prescribed reading
     instruction and their practices in an elementary classroom setting?
   • What role, if any, do teachers play in developing the how’s and why’s of literacy instruction
     in their classroom?
   • What factors do teachers believe are essential to providing effective reading instruction in
     an elementary school setting? How do these factors affect reading instruction in the
     elementary classroom?

5. Subject Inclusion: (4) 1st grade teachers (i.e. (2) 1st grade teachers from (2) different Non
   Reading First Schools and (2) 1st grade teachers from (2) different Reading First Schools),
   (4) Elementary Principals from the sites, (4) Reading Coaches from the sites, (1) Elementary
   Curriculum Director/ Director of Reading

6. Number of subjects: 13

7. Study Procedures: The study will be conducted in two phases. In the first
   phase, subjects will spend approximately 25 minutes completing two
   questionnaires on their educational and background experiences related to
   teaching literacy. In the second phase, subjects will be observed during the literacy
   instructional blocks/ grade-level (team) meetings throughout various periods over
   the course of six to eight weeks (not including testing week of March 10-14), as
   well as participate in a mid-study questionnaire. The study will be completed by the
   end of the spring semester. A final interview and debriefing will be given so that
   the subjects and investigator can review, share and analyze information gathered.

8. Benefits: The study may yield valuable information to the teacher
   about the how’s and why’s of literacy mandates as it relates to their own

241
teacher efficacy, as a result of being involved in the study.

9. Risks: The only study risk is the inadvertent release of time sensitive information found in the teacher surveys/questionnaires. However, every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of your study records. Files will be kept in secure cabinets to which only the investigator has access.

10. Right to Refuse: Subjects may choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of any benefit to which they might otherwise be entitled.

11. Privacy: Results of the study may be published, but no names or identifying information will be included in the publication. Subject identity will remain confidential unless disclosure is required by law.

12. Signatures:

The study will be discussed with the subjects and all questions will be answered. Subjects may direct additional questions regarding study specifics to the investigators. If questions arise about subjects' rights or other concerns, subjects can contact Robert C. Mathews, Institutional Review Board, (225) 578-8692. Signatures will be obtained from all subject to signify an agreement to participate in the study in accordance to the contents outlined in this request.

Additional Contact Information:

Joy R. Abernathy-Dyer, Elementary Reading Coordinator
Christa McAuliffe Center (Room 115)
12000 Goodwood Boulevard
Baton Rouge, LA 70815
225.226.7725
jabernathy@ebrschools.org
APPENDIX C: PRINCIPAL PERMISSION TO CONDUCT STUDY

February 22, 2008

To: Ms.__________________________, Principal (____________________Elementary)

From: J. Abernathy-Dyer

RE: Planning and Evaluation Tool for Effective Schoolwide Reading Programs

I hope all is going well with you and yours. As mention in our visit last fall, please complete the following packet as a form of your input and documentation of the reading program at your school. The following form will be used by me to help understand the implementation of the literacy program along with the information I have gathered from Ms. ________________ during our interview. As always, please feel free to contact me or your reading coach if you have any questions or concerns. Thanks for your assistance and valuable input concerning this matter.

P.S. You may return this packet to me via the pony using the following information:

Joy Abernathy-Dyer
Elementary Reading Coordinator
Christa McAuliffe Center Room 115
APPENDIX D: TEACHCE PERMISSION TO CONDUCT STUDY AND CONSENT FORM

January 2008

To:

_______________________________
(Study Participant)

From: Joy Abernathy- Dyer
Primary Investigator

Happy New Year! I hope you enjoyed your time off. Thanks for sending in the questionnaire and survey. I had an opportunity to read your responses over the break. I was wondering if we could schedule a time to interview with you to further discuss your perspective regarding the reading program and implementation on next week- possibly Wednesday or Thursday (January 16th or January 17th). Please let me know if these dates are fine with you. I am available to meet either before school, briefly during the day and after school. The interview should last no longer than 45 minutes. I will probably forward you a few questions to look over before the interview, so that you will know what type of questions to expect. Thanks again for your help.

Sincerely,

Joy
APPENDIX E: QUESTIONS FOR PRE-OBSERVATION SURVEY

School (Pseudonym):______________________

Choose one of the following:
Willow Lane ___ Hollow Brook___ Green Meadows___ Winding Trail_____
______ Reading First School ______ Non-Reading First School

Name:_______________________________________________________

Undergraduate Major:____________________________________________
(Year of Completion___________)

Certifications:_____________________________________________________

Grade level: _______Preferred grade to teach________

Other grades taught_________________________________________________

Number of years teaching:_____ # of years in grade 1_____Class size:_____

Demographics: (boy/girl) # of boys_________ # of girls _________

Exceptional students:_______________________________________________

Use of Assessments:
DIBELS: yes_______no_______ Class average score_______
DRA: yes_______ no_______ Class average score_______
Edusoft: yes_______no_______ Class average score_______

Please list other forms of assessments:_______________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________

# of students on level______ below level_______ above level______

# of Computers in classroom: _____ / Computer lab yes_______ no_______

Reading resources (i.e. Reading Specialists, complete reading series, teacher’s aide,
intervention materials etc…)

Frequency of grade level meetings (check one):
Have you ever worked on a literacy curriculum planning team? If so, what role did you play?

Are you a member of the Instructional Management Team? If so, what content do you represent?

Please provide a description of the Reading block at your school (i.e. instruction, student responses, assistance, management etc…). How do you feel about the format in which you are teaching during the block? Do you think this is the most effective way to teach all students? Explain as much as you’d like.

Please list additional programs that promote literacy achievement within your school, community and home/school connection: (i.e. Accelerated Reader, summer reading program, Book It, VIPS etc….)
APPENDIX F: QUESTIONS FOR PRE-OBSERVATION INTERVIEW


1. In the past 12 months, have you participated in any professional development activities that focused on literacy implementation for the new curriculum? Elaborate as necessary.

2. In the past 12 months, have you participated in any professional development activities that focused on student discipline and management in the classroom?

3. In the past 12 months, have you participated in any professional development activities that focused on uses of computers for instruction?

4. Describe any State, District and school level professional development activities that focused on student assessment, such as methods of testing, evaluation, performance assessment, etc that you have participated in.

5. How prepared do you feel to teach reading in accordance to the new comprehensive curriculum reading initiatives (i.e. 90 minute reading block, developmental activities and teaching methods).

6. Describe any changes, if any, that you have made in your teaching style and classroom in implementing the new literacy curriculum.

7. What can the district and school do to help you as a teacher become an effective reading instructor?

8. Please describe the impact you find most important when implementing the new literacy program and student reading achievement from your professional perspective.
Of the following listed below, choose three of the most important areas that you find beneficial to teaching and fostering a sense of literacy development among your students; Please feel free to elaborate and describe your beliefs as needed:

- Effective, research-based methods and teaching strategies
- Comprehensive design with aligned components
  - Textbooks & Instructional Models
- Literacy Professional development
- Measurable goals and benchmarks
- Support within the school for 90/105 minute reading block
- Parental and community involvement
- External technical support and assistance to integrate technology in lessons
- Evaluation strategies, and
- Coordination of resources
APPENDIX G: MID-STUDY TEACHER SURVEY

Name of School:____________________________ (Pseudonym)
Name:____________________________________________
Grade:_____________

Read and Respond to the following as best as you can.

I. LITERACY INITIATIVES
Thinking of your current classroom instruction techniques, how much emphasis do you give to each of the following goals or objectives?
(Circle one number on each line.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>1-2 times weekly</th>
<th>Almost Daily</th>
<th>Everyday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Integrating the course curriculum with other subjects or fields of study</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Teaching strategies, rules, or vocabulary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Showing the importance of the subject in Everyday life</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Increasing students’ interest in the subject and in Pursuing further study</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Encouraging students to explore alternative explanations or methods for solving problems</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Preparing students for taking standardized tests in the subject</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Fully covering the course curriculum as prescribed by the school/district/state</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. In-depth study of selected topics or issues, as opposed to exposure to a broad range of topics</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Understanding the theoretical concepts and ideas underlying scientific or mathematical applications</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

II. TEACHING STYLE
Approximately how often do you use each of the following teaching methods in this your class? (Circle one number on each line.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>1-2 times monthly</th>
<th>1-2 times weekly</th>
<th>Almost Daily</th>
<th>Everyday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Lecture or talk to the whole class</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Teacher-led whole class discussions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Students responding orally to questions on elicited by teacher matter covered in class or homework</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Student-led whole-group discussions or presentations</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Students working together in cooperative groups</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Reviewing homework or other assignments</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Approximately how often did you have students engage in the following learning activities in this year? *(Circle one number on each line.)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>1-2 times monthly</th>
<th>1-2 times weekly</th>
<th>Almost daily</th>
<th>Everyday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Work on hands-on activities (e.g., doing lab activities or using manipulatives)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Reflect on course material by writing in a notebook or journal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Use technology or computers for learning, practicing skills, or solving problems</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Work individually on written work or Assignments in a workbook or textbook</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Critique/evaluate their own or other students’ class work or homework</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Consider a real-world problem relevant to the course and develop a plan to address it</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Use primary sources (e.g., news papers News letters to investigate current issues or new developments in reading, or Theme)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Listen to guest speakers or go on field trips relevant to the material studied in class</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Design or implement their own inquiries &amp; questions or infer during the class</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
k. Use “state-of-the-art” equipment or technologies
   (Specify types________________________) .................1 2 3 4 5

On average, approximately what percent of your planning and preparation time for your class did you spend on each of the following activities? (Circle one number on each line.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>0%</th>
<th>1-9%</th>
<th>10-19%</th>
<th>20-29%</th>
<th>30-49%</th>
<th>50% +</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Revising current lessons/curriculum units</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Creating new lessons/curriculum units</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Contacting community resources, including making arrangements for</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>speakers, tours, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Using the Internet to access materials</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Using the Internet to network with colleagues</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Consulting with experts or professional</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading and Language Arts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Using a reflective teaching journal</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Learning to facilitate Literacy work stations</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Improving computer and/or software skills</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Writing grants to secure funding for new programs and/or equipment</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. Interacting with other teachers at your school to coordinate</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lessons/activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l. Responding to e-mail you receive from parents/ students, Administrators</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and the like</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During a typical week, approximately how much time did you spend outside of regular school hours on planning and preparing for teaching reading and implementing Literacy Mandates for your class?
Number of hours ___________________

7. Which textbook (or commercially prepared workbook) constituted the primary resource that you used in during Reading instruction?

**NOTE:** (If you used NO textbook or workbook in this course, skip to Question 12.)
Title: ____________________________________________________________________
8. Approximately what percentage of this textbook/workbook/student manuals did you, or do you typically cover in your class? ________________

9. Did/do you use the tests that the publishers included with the textbook/workbook? *(Circle only one.)*
   - Rarely or never ..........1
   - Sometimes ..................2
   - Frequently .................3

10. Please give your opinion about each of the following statements related to this textbook/workbook.
    *(Circle one number on each line.)*
    
    **This textbook:**

        | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly agree |
        |-------------------|----------|----------|-------|---------------|
    a. Is at a reading level that is appropriate for most of the students taking this course .......... | 2  | 3 | 4 | 5 |
    b. Helps develop problem-solving skills .................. | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
    c. Provides good review questions and problem sets ........ | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
    d. Explains concepts clearly ......................................... | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
    e. Provides challenging suggestions for discovery, further reading, and other assignments .......... | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
    f. Covers the right range of topics.............................. | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
    g. Satisfactorily covers topics in depth ......................... | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
    h. Makes interdisciplinary connections between subject areas ........................................ | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
    i. Is considered interesting by most students you teach....... | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
    j. Other *(specify)*

11. If you disagreed with any of the items in Question 10, above, please briefly describe the problems you see with this textbook/workbook.
12. To what extent did you use each of the following types of assessment to determine student progress and achievement in your class (Reading Initiative)?
(Circle one number on each line.)

| a. Pre-tests before beginning a new unit | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| b. Short-answer tests (e.g., multiple choice, true/false, fill-in-the-blank) | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| c. Tests requiring open-ended responses (e.g., descriptions, justifications, explanations) | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| d. Student portfolios | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| e. Class participation/group discussion | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| f. Student presentations/projects | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| g. Hands-on performance measurements | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| h. Written explanations of thought processes (e.g., journals, essays, surveys) | 2 | 3 | 4 |

II. YOUR ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS ABOUT TEACHING
Please indicate how confident you feel about the following aspects of your teaching. Answer based on how you feel about teaching reading under the new Literacy Initiative. (Circle one number on each line.)

| a. Your knowledge about the application of the subject to everyday life | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| b. Your ability to advise students about importance of reading | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| c. Your ability to determine the depth, breadth, and pace of coverage of material in your teaching | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| d. Your ability to develop appropriate and authentic assessment tools for students | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| e. Your ability to supervise literacy station for your students | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| f. Your ability to mentor beginning teachers | 2 | 3 | 4 |
14. To what extent do you feel each of the following statements describes the kind of teacher you are? (Circle one number on each line.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Slight Extent</th>
<th>Moderate Extent</th>
<th>Great Extent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. I am motivated to expand on the instructional techniques that I use</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. I am motivated to change the way I use hands-on materials and manipulatives in my teaching</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. I am motivated to use more technology in my teaching</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. I consider myself a “subject matter expert” in my main teaching field of reading</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. I consider preparing students for the kinds of expectations they will encounter in a real-life setting as an important part of my job</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. I believe I can truly make a difference in the lives of my students in terms of their choices for further education and as a responsible citizen</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15. What do you consider to be your greatest strengths as a teacher? Please be as specific as you can. Think about Literacy and reading areas of content mastery and instructional strategies when answering this question.

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

16. What areas of your teaching do you think need improvement? Think about Reading in addition to other areas of content mastery and instructional strategies when answering this question.

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

III. YOUR BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE
17. Including this school year, how many years have you been employed as a teacher? *(Include years spent teaching both full and part time, and in both public and private schools.)*
   a. In total........................ _____
   b. As a Elementary teacher....... _____
   c. As a Reading teacher .......... _____
   d. In a middle, high or other setting.......... _____
   e. At this school.............. _____

18. Do you have a teaching certificate in the state and/or city in which you are currently teaching?
   Yes.................................... 1
   No..................................... 2 *(Skip to Question 21.)*

19. On the line below, please write in the field(s) in which you have a teaching certificate.
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

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

21. During the last 12 months, have you participated in any professional development activities that focused on the following topics? If yes, how many hours did you spend on the activity?
   
   Participated? Approximate number of hours
   
   Yes ___________ No_____________

   8 or less 9-16 17-32 33 or more
a. In-depth study of your main subject area
   (i.e., reading, language arts, writing) ................. 1 2 3 4
b. Methods of teaching your main subject area .... 1 2 3 4
c. Applications of technology to education .......... 1 2 3 4
d. Other related areas (specify) ......................... 1 2 3 4

22. During the last 12 months, have you been involved in any of the following activities related to your teaching? (Circle one number on each line.)

   Yes____1____ No____2_____

   a. Served as grade level chair ................................................................. 1 2
   b. Developed or piloted new curricula ...................................................... 1 2
   c. Held a leadership position in a state or national professional organization ... 1 2
   d. Formally mentored beginning teacher(s) ............................................... 1 2
   e. Supervised student teacher(s) .............................................................. 1 2
   f. Conducted In-services or workshops for teachers ................................. 1 2
   g. Made observational visits to other schools .......................................... 1 2
   h. Made presentations to non-teaching groups (e.g., school board, parents, community groups) ................................................................. 1 2
   i. Conducted individual or collaborative research on a topic of interest to you... 1 2
   j. Represented the school or district on an instructional reform project .......... 1 2
   k. Other (specify) ................................................................................. 1 2

23. Have you participated in any professional development activities either in an in-service setting, research-based conference, or any certified program (i.e. National Boards, Teacher of the Year) during your tenure within a school, district or the nation in the last 5 years? If so, please describe this experience by providing the following information in the table below.

   The name of the program, and sponsoring agency;
The type of setting in which you worked (i.e., government, industry, laboratory, or university);
The date of your participation, and the duration of the program; and
The type of work that you did:
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
Note: If you have not participated in any such activities, go on to Question 24.
Name of program and sponsoring agency Type of setting along with dates and duration of program and the type of work.

24. During the last 5 years, have you been employed in a research setting, or Administrative setting (i.e. Principal, Assistant Principal, Support personnel) within the district that was relevant to your work as a 1st grade reading teacher (i.e. Reading Coach, Instructional Specialist, Resource teacher etc….)? If yes, please describe this work experience in space below.
Yes .........................1
No.........................2

25. Please describe your postsecondary education by completing the chart below.
Degree(s) held? Year Institution Major Minor
Bachelor’s ____ Y ____ N
Master’s ____ Y ____ N
Doctorate ____ Y ____ N
Other ____ Y ____ N
(specify)_____________

26. Are you currently working toward an advanced degree? If yes, please indicate the degree you are pursuing, the institution, and the area in which you are specializing.
Yes.................1 No...............2

Degree: ___________ Institution: ______________________ Specialization:

27. Please estimate the number of credit hours, if any, you have earned beyond your highest degree.________________

28. In order to get a general sense of your educational background, please place a check next to the titles of courses you have taken for credit as part of your postsecondary education. Do not be concerned about whether the titles match the classes you took, or if you do not have total recall of this information. Please feel free to record the Titles or Descriptions of courses
related to a specialty area (i.e. Literacy, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, The Arts, and the like)

EDUCATION COURSES
A. Computers/Technology in the Classroom
B. Curriculum and Curriculum Theory
C. Education Administration
D. Education/Instruction Media Design
E. Educational Assessment, Testing And Measurement
F. Educational Psychology
G. Educational Statistics
H. Evaluation and Research in Education
I. Specialty area courses:

IV. TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS
29. What is your gender?
Male .................1
Female ..............2
30. Which best describes you?
American Indian or Alaska Native ..........1
Asian or Pacific Islander .....................2
Black, non-Hispanic ..........................3
Hispanic ......................................4
White, non-Hispanic ..........................5

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR COMPLETING THIS SURVEY.
APPENDIX H: QUALITATIVE QUADRANTS-KEY OBSERVABLES

School______________________________________________
Principal____________________________________________
Coach/ Contact_______________________________________

Teacher _______________________________ Room ______________
Date/ Time_____________ Grade __________ Program ___________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use of Curricular Program</th>
<th>Impact of Instructional Delivery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effectiveness of Instructional Environment</th>
<th>Support of Student Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional Notes:

Adapted From Region VIII Service Center (2005)
APPENDIX I: adapted from-

Planning and Evaluation Tool for Effective Schoolwide Reading Programs - Administrator/Instructional Leader Guide (PET-A)

Deborah C. Simmons, Ph.D.
Edward J. Kame’enui, Ph.D.

Institute for the Development of Educational Achievement
College of Education
University of Oregon

Developed May, 2003
Planning and Evaluation Tool for Effective Schoolwide Reading Programs - Administrator/Instructional Leader Guide

Directions

This guide was developed for instructional leaders as they use the Planning and Evaluation Tool-Revised (PET-R) to assess school strengths and areas of improvement in beginning reading. The items in this guide parallel those of the PET-R (see left-hand column of each major element). As you facilitate your instructional team’s assessment of school readiness and need, use the information you may need, in the right-hand column to identify sources of information and actions you may take as an instructional leader.

The annotations in the right-hand column consist of two types of information: (a) sources/notes and (b) actions. In the source/notes section, you will find specific reference to documents or information. The notes provide elaborations or clarifications of information in the item. The action section specifies next steps or activities that need to be scheduled.

In this tool for administrators and instructional leaders, several companion or resource documents are referenced and needed including:

- Consumer’s Guide for Evaluating Core/Comprehensive Reading Programs
- Consumer’s Guide for Evaluating Supplemental and Intervention Programs (under development)
- Curriculum Maps (from Institute on Beginning Reading)
- Grade-Level Accomplishments (National Research Council, 1998)
- Core/Supplemental/Intervention Maps
- Master Professional Development Schedule (school specific)
- Master Schedule for Instructional Time (school specific)
- State standards and objectives (state specific)
#### Planning and Evaluation Tool for Effective Schoolwide Reading Programs

**Internal/External Auditing Form**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EVALUATION CRITERIA</th>
<th>ADMINISTRATIVE SOURCE/ACTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### I. Goals, Objectives, Priorities
Goals for reading achievement are clearly defined, anchored to research, prioritized in terms of importance to student learning, commonly understood by users, and consistently employed as instructional guides by all teachers of reading.

### Goals and Objectives:

1. are clearly defined and quantifiable at each grade level.

**SOURCES/NOTES**
- Document that outlines measurable goals for each grade level.
- Curriculum maps from IBR (See prioritized items).
- State standards specified by grade.
- To be useful, goals and objectives should be specific and measurable. In the absence of this information, it is difficult to assess progress adequately.

**ACTION**
- Identify existing documents or review new sources to determine goals, priorities, and objectives to guide K-3 reading instruction.
- Review each goal/objective to determine what it looks like in practice (how goal is defined and used to guide reading instruction).

2. are articulated across grade levels.

**SOURCES/NOTES**
- Check sources in item #1 above to determine whether they specify and articulate goals across grades.
- Objectives and standards should show the progression of skills within a grade and between a grade.

**ACTION**
- Identify the gaps in cross-grade level goals and objectives.
- Determine whether objectives and goals build across grade levels.
- Establish clarity and consensus across grade levels about who is responsible for which goals.
- Agree on a common curriculum map to communicate and guide cross-grade level goals and instruction.
I. **Goals, Objectives, Priorities** continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. are prioritized and dedicated to essential components of beginning reading (i.e., phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension). (x 2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SOURCES/NOTES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Check sources in item #1 to determine whether they are prioritized according to most essential.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- All objectives are not of equal importance to beginning reading. Those of greatest importance should be given greater emphasis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ACTION</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Review objectives to identify “priority” versus “discretionary” items. Determine which are fundamental to beginning reading success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Use research-based tools and reports (Preventing Reading Difficulties, curriculum maps) to help prioritize those that are essential.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Develop process for teachers and staff to review and gain understanding of most essential items and why they are essential.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4. guide instructional and curricular decisions (e.g., time allocations, curriculum program adoptions) (x 2).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SOURCES/NOTES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Standards or curriculum maps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Time allocations for reading instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Core instructional materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Ideally, there should be close and strong alignment between goals/objectives and what the curricular programs teach and emphasize.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ACTION</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Review alignment of essential objectives and how they are addressed in the core instructional program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Determine whether time and instruction are allocated to the most essential elements of beginning reading?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Determine whether and where adjustments need to be made to ensure sufficient instruction on most essential skills to enable attainment of goals and objectives.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I. **Goals, Objectives, Priorities** continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5. are commonly understood and consistently used by teachers and administrators within and between grades to evaluate and communicate student learning and improve practice.</th>
<th>SOURCE/NOTES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standards or curriculum maps</td>
<td><strong>ACTION:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey/assessment of teacher understanding</td>
<td>• Review goals/objectives/standards to assess teacher understanding (i.e., what does each objective look like in practice?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers may have varying levels of understanding regarding the importance and interpretation of goals and objectives. To ensure higher quality instruction, it is important that all individuals responsible for teaching reading have a clear and consistent understanding of essential learning goals and objectives.</td>
<td>• Assess degree to which teachers are aware of priority goals and objectives and use them to guide instruction.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/14 Total Points</th>
<th>Percent of Implementation:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7 = 50% 11 = 80% 14 = 100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
II. **Assessment** — Instruments and procedures for assessing reading achievement are clearly specified, measure essential skills, provide reliable and valid information about student performance, and inform instruction in important, meaningful, and maintainable ways.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EVALUATION CRITERIA</th>
<th>ADMINISTRATIVE SOURCE/ACTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assessment:</strong></td>
<td><strong>SOURCE/NOTES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• School data system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• District data system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. A schoolwide assessment system and database are established and maintained for documenting student performance and monitoring progress (x 2).</td>
<td><strong>ACTION</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Determine whether system for documenting and monitoring student performance data is available at the school or district level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Does the school have ready and easy access to information necessary to make instructional decisions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• If not, determine process for establishing a system and identify individuals responsible for maintaining.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Measures assess student performance on prioritized goals and objectives.</td>
<td><strong>SOURCE/NOTES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• List all measures used to assess performance and guide instructional decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• All goals and objectives are not of equal importance in beginning reading. It is important to determine that assessment tools are used judiciously and that just a few measures are used that provide essential information on screening, progress monitoring, diagnosis, and outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Administrative Time:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Screening:</strong> Fall or early in year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Progress Monitoring:</strong> At minimum 3 times per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Diagnostic:</strong> Selective use as needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Outcome:</strong> At minimum, in spring of year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### II. Assessment continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. Measures assess student performance on prioritized goals and objectives. (continued)</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Review measures currently used to assess their alignment with essential goals and objectives (See prior section: Goals, priorities, objectives)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Determine whether current measures provide adequate information and whether to add or delete particular measures from school battery.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Try to avoid “layering” assessments on top of one another. Instead, develop a map of assessments and those that provide information most relevant to instruction.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. Measures are technically adequate (i.e., have high reliability and validity) as documented by research.</th>
<th>SOURCE/NOTES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Technical manuals for specific measures used.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Validity - Degree to which measure assesses skill/strategy it is designed to measure. Does the measure relate to other criterion measures of reading? Does measure predict future performance?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reliability - Consistency of information attained through assessment. Do scores attained reflect performance that is consistent over time and between data collectors?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Measures used for high-stakes decisions must demonstrate adequate reliability and validity.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Your data are only as reliable as the process used to assess performance. It is important to schedule reliability checks.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4. All users receive training and follow up on measurement administration, scoring, and data interpretation.</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Designate at least one individual per school to become the expert in specific measures.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide training prior to data collection to ensure reliable administration and scoring.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cross-check at least 20% of data at the scoring and data entry stages.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
II. **Assessment** continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOURCE/NOTES</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 5. At the beginning of the year, screening measures identify students' level of performance and are used to determine instructional needs. | - Technical manual of measures used to identify whether measure is designed for screening.  
- Instructional practices used by individual teachers.  
- Screening measures are used to identify children who enter school at serious risk and may need additional instructional support. Ideally these measures are administered early in the academic year. |
| | - Determine whether and which measures to use for screening.  
- Determine process used to identify children who require additional instructional support.  
- Establish process early in the academic year to screen for children who have a potential reading difficulty. |
| 6. Progress monitoring measures are administered formatively throughout the year to document and monitor student reading performance (i.e., quarterly for all students; every 4 weeks for students at risk). | - Schoolwide assessment schedule  
- Progress monitoring is the process of assessing student performance frequently using short duration measures that are related to end-of-year outcomes.  
- Not all measures meet standards for progress monitoring. Ideally these are brief measures that provide highly relevant information on how students are progressing toward long-term goals. |
| | - Identify schedule used in grades K-3 to monitor student progress.  
- Determine whether schedule is sufficient to gain information for timely instructional decisions.  
- Identify whether some students require more frequent assessments.  
- Identify measures available to monitor progress and provide professional development to those responsible.  
- Determine who will collect progress monitoring information and how data will be disseminated. |
### II. Assessment continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7.</th>
<th>Student performance data are analyzed and summarized in meaningful formats and routinely used by grade-level teams to evaluate and adjust instruction (x 2).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ACTION | - Designate personnel to prepare and print reports and provide follow-up sessions with teachers on how to use information.  
- Schedule student performance feedback sessions at least quarterly  
- Check teacher use of, satisfaction, and comfort level with the information they receive. |
| SOURCE/NOTES | - Performance reports at the class and individual student level  
- Evidence that reports are used by individual teachers  
- To be useful, teachers should receive reports on student performance soon after assessments are administered. They must also have training on how to interpret and use reports to plan and modify instruction. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8.</th>
<th>The building has a “resident” expert or experts to maintain the assessment system and ensure measures are collected reliably, data are scored and entered accurately, and feedback is provided in a timely fashion.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ACTION | - Dedicate adequate FTE for assessment expert in your school.  
- Outline assessment related activities that range from preparing measures to providing feedback. |
| SOURCE/NOTES | - School data base and archives  
- Individual with dedicated time to carry out assessment related responsibilities. |

**/20 Total Points **

**Percent of Implementation:**

- 10 = 50%
- 16 = 80%
- 20 = 100%

### III. Instructional Programs and Materials

The instructional programs and materials have documented efficacy, are drawn from research-based findings and practices, align with state standards and benchmarks, and support the full range of learners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EVALUATION CRITERIA</th>
<th>ADMINISTRATIVE SOURCE/ACTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. A comprehensive or core reading program based on scientifically based evidence is adopted for use school wide (x 3). | **SOURCE/NOTES**  
- Current textbook adoption  
- Process to determine level of implementation at the classroom level  
- Core/comprehensive refers to a reading program that addresses the 5 essential elements of beginning reading and is designed for Grades K-3  
- Documented research-based efficacy is based on (a) prior research documenting effects or (b) an analysis and review based on SBRR (scientifically based reading research).  
- Sources of SBRR are included in the IBR notebooks.  
**ACTION**  
- Prior to selection of a core/comprehensive program, establish a process to review for alignment with SBRR.  
- Or, review current program according to available reviews to identify areas that need to be supplemented or strengthened.  
- See Consumer’s Guide for Evaluating Core Reading Programs. |
| 2. The instructional program and materials provide explicit and systematic instruction on essential reading elements (i.e., phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension) (x 2). | **SOURCE/NOTES**  
- Current textbook adoption  
- Or, core program that is under consideration.  
- Explicit and systematic instruction involves the intentional, direct teaching of critical skills and strategies with sufficient opportunity for practice. Systematic involves the schedule and sequence of instruction and practice to ensure adequate opportunity for students to learn and maintain the skill. |
### III. Instructional Programs and Materials continued

| 2. The instructional program and materials provide explicit and systematic instruction on essential reading elements (i.e., phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension) (x 2). (continued) |
| ACTION |
| - Review program under consideration for adoption or the program currently used to assess level of explicitness. |
| - Or, use existing program reviews to identify areas of strength and weakness. |
| - Determine if program is explicit and systematic in all elements or whether there are particular elements that need improvement. |
| - Try to avoid “layering” different programs on top of one another. Instead, try to identify a “core” reading program that provides the most explicit and systematic instruction. |

| 3. The instructional materials and program align with and support state standards/scientifically based practices and provide sufficient instruction in essential elements to allow the majority of students to reach learning goals. |
| SOURCE/NOTES |
| - State standards and curriculum maps |
| - Summary of scientifically based practices (See IBR notebook for references). |
| - Consumer’s Guide to Evaluating Core Reading Programs (guide or completed reviews). |

| ACTION |
| - Review programs currently used to assess their alignment with state standards and SBRR. |
| - Determine whether the program will “get students to the learning goals” if implemented with high quality. That is, is there enough instruction on the essential elements that align with high priority skills? |
| - Identify areas in which skills/strategies need to be supplemented. |
### III. Instructional Programs and Materials continued

| 4. Supplemental and intervention programs of documented efficacy are in place to support students who do not benefit adequately from the core program. (x 2) |
|----|---|
| **SOURCE/NOTES** | • Review current program according to available reviews to identify supplemental and intervention programs of documented efficacy.  
• See Consumer’s Guide for Evaluating Supplemental and Intervention Programs.  
• Supplemental programs are designed to build or strengthen a particular area of reading such as fluency or phonemic awareness.  
• Intervention programs are designed for students who require more intensive and explicit instruction in a specific skill. These programs often address multiple elements of beginning reading. |
| **ACTION** | • Review current gaps in core reading program to identify areas to supplement.  
• Develop a “program map” to outline what programs are being used where, by whom, for which periods of time. Distribute map to all individuals responsible for reading instruction.  
• Use student performance data to identify children who will require intervention programs.  
• Observe programs being used in other schools or pilot test the program if there is not available evidence to support its adoption.  
• Use student performance data to evaluate the efficacy of the supplemental/intervention.  
• Determine the alignment of the supplemental and intervention programs with the core. Use program map to increase coherence and consistency of instruction.  
• Try to avoid “layering” different programs that may not provide consistent instruction. |
III. Instructional Programs and Materials continued

5. Programs and materials are implemented with a high level of fidelity (x 3).

SOURCE/NOTES
- Implementation checklist from the program that documents critical features.
- Specific checklist to document implementation.
- Fidelity of implementation involves the consistent execution of the program with high quality for the time and days allocated.
  Implementation has three critical parts: (a) delivery of lesson, (b) with fluency and high quality, and (c) for the designated amount of time and on a daily basis.

ACTION
- Determine a process to assess fidelity of implementation. This process may involve a number of individuals all of whom must be familiar with the program and capable of providing feedback and support.
- Determine and schedule the amount of professional development needed to optimize fidelity of implementation.
- Dedicate FTE to individuals to support implementation. This may include a coach but also opportunity for teachers to observe others implementing the program.

/22 Total Points  ____
Percent of Implementation:
11 = 50%  18 = 80%  22 = 100%
### IV. Instructional Time

A sufficient amount of time is allocated for instruction and the time allocated is used effectively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EVALUATION CRITERIA</th>
<th>ADMINISTRATIVE SOURCE/ACTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. A schoolwide plan is established to allocate sufficient reading time and coordinate resources to ensure optimal use of time. | **SOURCE/NOTES**  
- Core/Supplemental/Intervention Map (CSI) that specifies daily # of minutes for reading instruction specified by grade.  
- Minimum # of minutes specified (e.g., 90 minutes per day)  
- Plan that articulates how support personnel (e.g., paraprofessionals) are used to deliver reading instruction.  
**ACTION**  
- Review current time allocations per grade to determine sufficiency.  
- Review student performance to determine whether adjustments need to be made to increase time for reading instruction and practice.  
- Distribute final schedule for reading instruction to all teachers/staff. |
| 2. Reading time is prioritized and protected from interruption (x 2). | **SOURCE/NOTES**  
- Master schedule that documents how reading time is prioritized and fits into larger school schedule.  
- Schedule for discretionary activities (e.g., field trips, assemblies).  
**ACTION**  
- At the beginning of the school year, determine optimal use of resources to provide reading instruction K-3.  
- Determine all “discretionary” activities (e.g., assemblies, etc.) and schedule outside of reading instruction.  
- Ensure that reading time is protected each day (e.g., 540 Days). |
### IV. Instructional Time

3. Instructional time is allocated to skills and practices most highly correlated with reading success (i.e., essential elements of reading including phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension).

**SOURCE/NOTES**
- Core/Comprehensive Reading Program
- Classroom Implementation of Program

**ACTION**
- Review current instructional program to determine where time is being spent and on which activities?
- Determine how much emphasis and time are dedicated to essential elements of reading.
- Review student performance data to determine whether instructional time and emphasis needs to be adjusted.

4. Students in grades K-3 receive a minimum of 30 minutes of small-group teacher-directed reading instruction daily (x 2).

**SOURCE/NOTES**
- Core/supplemental/intervention Map
- Consumer's Guide for Evaluating Core/Comprehensive Reading Programs

**ACTION**
- Determine how allocated reading time is actually being used on a daily and weekly basis.
- Determine how much time is dedicated to whole class, small group, and independent practice activities.
- Ensure a minimum of 30 minutes of small group instruction is scheduled daily.

5. Additional instructional time is allocated to students who fail to make adequate reading progress.

**SOURCE/NOTES**
- Core/Supplemental/intervention Maps (CSI)
- Master Instructional Schedule

**ACTION**
- Review supplemental/intervention program map and student performance data to schedule additional instructional time for students who are not making adequate progress.
- Try to schedule additional instructional time (e.g., a double dose) daily and in small groups.

/14 Total Points \[ \% \]

Percent of Implementation:

- 7 = 50%
- 11 = 80%
- 14 = 100%
### V. Differentiated Instruction/Grouping/Scheduling

Instruction optimizes learning for all students by tailoring instruction to meet current levels of knowledge and prerequisite skills and organizing instruction to enhance student learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EVALUATION CRITERIA</th>
<th>DOCUMENTATION OF EVIDENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Student performance is used to determine the level of instructional materials and to select research-based instructional programs. | SOURCE/NOTES  
- Student performance data from screening and progress monitoring measures (e.g., DIBELS)  
- Placement tests or inventories from reading programs  

**ACTION**  
- Review performance data to identify students who are not making adequate progress.  
- Use the placement test or reading inventories from programs to identify appropriate instructional placement.  
- Determine whether students can benefit from core reading instructional materials. |

| 2. Instruction is provided in flexible homogeneous groups to maximize student performance and opportunities to respond. | SOURCES/NOTES  
- Core/comprehensive Program Map (CSI) that specifies grouping structures.  
- Grouping children according to instructional levels increases the opportunity for them to receive instruction at their appropriate level. It is essential that as students progress, groups remain fluid and flexible.  

**ACTION**  
- Schedule instruction for students who are at greatest risk in the smallest groups available.  
- Review student performance data at least every two weeks to adjust instructional groups. |

| 3. For children who require additional and substantial instructional support, tutoring | SOURCES/NOTES  
- Core/Comprehensive Program Map/Schedule that specifies grouping structures. |
(1-1) or small group instruction (< 6) is used to support teacher-directed large group or whole class instruction.

**ACTION**
- Try to schedule instruction for students who are at greatest risk in the smallest groups available.
- Review student performance data at least monthly to adjust instructional groups.
### V. Differentiated Instruction/Grouping/Scheduling continued

| ****4. Group size, instructional time, and instructional programs are determined by and adjusted according to learner performance (i.e., students with greatest needs are in groups that allow more frequent monitoring and opportunities to respond and receive feedback). |
| Sources/Notes |
| - Core/Comprehensive Program Map that specifies grouping, time, and program. |
| Action |
| - Schedule instruction for students who are at greatest risk in the smallest groups available and a minimum of two reading periods daily (double dose). |
| - Review student performance data at least monthly to adjust instructional groups. |

| ****5. Cross-class and cross-grade grouping is used when appropriate to maximize learning opportunities. |
| Sources/Notes |
| - Core/Comprehensive Program Map (CSI) that specifies grouping, time, and programs. |
| - The purpose of cross-class (grouping children within a grade but between classes) or cross-grade grouping is to create groups in which children of like instructional levels can be taught in the same group. Such structures require careful planning, coordination, and communication. |
| - It is recommended that in the primary grades students stay within 1 year of their grade-level peers for instructional groups. |
| Action |
| - Review student performance data in grade-level or cross-grade level teams to identify students who could be grouped for instruction. |

### /10 Total Points  ____%  
**Percent of Implementation:**  
5 = 50%  
8 = 80%  
10 = 100%
### VI. Administration/Organization/Communication

- **Strong instructional leadership maintains a focus on high-quality instruction, organizes and allocates resources to support reading, and establishes mechanisms to communicate reading progress and practices.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EVALUATION CRITERIA</th>
<th>DOCUMENTATION OF EVIDENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Administrators or the leadership team are knowledgeable of state standards, priority reading skills and strategies, assessment measures and practices, and instructional programs and materials. | **SOURCES/NOTES**  
- State Standards  
- Curriculum Maps  
- Assessment Measures  
- Consumer’s Guide for Evaluating Core/Comprehensive Reading Programs  

**ACTION**  
- Identify areas in which further understanding is needed.  
- Develop strategy to fill in knowledge/understanding gaps. |

| 2. Administrators or the leadership team work with staff to create a coherent plan for reading instruction and implement practices to attain school reading goals. | **SOURCES/NOTES**  
- Core/Supplemental/Intervention Map (CSI)  
- Master Time Schedule  

**ACTION**  
- Schedule time prior to school year to develop a CSI Map. Map should include the following components: time, programs, instructional groupings, instructor, and assessment schedule. |

| 3. Administrators or the leadership team maximize and protect instructional time and organize resources and personnel to support reading instruction, practice, and assessment. | **SOURCES/NOTES**  
- Master Time Schedule  
- Core/Supplemental/Intervention Map  

**ACTION**  
- Prior to school start, establish schedule that maximizes reading instruction.  
- Coordinate use of paraprofessionals for use in core, supplemental, and intervention delivery.  
- Plan for midcourse reallocations of time and personnel. |
### VI. Administration/Organization/Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4.</th>
<th>Master professional development schedule that specifies and designates planning time for grade-level teams to review student performance data.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Documentation of meetings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Core/supplemental/intervention Maps (CSI Map) by grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Concurrent instruction (e.g., Title, special education) is coordinated with and complementary to general education reading instruction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Student and class reports from screening, progress monitoring, and end of year assessments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>A communication plan for reporting and sharing student performance with teachers, parents, and school, district, and state administrators is in place.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sources/Notes**

**Action**

- Build in planning and coordination time for all individuals responsible for providing reading instruction.
- Complete and revise CSI Map.
- Schedule time in Master professional development schedule for grade-level teachers to meet and review student performance.
- Schedule a minimum of 3-4 opportunities per year that coordinate with data reports.

**Percent of Implementation**

- 6 = 50%
- 10 = 80%
- 12 = 100%
VII. **Professional Development** - Adequate and ongoing professional development is determined and available to support reading instruction.

1. Teachers and instructional staff have thorough understanding and working knowledge of grade-level instructional/reading priorities and effective practices.

   **SOURCES/NOTES**
   - Curriculum maps
   - Survey of teacher understanding of
     - assessment measures and reports
     - core reading program
     - explicit instructional practices
     - supplemental/intervention programs

   **ACTION**
   - Build in professional development to increase understanding and use of
     - assessment measures and reports
     - core reading program
     - explicit instructional practices
     - supplemental/intervention programs

2. Ongoing professional development is established to support teachers and instructional staff in the assessment and instruction of reading priorities.

   **SOURCES/NOTES**
   - Master Professional Development Schedule
   - Coaching schedule to support implementation of
     - assessment measures and reports
     - core reading program
     - explicit instructional practices
     - supplemental/intervention programs

   **ACTION**
   - Implement professional development schedule to increase understanding and use of
     - assessment measures and reports
     - core reading program
     - explicit instructional practices
     - supplemental/intervention programs

3. Time is systematically allocated for educators to analyze, plan, and refine instruction.

   **SOURCES/NOTES**
   - Master Professional Development Schedule

   **ACTION**
   - Schedule a minimum of 3 planning sessions yearly for all individuals responsible for reading instruction to review student performance data and modify CSI plans.
VII. **Professional Development** continued

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 4. Professional development efforts are explicitly linked to practices and programs that have been shown to be effective through documented research. | **SOURCES/NOTES**  
- Master Professional Development Schedule  
**ACTION**  
- Establish committee to review professional development requests and evaluate evidence of efficacy prior to time and resource allocations. Determine if there is evidence that the PD opportunity or program meet research-based criteria? |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>/8 Total Points</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Percent of Implementation:**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 = 50%</td>
<td>6.5 = 80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Planning and Evaluation Tool for Effective Schoolwide Reading Programs

**Individual Summary Score**

**Directions:** Return to each element (e.g., goals; assessment) and total the scores at the bottom of the respective page. Sum the total scores to compute your overall evaluation of the schoolwide reading program. The total possible value is 100 points. The total score can be used to evaluate the overall quality of the school's reading program.

Evaluate each element to determine the respective quality of implementation. For example, a score of 11 in Goals/Objectives/Priorities means that in your estimation the school is implementing approximately 80% of the items in that element.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Goals/Objectives/Priorities</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Assessment</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Instructional Practices and Materials</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Instructional Time</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Differentiated Instruction/Grouping</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. Administration/Organization/Communication</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. Professional Development</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Score</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Planning and Evaluation Tool for Effective Schoolwide Reading Programs

**School Summary Score**

**Calculating Average Schoolwide Element Scores**: Enter each individual's score by element on the following table. Sum down each column and divide by the number of participants to achieve an average school score for each element.

Calculate the proportion of total points for each element by dividing the average element score by the total possible points. This will provide the percentage of total points earned for each element.

**Calculating Average Schoolwide Overall Scores**: Enter the total scores of each individual in the designated space. Sum across the Total row and divide by the number of participants to achieve an average overall score for the school.
## Planning and Evaluation Tool for Effective Schoolwide Reading Programs

### Average Schoolwide Overall Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Points Possible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14  20  22  14  10  12  8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Percentage of Total Points**
Planning and Evaluation Tool for Effective Schoolwide Reading Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narrative Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Based on the schoolwide summary scores for each element and the average total schoolwide score, identify the areas of strength. Strengths may be based on elements or on specific items within elements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 2. List each element and specific items within each element that are in need of further development. |
Institute on Beginning (IBR)

**Reading Action Plan (RAP)**

Name of School, District ____________________________

City, State ____________________________

**Reading Goals and Priorities**

1. **What:** __________________________________________________________________________
   
   Who: __________________________________________________________________________
   
   When: __________________________________________________________________________
   
2. **What:** __________________________________________________________________________
   
   Who: __________________________________________________________________________
   
   When: __________________________________________________________________________
   
3. **What:** __________________________________________________________________________
   
   Who: __________________________________________________________________________
   
   When: __________________________________________________________________________

---

**Committee Members**

_________________________  ____________________________  ____________________________

_________________________  ____________________________  ____________________________

_________________________  ____________________________  ____________________________

**Adopted by School Staff on:** Date_______________________________
APPENDIX J: ADDITIONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

*Post Observation: End of Study

Additional Interview Questions to Summarize Observations, Questionnaire and Data Analysis

1. Describe a typical day on the job.
2. What are the rewards you experience as a teacher?
3. How has your role and philosophy about reading instruction changed over the past five years?
4. What outcomes are you striving for with your students in reading?
5. What kinds of challenges are you facing as you implement the new reading program? As a result, what kinds of changes are you experiencing?
6. From your perspective, what could have a significant influence on the happiness and success of your students?
7. What changes in your school and the district do you think could have the greatest influence on your students’ success?
8. Describe the ideal school and the reading program that it would embrace.
9. Talk about your participation in professional development as it relates to reading instruction.
10. If you could change anything about your job, what would you like to change and why?
VITA

Joy Rene’ Abernathy, a native of Baker, Louisiana, attended Scotlandville Magnet High School, Baton Rouge, LA. In 1994, she entered Southern University and A & M College in Baton Rouge, Louisiana and received a Bachelor of Arts degree in elementary education in 1998. While working as a fourth grade teacher at Westminster Elementary in East Baton Rouge Parish (1999-2005), Joy enrolled in graduate school at Southern University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana to pursue a Masters degree in Curriculum and Instruction which was completed in Fall 2000.

During the following years, Joy continued to work within the school system as an Instructional Specialist while she matriculated towards her Education Specialist degree in Reading from Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. After earning her Educational Specialist degree in 2002, Joy became employed as a District Reading Coordinator for East Baton Rouge Parish Schools in Baton Rouge, Louisiana (2006). The years prior to promotions would also be spent conducting action-research and ultimately lead Joy to enroll in a doctoral program at Louisiana State University under the supervision of Dr. Earl Cheek, to study literacy and curriculum (2003).

As of date, Joy remains employed as a District Reading Coordinator as well as an Adjunct Professor at Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana where she provides professional development in literacy, instructional practices and facilitates a series of graduate courses in reading. Currently, Joy is also a trainer in Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS and DIBELS Next), and Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS). She is very familiar with policies that affect literacy instruction in schools, both on a state and national level. Hence, Joy aspires to
continue her professional partnership with teachers and students in an effort to promote excellence in literacy instruction and learning.

Joy’s Professional Affiliations Include:

International Reading Association

Louisiana Reading Association

National Staff Development Council

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Council