THE IMPACT OF TEACHER ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS OF DIRECT INSTRUCTION ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IN READING

by

Sharon P. Collum

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Liberty University

March 22, 2012

The Impact of Teacher Attitudes and Perceptions of Direct Instruction on Student Achievement in Reading

By Sharon P. Collum

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA
March 22, 2012

APPROVED BY:

DR. JUDY P. SHOEMAKER, Chair	March 22, 2012
DR. RALPH MARINO, JR., Committee	March 22, 2012
DR. ELIZABETH WILLIAMS, Committee	March 22, 2012
DR. SCOTT WATSON, Chair of Graduate Studies	March 22, 2012

ABSTRACT

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2004), 37% of America's fourth graders are not reading at grade level. This statistic has remained unchanged for over a decade (NCES, 2004). Findings from multiple studies indicate more research on successfully implementing reading interventions is needed (Begeny & Silber, 2006; Begeny, Krouse, Ross, & Mitchell, 2009). Barnyak and Paquette (2010) suggested that although teachers learn new methods, they return to the strategies they are most comfortable using. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to determine if teacher attitudes and perceptions of direct instruction impacted student achievement in reading. Elementary school teachers from different elementary schools within a school district shared their perceptions of reading instruction in conjunction with their content knowledge. Their satisfaction of direct instruction was analyzed through interviews, observations, and surveys. Results from this study could result in changes in the delivery of this instructional method, professional training provided to teachers, and the allocation of funds. In addition, results may also help educators become aware of how much of an impact their personal feelings influence student performance.

Descriptors: direct instruction, CRCT, DIBELS, oral reading fluency, nonsense word fluency, phoneme segmentation fluency, teacher efficacy

Dedication

I would like to express my eternal gratitude to my chairperson, Dr. Judy Shoemaker, who has been a source of encouragement, inspiration, and knowledge throughout the pursuit of my dream. She pushed me to broaden my horizons and enabled me to become not only a better leader but a better person.

I also want to thank Dr. Elizabeth Williams, my mentor and my friend. She unselfishly gave her time, thoughts, and suggestions in order for me to be the best I could be. She helped me grow and I will always be grateful.

To my friends who walked the journey with me: Evie, Venita, Kristy, and Susan many thanks for not allowing me to give up. Their friendship and unwavering support is priceless.

I am especially grateful to my mother, Sybil Payne, for her love, support, inspiration, encouragement, and most of all her prayers. I thank her for a lifetime of listening and understanding. She has always believed in me even when I did not believe in myself. I owe my determination and drive to my father, Larry L. Payne. He has taught me that through hard work and faith all things are possible.

To my two precious sons, Brian and Bryce Collum, I give my thanks and undying love. I want to especially thank them for their forgiveness for missing ball practices and games and many other special moments while I worked on a paper even when I was too busy to ask for it. I will love them forever.

To my husband and biggest fan, Rick Collum, I can never put into words how much his love, support, patience, and encouragement mean to me. The unselfish sacrifice and extra work he took on in order for me to realize my dream was incredible although never mentioned. Without him this degree would not have been possible. When I

wanted to cry, he provided a shoulder. When I worked all night, he sat quietly beside me. When I screamed or became ill-tempered, he gently smiled and asked what else could he do. He constantly told me how much he loved me even when I was unlovable. He is my hero and above all, he is my best friend.

Finally I owe everything to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Through His mercy and grace I have been afforded opportunities and blessings that I do not deserve. He has always been there for me in times of joy and sadness. My accomplishments belong to Him. My failures are all that I own, for it was then that I tried to do it all alone.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

Georgia's Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT)

Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)

Direct Instruction Systems in Arithmetic and Reading (DISTAR)

Project Follow Through (FT)

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)

Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF)

Oral Reading Fluency (ORF)

Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF)

Standard Error of Measurement (SEM)

Teacher Knowledge Assessment: Structure of Language (TKA: SL)

Teacher Motivation and Job Satisfaction Survey

Teacher Perceptions toward Early Reading and Spelling (TPERS)

Zone of Proximal Development (ZPO)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Background

Despite an increased focus on reading instruction, students continue to struggle in the area of phonemic awareness, fluency, and comprehension. Interventions and research-based teaching strategies and methods are provided for these students. However, student achievement scores do not reflect positive changes.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2004), 37% of fourth graders do not read at grade level, a statistic that has remained stagnant for the past 10 years (Begeny & Silber, 2006). Students who continue to read below grade level will struggle throughout their academic career and become potential drop-outs. "Individuals with lower reading levels have reduced economic bargaining power, make less money, and have fewer career choices" (Shippen, 2008, p. 345).

According to Balfanz, Herzog, and Iver (2007), identifying students early and providing them with research-based interventions will aid in more students graduating from high school. The question remains as to the identity of the most effective intervention. "Unfortunately, interventions for groups of three or more students that specifically target students' reading fluency of connected text have not been thoroughly investigated" (Begeny & Silber, 2006, p. 184). An effective intervention must be introduced in elementary school to alleviate these reading difficulties. Interventions aimed at improving phonemic awareness, fluency, and comprehension are vital to improved student achievement. This study analyzed one research-based intervention, direct instruction, and teacher attitudes and perceptions toward its effectiveness.

According to Coyne et al. (2009), "direct instructional approaches play an

essential role in helping students of all ages successfully construct meaning from language and text" (p. 222). Coyne et al. conducted a research study with 42 first-grade teachers to determine the effectiveness of the direct instruction approach. Through qualitative interviews, the participants of the study stated it "to be very beneficial for their students' understanding of texts" (Coyne et al., 2009, p. 224).

However, another study conducted by Wilson, Martens, Arya, and Altwerger (2004) refuted the findings of the National Reading Panel (2000), which found that explicit, direct instruction was necessary in the early grades. Wilson et al. studied three programs and how they affected comprehension and the reading process. They observed and questioned 84 second graders. Additionally, they interviewed teachers and principals about their perceptions of these particular reading programs which employed either the direction instruction strategy or the guided reading strategy. Patterns in participants' answers were analyzed. Wilson et al. found that, although student participants instructed with the direct instruction model scored well on standardized tests, educators felt this was not enough to produce effective readers. The question still remains whether teacher attitudes and perceptions influence student success in reading.

Problem Statement

There is a consensus from the research that when students continue to struggle to become fluent, effective readers and intercessions are necessary (Begeny & Silber, 2006; Shippen, 2008). Conflicts can arise, however, when choosing the appropriate intervention. Therefore, when a program or strategy is selected that has shown positive gains and has been implemented through consistent training and resources, improved standardized test scores are expected (Coyne et al., 2009). Direct instruction was implemented in all elementary schools within a school district addressed in the current

study. However, standardized test scores did not exhibit consistent gains in standardized test scores. The problem of this study was to determine if student achievement in reading was affected by teacher attitudes and perceptions of direct instruction.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to determine why students identified as struggling readers continue to read below grade level even though receiving direct instruction as a reading intervention. The study considered if teacher attitudes and perceptions played a role in student achievement. Only teachers who received the training and resources were included in this study. Eleven of the 12 elementary teachers were eligible for this study. The results of this study may help educators become aware of how much of an impact their personal feelings have on student performance.

Significance of the Study

An extensive amount of research has been conducted examining the necessary steps of learning to read. "Despite the advances in knowledge about effective reading instruction, a large number of students in the United States still experience great difficulties learning to read" (Begeny & Silber, 2006, p. 183). Interventions have been developed over time to address students' great reading difficulties. However, scores continue to show no growth and remain depressing. "Although there is widespread recognition of the increasing literacy demands on our citizens, the level of reading skills among school-aged children has remained stagnant over the last 30 years" (Ryder, Burton, & Silberg, 2006, pg. 179). The current study investigated how attitudes and perceptions of teachers regarding the specific intervention strategy of direct instruction impacted student achievement in reading.

Research Questions

The following questions will guide this study:

Research Question 1

What are teachers' perceptions of direct instruction?

Research Question 2

What contributes to the differences in scores among students who receive direct instruction in different classrooms?

Research Question 3

In what ways do teachers' attitudes about direct instruction impact student achievement?

Research Question 4

What are the barriers to implementing direct instruction?

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations

A possible threat to the internal validity of this study was the information gathered from the surveys and interview could be a result of outside factors other than direct instruction training. Teachers may have knowingly or unknowingly inserted other past strategies in their instruction. As the researcher, I had the target district's literacy specialist observe classroom instruction, but she was not in the classroom on a continuous basis.

An additional limitation was that the chosen school district had selected one second grade classroom at each of its 12 elementary schools to implement this instruction. However, because the study will include only the teachers who received the same training and resources, 11 of the 12 teachers were eligible for the study. The

sample was small, and the classroom enrollment was also kept low at 1:14. Students who qualified for direct instruction failed the state standardized test the previous year and did not receive any other specialized services. Students in these classrooms may have been transient which may have impacted the data; therefore, only full academic year data from students consistently enrolled in the classroom was used.

Delimitations

I chose to include the 11 teachers in the district who received identical, consistent training and resources in order to exclude as many outside factors as possible. As closely as possible, each teacher had the same daily schedule as well. Benchmark and state standardized test scores from full academic year students were used to increase validity and reliability of the data.

Research Plan

This study followed a qualitative case study research design which enabled me to investigate the impact of teachers' attitudes and perceptions of direct instruction on student achievement. Through a case study, I analyzed data regarding teachers' attitudes and perceptions of direct instruction on student achievement in Target School District, a rural school district in northwestern Georgia. A qualitative study was deemed appropriate for this proposed study because the data attempted to determine a pattern from the "voices of participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, and a complex description of a problem" (Creswell, 2007, p. 37). I utilized an assistant to conduct interviews with participating teachers. This ensured that participants felt more comfortable to share their true opinions and beliefs. It also helped ensure anonymity of the data. Consent was gained from each participant (see Appendix A). This allowed me to examine how direct instruction was perceived by classroom teachers. My position as

an elementary principal provided an additional viewpoint as well as allowed me to relate the attitudes of teacher participants to my own.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Student achievement is a central focus for education across the world (Fehrler, Michaelowa, & Wechtler, 2009; Marks, 2008). Teachers everywhere have students in class who struggle academically. Reading fluently and accurately is vital to completing everyday activities successfully, such as following the steps in a recipe or choosing an item from a restaurant menu, and is the foundation of all other academic content areas. Educators face a professional and moral obligation to teach in a manner in which all students can learn. "By wisdom the Lord laid the earth's foundations, by understanding he set the heavens in place" (Proverbs 3:19, New International Version [NIV]).

According to Biancarosa and Snow (2004), college is not within reach to struggling readers and places them at a disadvantage when trying to secure many jobs. Almost 40% of students who graduate from high school have not acquired the necessary skills for employment (Achieve, Inc., 2005). This has led to the need to differentiate instruction and provide targeted, direct instruction for children who have fallen behind their peers academically (Georgia Department of Education, 2010a).

Teachers are often provided materials, resources, and training so that strategies can be implemented effectively and systematically; however, summative test results may or may not be comparable. In 1998, Georgia allocated 35 million dollars toward staff development (Georgia Department of Education, 2010b). However, Georgia's 1998 graduation rate was 54%, the lowest in the United States (Green, 2002). Over a decade later, Georgia allotted more than 38 million dollars toward staff development in its 2010 budget (Georgia Department of Education, 2010b). In 2010, Georgia's graduation rate climbed to 80.8% (Office of Communications, 2010).

Money does not appear to be the only key to increasing student success. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) that cited the Federal Education Budget Project and The U.S. Department of Education, Georgia's per pupil expenditure rose from $6,092 in 1998 to $9,650 in 2010. However, "the percent of 4th graders nationwide that scored proficient or above in reading on the NAEP only increased by four percentage points between 1992 (29 %) and 2009 (33%)" (NAEP, 2011). The disparity in student achievement is the basis for this case study. The review of literature will provide background information on employing an intervention strategy in reading and how teachers' perceptions and attitudes affect the success of its implementation.

As presented in the literature, direct instruction has multiple definitions with some being general and some more narrow in meaning (Carnine, Silbert, Kame'enui, & Tarver, 2010; Rosenshine, 2008). Rosenshine specifically refers to five various meanings used throughout educational research. Direct instruction can refer to (a) teacher guided instruction without regard to the quality, (b) instructional strategies used by effective teachers garnered through research, (c) the process used to teach higher ordered thinking skills, (d) Direct Instruction Systems in Arithmetic and Reading (DISTAR) programs, or (e) an unacceptable style of teaching.

For the purpose of this case study, direct instruction is a systematic model of teaching specific skills and concepts to mastery (Carnine et al., 2010; Kirschner, Sweller, & Clark, 2006; Rosenshine & Stevens, 1986). "It emphasizes the use of small-group, face-to-face instruction by teachers and aides using carefully articulated lessons in which cognitive skills are broken down into small units, sequenced deliberately, and taught explicitly" (Carnine, 2000, pp. 5-6). By teaching information in small units along with

guided practice and feedback, there is an increase in student achievement (Goldberg, Knowles, & Scott, 1971).

As evident from the literature, confusion centers around the true definition of direct instruction and when this method of teaching is used effectively (Cole, Dale, Mills, & Jenkins, 1993; Rosenshine, 2008; Rosenshine & Meister, 1995). Therefore, training and follow-through is critical, which unfortunately, is often omitted from school initiatives. The literature further relates that when teachers are unfamiliar with the research behind a method or program in use, attitudes tend to be more negative (Demant & Yates, 2003).

Pertinent research was analyzed to establish a foundation for the current case study regarding the perceptions and attitudes of teachers surrounding direct instruction in reading. The current study focused on teachers' attitudes and perceptions of direct instruction. As expectations and demands placed on teachers have changed over the years, burnout, stress, exhaustion, and absenteeism have become the subjects for educational research (Imants & Van Zoelen, 1995; Jennings & Greenberg, 2008; Moomaw, 2005; Ransford, Greenberg, Domitrovich, Small, & Jacobson, 2009). There is evidence from the literature that these variables may even impact teacher performance (Betoret, 2006; Imants & Van Zoelen, 1995; Jennings & Greenberg, 2008; Ransford et al., 2009).

The teachers' level of understanding of the direct instruction process was also considered in this study. Because this qualitative study revolved around the content area of reading, it was important to understand literacy development and how it was measured. Due to the fact that reading is intertwined with all content areas and reading ability aids in predicting student future success, the economic impact was also analyzed.

The theoretical framework that established the foundation for direct instruction was established in order to completely understand the process. Components of direct instruction are found in the constructivist philosophies of Piaget and Vygotsky. Like the Greek philosopher Socrates, both emphasized the question and answer strategy along with the need to provide teacher directed guidance (Powell & Kalina, 2009).

Conceptual or Theoretical Framework

Child-centered and traditional teacher-directed programs of instruction are typically viewed as oppositional programs. Child-centered programs focus more on the child's interests and their own learning. Teacher-directed programs give more control over the learning process to the teacher (Tzuo, 2007). Although this study centered around direct instruction, a traditional teacher-directed model, a constructivist framework supported its foundation.

Constructivism can lack clarity in its definition and have a variety of meanings to educators. The foundational theory of constructivism insists that learning is built from experience and connects personally to the learner (Green & Gredler, 2002; Powell & Kalina, 2009). However, the teacher is still expected to guide the instruction and learning (Tzuo, 2007). Constructivism used in the classroom setting is divided into two major forms. According to Powell and Kalina (2009), "In cognitive constructivism, ideas are constructed in individuals through a personal process, as opposed to social constructivism where ideas are constructed through interaction with the teacher and other students."

This qualitative case study was built primarily on the constructivist theoretical perspectives of Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky. Piaget believed that children must build their own knowledge in order to understand and apply it. He also felt that it was important to allow students to learn at their own pace (Powell & Kalina, 2009). In

Vygotsky's constructivist approach, he maintained that social development precedes cognitive development (Fox & Riconscente, 2008). Too often, grade level standards determine what a child must learn, which does not take into account whether a child is cognitively ready to master the skill. Achievement gaps begin to emerge as students progress through grade levels (Caro & Lehmann, 2009; Foster & Miller, 2007; Teale, Paciga, & Hoffman, 2007). Vygotsky maintained that students must actively be involved in their learning and that children can accomplish much more with the help of a qualified adult (Green & Gredler, 2002; Powell & Kalina, 2009). Both theories focus on the learning of the child, whether the emphasis is placed on the individual's personal learning or in a social context. Both Piaget and Vygotsky also acknowledge the importance of the teacher's role (Tzuo, 2007). Therefore, a teacher's perception and attitude toward the curriculum being used was examined. As a school principal, the researcher's beliefs were also taken into account.

Constructivism

Constructivism does not have clearly defined boundaries (Gash, 2009; Green & Gedler, 2002; Powell &Kalina, 2009). There are multiple variations of constructivism (Gash, 2009). Currently there is insufficient research on the constructivist classroom (Gash, 2009; Green & Gredler, 2002). "It consists of differing theoretical views and varied classroom recommendations in different subject areas and special education" (Green & Gredler, 2002, p. 54). However, as presented in the literature, this school of thought is widely acknowledged (Green & Gredler, 2002; Powell & Kalina, 2009; Tobias, 2010). Presently, constructivist viewpoints hold two common foundational principles. Students help build their own knowledge and instruction must support this (Green & Gredler, 2002). Constructivism consists of four major areas of thought when

applied to the classroom.

Jean Piaget, a French psychologist, developed the theory of cognitive constructivism. Social constructivism evolved from the beliefs and teachings of Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky (Green & Gredler, 2002; Jaramillo, 1996; Powell & Kalina, 2009). The remaining two theories are known as radical constructivism and holistic (Green & Gredler, 2002). Piaget believed that a student's thinking evolves from illogical to logical thinking. In a Piagetian classroom, students should be encouraged to conduct unplanned experimentation, and teachers should solely serve as facilitators that use probing questions to guide student thinking to logical answers (Powell & Kalina, 2009).

Vygotsky's perceptions share similarities with Piaget. Both emphasize logical thinking and specify outcomes for the learner. However, Vygotsky named specific skills used to obtain cognitive development, and teacher-student interaction is a major component of this theory. Vygotsky also felt that modeling and explaining were important components of learning (Green & Gredler, 2002; Jaramillo, 1996; Powell & Kalina, 2009). Educators today use scaffolding to achieve this effect.

In a radical constructivist viewpoint, the classroom is considered a community where each member has expertise in something. No one member is always considered the expert. A holistic approach focuses on students taking ownership of their learning. Students who are in control of what they learn tend to learn more according to a holistic viewpoint (Green & Gredler, 2002). Both social and holistic constructivism emphasize processes instead of outcomes.

Cognitive constructivism and social constructivism strategies are more commonly used in the classroom setting (Powell & Kalina, 2009; Tzuo, 2007). Constructivist instruction can impact student achievement positively if delivered correctly. "Both

theories of constructivism need to be explicit in communicating concepts so that students can connect to them" (Powell & Kalina, 2009, p. 241). It is important that teachers understand "the timing of guidance and its appropriateness" (Gash, 2009, p. 64).

Piaget's theory of social constructivism. Piaget, a former biologist, based his ideas of childhood development on how the individual builds personal knowledge. He contended that people cannot be handed information and know how to apply it, but they must be held responsible for building their own ideas (Powell & Kalina, 2009). He further believed that knowledge is acquired as one progresses through four unique, sequential developmental stages. Although the sequence is prescribed, the ages may vary, and each–stage builds from the previous stage (Webb, 1980).

Children from zero to two go through the sensorimotor stage. In this stage, children use their senses to investigate their surroundings, and motor skills begin to develop. They eventually begin to use language during the later part of the sensorimotor stage (Powell & Kalina, 2009; Webb, 1980).

The preoperational stage involves children from two to seven years of age. Here language skills continue to develop but children do not comprehend thoughts presented by other people. Children begin to recognize pictures and symbols and start to ask many questions regarding their surroundings. In this stage children are unable to obtain logical reasoning, due in part to acknowledging only their own viewpoint and lack of ability to focus on multiple characteristics at one time (Fox & Riconscente, 2008; Powell & Kalina, 2009; Webb, 1980).

Piaget's third stage, the concrete operational stage, is where logical thought begins to develop significantly. Children in this stage are typically 7 to 11 years old and begin to think categorically. The ability to think abstractly depends on children having

multiple experiences with tactile objects (Fox & Riconscente, 2008; Powell & Kalina, 2009; Webb, 1980).

Higher-ordered thinking skills are used in the final stage. During the formal operational stage, children and adults use abstract concepts to problem solve. This stage may begin in adolescence and continue through adulthood, and it is important for educators to note that many children and adults have not reached this stage and still need access to multiple concrete experiences (Powell & Kalina, 2009; Webb, 1980).

Piaget's stages are widely known and accepted as a foundation for the development of concrete to abstract thinking skills (Powell & Kalina, 2009). He understood that learning occurs in steps and that certain things must occur before skills are mastered. This school of thought supports the direct instruction teaching model.

Piaget also felt that there were other components that influenced mental capabilities. The endocrine and nervous system must fully develop. The learner must be exposed to active learning activities that promote organization. "Third, social interaction offers opportunities for the observation of a wide variety of behaviors, for direct instruction, and for feedback concerning the individual's performance" (Webb, 1980, p. 93). Each is crucial, and the overlapping of each aids the other's development.

Vygotsky's theory of cognitive constructivism. Vygotsky , a contemporary of Piaget, developed his theory of sociocultural cognitive development or social constructivist theory while working in the Soviet Union (Louis, 2009). Like Piaget, his theory placed emphasis on the end result and the processes that led to the ultimate goal (Green & Gredler, 2002). Culture, language, and social development frame Vygotsky's theory (Vygotsky, 1978). "In the classroom, teacher-student exchange is the primary mechanism for learning in this approach. The process of learning to think in concepts is

worked out by the learner in collaboration with the teacher in instruction" (Vygotsky, 1934/1978 as cited in Webb, 1980).

Within Vygotsky's framework, three key concepts are explained. The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) refers to the area where tasks are too difficult to be performed independently but can be achieved successfully with the appropriate assistance from a qualified individual (Louis, 2009). Vygotsky maintained that no cognitive development will occur if a task is simple enough to be completed alone or too difficult to be accomplished with help. He believed that cognitive growth depends on societal interaction. He classified the cognitive growth into two planes: (a) where issues can be dealt with independently and (b) where problems can be solved with appropriate guidance. The area in between the two planes is known as the ZPD. Vygotsky uses this as his argument that children must be provided curriculum based on their learning level in order for their ZPD to expand (Yan-bin, 2009).

Secondly, Vygotsky's theory emphasizes that maximum learning occurs when the amount of assistance is greatest in the beginning and decreases as the learning progresses. By scaffolding, the learner will have the necessary assistance to become successful. A more difficult task may be given, thus increasing the level of rigor and comprehension. Vygotsky believed that a student must be taught how to be in charge of his own learning (Green & Gredler, 2002). Teachers who choose to embrace Vygotsky's theory use scaffolded instruction wholeheartedly and enthusiastically, and they see the need for providing assistance to students on tasks that are deemed appropriate according to the students' cognitive level. Scaffolding, referred to as modeling and explaining by Vygotsky, allows the student to complete a difficult task while viewing the teacher as a support system (Green & Gredler, 2002; Powell & Kalina, 2009). This is a key piece of

direct instruction.

Thirdly, according to Vygotsky (1978), tools such as written language and symbols allow us to share our learning with others. Effectively interacting socially is considered a cornerstone in cognitive growth. Communication provides society with the opportunity to share knowledge through the use of psychological tools (Louis, 2009).

Teachers must be able to determine a child's intellectual readiness. Problems with increasing levels of difficulty are given in order to determine a child's appropriate level. This range of levels of difficulty guides teachers when assigning problems to be solved (Vygotsky, 1984). According to Zaretskii (2009), the type of aid provided to students and how often it is offered help determine the actual range of a student's instructional zone. Vygotsky implored that teachers promote dialogue about the curriculum, enabling students to begin to think critically. Once this occurs, students will begin to construct their own knowledge and apply meaning to their learning (Powell & Kalina, 2009). Modeling and collaboration are crucial factors of social constructivism and effective direct instruction (Foorman & Torgesen, 2001; Green & Gredler, 2002; Powell & Kalina, 2009).

Theory foundation synthesis of direct instruction. The theories of cognitive constructivism and social constructivism have both similarities and differences that provide a basic foundation for direct instruction. Both focus on using inquiry as a question and answer strategy. Piaget and Vygotsky saw the importance of social collaboration as an aspect of learning (Louis, 2009; Webb, 1980; Zaretskii, 2009). Direct instruction utilizes small group instruction where inquiry is a strategy used to assess comprehension and social interaction occurs.

Piaget and Vygotsky contended that learning takes place in stages, and mastery of

concepts occurs after many experiences (Gredler, 2009; Powell & Kalina, 2009; Traina, 2001; Webb, 1980). Direct instruction is guidance, provided in a series of steps, which allows students to master a concept. Oftentimes, this is done through practice, which provides concrete experiences meaningful to the learner.

Direct instruction utilizes two ideas central to social constructivism. Vygotsky, the father of social constructivism, theorized about the ZPD and modeling and explaining instruction, which came to be known as scaffolding (Crawford, 1996; Edwards, 2005; Louis, 2009; Powell & Kalina, 2009; Yan-bin, 2009; Zaretskii, 2009). Using direct instruction learning occurs in the ZPD through the use of scaffolding information (Traina, 2001). Vygotsky maintained that direct instruction must be present for a student to learn (Crawford, 1996; Traina, 2001).

Piaget considered specific immediate feedback essential in the learning process (Webb, 1980). This enables the child to analyze the information again and self-correct. Once again, direct instruction employs these methods and strategies to promote cognitive growth. "Both cognitive and social constructivist teaching methods must be used by teachers interactively so that students can process individually what they learned in a group or from another adult or peer" (Powell & Kalina, 2009, p. 247).

Piaget believed that the only means in which learning could occur is when children must interact with others. Vygotsky agreed that interaction with one's surroundings promotes cognitive growth. Unlike Piaget, he felt that receiving guidance from others was crucial. Relationships play an important role in both theories. They both desired to explain cognitive growth through environmental or biological means (Traina, 2001). "Piaget and Vygotsky … are complementary rather than incompatible" (Pass, 2007, p. 278).

Case Study Research

According to Yin (2009), case study research is useful when looking at everyday experience such as school performance. Case studies utilize observing the occurrence and interviewing the participants (Yin, 2009). Both were used in this study. Case study research includes details regarding the types of data that will be gathered, research questions, analysis of what should be examined, the case, and how the data will be used once it has been collected and analyzed (Yin, 2009).

A Christian viewpoint was the framework for this case study. As the researcher, I maintained a biblical worldview combined with a constructivist paradigm. As a Christian, I believe all children should be encouraged to reach their true potential and "therefore I rejoice that I have confidence in you in everything" (2 Corinthians 7:12, NIV).

I followed an epistemological philosophical assumption for the basis of this qualitative case study, which was analyzing aspects of knowledge and how it was acquired (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). There is a link between the researcher and the phenomenon that was studied. Because the researcher maintained a constructivist epistemological belief, particular teachers' attitudes and perceptions during a specific grading period were studied (Gall et al., 2007).

Case study research "is useful for discovery and interpretation, for looking at processes and meanings, and for testing models or interventions in real-world situations" (Brown, 2010, p.3). In most instances, a case study involves the researcher working with participants in their everyday setting (Gall et al., 2007; Gangeness, & Yurkovich, 2006; Yin, 2009). The purpose of a case study is to explain an event or occurrence that is of interest to the researcher from the participants' viewpoints (Gall et al., 2007). The event,

occurrence, or process is known as the phenomenon. After identifying the phenomenon, a case or specific instance is selected for study. The unit of analysis in a case study is sometimes difficult to define (Yin, 2009). It refers to what is being measured or analyzed. A case study must have a defined focus for which data will be collected and analyzed (Gall et al., 2007).

The planned study will be a multiple case study across multiple sites design. Each individual case will include its own data and will not be pooled. The data will serve as findings for each case (Yin, 2009). This approach enabled me to provide a more thorough analysis of student achievement in reading based on teachers' attitudes and perceptions of a particular intervention.

Direct Instruction

The foundations for the direct instruction model can be traced back to the Carl Bereiter-Siegfried Engelmann Preschool at the University of Illinois in the 1960's (Ryder et al., 2006; Vukmir, 2002). The premise was that instruction must be taught at a faster pace in order to minimize achievement gaps. Classrooms utilizing direct instruction demonstrated increased levels of student engagement. This method of instruction allows the teacher to provide focused activities with clear goals, appropriate time allocation, intense coverage of the curriculum, ample progress monitoring, and corrective feedback (Rosenshine, 1978). There are data that emphatically supports explicitly teaching children to read. When students are taught specific skills using direct instruction, reading proficiency will be at its best. This is found to be true for multiple grades (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004; National Reading Panel, 2000).

The National Reading Panel (2000) analyzed existing research and determined that phonics instruction should be taught explicitly and systematically (Carnine, 2000).

According to Kirschner et al., (2006), over 50 years of empirical research substantiates that specific guidance supporting a concept is more effective than minimal guidance. Cognition is greatly influenced by long-term memory. Knowledge stored in long-term memory allows students to know how to react to a situation quickly, and extensive amounts of experiences allow learners to react in this manner. Learning is characterized as an alteration in long-term memory (Kirschner et al., 2006).

Direct instruction began by focusing on teacher behaviors. "Teachers exhibit behaviors such as hand signals, pointing, and specified words or phrases" (Ryder et al., 2006, p. 180). Complex instruction is broken down into systematic steps. Direct instruction uses scaffolding and is made up of five steps. The first step is to link prior knowledge and experiences with the new information being presented. Purpose and expectations will be clarified during this step. The next step involves teaching a strategy, preferably with verbal interactions and visual aids. Students are provided specific feedback at this point. During the third step teachers begin to release some responsibility of the learning process to their students. Here teachers use support systems such as graphic organizers to ensure success for the student. Next, the students move into guided practice where more corrective feedback is provided. During the final step of direct instruction, students work independently using the new material.

It is important that teachers receive training when expected to implement programs of instruction or teaching methods and strategies. According to Rosenshine (1983), when specific training on using instructional strategies was provided for teachers, their student achievement increased as opposed to teachers who did not receive explicit training. Several factors comprise the direct instruction approach. Small-group instruction, students responding verbally together, quick pacing, error analysis, and

rewards are the basic components of such instruction (Ryder et al., 2006; Vukmir, 2002). Once the desired behavior or skill has been broken down into steps, the instructor models the desired outcome, provides students an opportunity to complete the task, and provides specific commentary.

According to Rupley, Blair, and Nichols (2009), direct instruction is more likely to improve the skills of a struggling reader. Interactions between teachers and students and teacher-guided practice are components of direct instruction. Explicit teaching, modeling, and practice are also pieces of this instructional method (Shippen, Houchins, Steventon, & Sartor, 2005). Grossen (2004) defined direct instruction as a model of instruction designed to aid struggling students in catching up with their peers. It focuses on the mastery of skills through teacher-guided modeling and practice (Kirschner et al., 2006; Shippen et al., 2005). New material is bridged with prior knowledge through an explicitly-instructed, detailed process which includes guided practice (Rupley, Blair, & Nichols, 2009).

The degree of teacher directed instruction depends on the level of the skill being taught. Decoding skills, sequencing, distinguishing fact and opinion, and determining the main idea require more teacher command. However, skills such as predicting and summarizing require more involvement from the learner and less control from the teacher. These skills still require explanation, but there is no need to follow a series of steps to arrive at the correct answer. Direct instruction promotes teacher-pupil interactions, and the amount is dependent on the skill being taught. In some instances, the teacher acts as the facilitator. In other cases, the level of teacher involvement is extensive in the beginning and gradually is reduced as the skill is mastered, known as scaffolding instruction (Rupley, Blair, & Nichols, 2009). Giving students the opportunity

to apply skills they have learned is an important variable in successful direct instruction.

Equally important is the selection of text students are allowed to use to apply newly mastered skills. Students are often instructed in small groups (Kamps et al., 2008; Rankin-Erickson & Pressley, 2000; Shippen et al., 2005). This method of instruction has proven to be effective when working with students performing at lower levels of achievement. Research indicates that direct instruction used with struggling students shows some improvement in student achievement (Fallon, Light, McNaughton, Drager, & Hammer, 2004; Grossen, 2004; Mac Iver & Kemper, 2002; O'Brien & Ware, 2002; Wright & Jacobs, 2003). However, there is evidence that when direct instruction method is applied explicitly in the area of phonics, there are no significant findings that children are able to use such skills more effectively in isolation or in context than other instructional methods (Wilson et al., 2004). Comprehension is the ultimate goal in reading. According to the National Reading Panel (2000), reading comprehension shows greater gains when teachers instruct explicitly through explanations, modeling, and interacting with their students.

Perhaps some of the strongest research supporting direct instruction came from Project Follow Through (FT) which began as part of President Johnson's War on Poverty in 1967 (Lindsay, 2010; Vukmir, 2002). It cost approximately 1 billion dollars ending in 1995. Its purpose was to bridge the achievement gap of economically disadvantaged students. FT assessed over 70,000 kindergarten through third grade students nationwide. Nine models of instruction were studied. Results showed that direct instruction scored high cognitively including the areas of comprehension and problem solving (Vukmir, 2002).

Direct instruction lessons use five basic principles: orientation, presentation,

structured practice, guided practice, and independent practice (Moore, 2011). The introduction of the lesson can either present information about new knowledge or review previous information. During the development phase of the lesson, the teacher models expectations and provides examples while assessing the level of understanding. The teacher then assigns guided practice while progress monitoring, and the lesson is then closed by summarizing the material that was taught. Independent practice is then assigned, and finally students are evaluated (Rosenshine, 1983).

Critics claim that direct instruction teaches memorization skills and does not promote higher levels of learning (Shippen, Houchins, Steventon, & Sartor, 2005). Lindsay (2010) states that research from parent educator Dr. Jeffrey Jones (1995) notes that students involved who received "true direct instruction were much more likely to graduate from high school and to be accepted into college and to show long-term gains in reading, language, and math scores" (Project Follow Through section, para. 4). According to Ryder et al., (2006), direct instruction can show insensitivity to students' cultures and economic status. They found that the stories' content is more appropriate for middle-class students. Although when reviewing the literature, programs like the one created at John Hopkins University in the mid 1980s to address reading concerns with inner-city Baltimore schools placed this method of instruction in a more up-to-date arena (Ryder et al., 2006). Effective teachers maintain dialogue with their students about cultural differences and use these opportunities as teaching moments regarding diversity.

Teacher Perceptions and Attitudes

The expectations and accountability placed on teachers over the past few years may have led to increased stress and teacher burnout (Jennings & Greenberg, 2008). The *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB, 2001) holds teachers accountable for the progress of

all students as determined by annual measureable objectives. Schools that do not make adequate yearly progress (AYP) face severe consequences (No Child Left Behind Act, 2001). Economic pressures have forced teachers to perform more responsibilities with fewer resources. Also, teachers are often required to provide instruction regarding emotional issues such as character education and bullying prevention along with an academic focus. Under these conditions, teachers will likely implement programs poorly (Ransford, et al., 2009). Program fidelity is crucial to the successful implementation of any program.

The perceptions and attitudes developed by a teacher make up his or her belief system, and teachers use these beliefs to help make decisions on their method of teaching. A belief system is not easily changed unless evidence is provided that warrants changes. Teachers' beliefs impact their style of teaching, chosen resources, and the establishment of their classrooms. Teachers often teach the way they were instructed and use prior experiences in school to mold their belief system. Oftentimes, a teacher's attitudes and perceptions are passed on to students through their teaching (Barnyak & Paquette, 2010).

When selecting a method to deliver instruction, teachers choose a discovery model only on few occasions (Roelofs, Visser, & Terwel, 2002). However, teachers view literacy as a series of steps in a sequence both horizontal and vertical in nature. In addition, they express that literacy acquisition is the responsibility of the learner (Fagan, 1995). Contradictory to this perception, Rosenshine (2002) reported that teachers left direct instruction schools for three major reasons: (a) Teachers did not like the structure, (b) they were not willing to become familiar with the direct instruction method, or (c) this style of teaching required too much time and preparation. In a study by Demant and Yates (2003), 150 teachers were questioned regarding their perceptions toward their use

of direct instruction in the classroom. More contradictory viewpoints were discovered. When asked if direct instruction was useful in teaching basic skills, 81% responded positively. However, when asked if direct instruction was harmful to mental development, 76% responded positively. Direct instruction is a subject that needs further research regarding the varying opinions of it and its effectiveness.

By being exposed to stressors over time, professional burnout can occur, may contribute to an unhealthy classroom environment and school disarray. Burnout includes three elements: (a) emotional exhaustion, (b) depersonalization, and (c) reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach & Jackson, 1981 as cited in Ransford et al., 2009). This can lead to negative feelings and attitudes of indifference toward students, parents, other teachers, and administrators. Decreased productivity, increased absenteeism and teacher turnover may also occur (Betoret, 2006; Ransford, et al., 2009).

Imants and Van Zoelen (1995) analyzed the correlation between teacher absenteeism, school climate, and teacher efficacy. The research indicated that at least 50% of absences labeled as health-related were attributed to stress in the work environment. Examples of stressors included tasks that were not delegated equally, lack of autonomy, poor working relationships with colleagues, and decision-making procedures. Imants and Van Zoelen (1995) went further to say that "school climate might be an important factor in teacher absenteeism" (p. 78). Suprisingly, results indicated that teacher stress and directive leadership have a negative correlation. When the principal controls rules enforcement and the decision-making process, teacher stress and absenteeism is decreased (Bliss & Finneran, 1991). Research also indicates that teaching efficacy does not show any relation to teacher absenteeism (Imants & Van Zoelen, 1995).

Teacher absenteeism has also been linked to student achievement. Das, Dercon, Habyarimana, and Krishnan (2005) found that when teacher absenteeism in Zambia increased by 5%, English and math achievement scores decreased by almost 4% in each area. Suryadarma, Suryahadi, Sumarto, and Rogers (2006) concur that teacher absenteeism has a negative correlation with student achievement. Their findings suggest that student performance would increase when teacher absenteeism is decreased.

Administrative support is critical when implementing a new program. This may come in the form of encouragement, monitoring, verbal assurance, and ensuring resources are available (Ransford et al., 2009). Professional development and coaching are common approaches that can improve the instructional quality of a program. The National Reading Panel (2000) reported that teacher education and professional development were areas of concern mentioned frequently by speakers at monthly regional meetings. The National Reading Panel committee decided to research teacher education preparation and analyzed three studies that focused on improving teachers' attitudes. The Panel found that teacher attitudes change when intervention occurs. This is important because, in order to change practices, attitudes must change first.

Measures of Student Progress

Because reading is considered to be a monumental and critical life skill, literacy development should be measured to determine progress. Since 2002, federal funds amounting to almost $1 billion per year have supported improved literacy instruction in the early grades through professional development, resources, and programs (Teale et al., 2007). However, the teaching of reading remains a subject for debate, and there have been thousands of publications dealing with this topic during the previous half-century (Kubina & Starlin, 2003).

The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) are a battery of diagnostic probes that assess reading development in three of the five components of literacy: (a) phonological awareness, (b) alphabetic principle, and (c) fluency. Probes for the other two components of comprehension and vocabulary exist but are still in the research phase. Developed through the University of Oregon, DIBELS are standardized and are given individually to students. The results are used in conjunction with other resources to determine the effectiveness of interventions and make changes as needed. According to the Center on Teaching and Learning at the University of Oregon, "The measures are linked to one another, both psychometrically and theoretically, and have been found to be predictive of later reading proficiency" (Good et al., 2004, p.1). Alternate probes are available to help ensure accurate results. DIBELS results can be used to help determine if supplemental instruction is needed for struggling students as well as used collectively to aid school systems in evaluating the effectiveness of their instructional model (Good & Kaminski, 1996).

The Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF) probe assesses phonological awareness by asking children to segment words into their individual sounds. It is used as a predictor of future reading success and is intended to administer to a child during the latter part of kindergarten through the first part of first grade (Good & Kaminski, 2002). The predictive validity of the kindergarten spring PSF is .62 whereas the concurrent criterion validity is .54 (Good et al., 2004). This probe requires approximately two minutes to administer, and children should score at least 35 points in order to be considered at benchmark (Good & Kaminski, 2002).

The Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF) probe assesses the ability to recognize letters with their sounds and blend those sounds into words (Good & Kaminski, 1996).

Student scores will be higher as they correctly recode words because the probe is measuring fluency. The probe is administered in approximately two minutes, and students receive a final score based on the number of corresponding correct sounds produced. The predictive validity of this measure for the end of first grade is .82. The reliability measure of the NWF probe in first grade is .83 (Good & Kaminski, 1996). Students producing 50 correct sounds per minute at the end of first grade are considered to be at benchmark (Good & Kaminski, 2002).

The Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) probe contains grade-level appropriate passages that evaluate fluency and error patterns in printed text. Word omissions, substitutions, and long pauses are counted as errors. However, self-corrections within three seconds are counted as correct. Students are given one minute to read a calibrated selection. The ORF score is the total number of correct words read in the allotted minute. Reliabilities according to grade level ranged from .92 to .97 (Good & Kaminski, 1996). Criterion-related validity scored from .52 to .91 according to 8 studies conducted during the 1980s (Good & Jefferson, 1998). The ORF probe is given in first grade through sixth grade. Students must score a 40 and above at the end of first grade, a 90 and above at the end of second grade, a 110 and above at the end of third grade, a 118 at the end of fourth grade, and a 124 at the end of fifth grade in order to be considered low risk for needing interventions (Good & Kaminski, 2002).

Georgia's Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) was developed to ensure its students are obtaining the necessary skills to produce successful adults as required by NCLB (Georgia Department of Education, 2006a). The results are intended to diagnose students' strengths and weaknesses as well as gaps in curriculum and instruction. The test goes through a peer review to address validity and reliability.

Questions are field tested and reviewed for effectiveness. The 2004 test reliability for reading ranged from .79 to .86. In 2009, the reliability coefficients used Cronbach's alpha .88 in third grade to .86 in fifth grade (Georgia Department of Education, 2009). According to the Georgia Department of Education (2006b), "the CRCT are both reliable and valid" (p. 10)

An assessment is considered reliable if the same group of students repeatedly took the same test and received similar scores for each administration. Reliability is an important factor when looking at the consistency of the test. The CRCT uses Cronbach's alpha and the standard error of measurement (SEM) when measuring reliability. Internal reliability is measured by Cronbach's alpha, and the reliability of the test score is measured by the SEM, a statistical index of random variability. The SEM can be determined using raw scores or scale scores (Georgia Department of Education, 2009). This case study used scale scores. Scale scores are useful when comparing a specific content area within a certain grade level (Georgia Department of Education, 2010b). Scale scores for the CRCT are reported for each content area. Because the values for meeting and exceeding standards are the same in each grade and each content area, scale score values remain the same. A scale score is calculated by translating the number of correct answers to the CRCT scale.

There are three performance levels for each CRCT. Students who score at least 850 (level 3) are considered to be exceeding the standards at their grade. Students scoring below 800 (level 1) are not meeting the basic proficiency requirements, and students scoring in the range between 800 and 850 (level 2) are meeting the state's requirements (Georgia Department of Education, 2010b).

Intervention Strategies

Although significant improvements in how to teach reading have been made, a large number of students continue to struggle in learning to read (Begeny & Silber, 2006). Therefore, interventions have been developed. According to Shippen (2008), reading skills develop over time, and without an appropriate amount of practice, success will be limited. Eventually, students will fall behind fellow classmates who obtained adequate practice and are reading on grade level or above. This is also known as the "Matthew effect" developed by Keith Stanovich. This concept offers explanation as to how students who receive more instruction become better readers; whereas, students who do not receive intense instruction become further behind as they progress in school (Carlson & Francis, 2002; Driscoll, 1994; Shippen, 2008). This description can be characterized scripturally: "For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them" (Matthew 25:29, NIV).

In order for students to be successful readers, they must demonstrate phonemic awareness, read fluently using both speed and accuracy, and comprehend meaning from text (Martin, Martin, & Carvalho, 2008; McQuiston, O'Shea, &McCollin, 2008; Rupley, 2009; Wright & Jacobs, 2003). Students labeled as poor readers in elementary school continue to read poorly throughout school, intensifying each year (Carlson & Francis, 2002; Shippen, 2008). Critical thinking and reading are skills that are required in order for a person to be successful in all aspects of life (Geary, 2006). Skilled readers develop a wide array of strategies used to comprehend text and make sense of what they have read. According to Duke and Pearson (2002), skilled readers make predictions, think aloud, create visual images mentally, question their reading, and summarize.

Small-group individualized reading instruction was found to be one of the most popular methods used to deliver instruction (Kamps et al., 2008; Rankin-Erickson & Pressley, 2000). Modeling, direct instruction, guided practice and scaffolding were also incorporated as intervention strategies (Rasinski, Homan, & Biggs, 2009). It is important that struggling readers be provided the opportunity to see and hear fluent reading. Fluency has been defined as reading accurately with meaning (Rasinski et al., 2009). Students must practice repeatedly and listen to other fluent readers, and teachers should provide students with feedback in order to help students correct their errors.

Decoding is also a necessary skill in order to read fluently. This skill allows concentration to be placed on meaning rather than the individual letters or sounds (Kubina & Starlin, 2003). Students sometimes need additional instruction in breaking words apart and strategies in identifying unknown words in text (Roberts, Torgesen, Boardman, & Scammacca, 2008). Knowing the meaning of words is also essential in reading, and vocabulary acquisition is taught through exposure to more words used in context. Fluency and vocabulary are important in the reading process (Martin et al., 2008). However, comprehension is the overall goal. Strategies must be taught in order for students to maximize and understand meaning of a text (Duke & Pearson, 2002; Geary, 2006; Roberts et al., 2008).

Instruction regarding when to use a particular strategy and which strategy to employ should be provided. Students often benefit from strategies of predicting, summarizing, and previewing, and it is important to provide students many opportunities to read so that those strategies can actually be applied. Students also need to discuss with others what they have read (Duke & Pearson, 2002; Geary, 2006). Teachers should spend time questioning students on the important aspects of the text. Knowledge of text

structure is also proven to be helpful in reading comprehension (Duke & Pearson, 2002; Geary, 2006). This is especially helpful when reading informational text. Reading content area text is difficult; however, by having the capability to visualize what has been read, information becomes easier to recall.

Students who struggle with reading proficiency acquire skills at a slower pace but must master them in order to learn to read. Children who are determined to be at-risk for reading proficiency must receive explicit, direct instruction which provides much more support than children who are not struggling. Instruction must be sequenced so concepts and skills are taught in small increments, and the teacher is constantly dialoguing with the student (Foorman & Torgesen, 2001). Children are unique and each one possesses different instructional needs. When appropriate, effective interventions are used early significant gains will be achieved. According to Martin et al., (2008), interventions need to be teacher directed and monitored frequently for effectiveness.

Literacy Development

Students come to school with diverse backgrounds. It is important to use developmentally appropriate strategies and instructional methods when teaching students to read effectively. Research indicates that as students enter school in kindergarten at differing levels, the beginning achievement levels have direct impact on third grade achievement (Foster & Miller, 2007). Concerned with reading achievement data, the United States Congress gathered reading specialists to research effective reading practices. This group became known as the National Reading Panel and published their report in 2000. Its purpose was to produce a document that listed its findings in order to increase student achievement in decoding, fluency, and comprehension. Today reading strategies must be research-based with scientific evidence supporting the claim.

Struggling students often lack phonological awareness and decoding skills (Martin et al., 2008; McQuiston et al., 2008; Rivera, Al-Otaiba, & Koorland, 2006; Wright & Jacobs, 2003). Individuals who demonstrate a deficit in phonological awareness need instruction in sound structure with an emphasis on no more than two phonemic skills at one time. It is vital that teachers begin this process focusing on auditory processes linking sounds to printed letters. Students should then be provided activities that will allow them to apply these skills to text. Phonological awareness is crucial in order for effective decoding skills to be acquired (McQuiston et al., 2008; Wright & Jacobs, 2003). Decoding is necessary for fostering needed links between sounds and printed text. In order to develop this skill, students must practice decoding words within a text. By improving a student's ability to decode as well as increasing phonological awareness, literacy development can be improved (McQuiston et al., 2008; Rupley, 2009).

Once phonological awareness and decoding skills have been established, fluency and comprehension become the focus in furthering the reading process (Rupley, 2009). Students should be taught strategies in order to understand what they have read (Dymock, 2005; Rupley, 2009). It is important that students understand text structure so they comprehend meaning and do not become lost in the printed words. Students who demonstrate problems in reading fluently oftentimes are unable to chunk text, thus inhibiting their comprehension skills (Rupley, 2009). In order to promote fluency, teachers must model fluent reading and supply opportunities for students to practice with effective, specific feedback. According to the National Early Literacy Panel (2008), phonological awareness and decoding have been determined as predictors of future comprehension skills.

Economic Impact

The Alliance for Excellent Education (2007) reported that each day around 7,000 students decide to leave school, which means approximately 1.2 million children annually become high school dropouts. Adults who do not have a high school diploma are more likely to receive government supplements or become incarcerated at some point (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2007; Bridgeland, DiIulio, & Morison, 2006). Sadly, the graduation rate in the United States, when compared to the world's rates, has fallen to a dismal tenth place (Schargel, Thacker, & Bell, 2007). Approximately 10 million children, which equates to over 17.5 % of America's children, will experience reading difficulties by third grade (National Reading Panel, 2000). When surveyed, 35% of participants reported they dropped out of school because the work was too difficult (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2006; Bridgeland, DiIulio, & Morison, 2006). Fifty-seven percent reported that moving from one grade to the next was too hard because the previous grade did not prepare them for the next (Bridgeland, DiIulio, & Morison, 2006).

The economic impact for America is alarming. In 2007, if all high school students had graduated, America would have seen an added $329 billion in earned incomes. If graduation rates do not increase, approximately 12 million students will leave America's high schools over the next ten years with a loss of $3 trillion (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2007). Education affects the nation's number of incarcerated individuals. Almost 75% of America's state prison inmates do not have a high school diploma (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2006). Increasing the graduation rate of males by 10% would decrease the murder and assault statistics by 20% (Moretti, 2005 as cited in Alliance for Excellent Education, 2006).

Numerous changes have occurred nation-wide over the past five decades.

Georgia, the location of the current study, is no exception. Education, along with the requirements of the workforce, continues to change. Currently, less than 13% of Georgia citizens work in an agricultural related job, whereas, 50 years ago over half of Georgia's employed population worked in this field. In the past decade, computer related jobs which did not exist 50 years ago are now among Georgia's fastest growing occupations (Georgia Department of Education, 2006a). Educators more than ever must increase the rigor in their classrooms while ensuring all students receive needed skills. In order for students to be competitive in job seeking, advanced reading and mathematics skills will be required.

Although Georgia's graduation rate has shown some improvement, the rate is not increasing as rapidly as needed. According to the Georgia Department of Education (2006a), only 69.4% of the state's high school students received a diploma in 2005. Student subgroups graduation rates are even lower. The average graduation rate of students with disabilities was 29.4%, and 60.1% of students labeled economically disadvantaged received a diploma in 2005 (Georgia Department of Education, 2006a).

Summary

Educators will always face the dilemma of serving the needs of their students who are all different and require differentiated instruction (Shaughnessy & Sanger, 2005). Teachers need to understand the process of how literacy development occurs. With many different interventions available, classroom instructors must be able to use this information along with diagnostic assessment results to choose the most appropriate methods and strategies. Teachers' attitudes and perceptions help form the classroom environment, and it is crucial to know just how much teacher attitudes and perceptions can affect student achievement. This review of literature regarding teacher attitudes and

perception of using direct instruction within the classroom dissected the following areas: (a) theoretical framework, (b) direct instruction, (c) teacher perceptions and attitudes, (d) measures of student progress, (e) intervention strategies, (f) literacy development, and (g) economic impact.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Despite an increased focus on reading instruction, students continue to struggle in the areas of phonemic awareness, fluency, and comprehension. Interventions and research-based teaching strategies and methods are provided for these students. However, student achievement scores do not always reflect positive changes. Over the previous three decades, literacy scores have not shown improvement (Ryder et al., 2006). This data is used to guide instructional decisions whether implementing new programs or teaching strategies. Budgets are often designed to allow for these innovations, so it is important that the implementation is effective and produces the desired outcomes.

Direct instruction has provided positive results for decreasing the achievement gap between struggling readers and that of their peers (Grossen, 2004; Rupley, Blair, & Nichols, 2009). Interactions between students and teachers are a focus of direct instruction. Regardless of preservice instruction, teachers teach in the method they were taught (Barnyak & Paquette, 2010). Therefore, teachers often pass their attitudes and perceptions onto their students, creating a learning cycle (Barnyak & Paquette, 2010).

The purpose of the current study was to examine the effects of teacher attitudes and perceptions on student achievement in classrooms utilizing direct instruction. This qualitative study followed 11 second-grade classrooms after implementing direct instruction. The study considered if teacher attitudes and perceptions, which may be affected by variables such as teacher efficacy and teacher experience, play a role in student achievement. The results of this study may help educators become aware of how much of an impact their personal feelings influence student performance.

Research Questions

The following questions guided this research study:

Research Question 1

What are teachers' perceptions of direct instruction?

Research Question 2

What contributes to the differences in scores among students who receive direct instruction in different classrooms?

Research Question 3

In what ways do teachers' attitudes about direct instruction impact student achievement?

Research Question 4

What are the barriers to implementing direct instruction?

Research Design

This study followed a qualitative case study research design which allowed me to investigate the impact of teachers' attitudes and perceptions of direct instruction on student achievement. This design was selected because a case study attempts to explain why a decision was made, the implementation process, and the results (Yin, 2009). A case study helps explain a process in real-life situations through the participants viewpoints and experiences (Gall et al., 2007). Through a case study, I analyzed data regarding teachers' attitudes and perceptions of direct instruction on student achievement in Target School District, a large rural school district in northwestern Georgia.

According to Yin (2009) there are five aspects of a case study that are especially important. The study's research questions should be in the "how" and "why" form. If there are propositions, they need to be stated. If the study does not include them, it is

important that every study have a purpose. The unit(s) of analysis must be identified, which will be 11 second-grade teachers in the current study. This is where the case is defined. The data must be relevant to the proposition(s) so that the results can be interpreted, and the data must help analyze the focus of the case. Criteria must be established so results can be interpreted correctly (Gall et al., 2007; Yin, 2009). A case study across multiple sites design will be used for this study. Gall et al., (2007) state that this design is used when at least two instances of the phenomenon occur. In this study, direct instruction in 11 second-grade classrooms is the phenomenon.

Participants

Eleven second-grade teachers in a northwest Georgia school district were the sample for this study. The target district was comprised of 12 elementary schools. However, one second grade teacher was on an extended medical leave and did not receive the same training as the other 11. Eleven teachers were asked to participate in the study. Each participant received the same training in direct instruction and had access to the same resources, and each classroom's academic makeup was similar in nature. A majority of the students in each of the participating teachers' classrooms had failed the previous year's CRCT in reading and had been identified as an at-risk student on the DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency benchmarks. The 11 schools were, for the most part, not similar in all demographic areas. However, the populations were reflective of the system's general population. This qualitative study utilized purposeful criterion sampling, which is often used in the educational arena and is used when a case is analyzing a particular entity (Gall et al., 2007).

Setting/Site

Target District was located in northwestern Georgia. It had approximately 14,000

students and was home to 12 elementary schools, four middle schools, and three high schools. It was chosen for this study because I am employed in the district and have a vested interest in the district's improvement. The district has invested time and money into the district-wide implementation of direct instruction in targeted second grade classrooms in each of the 12 elementary schools. Identical training and resources were provided to each of the 12 schools; however, scores in each classroom did not show equal progress and growth. Therefore, it was important to determine if teacher attitudes and perceptions played a role in the discrepancies. Before this method of intervention can be applied in other content areas, it must be determined whether or not it is appropriate for all teachers to use. I also examined teacher efficacy and years of experience as areas of interest.

Researcher's Role/Personal Biography

As the researcher and writer, I am a wife and mother of the Christian faith. My husband and I have been blessed by the adoption of two sons. My faith is a very important part of my life. "But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint" (Isaiah 40:31, NIV). I am currently an elementary school principal and have 19 years experience as a teacher and an administrator. I have taught all subjects in middle grades, served as an assistant principal, and worked as a district-level curriculum coordinator. I strive to ensure that my biblical worldview affects all of my decisions whether as a researcher, administrator, or teacher. I have a personal connection with the schools involved in this study, having worked closely with the district's students and staff during the past three years. I want to see the system and its students succeed to its full potential and look forward to seeing how certain interventions will impact reading

achievement scores. My passion is working with struggling students, because I struggled with reading as a young child. However, with the love and support of my family and some very special teachers, I was able to turn that stumbling block into a stepping stone. My greatest desire now is to return that favor to other struggling students and honor those that worked so hard to help me succeed.

Data Collection

A qualitative study was deemed appropriate for this proposed study because the data attempted to determine a pattern from the "voices of participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, and a complex description of a problem" (Creswell, 2007, p. 37). I scheduled surveys and interviews with participating teachers. A research assistant conducted the interviews but the resulting information allowed me to examine how direct instruction was perceived by classroom teachers. My position as an elementary principal provided an additional viewpoint as well as allowed me to relate the attitudes of teacher participants to the effectiveness of direct instruction.

Creswell (2007) suggested that case studies need various forms of data collection. Information is often validated by triangulating data from multiple sources (Creswell, 2007; Yin, 2009). Yin (2009) suggested using previous records or artifacts, interviews, and observations. There are three main guidelines when collecting data (Yin, 2009). According to Yin (2009), when using the three principles correctly problems with validity and reliability can be avoided. The three guidelines include using many pieces of evidence, developing a database, and maintaining the evidence (Yin, 2009).

It is important to use several types of evidence. This allows for triangulation of data. Using multiple sources also allows for converging lines of inquiry to develop which is considered a major strength of case studies (Yin, 2009). There are four types of

triangulation: (a) data triangulation, (b) investigator triangulation, (c) theory triangulation, and (d) methodological triangulation. The data collection in this case study focused on data triangulation. In order for data to be properly triangulated instead of merely analyzed, facts from the case were supported by several sources of evidence. This helped control potential concerns of construct validity (Yin, 2009).

It is crucial that the case study report contain sufficient evidence for conclusions to be drawn. However, raw data needs to be accessible for review in case results are questioned or need to be replicated. An adequate database must be created for this purpose. This will help increase the reliability of the case study (Yin, 2009). Researchers must create and maintain the evidence so the case can be followed from conception to the end results. Following this procedure will increase reliability of the gathered information. It will also help improve the construct validity of the study (Yin, 2009).

For this study, an interview was conducted with the participants using five open-ended questions (see Appendix B). The questions were amended from interview questions obtained from The Education Alliance of Brown University with the Center for Applied Linguistics. Consent to use and amend the questions was sought before interviews were conducted. The questions were obtained via the Internet through the public domain. The interviews were conducted in a 45 minute session and transcribed verbatim.

Student achievement data was analyzed. Scores from the 2009–2010 Georgia's CRCT and DIBEL scores were disaggregated and compared to normed benchmark grade level expectations. Results for the fall of 2010 administration of DIBEL probes in phoneme segmentation, nonsense word fluency, and oral reading fluency were compared

to the previous year's scores to determine levels of progress and growth. Data was examined to determine if any patterns existed.

Observations of participants were conducted informally throughout the research process (see Appendix C). An observational protocol (see Appendix D) was used to record the data, and descriptive and reflective notes will be taken. The target district's literacy specialist conducted the observations.

Artifacts were kept as a form of data collection. Email questions and messages were kept. Interviews and observations were conducted and kept on file. The researcher's assistant took notes during the interviews. I then compared the participants answers and checked for patterns and themes. Interview and observational protocols were utilized as a form of data.

Participants were administered three surveys. Consent to use each survey was sought. Surveys were distributed electronically by email or paper copy whichever was preferred by the participant. The Teacher Motivation and Job Satisfaction Survey (see Appendix E) developed by Craig Mertler (2002) helped to determine participants' attitudes and overall feelings toward their job after using direct instruction in their classroom. Information gathered here also addressed the issue of teacher efficacy. This aided in addressing Research Question 4.

Additionally, participants were given The Teacher Perceptions toward Early Reading and Spelling (TPERS) survey (see Appendix F) which was adapted from a tool developed originally by DeFord (1985). It contains 25 questions and uses a 6-point Likert scale. They also took The Teacher Knowledge Assessment: Structure of Language (TKA: SL) (see Appendix G) which was developed by Mather, Bos, and Babur (2001). The survey is made up of 22 multiple choice questions about the structure of language.

The data from these two surveys helped to address Research Question 1.

Observations were conducted and information gathered was used to answer Research Question 3. Research Question 2 was addressed using benchmark data from DIBEL scores and state standardized test scores form Georgia's CRCT. Much of the information gathered aided in answering more than one of the research questions. This helped to ensure triangulation of the data.

Research question 1. *What are teachers' perceptions of direct instruction?* Teachers implementing direct instruction from each of the 11 elementary schools in Target District were interviewed. Teachers were asked five open-ended questions in a focus interview that were adapted from interview questions developed in 2005 by The Education Alliance at Brown University. Permission from the author(s) was sought. All interviews were conducted by a research assistant. The participants' interview answers were transcribed verbatim and coded by me. This data was analyzed for any emerging themes or patterns.

Teachers were also administered The Teacher Perceptions Toward Early Reading and Spelling (TPERS). Permission was sought to use the instrument. The survey contains 25 items and uses a 6-point Likert scale. It is considered a reliable instrument with a Cronbach's coefficient alpha of .74. According to Mather et al., (2001), teachers need to have confidence, maintain a positive attitude, and possess knowledge of language development when teaching children who struggle to read using explicit instruction.

Participants were given an additional survey measuring their knowledge of language both at the phoneme and grapheme level (Otaiba, Hosp, Smartt, & Dole, 2008). The Teacher Knowledge Assessment: Structure of Language (TKA:SL) contains 22 multiple-choice questions and has a Cronbach's coefficient alpha reliability of .83.

Permission was sought to use this assessment. "They [teachers] need to have an awareness of language elements (e.g., phonemes) and a knowledge of how these elements are represented in writing (e.g., knowledge of sound-symbol correspondences)" (Mather et al., 2001, p. 472).

Research question 2. *What contributes to the differences in scores among students who receive direct instruction in different classrooms?* Participants were informally observed utilizing direct instruction within their classrooms. An observation protocol was used to record information gathered from the classroom lesson. The literacy specialist from the target district conducted the observations in order to increase reliability of the observation. All observations were analyzed and results were compared. I noted themes and patterns for follow-up questioning if needed.

Research question 3. *In what ways do teachers' attitudes about direct instruction impact student achievement?* Participants were interviewed by a research assistant. All responses were transcribed and analyzed. The same teachers were observed and all observations were analyzed using an observational protocol. The Georgia Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) scores from 2010 and the fall 2010 administration of the Dynamic Indicators of Early Basic Literacy Skills (DIBELS) scores of students in those classrooms were analyzed for similarities and differences. This data was compared to the answers of participating teachers to distinguish the differences in responses and actions of those teachers with higher performing students than those of lower performing students.

Research question 4. *What are the barriers to implementing direct instruction?* Participants were given the Teacher Motivation and Job Satisfaction Survey developed by Craig Mertler of Bowling Green State University in 2002. Permission to use the

survey and a reliability measure were requested from the author. Administrators of all 11 elementary schools were questioned through an email correspondence to relate noted problems and successes with their individual school regarding training, resources, and perceptions. Information gathered from the teacher interviews and administrator correspondence were analyzed and compared for similarities and differences.

Data Analysis

"Data analysis in qualitative research consists of preparing and organizing the data for analysis, then reducing the data into themes through a process of coding and condensing the codes, and finally representing the data in figures, tables, or discussion" (Creswell, 2007, p. 148). The data was organized into main ideas, creating broader categories, and developing comparisons visually through charts and graphs. "These are the core elements of qualitative data analysis" (Creswell, 2007, p. 148).

Open coding was used as a method to sort data. This allowed the researcher to examine data from observations and interviews as well as aid the researcher in determining if patterns exist and furthermore in the developing of themes. This was an important step in summarizing and synthesizing the data. Coding aided in providing clarity to themes or categories (Gall et al., 2007). Creswell (2007) recommends limiting the research to five or six themes. Comparisons can then be made and data will be represented using graphs, charts, and tables.

Memoing was used as another method to help examine data. The researcher made notes inside the margin of texts helping to form preliminary codes as the text is read. This allowed information to be easily accessible and well-organized as I begin to develop the project. This was especially true as the interviews and observation were conducted and transcribed. Running thoughts was recorded as marginal notes throughout the

process. This aided me in distinguishing meaningful statements which developed into major themes. Naturalistic generalizations were created so "people can learn from the case either for themselves or to apply to a population of cases" (Creswell, 2007, p. 163). These generalizations was compared and contrasted with information from related literature. Data analysis spirals and continues to repeat itself until the final research product is produced. The data will be triangulated by using many sources of evidence allowing results to be corroborated. This process often enables explanation of a phenomenon or theme (Creswell, 2007). It also allows the conclusion gathered from the evidence to be more believable.

Research question 1. *What are teachers' perceptions of direct instruction?* Eleven second-grade teachers were interviewed. The interviews were conducted by an assistant to the researcher. Responses were coded and analyzed to determine patterns and overall perceptions. Participants were also administered two surveys that will address this research question. The TPERS and the TKA: SL were given. Results of each were compared. I determined through responses provided by the participants on the TPERS whether negative, positive, or neutral perceptions existed. The content knowledge level of the participant was compared to their interview responses.

Research question 2. *What contributes to the differences in scores among students who receive direct instruction in different classrooms?* Student achievement scores on the CRCT and DIBELS from each interview participant were analyzed. Scores from the 2010 CRCT of the participants' classes were categorized by percentage of students not meeting standards, meeting standards, and exceeding standards. Survey results from the TPERS and the TKA:SL were compared to the percentage of students not meeting, meeting, or exceeding standards. DIBELS scores were categorized also.

Teacher responses from interview sessions were compared to the number of students within their classroom reaching benchmark on the DIBELS.

Research question 3. *In what ways do teachers' attitudes about direct instruction affect student achievement?* Responses from teacher interviews were coded and grouped according to patterns discovered. Student achievement scores were then compared to teacher responses. Observations were conducted by the district literacy specialist using an observation protocol. Interview responses and student data (CRCT and DIBELS scores) will then be compared to the observation protocol for each teacher.

Research question 4. *What are the barriers to implementing direct instruction?* Participants were administered The Teacher Motivation and Job Satisfaction Survey. Their level of job satisfaction was analyzed and compared to the benchmark and state standardized test scores of their students. Administrators from each of the 11 participating schools will be interviewed by email. Principals were asked specifically about the problems and successes of implementing this reading intervention classroom, employing direct instruction. Teacher and administrator interviews will be compared.

Trustworthiness

Creswell (2007) cites a 1995 Stake study that provided steps for conducting a case study. Creswell also provided a list of 20 ways to determine if a case study is adequately written. Following these suggested guidelines helped increase a study's trustworthiness. Data was triangulated which increased the reliability of the findings and also helped ensure the case study was trustworthy. I made a detailed description of the case and setting. Data was analyzed, and generalizations were made from the interpretation of the data. This process increased the reliability because findings were "transferable between the researcher and those being studied" (Creswell, 2007, p. 204).

Data was triangulated by using multiple forms such as interviews, observations, and standardized test data. This allowed data to be corroborated. Field notes and transcripts were recorded in order to establish facts as opposed to my opinions. Member checks were utilized. Observations and interviews were conducted and transcribed, and both had an additional person working with the researcher. Protocols were also completed. This allowed the participant more involvement in the case and kept the interview and observation process credible. An audit trail will be maintained where information can be tracked to its initial source to aid in replication and also to prevent information from being unaccounted for and lost. It helped ensure dependability.

Ethical Issues

Regardless of the type of research, ethical considerations arise throughout the research process. Anonymity was given to all subjects and schools involved to protect confidentiality. Trust is therefore established with the participants, which was key to the success of the project. Data was secured at all times and stored properly. Permission from the participants was obtained. All information is recorded, and participants must be made aware of this. I emphatically believe that God's instructions must be followed. "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15, NIV).

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS/FINDINGS

Introduction

The primary purpose of this paper was to analyze whether teachers perceptions affect student achievement in the area of reading. A secondary purpose was to explore if teacher efficacy and/or years of experience had any effect on student achievement. A major goal of this study was to inform educators of how their personal perceptions and beliefs can impact student performance. In addition the results of this study can aid the target district in making a decision as to whether this type of intervention can be applied to other content areas in all classrooms at the elementary level.

Teacher Interviews

The teacher interviews were conducted separately by a research assistant and transcribed. Teachers were interviewed by a research assistant without political or employment ties to the target district. Interviews were conducted in a conference room at the staff-development center. It is closed to the public and can only be accessed by appointment. Teacher participants selected a number from one through 11 in order to maintain anonymity. All information will be identified using this number. Once the interviews were transcribed, I began to look for themes that would aid in answering the first research question. Research Question 1: *What are teachers' perceptions of direct instruction?* Themes noted were Theme 1: Teaching Strategies/Methods, Theme 2: Direct Instruction, Theme 3: Literacy Skills, Theme 4: Determining Fluent Readers, and Theme 5: Supports and Barriers. After reading the interview transcriptions, I learned that all participants discussed using needs-based groups in some form as a strategy effective for reading development. They felt training was essential, and their definition of direct

instruction differed.

Theme 1: Teaching Strategies/Methods

The theme of Teaching Strategies/Methods was found to be of interest. The research from the literature review supported that practice and feedback through planned lessons and using flexible small- group instruction were key to student success (Rasinski et al., 2009; Shippen, 2008). Ninety-one percent of the teachers that were interviewed reported that groups must be flexible and formed based on the needs of the students. Sixty-four percent of the participants responded that direct instruction and small-group instruction were the most effective teaching strategies/methods. According to 45% of the participants, immediate feedback and progress monitoring were also essential. The following comments addressed teaching strategies/methods:

- "Small group instruction based on individual student needs, grouping changed throughout the year as students need remediation or as students advance" (Speaking about effective teaching strategies)
- "I have found that direct instruction is the best tool. Another strategy would be small group instruction. Within a small group teachers are able to reach more individual goals."
- "Strategies that are effective for promoting reading development are using research based curriculum with small groups to reinforce skills students may need further instruction in."
- "Constant review and monitoring of skills is also imperative to make sure students are retaining information."
- "Frequent regrouping for specific areas helps meet the needs of the individual student without killing the teacher."

Theme 2: Direct Instruction

Direct instruction was named by 73% of the participants specifically when responding on how to address varying levels of students within an individual classroom. When providing essentials for successful direct instruction implementation, 55% reported that effective training which included observing others teach direct instruction and receiving the necessary materials is imperative. Classroom control is a must according to 36% of the participants. Established rituals and routines and clear expectations are also essential in conducting an effective direct instruction classroom according to 27% of the participants.

The participating teachers discussed some barriers when using direct instruction in their classroom. From the interview responses, 36% reported that direct instruction is boring, and 27% stated that direct instruction moves too slowly and lacks creativity. These two factors, according to 18% of the participants, lead to their stress level and exhaustion increasing.

- "Direct instruction is an effective strategy…. It allows students to begin at their level."
- "I don't have to worry that I might have missed teaching them a skill that is needed. Direct instruction is specifically designed to introduce, practice, and review each skill in just the right order for student learning."
- "There are no surprises."
- "Direct instruction in phonics helps struggling children."
- "Direct instruction is very structured and eliminates a lot of the distractions."
- "Phonics and blending are better taught with direct instruction."
- "Teachers should observe other teachers implementing direct instruction and

should be coached as they teach a few direct instruction lessons."

- "They need all the appropriate materials to successfully teach using direct instruction."
- "I have missed the creativity involved in preparing lessons since direct instruction is used in my classroom every day."
- "I find that my students often become bored when required to read on cue."
- "Direct instruction is exhausting at times."
- "I think some students begin to develop a ho-hum attitude."
- "Direct instruction is like juggling and if someone is off, you're gonna have a ball to fall."

Theme 3: Literacy Skills

Some literacy skills can be taught more easily through language arts while other literacy skills are taught through the content areas according to the responses from the participants. Twenty-seven percent felt phonics and grammar related skills were best taught through language arts. Using the content areas to teach comprehension and vocabulary development is appropriate according to 36% of the participants. Fluency is a skill also best taught through the content areas as reported from 27% of the participants.

- "In general comprehension and vocabulary development can be taught through other content areas."
- "Language arts is where grammar, parts of speech, types of sentences are taught."
- "Literacy skills taught through content areas are vocabulary, fluency, context clues, reading for meaning, reading for information, and comprehension."

Theme 4: Determining Fluent Readers

The theme that was prevalent throughout was distinguishing between a fluent reader and a struggling reader. The underlying goal for all participants was to create fluent readers who meet or exceed benchmark scores.

- "To me a fluent grade-level reader is one who is reading the appropriate number of words per minute with accurate retell."
- "If you can't tell me what you read, you are word calling. You must check for understanding and mastery constantly."
- "Just listening to them read. As a teacher I can hear a struggling reader. But the data helps me determine how to help a struggling reader."
- "A fluent reader is phonemically aware and possesses skills to decode words with automaticity."

Theme 5: Supports and Barriers

Participants referred to factors that they felt provide a support system as well as those things that were barriers for the successful implementation of a direct instruction program. Support from administrators and parents were considered to be a necessary support. The lack of it was also mentioned as being a barrier toward the success of the program. Effective training was also consistently mentioned as vital to a successful program.

- "Teachers need the support of administration and parents. The task of getting a below-grade-level student back on grade level is a difficult task. If everyone does not work together, the task becomes almost impossible."
- "Teachers need to be able to test their own students. They need to understand the results and be able to read the data collected to help the child's individual needs."

- "The largest barrier I have faced is lack of support from the parents because they do not understand or see the importance of the program."
- "A school which has a climate that allows for additional support from personnel."
- "Teachers need to be trained in direct instruction that is being used."
- "In order to be successful, training and implementation support are needed."
- "I also have to remind myself that it is more important to fix the missing reading foundation than to worry about what other second-grade classes are doing."
- "Teachers should observe other teachers implementing direct instruction and should be coached as they teach a few direct instruction lessons."
- "I have faced a few barriers while using direct instruction. I have missed the creativity involved in preparing lessons since direct instruction is used in my classroom every day."
- "My students often become bored when required to read on cue. Some students remain quiet and let others read as if I will not notice."
- "Direct instruction is exhausting at times."
- ". . . is very overwhelming and stressful for the teacher."
- "Extensive training is needed."
- "Some teachers like more freedom to do some of their own ideas."
- "Useful supports for direct instruction are training and watching another teacher teach the program. To be effective, training is extremely helpful."

The recurring themes were used to address the research questions. Answers to

the initial question which dealt directly with perceptions of direct instruction emerged from all five themes. Participants related that training was essential and small groups must be flexible and based on student needs. They further reported certain skills are taught through expository text whereas phonics and grammar skills are best taught through language arts.

The second research question which asks about differences in scores was addressed through information from themes 1 and 2. Differences in teaching strategies and methods appeared. Definitions of direct instruction differed as well.

The third research question which examined how attitudes can impact achievement was addressed through themes 2 and 5. Three participants reported that direct instruction was beneficial and effective while others reported it was boring and lacked creativity. Participants discussed barriers such as lack of training.

The final research question addressed by theme 5, discussed barriers to implementation. Responses included lack of time, extensive planning, and boredom. Similarities in responses included insufficient time and extensive planning.

Classroom Observations

Informal classroom observations were conducted by the target district's literacy specialist. She does not serve in any evaluative role for the district but has been extensively involved in the training process of this district initiative. She is thoroughly familiar with the program and the classroom schedule. The literacy specialist used the same observational protocol for each classroom so answers could be compared. She returned the protocols using the numbers 1 through 11 that was initially chosen by the participant. The data remained anonymous. Appendix C contains the observation parameters used by the literacy specialist. Appendix D contains the observational

protocol that was used.

Protocol Question 1

Describe the professional conduct of the teacher, i.e. uses of authority, language, attitude toward students, attitude toward subject matter, etc. The literacy specialist noted that in all instances the teacher's attitude was positive toward students. "She had a positive attitude, frequently smiling during the time I was in her classroom." She also noted that "somewhat formal language was used in keeping with the scripted nature of the program."

Protocol Question 2

Describe the teacher's relationship with students in the class, i.e. stance, comments, tone, responses directed to individual students, etc. The literacy specialist noted that each teacher had established a positive tone in the classroom making the environment conducive to learning. "The climate of the class was relaxed and risk free . . . creating an atmosphere of trust and openness." She specifically noted the use of effective specific praise/feedback in 60% of the classrooms observed.

Protocol Question 3

How well does the teacher use class time, i.e. ratio of instructional methods, pacing, etc.? It was noted that because the schedule and curriculum have been set by the district for these classes, no down time was observed. "Smooth transitions are evident and rituals and routines are strong." Pacing was also observed. "The teacher moved quickly from word to word in order to keep the students engaged in the task."

Protocol Question 4

How does the teacher accommodate a variety of student learning styles in the classroom? Due to the fact that observations occurred at various times during the day,

different parts of lessons were observed. In one classroom, the literacy specialist observed small-group rotations through centers or work stations. Eighty percent of the teachers observed were teaching whole-group lessons. She noted that these teachers have been trained to be "flexible in terms of time, student groupings, instructional models, and teaching and learning strategies."

Protocol Question 5

How does the teacher's classroom set up and practice correlate with the expected strategy of teaching? It was reported that the classroom environment has been arranged to allow for different modes of instructional delivery, including whole group, small group, and independent learning. "Overall the appearance, organization, and structure of the classroom invites learning with appealing colors, displays of student work, space for both individual and collaborative work, easy access to manipulatives, and visible anchor charts to support quality work."

Protocol Question 6

Does the teacher demonstrate familiarity with the expected method of teaching? Participating teachers have all received the Reading Endorsement, thus receiving extensive training. They have had multiple opportunities to learn research- based strategies and best practices. Teachers demonstrated familiarity by being able to include phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension into the lesson within the scheduled time.

The Teacher Motivation and Job Satisfaction Survey

The survey was distributed electronically. The survey was obtained through an internet search at http://wps.ablongman.com/wps/media/objects/3984/4080143/forms/jobsatis and is considered in the public domain. Permission was sought from the author,

Craig Mertler (see Appendix H). Once completed, participants returned the email anonymously through interoffice mail. Participants used their self-assigned number. There was no identifying information on the survey. Eleven teachers consented to participate in the survey but only eight teachers returned the survey. After analyzing the data from the completed surveys, the researcher learned that all participants were Caucasian females with a majority being in the age range of 26 – 30 years, and 50% possess 1–10 years of experience. In addition, 75% of the participants were satisfied with their job as a teacher, but 25% would choose another career if given the opportunity.

The Teacher Motivation and Job Satisfaction Survey Question 5

On the following 6-point scale, indicate the degree to which each of the following serve as a highly unmotivating factor (1) to a highly motivating factor (6) for teachers. Survey question 5 asked teachers to rank various job factors from highly motivating to highly unmotivating. Table 1 represents their responses. For each factor, the top row of data represents the percentage of teachers who responded. The second row represents the actual number of teachers who responded.

Table 1

The Teacher Motivation and Job Satisfaction Survey: Question 5

	Unmotivating			Motivating		
	Highly	Very	Unmotivating	Motivating	Very	Highly
Job Factors	1	2	3	4	5	6
Recognition	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	25% (n=2)	50% (n=4)	25% (n=2)
Professional growth	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	13% (n=1)	75% (n=6)	0% (n=0)	13% (n=1)

Supervisor competence	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	13% (n=1)	50% (n=4)	25% (n=2)	13% (n=1)
Colleague relationships	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	63% (n=5)	38% (n=3)	0% (n=0)
Salary	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	13% (n=1)	50% (n=4)	13% (n=1)	25% (n=2)
Tenure	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	38% (n=3)	50% (n=4)	13% (n=1)
Status	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	13% (n=1)	75% (n=6)	13% (n=1)	0% (n=0)
Administrator relationship	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	13% (n=1)	50% (n=4)	38% (n=3)	0% (n=0)
Sense of achievement	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	25% (n=2)	50% (n=4)	25% (n=2)
Working conditions	13% (n=1)	0% (n=0)	25% (n=2)	50% (n=4)	13% (n=1)	0% (n=0)
District policies	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	25% (n=2)	75% (n=6)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)
Teacher evaluation	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	13% (n=1)	50% (n=4)	13% (n=1)	25% (n=2)
Responsibility	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	13% (n=1)	38% (n=3)	38% (n=3)	13% (n=1)
Advancement	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	13% (n=1)	50% (n=4)	38% (n=3)	0% (n=0)
Work	0% (n=0)	13% (n=1)	13% (n=1)	38% (n=3)	25% (n=2)	13% (n=1)
Personal life	13% (n=1)	0% (n=0)	38% (n=3)	38% (n=3)	0% (n=0)	13% (n=1)
Student relationships	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	50% (n=4)	25% (n=2)	25% (n=2)
Accountability	0% (n=0)	13% (n=1)	0% (n=0)	25% (n=2)	38% (n=3)	25% (n=2)

The Teacher Motivation and Job Satisfaction Survey Question 6

On the following 6-point scale, indicate the degree to which each of the following serve as a motivating factor or an unmotivating factor for teachers with (1) highly unmotivating and (6) highly motivating. Survey question 6 asked teachers to rank various rewards from highly unmotivating to highly motivating. Table 2 represents how they responded. For each reward, the top row of data represents the percentage of teachers who responded. The row directly underneath represents the actual number of teachers who responded.

Table 2

The Teacher Motivation and Job Satisfaction Survey: Question 6

	Unmotivating			Motivating		
	Highly	Very	Unmotivating	Motivating	Very	Highly
Rewards	1	2	3	4	5	6
Monetary award	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	50% (n=4)	38% (n=3)	13% (n=1)
Teacher of the Year title	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	50% (n=4)	38% (n=3)	13% (n=1)
Workshop for a fee	0% (n=0)	13% (n=1)	38% (n=3)	38% (n=3)	13% (n=1)	0% (n=0)
Student thanks	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	38% (n=3)	38% (n=3)	25% (n=2)
Workshop fee paid by district	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	25% (n=2)	50% (n=4)	13% (n=1)	13% (n=1)
Teacher projects	13% (n=1)	0% (n=0)	50% (n=4)	38% (n=3)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)
Early retirement	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	13% (n=1)	50% (n=4)	25% (n=2)	13% (n=1)

Student academic growth	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	13% (n=1)	25% (n=2)	63% (n=5)
Plaque given by students	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	13% (n=1)	75% (n=6)	13% (n=1)	0% (n=0)
Extra supplies for class	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	25% (n=2)	50% (n=4)	25% (n=2)

The Teacher Perceptions toward Early Reading and Spelling (TPERS) Instrument

This survey was distributed via email. The survey was obtained through an internet search from http://www.mendeley.com/research/perceptions-knowledge-preservice-inservice-teachers-about-early-literacy-instruction and is considered in the public domain. Permission was sought and granted from the author (see Appendix H). Participants then return the completed survey through the interoffice mail. The participants once again used their self-assigned number when submitting the instrument. The responses remained anonymous. This survey had participants rate their perceptions of reading success using a 6-point Likert scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (6) regarding specific components of literacy.

TPERS Instrument

Please rank the statements from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) regarding reading and spelling. This survey asked participants to rank specific statements based on their perceptions of literacy skills. Participants' answers are represented in Table 3. For each abbreviated statement, the initial row of data represents the percentage of teacher participants who responded. The second row of data is the actual number of participants who responded.

Table 3

TPERS Instrument

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Skills	1	2	3	4	5	6
Ability to rhyme	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	11% (n=1)	56% (n=5)	33% (n=3)
Letter recognition	22% (n=2)	11% (n=1)	22% (n=2)	22% (n=2)	22% (n=2)	0% (n=0)
Poor phonemic awareness is an inhibitor	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	11% (n=1)	11% (n=1)	78% (n=7)
Invented spelling develops phonemic awareness	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	11% (n=1)	22% (n=2)	33% (n=3)	33% (n=3)
Know how to teach phonological awareness	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	11% (n=1)	89% (n=8)
Differences in awareness explains growth	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	33% (n=3)	67% (n=6)
Miscues not changing meaning	22% (n=2)	44% (n=4)	11% (n=1)	11% (n=1)	0% (n=0)	11% (n=1)
Prompt to sound out words	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	33% (n=3)	33% (n=3)	33% (n=3)
Context clues better than grapho phonic cues	33% (n=3)	33% (n=3)	33% (n=3)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)
Increased oral miscues decreased comprehension	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	33% (n=3)	67% (n=6)
Repetition needed to become part of sight vocabulary	11% (n=1)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	11% (n=1)	78% (n=7)
Poor memory affects word identification	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	89% (n=8)	11% (n=1)
Visual memory needed for spelling skills	11% (n=1)	11% (n=1)	11% (n=1)	11% (n=1)	56% (n=5)	0% (n=0)

Transpositions remain problems for few students	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	78% (n=7)	22% (n=2)
Early materials written in early language	0% (n=0)	22% (n=2)	44% (n=4)	22% (n=2)	11% (n=1)	0% (n=0)
Basic skills never taught in isolation	22% (n=2)	22% (n=2)	0% (n=0)	11% (n=1)	33% (n=3)	11% (n=1)
Identifying words related to spelling	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	11% (n=1)	11% (n=1)	56% (n=5)	22% (n=2)
Fluency requires rapid word identification	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	22% (n=2)	44% (n=4)	33% (n=3)
Comprehension is related to word identification	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	67% (n=6)	33% (n=3)
Control text with spelling patterns	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	44% (n=4)	33% (n=3)	22% (n=2)
Know how to teach phonics	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	11% (n=1)	89% (n=8)
Phonic rules should be taught	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	11% (n=1)	11% (n=1)	78% (n=7)
Phonic improves spelling	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	22% (n=2)	78% (n=7)
Repeated spelling errors need systematic instruction	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	78% (n=7)	22% (n=2)

The Teacher Knowledge Assessment: Structure of Language (TKA: SL) Instrument

The instrument was distributed by email. This survey was obtained through an internet search at http://repository.tamu.edu/bitstream/handle/1969.1/85925 and is considered to be in the public domain. Permission was sought and granted from the author (see Appendix H). After the participants completed the survey, it was returned through interoffice mail. The only identifying information was the self-assigned number used in all other transactions. All responses were anonymous. This instrument asked participants to rate their knowledge of the major concepts of literacy as minimal,

moderate, very good, or expert. They were also asked to answer multiple choice questions about specific literary terms and skills.

TKA: SL Survey Section 1

Please evaluate your knowledge minimal, moderate, very good, or expert of the following areas of literacy. This section asked participants to rank their knowledge level of certain concepts. Eight participants returned the survey. In phonemic awareness, 13% said they were experts, 75% ranked themselves very good, and 13% reported they had moderate knowledge. When teaching phonics, the participants stated that 25% of them considered themselves as experts and the remaining 75% ranked their knowledge as very good. When asked about fluency and vocabulary, 88% reported their knowledge base as very good with 13% stating they possessed a moderate level of knowledge. Seventy-five percent reported their knowledge of comprehension as very good and the remaining 25% said they had a moderate knowledge level. When asked about children's literature, 38% of the participants reported their knowledge level as very good. Fifty percent felt they were moderate and 13% ranked their knowledge of children's literature as minimal. Participants were also asked how comfortable they were using assessment to guide their reading instruction. All participants felt they were very good in this area.

TKA: SL Survey Section 2

Participants were asked 19 specific questions regarding their knowledge of particular literary terms and skills. Six questions were answered incorrectly once and one question was answered incorrectly twice. Another question was answered incorrectly three times. All missed questions were phonics questions. Two additional questions were not answered correctly. Both questions were about specific phonics rules. One of the questions was missed by two participants and the other question was answered

incorrectly by three participants.

Synthesis of the Data

Teacher data were collected by qualitative interviews and three surveys. All data helped address each of the four research questions. The participants completed three surveys. The first survey asked participants how they felt about various job factors. It also asked them about their current level of satisfaction with their job. Participants were asked that if given the opportunity to begin their career again, would they choose to become a teacher again? Twenty-five percent of them stated they were dissatisfied with their job and would choose another career. The dissatisfied respondents' years of experience varied from one to five years to 16 to 20 years. Participants were interviewed by a research assistant. They were all asked the same five open-ended questions. After the interviews were coded, five themes emerged: teaching strategies and methods, direct instruction, literacy skills, determining fluent readers, and supports/barriers. The participants relayed that through the direct instruction training, they had learned to apply research based teaching strategies and methods (Theme 1).

A synthesis of the data revealed that 91% of the participants now feel students must be flexibly grouped according to the varying needs of students (Theme 1). Sixty-four percent believe that small-group instruction (Themes 1 and 2) is most effective and 45% stated that specific feedback (Themes 1 and 2) and progress monitoring (Theme 4) are needed. Practice and scaffolding along with constant review were reported by 55% of the participants as important components for effective reading development (Theme 2).

Participants were also administered a second survey. The Teacher Perceptions Toward Early Reading and Spelling asked participants to rank their level of agreement regarding specific literacy skills. Theme 3 was addressed throughout this instrument.

Eighty-nine percent of the participants agreed to strongly agreed that poor phonemic awareness is an inhibitor to successfully reading on grade level. All participants felt that it was important for teachers to know how to teach phonological awareness. All participants further agreed that differences in phonological awareness explain different levels of academic growth.

Repetition is a large component of direct instruction (Shippen, Houchins, Steventon, & Sartor, 2005). In this survey, 78% strongly agreed and 11% agreed that repetition is needed in order for new words to become part of a student's sight vocabulary. All participants agreed that when teachers encounter repeated spelling errors from their students, they need to provide systematic instruction (Theme 2). All participants felt it was necessary for teachers to know how to teach phonics, but 89% reported that phonics rules should be taught (Theme 3). Participants responses were divided when discussing basic skills. Forty-four percent strongly disagreed that basic skills should never be taught in isolation; whereas, 44% strongly agreed.

The final survey, The Teacher Knowledge Assessment Structure of Language Instrument, asked participants to rate knowledge of major literacy concepts from minimal to expert. Eight participants returned the survey. When asked to rank their expertise in phonemic awareness, 13% of the participants considered themselves to be an expert and 75% thought their knowledge base was very good. Twenty-five percent of the participants ranked themselves as experts in the area of phonics and 75% considered themselves to be very good. The survey also included 19 multiple-choice questions about specific literary terms and skills. Ten of the 19 questions or 53% dealt with phonics concepts. Six of the ten phonics questions were answered incorrectly by different participants. An additional phonics question was missed by two of those 6 participants,

and one more phonics question was answered incorrectly by three of those 6 participants (Theme 4).

The first survey, the Teacher Motivation and Job Satisfaction Survey, which helped to determine attitudes and perceptions after using direct instruction addressed research questions 1 and 4. The second survey, Teacher Perceptions Toward Early Reading and Spelling and the third survey, the Teacher Knowledge Assessment: Structure of Language addressed research question 1.

Participants were also informally observed for 45 minutes during their literacy block by the target district's literacy specialist. Using an observational protocol, comments were compared for similarities and/or differences. Eight participants were observed because they have been teaching in the same position since the project was started in the district. It was noted that the attitudes of all participants were positive toward the students and 60% provided specific feedback and praise. There was no down time observed and the teachers pacing was quick so students were kept engaged. The literacy specialist observed students working in small groups on a rotational basis with the teacher, work stations, and whole-group instruction.

The environment in each classroom was overall inviting and conducive to learning. Classrooms were set up for different modes of delivery. She commented that rooms were appealing with colors and places for individual and collaborative student work displays. Manipulatives and anchor charts were accessible for student use.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Introduction

The goal of this study was to add to the body of research regarding teacher perceptions and attitudes toward direct instruction on student achievement in the area of reading. Teacher attitudes and perceptions were investigated to determine if they had an impact on reading achievement scores. Targeted second-grade classrooms in a northwest Georgia rural school district established a classroom at each of its 12 elementary schools comprised of students who were considered at-risk and reading below grade level. Each teacher received extensive identical training and resources. Direct instruction was implemented in each of the 11 classrooms daily. However, end of the year DIBELS results and standardized test scores showed differences between the schools.

Answers to Research Question

The following questions were used to guide this project:

Research Question 1

What are teachers' perceptions of direct instruction? In this case study, five themes emerged from the interviews with the teachers: Teaching Strategies/Methods, Direct Instruction, Literacy Skills, Determining Fluent Readers, and Supports and Barriers. Participants were interviewed and were given three surveys. Although all data helped provide information regarding this question, particular interest was paid to the interviews and two of the surveys.

Participants reported that direct instruction training allowed them to use various researched-based strategies and methods. Sixty-four percent used small-group instruction. Ninety-one percent stated that direct instruction had allowed them to see the benefits of flexible grouping and continuous progress monitoring. Direct instruction

provides students with the necessary practice and constant review needed for success.

Participants reported that they taught a majority of the literacy skills in the content areas often through read-alouds and expository text. They stated that phonics skills were explicitly taught using direct instruction. They further stated that direct instruction was "the best tool for promoting reading development." It is interesting to note that 55% of the participants stated that effective classroom management and strong rituals and routines are crucial for a direct instruction program to be successful.

The Teacher Perceptions toward Early Reading and Spelling (TPERS) survey was also used to address this question. Throughout this survey a recurring pattern emerged. Participants felt strongly that phonics instruction is very important in a productive, successful early reading program. All participants unanimously agreed that teachers must know how to teach phonics effectively. However, 11% of them felt phonics rules should not be taught.

The Teacher Knowledge Assessment: Structure of Language Instrument (TKA:SL) further provided insight into answering this research question. It is of great interest that the participants when asked about their knowledge of phonics skills 25% stated they were experts and the remaining 75% rated themselves very good which is the next level below expert. In the same survey, participants answered 19 multiple choice questions assessing their actual knowledge of the concepts they had rated themselves earlier in the survey. Ten of the 19 questions were explicitly phonics related. Eight of the ten questions were answered incorrectly by different participants. Two of those questions were missed by multiple participants. This information may indicate that participants believe their knowledge base is stronger than it actually is.

Research Question 2

What contributes to the differences in scores among students who receive direct instruction in different classrooms? The differences and similarities when comparing CRCT and DIBELS scores became a concern to the target district. As scores were compared, the question of why did scores differ became evident. All elementary schools had received the same training and resources. The district had expected similar increases in scores.

In order for a child to qualify for this classroom, they failed Georgia's CRCT the previous year which is administered in the spring of each year. Therefore, all students in the target classes scored below 800 scale score or in the level 1 range on the 2009 CRCT. When analyzing 2010 CRCT scores, two schools (school 2 and school 10) had no more than one student score below 800 scale score in Reading. The same two schools had more students scoring in the level 3 range which is considered exceeding standards at 850 scale score or higher. Those two schools also had a higher average class scale score than the other schools. School 2 had an average scale score of 846 and school 10 had an average scale score of 843. The remaining schools had more students scoring in the level 1 range than in the level 3 range. The remaining schools had more students scoring in the level 2 range than school 2 or school 10. Their average scale score was also lower than school 2 or school 10. The average scale score for the remaining schools fell between 815 and 820 which was lower than school 2 or school 10.

When comparing DIBELS scores, results continued to show differences between pockets of schools. Fall 2009 beginning-of-the-year scores were compared to Spring 2010 end-of-the-year scores. Full academic year students' scores were considered. Four of the schools showed increases in the number of students who needed intensive

instruction. It was anticipated that there would be more students who benchmarked by the end of the year. However, 5 of the schools showed decreases in the number of students who benchmarked at the end of the year. On the other hand, school 4 showed a dramatic increase in the number of students benchmarking. School 4 had 9 out of 12 students benchmark by the end of the year.

When comparing the CRCT and DIBELS scores to interview and survey responses, patterns begin to emerge. The TPERS was compared to interview responses along with the benchmark and standardized test scores. When looking at the responses from school 2, school 4, and school 10 similar answers appeared.

Phoneme segmentation is considered to be a very strong predictor of effective reading and a student must score 35 points in order to be considered at benchmark (Good & Kaminski, 2002). If a student has not benchmarked in phoneme segmentation, they will be more likely to experience reading difficulties later. Therefore, sound recognition is considered more important to master first than letter recognition. When asked to rank the statement that letter recognition is a strong predictor of early reading success, participants 2, 4, and 10 disagreed to strongly disagreed. The remaining participants agreed that letter recognition is a strong predictor. These three participants answered all questions very closely. On three other questions, these particular three participants answered on the opposite spectrum as the other participants.

The TKA:SL responses were also compared to interview responses and survey data. When asked to rate their knowledge level of phonemic awareness, 13% stated they were experts, 75% very good, and 13% moderate. Twenty-five percent rated themselves as an expert in phonics and 75% said they were very good. Interesting to note that participants 2, 4, and 10 stated they were very good (not experts) but scored better on

section two of this instrument. Teacher 4 and teacher 10 answered all questions correctly. Teacher 2 missed only one question. Using the data from this survey, their knowledge base, especially in the area of phonics, appears to be stronger.

The literacy specialist in the target district observed participants informally using an observational protocol. Although her comments were positive overall for all participants, there were some slight differences noted. She noted on teacher 2 and teacher 10, there was strong classroom management. Rituals and routines have been well established. "There are no surprises." Teachers 2 and 4 seemed to be more comfortable using a variety of teaching strategies. Small group instruction, as well as whole group instruction were observed during the observation period.

Research Question 3

In what ways do teachers' attitudes about direct instruction affect student achievement? Interview responses and observation notes will be compared to help address the answer to this question. Teachers were asked their definition of direct instruction. Answers varied somewhat even though participants had received specific training in direct instruction. Again teachers 2, 4, and 10 provided responses that had some similarities. They all stated that direct instruction was teacher led and very structured. They also note plentiful practice opportunities and constant interaction between the students and teacher. The remaining participants stated that direct instruction was a scripted program as opposed to focusing on it as a method of instruction.

Teacher 10 noted that direct instruction can be exhausting but is very beneficial especially to struggling students. Teacher 2 stated that direct instruction has "proven to be effective for my students." Teacher 4 reported that some teachers may find it "boring" to teach and that is why appropriate pacing is critical. Students remain engaged. She

noted that she has "enjoyed direct instruction because of knowing that students are receiving quality research-based curriculum and not having to worry that a skill was missed." The remaining participants were more neutral in their responses. They did not provide many negative responses but did not speak positively about direct instruction either. Two participants did report that direct instruction was boring and lacked creativity.

The Teacher Motivation and Job Satisfaction Survey provided information used to address this question. Teacher 2, teacher 4, teacher 10, and teacher 11 noted they were very satisfied with their current position. Their years of experience varied from 6 to 36 years and their absenteeism differed as well. All three teachers were absent more than five days but less than 10 days. The remaining teacher participants reported they were either somewhat satisfied or somewhat dissatisfied. Their years of experience varied from 1 to 15 years. This group of participants was absent at least one day but less than 10 days. A pattern could not be determined when analyzing years of experience or number of days absent.

Teacher efficacy is also addressed with this survey. When synthesizing the data from this survey, a sense of achievement along with recognition was ranked by 75% of the participants as very motivating to highly motivating. Accountability and tenure was seen as very motivating to highly motivating by 63% of the participants. Workshops, whether paid by the district or not, and teacher projects were ranked as unmotivating more than any other factor. Training was mentioned many times throughout the interviews as necessary for successful implementation. This is interesting to emphasize because workshops were rated as unmotivating.

Research Question 4

What are the barriers to implementing direct instruction? Teacher participants and administrators were asked specifically about the barriers of implementing a successful direct instruction program. Teacher responses included the need for extensive planning, lack of time, limited freedom and creativity, students become bored, lack of parental support, and overwhelming and stressful for the teacher.

Administrators also provided insight into some barriers faced at a different level to implementing a successful direct instruction program. Comments noted from the administrators included lack of time within the day. Administrators were provided a schedule of components and amount of time that must be included within a day. It was difficult to schedule all the components of the direct instruction program designed by the target district. Another barrier faced by administrators has been providing support personnel to help the classroom teacher administer all the intervention programs diagnosed for these classes.

It appears some commonalities include lack of time and extensive planning. Administrators from all schools commented on the positive outcomes they have seen through this program. Students appear to be more confident readers and their self-esteem has most assuredly increased. Due to smaller class size, the students receive more one-on-one attention from their teacher.

Summary of the Findings

Participants indicated that teaching strategies and methods, direct instruction, literacy skills, determining fluent readers, and barriers and supports lead to the development of a successful reading program which in turn affects student achievement. Participants noted that through direct instruction they have applied teaching strategies

and methods such as flexible small groups based on student needs, progress monitoring, practice, feedback, and constant review. Teachers from this case study realized the need for using flexible small groups.

Teachers overall felt that direct instruction was effective for struggling readers. Although some noted direct instruction was boring, moved slowly, and lacked creativity, the teachers whose benchmark and standardized test scores showed more positive results did not share this opinion. All teachers noted that in order for direct instruction to be successful, effective training is essential. They also felt it was the best method for addressing varying levels of students.

Literacy skills can be taught across the curriculum in all content areas according to the participants when interviewed. They said they are able to incorporate expository text into their direct instruction. They also stated that by doing this, students are able to apply what they have learned. They also concurred that some skills like phonics are easier to teach within the reading as opposed to other content areas.

Participants reported that being able to determine fluent readers is a skill needed by all teachers. In this case study, all participants felt they could easily use assessment to guide their instruction. In addition, they all felt that they were very comfortable in determining whether a reader was fluent or not. They all described their detailed process for determining fluency.

Participants reported that effective classroom management and well-established rituals and routines are necessary in a direct instruction classroom. They noted that direct instruction is the best teaching strategy when working with struggling, below-grade-level readers. As stated earlier, some teachers reported that direct instruction can be overwhelming and exhausting. Extensive planning is necessary in an effective direct

instruction classroom. Lack of time was stated as a barrier by both teacher participants and administrators.

Connections to Previous Research and Theoretical Framework

According to previous research, student achievement plays a major role in education world-wide (Fehrler et al., 2009; Mark, 2008). Teachers must teach all children in a manner that is appropriate for the needs of the child. This has forced educators to differentiate instruction and provide targeted direct instruction to students who have fallen behind their classmates.

Direct instruction uses lessons that are composed of small steps explicitly taught through methods such as small-group instruction (Carnine, 2000; Goldberg et al., 1971). This case study provided observations and interviews that corroborated the importance of small group instruction. From reviewing the literature, direct instruction can have multiple meanings (Cole et al., 1993; Rosenshine & Meister, 1995; Rosenshine, 2008). The participants' interview responses regarding their definition of direct instruction varied. Some participants viewed it as a method of instruction where other participants described it as a scripted program.

The literature also indicated that as more demands are placed on teachers other factors can affect the performance level of teachers which can affect student achievement (Imants & Van Zoelen, 1995; Jennings & Greenberg, 2008; Moomaw, 2005; Ransford et al., 2009). This study also considered years of experience, absenteeism, and teacher efficacy.

For a theoretical framework, this case study is supported by a constructivist approach. Constructivism is formed by personal experiences of the learner where the instructor facilitates the instruction (Green & Gredler, 2002; Tzuo, 2007; Powell &

Kalina, 2009). Jean Piaget's and Lev Vygotsky's constructivist theoretical perspectives provided a foundation for this study. Piaget maintained children must learn at their own pace (Powell & Kalina, 2009). Vygotsky insisted that children be involved in their own learning and they can progress further with the help of a qualified facilitator (Green & Gredler, 2002; Powell & Kalina, 2009).

Both theories place emphasis on the child's learning as corroborated by this case study. Just as Vygotsky and Piaget recognized the importance of the teacher's role (Tzuo, 2007), so does this case study. The teacher is key to the success of a direct instruction program. Modeling and explaining that which has evolved into scaffolded instruction is also crucial. This is at the heart of direct instruction as well as Vygotsky's theory (Green & Gredler, 2002; Jaramillo, 1996; Powell & Kalina, 2009). Piaget understood that learning occurs in steps and thinking progresses from concrete to abstract skills (Powell & Kalina, 2009). Direct instruction is supported by this.

Vygotsky felt learning relies on social interaction. Problems can either be solved independently or with appropriate guidance. This is also supported by direct instruction. Vygotsky also believed emphatically in scaffolding instruction through modeling and explaining concepts. Data and evidence from this case study support theories from both constructivists.

Effective direct instruction possesses the vital elements of modeling and collaboration (Foorman & Torgeson, 2001; Green & Gredler, 2002; Powell & Kalina, 2009). Immediate, specific feedback was considered important to Piaget and the direct instruction teaching model (Webb, 1980).

According to direct instruction teaching model, material should be taught at a faster pace minimizing gaps and maximizing student engagement. After coding

interviews and analyzing survey data, participants supported this claim. Observation notes also show this to be true. According to the literature, when direct instruction is used to teach skills specifically, reading development will be successful (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004; National Reading Panel, 2000). According to the National Reading Panel (2000), phonics should be taught through direct instruction. Data from the Teacher Perceptions of Early Reading and Spelling support this finding.

The research and participants concurred that receiving appropriate training is crucial when implementing a program of study. However, test data from this case study did not fully support Rosenshine's findings. He stated that when effective training is provided their student achievement increased (Rosenshine, 1983). Literature further indicates when teachers are unfamiliar with a concept, attitudes are often less positive (Demant & Yates, 2003). The discrepancy in test scores was the basis for this case study.

Direct instruction is composed of small group instruction, students answering together on cue, fast pacing, and immediate feedback (Ryder et al., 2006; Vukmir, 2002). As teacher participants were observed, these components were evident. Choosing appropriate text is key to instruction also. Participants rated their knowledge base in this area as minimal.

Although participants and earlier research indicated that phonics was a key concept best taught through direct instruction, all research did not necessarily support this. According to Wilson et al., (2004) when phonics is taught explicitly using direct instruction, there is no evidence that children can apply those skills. The interview responses do not support this claim; however, the DIBELS data corroborates this.

Rosenshine (2002) stated that teachers may choose to leave the direct instruction teaching model for various reasons. Teachers did not like the structure or this method of

teaching required too much planning and time. For this case study, participants responded that this method of teaching required extensive planning with a copious amount of paperwork. However, overall perceptions support the findings of Demant and Yates (2003). They found that 81% of their respondents stated that direct instruction was appropriate when teaching basic skills. Similarly this case study found that 73% of the participants shared this same perception.

Professional burnout can occur over time causing emotional exhaustion. This can lead to negative feelings and increased absenteeism (Betoret, 2006). Research indicated teacher efficacy did not show any relationship to teacher absenteeism (Imants & Van Zoelen, 1995). For this case study, both stressors were addressed but no relationship was established.

According to Shippen (2008), in order for reading skills to improve they must be nurtured over time with a large amount of practice opportunities. Participants from this study indicated that practice was one of the built-in support systems used in direct instruction. This corroborates Keith Stanovich's "Matthew effect."

Small-group instruction was one of the most widely used strategies in direct instruction (Kamps et al., 2008; Rankin-Erickson & Pressley, 2000). Sixty-four percent of the participants in this case study supported this finding. Struggling readers often do not possess adequate phonological awareness (Martin et al., 2008; McQuiston et al., 2008; Rivera et al., 2006; Wright & Jacobs, 2003). This is vital for decoding skills to be developed. It is important that sounds precede letter recognition. The three participants who showed more gains in test scores corroborated this statement.

Suggestions for Further Research

The outcomes from this study suggest that there are other areas for future

research. This case study involved one target district with 11 participants. The sample size was small so additional teachers could be included in the study from other grade levels. The same research could be replicated with teachers of older students. In addition, adding more teachers in the sample would allow the researcher to look closer at years of experience. Patterns may emerge through additional research.

Teacher absenteeism was of interest in this case study. It would be interesting to analyze the teachers' absence further. Research into the reasons given for being absent might help establish a relationship between student achievement and teacher absenteeism. Information here may help address burn out, teacher turnover, and exhaustion.

Additional research analyzing classroom management and achievement scores may provide more information to help develop a successful reading program. Dissecting rituals and routines may aid teachers in keeping students engaged. Including student responses may provide more insight into why some describe direct instruction as "boring." Student subgroups may provide interesting information that links cultural differences with direct instruction effectiveness.

Shortcomings and Limitations of the Study

The sample size was small and findings may not be generalizable to other ages and areas. All schools were rural; therefore, generalizability may be lost to other geographically different schools. All teacher participants were female Caucasian. The study may not relate to other ethnic groups or to the male gender.

Implications of the Study

This case study has implications for school systems and teachers. As school systems prepare to spend money on the professional learning and resources on a program, these findings may help systems ensure they have the right teachers in this position. For

this study it appeared that there may be a positive relationship between participants with higher achievement scores, knowledge of the program, perceptions and attitudes toward direct instruction. The data from this study may also allow teachers to realize how important their belief system is when looking at their knowledge base. It may also help systems and teachers apply this same method of instruction to other content areas.

Conclusion

Teachers may think that they can hide their perceptions and attitudes from district personnel, local administrators, fellow teachers, and students. However as revealed from this study, they may affect test scores or student achievement. Participants related how important they felt effective training was to the successful implementation of a program. Participants in this case study received numerous hours of training and identical resources but felt still more was needed. In this case the training may have given some of the teachers involved in the study a false sense of knowledge. For this case study instructional gaps in phonics was found between the participants, although 25% ranked themselves as experts and the remaining 75% described their knowledge base as very good.

Teachers must continue to remember what a vital role they play in the educational life of a child. Their perceptions and attitudes may shape a child's future more than they realize. After all we all "should be an example to the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12 New International Version [NIV]).

REFERENCES

Achieve, Inc., (2005). *Rising to the challenge: Are high school dropouts prepared for college and work?* Washington, DC: Author.

Alliance for Excellent Education. (2006). *Saving futures, saving dollars: The impact of education on crime reduction and earnings.* Washington, DC. Copy in possession of author.

Alliance for Excellent Education. (2007). *The high cost of high school dropouts.* Washington, DC. Copy in possession of author.

Balfanz, R., Herzog, L., & Mac Iver, D. J. (2007). Preventing student disengagement and keeping students on the graduation path in urban middle-grades schools: Early identification and effective interventions. *Educational Psychologist, 42*(4), 223-235.

Barnyak, N. C., & Paquette, K. (2010, March). An investigation of elementary pre-service teachers reading instruction beliefs. *Reading Improvement.* Farmington Hills, MI: Gale Group.

Begeny, J. C., Krouse, H. E., Ross, S. G., & Mitchell, R.C. (2009). Increasing elementary-aged students reading fluency with group-based interventions: A comparison of repeated reading, listening passage preview, and listening only strategies. *Journal of Behavioral Education, 18,* 211- 228.

Begeny, J. C., & Silber, J. M. (2006, February). An examination of group-based treatment packages for increasing elementary-aged students' reading fluency. *Psychology in the Schools, 43*(2), 183-195.

Betoret, F.D. (2006). Stressors, self-efficacy, coping resources, and burnout among

secondary school teachers in Spain. *Educational Psychology, 26*, 519-539.

Biancarosa, C., & Snow, C. E. (2004*). Reading next – a vision for action and research in middle and high school literacy: A report to Carnegie Corporation of New York* (2nd ed.). Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education.

Bliss, J., & Finneran, R. (1991, April). *Effects of school climate and teacher efficacy on teacher stress.* Chicago, IL: American Educational Research Association.

Bridgeland, J., DiIulio, J, & Morison, K. (2006). *The silent epidemic: Perspectives of high school dropouts.* Washington, DC: Civic Enterprises.

Brown, L. (2010, October). Making the case for case study research. *Chaplaincy Today*. *26*(2), 2-15.

Carlson, C.D., & Francis, D.J. (2002). Increasing the reading achievement of at-risk children through direct instruction: Evaluation of the Rodeo Institute for Teacher Excellence (RITE). *Journal of Education for Students Placed At Risk, 7*(2), 141-166.

Carnine, D. (2000). *Why education experts resist effective practices*. Washington, DC: Thomas B. Fordham Foundation.

Carnine, D. W., Silbert, J., Kame'enui, E.J., & Tarve, S. G. (2010, June). *Direct instruction reading.* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Merrill.

Caro, D., & Lehmann, R. (2009, December). Achievement inequalities in Hamburg schools: How do they change as students get older? *School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 20*(4), 407- 431.

Cole, K. N., Dale, P. S., Mills, P. E., & Jenkins, J. R. (1993). Interaction between early intervention curricula and student characteristics. *Exceptional Children, 60*(1), 17-28.

Coyne, M. D., Zipoli, R. P., Chard, D. J., Fagella-Luby, M., Ruby, M., Santoro, L. E., & Baker, S. (2009, April - September). Direct instruction of comprehension: Instructional examples from intervention research on listening and reading comprehension. *Reading and Writing Quarterly*, 25(2/3), 221-245.

Crawford, K. (1996). Vygotskian approaches to human development in the information era. *Educational Studies in Mathematics. 31,* 43-62.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Das, J., Dercon, S., Habyarimana, J., & Krishnan, P. (2005, April). Teacher shocks and student learning: Evidence from Zambia. *Journal of human Resources, 42*(4),.

DeFord, D. (1985). Validating the construct of theoretical orientation in reading instruction. *Reading Research Quarterly, 20,* 361-367.

Demant, M.S., & Yates, G. C. (2003, December). Primary teachers' attitudes toward direct instruction construct. *Educational Psychology, 23*(5), 483-489. doi: 10.1080/0144341032000123741

Driscoll, M.P. (1994). *Psychology of learning for instruction.* Needham, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Duke, N.K., & Pearson, P.D. (2002). Effective practices for developing reading comprehension. *Journal of Education, 189*(1/2), 107-122.

Dymock, S. (2005, October). Teaching expository text structure awareness. *The Reading Teacher, 59*(2), 177-180. doi:10.1598/RT.59.2.7

Edwards, S. (2004, February). Constructivism does not only happen in the individual: Sociocultural theory and early childhood education. *Early Child Development and Care, 175*(1), 37-47. doi: 10.1080/0300443042000230311

Fagan, W., T. (1995, November). Social relationships of literacy. *The Reading Teacher, 49*(3), 260-262.

Fallon, K., Light, J., McNaughton, D., Drager, K., & Hammer, C. (2004, December). The effects of direct instruction on the single-word reading skills of children who require augmentative and alternative communication. *Journal of Speech, Language, Hearing Research, 47,* 1424-1439.

Fehrler, S., Michaelowa, K., & Wechtler, A. (2009, October). The effectiveness of inputs in primary education: Insights from recent student surveys for Sub-Saharan Africa. *Journal of Development Studies, 45*(9), 1545-1578.

Foorman, B. R., & Torgesen, J. (2001). Critical elements of classroom and small-group instruction promote reading success in all children. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice, 16*(4), 203-212.

Foster, W., & Miller, M. (2007, July). Development of the literacy achievement gap: A longitudinal study of kindergarten through third grade. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools, 38*, 173-181.

Fox, E., & Riconscente, M. (2008, July). Metacognition and self-regulation in James, Piaget, and Vygotsky. *Educational Psychology Review, 20,* 373-389. doi: 10.1007/s1064800890792

Gall, M. D., Gall, J. P., & Borg, W. R. (2007). *Educational research: An introduction* (8th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc.

Gangeness, J.E., & Yurkovich, E. (2006, July). Revisiting case study as a nursing research design. *Nurse Researcher. 13*(4), 7-18.

Gash, H. (2009). What you always wanted to know about constructivist education. *Constructivist Foundations, 5*(1), 64-65.

Geary, P. (2006, Winter). Every child a reader: A national imperative. *Reading Improvement*, *43*(4), 179-184.

Georgia Department of Education. (2006a). *Graduation counts*. Atlanta, GA Washington, DC. Copy in possession of author.

Georgia Department of Education. (2006b). *What Georgia educators need to know about Georgia's testing program.* Atlanta, GA: Author. Retrieved from http://public.doe.k12.ga.us

Georgia Department of Education. (2009). *An accountability & assessment brief.* Atlanta, GA: Author.

Georgia Department of Education. (2010a). Overview of key terms and test-related concepts. *2010 CRCT Score Interpretation Guide.* Atlanta, GA: Author.

Georgia Department of Education. (2010b). *FY2010 Professional Learning Report*. Atlanta, GA: Author. Retrieved from http://public.doe.k12.ga.us

Goldberg, M., Knowles, G., & Scott, L. (1971, October). Project follow Through in Philadelphia. *Educational Leadership.* Retrieved from www.ascd.org/ASCD/_lead/el_197110_goldberg.pdf

Good, R. H., & Jefferson, G. (1998). Contemporary perspectives on curriculum-based measurement validity. *Advanced Applications of Curriculum-Based Measurement.* New York, NY: Guilford.

Good, R. H., III, & Kaminski, R. A. (1996). Assessment for instructional decisions: Toward a proactive/prevention model of decision-making for early literacy skills. *School Psychology Quarterly, 11*(4), 326-336.

Good, R. H., & Kaminski, R. A. (Eds.). (2002). *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills* (6th ed.). Eugene, OR: Institute for Development of Educational

Achievement.

Good, R.H., Kaminski, R.A., Shinn, M., Bratten, J., Laimon, L., Smith, S., & Flindt, N. (2004). *Technical adequacy and decision making utility of DIBELS.* (Technical Report No. 7). Eugene, OR: University of Oregon.

Gredler, M. E., (2009). Hiding in plain sight: The stages of mastery/self-regulation in Vygotsky's cultural-historical theory. *Educational Psychologist, 44*(1), 1-19.

Green, J. P. (2002, April). High school graduation rates in the United States. *Manhattan Institute for Policy Research*. Retrieved from http:www.manhattan-institute.org/html/cr_baeo.htm

Green, S. K., & Gredler, M. E. (2002). A review and analysis of constructivism for school-based practice. *School Psychology Review, 31*(1), 53-71.

Grossen, B. (2004, April-June). Success of a direct instruction model at a secondary level school with high-risk students. *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, *20*(2), 161-178.

Imants, J., & Van Zoelen, A. (1995). Teachers' sickness absence in primary schools, school climate, and teachers' sense of efficacy. *School Organisation, 15*(1), 77-86.

Jaramillo, J., (1996). Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and contributions to the development of constructivist curricula. *Education* , *117*(1), 133-140.

Jennings, P. A., & Greenberg, M. T. (2008, December). The prosocial classroom teacher social and emotional competence. Retrieved from http//online.sagepub.com/

Jones, J. R. (1995). Educational philosophies: A primer for parents. Milwaukee, WI: Parents Raising Educational Standards in Schools.

Kamps, D., Abbott, M., Greenwood, C., Wills, H., Veerkamp, M., & Kaufman, J. (2008,

March/April). Effects of small-group reading instruction and curriculum differences for students most at risk in kindergarten. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 41*(2), 101-114.

Kirschner, P.A., Sweller, J., & Clark, R. E. (2006). Why minimal guidance during instruction does not work: An analysis of the failure of constructivist, discovery, problem-based, experiential, and inquiry-based teaching. *Educational Psychologist, 41*(2), 75-86.

Kubina, R. M., & Starlin, C. M. (2003). Reading with precision. *European Journal of Behavior Analysis, 4,* 13-21.

Lindsay, J. (2010). *What the data really show: Direct instruction really works!* Retrieved from http://www.jefflindsay.com/EducData.shtml

Louis, G.W. (2009, May). Using Glasser's choice theory to understand Vygotsky. *International Journal of Reality Therapy, 28(2), 21-23.*

Mac Iver, M., & Kemper, E. (2002). The impact of direct instruction on elementary students' reading achievement in an urban school district. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk, 7*(2), 197-220.

Marks, G. (2008, February). Accounting for the gender gaps in student performance in reading and mathematics: Evidence from 31 countries. *Oxford Review of Education, 34*(1), 89-109.

Martin, D., Martin, M., & Carvalho, K. (2008, January/February). Reading and learning-disabled children: Understanding the problem. *Clearing House, 81*(3), 113-118.

Mather, N., Bos, C., & Babur, N. (2001, September/October). Perceptions and knowledge of preservice and inservice teachers about early literacy instruction. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 34*(5), 472-482.

Mertler, C. (2002). The Teacher Motivation and Job Satisfaction Survey. *American Secondary Education*, *31*(1), 43. Retrieved from http://wps.ablongman.com/wps/media/objects/3984/4080143/ forms/jobsatis

McQuiston, K., O'Shea, D., & McCollin, M. (2008, Winter). Improving phonological awareness and decoding skills of high school students from diverse backgrounds. *Preventing School Failure, 52*(2), 67-70.

Moomaw, W. E. (2005). *Teacher perceived autonomy: A construct validation of the teacher autonomy scale* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from EBSCOhost. University of West Florida, Florida.

Moore, D. W. (2011). Direct instruction: Targeted strategies for student success [Monograph]. Retrieved from www.ngsp.com/Portal/Downloads/Moore_Instruction.pdf

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). (2011). 4th grade reading proficiency has improved little since 1992 and the achievement gap persists. Retrieved June 22, 2011 from http://febp.newamerica.net/k12/rankings/naep4read

National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data: 2004 [Data file]. Washington, DC: Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov

National Early Literacy Panel. (2008). *Developing early literacy: Report of the National Early Literacy Panel.* Washington, DC: National Institute for Literacy. Available at http://www.nifl.gov/earlychildhooc/NELP/NELPreport.html

National Reading Panel (2000). Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction: reports of the subgroups. Bethesda, MD: National Institute of

Child Health and Human Development, National Institutes of Health.

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Public Law (P.L.) 107-110.

O'Brien, D., & Ware, A. (2002). Implementing research-based reading programs in the Fort Worth independent school district. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk, 7*(2), 167-195.

Office of Communications (2010, October). State graduation rate soars above 80 percent. Retrieved June 22, 2011 from http://www.georgia.gov/00/press_print/0,2669, 78006749_163863054_164455705,00.html

Otaiba, S. A., Hosp, J. L., Smartt, S., Dole, J. A. (2008). The challenging role of a reading coach, a cautionary tale. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation, 18*, 124-155.

Pass, S. (2007). When constructivists Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky were pedagogical collaborators: A viewpoint from a study of their communications. *Journal of Constructivist Psychology, 20*, 277-282. doi: 10.1080/10720530701347944

Powell, K. C., & Kalina, C. J. (2009, December). Cognitive and social constructivism: Developing tools for an effective classroom. *Education 130*(2), 241-250.

Rankin-Erickson, J.L., & Pressley, M. (2000). A survey of instructional practices of special education teachers nominated as effective teachers of literacy. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice,15*(4), 206-225.

Ransford, C. R., Greenberg, M. T., Domitrovich, C. E., Small, M., & Jacobson, L. (2009). The role of teachers' psychological experiences and perceptions of curriculum supports on the implementation of a social and emotional learning curriculum. *School Psychology Review, 38*(4), 510-532.

Rasinski, T., Homan, S., & Biggs, M. (2009). Teaching reading fluency to struggling

readers: Method, materials, and evidence. *Reading & Writing Quarterly, 25*, 192-204. doi: 10.1080/10573560802683622

Rivera, M. O., Al-Otaiba, S., & Koorland, M. A.. (2006, May). Reading instruction for students with emotional and behavioral disorders and at risk of antisocial behaviors in primary grades: Review of literature. *Behavioral Disorders, 31*(3), 323-337.

Roberts, G., Torgesen, J., Boardman, A., & Scammacca, N. (2008). Evidence-based strategies for reading instruction of older students with learning disabilities. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice, 23*(2), 63-69.

Roelofs, E., Visser, J., & Terwel, J. (2002). Preferences for various learning environments: Teachers' and parents' perceptions. *Learning Environments Research, 6*, 77-110.

Rosenshine, B. V. (1978). Academic engaged time, content covered and direct instruction. *Journal of Education, 160*(3), 38-66.

Rosenshine, B. (1983, March). Teaching functions in instructional programs. *The Elementary School Journal, 83*(4), 1-15.

Rosenshine, B. (2002). Helping students from low-income homes read at grade level. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk, 7*(2), 273-283.

Rosenshine, B. (2008). Five meanings of direct instruction. Academic Development Institute Center on Innovation and Improvement. Retrieved from www.centerii.org

Rosenshine, B., & Meister, C. (1995). Scaffolds for teaching higher-order cognitive strategies. *Teaching Theory into Practice,* Cambridge, MA: Brookline Books.

Rosenshine, B., & Stevens, R. (1986). *Handbook of research on teaching* (3rd ed). New

York, NY: Macmillan.

Rupley, W. H. (2009). Introduction to direct/explicit instruction in reading for the struggling reader: Phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. *Reading & Writing Quarterly, 25*, 119-124. doi: 10.1080/10573560802690189

Rupley, W. H., Blair, T. R., & Nichols, W.D. (2009, April-September). Effective reading instruction for struggling readers: The role of direct/explicit teaching. *Reading and Writing Quarterly*, *25*(2/3), 125-138.

Ryder, R. J., Burton, J. L., & Silberg, A. (2006, January/February). Longitudinal study of direct instruction effects from first through third grades. *Journal of Educational Research, 99*(3), 180-191.

Schargel, F., Thacker, T., & Bell, J., (2007). *From at risk to academic excellence: What successful leaders do.* Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education.

Shaughnessy, A., & Sanger, D. (2005). Kindergarten teachers' perceptions of language and literacy development, speech-language pathologists, and language interventions. *Communication Disorders Quarterly, 26*(2), 67-84.

Shippen, M.E. (2008, December). A pilot study of the efficacy of two adult basic literacy programs for incarcerated males. *Journal of Correctional Education, 59*(4), 339-347.

Shippen, M.E., Houchins, D.E., Steventon, C., & Sartor, D. (2005, May-June). A comparison of two direct instruction reading programs for urban middle school students. *Remedial and Special Education, 26*(3), 175-182.

Suryadarma, D., Suryahadi, A., Sumarto, S., & Rogers, F. H. (2006, December). Improving student performance in public primary schools in developing

countries: evidence from Indonesia. *Education Economic*, *14*(4), 401-429.

Teale, W., Paciga, K., & Hoffman, J. (2007). Beginning reading instruction in urban schools: The curriculum gap ensures a continuing achievement gap. *The Reading Teacher*, *61*(4), 344-348.

Traina, K. (2001). The cognitive theories of Piaget and Vygotsky. Retrieved from http://www.associatedcontent.com/shared/print.shtml?content_type=article&content_type

Tobias, S. (2010). Generative learning theory, paradigm shifts, and constructivism in educational psychology: A tribute to Merl Wittrock. *Educational Psychologist, 45*(1), 51-54.

Tzuo, P. W., (2007). The tension between teacher control and children's freedom in a child-centered classroom: Resolving the practical dilemma through a closer look at the related theories. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 35*(1), 33-39. doi: 10.1007/s10643-007-0166-7

Vukmir, L. (2002, Spring). Direct instruction a quiet revolution in Milwaukee public school. *Wisconsin Interest, 2*(2), 41-50.

Vygotskii [Vygotsky], L.S. (1984). *Problemy detskoi (vozrastnoi psikhologii)*. In Sobranie sochinenii. *6*(4), 243-432.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind and society: The development of higher mental processes.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Webb, P. K. (1980). Piaget: Implications for teaching. *Theory Into Practice*, *19*(2), 93-97.

Wilson, G.P, Martens, P., Poonam, A., & Altwerger, B. (2004, November). Readers, instruction, and the NRP. *Phi Delta Kappan*, *86*(3), 242-246.

Wright, J., & Jacobs, B. (2003). Teaching phonological awareness and metacognitive

strategies to children with reading difficulties: A comparison of two instructional methods. *Educational Psychology, 23*(1), 17- 42. doi: 10.1080/0144341022000022997

Yan-bin, W. (2009, October). Impact of Lev Vygotsky on special education. *Canadian Social Science 5*(5), 100-103.

Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research design and methods.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Zaretskii, V.K. (2009, November-December). The zone of proximal development: What Vygotsky did not have time to write. *Journal of Russian and East European Psychology, 47*(6), 70-93.

APPENDIX A

CONSENT FORM

Appendix A

Consent Form

The following consent form was taken from and adapted from Liberty University IRB website. https://www.liberty.edu/index.cfm?PID=12837

Consent Form

"Teachers' Perceptions of How Direct Instruction Affects Reading Achievement"

Sharon P. Collum
Liberty University
Department of Education

You are invited to be in a research study of teachers' perception of direct instruction's affect on reading achievement. You were selected as a possible participant because you have experience with direct instruction and the teaching of reading. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.
This study is being conducted by Sharon P. Collum through the Department of Education at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia.

Background Information
The purpose of this study is to determine why students identified as struggling readers continue to read below grade level although interventions have been used in their instruction. The study will consider if attitudes of teachers and/or students play a role in their level of student achievement.

Procedures
If you agree to be in this study, you would be involved in interviews, focus group interviews, and classroom observations. All interviews and observations will not be video recorded or audio recorded. Notes will be taken and an observation protocol will be used.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study
There are no known risks expected from participating in this study. Any risk that could occur is no more than you would encounter in everyday life. The opportunity to participate in a qualitative research study and the information gained are expected benefits.

Confidentiality
The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report we might publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers will have access to the records. Data will be stored electronically as well as a hard copy will be maintained, including

interviews and observations. All data will be kept secure by the researcher.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your relationship with Target Elementary, the school system, or administrators. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions
The researcher conducting this study is Sharon P. Collum, and you may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her by email at scollum@bartow.k12.ga.us or by phone at (770)606 – 5900. If you have questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, Dr. Fernando Garzon, Chair, 1971 University Blvd, Suite 1582, Lynchburg, VA 24502 or email at fgarzon@liberty.edu.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:
I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Investigator: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Appendix B

Interview Questions

Teacher Subject Questions

Questions adapted from questions developed by The Education Alliance at Brown University in 2005
http://www.cal.org/twi/toolkit/ci/QA/aa_qs.htm

- What teaching strategies are effective for promoting reading development?
- How do you teach a classroom of students with varying levels of literacy and reading readiness?
- What is direct instruction? What literacy skills are taught through the content areas and what are taught through language arts lessons?
- How do you distinguish a fluent grade-level reader from a struggling reader?
- What are some useful and appropriate supports for teachers implementing direct instruction? What information and skills do they need in order to be an effective Direct Instruction teacher? What are some barriers you have faced using Direct Instruction in your classroom?

APPENDIX C

OBSERVATION NOTES PROCEDURES

Appendix C

Observation Notes Procedures

- The classroom will serve as the observation site. Teachers will be observed for the duration of a reading class including a direct instruction reading segment (45 minutes).
- An observational protocol will be used to record notes in the classroom. A map of the room will be utilized scanning left to right. Differences and similarities of classrooms will be noted.
- Direct instruction will be the focus of the observation.
- The researcher will use an interview protocol and strictly adhere to the questions.
- The interviews will last approximately 45 minutes.

APPENDIX D

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION PROTOCOL FORM

Appendix D

Classroom Observation Protocol Form

This form was taken and adapted from

http://www.english.gsu.edu/graduate/pdf/ClassroomObservationForm.pdf

Teacher #: _____

Date: _____ Start Time: _____ End Time: _____

1. Describe the professional conduct of the teacher, i.e. uses of authority, language, attitude toward students, attitude toward subject matter, etc.

2. Describe the teacher's relationship with students in the class, i.e. stance, comments, tone, responses directed to individual students, etc.

3. How well does the teacher use class time, i.e. ratio of instructional methods, pacing, etc?

4. How does the teacher accommodate a variety of student learning styles in the classroom?

5. How does the teacher's classroom set up and practice correlate with the expected strategy of teaching?

6. Does the teacher demonstrate familiarity with the expected method of teaching?

APPENDIX E

THE TEACHER MOTIVATION AND

JOB SATISFACTION SURVEY

Appendix E

The Teacher Motivation and Job Satisfaction Survey

Developed by Craig Mertler

Permission to use and an electronic version have been requested

1. What is your overall level of satisfaction with your job as a teacher?

O Very Dissatisfied O Somewhat Dissatisfied O Somewhat Satisfied O Very Satisfied

2. If you had the opportunity to start over in a new career, would you choose to become a teacher?

O Yes O No

3. Generally speaking, do you believe that the teachers with whom you work are motivated?

O Yes O No

4. How many teachers that you know or work with would you classify as unmotivated?

O 1-2 O 3-4 O 5-6 O 7-8 O 9-10 O More than 10

5. On the following 6-point scale, indicate the degree to which each of the following serve as a motivating factor or an unmotivating factor for teachers.

   a. recognition (e.g. receiving praise from administrators, parents, students, or others)

O highly unmotivating O very unmotivating O unmotivating O motivating O very motivating O highly motivating

   b. potential for professional growth (e.g. possibility of improving one's own professional skills)

O highly unmotivating O very unmotivating O unmotivating O motivating O very motivating O highly motivating

c. supervision by superiors (e.g. overall competence of superiors)

O highly unmotivating O very unmotivating O unmotivating O motivating O very motivating O highly motivating

d. interpersonal relationships with colleagues (e.g. interaction with other teachers)

O highly unmotivating O very unmotivating O unmotivating O motivating O very motivating O highly motivating

e. salary (e.g. financial compensation)

O highly unmotivating O very unmotivating O unmotivating O motivating O very motivating O highly motivating

f. job security (e.g. tenure)

O highly unmotivating O very unmotivating O unmotivating O motivating O very motivating O highly motivating

g. status (e.g. professional status of teaching)

O highly unmotivating O very unmotivating O unmotivating O motivating O very motivating O highly motivating

h. interpersonal relationships with administrators (e.g. interaction with administrators)

O highly unmotivating O very unmotivating O unmotivating O motivating O very motivating O highly motivating

i. sense of achievement

O highly unmotivating O very unmotivating O unmotivating O motivating O very motivating O highly motivating

j. working conditions (e.g. building conditions, amount of work, facilities available)

O highly unmotivating O very unmotivating O unmotivating O motivating O very motivating O highly motivating

k. district policies (e.g. overall effects of the district as an organization)

O highly unmotivating O very unmotivating O unmotivating O motivating O very motivating O highly motivating

l. teacher evaluation (e.g. appraisal of classroom instruction by evaluator)

O highly unmotivating O very unmotivating O unmotivating O motivating O very motivating O highly motivating

m. responsibility (e.g. autonomy, authority and responsibility for own work)

O highly unmotivating O very unmotivating O unmotivating O motivating O very motivating O highly motivating

n. potential for advancement (possibility of assuming different positions in the profession)

O highly unmotivating O very unmotivating O unmotivating O motivating O very motivating O highly motivating

o. work itself (e.g. aspects associated with the task of teaching)

O highly unmotivating O very unmotivating O unmotivating O motivating O very motivating O highly motivating

p. factors in personal life (e.g. effects of teaching on one's personal life)

O highly unmotivating O very unmotivating O unmotivating O motivating O very motivating O highly motivating

q. interpersonal relationships with students (e.g. interaction with students)

O highly unmotivating O very unmotivating O unmotivating O motivating O very motivating O highly motivating

r. sense of accountability (e.g. being held directly responsible for student learning)

O highly unmotivating O very unmotivating O unmotivating O motivating O very motivating O highly motivating

6. On the following 6-point scale, indicate the degree to which each of the following serve as a motivating factor or an unmotivating factor for teachers.

a. a one-time monetary award (supplemental to the step increase)

O highly unmotivating O very unmotivating O unmotivating O motivating O very motivating O highly motivating

b. being selected as "Teacher of the Year" in the district

O highly unmotivating O very unmotivating O unmotivating O motivating O very motivating O highly motivating

c. an instructional workshop offered by the district for a fee

O highly unmotivating O very unmotivating O unmotivating O motivating O very motivating O highly motivating

d. having students thank a teacher for aiding in the understanding of a difficult concept

O highly unmotivating O very unmotivating O unmotivating O motivating O very motivating O highly motivating

e. an instructional workshop offered and paid for by the district

O highly unmotivating O very unmotivating O unmotivating O motivating O very motivating O highly motivating

f. being given the opportunity to participate in teacher projects (e.g. research, curriculum development)

O highly unmotivating O very unmotivating O unmotivating O motivating O very motivating O highly motivating

g. early retirement/contract buy-out

O highly unmotivating O very unmotivating O unmotivating O motivating O very motivating O highly motivating

h. observing vast improvement in the achievement levels of one's students since the beginning of the year

O highly unmotivating O very unmotivating O unmotivating O motivating O very motivating O highly motivating

i. being awarded a plaque by students

O highly unmotivating O very unmotivating O unmotivating O motivating O very motivating O highly motivating

j. being permitted to purchase additional equipment and supplies for the classroom

O highly unmotivating O very unmotivating O unmotivating O motivating O very motivating O highly motivating

7. What is your gender?

O female O male

8. What is your ethnicity?

O African American O Asian American O Caucasian O Hispanic American O Other

9. What is your age?

O 21-25 years O 26-30 years O 31-35 years O 36-40 years O 41-45 years O 46-50 years O 51-55 years O 56 years or older

10. Including the current school year, how many years of teaching experience do you have?

O 1-5 years O 6-10 years O 11-15 years O 16-20 years O 21-25 years O 26-30 years O 31-35 years O 36 years or more

11. Which best describes your current school setting?
O urban O suburban O rural

12. Which best describes your current school level?
O elementary school O middle/junior high school O high school

APPENDIX F

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS TOWARD EARLY READING AND SPELLING (TPERS) INSTRUMENT

Appendix F

The Teacher Perceptions toward Early Reading and Spelling (TPERS) Instrument

Developed by D. DeFord

Permission to use and an electronic version have been requested

All items are rated on a 6 point Likert scale

1. Ability to rhyme words is a strong predictor of early reading success.
2. Letter recognition is a strong predictor of early reading success.
3. Poor phonemic awareness (awareness of the individual sounds in words) inhibits learning to read.
4. Encouraging the use of invented spelling can help children develop phonemic awarenss.
5. K-2 teachers should know how to teach phonological awarenss, i.e., knowing that spoken language can be broken down into smaller units (words, syllables, phonemes).
6. Individual differences in phonological awareness in children help explain reading growth during primary grades.
7. A teacher should not be concerned when early readers' miscues do not change meaning.
8. When early readers do not know how to pronounce a word, one good strategy is to prompt them to sound it out.
9. When early readers do not know how to pronounce a word, one good strategy is to prompt them to sound it out.
10. Learning to use context clues (syntax and semantics) is more important than learning to use grapho-phonic cues (letters and sounds) when learning to read.

11. A significant increase in oral reading miscues is usually related to decrease in comprehension.
12. Beginning readers need to encounter a new word a number of times to ensure it will become a part of their sight vocabulary.
13. Poor memory for the visual features of words affects development in word identification.
14. Visual memory for the features of words is essential for accurate spelling.
15. Transpositions (e.g., saw for was) remain a persistent problem for a few children when reading.
16. Materials for early reading should be written in early language without regard for the difficulty of vocabulary.
17. Basic skills should never be taught in isolation.
18. The development of word identification and spelling are closely related.
19. For fluent reading, rapid identification of whole words is necessary.
20. Reading comprehension is related to fluent word identification.
21. Controlling text through consistent spelling patterns (e.g., the fat cat sat on a hat) is a method by which some children can most easily learn to read.
22. K-2 teachers should know how to teach phonics.
23. Phonic rules and generalizations should be taught to early readers.
24. Phonics instruction can help a child improve spelling abilities.
25. Children who make repeated spelling errors are likely to benefit from systematic instruction.

APPENDIX G

STRUCTURE OF LANGUAGE (TKA:SL) INSTRUMENT

Appendix G

The Teacher Knowledge Assessment: Structure of Language (TKA:SL) Instrument

Developed by Mather, N., Bos, C., & Babur, N.

Permission to use and an electronic version have been requested

Please evaluate your knowledge:

Minimal Moderate Very Good Expert

1. Phonemic Awareness
2. Phonics
3. Fluency
4. Vocabulary
5. Comprehension
6. Children's Literature
7. Teaching literacy skills to ELLs
8. Using assessment to inform reading instruction
9. A phoneme refers to

   O a single letter O a single speech sound O a single unit of meaning

   O a grapheme O no idea
10. If tife is a word, the letter "I" would probably sound like the "I" in:

    O if O beautiful O find O ceiling O sing

    O no idea
11. A combination of two or three consonants pronounced so that each letter keeps its own identity is called:

    O silent consonant O consonant digraph O dipthong

    O consonant blend O no idea

12. How many speech sounds are in the following words? For example, the word “cat” has 3 speech sounds “k”-”a”-”t”. Speech sounds do not necessarily equal the number of letters.

_____ box _____ brush

_____ grass _____ knee

_____ ship _____ through

_____ moon

13. What type of task would the following be? “Say the word ‘cat.’ Now say the word without the /k/ sound.”

O blending

O rhyming

O segmentation

O deletion

O no idea

14. A “soft c” is in the word

O Chicago

O cat

O chair

O cry

O none of the above

O no idea

15. Identify the pair of words that begins with the same sound:

O joke – goat

O chef – shoe

O quiet – giant

O chip – chemist

O no idea

(The next 2 items involve saying a word and then reversing the order of the sounds. For example, the word "back" would be "cab.")

16. If you say the word, and then reverse the order of the sounds, ice would be:

O easy

O sea

O size

O sigh

O no idea

17. If you say the word, and then reverse the order of the sounds, enough would be:

O fun

O phone

O funny

O one

O no idea

18. All of the following nonsense words have a silent letter, except:

O bamb

O wrin

O shipe

O knam

O phop

O no idea

19. For each of the words on the left, determine the number of syllables and the number of morphemes. (Please be sure to give both the number of syllables and the number of morphemes, even though it may be the same number.)

	# of syllables	# of morphemes
disassemble	_____	_____
heaven	_____	_____

O a teaching method for decoding skills

O the same as phonics

O no idea

24. Phonemic awareness is:

O the same as phonological awareness.

O the understanding of how letters and sounds are put together to form words.

O the ability to break down and manipulate the individual sounds in spoken language.

O the ability to use sound-symbol correspondences to read new words.

O no idea.

25. What is the rule that governs the use of ‘c’ in the initial position for /k/?

O ‘c’ is used for /k/ in the initial position before e, i, or y

O the use of ‘c’ for /k/ in the initial position is random and must be memorized

O ‘c’ is used for /k/ in the initial position before a, o, u, or any consonant

O none of the above

O no idea

26. What is the rule that governs the use of ‘k’ in the initial position for /k/?

O ‘k’ is used for /k/ in the initial position before e, i, or y

O the use of ‘k’ for /k/ in the initial position is random and must be memorized

O ‘k’ is used for /k/ in the initial position before a, o, u, or any consonant

O none of the above

O no idea

27. A morpheme refers to:

O a single letter

O a single speech sound

O a single unit of meaning

O a grapheme

O no idea

APPENDIX H

PERMISSION TO USE SURVEYS

Appendix H

Permission to Use Surveys

From: "Mather, Nancy - (nmather)" <nmather@email.arizona.edu>
Date: March 29, 2012 10:26:08 AM EDT
To: Richard Collum <rscollum@gmail.com>
Subject: RE: Permission to use surveys
Hi Sharon, it is totally fine with me if you use the surveys. I think this is the latest version? Be interested in hearing what you find out... Nancy

Nancy Mather

From: Richard Collum [rscollum@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, March 28, 2012 9:08 PM
To: nmather@u.arizona.edu
Subject: Permission to use surveys

Dr. Mather,
My name is Sharon Collum and I am a graduate student at Liberty University pursuing a doctorate degree in Educational Leadership. I am working on a study regarding the impact teacher perceptions and attitudes toward direct instruction have on student achievement. I am asking permission to use your surveys, The Teacher Knowledge Assessment: Structure of Language Survey and Teacher Perceptions Toward Early Reading and Spelling Survey. I would give you and the other authors (Candace Bos and Nalan Babur) full credit throughout the paper and defense. My sample is very small. It consists of 11 elementary teachers. This is very important to me to use these surveys. I obtained them through the public domain on the internet but would very much like to gain your permission to use them as well. Thank you in advance.
Sharon Collum

Dr. Mertler,
My name is Sharon COllum and I am a graduate student at Liberty University pursuing a doctorate degree in Educational Leadership. I am working on a study regarding the impact teacher perceptions and attitudes toward direct instruction have on student achievement. I am asking permission to use your survey, The Teacher Motivation and Job Satisfaction Survey. I would give you full credit throughout the paper and defense. My sample is very small. It consists of 11 elementary teachers. This is very important to me to use this survey. I obtained it through the public domain on the internet but would very much like to gain your permission to use it as well. Thank you in advance.
Sharon Collum