

Fall 10-29-2013

# Teacher Evaluation of the Scripted Reading Street Program and the Level of Satisfaction among its Sub-scale Components

Danielle Savino-Garzon  
danielle.savinogarzon@student.shu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarship.shu.edu/dissertations>

 Part of the [Curriculum and Instruction Commons](#), and the [Educational Leadership Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Savino-Garzon, Danielle, "Teacher Evaluation of the Scripted Reading Street Program and the Level of Satisfaction among its Sub-scale Components" (2013). *Seton Hall University Dissertations and Theses (ETDs)*. 1912.  
<https://scholarship.shu.edu/dissertations/1912>

TEACHER EVALUATION OF THE SCRIPTED READING STREET  
PROGRAM AND THE LEVEL OF SATISFACTION AMONG ITS SUB-SCALE COMPONENTS

Danielle Savino-Garzon

Dissertation Committee

Barbara Strobert, Ed.D., Mentor  
Michael Osnato, Ed.D., Committee Member  
Elaine Walker, Ph.D., Committee Member

In partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Education  
in  
Educational Leadership, Management, and Policy

Seton Hall University

2013

## **ABSTRACT**

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) transformed the system of accountability for schools in the United States by implementing high stakes consequences for poor performance on standardized tests. Scripted curriculum has become a common practice as a means to prepare students to achieve the academic standards measured by standardized tests. The purpose of this mixed-methods research study was to explore teachers' evaluation of the scripted Reading Street program and the implementation of the sub-scale components of this curriculum within their classrooms in one New Jersey urban district. This study was conducted to determine whether there were challenges or issues and a significant level of consistency between teacher satisfaction of the Reading Street program in the areas of planning, training and support; planning and scheduling; materials; curriculum and content; differentiated instruction; connections; and outcomes.

Data collection was completed through the use of Google Docs. On March 18, 2013, teachers were emailed a link to the Likert-scale survey and were given two weeks to respond. Follow up open-ended surveys were emailed to the same population of second through fifth grade teachers on April 24, 2013. This study used a mixed-methods approach using survey research. A non-probability sampling method was used; specifically, convenience sampling. The researcher constructed, piloted, and validated the instrument. The first Reading Street survey consisted of 34 Likert-scale questions and one open-ended question. The follow-up Reading Street survey consisted of 12 open-ended questions and two demographic questions, which included years of experience and grade taught. Both surveys were administered to the sample population (n=106), which consisted of second through fifth grade public school teachers.

The results of the study revealed that all scales except planning, training, and support were rated positively by respondents. Second through fifth grade teachers were found not to have received sufficient support prior to and during the course of implementing the Reading Street program throughout the school year.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would first like to thank Dr. Barbara Strobert. Her guidance and feedback were invaluable to me. The time that she dedicated to my research and development will never be forgotten. Her encouragement led me to heights I never thought I could attain, and for that I am forever grateful.

To Dr. Elaine Walker, I give many thanks for her encouragement and assistance in critiquing my dissertation. I am truly appreciative of her guidance through the dissertation process.

To Dr. Michael Osnato, I give many thanks for his encouragement and for being readily available to help me conclude this endeavor.

I thank my parents for the example and work ethic that they provided for me. From an early age I was able to see that if you work hard enough, you can achieve anything. In addition, I thank them for instilling in me the importance of education.

I would like to thank my other parents as well. The natural manner in which they accepted me and encouraged me has made me a better person. I have learned much about life from the time we have spent together.

To Catherine Verdibello, I thank you for your continued support and guidance throughout the ongoing process.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the participants in this study. Without them, this research would not have been possible. I thank them for so generously giving of their time and for their trust and candor.

## **DEDICATION**

I am eternally grateful to you, Germanico, not simply for supporting my decisions to pursue every goal I dream up but, more importantly, for always helping me to believe that I can achieve them. When I said that I wanted to earn a doctoral degree while working full time, you never hesitated to say, "Go for it." Your consistent encouragement made this possible, as there were times when I was off the path, and your encouragement got me back on track. The world is a better place because you are in it, and I will forever love you. I dedicate this dissertation to you, Germanico--my husband, my best friend, my hero.

I would also like to dedicate this to my children, Sophia and Olivia. You are the light, and you make the path worthwhile. I know that everything I do in this world is to enrich your lives, as you have given me unconditional love and support. Your understanding during this process came without asking. I have learned more from you than I could ever teach you. I love you more than words could ever express. You are my whole world, and I couldn't have been more blessed than to have two beautiful daughters with whom to share my success.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgments.....	iv
Dedication.....	v
Table of Contents.....	vi
List of Figures.....	ix
List of Tables.....	x
Chapter I. Introduction .....	1
Context of the Problem.....	1
Statement of the Problem .....	6
Purpose of the Study.....	9
Theoretical Framework .....	11
Research Questions .....	13
Design and Methodology .....	14
Significance of the study .....	16
Limitations .....	16
Delimitations .....	18
Definitions .....	18
Summary .....	20
Chapter II. Review of the Literature.....	21
Introduction .....	21
Early Research: Theoretical Framework .....	21
Review Methods.....	24
Parameters of the Review .....	25
Criteria for Inclusion .....	25
Review of Literature Topics.....	26
History of Reading Curriculum Implementation .....	26
History of Reading Instruction .....	27
Research on Scripted Reading Programs.....	36
Seminal Research .....	37
Replication Research.....	37
Do These Programs Really Work? .....	38
What the Research Says?.....	38
Research on Programmatic Reading Interventions.....	40
Accountability in Education.....	43
Pearson Reading Street Research .....	47
National Reading Panel: Scientifically Based Reading Research .....	49
The Relationship between Teachers' Beliefs and Practices .....	54
Teachers' Perceptions and Attitudes .....	55
Expert Review of Core Reading Programs.....	56
Reading Street.....	56
Summary .....	69
Chapter III. Research Methodology .....	71
Background .....	72
Research Questions.....	74
Research Design and Methods .....	74
Sampling.....	76
School District.....	76
Sample.....	78

Instrumentation.....	78
Data Collection.....	81
Data Analysis .....	83
Validity and Reliability .....	84
Limitations of the Study.....	84
Delimitations of the Study.....	85
Summary .....	85
Chapter IV. Findings .....	87
Introduction .....	87
Response Rate to Quantitative and Qualitative Survey Research .....	89
Data Analysis Procedures .....	90
Findings.....	91
Research Questions .....	91
Follow up Open-ended Survey Summary of Responses.....	101
Curriculum and Content: Reading Street Implementation .....	101
Reading Street Implementation Challenges .....	103
Planning and Scheduling .....	104
Planning and Scheduling Recommendations .....	104
Curriculum and Content: New Jersey Common Core Standards.....	106
Differentiated Instruction: Does It Really Exist? .....	107
Connection: Technology Integration.....	109
Technology: Effective or Ineffective .....	110
Reading Street Overall Challenges.....	111
Reading Street Improvement Recommendations .....	113
Recommendations for Planning, Training and Support.....	114
Summary .....	115
Chapter V. Conclusions, Discussion, and Suggestions for Future Research.....	118
Introduction .....	118
Summary of The Research Questions .....	119
Open-ended Follow Up Survey Responses .....	120
Review of Findings and Interpretations.....	121
Quantitative Data.....	121
Qualitative Data.....	121
Discussion of Findings .....	122
Curriculum and Content .....	122
Materials.....	123
Connections .....	124
Planning and Scheduling .....	125
Outcomes.....	126
Differentiated Instruction .....	127
Planning, Training and Support.....	128
Recommendations for Future Research.....	129
Recommendations for Policy .....	130
Recommendations for Practice.....	131
A Closing Thought .....	134
References .....	136
Appendix A .....	145
Appendix B .....	150
Appendix C .....	152
Appendix D .....	154
Appendix E.....	156

Appendix F.....	161
Appendix G .....	167

## List of Figures

Figure I. The Positive and Negative Impacts of Scripted Commercial Reading Program .....5

**List of Tables**

Table 1. Vital District Facts .....77

Table 2. Means, Standard Deviations, and Reliability Coefficients for Each Scale.....	92
Table 3. Relationships Among Scales as Measured by Pearson Product Moment Correlations .....	93
Table 4. Descriptive Statistics for Reading Street Questionnaire Item Content.....	97

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### **Context of the Problem**

This study sought to explore teachers' evaluation of the scripted Reading Street program and its sub-scale components in an urban New Jersey school district.

Scripted curriculums have become a growing trend among the nation's schools. One of the federal government's main elementary and secondary education programs is Title I, which allocates money for compensatory education to school districts based on child poverty (Gordon, 2002). Scripted curriculum materials are instructional materials that have been commercially prepared and require the teacher to read from a script while delivering the lesson. If a school district chooses to accept school-wide Title I funding, they are tied in to abiding by the federal governments rules concerning the allocation of the money.

Concerns about student achievement in reading in the United States have been well documented over the last 30 years. A few of the commonly known methods are the balanced literacy approach, the whole language approach, and the phonics and scripted reading approach. Most schools attempt to find the best fit for their students. Gallant (2009) and Troia and Maddox (2004) argue that the need to consider any program starts as early as kindergarten and continues throughout higher grade levels.

Scripted commercial programs are not new. The scripted reading instruction of today comes, in one way or another, from Siegfried Engelmann and Carl Bereiter, who in the 1960s developed the direct instruction method of teaching reading to raise the academic success of inner-city children. The pedagogy of a fully scripted teacher's guide

has an even longer history. In 1888 Samuel and Adeline Monroe published one of the earliest texts for teachers with complete scripts for teaching reading readiness, phonics, and oral reading.

Duncan-Owens (2009) discussed in her article how the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and the Reading First initiative have given commercial reading programs prominence in schools as principals look for ways to improve reading achievement through implementation of scientifically based reading methods. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), signed into law by President George W. Bush on January 8, 2002, was implemented to ensure that all students achieve academic proficiency in Language Arts and Mathematics. The cornerstone of the Bush administration's education legislation supports NCLB's goals of improving student achievement and implementing teaching methods proven to be effective. Reading First, part of the Bush initiative, was created in 2002 to encourage the use of scientifically-based research as the foundation for K-3 reading instruction. The goal of the program was to have every student reading at grade level or above by third grade. NCLB and the Reading First emphasis on standardized tests and scientifically based reading instruction have been linked to increased use of scripted reading programs in schools (Cotter, 2003, Erickson, 2008).

This dissertation explores teachers' evaluation of one scripted reading program implemented in a large New Jersey school district. The perceptions of second through fifth grade elementary teachers, who are required to use scripted reading programs, were investigated in this study.

Since perceptions influence actions, the insights of teachers are important in reviewing any program. Good teachers, effective teachers, matter much more than particular curriculum materials, pedagogical approaches, or "proven programs" (Allington & Johnston, 2001; Darling-Hammond, 1999; Duffy, 1997; Pressley et al., 2001; Sanders, 1998; Taylor, Pearson, Clark & Walpole, 2000).

Enhanced reading proficiency rests largely on the capacity of classroom teachers to provide expert, exemplary reading instruction. Exemplary teaching is responsive to children's needs, not regurgitation of a common script. Teachers, whether new or veteran, experience tensions between what the teachers see as the positive effects of scripts on students and the negative effects on the teachers' own autonomy. "New teachers will soon learn what other experienced teachers know. What holds currency today may be gone in a year or two or three. Pragmatically, I see no sense in preparing prospective teachers for any one approach, whether it is explicitly scripted direct instruction, balanced instruction, or the whole-language philosophical approach. New teachers need foundational knowledge of teaching reading to be ready for whatever mandates or choices await them in the schools where they will be teaching" (Commeyras, 2007).

Scripted curriculum determines what the teacher says during instruction and outlines the lessons and the pace at which the lessons are taught (Duncan-Owens, 2009). Scripted instruction refers to commercial reading programs that have highly structured lessons, often with specific time allotments for teaching specific skills, and often word-for-word scripts of what the teacher is to say. Scripted instruction has often been advocated for schools as a way to standardize the quality of instruction. Critics say that such programs stifle teachers' creativity, undermine teachers' expertise, and fail to

provide for the diverse needs of many classrooms. The teacher is expected to read the lesson scripts verbatim. Scripted teaching also hopes to eliminate the risk of poor instruction by inexperienced or ineffective teachers (Commeyras, 2007, p. 404).

Scripted curriculum materials are instructional materials that have been commercially prepared and require the teacher to read from a script while delivering the lesson (Moustafa & Land, 2002). Scripted materials reflect a focus on explicit, direct, systematic skills instruction and are touted as a method to boost sagging standardized test scores and narrow the achievement gap between children growing up in poverty and those who are more affluent (Coles, 2002).

Scripted curricula are not meant to eliminate the amount of teacher preparation but are to be used as a scaffold for teachers to adhere to the topics and skills required of students. Scripted reading programs are used as a tool to which teachers can add and subtract parts of the structure to create a learning environment that facilitates appropriate instruction individualized to the needs of their learners (Guccione, 2011). The goal is that all of the students will learn the same concepts and be able to use the knowledge that comes from the scripted lessons.

Cooter (2003) conducted a study on the urban school literacy crisis. He concluded that two common methods are needed to address poor reading performance. The first method focuses on scripted program interventions that emphasize the adoption of highly scripted programs (Cooter, 2003). The second method concentrates on teacher development and the implementation of professional programs that encourage the development of teacher capacity (Cooter, 2003). Both methods are important because they focus on improving scripted reading curriculum to meet the specific needs of

struggling readers. As part of this study, teacher professional development to implement a scripted reading program was considered.

Figure 1, The Positive and Negative Impacts of Scripted Commercial Reading Programs, created by Duncan-Owens (2007), lists some of the pros and cons of scripted reading to consider before making a decision to introduce a scripted reading program.

<b>The Positive and Negative Impacts of Scripted Commercial Reading Programs</b>	
<b>PROS</b>	<b>CONS</b>
A pre-set standardized curriculum makes lessons easier for teachers to plan and supervisors to monitor.	Programs can marginalize teachers by not allowing them to make decisions about how to teach (Garan, 2004).
Programs ensure teaching consistency.	Programs can “de-skill” teachers, placing them in the role of middle managers (Coles, 2001; Rice, 2006).
Program developers can provide teacher training (Garan, 2004)	Teachers can become alienated from their reading instruction and begin treating the teaching of reading as the application of commercial materials (Shannon, 2005).
Many programs advertise their use of scientifically based reading research and alignment with Reading First guidelines (Duncan-Owens, 2007).	Teachers will continue to follow a program in spite of a lack of results because of administrative insistence.
Designers of scripted instruction have noted that following a model derived from “scientifically based research” can be helpful for teachers and increase student achievement, especially that of students from low-income backgrounds.	Some teachers decry scripted instruction for limiting their autonomy, professionalism, and ability to respond to students’ individual needs. Scripts “take the professionalism out of teaching” (Christiana, 2005).

*Figure 1*

**The Positive and Negative Impacts of Scripted Commercial Reading Programs**

Source: Duncan-Owens (2007). *Reforming Reading Instruction in Mississippi through Demonstration Classes: Barksdale Literacy Teachers’ First Year Experiences.*

Socioeconomic and school factors such as cultural, parental, and familial background must be considered in relation to the use of scripted reading programs. Ede (2006) reported that students in high poverty populations are more likely to be taught with scripted reading curriculum than students living in more affluent schools. Students

in high poverty areas have a much higher likelihood of being taught in schools using a scripted curriculum than those living in more affluent school districts. Schools in which more than 50% of all students are on free or reduced-price lunches qualify for Title I funds from the federal government. Currently, Title I regulations specify that "all participating schools must use program funds to implement a comprehensive school reform program that employs proven methods and strategies based on scientifically-based research" (Comprehensive School Reform Program, p. 2). In essence, these regulations prescribe the use of scripted curriculum materials because these are the only ones that qualify as being scientifically based. Schools that do not receive Title I funds (i.e., those located, in general, in more affluent areas) are free to spend their district's funds on the curriculum of their choice (Ede, 2006).

Elementary school reading instruction and remediation were at the forefront of many local district initiatives because of the requirement of NCLB that all schools make AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress). This was the case for the New Jersey school district included in this study. It was essential that educators accomplish the task of teaching students to read. As a result, one of the many responsibilities confronting educators was how to teach students to read with fluency and to use specific reading strategies to help them read and comprehend what they had read.

### **Statement of the Problem**

What was not debatable is the influence, for better or for worse, that NCLB mandates have had on student achievement. According to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), by 2014 every child is expected to be on grade level in reading and math. The act is promoted as requiring 100% of students (including disadvantaged

and special education students) within a school to reach the same state standards in reading and mathematics. Critics charge that a 100% goal is unattainable. While statewide standards are designed to reduce the educational equality between privileged and underprivileged districts in a state, they still impose a "one size fits all" standard on individual students.

There are different reasons why scripted program supporters embrace this strategy. One rationale behind scripted programs is to create equity across the educational setting by providing consistency and guidance to teachers. Due to low student achievement, teacher shortages, and high student migratory rates, scripted programs were implemented to provide stability to the instructional program in many school districts (Achinstein, Ogawa, & Speiglmán, 2004). Another reason for the support of scripted programs is simply the researched results. Douglas McCrae conducted a study in 2002 over a 3-year period comparing the achievement scores of students using the scripted program Open Court against non-Open Court programs. The study examined over 700 schools in California. The research showed 50% to 75% differences, with Open Court schools scoring higher than non-Open Court schools. The research showed the greatest difference among schools serving a majority of economically disadvantaged student population (McGraw-Hill, 2008). The Sopris West (2008) scripted program Language is a part of over 40 research sites throughout the United States. One Sopris West study in Los Angeles County showed students using the program having 25% to 50% higher scores in their language arts achievement compared to traditional instructional programs.

An influential support for scripted programs in schools is the United States government's endorsement of scripted programs through incentives and sanction

requirements. The United States government allocated over \$2.4 billion in grant money to support scientifically based reading programs over a 4-year period (USDE, 2008). They also require schools under sanction to use scientifically based reading programs for students two or more years below grade level (CDE, 2008; McCarthy, Li, Tabernik, & Casazza, 2008).

During the 2011-2012 school year, one large urban northern New Jersey school district being studied implemented the Scott Foresman Reading Street scripted program in second through fifth grade. Reading Street was designed to help teachers build readers through motivating and engaging literature, scientifically research-based instruction, and a wealth of reliable teaching tools (Reading Street, 2008). The reading program takes the guesswork out of differentiating instruction with a strong emphasis on ongoing progress-monitoring and an explicit plan to help with managing small groups of students. In addition, Reading Street prioritizes skill instruction at each grade level, so teachers can be assured they will focus on the right reading skill, at the right time, and for every student.

The National Reading Panel has identified five core areas of reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Reading Street author Dr. Sharon Vaughn (2006) has found that not every skill at every grade level is equally important. For example, beginning readers need ample time to practice phonics skills. Older readers may need phonics instruction as an intervention strategy. If students do not acquire the knowledge and skills in each of these areas at the appropriate time, they will be at risk for developing reading difficulties (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2003).

The review of available research regarding scripted reading programs exposed a noticeable void in the literature. Many studies exist, particularly in the qualitative field, regarding teachers' attitudes toward a variety of instructional tools and decisions. However, with the recent influx of scripted reading programs since NCLB (2002), the field has been flooded with primarily quantitative research designed to evaluate the effectiveness of a specific program based on student test scores. Much of this available research regarding the effectiveness of scripted reading programs has been promoted by the publishing companies themselves.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this mixed-methods research study was to explore teachers' evaluation of the scripted Reading Street program and the implementation of the sub-scale components of this curriculum within their classrooms in one New Jersey urban district. Despite the fact that a few qualitative studies have evaluated scripted reading programs, an evident gap exists in quantitative studies exploring teacher reactions to those programs. In addition, there have been limited studies that have given voice to the elementary teacher. This study sought to help remedy those deficiencies by exploring teachers' attitudes toward a scripted reading program that reduced teacher autonomy in one large New Jersey district. There was a need for a mixed-methods study that examined the influence of utilizing a scripted language arts curriculum.

From 2005 to 2010, teachers in Grades K-5 in a northern New Jersey district implemented the balanced literacy method in their classrooms. The balanced literacy approach is characterized by explicit skill instruction and the use of authentic texts. Balanced literacy is a "framework to reading and writing instruction that includes all

forms of communication: reading, writing, listening, speaking, thinking, spelling and handwriting. Phonemic awareness, phonics, and language development are also included” (Schuster, 2004). Balanced literacy offered teachers considerable autonomy in teaching strategies and material selection. During the 2011/2012 school year, the district changed to the scripted Reading Street curriculum for grades second through fifth.

Reading Street (2008) is an empirically-based basal reading program for pre-Kindergarten to sixth grade classrooms. Reading Street is thematically organized to emphasize development of priority skills in five core reading areas: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Reading Street is based on three-tiered instruction, which is designed to meet the needs of students using primary, secondary, and tertiary intervention (Linan-Thompson & Elbaum, 2005).

Distinctions between the balanced literacy approach and the Reading Street scripted program are listed below:

### **Balanced Literacy**

1. Balanced literacy is a theory based on the idea that there are many different learning styles for children who are learning to read.
2. Instructing, demonstrating, discussing, coaching, and discovering are all part of this model (Routman, 2000).
3. Balanced literacy instruction is constant modeling. The teacher models her thinking as she writes.

### **Reading Street**

1. Reading Street is designed to help teachers build readers through motivating and engaging literature, scientifically research-based instruction, and a wealth of reliable teaching tools.
2. The reading program takes the guesswork out of differentiating instruction with a strong emphasis on ongoing progress-monitoring and an explicit plan to help with managing small groups of students.
3. Reading Street uses direct instruction as a teaching strategy in which the teacher demonstrates or models the new information for the student.

Early applications of direct instruction, a scripted process, showed that preschoolers learned faster when the teacher used exactly the same wording in an explanation, rather than varying wording from one example to another (Carnine, 1980). Direct instruction provides a script that indicates the precise wording teachers are to say in connection with examples. The script specifies both student responses and correction procedures for more common mistakes. Direct instruction programs were the first to have scripted teacher presentations (Engelmann, 2007). Considering the change from one style of teacher modeling to the move towards direct instruction, this study sought to explore the Reading Street program's influence on teachers' perceptions towards the two learning strategies.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Every research study has its foundation in theory; therefore, the theoretical framework of a study must be solid and well supported. The application of theories is significant and essential because without theories one would never go beyond the usual, one would have limited opportunity for making changes, and one would have difficulty in

implementing new discoveries. The application of theories allows for challenges that make things better, that make adjustments, and that make thoughts and ideas applicable to practice. “Theories may chart empirical phenomena, correct perceptions that are inaccurate, and generate arguments for alternative values or ways of life” (Beyer, 2001, p. 152).

Scripted teaching is influenced by behaviorist learning theory (Reeves, 2010). It uses repetition as a way to reinforce the concepts that students are learning. Some scripted learning programs go through an error correction process when a student answers a question incorrectly. Using a behavioral approach to teaching and learning, micro skills such as spelling are practiced meticulously and are perfected before moving onto macro skills such as writing or reading longer passages (Reeves, 2010).

Language from a behaviorist point of view is portrayed as a complex but fixed system of structures. As a content area, language can be deconstructed into its component parts, and language learners are to master these parts one-by-one in order to gain proficiency. Notably, the stability in language embedded within the behaviorist paradigm has been vigorously challenged in recent linguistic and language teaching scholarship wherein language is understood as dynamic (Firth & Wagner, 1997; Gee, 2004; Lantolf & Johnson, 2007).

“Reading is both a social and cognitive process where students and teachers regularly interact with each other and text in an attempt to achieve a variety of cognitive and social goals” (Bloome & Kinzer, as cited in Hall, 2005, p. 10).

Within this frame, students and teachers are seen as constructing and reconstructing what it means to be a reader within a classroom, what counts as literacy

and being literate, and the norms for which students should engage within the reading task demands of the classroom (Bloome & Kinzer, as cited in Hall, 2005, p. 11)

In reference to reading in the content area, as students use what they already know to acquire new information, they are not only constructing and reconstructing knowledge; but they are engaging in the whole learning process.

### **Research Questions**

During the 2011/2012 school-year, all second through fifth grade teachers in a large urban district in northern New Jersey implemented the new Reading Street Language Arts scripted curriculum. This mixed-methods study explored teachers' evaluation of the Reading Street curriculum and the implementation of the components of this curriculum within their classroom in one New Jersey urban district. The following questions were addressed

1. What are teachers' overall evaluations of the Reading Street program in the areas of planning, training and support, planning and scheduling, materials, curriculum and content, differentiated instruction, connections, and outcomes?
2. What is the level of consistency between teacher satisfaction of the Reading Street program in the areas of planning, training and support, planning and scheduling, materials, curriculum and content, differentiated instruction, connections, and outcomes?
3. What are some of the challenges or issues that teachers faced as they implemented the Reading Street program?

### **Design and Methodology**

Methodologically, this research study used a mixed-methods design to answer the research questions. “Mixed-methods research is a research design with philosophical assumptions as well as methods of inquiry. As a methodology, it involves philosophical assumptions that guide the direction of the collection and analysis of data and the mixture of qualitative and quantitative approaches in many phases in the research process. As a method, it focuses on collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies. Its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone” (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007).

Mixed-methods research was used to analyze the second through fifth grade teacher participants’ evaluation of the Reading Street program and the implementation of the components of the current curriculum within their classroom.

The research design included both quantitative and qualitative methods. Data were first collected quantitatively by using the survey format as the method of instrumentation. The survey was originally created in 2010 by Jamie Ladnier-Hicks, who conducted a validated study on *Third Grade Reading Performance and Teacher Perceptions of the Reading Street Program*, using a comparable questionnaire. The questionnaire was reviewed by the researcher and her advisor, Dr. Strobert, and modifications were made to determine the reactions and satisfaction levels of certified instructional personnel in the New Jersey district regarding the Scott Foresman Reading Street scripted program. The questionnaire was further refined using a focus group consisting of a reading recovery teacher, a third grade elementary teacher, and the researcher. An initial draft of the questionnaire was developed by the focus group that

identified specific areas of interest and the specific variables to be measured. The initial questionnaire consisted of 35 items with responses being measured by a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from *strongly agree* (5) to *strongly disagree* (1).

An expert panel consisting of the district's 30 reading specialists was given the opportunity to review the questionnaire draft, ensure face and content validity, and participate in the piloting process. The study participants included all certified teaching personnel in second through fifth grade who were employed within the northern New Jersey public school system during the 2011/2012 school year. The initial questionnaire was sent to each participant via the school mailbag and the correspondence included a self-addressed return envelope to facilitate an increased return rate. The initial draft of the questionnaire, the attached information letter, and the return envelope were copied on brightly colored paper. The attached cover letter explained the study and the questionnaire piloting process (see Appendix F).

The online program Google Docs was used to create charts based on the responses. Additionally, means, standard deviations of the main variables under study, and a summary of the sample correlations were also computed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Qualitative descriptive statistics used through Google Docs were utilized to summarize the participants' responses.

The second part of the study was conducted by using a follow-up open-ended survey to understand more deeply how the Reading Street program impacted the teachers' teaching and their level of satisfaction. Data were collected by surveying the same group of teachers that participated in the first survey administration. The survey included seven open-ended questions in the areas of planning, training and support, planning and scheduling, materials, curriculum and content, differentiated instruction,

connections, and outcomes. Teachers were again purposefully sampled based on their experiences in order to develop a cross section of multiple perspectives.

### **Significance of the Study**

With an emphasis on improving children's low reading achievement, more and more school districts are searching for specific cost-effective programs to implement. Bush (2002) stated, "It's time to fund curriculum and teacher training programs and reading programs not based upon what sounds good, or some theory, but based upon what works, so that children can learn to read in America" (p. 1). With the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (Bush, 2001), administrators are faced with even more pressure to address the needs of providing a program to ensure that all children read. Administrators need to think creatively and economically in order to provide the best possible program to meet the needs of the students in their districts. In spite of many attempts at intensive programs and of teacher training, there are still students who are struggling when reading texts. The importance of teachers implementing a successful reading program was the purpose for conducting this study.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study was designed to investigate teachers' evaluation and level of satisfaction while implementing the Reading Street curriculum currently in their classroom. The Reading Street curriculum was implemented in second through fifth grade; discussions of the results are limited to those grades. The study is limited to only teachers' evaluation of the program. In addition, this investigation was dependent on teachers answering the questions honestly and not with answers they suspect the researcher wanted to hear.

The study was conducted in one large urban school district in northern New Jersey; therefore, any discussion or results will be limited to districts with the same population make-up as the schools utilized in this investigation. The sample size was the number of second through fifth grade teachers. A convenience sampling was utilized when conducting the survey. The use of convenience sampling is limiting as it is the weakest form of sampling, but it is also the most widely used.

Use of the survey instrument may have resulted in limited data collection. Although this study exhibited adequate sample size ( $n = 106$ ), all of the participating schools were located in one urban area, limiting the generalizability of the results.

Although data were not available from consecutive years of implementation, study limitations were created by solely investigating the initial year of the Reading Street implementation into the district. Perhaps the most accurate data came from actual observations of the Reading Street's program over time to map the long-term effect this instruction has on student learning. "Many factors outside the student have an effect on elementary reading achievement, with the most obvious being the classroom environment" (Cooter, 1993, p. 585). The classroom environment can be determined only through observation; therefore, this was a major limitation for the purpose of this study.

Demographic data such as current grade level teaching and number of years of teaching experience were not collected. Respondents may be more likely to have extremely positive or extremely negative attitudes. There is always response bias with samples of convenience. This further limits the interpretation of the results.

### **Delimitations of the Study**

The foremost delimitation was the decision to survey only second through fifth grade teachers who were implementing the newly adopted Scott Foresman Reading Street curriculum. The study was delimited by the fact that only one urban school district in New Jersey was used to represent this study. Another delimitation of the study was that test scores were not viewed or utilized. The results of the study may not be pertinent in school districts with a different size, population, or demographics.

### **Definition of Terms and Abbreviations**

The following are definitions and abbreviations relevant to the study:

***Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)*** – an individual state’s measure of yearly progress toward achieving state academic standards as described in the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation (Ravitch, 2007).

***Balanced Literacy*** – a curricular methodology that integrates various modalities of literacy instruction. Assessment-based planning is at the core of this model. The balanced literacy approach is characterized by explicit skill instruction and the use of authentic texts (Heinemann, 2001).

***Direct Instruction*** – an approach to teaching. It is skills-oriented, and the teaching practices it implies are teacher-directed. 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, p. 5; Traub, 1999).

***Literacy*** – “is not simply about decoding words on a page or recounting the chronology of a story, rather it is about engaging with complex ideas and information through interaction with written documents” (Ippolito, Steele, & Samson, 2008, p. 2).

***New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJ ASK)*** –a series of state assessments administered to New Jersey public school students in Grades 3-8 to determine the level of student achievement in language arts, mathematics, and science. The NJ ASK tests were implemented in 2003 in response to the requirements of NCLB legislation.

***Non-Voluntary Readers*** - students without learning difficulties (Earl, 2006).

***Open Court*** – a core reading program for Grades K–6 developed by SRA/McGraw-Hill that is designed to teach decoding, comprehension, inquiry, and writing in a logical progression.

***Reading Interest*** - refers to what form of text a person might be likely to read based upon what he/she has actually read (Harris & Sipay, 1990).

***Reluctant Reader*** - a child who does not or cannot read and who is likely to avoid such an experience at all costs. (Moorefield, 2004).

***Scott Foresman Reading Street*** – an all-new reading instruction program for Grades PreK–6. Reading Street is designed to help teachers build readers through motivating and engaging literature, scientifically research-based instruction, and a wealth of reliable teaching tools. The reading program takes the guesswork out of differentiating instruction with a strong emphasis on ongoing progress-monitoring and an explicit plan to help with managing small groups of students.

***Scripted Reading Programs*** - reading instruction where a commercial reading program, not the classroom teacher, determines what the teacher says during instruction and/or the particular lessons and the pace at which the lessons are taught (e.g., so many lessons taught in so many days). The teacher's role is to execute the plan of the commercial

program without making adjustments for the instructional needs of the children in the classroom.

### **Summary**

This dissertation is divided into five chapters. Chapter I provides an introduction and overview of the study, including the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the research questions, the significance of the study, the theoretical framework, the limitations, the delimitations, and an overview of the methodology that was used. Chapter II includes a review of the literature on the following topics: early research/theoretical framework, history of reading curriculum implementation, history of reading instruction, research on scripted reading programs, accountability in education, Pearson research, National Reading Panel/scientifically based reading research, teacher perceptions of scripted programs, and *Expert Review of Core Reading Programs*. Chapter III provides a detailed explanation of the procedures and methodologies that were used in this research study. Chapter IV provides an analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data from this study, and Chapter V provides a discussion of the findings.

## **Chapter II**

### **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

#### **Introduction**

The review of important research, theory, and literature related to this investigation encompasses studies from 1783 to 2006. The review is divided into ten sections: (1) Early Research: Theoretical Framework, (2) History of Curriculum Implementation, (3) History of Reading Instruction, (4) Research on Scripted Reading Programs, (5) Research on Programmatic Reading Interventions (6) Accountability in Education, (7) Pearson Reading Street Research, (8) National Reading Panel: Scientifically Based Reading Research, (9) Teacher Perceptions and Beliefs, (10) Expert Review of Core Reading Programs.

#### **Early Research: Theoretical Framework**

Many theorists have contributed to the understanding of learning, using multiple theoretical lenses to analyze the way their research and ideas provided educators with a solid framework by which to design instruction. I used researchers such as Edward Thorndike, Jean Piaget, John Watson, B. F. Skinner, Robert Gagne, and Howard Gardner, all of whom have made significant contributions in the area of education.

Edward Thorndike (1912) was an early researcher who investigated the process of learning. One of Thorndike's major contributions was *The Law of Exercise*. He stated that the law of exercise is commonly recognized as a basic law of human nature (Thorndike, 1912). Thorndike's research indicated that “with all things being equal,” repetitive actions would strengthen mental connections and, therefore, improve performance (Thorndike,

1912, p. 95). Most instructional materials provide repetitive practice for newly introduced concepts or critically important skills.

In 1929, Jean Piaget published a book entitled *The Child's Conception of the World* in which he discussed his theory regarding the thought processes of children. Piaget (1929, 1951) identified four stages of the cognitive development process. Piaget (1929, 1951) identified the sensori-motor stage as the period from birth to two years of age. During this time, Piaget suggested that children develop an understanding of their environment as a result of actions. During the pre-operational stage (ages 2-7), the child begins using symbols to represent his or her environment. The concrete operations stage (ages 7-11) is characterized by the child's ability to mentally reverse actions that are in his or her environment. Finally, Piaget (1929, 1951) proposed the formal operations stage, which ranged from age 11 to adulthood. Forman and Kuschner (1983) described Piaget's formal operations stage as the stage where "children begin to think about thinking and perform operations on operations" (p. 92). Insight from Piaget's research suggested to educators that the scope and sequence of instruction should consider a child's cognitive ability during these stages in order to be effective. The work of Piaget emphasized the importance of introducing concepts and ideas that are developmentally appropriate.

John B. Watson (1924) and B. F. Skinner (1948) introduced the concept of *behavioralism* into the educational setting, which suggested that learning occurred as a result of environmental interaction. According to Horowitz (1992), John B. Watson introduced a more objective approach to behavioral observation. Watson emphasized the importance of experience and environment in shaping an individual's behavior (Horowitz,

1992). In the 1900s, B. F. Skinner contributed to the growth of behavioralism by developing the theory of *operant conditioning* (Hawkes, 1992). The work of Watson and Skinner established the importance of having a structured environment in order to facilitate learning.

Robert Gagne (1974) developed the information-processing theory. This theory indicated that the process of learning resembled a computer. Gagne (1974) suggested that learning consisted of a series of inputs and outputs that could be stored in either short-term memory or long-term memory. He also suggested that environmental factors, expectancies, and executive control also affected the learning process. In addition, Gagne defined learning as a change in behavior that endures over extended periods of time throughout an individual's life and also defined the role of an effective educator as a creator, administrator, and an evaluator of instruction (Gagne, 1974). The recognition that learning could be affected by so many external variables and the fact that Gagne's emphasis on instructional design has provided a systematic basis for program development speaks to many recently developed curriculums contain a spiraling curriculum in which specific skills are introduced, built upon, and revisited as the student progresses throughout school.

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

intelligences by introducing and assessing educational concepts using a variety of learning style considerations.

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

### **Review Methods**

This review examined quantitative and qualitative research on literacy for children used in the teaching of reading and the perceptions of teachers based on its effectiveness. A literature search was carried out in an effort to uncover studies that discuss any of the features of teacher observations, evaluations, and their historical underpinnings. Information was gathered primarily from electronic databases (ERIC, JSTOR, EBSCO, PsycINFO, Google Scholar, Academic Search Premier). International studies were examined where applicable. The conceptual framework for analyzing each piece of literature was based on the following questions:

1. What does it add to the knowledge dynamic?
2. What is the sample size and design?
3. What is the quality of the data analysis, methods, and conclusions?
4. How does it fit with classic or current literature on the subject?
5. What type of references does the author use? (peer reviewed or non-peer reviewed)
6. How do the survey results align with the accepted theoretical frameworks?

## **Parameters of the Review**

This review primarily focused on quantitative studies; qualitative studies were used where applicable. The limitations of this review were as follows:

1. Only studies that examined elementary school second through fifth grade settings or span Grades 2-5.
2. The Reading Street program was utilized in an urban public school district in northern New Jersey for one year in Grades 2-5.
3. Only studies that included the following quantitative strategies: reading performance, reading achievement, Reading Street, grounded theory, case studies, phenomenological research, narrative research, meta-synthesis, and balanced literacy.
4. Time frame of 1960-present.
5. Only peer-reviewed sources. Peer review is the accepted method for ensuring that information is of the highest quality. Articles are critically assessed by other scholars in the author's field or specialty before they are accepted for publication.

## **Criteria for Inclusion**

The review of the research on the subject of Reading Street and the influence of teacher perceptions began with an examination of the recent history of the current teaching force that has been employed. Following that review, the focus concentrated on current research and articles written since the inception of the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation, which significantly changed the context of education in this country.

Specific inclusion criteria included the following:

1. Research samples directly related to reading programs in public schools in second through fifth grade settings.
2. Research primarily published since January of 2000.
3. Research studies that included both qualitative and quantitative research designs.
4. Research publications from peer-reviewed professional journals.

### **Review of Literature Search Topics**

Literature searches were conducted with the key vocabulary for this study. Key vocabulary included the following: balanced literacy, reading achievement in the public schools, elementary education literacy, teacher perceptions of various reading programs, and Reading Street. Excluded from the review were references from higher education, pre-service teachers, and parents' and students' perceptions of teachers.

### **History of Reading Curriculum Implementation**

Many researchers have provided insight into the evolution of the process of curriculum implementation. In 1969, Fuller proposed a three-phase developmental framework of common teacher concerns. The Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) was developed as an extension of Fuller's work throughout the early 1970s and mid-1980s (Anderson, 1997). Hall, George, and Rutherford (1977) hypothesized that there were definitive categories of concern related to the adoption of a product, a curriculum or program, or an instructional approach (which they referred to as an innovation); and these concerns progressed in a logical sequence as the users became more efficient in using the innovation. Many researchers assess the fidelity of new innovation implementation based

upon the CBAM. In 1975, Loucks investigated the implementation of new innovations and revealed that when reading instruction was the focus, a curvilinear relationship was documented, indicating that reading achievement scores do not increase in direct relation to the number of years the new program has been in place.

### **History of Reading Instruction**

The history of reading instruction in the United States can be traced back to England. As many European immigrants moved and settled into the early colonies, they carried with them not only their value of education but also some of the instructional materials that were used in their homelands (Teale, 1995). Rasinski (2003) pointed out that in early American homes oral reading was used to facilitate communication. Typically, only one member of the family could read; and because of the scarcity of printed reading material, most families listened as one individual read for entertainment as well as to share knowledge and news. Education mirrored these techniques in the home by focusing on oral reading for reading instruction (Rasinski, 2003).

According to Witty (1949), many colonists used the *New England Primer* for reading instruction. The *Primer* was published in 1687. It was extremely small in size and contained minimal information. The content included the alphabet, brief word lists ranging from two to six syllables, the Lord's Prayer, the Christian Creed, and popular two-lined poems. Most of the early instructional materials contained religious ideology intended to teach children a moral lesson. Examples include alphabet lessons for youth which included sentences containing advice based on Biblical principles relating to each letter of the alphabet (Witty, 1949). Further research indicated that a "hornbook" was used as a supplement to the *New England Primer* (Witty, 1949). The hornbook was not

actually a book, but a paddle made of wood or cardboard that contained a string through the handle to enable children to attach it to their clothing or hang it around their neck.

The hornbook also contained minimal instructional materials and its content consisted of a picture of a cross, the upper- and lower-case letters, vowel and consonant combinations, the Lord's Prayer, and Roman numerals (Witty, 1949).

According to Alexander (1988), basal readers began to be used in reading instruction during the 1700s. Basal readers were texts that were systematically arranged by progression of reading difficulty. Witty (1949) reported that Noah Webster published a group of readers under the title *Grammatical Institute*, which was republished in 1790 as a three-book series entitled *The American Spelling Book*. Following that, John Pierpont published a four-book series of readers that were characterized by a moralistic tone and a "nationalist spirit" (Witty, 1949, p. 2).

The *alphabet method* was the first documented instructional method used in the United States to teach reading (Witty, 1949). It consisted of children mastering the following skills in sequential order: memorizing upper- and lower-case letters; spelling and decoding syllables which progressed from two letters to monosyllabic words; and then spelling and decoding phrases, sentences, and stories. Additional components of the alphabet method included memorizing the Ten Commandments and other religious materials. The alphabet method consisted primarily of oral reading activities (Witty, 1949). Furthermore, Witty (1949) suggested that oral reading was emphasized in early American homes because educated family members read the Bible to other members and acquaintances. In addition, Rasinski (2003) proposed that prior to technological advances such as radio, television, and computers, oral reading was not only considered a family-

oriented leisure activity, but it was a way for families and acquaintances to share valuable information as well. In conjunction with the alphabet method, educators began to emphasize articulation and elocution in reading instruction instead of comprehension; therefore, this instructional method began to be criticized (Rasinski, 2003).

Research regarding the establishment of the next instructional technique in reading, the *word method*, revealed conflicting information. Witty (1949) suggested the word method was established in Europe by the European educator Comenius but reported the method was introduced to American educators by Samuel Worcester in 1828. Yoakam (1955) reported that in 1828, Samuel Comenius introduced the word method of reading instruction. According to Yoakam (1955), it was popularized by Horace Mann but was not widely accepted and used in the United States until the 1950s. Teale (1995) reported the word method was developed by Francis Parker, a colleague of John Dewey. Dewey was instrumental in initiating the *progressive education* movement, and it took root within American schools in the mid-1800s (Teale, 1995). The word method did not teach letter names for at least two years, and phonics was not a component of the approach. Children who were instructed in the word method memorized a list of approximately 200 sight words. Once the child demonstrated the mastery of these targeted words, they used the words they knew to read books and other printed material. This new instructional approach emphasized that reading material should be interesting to children (Teale, 1995). However, many parents became dissatisfied with the word method because their children were unable to decode new and unfamiliar words during reading. The result of parental dismay resulted in the development of a phonics approach by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Witty, 1949).

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

Yoakam (1955) pointed out that from 1880 to 1918, extensive phonics programs emerged. Moreover, the beginning of the 19th century resulted in a shift from oral reading to silent reading with an emphasis on comprehension. Reading was no longer regarded as solely an educational activity, but also as a social activity. Educators began to advocate that reading in school should be associated with meaningful and practical life experiences (Yoakam, 1955).

According to Teale (1995), no specific instructional method in reading prevailed between 1924 and 1940. However, between 1940 and 1960 the influence of behavioral theorists began to slip into the education field (Teale, 1995). The research of 20th century psychologists such as John B. Watson and B. F. Skinner helped establish the theory of behaviorism, which considered learning to occur as a result of environmental influences. Behaviorism disallowed for consideration of internal mental processes such as cognition and effect in explaining behavior since those processes were unable to be objectively measured (Horowitz, 1992; DeBell & Harless, 1992). Although no particular learning approaches were stressed at this time, the behaviorist ideologies indicated that learning was facilitated through the pairing of a printed word and its pronunciation (Teale, 1995).

Today psychologists refer to this action as *associative learning* (Mitchell, DeHouwer, & Lovibond, 2009). Scott Foresman published the popular *Dick and Jane* reading series, which implemented an associative-learning style, or *whole word* approach (Reyhner, 2008). Some educators referred to this approach of emphasizing repetitive and highly predictable sight words as the *look-say* approach (Wren, n.d.). According to Reyhner (2008), as time progressed, an opponent of the look-say approach, Rudolph Flesch, published a controversial book in 1955 entitled *Why Johnny Can't Read*, which supported using a phonics approach to reading instruction (Reyhner, 2008). A phonics approach was often referred to as a *bottom up* approach because it established teaching sound/letter relationships before students advanced to reading words, sentences, and stories (Reyhner, 2008, p. 2).

During the 1960s and 1970s, there appeared to be two major approaches to reading instruction being used. A variety of phonics approaches continued to be used while the *language experience* approach (LEA) was evolving. Basal reading series were reconstructed to include more phonics instruction. Popular basal reading programs included Lippincott's Basic Reading and Open Court (Teale, 1995). Components of phonics programs in the 1960s and 1970s included leveled texts with controlled vocabulary; ancillary materials such as manuals, charts, and workbooks; instructional grouping; and additional emphasis on increased skill mastery (Alexander, 1988). The language experience approach (LEA) was developed based upon the work of individuals such as Dewey, Piaget, and Watson (Stauffer, 1980). This approach emphasized using a child's experience and linguistic skills to teach reading. This approach suggested that in order to teach reading, educators should create opportunities for children to explore their

environment via their five basic senses, talk about their experiences, and act on them by creating products that exhibited their understanding of how those experiences were interrelated (Stauffer, 1980). The LEA was a holistic instructional method that incorporated the individualized interests of children (Teale, 1995). Instructional materials were not provided when the LEA was implemented. Instead, it emphasized encouraging children to express their personal experiences and thoughts through oral and written language. Communication skills such as speaking, listening, reading, and writing were all targeted during instruction. The assumption was that children would develop the ability to decode printed material more readily if the material was created by them and based upon their personal experiences. Therefore, teaching materials were limited. Proponents of the LEA boasted that their techniques were effective, inexpensive, and built children's self-esteem by creating a feeling that their personal thoughts and ideas were acknowledged and validated (Alexander, 1988).

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

Many seasoned educators have recognized that the pendulum of education swings from one extreme to another over time. Some have proposed the idea that if the current,

most popular instructional approaches are not of particular interest or favor, then as the years progress, a more favored approach will come to light again. Instead of the pendulum model, Teale (1995) suggested that instructional approaches never return in complete original form but that educators re-evaluate instructional techniques and strategies from the past, identify the strengths of the prior approaches, and incorporate those strengths into a changed form. Currently, new educational philosophies and instructional approaches incorporate the strengths of a wide variety of approaches such as *differentiated instruction*, Marzano's research-based instructional strategies, *professional learning communities*, and the *three-tier reading intervention* model. These have been the most popular among educators in the 21st century.

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

The shift from focusing on the instructional approach to incorporating strategies that research has deemed most effective was popularized by Robert Marzano in the late 1990s. Through the use of meta-analyses of 35 years of research, Marzano identified nine instructional strategies that significantly affected academic achievement. Marzano reported that the use of these instructional strategies have resulted in percentile gains from 22 to 45 percentile points. Marzano's instructional strategies included activities in the following categories: identifying similarities and differences; summarizing and note taking; reinforcing effort and providing recognition; homework and practice; nonlinguistic representations; cooperative learning; setting objectives and providing feedback; generating and testing hypotheses; and using questions, cues, and advanced organizers (Marzano, 2003).

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

Alexander (1988) suggested that there was no single instructional approach that was superior; he proposed educators use an approach that encompassed implementing the most effective strategies from a variety of approaches. As educators began to focus on literacy instead of the isolated skill of reading, *balanced literacy* became a widely known

approach to reading instruction that continues to be practiced in classrooms across the United States today. Balanced literacy challenged teachers to explore instructional practices that do not conform solely to the approaches of the past but to use research to guide instructional decisions and adapt classroom instruction to meet the needs of individual learners (Wren, n.d.). Balanced literacy is a multifaceted approach composed of blending the strengths of past instructional techniques with current *best practices*. The major components of balanced literacy consist of the following: read aloud, shared reading, guided reading, independent reading, phonics instruction, write aloud, shared writing, guided writing, and independent writing (*Teaching Matters*, n.d.). Research has been completed on the effects of balanced literacy both in urban and rural school settings.

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

Merriman (2008) completed a quasi-experimental study that determined the effectiveness of Voyager's Passport Intervention program. The study participants consisted of third grade students enrolled in a rural Tennessee school district. Pre-test and

post-test data were collected on students determined at-risk on the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) over a period of 12 weeks. The Voyager Passport Intervention program was used as a scripted program with the treatment groups. The control group received a "teacher-directed intervention program" (Merriman, 2008, p. 76). Results of this study indicated that students who received intervention using the scripted Voyager Passport Intervention program and students who received more teacher-directed intervention performed equally well on measures of reading achievement (Merriman, 2008). Furthermore, Merriman (2008) reported that the qualitative data from participant surveys gathered during the study confirmed the findings.

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

### **Research on Scripted Reading Programs**

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

children in the classroom. Scripted commercial programs are not new. However, the requirements of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act and the Reading First initiative have given commercial reading programs prominence in schools as principals look for ways to improve reading achievement through implementation of scientifically based reading methods. Many of the commercial reading programs are well designed and attractive and promote their ability to meet the needs of all children. But they represent a costly investment, which can complicate a purchasing decision. While principals can cite the benefits of using scripted commercial reading programs, these programs can have a negative impact on teachers.

### **Seminal Research**

The Cooperative Research Program in First-Grade Reading Instruction, a large government-funded study commonly referred to as the *First Grade Studies*, found that teacher excellence, not method, was the single biggest factor in student achievement in reading, accounting for 33% of the variance in children's reading achievement. (Bond & Dykstra, 1967, p. 43).

### **Replication Research**

Moustafa and Land (2002) found that scripted reading instruction is less effective than reading instruction where teachers are allowed to exercise their professional judgment and match instruction to instructional needs. They compared the average SAT 9 reading scores of second through fifth grade English-only children in schools using a scripted commercial reading instruction program (where teachers were expected to teach every lesson in the program whether it was appropriate for the children or not and to do

so at a prescribed pace) with the SAT 9 reading scores of schools using any of three non-scripted commercial programs.

They found the SAT 9 reading scores in schools using the scripted reading program were significantly more likely to be in the bottom quartile than the SAT 9 reading scores of the schools using the non-scripted reading programs ( $p < .01$ ) (Moustafa and Land, 2002)

### **Do These Programs Really Work?**

Questions about the effectiveness of commercial reading programs are not easily answered. While program developers often commission research evaluating their programs, these studies are viewed skeptically because they represent self-evaluations that may not be objective and have not been put through the rigors of peer evaluation. Studies that are cited to demonstrate the effectiveness of programs tend to focus on reading sub-skills, such as phoneme segmentation, and don't necessarily provide insight into overall literacy development. It also may not be clear that gains promised by program developers will translate into higher reading achievement later. Researchers have noted the need for qualitative studies to investigate the efficacy of commercial programs within the context of actual classrooms (Purcell-Gates, 2000; Yatvin, 2000).

### **What the Research Says**

Program fidelity is a cornerstone of scripted programs, and developers assert that teachers must maintain fidelity for their programs to be successful. When programs do not live up to expectations, the fault is generally attributed to a lack of fidelity. However, regardless of mandates for program fidelity and whether teachers like a particular program, research demonstrates that they tend to maintain a certain amount of autonomy

in what or how they teach (Datnow & Castellano, 2000; Sosniak & Stodolsky, 1993). Interviews with demonstration classroom teachers supported this finding. Eleven of the twelve teachers reported making alterations in the program in spite of the insistence of administrators and program developers for program fidelity.

While it may be argued that novice teachers would benefit from a highly structured program with a script, studies have found that it isn't just experienced teachers who veer from program mandates but that inexperienced and ineffective teachers make changes, too (Datnow & Castellano, 2000; Sosniak & Stodolsky, 1993). However, while experienced teachers have the knowledge and background to alter the program using scientifically based reading research methods, less experienced teachers may not be as equipped to make sound decisions. Therefore, there are several factors that principals should keep in mind when deciding whether to purchase a scripted commercial reading program:

- Researchers investigating the effectiveness of commercial reading programs have found that the critical factor in successful reading instruction is not the program, but teacher quality (Bond & Dykstra, 1967; Pressley et al., 2001; Ryder, Sekulski, & Silberg, 2003).
- Programs that allow teachers to maintain some autonomy in literature selection, methods, and materials have been found to yield higher results in reading comprehension (Fang, Fu, & Lamme, 2004; Tivnan & Hemphill, 2005; Wilson, Martens, & Poonam, 2005).

- Regardless of teacher approval of a program or administrative mandates for program fidelity, teachers will make adaptations in how they use the program (Datnow & Castellano, 2000; Sosniak & Stodolsky, 1993).
- One program cannot meet the needs of all children. Teachers need to be trained and empowered to make decisions about how best to teach their students (Garan, 2004).
- Effective teachers are not opposed to well-designed programs, but they understand that a good program can never take the place of a highly qualified teacher, nor can it overcome the problems associated with ineffective teaching.
- Whether or not a commercial program is used, new and inexperienced teachers need mentors to show them how to implement effective teaching strategies.
- The decision about whether to purchase or implement a program should be embedded in an understanding of the students and teachers who will use it.

The majority of research conducted to evaluate program efficacy base conclusions on a comparison of pre-test and post-test data, assuming that teachers have followed the program with fidelity. However, evidence has demonstrated that teachers tend to abandon fidelity in favor of making adjustments in their instruction when they find it necessary in order to meet the needs of their students.

### **Research on Programmatic Reading Interventions**

While scripted reading interventions have been available for many years, increased national attention to struggling adolescent readers since the implementation of

the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB, 2002) has led to an influx of programmatic, often scripted, reading intervention programs being marketed toward students who read below expected levels at the middle and secondary levels. For example, in 2007, Deshler, Palinscar, Biancarosa, and Nair published a guide to over 40 programmatic interventions (including scripted programs) for adolescents who struggle with reading. However, most available research on scripted reading interventions has tended to focus on elementary-aged readers and on quantifiable skills-based assessments (e.g., Jones, Staats, Bowling, Bikel, Cunningham, & Cadle, 2004; Munoz & Dossett, 2004; Pikulski, 1994; Ross & Smith, 1994).

Research on the impact of programmatic reading interventions for older students has begun to emerge recently, albeit in smaller quantities (e.g., Bradford, Shippen, Alberto, Houchins, & Flores, 2006; Hasselbring & Goin, 2004; Topping & Paul, 1999; Tunmer, Chapman, Greaney, & Prochnow, 2002); but again the focus has been on the acquisition of reading skills. In addition, much of the research on programmatic reading interventions available for older readers is often evaluative, commissioned by the program publishers, or published in organizational reports (Slavin, Chung, Groff, & Lake, 2008). While a few studies on scripted interventions have included surveys of student, teacher, and parent attitudes (Munoz & Dossett, 2004; Ross & Smith, 1994), examinations of scripted interventions from a sociocultural perspective to determine if or how the use of these tools impacts the ways participants view learning or content are even more difficult to find.

## Scripted Interventions

From a constructivist perspective (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1998), our knowledge of the world shapes and is shaped by our interactions with others and with the tools we use. Scripted reading interventions are instructional tools, defined here as pre-packaged, publisher-designed curricula that provide explicit instructions for teacher and student behaviors and responses. Additionally, scripting implies that the program follows a specifically-paced, externally-monitored format (P. D. Pearson, personal communication, May 21, 2007) that allows for little, if any, modification or deviation by classroom teachers outside the pre-set parameters of the program design. All curricular materials--including passages for reading, discussion topics, questions and expected responses, and assessments--are provided by the publishers, and the teachers are given guides, often with explicit scripts to read during instruction, that indicate which lessons are taught and how to assess student progress through the program. It is important to note that not all pre-packaged programs fit this definition for scripted interventions. For example, Accelerated Reader (Renaissance Learning) is a pre-packaged program present in many school districts; however, as it does not use a program-pacing guide, nor are there explicit guides for instruction, it would not be included in a list of scripted interventions.

Programs fitting the definition of *scripted* come in a variety of formats, targeting different skills. Some, like Corrective Reading (SRA, McGraw-Hill) advertise themselves as scripted, while others with designs meeting the scripted criteria, like Rewards Plus (Sopris West) and Read 180 (Scholastic), do not. Corrective Reading, Rewards Plus, and Read 180 are the three scripted reading intervention programs that were used in the

classrooms in the studies described below. Read 180 is a comprehensive program that provides texts and opportunities for independent reading, small- and large-group discussion, workbooks and videos, and individualized, computer-based instruction. Skills taught include word work, decoding, vocabulary acquisition, spelling, and comprehension. Corrective Reading offers multiple workbooks for classroom use, depending on student-tested reading levels, focusing on decoding and comprehension skills (Englemann, Hanner, & Johnson, 1999). Rewards Plus is the second component of a program that begins with structural analysis of multisyllabic words and then shifts to more in-depth comprehension, writing, and text analysis lessons. Rewards Plus is a supplemental program that builds on a previously learned method for structural analysis of multisyllabic words, integrating this process with content-based texts and activities.

### **Accountability in Education**

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

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

and effective educational instruction was born. It was vital to train men appropriately and as quickly as possible.

Additional concerns regarding educational accountability escalated during the 1950s. The launch of the first orbiting space satellite, Sputnik, in 1957 created a renewed interest in the state of public education (Reiser, 2001). According to Marzano (2003), publications such as Admiral Hyman Rickover's *Education and Freedom* insinuated that the security of the nation hinged upon the quality of its citizens' education. Alarmed regarding the future security and safety of the United States, the federal government poured millions of dollars into improving math and science programs in public schools (Reiser, 2001). Although significant amounts of money were used to develop new and improved instructional materials, it was later discovered that most of the new materials were developed by professionals with expertise in areas other than education; and the materials were not piloted to determine their effectiveness. Therefore, many of the new materials were determined to be ineffective (Reiser, 2001).

In the 1960s, Michael Scriven proposed the idea of piloting new instructional materials and modifying them as necessary before creating and implementing the final product into public school systems (Reiser, 2001). According to Reiser (2001), Scriven also proposed the idea of evaluating instructional materials in their final form as well. As a result, Scriven created what educators refer to today as formative and summative evaluations (Reiser, 2001). In the 1960s, educational reform evolved into even more of a national issue due to social and economic concerns (Airasian, 1987).

The passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 increased the federal government's role in education by guaranteeing educational rights to all, regardless of race or gender.

President Lyndon Johnson's Great Society focused on the war on poverty, and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was passed (Marzano, 2003). During this time, the Commissioner of Education was appointed to collect data regarding the availability of educational opportunities (Marzano, 2003). Data from achievement and aptitude tests were gathered on more than 640,000 students across the nation. Questionnaires regarding teacher efficacy were completed by 60,000 teachers in 4,000 schools. The data were analyzed by Coleman, Campbell, Hobson, McPartland, Mood, Weinfield, and York and the results were published in 1966 under the title *Equality in Educational Opportunity*. This report has become known as the Coleman Report, and its conclusions implied that the quality of a child's education had a very small effect on student achievement (10%) and that social, emotional, intellectual, and other environmental inequalities accounted for the majority (90%) of a student's success (Coleman et al., 1966). However, in 1975, Carver published an article indicating that due to the use of the variance statistic in the Coleman Report analyses, the results were misleading and a re-analysis of the data did, in fact, indicate that the differences between schools do impact the academic achievement of students (Carver, 1975). The passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 increased federal spending even more and was designed to ensure that equal opportunities were available for all children to receive a high-quality education (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 specifically increased federal funding to advance the academic achievement of the economically disadvantaged (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2004). These new federal initiatives required increased accountability.

The 1970s resulted in financial support for the education of handicapped students.

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

Lunenburg and Ornstein (2004) noted that federal initiatives to increase spending to improve specific areas of public education continued until the 1980s when it was reduced by the Reagan and Bush I administrations. In 1983, the National Commission on Excellence in Education published *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*. The document reported that the United States was being surpassed by other nations as a result of an educational system that was deteriorating as a result of mediocrity. The report associated the documented educational ills with the continued prosperity and security of the nation (National Commission on Excellence (NCE), 1983).

As a result, Congress requested the establishment of the NRC and NRP to review the knowledge and effectiveness of the available research-based instructional reading techniques (Snow et al., 1998). The end of the 20th century introduced even greater educational challenges and accountability requirements in education. Education became one of the nation's top priorities as Goals 2000 legislation was passed in 1994 (Bush, 2001).

The 21st century commenced with the passage of George W. Bush's No Child Left Behind Act in 2001. The Executive Summary of NCLB disclosed the fact that the federal government was spending \$120 billion a year on programs that had not been

documented by research to positively affect the individualized needs of the local schools or produce positive results in student achievement (Bush, 2001, p. 1). The priorities of NCLB included increasing accountability, requiring the use of research-based programs and practices, increasing state and local flexibility in spending federal funds, and empowering parents through improved communication and transfer options from low- to high-performing schools (Bush, 2001, p. 2). NCLB became the first legislation to increase public school accountability by rewarding states that exhibit significant educational progress and implementing sanctions such as withholding federal funding from states that fail to exhibit such progress (Bush, 2001, p. 26).

The most recent federal legislation included the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), which provided funds to purchase and implement effective reading curricula. Given that the federal government poured millions of dollars into ineffective instructional programs during the 1950s and 1960s, an increased focus on accountability requirements prevails and today's educators are burdened with the additional responsibility to exhibit progress in student outcome data. The Reading Street curriculum (which is the focus of this research study) has embedded the five Reading First principles within the program. Reading Street is one of many reading curriculum programs which have been adopted by state and district educational leaders across the United States as being an effective, research-based program.

### **Pearson Reading Street Research**

Pearson has commissioned several studies to examine the effectiveness of Reading Street. Gatti Evaluation completed two studies in which Reading Street assessment items were analyzed to determine whether a correlation to state reading

standards existed. The analyses determined that the Reading Street program was closely aligned to state standards across the nation (Gatti, 2005, 2006). In two additional studies commissioned by Pearson in 2006 and 2007, Magnolia Consulting, under the direction of Wilkerson, Shannon, and Herman, completed two separate year-long research investigations to determine the effectiveness of the Reading Street program. Both reports indicated that students who received instruction using Reading Street exhibited significant gains in reading achievement, but those gains were similar to gains achieved by students who were instructed in other basal reading curricula (Wilkerson et al., 2006, 2007). Berry et al. (2009) conducted a study contracted by Pearson which was designed to continue research on the curriculum by building upon the findings of the 2006 and 2007 Wilkerson et al. studies. The findings of Berry et al. were consistent with the findings of Wilkerson et al., as gains were noted in reading achievement.

The Pearson studies provided a basis on which to design and create further Reading Street studies. If additional independent, non-commissioned research studies were completed and the Reading Street curriculum was determined to be effective, both district and state leaders would know with assurance their students were receiving a quality education. Furthermore, stakeholders might be more willing to purchase supplemental Reading Street materials and provide additional professional development for teachers, which would further ensure the program was being implemented with fidelity. All too often, districts are pressured by political and social entities to change curriculum programs if significant progress is not documented during the first several years of implementation. When districts make frequent curriculum changes, students and

parents may become confused and teachers may become frustrated, resulting in a negative school atmosphere.

### **National Reading Panel: Scientifically Based Reading Research**

In 1997 Congress asked the director of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development and the Secretary of Education to convene a national panel of experts to produce a report that evaluated the status of research-based knowledge, including the efficacy of various approaches to teaching children to read (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000). Thus, the National Reading Panel was formed and started their work by thoroughly analyzing the National Research Council Committee's publication, *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*. After meeting, discussing and debating, the Panel settled on five essential components (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension) as topics for further study (NICHD, 2000). Once these topics were identified, the panel developed and adopted a set of rigorous research methodological standards. The research had to employ systematic, empirical methods that drew on observation or experiment, involved rigorous data analyses that were adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn, had to rely on measurements or observational methods that provided valid data across evaluators and observers and across multiple measurements and observations, and had to have been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts (NICHD, 2000). In addition, studies should "allow for replicability" (U. S. Department of Education, 2002, p. 5). These standards guided the screening of the research literature and identified a final set of experimental or quasi-experimental research studies that were then subjected to detailed analysis. The

methodological standards adopted by the National Reading Panel are the same as those used in efficacy studies in both psychology and medicine. The Panel stated (NICHD, 2000) that it was their belief that reading research should be conducted no less rigorously than medical and/or psychological treatments. The Panel alluded to their lack of examination of non-experimental studies stating, “Such standards have not been universally accepted and used in reading education research. Unfortunately, only a fraction of the total reading research literature met the Panel’s standards for use in the topic analyses” (NICHD, 2000, p. 5). For example, while the Panel initially identified 1,962 studies relevant to phonemic awareness instruction, only 52 of those studies met the specific research methodology criteria (NICHD, 2000). Opponents like Garan (2005) wondered how the Panel could discredit and exclude so many research studies.

A proponent of scientifically based reading research and George Bush’s first director of the Institute of Education Sciences (previously titled the Office of Educational Research and Improvement), Grover J. Whitehurst stated that his office “engages in a variety of activities to encourage the use of scientifically based research in education policy and decision making throughout the United States” (Whitehurst, 2001, p. 1). Therefore, in an effort to assist educational leaders with scientific evidence about the effectiveness of instructional programs and practices related to student achievement and outcomes, the Institute of Education Sciences established the *What Works Clearinghouse* website. Whitehurst went on to claim that there is every reason to believe that, if we invest in the education sciences and develop mechanisms to encourage evidence-based practices, we will see progress and transformation . . . of the same order and magnitude as we have seen in medicine and agriculture (Whitehurst, 2005, p. 1).

Many researchers and educational professionals object to such a narrow view of “valid” research. In direct response to Whitehurst’s comment noted above, Mary Smith in *Political Spectacle and the Fate of American Schools* (2004) posed the following questions: Does it make sense to apply the same criteria to educational research as to medical research? Or is this identification yet another political intrusion into the endeavors of truth seeking? Whether education experiments share sufficient characteristics with medical experiments is anything but settled, and there is no institutional forum for considering the issue. (Smith, 2004, p. 184)

Smith (2004) and Garan (2005) also questioned how the NRP could impose the model of medical research on a complex, behaviorally based discipline. They argue that the conditions for conducting medical research are quite different from those for conducting educational research. Smith (2004) gives us several examples. One example relates to the level of control. For instance, control over variable and treatment conditions is much greater in medical research than in educational research. Another example relates to the fact that comparative experiments on teaching and instructional methods present complications that do not exist in the medical field (Smith, 2004). With regard to the notion that studies should be able to be replicated, Allington (2005) argues that effective instruction cannot be packaged and repeated over and over again. Allington (2005) also states, “Effective teachers are much like the effective physician who offers a multi-pronged approach to reducing cholesterol; for instance, an approach that includes changes in diet, added exercise, and the use of drug therapy” (p. 464). Thus, effective doctors know that the information learned from clinical trials applies to most people in the population and that when treating patients, they must also consider the individual

patient's history and reaction to treatments. Along the same vein, Allington (2002) rejects the idea of a national reading curriculum and a one size-fits-all mentality.

In opposition to the notion of using scientifically based research exclusively, Smith (2004) asserts that no study is perfect or completely comprehensive, noting that one study cannot address all of the important aspects of a policy and its effects. Thus, we can make the connection that in order to see the whole picture, we need to examine all types of research available. She continues to point out that all researchers make choices, and those choices ultimately impact the study, findings, and others' interpretations. For example, one researcher may measure immediate but not long-term effects of policy. One researcher may limit the study to a single measure, while another uses multiple measures. Other researchers study the workings of the policy in the field, while others may study just the policy itself. Some may interpret statistical findings conservatively using circumspect language, while others may use more latitude and speculative or generous language (Smith, 2004). There have even been accusations that Timothy Shanahan misrepresented findings of the National Reading Panel to further his own agenda. Garan (2005) cautions readers about being seduced by words and insists that ethical scientists must "approach their work with humility and discipline and resist the temptation to indulge their own pet notions at the expense of the truth and in defiance of the evidence" (p. 438). Garan stated the following:

It is this fundamental precept that defenders of the Report of the National Reading Panel (NRP) have not faced. As a result, instead of an evidence-based guide that can inform practice in reading instruction, we are faced with a biased report characterized by misreported, over-generalized findings that do not inform but

rather mandate education policy—ironically—in the name of science (Garan, 2005, p. 438).

Whether dubbed right or wrong, scientifically based reading research as identified by the National Reading Panel report is the foundation for Reading First. Many critics fear that the process used by the National Reading Panel marked the beginning of a federal hijacking of public education, and these critics loathe the promotion of the idea of scientific research as a cure-all for the United States' ailing public education system (Garan, 2005).

### **Teachers' Perceptions and Beliefs**

Research regarding teachers' thinking and beliefs began in the late 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s and quickly grew into a large body of research (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Kagan, 1992). Some researchers (Ashton, 1990; Brookhart & Freeman, 1992; Clark, 1988; Putman & Duffy, 1984) believed that since behavior is guided by thought, knowing teachers' perceptions and beliefs would help better understand teachers' behaviors in classrooms and provide a guide for improving teachers' practices and pre-service teacher preparation.

On the other hand, research related to teachers' perceptions and beliefs responds to the need to involve teachers in a discussion of educational research and policies. As mentioned before, teachers are among the most important personnel in the educational system: teachers are in the front line of education, heavily involved in various teaching and learning processes, and also the final practitioners of educational principles and theories. For many years, however, teachers had been absent from educational research and policies, and the voices of teachers were seldom heard in public (Dhunpath, 2000).

Therefore, starting in the 1990s, many researchers (Angaran, 1999; Bibou-Nakou, Kiosseoglou, & Stogiannidou, 2000; Casimir, Mattox, & Hays, 2000; Commeyras, Osborn, & Bruce, 1994; Dhunpath, 2000; Good & Brophy, 2000) advocated introducing more teachers' ideas and thoughts to educational research.

### **The Relationship between Teachers' Beliefs and Practices**

So far, research regarding teachers' perceptions and beliefs has experienced two periods. The first period was from the end of the 1970s to the 1990s. In this period, studies of teachers' perceptions usually concentrated on examining the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices. The findings of most of these studies indicated that teachers' practices were usually consistent with their beliefs and thoughts and were related to students' performance (Fuchs, Fuchs, & Phillips, 1994; Johnson, 1992; Mangano & Allen, 1986; Rupley & Logan, 1984; Richardson, Anders, Tidwell, & Lloyd, 1991; Wing, 1989; Wood, Cobb, & Yackel, 1990). For instance, Fuchs, Fuchs, and Phillips (1994) examined the relationship between teachers' beliefs about the importance of good student work habits and their responsiveness to student academic performance. One hundred and twenty-one elementary school teachers participated in this study. Teachers' beliefs were measured by questionnaires. The results indicated that teachers with strong beliefs about good student work habits plan with greater responsiveness to student performance than teachers with less strong beliefs. Their learning-disabled students also achieved better than those with teachers who had less strong beliefs.

## **Teachers' 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 measurable 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 its effectiveness.

### **Expert Review of Core Reading Programs**

In 2007, the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) established a 24-member review panel to provide information regarding a variety of core reading programs to assist local school districts in determining the degree to which each reading program aligned with scientific research in reading. The review was conducted as a service to local school districts. The evaluation was completed by a 24-member panel consisting of regional reading coaches, school reading coaches, classroom teachers, and a university professor (Alabama State Department of Education, 2007). The panel members were not associated with any publisher or reading program. As a matter of fact, each panelist had to sign a statement indicating that he or she had no bias toward any publisher or programs, did not have any attitudes or preconceived notions that would inhibit a fair and impartial evaluation, and was in no way receiving any monetary gain for

participating. The panel was trained and supervised by the state staff of the Alabama Reading Initiative (ALSDE, 2007).

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

Small grade-level groups screened the submitted curricula in May 2007. Eleven reading programs were submitted for screening (ALSDE, 2007). All but two of the programs were identified as core reading programs. Before the evaluation began, an external consultant trained the expert review panel and mock reviews were held. The program evaluation was completed in June 2007. The following programs received a full review: Harcourt, Storytown; Houghton Mifflin, Alabama Reading; Macmillan/McGraw-Hill Treasures; Rigby, Literacy by Design; Scott Foresman, Reading Street; Sopris, West Read Well; SRA/McGraw-Hill, Reading Mastery Signature Edition; Voyager, Universal Literacy System; and Zaner-Bloser, Voices Reading (ALSDE, 2007). Questions were addressed at the beginning and end of each session. The consultant answered questions

during the evaluation, contacted the publishers to answer any comments during daily debriefings, and documented notes daily regarding the activities, questions, and concerns from each day. Panel members evaluated the programs based upon criteria from Simmons and Kameenui's 2006 *Consumer's Guide to Analyzing a Core Reading Program Grades K-3: A Critical Elements Analysis*. Overall, the panel concluded that the most effective reading curricula were Reading Street, MacMillan/McGraw-Hill Treasures, and Harcourt Storytown. Reading Street received the highest ratings during the review (ALSDE, 2007).

### **Reading Street**

In 2000, Reading Street began to take form when Pearson created and published the Reading curriculum. Reading Street is a comprehensive reading curriculum that was developed by 14 authors with a wide variety of knowledge and experience in education (Wilkerson et al., 2007). The Reading Street curriculum has been described by Wilkerson et al. (2007) as a "research-based basal program that provides comprehensive reading curriculum materials for pre-kindergarten through sixth-grade classrooms" (p. 18). The program is founded on the three-tiered reading intervention model. Pearson incorporated differentiated instruction in the five areas of reading that were identified most effective by the research of Snow et al. (1998) and the National Reading Panel (2000): phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency.

The core program consists of teacher editions, an assessment handbook, student editions, assessments, Big Books (K-2), leveled readers, student practice books, decodable readers, and take-home readers. Supplemental materials include sound cards, graphic organizers, transparencies, a song and rhyme chart that corresponds to the

phonics lessons, and a variety of CDs. Progress-monitoring materials, baseline tests, selections tests, unit and end-of-year tests, and fresh reads are also included in the assessment component of the program. Additional supplemental materials available for purchase include English Language Learner (ELL) materials, a language arts component, and a technology component (Wilkerson et al., 2007). A separate reading intervention program, My Sidewalks, was developed and designed for students whose reading skills are well below grade level and cannot be adequately instructed using grade level materials alone (Wilkerson, 2008).

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

Gatti Evaluation, in conjunction with the Wisconsin Center for Educational Research (WCER), completed two studies in which the assessment items in the unit benchmark and end-of-the-year tests in Reading Street were analyzed to determine whether a correlation to state reading standards existed. Pearson recognized the importance of ensuring the concepts embedded and tested within the curriculum addressed the assessment items used by the states for accountability.

The 2005 study examined the Reading Street's alignment to a sampling of standards throughout 10 states. Gatti (2005) determined that 98% of the tests "aligned above the median for recently aligned state assessments" (p. 1). A similar study in 2006 compared the alignment of unit benchmark assessments and end-of-the-year tests to the standards across 21 states. Gatti (2006) reported that over 90% of these assessments "were above the median for state assessments that had been recently aligned" by the WCER (p. 1). Both studies reported that approximately 97% of the assessment questions were considered free from quality concerns. The analyses determined that the Reading Street program was closely aligned to state standards across the nation and the evaluation firm recommended using Reading Street as a means of effectively implementing quality reading instruction (Gatti, 2005, 2006).

In two additional studies commissioned by Pearson in 2006 and 2007, Magnolia Consulting, under the direction of Wilkerson, Shannon, and Herman, completed two separate year-long research investigations to determine the effectiveness of the Reading Street program. Although Pearson commissioned the studies, the researchers described Magnolia Consulting as an "external, independent consulting firm specializing in educational evaluation" (Wilkerson et al., 2006, p. 1). Both studies utilized clustered, randomized trials in which teachers were assigned to either a treatment or control group of students within the same school. The researchers designed the studies to meet the requirements of the quality standards created by the U.S. Department of Education's What Works Clearinghouse as well as the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation criteria. Wilkerson et al. (2006) also noted that the quality of the two studies was ensured by establishing and reporting the following: "construct validity, internal

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

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

Treatment groups received instruction using Reading Street, and control groups received instruction using the school's adopted district approved curriculum (Wilkerson et al., 2006, 2007). Teachers implementing the Reading Street program received initial and follow-up professional development and training from the publishers. In addition, two Pearson representatives were appointed to provide the study sites with additional

guidance and assistance as needed. In order to provide additional qualitative data, both studies incorporated fall and spring site visits, classroom observations, implementation logs, teacher interviews, surveys, and focus group meetings to address secondary research questions surrounding the quality and consistency of implementation as well as teachers' perceptions of the new program (Wilkerson et al., 2006, 2007).

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

Schools in this study were referred to as School 1, School 2, School 3, School 4, and School 5 (Wilkerson et al., 2006). Specific characteristics of participating schools were included in the study. School 1 was a Title I school characterized by 97% African-American students, a teacher/student ratio of 1:25, 90% free- and reduced-lunch rate, 15% English Language Learners (ELL), and low parental involvement. School 2 was also a Title I school characterized by predominately Caucasian enrollment, a teacher/student

ratio of 1:30, and low parental involvement. Free- and reduced-lunch percentage rate as well as percentages of ELL and minority students for School 2 were not reported (Wilkerson et al., 2006). School 3 did not qualify for Title I status. It was characterized by predominately Caucasian students, a minority population of less than 20%, a 1:24 teacher/student ratio, 2% English Language Learners (ELL), and no instructional support staff but increased parental support and in-class intervention. School 4 did not qualify for Title I status. It was characterized by an enrollment of predominately Caucasian students, a minority population of less than 20%, a 1:22 teacher/student ratio, 7% English Language Learners (ELL), a reading specialist, and an ELL instructor. No free- and reduced-lunch information was provided. School 5 did not qualify for Title I status and was characterized by an enrollment of predominately Caucasian students. School 5 exhibited a teacher/student ratio 1:18, free- and reduced-lunch percentage of 25%, a small percentage of English Language Learners (ELL), and instructional support (Wilkerson et al., 2006). Information regarding specific percentages of ELL and minority students was not reported. Informal analyses of these characteristics revealed a pattern of schools represented primarily by Caucasian students and high teacher/student ratios. Gender differences and the enrollment at each grade level were equally distributed throughout the sampled population. In order to rule out differences related to teacher factors, statistical analyses were completed to determine the presence of any differences related to number of years experience, number of years experience at that specific grade level, number of years at the participating school, level of teacher education, and student/teacher ratios. No statistical differences were found (Wilkerson et al., 2006).

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

The researchers also collected data regarding teachers' perceptions of Reading Street via weekly teacher logs, site visits, and end-of-year focus groups. Teachers' perceptions of the new curriculum were favorable (Wilkerson et al., 2006). Specifically, teachers noted the following as strengths of the program: comprehensive nature of the materials; theme incorporation; threaded target skills; differentiated materials and lessons; science, social studies, and technology connections; and increased student interest and interaction. According to feedback provided by the participating teachers, it appeared to take approximately three months for teachers to adapt to and feel comfortable implementing the new reading series. At focus group meetings, teachers reported and agreed that implementing Reading Street with fidelity required additional work and time; however, the teachers agreed that the benefits greatly outweighed the added preparation (Wilkerson et al., 2006).

The 2007 study examined the reading performance of 1,207 first, second, and third graders across six schools in four school districts (Wilkerson et al., 2007). These

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

Specific characteristics of participating schools were included in the study (Wilkerson et al., 2007). Schools in this study were referred to as School A, School B, School C, School D, School E, and School F. School A was characterized by predominately Caucasian enrollment, a teacher/student ratio of 1:23, and a minority population of less than 8%. School B was also characterized by predominately Caucasian enrollment, a teacher/student ratio of 1:21, and a minority population of less than 31%. Free- and reduced-lunch percentage rates were not reported, although it was noted that Schools A and B did not qualify for Title I status (Wilkerson et al., 2007). The study reported that School C was not a Title I school but indicated that 39% of students received free and reduced lunch. Interestingly, the study reported that School D was, in fact, a Title I school, but indicated that 14% of students received free and reduced lunch. It was unclear if School D qualified for Title I status based upon other criteria or if the percentages of free and reduced lunch were mistakenly switched in the report. Nevertheless, it was reported that School C did not qualify for Title I status. School C

was characterized by predominately Caucasian students, a minority population of less than 11%, and a teacher/student ratio of 1:10. The percentage of English Language Learners (ELL) was not disclosed in the report (Wilkerson et al., 2007). It was reported that School D qualified for Title I status; however, as mentioned above, the researchers reported a 14% free- and reduced-lunch rate. School D was characterized by an enrollment of predominately Caucasian students, a teacher/student ratio of 1:10, and a minority population of less than 11%. Again, the percentage of English Language Learners (ELL) was not disclosed. School E qualified for Title I status and was characterized by 97% Caucasian enrollment, a teacher/student ratio of 1:18, free- and reduced-lunch percentage of 40.4%, and 4.1% of English Language Learners (ELL). School F was characterized by Title I status, a majority of Caucasian students, a teacher/student ratio of 1:17, and a 46% free- and reduced-lunch rate. The report did not indicate the percentage of ELL student enrollment (Wilkerson et al., 2007). Informal analyses of these characteristics revealed a pattern of schools represented primarily by Caucasian students and low teacher/student ratios. Gender and grade level enrollment figures were equally distributed throughout the sampled population. In order to rule out differences related to teacher factors, statistical analyses were completed to determine the presence of any differences related to number of years experience, number of years experience at that specific grade level, number of years at the participating school, level of teacher education, and student/teacher ratios. No statistical differences were found (Wilkerson et al., 2007).

The 2007 Year Two Report revealed results that almost mirrored the 2006 study.

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

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

Teachers reported feeling overwhelmed at the wealth of resources and reported the differentiated lessons appeared to facilitate academic growth and establish student self-confidence. Generally speaking, teachers reported feeling the curriculum met the needs of above-level and on-level students more efficiently (Wilkerson et al., 2007). Furthermore, it was also reported that at times the intervention materials for below-level readers was too challenging for students demonstrating significant reading deficits. At focus group meetings, teachers in the 2007 Two Year Study also agreed that

implementing Reading Street with fidelity required additional work and time; however, the teachers agreed that the benefits greatly outweighed any added preparation. In conclusion, the study indicated the need for additional research to investigate the effects of the Reading Street program following a full year of implementation (Wilkerson et al., 2007).

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

first grade was 40 wpm. The second grade achievement benchmark was 90 wpm, and the third grade achievement benchmark was 110 wpm (University of Oregon, 2008).

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

### **Summary**

A thorough review of the literature revealed the major themes of research. A theoretical basis of reading instruction, the history of curriculum implementation, the

history of reading instruction, research on programmatic reading interventions, accountability in education, Pearson Reading Street research, the National Reading Panel Scientifically Based Reading Research, teacher perceptions and beliefs, the Expert Review of Core Reading Programs, and the Reading Street program were discussed.

Although a few studies have been completed on the Reading Street scripted program, research revealed that a study regarding the effects of this program in an urban community with high poverty levels has never been completed. It was the researcher's intent to identify and obtain information regarding teacher perceptions of the scripted Reading Street program and its sub-scale components in an urban school district in northern New Jersey. Chapter III explains the methodology used in this dissertation.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this mixed-methods research study was to explore teachers' evaluation of the Reading Street program and the implementation of the sub-scale components of this curriculum within their classrooms in one New Jersey urban district. Despite the fact that a few qualitative studies have evaluated scripted reading programs, an evident gap exists in quantitative studies exploring teacher reactions to those programs. In addition, there have been limited studies that have given voice to the elementary teacher. This study sought to help remedy those deficiencies by exploring teachers' attitudes toward a scripted reading program that reduced teacher autonomy in one large New Jersey district. There was a need for a mixed-methods study that examined the influence of utilizing a scripted Language Arts curriculum.

This chapter provides descriptions of how the research was conducted. It describes the procedures and methods used in the present investigation to develop an online instrument to measure the evaluation and satisfaction levels of certified instructional personnel (Grades 2-5) regarding the Reading Street scripted program. Attention is given to the procedures for collecting data and the methods used in analyzing the data. The topics are presented in the following order: (1) background, (2) research questions, (3) research design and methods, (4) sampling, (5) instrumentation, (6) data collection, (7) data analysis, (8) validity and reliability, (9) limitations, and (10) delimitations.

## **Background**

After seven years as an elementary classroom teacher in a culturally diverse urban school district in New Jersey, the present researcher served as a literacy coach for its Curriculum and Instruction Department due to her extensive expertise in elementary literacy. As a coach, she worked in two schools and provided support to teachers in grades K-8 for three years. Additionally, she provided professional development to Language Arts teachers in Grades K-5 and offered daily classroom support, which was an additional resource to the classroom teacher. Over the course of the 2010-11 and 2011-12 school years, the Language Arts supervisors asked literacy coaches not only to provide support to teachers but also to create mini lessons to enhance writing skills and strategies for students. The mini lessons included daily lesson plans for teachers to follow for each writing genre and a resource packet filled with additional activities and materials for teachers to use.

Because New Jersey has not used the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards in Language Arts and Mathematics since the 2010-2011 school year, the Language Arts supervisors researched and presented a new Language Arts curriculum to the board members. The board members, the Associate Superintendent of the Curriculum and Instruction Department and the Superintendent of Schools approved the new curriculum because it was aligned to the new Common Core State Standards. With the adoption of a new scripted program, literacy coaches were eliminated and this researcher returned to the classroom as a second grade teacher. The district was under tremendous financial pressure with a 2% spending cap and declining enrollment that decreased resources. A policy decision by the New Jersey Commissioner of Education to address a

federal mandate funneled down to the local district. This necessitated a decision by the district to quickly adopt the new reading program. This top down, politically imposed approach represented a significant change in how curriculum was selected for the district.

During the 2011/2012 school year, the new Language Arts Reading Street scripted curriculum was implemented throughout the district. The researcher was at the advantage because she was given Reading Street professional development the last year she was a literacy coach. Unfortunately, since none of her colleagues had been given the same opportunity, the building administrator asked if she would take on the responsibility not only of teaching but also of working with teachers to provide them with the support needed in order for them to effectively implement the curriculum. She gladly accepted because she enjoyed working with the teachers to properly prepare them for teaching the new curriculum.

This opportunity was an impetus for the current researcher to measure teachers' evaluation and level of satisfaction with the new curriculum. The researcher's role in this study was to collect data by using an online survey as the method of instrumentation. In this way, she could email the population of teachers a hyperlink to the survey, increasing her reach and eliminating the need for data entry of paper and pencil surveys.

As an elementary educator employed in a urban public school in northern New Jersey, the scope of professional roles and responsibilities of the researcher in this study has included the opportunity to deliver instruction using the scripted Reading Street program, to monitor administration of the Terra Nova Assessment (Grades K-2), the New Jersey Skills and Knowledge Assessment (NJ ASK) for Grades 3-8, and to participate in

collaborative data meetings, school leadership committees, and grade level planning experiences. Kemp (2001) stressed that even though the degree of participation may vary significantly by researcher, it is imperative that the researcher minimize any influence upon the outcome of the phenomena being studied.

### **Research Questions**

During the 2011-2012 school-year, all second through fifth grade teachers in a large urban district in northern New Jersey implemented the new Reading Street Language Arts scripted curriculum. This mixed-methods research study explored teachers' evaluation of the Reading Street curriculum and the implementation of the components of this curriculum within their classroom in one New Jersey urban district. The following questions were addressed:

1. What are teachers' overall evaluations of the Reading Street program in the areas of planning, training and support, planning and scheduling, materials, curriculum and content, differentiated instruction, connections, and outcomes?
2. What is the level of consistency between teacher satisfaction of the Reading Street program in the areas of planning, training and support, planning and scheduling; materials, curriculum and content, differentiated instruction connections, and outcomes?
3. What are some of the challenges or issues that teachers faced as they implemented the Reading Street program?

### **Research Design and Methods**

This study used a mixed-methods approach to measure teachers' evaluation and level of satisfaction toward the Reading Street curriculum. "Mixed-methods research is a

research design with philosophical assumptions as well as methods of inquiry. As a methodology, it involves philosophical assumptions that guide the direction of the collection and analysis of data and the mixture of qualitative and quantitative approaches in many phases in the research process. As a method, it focuses on collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies. Its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone” (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007).

Mixed-methods research was used to analyze the second through fifth grade teacher participants’ evaluation of the Reading Street program and the implementation of the components of the current curriculum within their classroom.

This study examined teachers’ evaluation of the scripted Reading Street program and their level of satisfaction among the sub-scale components. The research asked participants open-ended questions in the areas of planning, training and support, planning and scheduling, materials, curriculum and content, differentiated instruction, connections, and outcomes.

This study combined quantitative and qualitative methods in order to capitalize on the strengths of each approach. Greene, Caracelli, and Graham (1989) and Creswell (2002) stated that a mixed-methods design provides a more comprehensive answer to the research questions of the study. They also argued that a research design that integrates different methods is more likely to produce better results in terms of quality and scope. According to Gay and Airasian (2003), the mixed-methods design goes beyond the limitations of a single approach because it integrates both quantitative and qualitative

research methods. Incorporating methods can enhance, illustrate, and clarify research findings by having to use deductive reasoning while analyzing statistics (quantitative research) and inductive reasoning concentrating on details (qualitative research). While the primary methodology used in this study was quantitative, qualitative methods were used to enhance the findings of the study.

## **Sampling**

### **School District**

The northern New Jersey public school system (NNJPSS) studied is located in a culturally diverse urban area. The NNJPSS employs approximately 3,500 personnel, has over 37 schools servicing 27, 973 students in Grades Pre-K to 12, and utilizes a budget of over \$631 million dollars. The district is an international haven, supporting a city that is a melting pot of cultures where more than 100 languages are spoken by the students at home. According to the New Jersey State Department of Education website, the NNJPSS consistently educates a higher percentage of low-income students (as defined by qualifying for free or reduced lunch) than the state average.

Within this large urban district under study there are 33% African American students, 16.5% Asian American students, 37.8% Latino American students and 9.3% Caucasian students. There are 14.1% Special Education students and 9.3% English Language Learners. Based on the above percentages, this is a predominantly minority community. The percentage of free/reduced lunch rate is 77%.

Table 1 lists the vital facts pertaining to the northern New Jersey district under study (as of February 2013).

Table I

*Vital Facts Pertaining to the northern New Jersey District under Study*

<i>DISTRICT STAFF</i>
No. of Instructional Staff: 2,989 No. of Non-instructional: 1,574 No. of Administrators: 177
<i>SCHOOLS</i>
25 Elementary Schools 6 Middle Schools 6 High Schools 1 Regional Day 1 Adult Education Schools (Evening, Day) 42 Childcare Sites Total No. of Schools: 81
<i>STUDENT ENROLLMENT</i>
Pacific Islander - 181 African-American - 9,311 Asian-American - 4,631 Latino-American - 10,589 Native American - 104 Caucasian - 3,005 Multiracial - 155 Total No. of Students: 27,973
<i>FEMALE STUDENTS</i>
Elementary - 10,257 Secondary - 3,309 Total No. of Female Students: 13,566
<i>MALE STUDENTS</i>
Elementary - 10,880 Secondary - 3,527 Total No. of Male Students: 14,407
Charter School Enrollment - 4,143 Special Education Students - 3,941 English Language Learner - 2,605 Adult Education Students - 257

## **Sample**

The sample included all certified teaching personnel in second through fifth grade who were employed within the northern New Jersey school district during the 2011/2012 school year. The sample was identified from the district's list of highly qualified classroom teachers in second through fifth grade. Certified personnel who participated had experience, had acquired knowledge, or had received professional development training regarding the scripted Reading Street program. For the purposes of this study, it was decided to obtain data from certified personnel in second through fifth grade in order to collect a more comprehensive impression of teachers' evaluation and their satisfaction levels regarding the 2011-2012 district-wide adoption of the Reading Street program.

This is an urban Abbott district, and 25 elementary schools were selected with grades ranging from pre-kindergarten through eighth grade with great cultural diversity. The sample of this research study was composed of 606 second through fifth grade teachers within each building (see Appendix H). The first survey response rate was 17.5% based on the 106 participants who responded. The follow-up open-ended survey response rate was 9.4% based on the 10 participants who responded.

The inclusion criteria were as follows: certified second through fifth grade public school teachers currently employed in one northern New Jersey public school district utilizing the scripted Reading Street curriculum.

## **Instrumentation**

A questionnaire (see Appendix G) was developed to determine the evaluation and satisfaction levels of certified instructional personnel regarding the scripted Reading Street program. The current study adapted the survey used by Ladnier-Hicks (2010), who

conducted a validation study on *Third Grade Reading Performance and Teacher Perceptions of the Reading Street Program*. That questionnaire consisted of 35 items with responses being measured by a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from *strongly agree* (5) to *strongly disagree* (1) and four demographic questions which included years of experience, highest academic degree, school location, and grade level currently teaching. The questionnaire was reviewed by the researcher and her advisor, Dr. Strobert, and modifications were made to determine the reactions and satisfaction levels of certified instructional personnel regarding the Reading Street scripted program.

An expert panel consisting of the district's 30 reading specialists was given the opportunity to review the questionnaire draft and participate in the piloting process. Twenty-four questionnaires were returned during pilot testing, with a response rate of 80%. The questionnaire was refined, using a focus group consisting of a reading recovery teacher, a third grade elementary teacher, and the researcher. The questionnaire was further refined based upon feedback from the expert panel. The questionnaire consisted of 34 quantitative items with responses measured by a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from *strongly agree* (5) to *strongly disagree* (1) and 1 qualitative open-ended question.

Once a modification of the initial questions corresponding to the above quantitative items was developed, the surveys were distributed electronically and were conducted with a sample of second through fifth grade teachers from one New Jersey school district. The school principals were notified that the researcher had permission (as a matter of professional courtesy) from the district to conduct a survey of the teachers via email. The questionnaire, attached information letter that explained the purpose of the study, voluntary participation form, informed consent form, and contact information for

potential questions or comments was sent to each participant via email. A non-experimental, quantitative design methodology was designed to collect data to answer the research questions.

Quantitative data included information obtained from questionnaires regarding teacher attitudes towards the Reading Street program following the first year of the program's implementation. Teacher evaluation was measured by mean scores obtained from a questionnaire designed by the researcher that utilized a 5-point Likert type scale. Qualitative data was first obtained from the teacher questionnaire, as teachers were given the opportunity to make a comment regarding the new reading program at the end of the questionnaire.

The second part of the study was conducted by using a follow-up open-ended survey to understand more deeply how the Reading Street program impacted the teachers' teaching and their level of satisfaction. The survey was developed based on the lack of support responses to the original survey. The researcher developed the survey, which included seven open-ended questions in the areas of planning, training and support, planning and scheduling, materials, curriculum and content, differentiated instruction, connections, and outcomes. Teachers were again purposefully sampled based on their experiences in order to develop a cross section of multiple perspectives.

Surveys were chosen as the measure of teacher evaluation and level of satisfaction. Due to the length and nature of the study, observations and personal interviews would not have provided the honesty that the anonymous survey allowed. In addition, observations, interviews, or focus groups would add the potential for bias; some vocal people may influence others in their expression of attitude. Further, the data

analysis for such an endeavor would be overly cumbersome if attitudes could be measured using a survey that was reliable and valid.

### **Data Collection**

Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was obtained (see Appendix A). According to the standard operating procedures (SOP) in the northern New Jersey urban public school district, the researcher needed to obtain written permission by filling out the district's authorization to conduct research application. The application was sent to the Director of Program Evaluation, who reviewed the application. Once the application was reviewed and approved by the Director of Program Evaluation, a letter to conduct research within the district was sent to the researcher (see Appendix B). A copy of the authorization to conduct research letter was sent to the Associate Superintendent, the Superintendent and the Associate Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction to maintain for their records. No written permission from the above administrators was needed because the application to conduct research within the district was filed according to the New Jersey urban public school district guidelines.

The sample was identified from the district's list of highly qualified classroom teachers in second through fifth grade who were employed within the northern New Jersey public school system during the 2011/2012 school year. The list of highly qualified classroom teachers was obtained from the Curriculum and Instruction Associate Superintendent (see Appendix D). School principals did not distribute the researcher's questionnaire nor give oral directions. The school principals were notified that the researcher had permission from the district to conduct a survey of the teachers via email.

The questionnaire, attached information letter that explained the purpose of the study, voluntary participation form, informed consent form, and contact information for potential questions or comment were sent to each participant via email (see Appendix F). The letter assured all participants of their anonymity and that the information they provided would be kept confidential. To protect the confidentiality of all participants, the researcher was advised not to include any demographic materials to improve the response rate and access to all surveys was restricted to the researcher. All statistical analysis was presented in summary form with no one person or school being identified.

The researcher constructed the survey using Google Docs, and each teacher in the population was emailed the link to the Google Docs survey. The usage of the convenience sampling method proved to be less costly, less time consuming, easier to administer, and ensured a high participation rate.

Data collection was completed through the use of Google Docs. On March 18, 2013, teachers were emailed a link to the Likert-scale survey and were given two weeks to respond. Follow-up open-ended surveys were emailed to the same population of second through fifth grade teachers on April 24, 2013. The follow-up open-ended questions were based on the seven sub-scale components: planning, training and support, planning and scheduling, materials, curriculum and content, differentiated instruction, connections, and outcomes.

Once the surveys were completed online, the questions and answers gathered were viewed on Google Docs and the questions were put into different sections. These sections were as follows: planning, training and support, planning and scheduling, materials, curriculum and content, differentiated instruction, connections, and outcomes.

The open-ended responses were summarized based on the responses of the participating teachers.

### **Data Analysis**

The online program, Google Docs was used to create charts based on the responses. Additionally, means, standard deviations of the main variables under study, and a summary of the sample correlations were also computed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Qualitative descriptive statistics used through Google Docs were utilized to summarize the participants' responses.

Questionnaire responses were then entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Data analysis was used in several ways with the assistance of the SPSS. First, the final scales were analyzed to determine the internal consistency of each a priori scale, using coefficient alpha. Only one scale was modified based on these results. The resulting alphas all exceeded .75, signifying moderately reliable scales.

Average scale scores were then computed by summing the responses for each scale separately and dividing by the number of items. In this way, regardless of the number of items that comprised the scales, scale scores were all on the same scale (1 to 5). The researcher could then determine the relative positive or negative attitude of teachers toward each aspect of the Reading Street program by examining the scale means. Each questionnaire was designed to reveal a mean overall score. Statistical analyses of the questionnaire were also designed to reveal mean scores in each major interest area.

Pearson Product Moment correlations were then computed between each scale and the student outcome scale to determine the relationship between teacher attitudes

about different aspects of the Reading Street curriculum and the perceived effects of the curriculum on student outcome.

### **Validity and Reliability**

The researcher met with the district's statistician to complete Cronbach's alpha to determine internal reliability. The piloted questionnaire obtained an overall Cronbach's alpha of .926 indicating that the instrument was reliable.

According to SPSS Command Syntax Reference, Cronbach's alpha is a measure of internal consistency; that is, how closely related a set of items is as a group. A "high" value of alpha is often used (along with substantive arguments and possibly other statistical measures) as evidence that the items measure an underlying (or latent) construct. However, a high alpha does not imply that the measure is uni-dimensional. If, in addition to measuring internal consistency, one wishes to provide evidence that the scale in question is uni-dimensional, additional analyses can be performed. The questionnaire provided an opportunity for participants to provide a limited amount of qualitative data in the form of comments and/or concerns.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study was designed to investigate teachers' evaluation and level of satisfaction while implementing the Reading Street curriculum currently in their classroom. The Reading Street curriculum was implemented in second through fifth grade; therefore, a discussion of results was limited to Grades 2 through 5. The study was limited to only teachers' evaluation of the program. In addition, this investigation was dependent on teachers answering the questions honestly and not with answers they suspected the researcher wanted to hear.

The study was conducted in one large urban school district in northern New Jersey; therefore, discussion or results is limited to districts with the same population make-up as the schools utilized in this investigation. The sample size was the number of second through fifth grade teachers. A convenience sampling was utilized when conducting the survey. The use of convenience sampling is limiting as it is the weakest form of sampling, but it is also the most widely used. In the surveys the researcher did not collect demographic data such as grade level, school they are currently teaching in, how many years teaching, and highest degree of education, which enables the researcher to protect the anonymity of the respondents.

Since the researcher intended to collect the data for this study through a survey instrument, the researcher was well aware that this might have resulted in limited data collection. Although this study exhibited adequate sample size ( $n = 106$ ), all of the participating schools were located in urban areas within the county. Collection of data from teachers who teach in one urban district limits the results. Care must be taken not to generalize these results to rural schools or those with predominantly middle class students, as they differ from the population served by the district that provided data for this study.

Although data were not available from consecutive years of implementation, study limitations were created by solely investigating the initial year of the Reading Street implementation into the district. Perhaps the most accurate data came from actual observations of the Reading Street program's instructional components over time to map the long-term effect this instruction has on student learning. "Many factors outside the student have an effect on elementary reading achievement, with the most obvious being

the classroom environment” (Cooter, 1993, p. 585). The classroom environment can only be determined through observation; therefore, this was a major limitation for the purpose of this study.

Demographic data such as current grade level teaching and number of years of teaching experience were not collected. Other data concerning highest degree earned were also not collected due to concerns with a 17.5% response rate. However, those who responded may have been more likely to have extremely positive or extremely negative attitudes. There is always response bias with samples of convenience. This further limits the interpretation of the results.

### **Delimitations of the Study**

The foremost delimitation was the decision to survey only second through fifth grade teachers who are implementing the newly adopted Scott Foresman Reading Street curriculum. The study was delimited by the fact that only one urban school district in New Jersey was used to represent this study. Another delimitation of the study was that test scores were not being viewed or utilized. The results of the study may not be pertinent in school districts with a different size, population, or demographics.

### **Summary**

Chapter III provided an explanation of the methodology used for this dissertation. It described the researcher’s background, the design of the study, the sampling technique, the quantitative method of data collection, and the method of qualitative data analysis that the researcher used to produce the findings. Finally, this chapter also described the methods used to attain validity and reliability in the study. Chapter IV presents the findings.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **FINDINGS**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter presents results of the data analyzed from the surveys disseminated. The Reading Street Teacher Perception Survey was composed of one open-ended question and 34 Likert-scale questions. The follow-up Reading Street survey was composed of 7 open-ended questions. The current study adapted the survey used by Ladnier-Hicks (2010), who conducted a validation study on *Third Grade Reading Performance and Teacher Perceptions of the Reading Street Program*. The researcher developed the follow-up open-ended survey instrument. A detailed discussion about the response rate, data analysis, findings, results, and interpretation of the quantitative and qualitative data for each of the three research questions of this study is also included in this chapter.

The purpose of this mixed-methods research study was to explore teachers' evaluation of the Reading Street program and the implementation of the sub-scale components of this curriculum within their classrooms in one New Jersey urban district.

Patton (2002) suggested that researchers use mixed-methods study because “they need to know and use a variety of methods to be responsive to the nuances of particular empirical questions and the idiosyncrasies of specific stakeholder needs” (2002, p. 585). In this context, a mixed-methods approach was used in this study to “build on the synergy and strength that exists between quantitative and qualitative research methods in order to understand a phenomenon more fully than is possible using either quantitative or qualitative methods alone” (Gay, Miles, & Airasian, 2006, p. 490).

On March 18, 2013, the study questionnaire (see Appendix G) was sent via email to each second through fifth grade teacher included in this study. An electronic copy of oral directions, which were to be read prior to the survey, was also provided (see Appendix F). A cover letter was also attached to each questionnaire. The cover letter explained the purposes of the study, indicated who should participate, explained voluntary participation, addressed informed consent, and provided contact information for potential questions or comments (see Appendix F). Participants had to follow the link on the cover letter to complete the questionnaire online. The sample population of this study was composed of 606 educators; of those, 106 surveys were collected electronically and used in the study.

This study was done as a single-phase, one-year study employing mixed methods. A Likert-type scale survey instrument, the Reading Street Questionnaire, was used as an implementation collection of teacher perceptions regarding the scripted Reading Street program and its sub-scale components. Follow-up open-ended surveys were emailed to the same population of second through fifth grade teachers on April 24, 2013. The follow-up open-ended questions were based on the seven sub-scale components of the survey: planning, training and support, planning and scheduling, materials, curriculum and content, differentiated instruction, connections, and outcomes.

This chapter begins with an overview of the analysis of the quantitative data collected from the 106 second through fifth grade teachers who participated in the study. An overview of the analysis of the qualitative data collected from follow-up open-ended surveys from the same population of second through fifth grade teachers is then presented.

The overview of the quantitative and qualitative analysis includes the procedures within the analysis and a description of the sample that participated in the surveys. The results of the educators' responses to each of the following research questions were examined: (a) What are teachers' overall evaluations of the Reading Street program in the areas of planning, training and support, planning and scheduling, materials, curriculum and content, differentiated instruction, connections, and outcomes? (b) What is the level of consistency between teacher satisfaction of the Reading Street program in the areas of planning, training and support, planning and scheduling, materials, curriculum and content, differentiated instruction, connections, and outcomes? (c) What are some of the challenges or issues that teachers faced as they implemented the Reading Street program?

The end of Chapter IV presents a summary of the data findings as they relate to the research questions. A review of the elements of the study is offered. In the first survey, the researcher did not collect demographic data such as grade level, school they are currently teaching in, how many years teaching, and highest degree of education, which enables the researcher to protect the anonymity of the respondents. In the second follow-up open-ended survey, however, the researcher collected demographic data such as grade level and years of experience.

### **Response Rate to the Quantitative & Qualitative Survey Research**

One hundred and six second through fifth grade teachers agreed to participate in the research, for an average response rate of 17.5% for each Likert-scale question asked.

The same population of second through fifth grade teachers was sent the follow-up open-ended survey. From these 106 participants, 10 second through fifth grade

educators participated in the survey, for an average response rate of 9.4% for each open-ended question asked.

There is a challenge in survey research in regard to convenience sampling, which may affect the generalized conclusions of the study (Nguyen, 2007). The reason that lower response rates are problematic is, of course, that people who do not respond may well be different from those who do. Low response rates therefore can create sampling bias.

According to Nguyen (2007), the lower the rate, the greater the risk of such bias, which means that a high survey response rate helps to ensure that the survey results are representative of the survey population. In this regard, in order to collect successful responses, researchers must take into consideration the audience, the quantity of online surveys in circulation, and the potential for surveys reported as spam. These factors may result in lower respondent interest and acceptance of survey invitations.

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

The researcher utilized data collected from the surveys that were conducted. The instrument was Internet based, and each teacher was given a link to access the survey. No demographic data were collected in order to keep all information confidential. The instrument measured teacher perceptions of 35 items categorized under seven sub-scale components: planning, training and support, planning and scheduling, materials, curriculum and content, differentiated instruction, connections, and outcomes.

The Reading Street questionnaire survey (see Appendix G) consisted of 34 Likert-scale questions and one open-ended question. Questions were randomized throughout the survey so as to not follow concurrently under one particular aspect being studied (see

Appendix G). The follow-up Reading Street survey (see Appendix G) consisted of seven open-ended questions.

The surveys were housed online on Goggle Docs. Data were collected from the 106 teacher responses and then analyzed using Goggle Docs and SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences), Version 16.0 for Windows software.

The first two research questions were examined using descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations. The mean provided the central tendency for each area studied, while the standard deviations offered an available definition to explain potential variations for each distribution. This statistical method measures the influence of an independent variable, in this case planning, training and support, planning and scheduling, materials, curriculum and content, differentiated instruction, connections, and outcomes. Statistically significant relationships were determined based on an alpha level of  $-.05$  or less. The third research question was examined using the teacher responses from the follow-up open-ended survey.

## **Findings**

### **Research Questions**

**Research Question 1:** What are teachers' overall evaluations of the Reading Street program in the areas of planning, training and support, planning and scheduling, materials, curriculum and content, differentiated instruction, connections, and outcomes?

Means and standard deviations for each scale are listed in Table 2. Because of the different number of items per scale, each scale mean was divided by the number of items in the scale so that means could be easily comparable. As a result, any mean above 3.0 was considered positive since it aligned with the response category "agree." Generally,

all scales except planning, training, and support were rated positively by respondents. Teachers were most enthusiastic about the Reading Street curriculum and content, materials, planning and schedules, outcomes, and differentiated instruction. All scales had moderate reliability as noted in the last column.

Table 2

*Means, Standard Deviations, and Reliability Coefficients for Each Scale*

	<b>Number of Items</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Coefficient Alpha Reliability</b>
Curriculum and Content	8	106	3.8	0.7	.87
Materials	7	106	3.7	0.8	.77
Connections	4	106	3.6	0.8	.89
Planning and Scheduling	3	106	3.6	0.8	.92
Outcomes	3	106	3.5	0.7	.88
Differentiated Instruction	6	106	3.4	0.7	.83
Planning, Training and Support	2	106	2.8	1.2	.86

A closer look at the data by item appears in Table 3. Based on the 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from *strongly agree* (5) to *strongly disagree* (1), anything above 3 was positive (on average, teachers rated item as higher than *neither agree nor disagree*). Anything less than 3 is negative (on average, teachers rated item as lower than *neither agree nor disagree*). The survey item “planning, training, and support (I received sufficient training prior to implementing the Reading Street Program)” received a mean score of 2.70, which shows a negative perception of training prior to implementing the Reading Street program.

Table 3

*Descriptive Statistics for Reading Street Questionnaire Item Content*

<b>Item Content</b>	Planning, Training and Support; Planning and Scheduling; Materials; Curriculum and Content; Differentiated Instruction; Connections; Outcomes	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
The Reading Street Program students' editions are visually appealing to students.		106	4.08	.902
I found the Reading Street Program sufficiently correlated with the New Jersey Common Core Standards.		106	4.07	.854
I found the Reading Street Program sufficiently correlated with the New Jersey Common Core Standards.		106	4.03	.889
The Reading Street materials are well-organized, clearly labeled, and easy to access.		106	3.98	.966
The Reading Street Program teachers' editions are well organized and easy to follow.		106	3.97	.931
I received allotted materials for the Reading Street Program.		106	3.89	1.098
The Reading Street Program provides vocabulary lessons that are grade/age appropriate.		106	3.85	.860
Lesson overviews provided in the Reading Street Program are beneficial and helpful in planning.		106	3.84	.948
The Reading Street Program provided integrated themes that were appropriate for my grade level and students' interests.		106	3.82	.778
The Reading Street Program provides explicit instruction for teachers that are simple to follow.		106	3.80	.855

<b>Item Content</b>	<b>Planning, Training and Support; Planning and Scheduling; Materials; Curriculum and Content; Differentiated Instruction; Connections; Outcomes</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
The Reading Street Program provides sufficient instruction of targeted skills threaded throughout the year.		106	3.77	.854
Technology is appropriately integrated throughout the lessons found in the Reading Street Program.		106	3.74	1.008
The Reading Street Program provided all necessary materials needed to implement lessons.		106	3.73	1.065
Integration of phonic skills and spelling lists were suitable for students.		106	3.72	.934
The differentiated lessons provided in the Reading Street Program are well organized and easy to follow.		106	3.68	.868
Differentiated lessons provided in the Reading Street Program are useful when planning small group instruction lesson plans.		106	3.66	.994
The Reading Street Program provides ideas and suggestions for managing and organizing materials used in implementing lessons.		106	3.66	.882
The Reading Street Program provides ample supplemental reading materials for students on all levels.		106	3.66	1.050
The Reading Street Program offers a selection of student tests that encompass a variety of modes.		106	3.62	.867
Overall, my students have shown improvement in the area of reading vocabulary since the implementation of the Reading Street Program.		106	3.61	.846
The Reading Street Program provides		106	3.60	.891

<b>Item Content</b>	<b>Planning, Training and Support; Planning and Scheduling; Materials; Curriculum and Content; Differentiated Instruction; Connections; Outcomes</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
appropriate instruction and pacing for students on grade level.				
Unit themes integrating science objectives found in the Reading Street Program are appropriate and spur students' interests.		106	3.58	.914
Overall, my students have shown improvement in the area of reading decoding/fluency since the implementation of the Reading Street Program.		106	3.58	.767
The Reading Street Program provides appropriate instruction and pacing for students above grade level.		106	3.55	.896
Unit themes integrating social studies objectives found in the Reading Street Program are appropriate and spur students' interests.		106	3.50	.969
Overall, my students have shown improvement in the area of reading comprehension since the implementation of the Reading Street Program.		106	3.41	.903
Suitable ideas and suggestions are provided in the Reading Street Program for ESL/ELL students in my class.		106	3.32	.911
I found the pacing in the Reading Street Program appropriate for my grade level.		106	3.29	1.042
The Reading Street Program provided instruction and activities appropriate for students in my class with individual education plans.		106	3.24	.931

<b>Item Content</b>	Planning, Training and Support; Planning and Scheduling; Materials; Curriculum and Content; Differentiated Instruction; Connections; Outcomes	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Scheduling ideas and suggestions provided in the Reading Street Program are practical and easily implemented.		106	3.20	1.055
The Reading Street Program provides appropriate instruction and pacing for students below grade level.		106	3.20	.940
Materials provided in the Reading Street Program for center activities were suitable and easy to implement.		106	3.05	1.158
I received sufficient support during the course of implementing the Reading Street Program throughout the school year.		106	2.99	1.246
I received sufficient training prior to implementing the Reading Street Program.		106	2.70	1.281

**Research Question 2:** What is the level of consistency between teacher satisfaction of the Reading Street program in the areas of planning, training and support, planning and scheduling, materials, curriculum and content, differentiated instruction, connections, and outcomes?

Table 4 is the correlation matrix that summarizes the relationships between scales. All correlations are positive and statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ). However, some are larger than others. For example, the correlation between materials and curriculum and content is .86, while the correlation between planning, training, and support with curriculum and content is .28.

Examination of the relationship between student outcomes and the other scales revealed that outcomes were most highly associated with curriculum and content, differentiated instruction, and connections.

Table 4  
*Relationships Among Scales as Measured by Pearson Product Moment Correlations*

	N	Planning, Training, and Support	Planning and Scheduling	Materials	Curriculum and Content	Differentiated Instruction 1	Connections	Outcome
Differentiated Instruction	Pearson Correlation	1	.508**	.357**	.277**	.351**	.757**	.721**
	Sig. (2- tailed)						.000	.000
Planning, Training, and Support	Pearson Correlation	1	.508**	.357**	.277**	.351**	.238*	.250**
	N					106	106	106
	Sig. (2- tailed)		.000	.000	.004	.000	.014	.010
Connections	Pearson Correlation						1	.721**
	N	106	106	106	106	106	106	106
	Sig. (2- tailed)							.000
Planning and Scheduling	Pearson Correlation		1	.741**	.693**	.668**	.569**	.535**
	N						106	106
	Sig. (2- tailed)			.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Outcomes	Pearson Correlation							1
	N		106	106	106	106	106	106
	Sig. (2- tailed)							.000
Materials	Pearson Correlation			1	.859**	.719**	.744**	.666**
	N							106
	Sig. (2- tailed)				.000	.000	.000	.000
**	Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).							
*	Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).			106	106	106	106	106
Curriculum and Content	Pearson Correlation				1	.758**	.795**	.726**
	Sig. (2- tailed)					.000	.000	.000

**Research Question 3:** What are some of the challenges or issues that teachers faced as they implemented the Reading Street program?

Based on the 10 responses from the follow-up survey, the teachers felt that besides dealing with the challenge of technology functioning properly on a daily basis, there was a lack of support in implementing the Reading Street program efficiently.

In general, teachers who responded felt that Reading Street support was important; but support, whether it be professional development training or in-class support, should be given not only throughout the year but also at the end of every school year so that teachers can plan during the summer. The majority of the teachers expressed that the support that was given was very brief and limited.

“Teachers received one training session on the program on a Saturday--if you were able to go.”

“More training would have been beneficial from a person who truly knew how the program works in a school setting, not from reading the teachers' editions.”

“Training updates would be helpful, but I definitely was not satisfied at all with the support received--or lack thereof.”

Participants also believed that teachers learned the programs from one another and through trial and error. Teachers adjusted the program to their individualized students' needs. Some teachers were unable to incorporate and develop the writing requirements effectively.

In the beginning, the majority of teachers did not receive training on how to implement the program and all of its components. One teacher who responded to the survey felt that they had struggled implementing the program.

“It was too difficult covering everything in one day. I wish that someone had demonstrated the lessons. The district supervisor tried to provide some support and came around when he could but that is only one person and the administration are not 100% familiar with the program.”

The majority of teachers who responded stated that the training session for the use of the Promethean Board was given only once to learn how to hook up the connection. By the beginning of the new school year, teachers felt that they had forgotten half of what could be done with it.

“Another challenge is the inability to use computers when the Internet is down.”

“Technology is so frustrating! There is a lack of training for teachers implementing the program on the Smart Board.”

“A big challenge to implement the Reading Street program was not having a Smart Board for the first couple of months. Therefore, showing the videos of the week took more time since teachers had to show them in small groups.”

“Technology is one challenge in itself because sometimes the Pearson site was either slow or not responding. It then wastes too much time. Teachers sometimes have to log out, log in, and then again it doesn't work!”

In general, other than lack of support, another one of the biggest challenges was the allotted time. Many teachers felt that there was not enough time throughout the day to

complete the different components of the program and incorporate science and social studies.

“Although repetition is important to reinforce skills, teachers sometimes feel their students get tired of the repetition of reading the weekly story, or just the phonics lesson.”

“The writing lesson should address the skills needed in each grade. The only challenge was time allotment because of daily routines, announcements, students coming in late, etc. There is no time given to correct and review homework, which is reinforcement.”

“It was a struggle because it is a rigid pacing chart that does not take into consideration the diversity of the students.”

“Time management to move from one activity to the other at times is difficult. Material needs to be better organized, especially for writing, for easier access to the teacher.”

Some teachers felt that some of the program is too scripted. This inhibits the creativity of both students and their teachers. Based on the 10 responses, I found that if more freedom had been allowed, the science and social studies curriculum could have been more integrated in the reading and writing curriculum. The challenges are more related to the time allocated for each lesson and the provision of additional time for students with special needs.

“Some of the weekly tests are so easy that students who are reading below level or are struggling readers pass the tests. The program needs more comprehension skills or comprehension tests that go along with the story of the week.”

“There is a problem creating sufficient time in small groups. Also, the writing component is not correlated to the reading topics and a format for delivery of instruction is non-existent.”

### **Follow-up Open-Ended Survey Summary of Responses**

Based on the 10 responses from the follow-up survey, the majority of teachers felt that there was a lack of support in order for them to properly and effectively implement the Reading Street program in their classroom. The sub-scale components that were addressed in the follow-up survey, along with the participant responses, were as follows:

#### **Curriculum and Content: Reading Street Implementation**

In general, teachers felt the Reading Street program was fairly easy to follow and implement. Various tools such as Fresh Reads, weekly tests, and unit tests are used to monitor student progress. Teachers found that for the most part Reading Street is an effective program.

“The introductory routine of activating prior knowledge, using anchored talk, and learning new ‘amazing words’ with each reading piece is a good way to keep all students actively engaged. It is also at this time that the teacher is given the opportunity to address various learning styles and develop higher-order discussions.”

One teacher’s experience in implementing the Reading Street Program was a positive one due to the diversity of genres used within the books and the writing activities. The teacher described the program as “productive.” She stated, “Reading Street is productive because of the stories that students get to read, the phonics and grammar

components, but there needs to be more done with comprehension. This is where students are lacking and falling behind.”

Some teachers felt that implementing Reading Street had been a positive experience since they got all their materials on time. In addition, student’s academic growth was evident as they advanced.

“At first it was a struggle trying to fit everything in during the allotted time. Once you get accustomed to the program, it becomes routine. The program is developmentally appropriate for their grade level.”

“I love that phonics is included and that there is a different sound introduced each week. Students enjoy the videos and songs. The *amazing words* are great: and because students are repeatedly exposed to the words, they retain them.”

“In the past two years I have been implementing the Reading Street program I’ve noticed that accommodations were required; but during the 2012-2013 school-year, the district implemented a special education component called My Sidewalks. The sidewalks component alleviated some of this added intervention.”

There were also negative responses in this area. The majority of teachers found the program was too scripted because it did not allow for much flexibility and creativity in teaching. The time allotted for each session is rigid. One teacher defined Fresh Reads as “mini assessments basically used to check the comprehension and fluency of a student. They have to read a short passage based on their level (below level, on level, or advanced). They have one minute to do it, which I think is crazy because you have to time them.”

“The program is meant to be taught by two people. One teacher is always playing catch up to truly implement program correctly.”

The majority of the participants believed that teachers were given a lot of materials with minimum directions.

“Teachers have to figure out the lessons, so it was a struggle to keep to the required time frames.”

### **Reading Street Implementation Challenges**

In reviewing the 10 responses from the follow-up survey, technology was a challenge that was discussed.

“Trying to complete everything in one morning--showing the videos and chanting the songs--was a challenge until January when I got a Smart Board. Nevertheless, songs were sung using the radio and the videos were shown in small groups.”

Another challenge was the writing genres, both Customized and 21st Century writing pieces. Teachers and students searched for books in the school library and the public library. In regard to the writing genres, one teacher stated, “The teachers are responsible for getting books on different animals for the students to write their reports. Often, the below-level or even the on-level students have trouble reading some of these books.”

Another teacher stated, “A big challenge for me is the difficulty in fitting in small group instruction and making it meaningful in the allotted time. It is a struggle to adhere to the time allotted for each lesson, when children may not comprehend the skill being

taught. Reading Street assumes that repetition will make up for lack of comprehension in the student. Sometimes teachers need to slow down the pace and re-teach.”

### **Planning and Scheduling**

Planning and scheduling is a big component when implementing the Reading Street program effectively.

“At the end, your students determine the pacing of each lesson. When the lesson was something the students were interested in or when it was difficult for them to understand, teachers found it hard to stick to the allotted time. Writing was an example of this. Days 1-3 were the heaviest in reference to the 5-day plan.

Therefore, time allotted sometimes seems limited for the amount of material expected to be taught in the time frame for Read and Comprehend.”

“It was difficult to remain true to the time frame when some children are not getting the concept because the program does not allow for re-teaching for the struggling children. The program does not allow discussions to be clarified when necessary. Also, as the year progresses, some of the designated times may need to be altered as the students’ abilities develop. In order to implement all or most of the activities provided in the Teacher’s Edition, the Language Arts allotted time should be about four hours.”

### **Planning and Scheduling Recommendations**

The majority of teachers felt that the allotted time for writing was always rushed. Several teachers acknowledged that the allotted time should depend on the teacher. A task should be given without time constraints. One teacher recommended, “Perhaps

eliminate the time for modeling handwriting and send home worksheets for practice instead as homework.”

Another teacher recommended spreading out the plan of Days 1-5 to Day’s 1-7 instead. A common recommendation throughout the follow-up survey was to shorten some of the whole class repetition that goes on throughout the week. This would allow more time for small group instruction to be more effective. Some teachers recommended more time on Days 1 and 2 to truly allow children who are not getting it more time to front-load and review.

“Giving teachers more freedom in implementing the program could enhance its delivery. For example, some stories may not have to be read over three times. Also, it would be more beneficial to incorporate the writing program so that the topics could correlate with the Reading Street topics.”

“A recommendation would be to have students take a weekly test; they should do it biweekly, providing time for the students and the teacher to complete the activities and master the skills and concepts addressed within each unit.”

“Split the activities evenly amongst the days so that more activities do not fall on one day, while not enough are on another day. Day 5 needs more activities. If the teacher has all the materials and technology resources needed, the times provided by the supervisor work smoothly. Possibly splitting up some of the activities and skills evenly amongst the days so that Day 2 does not have the most.”

“Make the baseline test that is given at the beginning of the year more challenging. All of the students passed; however, at the beginning of the year

I started with half of my class below level. The test is not a true representation of the students' abilities.

### **Curriculum and Content: New Jersey Common Core Standards**

According to the 10 teachers who responded, the Reading Street program supports the NJCCSS. The majority felt that the Standards to be addressed are listed in the beginning of every lesson. According to Scott Foresman (2010), Reading Street integrates the common core standards comprehensively for reading skills and writing. Effective implementation and application builds effective listeners, speakers, readers, and writers.

“The program lists the Standards at the beginning of each week. It specifies what task targets what Standards. All of the components are based on the New Jersey Common Core Standards. The program incorporates all of the Standards, as it was designed to address them. However, the writing component of the program is not broken down in a good way. The kids struggle and teachers have to use mini lessons that literacy coaches created in the past to help them out. A new teacher may need more direction in addressing the standards and correlating them to the writing.”

Participants believed that the Standards are correlated because the program addresses the different skills and objectives the students need to master by the end of each grade level. The majority feel the program is aligned to Common Core Standards.

“In kindergarten, Reading Street covers all the objectives required by NJCCS. It covers all the reading skills needed to become a fluent reader and at the same time

gain comprehension skills. It effectively addresses all components of reading, writing, comprehension, spelling, and grammar.”

The majority of teachers felt each lesson was Standard-driven. By teaching the lesson, the teacher is implementing the Standards.

“By tying the unit concept and essential question to the objectives of the lesson, that is correlating the New Jersey Common Core Standards in planning and preparation. Teachers view and select the ones that they believe are needed to achieve success for the children in the class.”

In general, teachers felt they assess the needs of the students and then select. One teacher stated, “I was able to adjust the lessons and still adhere to the Standards. I think some teachers tried to get more detail when it comes to writing and comprehension through the use of graphic organizers and by following the writing process. They feel that students need to make text-to-self connection every time we read a new reading selection. They try to remember to discuss the Standards before each lesson, but sometimes there is just not enough time in the day.”

The majority acknowledged that teachers may create their own extension activities that correlate with the activities in the book so that they meet the standards implemented that day.

“For the most part, teachers view the Standards at the beginning of the week to assure that target areas are addressed and re-enforced.”

### **Differentiated Instruction: Does It Really Exist?**

Based on the responses, small group activities and flip chart centers address the many needs of the many levels in class.

“Sometimes some activities are too easy; teachers have to use the centers as a guide to what skill should be reinforced that week. The lessons are differentiated and suitable for all students. They provide visuals, videos, and different levels of critical thinking questions. The texts in small group instruction are leveled readers emphasizing the same concepts and vocabulary as well as skills taught throughout the week.”

“Not all the lessons are differentiated. The only ones that are differentiated are the small group instruction and the spelling assessment. The rest are given on a second-grade level.”

“Some components of the Reading Street program can be differentiated; however, it would be difficult to do so, with only one teacher present. The Reading Street Sidewalks program is, for low-level kids struggling with comprehension during small group, a beneficial alternative to appropriately address that student population and the needs.”

The majority of teachers felt that they address the different students' levels because they provide different activities for each tier; also, the guided reading books are labeled to fit the different levels. Some weekly test comprehension questions can be answered without even reading the story from the weekly test, making it less challenging for students. There is not much in the program for students that are above grade level besides the small-group books. Even the Fresh Reads for the advanced level seem too easy for the advanced students.

“The Reading Street program is too advanced for some students, especially for ELLs. We have materials to differentiate instruction; however, ESL students need

to be exposed to regular material as well. The “amazing words” are too difficult for students on level due to the lack of familiarity with those vocabulary words. The Reading Street teacher’s edition provides activities or extension activities for strategic intervention and advanced students. Some teachers think it’s great because they can meet the needs of ELL students who are reading below level. By each student having the story in front of them, they are able to read chorally, allowing for lower level students to participate. The clusters are differentiated, but for very low standards. At times they can’t even read the directions on their own. The teacher has to read all directions prior to completing the activity. Most of the lessons are designed in the same format and allow a student with challenges to engage in a routine, which they need. However, most of the lessons are designed with teacher-directed instruction and therefore do not accommodate a variety of learning styles. The program only differentiates instruction during small group instruction and spelling tasks. The guided reading and Read To Comprehend are taught only on grade level.”

### **Connection: Technology Integration**

Based on the follow-up survey responses, the technology portion of this program helps bridge the technology gap between parent and teacher. The majority felt that the teacher is able to customize activities to address each student. This is continued at home because parents can log in to reinforce skills using the same resources utilized in class. Songs, read a-long stories, Grammar Jammers, short videos, can be viewed at any time. Technology is integrated because *concept* videos and *envision it* videos visually enhance the skills taught.

“21st Century Writing incorporates the use of technology because the Internet and search engines are utilized as well as a design program to produce the writing.

The 21st Century Writing has an activity for each unit that integrates the use of technology, from writing an email to a pen pal to researching and writing a paper. Some of the writing genres also require use of the computer to assist with finding information and/or searching for pictures to go along with their writing. Also, the required reading materials, as well as the student and teacher manuals, are located online. It is a great asset for the visual learner.”

In general, teachers continue to use the Promethean Board to help teach the lessons. Technology is a plus; and if teachers are provided with a Smart Board, the program is more interactive and enjoyable for the students. The concept talk video, sing along, story sort, and videos teaching skills such as adjectives, contractions, adverbs, verbs, nouns, etc., all are presented on the Promethean Board. Students love interacting with the board. They enjoy coming up to do the story sort and the vocabulary activities. They love the animation that is presented in the videos. The interactive introducing songs and the stories online, as well as the Grammar Jammers, are all enjoyable integral components of the program. The website allows visual learners to see video concepts and re-enforces skills. It makes the lesson interesting and fun for the children.

### **Technology: Effective or Ineffective?**

In general, teachers expressed that technology class is essential nowadays. It is as effective as teachers make it. The program does not require the use of technology, but it is recommended by the district. Technology is a plus; and if teachers are provided with a

Smart Board, the program is more interactive and enjoyable for the students. Therefore, implementing the lessons is more effective with the use of technology.

“I truly feel bad for those schools that do not have the same technology as this school has. When the Promethean Board was being temperamental, I felt a bit lost, so I can just imagine how those teachers feel who have nothing.”

“The children would rather sing the song off the Promethean Board than the radio. It’s more fun and holds their attention, whereas a radio is old fashioned and boring. Children are fully engaged and like to watch various videos and activities.”

One teacher affirmed, “Technology and the use of it can be more effective if there is a technology teacher providing the basic skills and techniques for children to successfully use the resources--ineffective on the days if doesn't work or the Internet is slow. Although the reading component is enhanced with the technology, the writing is definitely not. An interactive writing component could have aided in demonstrating to students how the writing process works. It would be more effective if the district provided laptops for students to use on a daily/weekly basis. One computer lab per school is not enough.”

### **Reading Street Overall Challenges**

In general, the biggest challenge is the allotted time.

“Although repetition is important to reinforce skills, teachers sometimes feel their students get tired of the repetition of reading the weekly story, or just the phonics lesson. Teachers feel the writing lesson should address the skills needed in each grade. Another challenge, I felt, was the time allotment because of daily routines,

announcements, students coming in late, etc. There is no time given to correct and review homework, which is reinforcement.”

“Another challenge is the inability to use computers when the Internet is down. It was a struggle because it is a rigid pacing chart that does not take into consideration the diversity of the students.”

Some teachers felt that some of the program is too scripted. This inhibits the creativity of both students and their teachers. If more freedom were allowed, the science and social studies curriculum could be more integrated with the reading and writing curriculum.

The challenges are more related to the time allocated for each lesson and the provision of additional time for students with special needs. Based on the follow-up survey results, the program needs more comprehension skills or comprehension tests that go along with the story of the week.

“A big challenge to implementing the Reading Street program was not having a Smart Board for the first couple of months. Therefore, showing the videos of the week took more time since teachers had to show them in small groups.

Technology is one challenge in itself because sometimes the Pearson site was either slow or not responding. It then wastes too much time. Teachers sometimes have to log out, log in, and then again it doesn’t work!”

“Time management to move from one activity to the other at times is difficult. Material needs to be better organized, especially for writing for easier access to the teacher.”

### **Reading Street Improvement Recommendations**

The majority of teachers felt that more writing activities to address and reinforce skills were needed to develop phonics and phonemic awareness, using varying activities.

“Instead of having a Day 1-5 plan, extend it and leave a day for practicing instead of rushing through the lesson. Teaching grammar with added practice is not taught sufficiently, so they have to change the time allotted.”

“Additional hands-on training for the teachers, where the teacher may see an actual day’s worth of lessons being taught, and additional resources for ESL students and children below grade level. Less repetition would enable more time allotted for small groups. Also, a more structured writing program should be incorporated. The centers need to be more challenging because the activities are too short and too easy. The center activities do not actively engage children for the 20 minutes for small group.”

In general, the participants felt that it was important for students to make text-to-self connections in order for them to comprehend a story. However, they expressed that some of the students do not have the background experiences to relate to the text. It might be due to the different settings within the stories to which our city children and bilingual children cannot relate.

“The center activities that go with the program are definitely not that practical, seeing how we have to create word cards ahead of time. There is not enough time to do that. Then students finish those particular centers within 5 minutes. Teachers need to make sure they have a different center handy for them to do work.”

The majority of teachers made several recommendations for more training in technology on an ongoing basis to enable teachers to utilize it more effectively in the program's delivery.

### **Recommendations for Planning, Training, and Support**

Based on the participants' responses, it seems that teachers want to have actual hands-on training. Many participants included in their recommendations the rehiring of literacy coaches because the teachers were able to actually see lessons conducted first hand. Also, they were able to use what they saw and replicate it. Some teachers felt that many did not receive training using the Promethean Boards.

“If literacy coaches or lead teachers were rehired, they could come in and demonstrate an actual lesson so that teachers could see transition from one activity to another. Updated training using the Promethean Board would also be great.”

The majority of teachers who responded felt that literacy coaches were the only ones who went into the rooms to demonstrate specific strategies. They also felt that outside training from the Reading Street program would be beneficial, as well as working with peers to assist one another.

“At times the program was very difficult to do by yourself. Teachers should be given a syllabus to follow for the development of each writing piece. Also, it would be helpful if lead teachers were available to model when teachers are having difficulty with timing problems.”

“New teachers would need to be shown a daily lesson from beginning to end because that is the hardest part when a teacher first implements the program--trying to cram everything into one day.”

“A big recommendation when it comes to technology, and even implementing the program, would be to give teachers more professional development and not just the presenter talking and teachers listening.”

### **Summary**

This chapter presents a review of the purpose of the study. It also presents the research questions and a brief discussion about the importance of the response rate for the study. The data analysis and findings from the quantitative and qualitative surveys are also presented in this chapter. The responses to each question contained within the seven categorical headings of planning, training and support, planning and scheduling, materials, curriculum and content, differentiated instruction, connections, and outcomes were examined using descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations.

In this mixed-methods study, the follow-up Reading Street survey was composed of seven open-ended questions, and the Reading Street Perceptions survey was composed of 34 Likert-scale questions with one open-ended question. Qualitative themes that emerged from the qualitative data were presented and discussed. Quantitative and qualitative data analysis and reporting for each of the three research questions were also included in the chapter.

In this study, the analysis of the data revealed that generally all scales except planning, training, and support were rated positively by respondents. Teachers were most enthusiastic about the Reading Street curriculum and content, materials, planning and

schedules, outcomes, and differentiated instruction. Because of the different number of items per scale, each scale mean was divided by the number of items in the scale so that means could be easily comparable. As a result, any mean above 3.0 was considered positive since it aligns with the response category “agree.” Planning, training, and support received a mean score of 2.8, which is considered negative since it aligns with the response category “disagree.”

The qualitative data from the open-ended survey questions show that second through fifth grade teachers’ perceptions affect the way they implement the Reading Street curriculum. The majority of teachers believe that by using best practices they would be able to provide a sufficient amount of knowledge to their students. These teachers also stated that there are probably isolated instances of their perceptions being influenced by the lack of support. In these situations, they believe that they have encouraged colleague visits related to the improvement of properly implementing the Reading Street curriculum. For example, one of the teachers stated, “More training would have been beneficial from a person who truly knew how the program works in a school setting, not from reading the teachers' editions. The district supervisor tried to provide some support and came around when he could, but that is only one person and the administrators are not 100% familiar with the program.”

The quantitative and qualitative data show that second through fifth grade teachers had a negative level of satisfaction when it came to the Reading Street planning, training, and support sub-scale component. The majority of second through fifth grade teachers felt that Reading Street support is important; but support, whether it be professional development training or in-class support, should not only be given throughout the year but also at the end of every school year so that teachers can plan during the summer. The majority of the teachers believe that the lack of support causes

teachers to have a difficult time properly implementing the program, which influences the way they perceive the Reading Street curriculum.

Chapter V provides an interpretation of the data and conclusions. Findings are presented in a manner that extends the knowledge base contained within the accompanying literature review. In addition, suggestions for policy, practice, and further research are discussed.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this mixed-methods research study was to explore teachers' evaluation of the scripted Reading Street program and the implementation of the sub-scale components of this curriculum within their classrooms in one New Jersey urban district. This study was guided by the following research questions: (1) What are teachers' overall evaluations of the Reading Street program in the areas of planning, training and support, planning and scheduling, materials, curriculum and content,

differentiated instruction, connections, and outcomes? (2) What is the level of consistency between teacher satisfaction of the Reading Street program in the areas of planning, training and support, planning and scheduling, materials, curriculum and content, differentiated instruction, connections, and outcomes? (3) What are some of the challenges or issues that teachers faced as they implemented the Reading Street program? The data for this survey were collected quantitatively using a 5-point Likert- scale survey and information was then gathered qualitatively from follow up open-ended survey questions.

In this chapter, I summarize the findings of the study as they relate to these research questions. I then discuss the relationship between the findings and previous research on the topic of scripted reading programs, making additional connections to the theoretical framework. I conclude this chapter with recommendations for further research, policy, and practice.

## **Summary of Research Questions**

### **Research Question 1**

What are teachers' overall evaluations of the Reading Street program in the areas of planning, training, and support, planning and scheduling, materials, curriculum and content, differentiated instruction, connections, and outcomes?

Teachers were most enthusiastic about the Reading Street curriculum and content, materials, planning and scheduling, outcomes, and differentiated instruction. Based on the survey results found in Chapter IV, the participants agreed that the program meets the needs of students in those particular areas.

## **Research Question 2**

What is the level of consistency between teacher satisfaction of the Reading Street program in the areas of planning, training and support, planning and scheduling, materials, curriculum and content, differentiated instruction, connections, and outcomes?

The findings of the study indicate that based on the 5-point Likert-type scale, the relationships between the scales show that all correlations are positive and statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ). An examination of the relationship between outcomes and the other scales revealed that outcomes were most highly associated with curriculum and content, differentiated instruction, and connections. These results found in Chapter IV demonstrate a positive and statistically significant outcome.

The findings also indicated that teachers were unsatisfied with the item scale-- planning, training, and support, giving it a negative rating. Teachers felt that there was a lack of support, but it was not clearly specified as to what kind of support they were lacking.

## **Research Question 3**

What are some of the challenges or issues that teachers faced as they implemented the Reading Street program?

The findings of the study demonstrated that teachers found that a lack of professional development training or in-class support was a major issue. The program was in its first year of implementation, and the teachers had yet to be given any type of support to ensure effective teaching practices when implementing the Reading Street program. Based on the open-ended survey responses, teachers felt that professional development training should not only be given throughout the year but also at the end of

every school year so that teachers could plan during the summer. Participants also believed that teachers learned the programs from one another and through trial and error. Teachers adjusted the program to their individualized student needs. Some teachers were unable to incorporate and develop the writing requirements effectively.

### **Qualitative Open-Ended Follow Up Survey Responses**

The second part of the study was conducted by using a follow up open-ended survey to understand more deeply how the Reading Street program impacted the teachers' teaching and their level of satisfaction. The survey was developed based on the lack of professional development or in-class support responses to the original survey.

Based on the 10 responses from the follow up survey, the teachers felt that dealing with the building technology functioning properly on a daily basis was another challenge. Several of the participants felt that each school should have a technology coordinator to assist with the implementation of the program since there seems to be a problem with the technology functioning properly. For example, the Internet might be down, causing teachers to use other materials instead of using the Smart Board or Promethean Board.

### **Review of Findings and Interpretations**

Analysis of the quantitative and qualitative survey results revealed that there were some challenges or issues concerning teacher satisfaction of the scripted Reading Street program in the area of planning, training and support. The strengths, however, were found in the areas of planning and scheduling, materials, curriculum and content, differentiated instruction, connections, and outcomes.

### **Quantitative Data**

The quantitative data from Chapter IV indicated that the scales planning and scheduling, materials, curriculum and content, differentiated instruction, connections, and outcomes were rated positively by respondents. As a result, any mean above 3.0 was considered positive since it aligned with the response category “agree.” The item content planning, training and support (I received sufficient training prior to implementing the Reading Street Program) from the original survey revealed a negative perception of training prior to implementing the Reading Street program.

### **Qualitative Data**

The qualitative data from Chapter IV indicated that based on the 10 responses from the follow up open-ended survey, the teachers felt that besides dealing with the challenge of technology not functioning properly, there was also a lack of support. It is inconclusive as to whether this lack of support was in the form of professional development or in-class support.

## **Discussion of the Findings**

The creation of the research on scripted reading programs provided educators and researchers with a tool for critically analyzing a district's choice when selecting a Language Arts curriculum. Every school has a responsibility to ensure that every teacher is provided with professional development and/or in-class support in order for teachers to effectively implement a curriculum. The themes and research connections that follow are based on the Reading Street survey scales.

### **Curriculum and Content**

The results of this study are consistent with the law of exercise theory developed by Edward Thorndike (1912). He investigated the process of learning, and his research indicated that “with all things being equal,” repetitive actions would strengthen mental connections and, therefore, improve performance (Thorndike, 1912, p. 95). Most instructional materials in the Reading Street program provide repetitive practice for newly-introduced concepts or critically important skills. Similarly, results of the extant study show that the Reading Street curriculum is scripted and contains repetitive materials for students to use to explain new and reviewed concepts.

The results of this study are inconsistent with the information-processing theory developed by Robert Gagne (1974). His theory concluded that learning consisted of a series of inputs and outputs that could be stored in either short-term memory or long-term memory. Many recently developed curriculums contain a spiraling curriculum in which specific skills are introduced, built upon, and revisited as the student progresses throughout school (Gamoran, 2001). Gagne also suggested that environmental factors, expectancies, and executive control also affected the learning process. In contrast, the results of this study show that teachers agree that curriculum and content provide explicit instruction for teachers that are simple to follow and appropriate for the grade level, that sufficient instruction of targeted skills is threaded throughout the year, sufficiently correlated with the New Jersey Common Core Standards, and that the differentiated lessons provided in the Reading Street Program are well organized and easy to follow. However, the lessons that are developed in the scripted Reading Street program do not have a spiraling affect.

## **Materials**

Vygotsky (1978) found that scripted reading interventions are instructional tools, defined as pre-packaged, publisher-designed curricula that provide explicit instructions for teacher and student behaviors and responses. All curricular materials--including passages for reading, discussion topics, questions and expected responses, and assessments--are provided by the publishers; and the teachers are given guides, often with explicit scripts to read during instruction that indicate which lessons are taught and how to assess student progress through the program. Similarly, results of the extant study show that teachers received all the necessary materials in order to implement the curriculum effectively. It is unknown whether the teachers received the materials in the beginning or throughout the year.

The results of this study are inconsistent with the language experience approach (LEA). The language experience approach was developed based upon the work of individuals such as Dewey, Piaget, and Watson (Stauffer, 1980). This approach suggested that in order to teach reading, educators should create opportunities for children to explore their environment via their five basic senses, talk about their experiences, and act on them by creating products that exhibited their understanding of how those experiences were interrelated (Stauffer, 1980). Instructional materials were not provided when the LEA was implemented. Instead, it emphasized encouraging children to express their personal experiences and thoughts through oral and written language, whereas students utilizing the scripted Reading Street program are provided with all the necessary materials, such as flip charts, student workbooks, and books on tape in order to effectively master the targeted areas that teachers will be focusing on when teaching the scripted lessons.

## **Connections**

The results of this study are consistent with the Reading Reels program by Chambers, Cheung, Madden, Slavin, & Gifford (2006). Reading Reels is a form of multimedia in which video content is embedded within the teachers' lessons and is used only within the Success for All comprehensive reform programs. Brief animations, puppet skits, and live-action video segments, about 5 minutes daily in total, model beginning reading strategies for children and teachers.

Chambers, Cheung, Madden, Slavin, & Gifford (2006) evaluated Reading Reels in a year-long randomized experiment with 394 first graders in 10 high-poverty schools in Hartford, Connecticut. The schools served very disadvantaged populations that were approximately 60% Hispanic and 40% African American. The study compared first graders who learned to read using the Success for All program either with or without the embedded video components. The mean effect size across the four measures was +0.23, indicating a positive effect for children who received only the Reading Reels intervention. The results are consistent and connected to the scripted Reading Street program because teachers are able to utilize technology that has been incorporated into the curriculum. Reading Street has videos and other enrichment activities for students to use online at all times such as flip charts, online sing-alongs, building background knowledge, audio, and real world videos for students to view in order for them to fully grasp the concept being taught that week.

The results of this study are inconsistent with the alphabet method. The alphabet method was the first documented instructional method used in the United States to teach reading (Witty, 1949). It consisted of children mastering the following skills in sequential

order: memorizing upper- and lower-case letters; spelling and decoding syllables, which progressed from two letters to monosyllabic words; and then spelling and decoding phrases, sentences, and stories. The scripted Reading Street program utilizes various components to demonstrate routines for students. There is rarely a sequence to what the students are learning because every day the concepts being taught are different based on the theme for the week. Students learn that the routine of the program is the same on a daily basis.

### **Planning and Scheduling**

The results of this study are consistent with the two most widely used reading programs, Success for All and Open Court, by Ede (2006). Ede (2006) stated that depending on the teacher's familiarity with the program, "Up to three hours of class time every day may be needed to cover the lesson script, thus leading to a significant narrowing of the curriculum." In a survey done in 2003 by the Council for Basic Education, the principals reported that their schools spent 37% less time on civics and 35% less time on geography (Perkins-Gough, 2004). Other principals reported spending less time teaching language (29%) and less time teaching the arts (36%) (Perkins-Gough, 2004). Open Court requires a lot of time and effort on the part of both the teacher and the students and the extra time takes away from the other subjects that the students need to know.

The results are consistent with the implementation of the scripted Reading Street program because science and social studies are integrated into the curriculum. The materials, student and teacher editions are filled with texts/activities that contain elements to meet the needs of the students in science and social studies. The weekly themes and

questions are science- or social studies-based, which demonstrates that in the Reading Street program, Open Court and Success for All, teachers do not need to spend countless hours rearing away from the curriculum because all of the components are connected and intertwined.

### **Outcomes**

The results of this study are inconsistent with the Success for All (SFA) program. Success for All (SFA) is a comprehensive school reform program designed to ensure success in reading for children in high-poverty schools (Slavin & Madden, 2009). It provides schools with a K-5 reading curriculum that focuses on phonemic awareness, phonics, comprehension, and vocabulary development, beginning with phonetically-controlled mini-books in grades K-1. Struggling students, especially first graders, receive one-to-one tutoring. Children are frequently assessed on curriculum-based measures, and these are used to regroup children into reading groups according to current reading level, across grade lines. Extensive professional development and a full-time facilitator help teachers effectively apply all program elements.

The scripted Reading Street program under study, students are not provided with one-to-one tutoring and nor have teachers received professional development and/or support from facilitators to help them effectively teach the program.

### **Differentiated Instruction**

The results of this study are consistent with Marzano's instructional strategies. These instructional strategies included activities in the following categories: identifying similarities and differences; summarizing and note taking; reinforcing effort and providing recognition; homework and practice; nonlinguistic representations; cooperative

learning; setting objectives and providing feedback; generating and testing hypotheses; and using questions, cues, and advanced organizers (Marzano, 2003). Marzano's instructional strategies and Reading Street have a connection; just as described in Marzano's theory, in the scripted reading program, students are given objectives in the areas of oral vocabulary, phonics, spelling, building background knowledge, comprehension skills and strategies, conventions, small group instruction, customized writing, and practice.

The results of this study are inconsistent with the idea of differentiated instruction as described by Carol Ann Tomlinson. Tomlinson suggested that all students should have equally challenging work. Furthermore, Tomlinson challenged teachers to "diversify their instructional practices through the use of flexible grouping and teaching up" (Rebora, 2008, p. 3). Teachers use the flexible grouping component of differentiated instruction to move students between groups as the need arises, not just at the beginning of the year or at the end of a quarter. The program includes various differentiated instruction activities to meet the needs of all students.

Tomlinson encouraged educators to resist compromising the rigor of the curriculum but suggested instead to provide instructional support through a scaffolding system designed to facilitate student achievement (Rebora, 2008). Program fidelity is a cornerstone of scripted programs, and developers assert that teachers must maintain fidelity for their programs to be successful. When programs do not live up to expectations, the fault is generally attributed to a lack of fidelity. However, regardless of mandates for program fidelity and whether teachers like a particular program, research

demonstrates that they tend to maintain a certain amount of autonomy in what or how they teach (Datnow & Castellano, 2000; Sosniak & Stodolsky, 1993).

### **Planning, Training, and Support**

Teachers in the district under study used the balanced literacy approach prior to implementing the scripted Reading Street program. Teachers were provided with various types of professional development, in-class support, coaching, and colleague visits in order for them to properly implement the balanced literacy program. Balanced literacy challenged teachers to explore instructional practices that do not conform solely to the approaches of the past, but to use research to guide instructional decisions and adapt classroom instruction to meet the needs of individual learners (McKenna, 2008).

The results of this study are inconsistent with the concept of professional learning communities (PLC). Professional learning communities challenged educators to work together as a team by collaborating often to ensure that students learn and positive results are obtained. Professional learning communities provide the platform for educators to brainstorm and share ideas and ways to improve every student's academic performance (DuFour, 2004). Unfortunately, based on the survey results, teachers felt that there was a lack of support, which is why establishing professional learning communities was incorporated as a policy recommendation for this study.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

The outcomes from this study suggest that there are other areas for future research. The same research on scripted reading programs could be replicated adding more teachers and grade levels in the sample, which would allow the researcher to look

more closely at their evaluation of Planning, Training, and Support. Patterns may emerge through additional research.

Additional research analyzing student achievement scores may provide more information to help develop a successful reading program. 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. This information could lead to recommendations that could improve teaching practice.

The following are recommendations for topics of future research:

- Teacher satisfaction of a scripted reading program’s design as it relates to student achievement, including a measure of student achievement to relate to teacher satisfaction such as comparing the sub-scale components: planning, training and support, planning and scheduling, materials, curriculum and content, differentiated instruction, connections, and outcomes.
- Teacher evaluation and satisfaction of the scripted reading program design as it relates to the relationships with students and administrators.
- Research on teacher training in lower socioeconomic districts based on District Factor Grouping and their levels of satisfaction with the scripted reading program.
- Expanding this particular study to also include all kindergarten through fifth grade teachers that conduct daily lessons using the scripted reading program.
- Future studies, including rural, urban and suburban students, should be conducted to broaden the results to a variety of populations.

- The key recommendation for future studies would be that, with the introduction to any scripted reading program, teachers should be provided with ongoing professional development. Providing teachers with professional development will help ensure the success of implementing the scripted reading curriculum.

### **Recommendations for Policy**

When federal policies related to specific curriculum approaches are developed, provisions should be included for professional development necessary to successfully implement the required curriculum.

In order for the potential of these new approaches to be fully realized, K–12 education would need to adopt a standard of care that calls for all teachers to continually acquire new knowledge about academic content, pedagogy, learning theory, and technology by participating in high-quality professional learning opportunities, along with revising their instructional practices based on their newly acquired knowledge. With the introduction of any scripted program, a key component would be professional development.

### **Recommendations for Practice**

The findings of this study have many implications for the practice and research of many educators and stakeholders. With the information gained from research, there are many practices educators utilizing scripted reading programs could exercise in order to effectively implement a scripted reading program.

This study can be used to provide data regarding Year 1 implementation of the scripted Reading Street program within schools that participated in the study. Limitations

should be considered by researchers and administrative personnel while reviewing this study.

The use of a scripted curriculum can be implemented without sacrificing the teacher's instructional self-efficacy and enhance student scores at the same time if the curriculum is successfully introduced and implemented.

While it may be argued that novice teachers would benefit from a highly structured program with a script, studies have found that it is not just experienced teachers who veer from program mandates, but that inexperienced and ineffective teachers make changes, too (Datnow & Castellano, 2000; Sosniak & Stodolsky, 1993). However, while experienced teachers have the knowledge and background to alter the program using scientifically based reading research methods, less experienced teachers may not be as equipped to make sound decisions. Therefore, there are several factors that administrators should keep in mind when deciding whether to purchase a scripted commercial reading program:

- Researchers investigating the effectiveness of commercial reading programs have found that the critical factor in successful reading instruction is not the program, but teacher quality (Bond & Dykstra, 1967; Pressley et al., 2001; Ryder, Sekulski, & Silberg, 2003).
- Programs that allow teachers to maintain some autonomy in literature selection, methods, and materials have been found to yield higher results in reading comprehension (Fang, Fu, & Lamme, 2004; Tivnan & Hemphill, 2005; Wilson, Martens, & Poonam, 2005).

- Regardless of teacher approval of a program or administrative mandates for program fidelity, teachers will make adaptations in how they use the program (Datnow & Castellano, 2000; Sosniak & Stodolsky, 1993).
- One program cannot meet the needs of all children. Teachers need to be trained and empowered to make decisions about how best to teach their students (Garan, 2004).
- Forming a committee and professional learning communities is beneficial. It is not unusual for a school district to form a curriculum selection committee that consists of district administration, campus administration, teachers, and other staff members. It is the committee members' job to meet with curriculum representatives, compare and contrast materials, and select the curriculum that best suits the needs of the students and teachers as well as meets the district objectives. By incorporating the appropriate stakeholders into the selection process, many voices of representation may be heard, thus creating a sense of unity when selecting a curriculum for implementation.
- Choosing the best curriculum for the district is vital. There is a large variety of research-based curriculums that differ in the amount of scripting that is present. The district that is selecting its curriculum should be aware of the students' educational needs and their teachers' strengths and weaknesses. The curriculum that is chosen by the committee should be flexible enough to change with the shifting needs of the district and one that is compatible with current instructional materials. The committee should also thoroughly review the research of the

curriculum to evaluate the company's claims of student achievement targeted to specific populations with a view to closing the achievement gap.

- Providing ongoing staff development is recommended. With the implementation of a new scripted curriculum, there will inevitably be many questions from the teachers pertaining to the use of the materials, content clarification, and the general need for instructional support. Once the curriculum has been introduced and utilized, the district and campus administration should provide ongoing staff development that provides staff members increased knowledge of working with the scripted curriculum. Offering this type of continual support will allow teachers to feel that they are not left to “fend for themselves” and interpret the curriculum as they wish, but rather understand that the scripted curriculum provides educational benefits if it is embraced by the teachers and students alike.
- It is important to explain the need for a scripted curriculum. Change is often ill-received when it comes without warning and with little to no explanation. The district should be prepared to inform campus staff of what change is being made, why it is being made, and how this change will directly impact their classroom and student achievement. Quantitative data to support the curricular change will also be a strong support when it comes to teacher *buy in* of the new curriculum.

The district should take pride in considering that the overall level of satisfaction and the perceptions of the instructional personnel have been characterized by positive feedback across all schools participating in the study. Teachers' suggestions and comments should be reviewed and suggestions forwarded to the publishers for consideration for future changes to the program. In addition, the results of this study

should be shared with the system, specifically study participants, to provide professional development regarding the implementation process and expected outcomes. Finally, each individual school in the district should continue to work collaboratively as facilitators to establish full program implementation as encouraged by Hall and Hord (1987).

### **A Closing Thought**

As revealed from this study, teachers' evaluation of the scripted reading program may affect how teachers properly implement the Reading Street curriculum. Participants related how important they felt effective training was to the successful implementation of the program. Participants in this study did not receive enough professional development training and felt more was needed. In this case, the training may have given some of the teachers involved in the study a false sense of competency in implementing the Reading Street curriculum.

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

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]).

This study adds to the growing body of literature on scripted reading programs. It provides a glimpse into the world of teachers as they struggle to implement a scripted curriculum. The hope is that this study helps those who administer such programs to think about how to more effectively manage implementation and create and sustain teacher buy-in. With all stakeholders at the table, respected for their knowledge and input, internal commitment will come and so will success.

### **References**

Alabama State Department of Education. (2007). *Expert review of core reading programs*. Retrieved from [http://www.alsde.edu/general/Expert\\_Review\\_of\\_Core\\_Reading\\_programs.pdf](http://www.alsde.edu/general/Expert_Review_of_Core_Reading_programs.pdf)

- Alexander, J. E. (1988). *Teaching reading* (3rd ed.). Glenview, IL: Scott Foresman.
- Allington, R. L. (2006). Research and the three-tiered model. *Reading Today*, 23, 20.
- Allington, R. L. (2005, February). Ideology is still trumping evidence. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 462-468.
- Allington, R. L. (2002). *Big brother and the national reading curriculum: How ideology trumped evidence*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Allington, R. L., & McGill-Franzen, A. M. (2000). Looking back, looking forward: A conversation about teaching reading in the 21st century. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 35, 136-153.
- Anderson, S. E. (1997). Understanding teacher change: Revisiting the concerns-based adoption model. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 27, 331-367.
- Berry, T., Byrd, K. K., & Collins, K. (2009, September 4). *The effects of Reading Street on reading achievement: A focus on second-year curriculum users. (Final report)*. Retrieved from [http://www.pearsoned.com/RESPRTS\\_FR\\_POSTING/READING\\_RESEARCH\\_STUDIES/ReadingStreefReportRevised\\_Final.pdf](http://www.pearsoned.com/RESPRTS_FR_POSTING/READING_RESEARCH_STUDIES/ReadingStreefReportRevised_Final.pdf)
- Bond, G. L., & Dykstra, R. (1967). The cooperative research program on first-grade reading instruction. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 2(4), 5-142.
- Bush, G. W. (2000). *No Child Left Behind*. Retrieved from <http://www.nationalreadingpanel.org/Publications/No%20Child%20Left%20Behind.pdf>
- Bush, G. W. (2001). No child left behind, house document 107-34. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Carver, R. P. (1975). The Coleman report: Using inappropriately designed achievement

- tests. *American Educational Research Journal*, 12, 77-86.
- Castillo, J. J. (2009). *Convenience sampling*. Retrieved from <http://www.experiment-resources.com/convenience-sampling.html>
- Clarke, H. (2006). *Development of teacher training in differentiated instruction to improve reading achievement* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses database. (UMI No. 3216019)
- Coleman, J. S., Campbell, E. Q., Hobson, C. J., McPortland, J., Mood, A. M., Weinfield, F. D., & York, R. L. (1966). *Equality of educational opportunity*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Commeyras, M. (2007, January). Scripted reading instruction? What's a teacher to do? *Phi Delta Kappan*, 33(5), 404-407.
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano-Clark, V. L. *Designing and conducting mixed-methods research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Crowe, E. C, Connor, C. M., & Petscher, Y. (2009). Examining the core: Relations among reading curricula, poverty, and first through third grade reading achievement. *Journal of School Psychology*, 47, 187-214.
- Datnow, A., & Castellano, M. (2000). Teachers' responses to Success for All: How beliefs, experiences and adaptations shape implementation. *American Educational Research Journal*, 37, 775-799.
- DeBell, C. S., & Harless, D. K. (1992). B. F. Skinner: Myth and misperception [Electronic Version]. *Teaching of Psychology*, 19, 68-73.
- DuFour, R. (2004). What is professional learning community? *Educational Leadership*, 61, 6-11.

- Ede, A. (2006). Scripted curriculum: Is it a prescription for success? *Childhood Education, 83*(1), 29-32.
- Ehri, L. C., Nunes, D. M., Willows, B. V., Schuster, Z., Yaghoub-Zadeh, & Shanahan, T. (2001). Phonemic awareness instruction helps children learn to read: Evidence from the National Reading Panel's meta-analysis. *Reading Research Quarterly, 36*(3), 250-287.
- Fang, Z., Fu, D., & Lamme, L. L. (2004). From scripted instruction to teacher empowerment: Supporting literacy teachers to make pedagogical transitions.
- Fisher, D., & Ivey, G. (2006). Evaluating the interventions for struggling adolescent readers. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 50*, 180-189.
- Forman, G. E., & Kuschner, D. S. (1983). *The child's construction of knowledge*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- Friedman, I. (2004). *Education reform*. New York, NY: Facts on File.
- Gagne, R. M. (1974). *Essentials of learning for instruction*. Hinsdale, IL: Dryden.
- Garan, E. M. (2004). *In defense of our children: When politics, profit, and education collide*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Garan, E. (2005, February). Murder your darlings: A scientific response to The Voice of Evidence in Reading Research. *Phi Delta Kappan*, p. 438-443.
- Gardner, H. (1983). *Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Gatti, G. G. (2005). *Scott Foresman Reading Street benchmark item validation study 2005*. Retrieved from [http://pearsonschool.com/live/assets/200728/ReadingStreet\\_Research\\_656\\_1.pdf](http://pearsonschool.com/live/assets/200728/ReadingStreet_Research_656_1.pdf)

- Gatti, G. G. (2006). *Scott Foresman Reading Street benchmark item validation study* 2006. Retrieved from [http://www.personed.com/RESRPTS\\_FOR\\_POSTING/READING\\_RESEARCH\\_STUSTUD/SF%20Reading20Street%20Benchmark%20Item-Validation%20Study.pdf](http://www.personed.com/RESRPTS_FOR_POSTING/READING_RESEARCH_STUSTUD/SF%20Reading20Street%20Benchmark%20Item-Validation%20Study.pdf)
- Hall, G. E., George, A. A., & Rutherford, W. L. (1977). *Measuring stages of concern about the innovation: A manual for use of the SoC Questionnaire*. Austin, TX: The Research and Development Center for Teacher Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 147342)
- Hawkes, M. (1992). Facilitating educational restructuring: Applying lessons learned from the past. *Education, 113*, 96-101.
- Horowitz, F. D. (1992). John B. Watson's legacy: Learning and environment. *Developmental Psychology, 3*, 360-367. Ippolito, J., Steele, J.L., & Samson, J.F. (2008). Introduction: Why adolescent literacy matters now. *Harvard Educational Review, 78*, 1-5.
- Ippolito, J., Steele, J. L., & Samson, J. F. (2008). Introduction: Why adolescent literacy matters now. *Harvard Educational Review, 78*, 1-5.
- Kemp, E. (2001). Observing practice as participant observation—linking theory to practice. *Social Work Education, 20*, 527-538.
- Lunenburg, F. C., & Ornstein, A. C. (2004). *Educational administration: Concepts and practices* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.
- Marzano, R. J. (2003). *What works in schools: Translating research into action*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

- McKenna, J. E. (2008). *A case study of the development and implementation of a balanced literacy intervention program*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (Publication No. AAT 3307650)
- Merriman, R. (2008). *A study on the effects of a balanced literacy program featuring the Voyager Passport Intervention Program on third grade students in a rural school district located in middle Tennessee*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (Publication No. AAT 3320569)
- Mitchell, C. J., DeHouwer, J., & Lovibond, P. F. (2009). The prepositional nature of human associative learning. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 32, 183-198.
- Moustafa, M., & Land, R. (2002). The reading achievement of economically-disadvantaged children in urban schools using Open Court vs. comparably disadvantaged children in urban schools using non-scripted reading programs. *Urban Learning, Teaching, and Research 2002 Yearbook*, 44-53. Retrieved from <http://curriculum.calstatela.edu/margaret/moustafa>
- National Commission on Excellence. (1983). *A nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (2000). *Teaching Children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction*. (Report of the National Reading Panel). NIH Publication No. 00-4796. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- National Reading Panel. (2000). *Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for*

- reading instruction* [Electronic Version]. Retrieved from  
[http://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/nrp/upload/smallbook\\_pdf](http://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/nrp/upload/smallbook_pdf)
- Neuman, W. L. (2003). *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Partnership for Reading. (2003). *Put reading first: The research building blocks of reading instruction* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Retrieved from  
<http://www.nifl.gov/partnershipforreading/publications/PFRbooklet>
- Pearson Education Group. (2008, March 18). *U.S. Department of Defense schools choose Pearson's reading programs for elementary students around the globe*. Retrieved from [http://www.pearsoned.com/pr\\_2008/031808.htm](http://www.pearsoned.com/pr_2008/031808.htm)
- Pearson Education Group. (2003). *Pearson education history*. Retrieved from  
<http://www.pearson.com/about/history.htm>
- Piaget, J. (1951). *The child's conception of the world* (J. Tomlinson & A. Tomlinson, Trans.). New York, NY: Humanities. (Original work published 1929).
- Pressley, M., Wharton-McDonald, R., Allington, R., Block, C. C., Morrow, L., Tracey, D., et al. (2001). A study of effective grade-1 literacy instruction. *Scientific Studies of Reading, 5*, 35-58.
- Purcell-Gates, V. (2000). The role of qualitative and ethnographic research in educational policy. *Reading Online, 4*(1). Retrieved from  
[www.readingonline.org/articles/purcellgates](http://www.readingonline.org/articles/purcellgates)
- Rasinski, T. V. (2003). *The fluent reader*. New York, NY: Scholastic Professional Books.
- Rebora, A. (2008). Making a difference [Electronic Version]. *Teacher Magazine, 2*(1), 26-31.

- Reiser, R. A. (2001). A history of instructional design and technology, Part II: A history of instructional design [Electronic Version]. *Educational Technology Research and Development*, 49, 57-67.
- Reyhner, J. (2008). The reading wars: Phonics versus whole language [Electronic Version]. Retrieved from [http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~jar/Reading\\_Wars.html](http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~jar/Reading_Wars.html)
- Ryder, R. J., Sekulski, J., & Silberg, A. (2003). *Results of direct instruction reading program evaluation first through second grade, 2000-2002*. Madison, WI: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.
- Skinner, B. F. (1948). 'Superstition' in the pigeon. *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 38, 1628-172.
- Smith, M. (2004). *Political spectacle and the fate of American Schools*. New York, NY: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Snow, C. E., Burns, S., & Griffin, P. (1998). *Committee on the prevention of reading difficulties in young children*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
- Sosniak, L. A., & Stodolsky, S. S. (1993). Teachers and textbooks: Materials use in four fourth-grade classrooms. *The Elementary School Journal*, 93(3), 249-275.
- Teaching Matters, (n.d.). *Balanced literacy: An overview*. Retrieved June 18, 2009, from [http://www.teachingmatters.org/literacy/guide\\_overview.htm](http://www.teachingmatters.org/literacy/guide_overview.htm)
- Teale, W. H. (1995). Young children and reading: Trends across the twentieth century. *Journal of Education*, 177, 95-127.
- Thorndike, E. (1912). *Education: A first book*. New York, NY: Macmillian.
- Tivnan, T., & Hemphill, L. (2005). Comparing four literacy models in high poverty

- schools: Patterns of first-grade achievement. *The Elementary School Journal*, 105, 419-441 University of Oregon Center on Teaching & Learning. (2008). *DIBELS benchmark goals: Four assessment periods per year*. Retrieved from <http://dibels.uoregon.edu/docs/benchmarkgoals4x.pdf>
- Watson, J. B. (1924). *Behaviorism*. New York, NY: People's Institute Publishing.
- Watson, J. B. (1928). *The ways of behaviorism*. New York, NY: Harper & Brothers.
- Watson, J. B., & McDougal, W. ((1928). *The battle of behaviorism*. London, England: Kegan, Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co.
- Whitehurst. G. (2005). *Director, Institute of Education Sciences*. Retrieved from [www.ed.gov/new/staff/bios/whitehurst.html?exp=0](http://www.ed.gov/new/staff/bios/whitehurst.html?exp=0)
- Wilkerson, S. B. (2008). *A study of Pearson's My Sidewalks program: Final report*. Retrieved from [http://pearsoned.com/new\\_research.htm](http://pearsoned.com/new_research.htm)
- Wilkerson, S. B., Shannon, L. C, & Herman, T. (2006). *The efficacy study on Scott Foresman 's Reading Street program: Year one*. Retrieved June 5, 2009, from [http://www.personed.com/new\\_research.htm](http://www.personed.com/new_research.htm)
- Wilkerson, S. B., Shannon, L. C, & Herman, T. (2007). *The efficacy study of Pearson Education's Reading Street program: Year two*. Retrieved from [http://www.pearsoned.com/new\\_research.htm](http://www.pearsoned.com/new_research.htm)
- Wilson, P., Martens, P., & Poonam, A. (2005). Accountability for reading and readers: What the numbers don't tell. *The Reading Teacher*, 58(7), 622-631.
- Witty, P. (1949). *Reading in modern education*. Boston, MA: D. C. Heath.
- Yatvin, J. (2000). Minority view. In *Teaching children to read: An evidence-based*

*assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction* (NIH Pub. No. 00-4754). Washington, DC: National Institute for Literacy.

Yoakam, G. A. (1955). *Basal reading instruction*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

**Appendix A**

**Approval for Dissertation Proposal**

**PRE-IRB Form**

**IRB - Informed Consent Form**

**IRB – Amendment Approval Request**





**RE: IRB Amendment Approval Request**  
IRB\_MAILBOX [IRB@shu.edu]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 23, 2013 7:13 AM  
**To:** Danielle Savino-Garzon  
**Cc:** Barbara V Strobert

Dear Danielle,

This email is formal approval of your requested amendment to administer another anonymous survey to your subjects.

Sincerely,

Mary F. Ruzicka, Ph.D.  
Professor  
Director, Institutional Review Board  
Seton Hall University  
973-313-6314

**From:** Danielle Savino-Garzon [mailto:danielle.savinogarzon@student.shu.edu]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 23, 2013 9:37 AM  
**To:** IRB\_MAILBOX  
**Subject:** IRB Amendment Approval Request

Good Morning Dr. Ruzicka,

The purpose of this email is to request an approval of an amendment to my study. Attached is the anonymous survey that will be administered via email to all the previous surveyed 606 second through fifth grade teachers in the urban New Jersey district under study.

Thank you,

Danielle Savino-Garzon

**Appendix B**

**District Request for Approval of Research**



**Appendix C**  
**Protecting Human Subjects Certificate**



**Appendix D**

**List of Participating Schools & Number of 2<sup>nd</sup> thru 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Teachers**

**Name of School with Number of Grade 2-5 Teachers**

<b>School</b>	<b>Number of 2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Teachers</b>
003	27
005	19
006	32
008	28
011	28
012	16
014	16
015	28
016	14
017	39
020	23
022	24
023	46
024	27
025	27
027	33
028	27
029	16
030	25
031	9
033	12
034	25
037	29
038	24
039	12

**Appendix E**

**Letters of Solicitation (Administrators & Participants)**

LETTER TO ADMINISTRATORS

**Seton Hall University**

**Teacher Perceptions of the Reading Street Program in one Urban School  
District  
in Northern New Jersey**

Dear Principals:

My name is Danielle Savino-Garzon, a doctoral student at Seton Hall University. The Jersey City Public School District has authorized my request to conduct research with 2<sup>nd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade general education teachers throughout the district.

The purpose of this study is to explore teachers' perceptions of the Reading Street curriculum and the implementation of the components within their classroom. The existing literature on how teachers perceive the implementation of a newly adopted Language Arts curriculum is limited, so there was a need for a non-experimental quantitative study that examined the influence of utilizing the Reading Street program in our classrooms.

I am requesting that all grades 2 through 5 general education teachers complete an on-line survey regarding their perceptions about the Reading Street Program. Participation in this study is voluntary and completely anonymous. The anonymity of the participating teachers will be ensured throughout the study period.

Should you have any additional questions regarding this study, please contact the researcher at [dsavino@jcboe.org](mailto:dsavino@jcboe.org). You may also contact Dr. Barbara Strobert at [Barbara.Strobert@shu.edu](mailto:Barbara.Strobert@shu.edu) or 551-265-1911. I truly appreciate your support of my research efforts.

Thank you for your support and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Danielle Savino-Garzon  
[dsavino@jcboe.org](mailto:dsavino@jcboe.org)  
201-920-0201

LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

**Seton Hall University**

**Teacher Perceptions of the Reading Street Program in one Urban School  
District in Northern New Jersey**

Dear Participant,

My name is Danielle Savino-Garzon, a doctoral student at Seton Hall University. The Jersey City Public School District has authorized my request to conduct research with 2<sup>nd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade general education teachers throughout the district.

The purpose of this study is to explore teachers' perceptions of the Reading Street curriculum and the implementation of the components within their classroom. The existing literature on how teachers perceive the implementation of a newly adopted Language Arts curriculum is limited, so there was a need for a non-experimental quantitative study that examined the influence of utilizing the Reading Street program in our classrooms.

I am requesting that all grades 2 through 5 general education teachers complete an on-line survey regarding their perceptions about the Reading Street Program. Completion of the questionnaire should take no longer than 10 minutes. Participation in this study is voluntary and completely anonymous. The anonymity of the participating teachers will be ensured throughout the study period.

By completing this questionnaire, you are giving consent as a participant for this information to be used for the purpose described above. Completing the survey will be very much appreciated.

Please follow the link below to complete the survey:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/viewform?fromEmail=true&formkey=dGEyS1ZGT3Z3OURuYnhWUVRjNThDRWc6MA>

Should you have any additional questions regarding this study, please contact the researcher at [dsavino@jcboe.org](mailto:dsavino@jcboe.org). You may also contact Dr. Barbara Strobert at [Barbara.Strobert@shu.edu](mailto:Barbara.Strobert@shu.edu) or 551-265-1911. I truly appreciate your support of my research efforts.

Sincerely,

Danielle Savino-Garzon  
[dsavino@jcboe.org](mailto:dsavino@jcboe.org)  
201-920-0201

FOLLOW UP SURVERY LETTER TO ADMINISTRATORS

**Seton Hall University**

**Teacher Evaluation of the Scripted Reading Street  
Program and the Level of Satisfaction among its Sub-scale Components**

Dear Principals:

My name is Danielle Savino-Garzon, a doctoral student at Seton Hall University. The Jersey City Public School District has authorized my request to conduct research with 2<sup>nd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade general education teachers throughout the district.

The purpose of this study is to explore teachers' perceptions of the Reading Street curriculum and the implementation of the components within their classroom. The existing literature on how teachers perceive the implementation of a newly adopted Language Arts curriculum is limited, so there was a need for a non-experimental quantitative study that examined the influence of utilizing the Reading Street program in our classrooms.

I am requesting that all grades 2 through 5 general education teachers complete a follow up on-line open-ended survey regarding their perceptions about the Reading Street Program by Thursday, May 2, 2013. Participation in this study is voluntary and completely anonymous. The anonymity of the participating teachers will be ensured throughout the study period.

Should you have any additional questions regarding this study, please contact the researcher at [dsavino@jcboe.org](mailto:dsavino@jcboe.org). You may also contact Dr. Barbara Strobert at [Barbara.Strobert@shu.edu](mailto:Barbara.Strobert@shu.edu) or 551-265-1911. I truly appreciate your support of my research efforts.

Thank you for your support and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Danielle Savino-Garzon  
[dsavino@jcboe.org](mailto:dsavino@jcboe.org)  
201-920-0201

FOLLOW UP SURVEY LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

**Seton Hall University**

## **Teacher Evaluation of the Scripted Reading Street**

### **Program and the Level of Satisfaction among its Sub-scale Components**

Dear Participant,

My name is Danielle Savino-Garzon, a doctoral student at Seton Hall University. The Jersey City Public School District has authorized my request to conduct research with 2<sup>nd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade general education teachers throughout the district.

The purpose of this study is to explore teachers' perceptions of the Reading Street curriculum and the implementation of the components within their classroom. The existing literature on how teachers perceive the implementation of a newly adopted Language Arts curriculum is limited, so there was a need for a non-experimental quantitative study that examined the influence of utilizing the Reading Street program in our classrooms.

I am requesting that all grades 2 through 5 general education teachers complete a follow up open-ended on-line survey regarding their perceptions about the Reading Street Program. Completion of the questionnaire should take no longer than 10 minutes. Participation in this study is voluntary and completely anonymous. The anonymity of the participating teachers will be ensured throughout the study period.

By completing this questionnaire, you are giving consent as a participant for this information to be used for the purpose described above. Completing the survey by Thursday, May 2, 2013 will be very much appreciated.

Please follow the link below to complete the survey:  
[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/14Tu\\_OTggmRL3k7br63cW406hGGTZD3Ai\\_QHzHaiwqxw/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/14Tu_OTggmRL3k7br63cW406hGGTZD3Ai_QHzHaiwqxw/viewform)

Should you have any additional questions regarding this study, please contact the researcher at [dsavino@jcboe.org](mailto:dsavino@jcboe.org). You may also contact Dr. Barbara Strobert at [Barbara.Strobert@shu.edu](mailto:Barbara.Strobert@shu.edu) or 551-265-1911. I truly appreciate your support of my research efforts.

Sincerely,

Danielle Savino-Garzon  
[dsavino@jcboe.org](mailto:dsavino@jcboe.org)  
201-920-0201

**Appendix F**  
**Reading Street Questionnaire Survey**

**Reading Street Questionnaire**

Please click on the response that reflects your perception of the Reading Street Program. The following terms have been used: Strongly Agree (SA = 5); Agree (A = 4); Neither Agree or Disagree (N = 3); Disagree (D = 2); Strongly Disagree (SD = 1).

**\* Required**

I received allotted materials for the Reading Street Program. \*

\_\_\_\_\_

1   2   3   4   5

Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

\_\_\_\_\_

I received sufficient support during the course of implementing the Reading Street Program throughout the school year. \*

\_\_\_\_\_

1   2   3   4   5

Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

\_\_\_\_\_

I received sufficient training prior to implementing the Reading Street Program. \*

\_\_\_\_\_

1   2   3   4   5

Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

\_\_\_\_\_

Lesson overviews provided in the Reading Street Program are beneficial and helpful in planning. \*

\_\_\_\_\_

1   2   3   4   5

Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

\_\_\_\_\_

Differentiated lessons provided in the Reading Street Program are useful when planning small group instruction lesson plans. \*

\_\_\_\_\_

1   2   3   4   5

Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

\_\_\_\_\_

Scheduling ideas and suggestions provided in the Reading Street Program are practical and easily implemented. \*

\_\_\_\_\_

1   2   3   4   5

Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

\_\_\_\_\_

The Reading Street Program provided all necessary materials needed to implement lessons. \*

\_\_\_\_\_

1   2   3   4   5

Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

\_\_\_\_\_

The Reading Street materials are well-organized, clearly labeled, and easy to access. \*

\_\_\_\_\_

1   2   3   4   5

---

Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

---

The Reading Street Program provides ideas and suggestions for managing and organizing materials used in implementing lessons. \*

1 2 3 4 5

---

Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

---

The Reading Street Program teacher's editions are well organized and easy to follow. \*

1 2 3 4 5

---

Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

---

The Reading Street Program student's editions are visually appealing to students. \*

1 2 3 4 5

---

Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

---

The Reading Street Program provides ample supplemental reading materials for students on all levels. \*

1 2 3 4 5

---

Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

---

Materials provided in the Reading Street Program for center activities were suitable and easy to implement. \*

1 2 3 4 5

---

Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

---

The Reading Street Program provides explicit instruction for teachers that are simple to follow. \*

1 2 3 4 5

---

Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

---

I found the pacing in the Reading Street Program appropriate for my grade level. \*

1 2 3 4 5

---

Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

---

The Reading Street Program provides sufficient instruction of targeted skills threaded throughout the year. \*

1 2 3 4 5  
Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

The Reading Street Program provides vocabulary lessons that are grade/age appropriate.\*

1 2 3 4 5  
Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

The Reading Street Program provided integrated themes that were appropriate for my grade level and students' interests.\*

1 2 3 4 5  
Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

The Reading Street Program offers a selection of student tests that encompass a variety of modes.\*

1 2 3 4 5  
Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

I found the Reading Street Program sufficiently correlated with the New Jersey Common Core Standards.\*

1 2 3 4 5  
Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

The differentiated lessons provided in the Reading Street Program are well organized and easy to follow.\*

1 2 3 4 5  
Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

The Reading Street Program provides appropriate instruction and pacing for students on grade level.\*

1 2 3 4 5  
Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

The Reading Street Program provides appropriate instruction and pacing for students below grade level.\*

1 2 3 4 5  
Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

The Reading Street Program provides appropriate instruction and pacing for students above grade level.\*

1 2 3 4 5  
Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

Suitable ideas and suggestions are provided in the Reading Street Program for ESL/ELL students in my class. \*

1 2 3 4 5  
Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

The Reading Street Program provided instruction and activities appropriate for students in my class with individual education plans. \*

1 2 3 4 5  
Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

Integration of phonic skills and spelling lists were suitable for students. \*

1 2 3 4 5  
Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

Technology is appropriately integrated throughout the lessons found in the Reading Street Program. \*

1 2 3 4 5  
Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

Unit themes integrating social studies objectives found in the Reading Street Program are appropriate and spur students' interests. \*

1 2 3 4 5  
Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

Unit themes integrating science objectives found in the Reading Street Program are appropriate and spur students' interests. \*

1 2 3 4 5  
Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

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

1 2 3 4 5

---

Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

---

Overall, my students have shown improvement in the area of reading comprehension since the implementation of the Reading Street Program. \*

1 2 3 4 5

---

Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

---

Overall, my students have shown improvement in the area of reading vocabulary since the implementation of the Reading Street Program. \*

1 2 3 4 5

---

Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

---

How do you compare the Reading Street Program to previous district reading programs? Please explain. \*

**Appendix G**

**Reading Street Open-Ended Follow Up Survey**

**Reading Street Follow Up Open-Ended  
Survey**

\* Required

Describe your general experience in implementing the Reading Street Program. \*

Given the time allotted for each lesson, what challenges, if any did you face in implementing the Reading Street program? Please be specific. \*

What recommendations do you have for addressing the time allotted for the implementation of the lessons? \*

Can you explain how the Reading Street program supports New Jersey Common Core Standards? \*

How do you incorporate the components of the New Jersey Common Core Standards when implementing the Reading Street program? \*

Do you feel that the lessons in the Reading Street program are differentiated and suitable for students with different ability lessons (above, on or below grade level students); and can you explain why or why not? \*

Please explain how technology has been integrated throughout the lessons found in the Reading Street Program. \*

How effective or ineffective is the use technology in the Reading Street program? \*

Thinking about your experience so far, what are some of the overall challenges that you have faced while implementing the Reading Street program? Why were there challenges? \*

What are your recommendations for improvement for the Reading Street Program? \*

How satisfied were you with the support given in the Reading Street program? \*

What are your recommendations for the types of support teachers' would find beneficial for the Reading Street Program? \*

What grade level are you currently teaching? \*

- Grade 2
- Grade 3
- Grade 4
- Grade 5
- Other:

How many years of experience do you have teaching? \*

- 1 year
- 2-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 10-15 years
- 16 or more years