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A Correlation Study of Leadership Indicators and Literacy Outcomes: Examining a State Adopted Leadership Assessment Model

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A Correlation Study of Leadership Indicators and Literacy Outcomes: Examining a State
Adopted Leadership Assessment Model

by

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DEDICATION

In dedication to my late grandfather and first-born's namesake, Hurchel L. Hoke;

a man who loved me unconditionally, knew with every fiber that I would finish this

project and taught me to "speak up." You are deeply missed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Philippians 4:13

I am grateful to have people surrounding me who consistently believed in my efforts, encouraged me when I needed it and prayed for strength and guidance throughout this journey. The boys in my life, Robbie, Mac and Kaine, are the core of who I am and want to become; they continually provide me with wisdom and test my patience. My parents have always been an unwavering support and knew "I could accomplish whatever I put my mind to."

It is with much appreciation and gratitude that I mention Dr. Zach Kelehear and what an amazing help he has been during this time. I have met no other individual that so quickly and calmly diffuses a frustrated, confused Ph.D. candidate – over the phone no less. Dr. K possesses a slow southern drawl, knack for positivity and overwhelming kindness that make him the ideal partner in this process. I would be remiss not to include the entire dissertation team, Dr. Linda Fitzharris, Dr. Sandy Lindsay and Dr. Lynn Harrell. Thank you for your time, effort and agreeing to take this walk with me.

ABSTRACT

In an attempt to shed light on the possible impact certain leadership practices might have on student outcomes in literacy, this research considers the relationship of selected leadership traits and their impact on the implementation of a literacy intervention program. If it is true that all schools' have as their primary goal to prepare students for the rigorous learning, reading and analyzing required that is expected to be successful in the future, then examining the role that leadership might have on that goal remains important. Further, it is the hope that this analysis might further educators' understanding on the topic of leadership skills and practices that are essential to increasing literacy outcomes, specifically within an intervention program at the school level.

Toward capturing data that aligned with successful leadership, this study focuses on the leadership skills that are part of the state adopted evaluation protocol. These indicators are considered in the evaluation of principals in the state of South Carolina and used to determine their effectiveness as instructional leaders. These measures are correlated to the expected gains of students within a structured intervention program.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the degree to which effective leadership relates to literacy outcomes. This study is designed to focus on the characteristics of principals outlined by the evaluation tool and how these specified characteristics relate to literacy outcomes. The fuel behind this study is the need for

clarity about the nature of leadership assessment and actual leadership practice in regards to literacy. Put differently, the research question moves toward examining the degree to which the assessment of the school leader is consistent with the emphasis on literacy. Certainly, the hope for some policy makers is that by increasing the success of students' reading levels, schools will, in turn, prepare more students for the rigorous learning, reading and analyzing required to be successful in the future.

With literacy in the forefront of educational policy, research focus and millions of dollars being allocated for its development, principals need to have a set of skills that will enhance literacy within school settings. Thus, the examination of the evaluation tool as it relates to literacy within this study is valuable information. It is hopeful that leaders will be more knowledgeable about leadership behaviors or qualities, which they can more readily concentrate on so that they will strengthen their leadership overall.

The focus question leading the research is: *To what extent do leadership practices, as measured by a state adopted instrument, relate to the success of literacy intervention programs at an individual school setting?*

The research was completed by utilizing a correlation analysis. Two correlation coefficients were calculated: Pearson's correlation and Spearman's rho correlation. Pearson's correlation coefficient describes the direction and strength of the linear relationship between two continuous variables while Spearman's rho correlation coefficient can be used to determine if there is a relationship between ordinal variables or between a continuous variable and ordinal variable.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

According to Torgeson, Houston, Rissman and Kosanovich (2007) and Clark

(2004) the principal plays a central role in students' outcomes based on their leadership

and priorities. Leading a school requires that one be clear about the focus so that time

and money are committed to those things that matter most. O'Doherty and Ovando

(2013) attest that with "the multiple social, emotional, and academic needs of students,

it is evident that today's principals face additional school context challenges when

navigating an accountability system that demands the principal be an effective

instructional leader" (p. 533).

In today's popular literature, it might seem that literacy for school children

continues to be an area of concern and that an emphasis on teaching reading and

comprehension should overshadow all other areas of the curriculum. At the same time

as conversations about literacy populate the newspapers and media, discussions around

testing and assessment are occurring simultaneously. The intersection of these themes

constitutes the primary motivation of this investigation: How can the assessment of

leadership practice reflect a priority for literacy instruction in today's schools?

Statement of Problem

School leaders communicate priorities for learning. Though leaders claim to prioritize literacy and its instruction, literacy leadership is not as simple as it sounds. As a result, one is left to consider the subtext of such a claim. Specifically, is leading for literacy and its instruction assessed in current evaluation models? In what way is literacy complicated by factors outside the leader's and teachers' control? If there are outside factors, can leaders and teachers be judged by aspects over which they have no control? And is there an avenue to overcome these outside factors that so heavily determines a child's academic success?

Literacy: Context Matters

Noguera (2013), Professor of Education at New York University, commented in a recent keynote that equity does not always mean equal or treating people the same. He goes on to mention that the battle educators are facing today is not an achievement gap, but a preparation gap in our students (2013). Put differently, the educational gap is a gap of economic access that fosters a context for children to develop and grow in less than rich settings as compared to social settings of their high achieving peers (Ferguson, 1995; Covey & Baker, 2013). This preparation gap has many facets and contributions that are not limited to race, ethnicity, socio economic status, level of parents' education, etc. Given the inequities that children bring with them through the doors of schools, gaps in opportunities that are fostered by forces beyond the control of teachers who work in their classrooms, it is essential that school leaders craft places of learning that address those economic and intellectual inequities. Thus, it is imperative leaders

attempt to equalize learning, and therefore achievement, for all students upon entry into the public education system.

Fundamental to all learning is a child's ability to read. In order to achieve this basic but vital competency, students need a thoughtful and caring teacher who understands how to teach reading. In addition, critical to successful schooling and learning is the presence of a leader who can support both student learning and effective teaching even amidst gross inequities present in every classroom. In that light, this study seeks to discover evidence of an intersection between leadership assessment and effective literacy practice in a large, diverse district in the southeastern United States.

A study published by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) stated, "it is clear that children who arrive at school with weaker verbal abilities and literacy knowledge are much more likely than their classmates to experience difficulties in reading in the primary grades" (McCardle, Scarborough, & Catts, 2001, p.232). Students are coming to school with significant deficiencies that need immediate attention, and not in the same ways as we have always treated those struggling students. Educators need to start being more cognizant of students' individual needs to address these deficiencies because the longer the gaps exist, the larger the gaps in performance become.

As the gaps in performance over time continue to expand, it becomes clear that leaders and teachers are not adequately addressing the fundamental, instructional, and social needs due to many of these students not coming to school with the adequate preparation for learning and reading (Noguera (2013). Highlighting the learning gap that

is present upon entry into schooling, Hart and Risley's *The Early Catastrophe: The 30 Million Word Gap* (2003), identifies the difference among various subgroups as measured by vocabulary acquisition at age three. The students who come to school from poverty have experience and familiarity with thirteen million fewer words than those living with educated parents. Consequently, many of these students will struggle with literacy development and reading as the follow up data from the same study indicates. "Research reveals that the children most at risk for reading difficulties in the primary grades are those who began school with less verbal skill, less phonological awareness, less letter knowledge, and less familiarity with the basic purposes and mechanisms of reading" (Burns, Griffith, & Snow, 1999, p. 26). Further, Torgeson (2007) acknowledges that all students can learn to read, whether in a regular education setting or intervention program; however, once a student arrives in third grade lacking vocabulary, the achievement gap widens with each year causing students to fall behind their peers.

Leadership: Context and Emphasis Matter

With these disparities noted as a backdrop to all learning, a school leader would do well to consider the impact he or she has on these struggling students. The school leader's view and knowledge on literacy and instruction can make a significant difference in the organizational approach regarding students with delayed progress and identify appropriate ways to intervene, specifically in the area of literacy (Clark, 2004; Foorman, 2007). The leader has the ability to make literacy instruction a priority, and therefore that leader can more nearly ensure that those students in need will receive

aggressive, and thus, adequate intervention to ensure preparedness for literacy achievement.

School leaders can often be inundated with new initiatives, decreasing budgets and diminishing assistance; therefore, asking leaders to be involved in data analysis can easily be neglected amidst the competing demands on their time and resources. Nevertheless, administrators are expected to be active consumers of data from many sources, (e.g., standardized test scores, school report cards, climate surveys) so that they might lead and guide teachers to make a decision regarding students' literacy advancement. Leaders need to understand data, to explain data and analyze the sources in order to make effective use of the data, but not be victim to the data. When leaders have the ability to "connect data to individual students it becomes more meaningful and actionable" (Sharatt & Fullan, 2012). Consequently, leaders need to have the ability to identify valuable data resources and how to analyze the information, ensuring appropriate and effective measures are implemented.

Literacy: Outside Factors

There are several data resources that inform leaders as to the depth and complexity of literacy achievement and school practice. The Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement (CIERA), reported that, "in today's schools, too many children struggle with learning to read. As many teachers and parents will attest, reading failure has exacted a tremendous long-term consequence for children in the development of self-confidence and motivation to learn, as well as in their later school performance" (2001). Another highly recognized data and research resource is

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). In 1997, NAEP results

revealed that thirty-seven percent of U.S. fourth graders failed to achieve basic levels of

reading achievement; this number significantly increases in students living in poverty.

Showing a similar pattern, as a part of the Research on Human Capital and Education,

Coley and Baker (2013) state more than twenty-two percent of children in the United

States are living in poverty; this is the second largest in the world among the thirty-five

richest countries (2013). In addition, according to *The Condition of Education*, a U.S.

Department of Education report, forty-three percent of African American children are

living below the poverty line, compared to sixteen percent of white children.

These important and striking statistics suggest that our African American

children are coming to school with significant risk factors related to poverty at a higher

rate than those middle income students, thus, impeding their readiness for education.

Herein brings another set of factors to the forefront supporting the fact that leaders and

teachers have to work at identifying students with lower skills earlier in order for them

to acquire the much-needed intervention to ensure success. These factors place a huge

responsibility on all educators, especially those in a leadership role, to address areas of

need to ensure success for all.

Despite educational efforts to improve literacy, a significant portion of American

adults classified as "below basic" readers remained remarkably constant between 1992

and 2002 (Snow, 2002); this stagnant statistic suggests school initiatives have much yet

to accomplish if the hope of improving our literacy instruction in the classroom is ever

to become a reality for the children. The National Assessment of Adult Literacy (2003)

reported that fourteen percent of American adults had below basic literacy skills. While this number might seem small, this statistic translates to one out of every seven adults being below basic in reading ability. According to this report from 2003, thirty-two million Americans were unable to read a newspaper, follow the directions for medication, clearly comprehend street signs or read a story to a child.

The problem leaders and teachers face today is how to prepare all students to be literate, functional members of society and to possess basic skills in reading and writing in order to compete in a global society. Therefore, it is imperative that as an educational community, researchers and practitioners alike identify an appropriate instructional setting to support students through interventions in literacy in order to level the playing field for all students and ensure competency in reading. These practices will only come to pass, however, to the degree which leadership makes such an emphasis a reality.

Therefore, preparing students to read becomes a foundational emphasis for today's successful leader, and if that be the case, then the mechanism for evaluating those principals must reflect an equally literacy-rich emphasis. The principal matters; the teacher matters; and the context from which the student comes matters. Because the principal is the lead teacher in a school building and guides the instruction by prioritizing the focus, then that person is tasked with monitoring instruction and holding key players accountable for goals and progress.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the degree to which effective leadership influences the implementation of a well-designed literacy intervention

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program. The fuel behind this study is the need for clarity about the nature of leadership assessment and actual leadership practice in regards to literacy. Put differently, the research question moves toward examining the degree to which the assessment of the school leader is consistent with the emphasis on literacy. Certainly, the hope for some policy makers is that by increasing the success of students' reading levels, schools will, in turn, prepare more students for the rigorous learning, reading and analyzing required to be successful in the future.

By identifying key leadership factors that influence successful literacy programs, administrators will be able to focus their efforts to ensure fidelity within the programs that will maximize student success. In short, leaders will be able to work smarter, not harder and be more effective in elevating performances in reading and literacy.

Research Questions

The focus question leading the research is: *To what extent do leadership practices, as measured by a state adopted instrument, relate to the success of literacy intervention programs at an individual school setting?*

The focus question of the study speaks to the relationship among leadership and success of literacy intervention programs. Leadership is measured in this study by the evaluation tool, PADEPP. This particular indicator was chosen in the study because it is used in the current school district to make determinations of principal quality and effectiveness in South Carolina.

Because the district under study does not believe in utilizing just one indicator for successful leadership, this study also considers correlations using other leadership

indicators - climate and school report card. Though these data sets are presented, the

focal point of this investigation is seeking clarity in the PADEPP instrument and how it

captures the daily practices of principals involved in literacy leadership.

Theoretical Framework

The focus that leadership has significant effects on intervention programs and

therefore, literacy advancement, lies within the confines of organizational change

theory. According to Marion (2002) organizational change theory is a subcategory of the

Human Relations theories. Human Relations studies and research began around the

1920's and focus on increasing productivity while considering and understanding human

factors, such as workers' home lives (Marion, 2002). "Important conclusions that

emerged out of this movement are still taught to aspiring educational administrators

and still influence the way managers deal with their employees" (Marion, 2000, p. 41).

In short, after almost one hundred years, it is still imperative that a leader or manager

view individuals not only at work, but understand that outside factors impact workers'

output, thus the overall success of the institution.

Evans, Thornton and Usinger (2012) provide insight into four major theories of

organizational change: "continuous improvement model by W. Edwards Deming,

organizational learning by Chris Argyris and David Schön, learning organizations by Peter

Senge, and appreciative inquiry by David Cooperrider" (p. 155). As the research states,

"change constitutes an integral component of the educational landscape" (Evans et al.,

2012, p. 154). Leaders pioneer schools through a variety of changes, and many leaders

are not prepared to understand the theory behind the change initiatives, therefore, they

fail. In addition, school districts, including principals, find themselves in what Fullan

(2008b) refers to as "initiativitis," a bad case of reoccurring and implementing the

newest change effort without really thinking through the affects of the change on the

organization or the organizational goals, thus, leaving many tasks incomplete and

teachers and leadership teams weary. In short, it is important for leaders to understand

the change process and the theory behind the changes in order to foster a successful

outcome (Fullan, 2008a; Fullan 2008b, Fullan, 2001; Evans et al. 2012).

For the purpose of this study, focusing on the leader as he or she affects student

achievement is directly related to the continuous improvement model. As described in

Evans et al. (2012), Deming offered fourteen strategies to support continuous

improvement in the organizational setting. These were developed as a result of his work

with Japanese companies after World War II. These strategies are as follows: "(1) create

constancy and purpose toward improvement of product and services, (2) adopt a new

philosophy, (3) cease dependence on, (4) end the practice of awarding business on the

basis of price, (5) improve the system of production and service, (6) institute training on

the job, (7) institute leadership, (8) drive out fear, (9) break down barriers between

departments, (10) eliminate slogans and targets for production, (11) eliminate quotas

and management by objectives, (12) remove barriers to pride in workmanship, (13)

institute a program of education, and (14) include everyone in the transformation of the

organization (pp. 23-24)" (Evans et al., 2012, p. 156).

The continuous improvement theory takes into consideration four significant

steps for successful change. Beginning with a plan based on data analysis, a team

implements the change effort within a small setting and then studies the results.

Consequently, after studying the results of the initial plan, the team makes adjustments

and re-implements the plan.

Until the last few decades, the leader, specifically the principal in this research,

was simply a manager; someone that arrived at work to ensure the day went smoothly.

This individual was not necessarily required to have thorough knowledge of education

and teaching, be abreast of the newest classroom techniques or seek ways to improve

the instruction in the classroom. Now, as research and theory suggested, leaders have

heavy demands. "Only principals who are equipped to handle complex, rapidly changing

environment[sic] can implement the reforms that lead to sustained improvement in

student achievement" (Fullan, 2002, p. 16).

The continuous improvement model is exactly the way the school district rolled

out the Primary Grades Academies, which reflect success in literacy. The school district

committed to the plan-do-study-act process as prescribed by Deming (Evan et al., 2012).

Definitions of Terms

1) PADEPP - Program for Assisting, Developing, and Evaluating Principal
   Performance – South Carolina's principal evaluation program

2) Literacy - using printed and written information to function in the classroom
   to achieve one's goals and to develop one's knowledge and potential for
   maximum success

3) Intervention – providing additional support for struggling students in order to
   make significant gains to obtain grade level expectations

4) Intervention program – research based materials implemented to improve students' achievement; all students follow same criteria to obtain services

5) Literacy Academies – intervention program implemented within school district under study where student data is considered to identify students struggling specifically in reading

6) MAP (Measure of Academic Progress) – computerized testing that is unique to student's level that assesses progress

7) PMAP (Measure of Academic Progress for Primary Grades) – testing specifically for K-2 grades, focusing on early literacy skills

Limitations of the Study

The researcher has identified two limitations in the study. The first is researcher bias. Through reading of literature regarding literacy intervention and the leader's role within this success, the researcher has come to various conclusions in relation to best practices in literacy and early intervention. Additionally, as a practitioner, it is the researcher's opinion that the leader within each school setting pioneers the intervention process and influences the success greatly. Due to this, the researcher must guard against bias when analyzing data and the interpretations of factors that influence the success of intervention for particular subjects.

The second limitation is the number of quantitative measures for school leadership. While there are many facets to leadership, the researcher is considering the quantitative results that are intended to reflect effective leadership. The researcher does question the validity of the PADEPP standards that determine the effectiveness, or

lack thereof, of principals in this particular school district, but given few measures that consider a principal's role, PADEPP was the most encompassing, the standard used in South Carolina and the consistent one available to use for this study. Additionally, if the PADEPP instrument is the single most important assessment measure over which principals in this state worry, then assessing the degree to which that instrument captures what is highly valued (i.e., literacy) is critical.

Literacy Academies within School District

The Literacy Academies have grown and developed through a plan being implemented, modified, and continued to help better serve students. This program originated due to an overwhelming amount of students arriving to the middle and high school level unable to read on grade level.

In 2008-09, a committee was established in investigate the literacy needs in the district due to a series of newspaper articles that highlighted a number of low performing students entering 10th grade. Through this investigation, it was determined that an intensive intervention program would be started in grade one, called Pathways or First Grade Academy. The intent was that there would be a literacy path of support for struggling students.

Based on the research and the programs available, the committee decided that in grade one Reading Recovery and Fountas and Pinnell's Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) would be used in addition to Wilson Fundations. Read Well was also included for very low performing schools that needed a high level of structure. These programs were to target struggling readers in the first grade. The Fountas and Pinnell Level I

Assessment kit was used to benchmark students text levels, Aimsweb was used to progress monitor students weekly, and PMAP was used as an annual evaluation.

The program was designed to follow the RTI model and focused on students scoring at the 25th percentile and below on a standardized measures like PMAP and Aimsweb. This multi-tiered approach is the intervention system that the literacy program uses in the school district being examined. The multi-tiered model focuses first on the general practices of the school. At this level, referred to as Tier 1, students are acquiring knowledge through the general core curriculum within a regular educational setting, the classroom. In order for the RtI process to be reliable, a school or district should ensure that the core curriculum is rigorous and implemented with fidelity, thus, ruling out a student's low performance on the lack of quality instruction. "When students fail to respond adequately to instruction, teachers need to be reasonably certain that their instructional practices did not contribute to the students' poor learning," (Stecker, Fuchs & Fuchs, 2008, p. 10).

If a student struggles or displays signs of failure during Tier 1 instruction, the student will move to a more intensive model of instructional delivery. This can only be determined through data management within the Tier 1 model, utilizing an initial assessment as well as incremental data points to assess the student's growth (or lack thereof) and progress; a team of school staff examine the data in the RtI process during this transition. The next level of instruction is referred to as Tier 2, often thought of as a preventive phase in a child's learning. Tier 2 instruction delivered in a small group setting, typically three to five students, is a pullout service and should take place daily or

several days per week. The instructional program should be based on the individual student's needs; however, teams will group students together who have similar struggles. Tier 2 lessons are scientifically researched based programs, and the teacher delivering the lesson is trained in the specific program. The overall approach for Tier 2 learning is providing "students with additional instructional time in reading and more intensive instructional delivery with increased opportunities to respond and practice reading skills" (Steck, Fuchs & Fuchs, 2008, p.13). The Tier 2 instructional phase offers the student more individualized attention and gives the teacher more occasions to give appropriate feedback and correction as needed.

The last of the multi-tiered approach is Tier 3, the most intensive instructional level. This step aligns with Torgesen's research (2002) that schools must be equipped to go beyond the typical core curriculum in order to reach all students. Tier 3 interventions consist of concentrated, thorough, tailored instruction for a specific student that addresses an exact weakness in the student's abilities and are delivered at the student's current working level. Throughout the Tier 3 process, the student will be working at his or her current assessment level; for example, if a fifth grader is reading on a second grade level, then the intervention is based on second grade level reading materials and skills. The Tier 3 model limits the number of students to three, and the intervention occurs every day for a minimum of thirty to forty-five minutes.

In accordance with the recommendation by the National Research Council (Burns et al., 1999) as well as the National Reading Panel (2000), Put Reading First (Armbruster et al., 2001) and research based strategies from Dean, Hubbell, Pitler &

Stone (2012), the school district studied adopted a curriculum that was standard for kindergarten through fifth grade. This purchased program contained all necessary instructional lessons and activities to meet the needs of most children in order to develop literacy skills; however, Torgeson (2002) writes in order to reach all students, schools must be prepared to go far beyond the regular curriculum. As a result of seeing students continue to struggle in reading, this school district did exactly what Torgeson (2002) recommends and created an intervention program intended to accelerate literacy for struggling and unprepared students.

Through data analysis, consistent intervention and monitoring all students, every pupil should be able to progress successfully into third grade after being a part of the literacy intervention program. In conjunction with the literacy program and data analysis, many students who have failed to reach grade level expectations or make significant gains are typically those students who have additional learning issues addressed through other services, such as special education.

Since its inception, the program has expanded to include intervention materials and training for Kindergarten teachers as well as Associate Reading Teachers for grades two and three to reinforce and support the Master Reading Teacher. The name also changed to Primary Grades Academy.

As a leader in education, ensuring that my teachers are providing effective intervention is critical; fortunately, my teachers are doing this well. Being in a small community, many parents bring their children to school in order to get the services of intervention to ensure that their child is progressing as he or she should. Additionally,

through intense intervention, we have strengthened our core curriculum and increased

engagement from students and teachers; we believe this is due to the assistance

teachers are receiving and pull out services provided to those students struggling. Our

students feel success when given opportunities to learn at their instructional level.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Due to the mass of unprepared students arriving on school doorsteps, ample research focuses on the importance of early literacy instruction and key components within the regular educational classroom. Additionally, substantive efforts have been made in an attempt to provide teachers with specific steps to intervene when traditional literacy instruction fails. The key, however, to these successful strategies and instructional practices is the degree to which the leader can oversee the tasks.

The following literature review will enhance understanding in leadership and literacy development as outlined in research. These areas of study are the heart of identifying specific habits and practices, as well as the knowledge base of school leaders regarding instructional literacy leadership that will enhance student achievement in schools.

In searching for clarity within the evaluation of principals as it relates to literacy, this chapter begins with an in-depth review of the evaluation instrument utilized. Further, this chapter discusses the research on instructional and literacy leadership, with an overview of a non-educational perspective of leadership. The literature review moves on, summarizing the affects poverty has on literacy and children, and then proceeds by describing the basic beginnings of literacy skills, oral language

development; oral language begins within the home and early daycare or preschool settings. These beginning experiences with emerging literacy skills are the base of literacy acquisition and highly affect a child's ability to progress and develop.

Evaluation Instrument

At the heart of this study is the evaluation of leadership as it encompasses the management of literacy, therefore, it is important to consider the criterion which leaders are accountable for in the state of South Carolina where the study is conducted. These standards, developed in 2010 and defined below, are currently the focus for evaluation of principals. There are nine categories with subsequent proficient indicators as outlined on the evaluation instrument:

Standard 1: Vision – A school principal is an educational leader who fosters the success of all students by facilitating the development, communication, implementation, and evaluation of a shared vision of learning that reflects excellence and equity.

- ✓ Involves some stakeholders (e.g. school and district personnel, students, families, and community members) in the development of a broad vision for the school that is compatible with the district's mission and vision
- ✓ Collaborates with some stakeholders, or informs stakeholders about goals, plans, and priorities consistent with the vision of the school.
- ✓ Communicates the school's vision, goals, plans, and priorities to staff, students, parents, and community.

✓ Implements, evaluates, and refines selected portions of the plan of action for achieving the school's vision.

Standard 2: Instructional Leadership - A school principal is an educational leader who fosters the success of all students by leading the development and alignment of the organizational, instructional, and assessment strategies that enhance teaching and learning.

✓ Generally sets and communicates high standards for curricular/instructional quality and student achievement.

✓ Demonstrates some proficiency in analyzing research and assessment data.

✓ Ensures the use of data from most state and locally mandated assessments and educational research to improve curriculum, instruction, and student performance.

✓ Routinely observes staff and/or assists in the implementation of effective teaching and assessment strategies to promote student learning.

✓ Monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of most instructional programs to promote the achievement of student learning standards.

Standard 3: Effective Management - A school principal is an educational leader who fosters the success of all students by managing the school organization, its operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.

✓ Often seeks, and/or adequately allocates resources to achieve school and district goals.

✓ Plans and administers budgeting and purchasing according to most local, state, and federal requirements.

✓ Screens, recommends, and assigns staff in a timely manner based on local, state, and federal requirements, with some use of school needs information and assessment data.

✓ Typically manages the supervision and evaluation of staff in accordance with local, state, and federal requirements.

✓ Implements, evaluates, and refines, as necessary, procedures for the security and safety of all personnel and students.

✓ Ensures the maintenance of a clean and aesthetically pleasing school environment most of the time.

Standard 4: Climate - A school principal is an educational leader who fosters the success of all students by advocating, nurturing and sustaining a positive school climate.

✓ Initiates and maintains strategies to promote collegiality and collaboration among the staff most of the time.

✓ Involves some parents, students, and community members in efforts to create and maintain a positive learning environment.

✓ Establishes and adequately supervises programs that promote positive social, emotional, and intellectual growth for all students.

- ✓ Establishes and typically enforces standards for appropriate student behavior according to local, state, and federal requirements.

- ✓ Manages conflict and crisis situations in an effective and timely manner the majority of the time.

- ✓ Usually deals with student misconduct in a prompt and effective manner.

Standard 5: School/Community Relations - A school principal is an educational leader who fosters the success of all students by collaborating effectively with stakeholders.

- ✓ Develops a somewhat effective and interactive communications plan and public relations program.

- ✓ Participates in selected school community activities.

- ✓ Involves some staff, parents, community, and students in needs assessment, problem solving, and decision making for school improvement.

- ✓ Responds to diverse community interests and needs in most cases.

- ✓ Creates and sustains some opportunities for parent and community involvement in school activities.

- ✓ Collaborates with staff to develop strategies for parents and the community to support students' learning.

Standard 6: Ethical Behavior - A school principal is an educational leader who fosters the success of all students by demonstrating integrity, fairness, and ethical behavior.

- ✓ Typically works within professional and ethical guidelines to improve student learning and to accomplish school and district goals.

- ✓ Models respect, understanding, sensitivity, and appreciation in most circumstances.

- ✓ Adheres to local, state, and federal requirements

Standard 7: Interpersonal Skills - A school principal is an educational leader who fosters the success of all students by interacting effectively with stakeholders and addressing their needs and concerns.

- ✓ Demonstrates respect for others with few exceptions.

- ✓ Typically elicits and responds to feelings, needs, concerns, and perceptions of others to build mutual understanding.

- ✓ Typically communicates effectively with stakeholders to support school and district goals.

- ✓ Generally recognizes and effectively uses skills and strategies for problem solving, consensus building, conflict resolution, stress management, and crisis management.

- ✓ Uses appropriate oral and written communication skills on most occasions.

Standard 8: Staff Development - A school principal is an educational leader who fosters the success of all students by collaborating with school and district staff to plan and implement professional development activities that promote the achievement of school and district goals.

- ✓ Collaborates with staff to create and implement a plan for a variety of relevant staff development activities that promote the achievement of school goals and staff growth.

- ✓ Generally uses data related to the achievement of school goals and staff growth as the basis for evaluating the success of the staff development plan.

- ✓ Typically encourages staff to set goals for professional growth.

- ✓ Usually shares effective teaching strategies and uses coaching skills to encourage professional growth.

Standard 9: Professional development - A school principal is an educational leader who fosters the success of all students by using available resources and opportunities for professional growth

- ✓ Develops and implements a plan for professional development.

- ✓ Establishes and maintains a limited professional network with other administrators.

- ✓ Complies with district and state professional development requirements.

- ✓ Typically participates in staff development activities to understand the complex role of teaching and effective instructional practices. (Retrieved from the Department of South Carolina. See Appendix A for full view of instrument.)

The state of South Carolina has not published exactly how the instrument was created, but cites a statue stating:

The statute and regulation 43-165.1 require all principals to be evaluated annually. To guide this task, nine standards with criteria frame the evaluation process. Standard 9, Principal's Professional Development (PPD), requires all principals to develop a plan based on the strengths and needs identified in the previous evaluation in concert with the school's strategic plan. The goal of PPD is to improve the principal's performance and support the teaching/learning process.

All standards and criteria were approved by the General Assembly as presented by the State Board of Education for use in all South Carolina schools. To document the principal evaluation process an evaluation instrument was piloted and deemed valid and reliable for measuring the degree to which a principal's performance meets the standards. There is increased reliability when the instrument is used by more than one administrator within the evaluation process. Principals currently receive a rating of Improvement Needed, Proficient or Exemplary on each standard with a final rating determined by the evaluator. When more than one evaluator is part of the process, consensus is reached. *§59-24-40. Amended by 1997 Act. No. 50*

As is the norm in education, there is a process for growth and development for supervisors if a principal struggles. The state department has published a handbook and development guide with suggestions for literature, activities and technology resources to support the area of weakness. To view a copy of the evaluation instrument visit:

https://ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/49/documents/PrincipalEvaluations2013.pdf

An Overview of Leadership

As literacy moves to the forefront of educational discussion and focus, it is imperative that principals are instructional leaders who support the development of literacy and understand the components of reading. In one study, Dowell, Bickmore and Hoewing (2012) introduce the theory of literacy leadership – a focused lens of leadership that encompasses a deeper understanding in the instructional practices and components of literacy development. According to Reeves (2008), "if school leaders

really believe that literacy is a priority, then they have a personal responsibility to understand literacy instruction, define it for colleagues, and observe it daily" (p.91).

Dowell, Bickmore and Hoewing (2012) comment that while understanding literacy in the middle and secondary levels is important, it is vital that elementary principals have a greater understanding in order to lead literacy development. Further identified in the research, is the lack of knowledge that principals have regarding literacy. Through this study, emerged five themes to what skills were required for elementary principals to fill the role as the literacy leader: content knowledge, knowledge of best practices spanning developmental age ranges and content areas, provide school structures to support literacy, literacy environment and management systems and developing a literacy mission and monitoring and evaluation of literacy instruction.

The Australian Primary Principals Association published a report on an institute titled Principals as Literacy Leaders (PALL). This institute encompassed a group of elementary principals to focus on action research surrounding literacy. During the study, the researchers engaged the participants through individual questionnaires and interviews; teacher questionnaires and interviews; and interviews and input from literacy achievement advisors (LAA); literacy achievement advisors were support personnel for the principals within the program. Dempster, Konza, Robson, Gaffney, Lock and McKennariey (2012), report that leaders, and therefore schools, started to share a moral purpose with literacy as the pre-eminent improvement priority; increased professional development regarding literacy, data analysis, and interventions; engaged

in thoughtful, purposeful dialogue surrounding the advancement of literacy for students; and focused on the alignment of resources to facilitate literacy teaching and learning.

As a result of participating in the PALL project, many principals' schools and staffs benefitted from clear literacy targets; whole-school professional learning about literacy practices; the adoption of literacy blocks within schedules, as well as explicit instructional practices delivered during these specified intervals; universal screening processes for intervention placement and monitoring; a focus on teaching practices and interventions using a coordinated multileveled approached to oral language development in the early grades/years (Dempster et al., 2012).

Ward-Cameron, president of Early Literacy Institute and consultant to Vanderbilt University, states that principals need to value and prioritize language development within their schools and especially preschool programs (2013). One way to ensure this is to provide meaningful professional development to the teachers about assessing a student's language, setting goals to grow and monitoring progress (Ward-Cameron, 2013).

Professional learning for staff is an excellent way to empower educators with the tools to assist struggling students. In one study published through the National Association of Elementary School Principals, Young, Chandler, Shields, Laubenstien, Butts and Black (2008) state the principal's support, both financially and intellectually, increased teachers' success on individual improvement plans for reading and literacy. In a successful professional development model, the principal, as the lead learner,

celebrates the already existing strengths among staff and focuses efforts on

improvement (Barth, 2003).

Effective leadership is difficult to define and varies within contexts; therefore, it

is important to consider several views on effective leadership and the research that

surround this notion. Known as one of the most influential men in America, Steven

Covey (1989) restores character ethics in leadership through what he has titled *The 7*

Habits of Highly Effective People. In these habits, Covey (1989) empowers people

through visuals and stories of others to guide readers to a more ethical leadership

approach. His habits have won rave reviews in the business world, describing this

leadership approach as a major development in many companies and the handbook to

new employee training. Covey's (1989) habits are as follows:

> Habit 1 – Be Proactive
> Habit 2 – Begin with the End in Mind
> Habit 3 – Put First Things First
> Habit 4 – Think Win/Win
> Habit 5 – Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood
> Habit 6 – Synergize
> Habit 7 – Sharpen the Saw

Professor of Columbia University and former chief officer of Pepsi, Michael

Feiner (2004) discusses the differences and importance of managing versus leading,

including the varying skill sets each require. In his writing, he lists fifty basic laws that

will encourage people to perform better and he portrays these laws within stories and

anecdotes. In his compelling book about leadership, he distinctly carved out four

sections of leadership. The first part focuses on the meaning of leadership and "makes

the case that a focus on managing relationships is what distinguishes successful leaders"

(Feiner, 2004, p. xiii). In the first section, he argues that knowledge is not the key, rather how a leader accomplishes tasks is more beneficial. Part two focuses solely on managing the variety of relationships a leader must cultivate. In the next chapters, part three, he provides insight into situational conflicts and change that involve ethnicity or gender factors. The last section, viewed as the most relevant combining the varying laws, focuses on valued-based leadership. Fiener offers in his final chapters, "it's your values that build followship" (Fiener, 2004, p. xiii).

Through his book, Fiener provides fifty laws, though many could easily be presented together. For example, while focusing on managing people, relationships and communication are the key factors according to Fiener (2004); this theme continues to rise to the top of priorities when leading. Fiener (2004) discusses relationships and how to foster successful ones with your boss in section two. Focusing on leading peers, chapters of section three are dedicated to knowing how to treat others while still pushing them to achieve. As far as school leadership, specifically the principalship, section three of Fiener's book zeros in on the skill set and characteristics to help lead successful schools. Fiener concludes with a powerful summation of knowing where you stand as a leader. He advises leaders "sharpen your ethical reflexes by developing a detailed written statement of what you stand for in life. Do this now, so that you've already thought about your values before you face an ethical dilemma" (Fiener, 2004, p. 265). Appendix C catalogs the fifty laws as outlined by Fiener (2004).

Michael Fullan (2001), offers insight for leaders in times of a fast and ever-changing world. Fullan (2001) advises that through the integration of five core

competencies, leaders will be equipped to deal with complex issues and change. His framework includes leaders focusing on a moral purpose, understanding change, building relationships, creating and sharing knowledge and, lastly, coherence-making.

A leader with moral purpose focuses on and remains cognizant that every action must be with positive intent to the organization and those involved; this is about having a positive attitude and view. According to Fullan (2001), understanding the complexity of change is essential for leadership; he provides six guidelines for thinking about change as well. Third, Fullan (2001) identifies the power of relationships within an organization. Creating and sharing knowledge refers to the integration of the previous three themes by using new ideas and research to push the organization, however, Fullan (2001) acknowledges that without the first three themes, knowledge sharing is difficult. The last theme is coherence making which is synonymous with reflection. As change occurs within an organization, there is chaos, making reflection pivotal for progress.

In order to achieve better results, the leader must also cultivate within its members commitment to the organizational goals. These five themes aforementioned, coupled with commitment, result in "more good things happening" (Fullan, 2001, p. 4).

In a recent article, Sharatt and Fullan (2012) discuss three key characteristics of an ideal leader; one that others want and who is able to make significant, lasting change through data analysis. Participants of the study said they want someone that encompasses the following traits:

1) Understands the art of teaching and grasps the importance of assessment and good instruction
2) Communicates clearly the plan to others
3) Intends to stay around

In corroboration with Sharatt and Fullan (2012), Robinson (2012) concluded that one of the most influential activities a principal could participate in to raise student achievement is to engage in work with teachers, participating as a learner, in terms of improving instructional practices and student learning.

Additionally, communication, Sharatt and Fullan (2012) attest, is a key characteristic many researchers identify in order to be an effective leader/manager. "Clarity is the antidote to anxiety…if you do nothing else as a leader, be clear" (Buckingham, 2005, p.146). John Maxwell writes in his book "that 60 percent of all management problems are the result of faulty communication" (1999, p.77). Kelehear (2006) writes that trust is a prerequisite to meaningful, productive communication; if two people are not able to have an open, trustworthy conversation, little will be accomplished. Additionally, an important piece of communication on behalf of the leader is active listening.

These studies make clear that communication is a key factor in successful leadership. This researcher and practitioner strongly agrees that a breakdown in communication can derail a highly effective initiative quickly. Moreover, it is the leader's responsibility to hold everyone accountable for clear, open lines of communication that foster success for the organization.

Marzano, Waters and McNulty (2005) conducted a meta-analysis of sixty-nine studies focusing on "school leadership as practiced by principals" (p. 28) from 1978 to 2001 that met specific conditions. From this meta-analysis, the researchers identified twenty-one responsibilities of a school leader that had an average correlation of 0.25 to

student achievement. Of these identified twenty-one, communication was at the top of the list. Two ideas from Marzano, Water and McNutty (2005), relationships and affirmation, are very similar and could easily be considered one, or at the very least, comingled. The practice of building key relationships typically comes from continued and thoughtful affirmation regarding one's work, dedication and achievements. Appendix B provides the full list of the twenty-one responsibilities as viewed by Marzano, Water and McNutty (2005).

In Donaldson's book, *Cultivating Leadership in Schools* (2001), he focuses on connecting the people of the organization in order to build a cohesive system of shared leadership. In this handbook for leadership, teachers are an integral part of the organization's success and take on a significant amount of leadership. He identifies three streams that are essential to leading schools:

1) building relationships
2) mutual moral purpose
3) shared belief in action

Ron Clark (2004), educational pioneer and leader of Ron Clark Academy in Atlanta, discusses the influence that a principal has on the environment in the school; he relays that this is the single most significant factor in a successful, supportive environment for teachers, and thus for students. Clark states, "in reality, the strength of a principal is measured by his or her ability to bring out the best attributes of the staff and to get them to use their talents, intelligence and creativity to the meet the needs of all students" (2004, p. 210).

In his book, *The Excellent 11,* Clark identifies these specific practices of the leader

(principal) in order to accomplish bringing out the best in others:

1) Give unconditional support – principal need to back up teachers in times of disagreement or challenge from a parent
2) Ask for ideas – getting input from others, such as teachers, is a sure way to gather support as well
3) Be fair – no matter the role or relationship, treat all people the same
4) Be an example of your expectations – do not expect something of teachers that you yourself are not doing
5) Have an open-door policy – allow teachers to pop in to ask a question or express a concern
6) Respect teachers' time – don't allow meetings and other not school related events to encumber teachers' outside hours of teaching
7) Handle disciplinary measures immediately – don't allow referrals to the office to lag on for days at a time
8) Give instant feedback from observations
9) Learn the names of all the students
10) Give freedom for creativity and new ideas – within curricular measures, allow teachers to bring outside ideas to their teaching
11) Bringing out the best in others is a key way to also engage change and buy in when creating school culture.

In Nogeura's symposium delivery (2013), he focuses on five principles that

leaders should consider in order to improve schools and leave a lasting impression. His

principles are briefly explained below:

- Challenge the normalization of failure
  - o Ensure internal accountability
  - o Challenge expectations and complacency
  - o Accept responsibility
- Leaders must be guardians of equality
  - o Implement strategies that support the most vulnerable students
  - o Leaders must confront the students denied educational opportunities
- Embrace immigrant students and their culture
- Students must be provided clear guidance on what it takes to be successful (in the class, school, course, etc.)
  - o Give explicit guidelines and instructions
  - o What excellent 'look like' – give the example
  - o Powerful learning culture
- Partnership with parents to have shared interest

- Communicate with parents regularly
- Organize events and activities
- Provide clear guidance to parents on what they can do to support the cause
- Remember that most low income families trust in schools and the system

Noguero (2013) then proceeds to take the discussion further and suggests action steps or practices that will cultivate learning and success. In practice number one: Shift the paradigm, focus on cultivating talent, confidence and character. As the leader (or teacher), he says to address the social and emotional underlying issues of behavior, employ only adults with high moral authority, and utilize consequences that support meaningful learning (restorative justice) (Noguero, 2013). Fiener (2004) also mentions the great need to be of high moral authority.

In practice number two: Monitor learning and intervene early; ensure the use of data, involve parents, and continue to move and interact with student groups. For practice number three: Increase access to personalized learning opportunities and support rigorous courses. This practice focuses on intervention and meeting students where they are rather that expecting them to automatically acquire the information being presented (Nogeuro, 2013).

In practice number four: Build strong relationships between teachers and students to improve behavior and achievement. Noguero gives examples of team building with teachers and students or providing opportunities for young people to participate in service work, such as a countywide caring event. Practice number five, the last practice is simple: We must teach the way students learn, not expect them to learn regardless of how we teach (Noguero, 2013).

The Impact of Poverty

Prior to focusing on the components of literacy and the development of reading, first consider one highly influential factor: poverty, which leads to the lack of access and opportunity that influence student outcomes. While not the sole predictor, parents' education, and therefore, a child's home environment also contribute to a child's development in literacy. "Research consistently demonstrates that the more children know about language and literacy before they arrive at school, the better equipped they are to succeed in reading" (Burns, et al., 1999 p. 19). Lacking the access and an opportunity to attend programs that develop oral language skills, the corner stone to reading, puts students at a disadvantage very early in their educational career.

In one research study published by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), a mother's level of literacy was the most influential factor of her children's academic success. The mother's level of education was more impactful than socio economic status (SES), neighborhood environment or programs attended, like daycare or preschool. The NICHD, therefore, recommends that in order to increase student achievement, schools must be more successful in providing adult literacy education to mothers.

Hart and Risley (2003) discuss families' language and varying use of vocabulary within income groups and levels of education. Of the thirteen families participating in the study who were considered professional, the average score on the given literacy test was forty-one, working class families scored thirty-one and parents on welfare scored fourteen. Children of families in the professional category were exposed to over 300

more words per hour than those living in houses on welfare and parents' vocabulary size was more than twelve hundred words larger as well. The gaps between working class families was smaller, hearing 186 less words per hour and parents' recorded vocabulary knowledge 700 words less than those considered professional in the study. Overall, Hart and Risley (2003) conclude that those children living in a home with educated parents who are considered professional have more word exposure and acquisition than those living in working class and low income homes. Additionally, the variance in parents' scores and word development, as categorized by SES, suggest that SES relates to one's education.

Jensen (2009) writes "one problem created by poverty begets another, which in turn contributes to another, leading to a seemingly endless cascade of deleterious consequences" (p. 7). He goes on to point out children living in poverty face many challenges that affect their ability to develop as learners such as the quality of homes, social, municipal and local services that are all subpar to those students living in middle income families. Specifically, Jensen (2009) writes that students living in low-income neighborhoods have less green space, fewer playgrounds, spend less time outside, have fewer adults to rely on and often find they struggle to survive on a daily basis. In comparison to their middle-income counterparts, students in poverty have fewer books, and the majority of students miss simple parental interactions, like a parent reading to his or her child (Jensen, 2009). "Developing children need reliable caregivers who offer high predictability, or their brains will typically develop adverse adaptive responses" (Jensen, 2009, p.8). Jensen goes on to discuss that children growing up in deprivation or

instability as associated with poverty are exposed to environments that "undermine the development of self and the capacity for self-determination and self-efficacy" (2009, p.8-9).

This research regarding environment coincides with Hart and Risley (2003) who discuss the comparison of affirmative versus negative or prohibitive comments. In their study, they were able to extrapolate specific kinds of language used in the home. Children living in poverty, according to the study, were accumulating five affirmative statements and eleven negative statements per hour as compared to their professional counterparts who were hearing thirty-two affirmatives and five prohibitions were hour (Hart & Risley, 2003). Thus, "the average child in a professional family would have accumulated 560,000 more instances of encouraging feedback" than those living in poverty (Hart & Risley, 2003, p. 117).

While this study is not a focus on policy or solving the issue of poverty, one cannot ignore the glaring impact that poverty plays on educational outcomes of children. "Education has been envisioned as the great equalizer, able to mitigate the effects of poverty on children by equipping them with the knowledge and skills they need to lead successful and productive lives. Unfortunately, this promise has been more myth than reality" (Coley & Baker, 2013, p. 9). Many students do not have the chance to attend stimulating, appropriate educational settings early. As Arne Duncan, United States Secretary of Education, stated in a recent newspaper article, "among 4-year-olds in the United States, fewer than three in ten attend a high-quality preschool program"

(2013), he goes on to discuss the struggle that low-income families have in finding suitable learning environments or programs that are affordable for infants and toddlers.

An Overview of Literacy

In its simplest form, literacy is the ability to read and write. The National Institute for Literacy breaks down this term in three categories: prose literacy defined as the ability to read and comprehend documents with continuous text, such as newspaper articles and instructions; document literacy described as the ability to read and understand documents with non-continuous text, such as job applications, maps, and transportation schedules; and quantitative literacy which is the ability to perform computations, such as reviewing a bill or balancing a checkbook. For the purpose of this research and study, the definition of literacy as adapted from research and the National Reading Panel (NRP) is the ability to read words in isolation and context, read text silently or aloud with comprehension to acquire knowledge, meet grade level standards and develop critical thinking skills.

The International Reading Association (IRA) published a position statement regarding the importance of high quality preschool, stating that "high-quality preschool experiences that successfully foster early language and literacy skills are laying a critical foundation for children's successful future" (IRA, p. 2). The IRA encourages all students to attend preschool, but specifically points out that those students living in poverty with parents who have limited education are the ones that benefit the most from this exposure.

"Today, the achievement gap between the poor and the non-poor is twice as large as the achievement gap between Black and White students" (Coley and Baker, 2013, p.4). This supports Noguera's (2013) stance on the preparation gap. If middle- and high-income families are able to access programs that will provide early literacy skills, such as exposure to books, rhyming, singing and repetition, this widens the gap from those impoverished families that do not have the same capabilities. Furthermore, if low income families are being provided free access to such programs, one must question the quality and validity of these programs when consistently - impoverished families continually make the greatest contribution to illiteracy nationwide as well as play a major factor in the total of struggling readers in our schools.

Preschool experiences help develop key early literacy skills such as oral language development. Oral language development encompasses a variety of aspects of the written word, including speech, phonology, vocabulary, intonation, and sentence structure (Fountas & Pinnell, 2009; Hill & Launder, 2010). Fountas and Pinnell (2009) state "language interactions are the most important characteristic of teaching" (p. 131). Many have regarded oral language as the foundation for beginning reading and for those struggling with reading as well (Fountas & Pinnell, 2009; Hill & Launder, 2010). Kirkland and Patterson (2005) write, "the development of oral language is crucial to a child's literacy development, including listening, speaking, reading and writing" (p. 391).

Below is a visual of components related to reading that will help educators, both principals and teachers, understand all areas of literacy. The Literacy Wheel, as constructed by the consulting company LiteracyHow, displays the key factors that assist

students in developing good reading skills. As supported by research, oral language development, beginning very early in life, is the core. The team from LiteracyHow, compromised of educators and researchers, includes literacy expert Louisa Moats.

Figure 2.1 The Literacy Wheel, retrieved at http://www.literacyhow.com/our-model/our-model/ December 29, 2013.

The issue of struggling readers has received considerable critical attention, thus, many researchers have come to identify key components in fostering literacy in young children. In 2000, Congress tasked the National Reading Panel (NRP) to determine a specific set of instructional practices that would increase literacy in students; this set of practices was to be the baseline for educators. Teacher mastery and administrator awareness of these skills would ensure that students are prepared to launch into reading.

In response, the National Reading Panel (NRP, 2000) identified five strands of

literacy to develop reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and

comprehension. According to Burns, et al., (1999) in the National Research Council

report, integrating key elements in literacy such as phonemic awareness, alphabetic

decoding, comprehension, vocabulary, text processing and writing into daily classroom

instruction is crucial in order to prevent reading difficulties (Foorman & Moats, 2004).

Fountas and Pinnell (2009) emphasize the great need for children to experience

explicit, clear, effective classroom instruction in order to understand letter-sound

relationships; understand the use of visual analysis, word structure, spelling patterns

and word-solving actions; understand how to use knowledge like letters, sounds, and

words and apply to reading texts as well as writing. These researchers support the basics

of the key elements in teaching reading; however, without explicit, clear, and effective

instruction students may not become successful readers.

Phonemic awareness, the foundational skill for understanding word meaning, is

a necessity for student mastery of phonics skills. Undoubtedly, research indicates that

the building blocks for literacy are phonemic awareness and phonics skills. The National

Institute for Literacy defines phonemic awareness as the ability to notice, think about,

and work with the individual sounds in spoken words (Armbuster, Lehr & Osborn, 2000).

Fountas and Pinnell (2009) agree, stating that this term "refers to the ability to identify,

isolate and manipulate individual sounds, or phonemes, in a spoken word" (p.35).

Appendix A features specific skills for teaching phonemic awareness, both instructional

suggestions as well as tasks to enable students to develop early literacy skills for reading (Fountas and Pinnell, 2003).

One fact is certain: "Phonological awareness is critical for learning to read any alphabetic writing system" (Moats, 2009, p.18). Consistent with research, Moats (2009), outlines several arguments in agreement with the importance of phonological skills: in order to use the alphabetic code, students must have phoneme awareness; phoneme awareness predicts later outcomes in reading and spelling; the majority of poor readers struggle with phonological skills, therefore, explicit instruction of phoneme awareness is beneficial for early readers; and phonological awareness affects vocabulary and word acquisition.

Phoneme awareness, according to Moats (2009), "is demonstrated by any *oral language* task that requires attending to, think about, or intentionally manipulating the individual speech sounds in spoken works" (p. 14). Furthermore, to support the understanding and difference between phonemic awareness and phonics, "phoneme and phonological activities can be done in the dark; they do not involve print," whereas phonics does. "Without phoneme awareness, students may be mystified by the print system and how it represents the spoken word" (Moats, 2009, p. 19).

Moats (2009) explains that phonics "is the system of correspondence between phonemes and graphemes [letters and letter combinations], and also the approach to reading and spelling instruction that directly teaches students to use the correspondences to identify unknown words" (p.16). Therefore, phonics builds upon phonemic awareness and enables a child to begin basic reading.

"Phonics instruction teaches children the relationships between the letters (graphemes) of written language and the individual sounds (phonemes) of spoken language. These relationships are referred to using a variety of labels: graphophonemic relationships, letter-sound associations, letter-sound correspondences, sound-symbol correspondences, and sound spellings" (National Reading Panel – Armbuster et al., 2001, p. 12).

When teachers commit to teaching phonemic awareness and building the foundation of letter understanding and sound recognition daily, students are able to apply this knowledge to phonics, thus reading. Many students are learning these awareness skills quite early and a variety of these skills are introduced through the development of language.

> Although younger preschoolers rarely pay attention to the smallest meaningful segments (phonemes) of words, gaining an awareness of these phonemes is a more advanced aspect of phonological awareness that becomes increasingly important as school approaches, because these segments are what letters usually stand for. That's the alphabetic principle. A child who has attained phonemic awareness, for example, understands that there are three phonemes in the spoken word 'mud' (Burns et al., 1999, p. 32).

The National Early Literacy Panel (NELP) released that students who are able to identify letter/sound correspondences and pick out word chunks such as syllables, would benefit from early reading instruction to foster reading (National Early Literacy Panel - Strickland & Shanahan, 2004).

In alignment with the NRP, vocabulary knowledge and background is a vital part of literacy. As students learn to read, word acquisition and familiarity, that is one's vocabulary, play an important role. "Vocabulary refers to the words we must know to

communicate effectively" (Armbruster, Lehr & Osborn, 2001, p. 34). Wasik's (2010) research studies the importance of learning vocabulary, as initiated by Hart and Risley (1995). Research has proven that students living in poverty come to school with a significant deficit in language and familiarity of words, as well as with vocabulary that is delayed (Hart & Risley, 1995; Coley & Baker, 2013; Moats, 2001; Jalongo & Sobolak, 2010), therefore, having adequate and appropriate training for teachers to develop vocabulary is vital (Wasik, 2010). Jalongo and Sobolak claim "all students, regardless of socio-economic status or background, need to make significant gains in receptive and expressive vocabulary at home and at school each year in order to support their growth in literacy" (2010, p. 421).

Weaver (2002) acknowledges that students will struggle with reading when they are unfamiliar with words. She uses a simple example from *Clifford the Red Dog;* explaining that in the story Jaime, the main character, and Clifford go on a trip across a bridge. If students are unfamiliar with taking a trip or crossing a bridge, they will find this story difficult to navigate and therefore, may fail to comprehend simply due to the lack of vocabulary knowledge. Fountas and Pinnell support this idea, stating "knowing the meaning of words, while not the only factor in comprehending a text, is very important" (2009, p.152).

Beck, McKeown and Kucan (2002) discuss vocabulary in three tiers: tier one, two and three. The development of each tier is important for students in order to be successful readers. While a mere five hundred words make up ninety percent of the texts met through the ninth grade (Pikulski & Templeton, 2004), fostering understanding

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of tier two words builds background knowledge and familiarity that will expand a student's ability to thrive later in school (Fountas & Pinnell, 2009). Tier two words are those words that mature language readers often use and become high frequency for this level of language (Beck et al., 2002), thus making comprehension more viable.

Jalongo and Sobolak's research focuses on strategies of early childhood vocabulary development, but this research also sheds light on a key finding; research indicates "that young children need to be actively engaged in vocabulary development if they are to remember new words and begin to grasp the multiple nuanced meaning of words" (2010, p. 421). This engagement is vitally important, particularly for those students that are arriving to school with deficient, lacking vocabularies and exposure to language. Research trends link a child's vocabulary to gains in reading and comprehension, consequently, early childhood and preschool teachers have a special obligation to foster vocabulary acquisition (Jalongo & Sobolak, 2010).

The last two stems of literacy as suggested by the NRP are fluency and comprehension. Researchers debate the direct relationship between fluency and comprehension though studies have proven to both link and negate its partnership. The purpose of this study is not to come to a definitive conclusion about these components, but rather, to discuss them in relation to one another as they relate to developing literacy skills for successful reading in students.

In one study presented by Ardoin, et al., (2013), the researchers compared reading fluency outcomes to the Iowa Basic Skills comprehension portion for first and second graders. This research supports that of others' and indicates a strong correlation

between high reading fluency and comprehension data collected, thus concluding that reading fluency is an indicator for comprehension. Rasinski (2003) writes,

> while many readers can decode words accurately they may not be fluent or, as some reading scholars have termed, automatic in their word recognition. These readers tend to expend a lot of mental energy on figuring out the pronunciation of unknown words, energy that takes away from the more important task of getting to the test's overall meaning: comprehension. Thus, the lack of fluency often results in poor comprehension (p. 26).

In 2000, the National Reading Panel included fluency, a new area in relative terms of education, as one of the five pillars of literacy instruction—though Samuels discussed fluency as early as the 1970s. As defined by the NRP, fluency is the accurate, rapid and expressive reading of literature (2000). Schreiber (1991) describes fluent reading to be natural and expressive "with syntactically appropriated pauses, intonation contours, and phrase-final lengthenings" (p. 161). Rasinski (2003) refers to reading fluently as a missed ingredient for several reading programs; he goes on to define fluency as "the ability of readers to read quickly, effortlessly, and efficiently with good, meaningful expression" (2003, p. 26). Fountas and Pinnell (2009) refer to fluency in oral reading as "the way an oral reading sounds, including phrasing, intonation, pausing, stress, rate, and integration of the first five factors" (p. 544).

Reading fluently is the ability to recognize words automatically, thus, encouraging comprehension of the text. When a reader is unable to read fluently, he or she may stumble upon words, find difficulties in sounding out words, confront confusing word usage, and as a result, fluency is lost; research suggests that comprehension is at stake as well.

Utilizing curriculum-based measures in reading (R-CBM's) is often the way that fluency is calculated. Deno (1985) created an assessment largely based on "Perfetti's (1985) verbal efficiency theory and the desire to develop a simple and quick assessment procedure to monitor student progress" (Ardoin, S., Eckert, T., Christ, T., White, M., Morena, L. S., January, S., & Hine, J., 2013, p. 244). During this quick, one-minute assessment, students read grade level materials in order to measure their words read correctly. The results of the assessment can be compared to other students' data nationally to provide insight to teachers because research suggests that those students who are able to read smoothly, are able to comprehend as well. However, Fountas and Pinnell (2006) warn teachers to understand that fluency, while assessed here as speed, encompasses other facets as well. They write, "fluency is often described as speed or 'expression,' but it is much more" (Fountas & Pinnell, 2006, p.49).

Rasinski (2003) suggests four ways that teachers are able to build fluency in readers. First, a teacher must model good oral reading practices for students, which means that regardless of age, students need to hear engaging read alouds. Second, a teacher should provide oral support for readers through types of reading such as choral reading, paired reading or recording students reading for teaching purposes. Rasinski notes that when a reader hears and reads texts fluently, his or her reading fluency and comprehension increase (2003). Practice encourages improvement in all areas of life, including reading; therefore, a third strategy to build fluency is offering students multiple opportunities of practice. Lastly mentioned is encouraging fluency through proper phrasing. "Being able to decode automatically, fluent readers chunk or phrase

text into syntactically appropriate units" (Rasinski, 2003, p. 32), thus building comprehension (Rasinski, Yildirim & Nageldinger, 2011).

Wide reading and repeated reading are also two ways that encourage fluency (Rasinski, 2012; Ari, 2011). Wide reading refers to the introduction of a strategy followed by varying textual experiences to support the development of the strategy (Rasinski, 2012). Repeated reading is self-explanatory and simple, giving students multiple opportunities to read the same materials for broader understanding; many believe this is deeply related to comprehension (Berg & Lyle, 2012; Nichols, Rupley & Rasinski, 2009).

"Using their experiences and knowledge of the world, their knowledge of vocabulary and language structure, and their knowledge of reading strategies (or plans), good readers make sense of the text and know how to get the most out of it" (Armbruster, Lehr & Osborn, 2001, p. 48); in short, a student is able to understand or comprehend what is read. In McCardle's, et al., (2001) study, comprehension comes from a joint understanding of vocabulary, sentence structure, background knowledge, literacy conventions and verbal reasoning.

Comprehension, articulates Fountas and Pinnell (2006), "is the vital, central core of the broader and more complex ability to reason" (p. 4). The researchers continue stating:

> comprehension is actively making meaning using this kind of in-the-head problem solving. All the complex operations of the brain before, during, and after reading a text-cognitive, linguistic, sensory-motor, emotional, artistic, and creative-are operating as readers process texts (Fountas & Pinnell, 2006, p.4).

Comprehension, therefore, is not a simple term, but a compilation of skills that engages the individual in a text; like fluency, this engagement with a text varies in the readers' background knowledge, readers' ability to connect with the text and genre of the texts.

Once a student has developed the foundation for learning to read, the teacher must focus on fostering habits and skills that make students 'good readers,' ones that are able to interact with and comprehend the texts read. According to Burns, et al., (1999), three main accomplishments characterize good readers:

- understanding the alphabetic system of English to identify printed words
- having and using background knowledge and strategies to obtain meaning from print
- reading fluently.

Literacy experts, Fountas and Pinnell (2009), break down into very simple terms what children need to acquire skills that will help them become good readers who can grasp the meaning of the text; those children who find literacy difficult will need talk, texts and teaching. Within each of these simple requirements, is a description. In "talk," children need opportunity to engage in conversation that will expand their language skills, engage in conversation about texts they are reading or have read, tell stories related to their reading, and listen and respond to language.

In "texts," Fountas and Pinnell (2009) note that students need experiences in reading, hearing, and responding paired with talking about the texts that they engage. Students need to **read and talk** about a large number of texts read independently, texts they can read with fluency and comprehension, texts that interest them, texts of varying genre, texts that are supported by the teacher and texts that provide a basis for

discussion and writing. Students need to **hear and talk** about texts that are interesting

and engaging; age and grade-appropriate; texts of different genres; texts that offer

expanded vocabulary, language and content knowledge; texts that support discussion

and writing, as well as texts that will assist the student in helping him or her in writing.

Children also need to **respond and talk** in meaningful ways such as talking about reading

with their teacher and peers, engaging in writing about a variety of genres, and drawing

about their reading. These habits, as presented by Fountas and PInnell (2009), increase

students' ability to comprehend the texts they engage.

Foorman and Torgeson (2001) write, "the components of effective reading

instruction are the same whether the focus is prevention or intervention: phonemic

awareness and phonemic decoding skills, fluency in word recognition and text

processing, construction of meaning, vocabulary, spelling and writing" (p. 203). Foorman

and Torgeson (2001) argue that these instructional approaches never change, but the

intensity which a child may need instruction does. These researchers found through

their study that students placed in small groups and exposed to more one-to-one

experiences in teaching had a faster growth rate than other students receiving typical

instruction in a classroom setting. This is reflective of the philosophy of the Primary

Grades Academy utilized in the study.

Researchers McCardle, Scarborough & Catts (2001), clearly state that children do

not learn to read or obtain literacy skills upon arriving to school, rather, Burns, et al.

(1999; Missall, et al., 2007) claim literacy begins at a very young age, as early as infancy.

Literacy development such as rhyming, singing, alliteration, oral language development

including expressive and receptive language skills as well as early writing and vocabulary are some of the early literacy experiences that vary from child to child but play a significant factor in literacy development; all of these skills are first established at home, prior to entering school (Missall et al, 2007; McCardle et al., 2001; Dickinson & McCabe, 2001). After much research, these authors pose the idea of predicting literacy success at a very early age, as early as two years old. Since research explicitly tells us that children with weaker verbal and literacy abilities are less prepared to learn to read, researchers are wondering, by identifying at-risk children at an earlier age, might we be able to level the playing field in order for them to obtain literacy readiness skills; thus, making learning to read easier (Torgeson, 2001; Coley & Baker, 2013; Nogeruo,2013).

Missall et al. (2007) claim that preschool Early Literacy Individual Growth and Development Indicators (EL-IGDI's) are high predictors of oral reading fluency both at the end of kindergarten and first grade. The EL-IGDI's test young students in early literacy indicators, including picture naming, rhyming and alliteration, and are administered individually three times a year, typically fall, winter and spring (Missal et al., 2007).

Conclusion

Through the literacy review, one can comprehend the importance of literacy understanding at the elementary leadership level in order to advance and prepare students for the demands of further education and success. Without a solid foundation of literacy practice, components and perhaps most importantly, a grasp of supervising these tasks, principals will fail at developing students who are prepared for the rigorous

learning to come. Therefore, examining the PADEPP evaluation tool, as it gauges these

principles, is imperative to improve the leadership practices of educators.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Dr. Nancy McGinley, a Southeastern superintendent, recently wrote that literacy was at the root of raising student achievement (Superintendent's Letter, Sept 6, 2013). Children's author and researcher, Denise von Stockar, discusses at length that learning to read begins as a baby, "reading" a mother's face for positive emotions, "reading" how to listen and communicate, "reading" how to interact with peers and family. The point she makes is that literacy skills are the key component to development. With such emphasis on literacy and its influence on student success, this research is a study of school leadership (i.e., the principal) and his or her effect on literacy outcomes within individual school settings.

As previously outlined, the purpose of this research is to examine if a relationship exists between effective leadership evaluation and literacy outcomes; based on McEwan and McEwan (2003), this approach will assist the researcher in making recommendations to strengthen leadership skills or characteristics that will increase literacy. In this correlation study, three important pieces of information may emerge: establishing important relationships between leadership skills and literacy outcomes, guiding future experimental studies and identifying nearly causal relationships (Cook & Cook, 2008)

The quantitative study will examine how leadership relates to literacy outcomes. The following sections provide details regarding the questions, research design, population and sample, data collection, and summary to conclude.

Research Questions

The focus question leading the research is: *To what extent do leadership practices, as measured by a state adopted instrument, relate to the success of literacy intervention programs at an individual school setting?*

The question seeks to reveal a relationship between leadership and literacy outcomes.

Research Design

Utilizing nonexperimental quantitative data, the researcher conducted a correlation study using descriptive statistics in order to determine to what extent, if any, leadership has on literacy outcomes within a school setting. "Correlational research seeks to identify relationships that exist among variables and describe them in relation to their direction (positive or negative) and their strength without introducing an intervention to change an outcome variable" (Cook & Cook, 2008, p. 101). This research is nonexperimental, using data that already exist in a correlation analysis. "Nonexperimental quantitative research is an important area of research for educators because there are so many important but nonmanipulable independent variables needing further study in the field of education" (Burke, 2001, p. 3).

The focus question of the study speaks to the relationship among leadership and success of literacy intervention programs. Though the research is isolating PADEPP as a

variable for leadership, the correlation results include leadership with three variables: PADEPP score, school climate (parent and teacher), and report card rating. These three variables were presented within the study because they are the indicators that current school districts utilize in order to make determinations of principal quality and effectiveness, though the question of the research zeros in on PADEPP.

For the purpose of this study, the success rate of the program is the percentage of students that made expected growth gains per PMAP, a national assessment tool used by the school district that uses parameters based on the results thousands of students. Considering this, the goal is to explore how the set of leadership variables relates to or influences in any way literacy outcomes of students.

The descriptive variables used are as follows: PADEPP score, school climate (parent and teacher), and report card rating. There are two subcategories within climate, a teacher and parent section from the state report card. In order to organize and understand the data, means and standard deviations were provided for the continuous variables, and a frequency table is provided for the categorical (ordinal) variable, PADEPP. In addition, means and standard deviations of the continuous variables are considered for each level of PADEPP. Tables outlining this information follow in Chapter Four.

Because the district under study implements a principal evaluation model that is multi-faceted, using other indicators in conjunction with PADEPP, correlation analysis was performed to determine a relationship between literacy outcomes and leadership as measured by the descriptive statistic. Correlation analysis is used to describe the

direction and strength of the linear relationship between variables. In a correlation

analysis, direction can be either positive or negative. A positive correlation, for example,

would result if PADEPP score was to increase and literacy scores increase also; whereas,

a negative relationship would result from one variable increasing, such as climate with

literacy decreasing. As cited by Cook and Cook, "strength is the consistency with which

the variables correspond with one another" (Cook & Cook, 2008, p. 101).

Two correlation coefficients were calculated: Pearson's correlation and

Spearman's rho correlation. Pearson's correlation coefficient describes the direction and

strength of the linear relationship between two continuous variables while Spearman's

rho correlation coefficient can be used to determine if there is a relationship between

ordinal variables or between a continuous variable and ordinal variable.

In order to rule out that the leadership variables were highly correlated, thus

eliminating the need for one, multiple regression analysis was considered. Multiple

regression is a technique used to examine the relationship between one dependent

variable and a collection of independent variables. Unlike correlation, multiple

regression allows you to examine the interrelationship among the collection of

leadership variables. This technique indicates how well a set of independent variables is

able to predict a specific outcome (i.e., the technique examines the model as a whole),

and it will also provide information about the relative effect of each of the independent

variables in the model.

Population and Sample

The researcher utilized a Southeastern school district that encompasses forty-five elementary schools that are extremely diverse, ranging from very rural to inner-city populations. Within this school district there are over one thousand square miles, serving approximately forty thousand students.

Among the schools considered, twenty-six are categorized as Title I schools who receive additional funds due to a high poverty rate among students. This is 57.8% of the schools in the study with a high enough poverty rate to qualify for federal assistance or funding. Of the identified Title I schools, six were 2013-14 Title I Reward Schools by South Carolina's ESEA Federal Accountability System. Reward Schools for Performance are the highest performing Title I schools in a given year and meet the following criteria: have attained an "A" or "B" in the two most recent school years, have a free/reduced lunch count that is greater than 50 percent, do not have significant achievement gaps, and have at least one tested grade on state assessments.

The Primary Grades Academy (PGA), the literacy intervention program, has been implemented for three years and every school within the district follows the same protocol for the program.

Data Collection

As cited in the University of South Carolina IRB materials, Exempt Research (45 CFR 46.101(b)), this study falls within the confines of exemption from the federal regulations for the use of human subjects. There was no direct contact with human participants within the research of this study. Per the South Carolina IRB materials, "research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents…if these sources

are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects" may be exempt from the IRB review process.

Following protocol from the district studied, a letter was submitted to the school district on September 21, 2013 requesting approval of research, summary of intent and data from the Primary Grades Academy for the 2013 school year. In addition, a summary and letter of support from the University of South Carolina accompanied the submission. This information is located in Appendix D. A letter of approval was received from the Director of Accountability and Outcomes on October 1, 2013; see Appendix E.

The data from the Primary Grades Academy was supplied by the school district participating in the study. Other data points considered, such as school report card information and school climate are public knowledge and may be accessed through the South Carolina Department of Education website. The district PADEPP information was also collected through the participating school district.

Summary

In Chapter Three of this research paper, the methodology and associated procedures used to complete the analysis are discussed. This chapter included discussions of research questions, research design, population and sample, and data collection. The research method chosen for the given data was the most effective and useful in order provide insights for leaders who would like to increase literacy outcomes. The goal of the research is to contribute to the educational leadership community in a

positive and unique way by giving guidance on leadership practices to increase student achievement.

Chapter Four will provide the results for the methodology discussed. The reader will be able to process the data through data tables, charts and graphs, and find an explanation of the results to accompany this information.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

The purpose of this study is to examine effective leadership practices, measured by a state adopted evaluation tool, and their relationship to the outcomes of student performance within a literacy intervention program. By increasing the success of reading in students, schools will in turn, prepare more students for the rigorous learning, reading and analyzing required to be successful in the future, but as researchers indicate, this can only be successful in conjunction with strong leadership practices. Thus, the analysis of leadership practices measured by PADEPP related to expected literacy gains on PMAP.

By identifying the key leadership factors and practices that influence successful literacy programs, administrators will be able to focus their efforts in these areas as literacy continues to make its way to the forefront of educational discussions. As a result, administrators will become better prepared for literacy leadership at the school level.

Research Question

The focus question leading the research is: *To what extent do leadership practices, as measured by a state adopted instrument, relate to the success of literacy intervention programs at an individual school setting?*

This research will promote successful practices for leaders that have a need to improve the overall literacy achievement for students, specifically those that are in need of assistance and at-risk of failing.

Prior to addressing the research question, the data was organized by descriptive statistics under consideration, though the focus is PADEPP. The following, Table 4.1, displays means and standard deviations for the continuous variables discussed in the study. The number of data in each category varies due to the failure of results or available information, as with climate results from teachers. The district reports that this number is significantly lower due to the roll out of another survey administrated by the district being considered for the study. Teachers were unaware and confused about completing both surveys; therefore, several schools are missing this school report card data.

Table 4.1 Means & Standard Deviations of Descriptive Statistics under Study

Descriptive Statistic	N	μ	σ
Percent of students that made expected growth PMAP	45	72.744	23.352
Climate-Parents	40	87.845	9.293
Climate-Teachers	36*	88.003	13.157
School Report Card Rating	44	3.107	0.607

Table 4.2, a frequency table for the ordinal categorical variable, PADEPP, reveals the number of evaluations for each score of the principal evaluation system in the district studied. In the district of PADEPP ratings, the majority of individuals are within the exemplary range totaling 64.4%, while there are thirteen rated for proficient totaling

28.9%. Uniquely, only one rating of needs improvement among the forty-five indicates

that a single individual is not meeting the district requirements.

Table 4.2 Frequency Table for Categorical Variable, PADEPP for school district under study

PADEPP Rating	Frequency	Percent
Needs Improvement	1	2.2
Proficient	13	28.9
Exemplary	29	64.4
Missing	2	4.4

N=45

For the following analysis, three tables; Tables 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6; have been

submitted at the end of the discussion for easier comparison. Among the evaluation

results, means and standard deviations of the continuous variables are provided for

each level of PADEPP. In Table 4.4, with only one indicator, note the high percentage of

parents' satisfaction with the school. At one hundred percent of respondents agreeing

with the habits of the school leader, it is interesting to see the PADEPP score of needs

improvement. This would suggest that parent satisfaction does not relate to one's

PADEPP rating, at least for this individual school.

Table 4.5 and Table 4.6 display means and standard deviations for PADEPP

results for proficient and exemplary scores in the district studied of the forty-five

schools. Take note of the data presented within these charts as compared to Table 4.4.

With only one rating of needs improvement within the elementary schools

studied, this individual school possesses the highest rating for climate from parents with

one hundred percent, in comparison to the proficient and exemplary counterparts at

84% for proficient principals and 88% for exemplary principals. More alarming is that

the needs improvement category also has the highest percentage of students that made expected growth on PMAP with 83.3%. Those principals rated proficient had 75.09% of students meetings the PMAP expected gains, while the exemplary school leaders have 72.78% of students making the expected gains on PMAP. This data would suggest then that as a principal is more successful on the PADEPP evaluation, the less likely the students are to make gains as expected on PMAP assessments.

Given this, it raises the question of what literacy components, if any, are evaluated within PADEPP? Additionally, does literacy success become less important for some reason at a school where the principal is considered "exemplary;" if so, why?

School report card information and climate results are both included in the tables because the district studied uses multiple factors for evaluation, not solely PADEPP. The principals who earned exemplary PADEPP ratings also had the highest school report card rating average of 3.303, considered Good on the absolute rating index (Table 4.3). However, the proficient principals' school report card rating of 2.74 is Below Average and the needs improvement principal among the group falls into the Average rating for school report card.

Table 4.3 Index Values for Absolute Rating (2009-2013)

Rating	Interval
Excellent	3.40 or above
Good	3.18 to 3.39
Average	2.65 to 3.17
Below Average	2.32 to 2.64
At Risk	2.31 or below

Table 4.4 Means & Standard Deviations within PADEPP rating of Needs Improvement

Descriptive Statistic	μ	σ
Percent of students that made expected growth	83.3	NA
Climate-Parents	100	NA
Climate-Teachers	NA	NA
School Report Card Rating	3.130	NA

N=1

Table 4.5 Means & Standard Deviations within PADEPP rating of Proficient

Descriptive Statistic	μ	σ
Percent of students that made expected growth	75.092	15.298
Climate-Parents*	84.040	11.222
Climate-Teachers**	77.875	15.701
School Report Card Rating	2.742	0.546

*In the sample of 13 proficient scores, three are missing parent survey results for climate.
**In the sample of 13 proficient scores, one is missing teacher survey results for climate.

Table 4.6 Means & Standard Deviations within PADEPP rating of Exemplary

Descriptive Statistic	μ	σ
Percent of students that made expected growth	72.783	25.999
Climate-Parents*	88.967	8.343
Climate-Teachers**	93.735	7.980
School Report Card Rating	3.303	0.583

*In the sample of 29 proficient scores, two are missing parent survey results for climate.
**In the sample of 29 proficient scores, six are missing teacher survey results for climate.

While focusing on leadership as measured by PADEPP, school report card and climate results were also tested. To examine the relationship of variable at a time, correlation analysis was performed to determine a relationship between literacy outcomes and leadership as measured by the descriptive statistics which are the independent variables. Correlation analysis is used to describe the direction and strength of the linear relationship between variables. In a correlation analysis, direction can be either positive or negative. Also under consideration is the significance of the relationship, indicated by the p-value. For the purpose of this study, a general level of significance has been established at the decisive level of *p<0.05* or less.

Two correlation coefficients were calculated: Pearson's correlation and Spearman's rho correlation. Pearson's correlation coefficient describes the direction and strength of the linear relationship between two continuous variables while Spearman's rho correlation coefficient can be used to determine if there is a relationship between ordinal variables or between a continuous variable and ordinal variable.

In Table 4.7, the correlation coefficient (*r*) is located in the first row, while the p-value (*p*) of the hypothesis test assessing whether the correlation is significantly different from zero is given in the second row for each variable listed. For example, the correlation between literacy score (indicated by the percent of students that made expected growth on PMAP) and parent rating of school climate is -0.240. This value, *r*= -0.240, indicates that there is a negative relationship between the percent of students that made expected PMAP growth and parent rating of school climate. The *p*=0.135 suggests that this relationship is not significant when comparing the p-value to a 0.05

level of significance. Continuing to examine the relationship between literacy score and other variables of study, three of the five relationships are negative while only one of the variables, school report card rating, indicates a positive relationship.

School report card rating indicates a positive relationship to literacy, 0.077, but the p=0.621 suggests that the relationship is not significant when comparing the p-value to the decisive 0.05 level of significance. Lastly, PADEPP's relationship, as shown through Spearman's rho, also suggests a small positive relationship (r=.032), however again, the p=0.837 suggests this relationship is not significant either. Overall, none of the independent variables suggest a significant relationship to expected MAP growth.

Moreover, climate-teachers and climate-parents are positively related with a correlation of 0.412 and a p-value of 0.019. In comparison to the 0.05 level of significance as established by the study, this too suggests a significant correlation. Another strong relationship as suggested by the matrix, school report card rating and climate-teachers, with an r=0.561 and a p-value of 0.000; this implies a moderate but strong relationship when compared to the 0.05 level of significance. School report card rating is also moderately correlated to climate-parents; a correlation of 0.479 indicates a positive relationship and the p-value of 0.002 indicates significance between these two variables.

Utilizing Spearman's rho when considering PADEPP, all correlations are positive, though only three suggest significance. The highest correlation of 0.553 with school report card and a p-value of 0.001 suggest that these two variables are strongly related when considering the 0.05 level of significance. Also suggesting a strong relationship are

school report card rating and PADEPP (r=.419, p=.006). This data suggests that the

higher the PADEPP rating, the higher the school report card rating.

For the following *Table 4.7 Pearson's Correlation Matrix,* each variable within the

matrix has been identified by a number as follows:

1) Percent of students that made expected growth on PMAP
2) Climate-Parents
3) Climate-Teachers
4) School report card rating

In Table 4.8 of the correlation matrix, the PADEPP correlations are from running

Spearman's rho analysis because PADEPP is an ordinal variable.

Table 4.7 Pearson's Correlation Matrix

	1	2	3	4
Percent of students that made expected growth on MAP (1)				
Climate-Parents (3)	-.240 .135			
Climate-Teachers (4)	-.023 .893	.412* .019		
School Report Card Rating (5)	.077 .621	.479** .002	.561** .000	
***PADEPP	.032 .837	.078 .640	.553** .001	.419** .006

***PADEPP values are Spearman's Correlation.
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

In order to assess the independent variables collectively, the researcher used

multiple regression analysis. Multiple regression analysis assists the researcher in

looking at independent variables as a collection and how they affect the outcome.

Unlike correlation, multiple regression analysis allows you to examine the

interrelationship among the collection of leadership variables. This technique indicates

how well a set of independent variables is able to predict a specific outcome and it will

also provide information about the relative effect of each of the independent variables

in the model.

As a part of multiple regression analysis, the R-squared (r^2) value is calculated

and is of particular interest as it indicates the measure of model fit. The measure of

model fit will indicate whether the five independent variables are good predictors of

literacy outcomes within individual school settings. In other words, r^2 indicates the

proportion of variation in literacy score that is explained by its relationship with the

other variables in the model. The r^2=.075 suggests that 7.5% of variation within literacy

scores can be explained by the model of using PADEPP, climate scores and report card

rating to predict literacy outcomes.

The second portion of regression analysis assesses the model as a whole using

analysis of variance (ANOVA) testing. The ANOVA test considers the independent

variables collectively and how together they affect literacy outcomes. Displayed in Table

4.8, the ANOVA table reveals a p-value (p) of 0.719. A p=.719 suggests that statistically,

the overall model predicting literacy score from PADEPP, climate scores and report card

rating is not significant.

Table 4.8 ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean square	F	p
Regression	1272.550	4	318.137	.524	.719
Residual	15790.770	26	607.337		
Total	17063.319	30			

The last table as part of the regression analysis evaluates each of the independent variables in the model in order to assess what each variable contributes to the prediction of literacy scores. In this statistical window, one can view the effect of each independent variable while still taking into consideration the other independent variables simultaneously. The p-values of all the independent variables are greater than the decisive 0.05 level of significance set for the study; therefore, the data analysis suggests that none of the variables have statistically significant effects on literacy scores.

Table 4.9 Multiple Regression Analysis

Variable	*B*	*SE B*	*β*	*t*	*p*
Constant	127.834	46.996		2.720	.011
PADEPP Rating	-.303	11.386	-.006	-.027	.979
Climate-Parents	-.783	.592	-.306	-1.322	.198
Climate-Teachers	-.084	.499	-.040	-.169	.867
School Report Card Rating	6.909	9.014	.179	.766	.450

Dependent Variable: Percent of students that made expected PMAP growth

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATION

Introduction

In the following, Chapter Five begins with the restatement of the purpose of the study, as well as the research question that led the investigation. The summary of the findings are included, though just a recap of important data results. The chapter continues with implications and recommendations for future research and finally a conclusion.

The purpose of this study was to examine a state adopted evaluation tool of leadership and investigate the results as they relate to literacy as outlined by one school district. This study was designed to focus on the characteristics of principals and principal practices as outlined by the evaluation tool and how these specified characteristics and practices relate to literacy outcomes.

With literacy in the forefront of educational policy, research focus and millions of dollars being allocated for its development, principals need to have a set of skills that will enhance literacy within school settings. Thus, the examination of the evaluation tool as it relates to literacy within this study is valuable information. It is hopeful that leaders will be more knowledgeable about leadership behaviors or qualities, which they can more readily concentrate on so that they will strengthen their leadership overall.

The focus question leading the research is: *To what extent do leadership practices, as measured by a state adopted instrument, relate to the success of literacy intervention programs at an individual school setting?*

The research was completed by utilizing a correlation analysis; identifying key leadership indicators from varying data points used by the state of South Carolina and investigating if there is a relationship between leadership, as portrayed through these data, and literacy outcomes (as defined by PMAP growth).

Two correlation coefficients were calculated: Pearson's correlation and Spearman's rho correlation. Pearson's correlation coefficient describes the direction and strength of the linear relationship between two continuous variables while Spearman's rho correlation coefficient can be used to determine if there is a relationship between ordinal variables or between a continuous variable and ordinal variable.

The findings from the correlation analysis were surprising in the fact that the leadership qualities, as measured within the study, fail to correlate significantly to student achievement, in this case, PMAP outcomes. While the focus of the study is the relationship that PADEPP evaluations have to literacy growth on PMAP, climate results and school report ratings were included as indicators of successful leadership as these are data points for which many leaders are held accountable.

School report card rating indicates a positive relationship to literacy, 0.077, but the *p*=0.621 suggests that the relationship is not significant when comparing the p-value to the decisive 0.05 level of significance. PADEPP's relationship, as shown through Spearman's rho, also suggests a small positive relationship (*r*=.032), however again, the

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p=0.837 suggests this relationship is not significant either. Overall, none of the

independent variables related to leadership suggest a significant relationship to

expected PMAP growth. In other words, the PADEPP evaluation tool, currently used as

a way to assess leaders, does not suggest any relationship, as indicated by the

correlation, to literacy growth and achievement.

Implications

As the data portrays, the evaluation tool used within the state of South Carolina

suggests no relationship to literacy outcomes as defined in the study. Further, using

other variables related to accountability by the district, none of the independent

variables related to leadership suggest a significant relationship to expected PMAP

growth either.

Therefore, if literacy is as important as is being presented in the present policy

and research, questions surrounding the instrument emerge, as well as its

implementation and creation. In addition, this raises questions in relation to the

indicators available to assess leadership. Referring back to the old adage, "what gets

checked, gets done;" what are supervisors checking for when assessing leadership if,

according to this study, the indicators are not related to student achievement? Is there

something more important that student growth and learning?

Further, as pointed out in Chapter Four, the data suggests that the lower the

PADEPP rating, the higher the literacy outcomes. Inversely then, the better a principal

scores on the PADEPP evaluation, the worse the students are performing in PMAP

growth. Given this, it raises the question of what literacy components, if any, are

evaluated within PADEPP? Additionally, does literacy success become less important for some reason at a school where the principal is considered "exemplary;" if so, why?

How are the PADEPP categories weighed within each district or is it standard; how consistent are the supervisors in completing these evaluation tools? What did the one principal do within the school district studied that would result in a Needs Improvement rating, yet one hundred percent of the parents are satisfied with the climate and the highest percentage of students made PMAP growth with 83.3% of students? Why are successful, exemplary, principals' literacy data displaying a negative trend?

As a member of the principal group within the study, not all principals are equipped with leading a school to improve literacy. While this is an observation, it is worthy to note that the school district has made significant efforts in training and professional development for principals that do not have the background of literacy, who may be out of their comfort zone with instructional practices regarding literacy, especially in terms of grade level configuration and knowledge base, or those that simply need the added support. Additionally, it would be my hypothesis that principals do not engage in the daily activities that support literacy advancement within the school district.

Many principals fail to hold key players accountable, such as the Master Reading Teacher, who charges the intervention processes within the program when students are not been seen regularly, data is not current or absences are an issue. Principals who prioritize literacy seek further professional development for himself or herself, as

Reeves (2008) points outs the responsibility of the leader to have sufficient literacy knowledge, specifically at the elementary school level of leadership. As an instructional literacy leader, principals should guide teachers through data analysis, ensuring that students are being provided with appropriate time and research based interventions that will assist students in making gains. Communication is a key factor with prioritizing literacy; staff members should be able to let others know that literacy is the focus within the school and district.

One of the most difficult roles that a principal plays is checking and following through; being the principal is simply having a larger classroom with more students. Principals need to know that once a priority is set, like literacy instruction, it is the principal's responsibility to ensure that the teachers and staff members who support this initiative are engaging in proper instructional techniques, keeping data records and planning accordingly.

One thoughtful way to extrapolate the shortcomings and strengths of leaders is to look into the details of the evaluation, i.e. the individual categories and their indicators. Delving into the individual categories may assist in assessing the specifics regarding literacy.

In Table 5.1, using the PADEPP Data System results from 2010-11, is a breakdown of categories within the PADEPP instrument for the pilot schools that were using the PADEPP Data System. This same data and information was requested from the school district under study for the 2013 year as all school districts are now required to utilize this system, however, the individual who leads PADEPP was not familiar with this

data management tool as responded via email. On the contrary, when requested

through the state, The Office of Principal Evaluation verified that the district under study

did in fact have this data for the year studied, 2013, but could not release it directly to

the researcher. This is red flag regarding the PADEPP implementation within the school

district.

Having access to this specific data requested perhaps would have presented a

clearer picture as to the relationship of PADEPP and literacy growth as measured by

PMAP. It is fair to assume that the intent of an evaluation tool is not to exclude

something as important as literacy. What's more, the domain of instructional leadership

does in fact encompass characteristics that would support literacy. The standard itself

speaks to the importance of the school principal as the lead teacher.

Standard 2: Instructional Leadership - A school principal is an educational leader

who fosters the success of all students by leading the development and alignment of the

organizational, instructional, and assessment strategies that enhance teaching and

learning.

Further, the indicators as prescribed by the state generally support the day-to-

day activities that would improve literacy within a school setting. Instructional

leadership, per the evaluation tool, incorporates communicating high standards for

curriculum and instructional quality for student achievement, having a proficiency in

analyzing data and implementing changed based upon the analysis, observes staff

and/or assists in the implementation of effective teaching and assessment strategies to

promote student learning, and monitors effective instructional programs. In short, these

duties, many previously mentioned, portray a leader that in fact supports literacy.

Therefore, perhaps the data would suggest there is a relationship, given the appropriate

extrapolated information.

The data in Table 5.1 provides further insight into the day-to-day tasks

completed by the principal that will give leaders more direct, specific feedback in

improving literacy leadership skills. For example, considering instructional leadership,

there are twenty-seven of the 475, equating to 5.6% of principals within the 2010-11

pilot program needing assistance in instructional leadership. This is the weakest area

indicated and supports the research that many principals struggle in providing

instructional support to the school. Given this, it would behoove the state to strengthen

its administration in instructional background and practices in order to support teachers

and growth of students.

Further, in comparing this data to the school district under study, there is twice

as many needs improvement within the pilot schools as the district. While the data for

the school district provided does not have the details for the each category, there was

only one, 2.2%, of the principals who received a needs improvement rating.

Table 5.1 South Carolina PADEPP Results

PADEPP Category	E	P	NI	T
Vision	295	168	13	476
Instructional Leadership	249	199	27	475
Effective Management	261	198	16	475
Climate	263	199	13	475
Sch. /Com. Relationship	268	201	6	475
Ethical Behavior	341	132	2	475
Intrapersonal Skills	280	181	15	476
Staff Development	258	211	8	477
Professional Development	278	196	2	476

E = exemplary, P= proficient, NI=needs improvement, T=total reported

With this in mind, supervisors should be cognizant of their subordinates strengthens and weaknesses, they should have a personal connection to each principal running a school to know their challenges and be involved when problems arise. Failing to practice these tasks, a supervisor would fall short of knowing the leader and their abilities; therefore, unable to complete the evaluation instruments provided efficiently and appropriately.

Principal leadership programs should be considered among the discussion. Many programs lack the thorough training in data analysis and leading change through intervention or instruction. Universities and colleges should realize the importance of leading change through interventions and data analysis, in turn; consider field experiences or adding course work to benefit future principals.

Further, because most leadership programs do not prepare leaders for this type of work, leaders should take on an ethical responsibility in understanding literacy components, instruction and intervention. Torgeson (2005) writes, "the principal plays a key role in helping to organize the school to provide intensive intervention for students

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who needs them" (p. 1-2). For that reason, principals need professional development in understanding literacy and data analysis; leaders should take action in acquiring this knowledge.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study presented a correlation analysis of leadership qualities as observed by South Carolina principal assessments or indicators and expected literacy growth on PMAP for first grade students. The goal of the study was to examine those leadership characteristics as evaluated on the state evaluation tool that would support higher literacy achievement. The following are recommendations for further research that may broaden the depth of knowledge for school leaders:

1) Continuing to use the variables in this study, one recommendation would encompass extrapolating data specifically from the PADEPP evaluation, as displayed above in Table 5.1. Literature clearly suggested that communication, relationships, knowledge base and an ethical moral compass were must haves for successful leadership practice. In regards to the PADEPP instrument and the nine categories, there are specific indicators on the instrument that involve these attributes, therefore, further research might include disaggregating the categories of PADEPP to research their alignment or relationship with literacy outcomes.

2) Consider a survey component for teachers, principals, and supervisors of data analysis in order to assess data knowledge and literacy outcomes.

3) Further research is needed on leaders', and perhaps teachers', knowledge base of literacy instruction.

4) Examine the number of years of the principals within schools implementing the intervention program, as well as teachers providing the service.

5) Additional research in assessing leadership is needed to provide more insight into leadership behaviors that support growth of students in literacy.

Conclusions

This study examined school leadership as indicated by the current assessment tools and the expected growth of first graders in literacy. The purpose of this study is to guide principals to obtain a set of efficient practices that will lead to higher growth in literacy of students within a reading intervention program, as were the first graders.

Although no significant relationship was found among the leadership variables and literacy outcomes, important leadership qualities emerged through literature that leaders should take heed. Communication, building relationships, understanding your craft and standing firm on high moral ethics are all characteristics of strong leadership, in a school setting or otherwise. Further, principals should practice those tasks that ensure literacy is the focus, given the immense emphasis on literacy advancement by school districts, politics and increasing student understanding of the Common Core Standards.

Even more important, principals now have knowledge that behaviors influencing or relating to student achievement, specifically literacy, can be abstract and difficult to assess with today's current tools. While this is the case currently, the state of South

Carolina is planning to implement a newly adopted evaluation format for the 2014-2015

school, though the process is slow and little has been communicated with school

districts at this time.

In light of the facts as associated with the data, principals should be

conscientious of behaviors and tasks that fail to support literacy improvement and seek

colleagues' knowledge of leadership who continue to produce high student

achievement. Ensuring a child's ability to read may be one of the single most important

responsibilities of leaders in today's schools.

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Fountas and Pinnell – Teaching Phonemic Awareness

Table A.1 - Fountas & Pinnell – Teaching Phonemic Awareness

	Kindergarten Lesson Topics	Grade 1 Lesson Topics
Phonological Awareness Instruction	Hearing Rhymes Making Rhymes Hearing, Saying, and Clapping Syllables Blending Syllables Hearing and Blending Onsets and Rimes Identifying and Blending Onsets and Rimes Recognizing and Making Rhymes Identifying Onsets and Rimes	Recognizing and Making Rhymes Identifying Onsets and Rimes Hearing and Blending Onsets and Rimes Saying Words Slowly to Predict Letter Sequence Exploring Syllables Hearing Sounds in Sequence
Phonemic Awareness Training	Saying Words Slowly to Hear Sounds Hearing Beginning Sounds Hearing Ending Sounds Hearing Middle Sounds Hearing Sounds in Sequence Hearing and Substituting Sounds Blending and Segmenting Sounds in Words Hearing, Saying, and Deleting Beginning Sounds Hearing Long Vowel Sounds in the Middle of Words	Hearing Sounds in Sequence Hearing and Identifying Beginning Sounds Hearing and Identifying Ending Sounds Hearing Middle Sounds Blending Sounds Hearing and Changing Ending Sounds Hearing and Changing Beginning and Ending Sounds

APPENDIX B

Twenty-one Responsibilities of a Leader

The twenty-one responsibilities as viewed by Marzano, Water and McNutty (2005).

1) Affirmation
2) Change Agent
3) Contingent Awards
4) Communication
5) Culture
6) Discipline
7) Flexibility
8) Focus
9) Ideals/Beliefs
10) Input
11) Intellectual Stimulation
12) Involvement in Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment
13) Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment
14) Monitoring/Evaluating
15) Optimizer
16) Order
17) Outreach
18) Relationships
19) Resources
20) Situational Awareness
21) Visibility

APPENDIX C

Feiner's Fifty Laws

1) Expectations – increase them
2) Intimacy –get to know your people
3) Building a Cathedral – believe in what you do with fervor and passion
4) Personal Commitment – be committed to your people
5) Feedback – provide critical feedback
6) Tough Love – have tough conversations
7) Competency-Based Coaching – coaching struggling subordinates
8) Accountability – hold be to a standard
9) Make Your Own Bed – be responsible for your relationship with your boss
10) Who Is That Masked Man or Woman? – you have to know your boss
11) Professional Commitment – commit yourself to your boss' success
12) the Career Covenant – there are 4 expectations you can reasonably have for your boss
13) the Emperor's Wardrobe – know how to push back appropriately
14) Class vs. Style – treat people the right way
15) Acting Grown-up – when you are not getting something you need, ask for it
16) First Among Equals – lead with command
17) Winning Championships – choose good people for your team
18) Building a Cathedral-Again! – believe, passion, fervor
19) the Nitty-Gritty – set the rules of engagement
20) Communicating up – keep people in the loop, no surprises
21) Team Together, Team Apart – if it's not okay in the meeting, it's not acceptable to say outside the meeting
22) Equality – treat peers equally
23) Pull vs. Push – have balance
24) the Good Samaritan – don't let a peer fail
25) the Mirror – assume you are the problem
26) Feedback-Again – acknowledge feedback
27) Trust – being trustworthy builds trust
28) Tell Your Cat – don't gossip
29) Interdependence – don't rely on power to problem solve or motivate
30) Building a Cathedral-Again! – keep people focused
31) Options – know the options in managing conflict
32) the Conscientious Objector – never take up someone else's fight

33) the Last Chance Saloon – sometimes a leader must ask people to resolve their own conflict or live with the leader's resolution
34) Healthy Conflict – high-performance leaders encourage healthy conflict

35) the Burning Platform – communicate the importance of change
36) Cascading Sponsorship – leaders must stay involved with the change process
37) Nuts and Bolts – discipline and planning are at the forefront of change
38) Ownership – give people a vote in order to stay focused on the change
39) the Onion – look beneath the surface
40) Intention – leaders make a careful distinction between biased behavior that is conscious and that which is not
41) the Whole Person – courage to connect with people emotionally
42) Self-Interest – frame issues in terms of the other's self-interest to encourage them to do the right thing
43) Loyalty vs. Insubordination – tell your boss what they need to hear
44) Re-Pledging Allegiance – your boss needs to know you are loyal and committed
45) Strategic Retreat – know your rank and when to back off
46) the Candy Store – know who's the boss
47) WYHA vs WYHB – focus on what you have become, as well as what you have achieved
48) the Silent Sinner – if you can't tell anyone what you are doing, DON'T do it!!!
49) Choosing a Culture – sometimes it's okay to leave when your values are not in line with the company's
50) the Tombstone - know your ethical stance

APPENDIX D

Submission to School District

September 21, 2013

Achievement and Accountability Department
Attn: Dr. Laura Donnelly
75 Calhoun Street
Charleston, South Carolina 29401

Dr. Donnelly:

The purpose of this letter is to request the collaboration and assistance of the Charleston County School District in data collection regarding the Primary Grades Academy and PADEPP results for those schools participating in PGA during the 2013 school year, as well as the approval to use abovementioned data to conduct research.

This data analysis will assist me in completion of my dissertation as partial fulfillment in the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Administration at the University of South Carolina (College Street, Columbia, SC 29208). As a researcher and practitioner, I have completed a master's degree in both education administration and curriculum and instruction; I am currently a working principal in CCSD.

Thank you for your consideration and assistance with this data collection as it pertains to the completion of my degree.

Sincerely,

Abigail D. Woods
3009 Coopers Basin Circle
Charleston, SC 29414
843-697-9559
843-889-2976

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to research the influence that effective leadership has on the implementation of a well-designed literacy intervention program. By increasing the success of reading in students, schools will in turn, prepare more students for the rigorous learning, reading and analyzing required to be successful in the future.

By identifying the key leadership factors that influence successful literacy programs, administrators will be able to focus their efforts to ensure fidelity within the programs that will maximize success. In short, leaders will be able 'to work smarter, not harder.'

The focus question leading the research is: *To what extent does leadership influence the overall success of literacy intervention programs within an individual school setting?*

The researcher also considers the following questions as guidelines for a more in-depth look into successful leadership characteristics that promote literacy:

1) To what extent is one's score on PADEPP correlated with high literacy scores?

2) To what extent is a school's climate correlated with high literacy scores?

3) To what extent is a school's report card rating correlated with high literacy scores?

4) To what extent is a school's ESEA correlated with high literacy score?

The questions were written in a way that would provide insight into leaders who have sufficient literacy knowledge and also positively impact learning within

intervention programs. This research will promote successful practices for leaders that have a need to improve the overall literacy achievement for students, specifically those that are in need of assistance and at-risk of failing.

Procedures

The data collection will take place at the district level utilizing data from the 2013 school year. There will be no impact on instruction to collect the information needed. The schools' data considered are those that have data from the Primary Grades Academy literacy intervention program, as well as an administrator with 2013 PADEPP results, school report and ESEA rating. Since all data can be collected at the district office level there will be no participants, eliminating the need for consent. There is no risk involved for the schools that have PGA data, though, this research study will benefit those schools trying to increase literacy instruction and success by identifying 1) specific leadership qualities that correlate with increased literacy achievement and 2) supply the school district with leaders that are actively engaged in increasing literacy achievement for all students.

Data Collection

There are six categories of data needed for the study, below lists the identified data:

1) PADEPP results from those schools with PGA data for the 2013 school year

2) Literacy success rate per MAP data from PGA students in the 2013 school year

3) School report card rating

94

4) ESEA rating

5) Climate results per the school report card

6) Number of years the principal has been at the school

This data collection will provide the researcher with the means to conduct a quantitative

correlation study on the effect that leadership may have on literacy outcomes at the

school level.

September 16, 2013

Dear Ms. Woods,

Please accept this note as evidence that your committee at the University of South Carolina is in support of your study titled, "Impacting Literacy through Leadership." Having reviewed your submission The Human Studies Council at University of South Carolina (i.e., The Institutional Review Board) has reviewed, approved, and deemed exempt your investigation.

Please note that any changes to the study must be reported promptly and approved. Please contact me immediately if you have any questions or require further information. Your study is well organized and responsibly crafted. I look forward to working alongside of you as you continue these pursuits. Best of luck with the research!

Sincerely,

Zach Kelehear

APPENDIX E

Approval from School District

Charleston > excellence is our standard
County SCHOOL DISTRICT

VISION 2016
CHARLESTON ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE

October 1, 2013

Abigail D. Woods
3009 Coppers Basin Cir
Charleston, SC 29414

Dear Ms. Woods,

This is to inform you that your request to continue your research **"Research the Influence That Effective Leadership has on the Implementation of a Well-Designed Literacy Intervention Program"** has been reviewed and approved.

Please adhere to the following guidelines:

> Except in the case of emancipated minors, researchers must obtain signatures of parents or legally authorized representatives on a consent form prior to a student's participation in the research study. All consent forms must contain the following sentences:
>> o "I do not wish (my child) to participate." (This must be an option on the form.)
>> o The school district is neither sponsoring nor conducting this research.
>> o There is no penalty for not participating.
>> o Participants may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

> Assent of children who are of sufficient age and maturity should be obtained prior to their participation in research. In all cases, students should be told that they have the right to decline participation.

> Parents or guardians of students participating in your research must be notified of their right to inspect all instructional materials, surveys, and non-secured assessment tools used in conjunction with your research. This notification should include details of how parents can access these materials.

> Student social security numbers should never be used.

> Data directly identifying participants (students, teachers, administrators), such as name, address, telephone number, etc., may not be distributed in any form to outside persons or agencies.

> All personally identifiable information, such as name, social security number, student ID number, address, telephone number, email address must be suppressed in surveys and reports. Reports and publications intended for audiences outside of the district should not identify names of individual schools or the district.

> Any further analyses and use of the collected data beyond the scope of the approved research project, and any extensions and variations of the research project, must be requested through CCSD's Department of Achievement and Accountability.

> Researchers should forward a copy of the results of the research to CCSD's Department of Achievement and Accountability.

Administration

Dr. Nancy J. McGinley
Superintendent of Schools

Mr. Michael Bobby
Chief of Finance and Operations

Mr. William Lewis
Chief of Capital Programs

Dr. Lisa Herring
Associate Superintendent

Mr. Louis J. Martin, Jr.
Associate Superintendent

Ms. Terri Nichols
Associate Superintendent

Dr. James Winbush
Associate Superintendent

Ms. Ruth Taylor
Assistant Associate Superintendent

75 Calhoun Street • Charleston, SC 29401 • tel. (843) 937-6300 • fax. (843) 937-6323 • www.ccsdschools.com

Please note that this district-level approval obligates no school or employee to participate. Final approval, consent to participate, and cooperation must come from the school principal or administrator of the unit involved. Please show this letter to the school principal or administrator.

Respectfully,

Charles D'Alfonso, Ed. D.
Interim Executive Director
Achievement and Accountability

Cc: Dr. Nancy McGinley