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Effects of Direct Reading Instruction on Literacy Achievement in Urban, Literature Based Classrooms

Steven M. Scarcelli
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Effects of Direct Reading Instruction on Literacy Achievement in Urban Literature Based Classrooms

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December 1995

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ABSTRACT

Effects of Direct Reading Instruction on Literacy Achievement in Urban Literature Based Classrooms

December 14, 1995

Steven M. Scarcelli

Program Director: Rebecca S. Bowers, Ed.D.
Dissertation Chair: Raymond F. Morgan, Ed.D.

This research examined two similar groups of first grade students and two different approaches to reading instruction within a whole language / literature based curriculum. The sample population for this research was drawn from four randomly assigned first grade classes attending an elementary school with urban characteristics. Teacher selection was based on results from the Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile. Teachers in the experimental group implemented an approach that utilized a daily format for reading instruction developed by Dr. Patricia Cunningham. This approach involved strategies including phonics, writing, teacher directed, and self selected reading instruction. Teachers in the control group used the whole language philosophy as the guide for all classroom instruction. There were statistically significant results between the two groups and four subgroups of students with varying levels of ability. Research indicates that the Cunningham format was highly effective improving decoding, vocabulary, and comprehension scores of average and below average students.
Acknowledgements

The pursuit and completion of this dissertation has been a long and arduous process with many difficulties and challenges. However, the goals I set have been achieved and I would like to thank the many people who have been invaluable to the success of this project.

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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

Education in this country has always been characterized by various reform movements. During the last decade there have been numerous groups calling for reform in the public schools. As Carbo (1987) has noted, government agencies, private institutions, and the general public, have raised concerns about the academic programs and the educational progress of students in this country.

Due to the difficult questions being asked, and the perceived lack of academic achievement of many students in the public schools, numerous restructuring movements have arisen. One of the most significant reform movements in recent years centers around the debate over which philosophy of reading instruction is best for young children.

Jacobs and Tunnell (1989) state that the whole language/literature based approach to reading instruction is becoming increasingly popular throughout the United States and other countries. This trend has continued and during recent years, reading journals, professional conferences, workshops, college courses, and local reading in-services have placed an emphasis on whole language instruction. Additional research by Deegan (1995) has also shown that whole language advocates believe that the implementation of this reading philosophy creates a significant opportunity to increase student interest and enjoyment in reading. They further state that whole language
Eldredge (1991) believes that the whole language movement is a reform that will continue to gain momentum and become a vocal force in the development and direction of reading programs in this country. Included in this reform movement are modified whole language programs described as literature based. The literature based classroom incorporates whole language strategies while including opportunities for teacher directed instruction with authentic literature.

These strategies share a philosophical approach toward reading instruction that is being openly embraced by a growing number of school divisions across the nation. Fountas and Hannigan (1989) observe that the restructuring of traditional reading programs and curricula is occurring, to some degree, in virtually every state in this country. Eldredge (1991) concurs, and points out that even the textbook publishers are now frantically trying to incorporate these views into publishable products.

However, the unique aspect of this dramatic reform is that it is occurring even though there is limited quantitative evidence to support such widespread and rapid implementation. There appear to be benefits gained from whole language instruction, (Macdonald & Burris, 1995; Cooter & Reutzel, 1990; Jacobs & Tunnell 1989), but these benefits have rarely been consistently defined, (Barnett & Irwin 1994; Altwerger, Edelsky, & Flores 1987; Farris & Kaczmarski 1988) or quantitatively measured.
Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to assess the reading achievement of two groups of first grade students receiving instruction with different reading strategies and philosophies. This Virginia Beach City Public School will mirror an urban setting and exhibit the characteristics of an urban public school. The research will compare the reading achievement of students in whole language/literature based classrooms with data from similar classrooms that incorporate a specific format for direct and systematic instructional strategies.

The reading curricula utilized in whole language/literature based classrooms is generally designed without a systematic format for direct instruction on a daily basis. Therefore, a lack of specific guidelines for reading instruction and a resistance to test student achievement may lead to inconsistencies in curriculum presentation and program assessment. This in turn may lead to gaps in student learning and achievement.

Teachers and students in whole language/literature based classrooms take significant responsibility for learning and are actively involved with reading and writing language everyday. The language arts teacher in this environment has significant academic freedom in program design and curriculum implementation in the classroom. The teacher also has the discretion to use theoretically based decision making in the choice of lessons, in the sequencing of objectives, and in the selection of materials.
The wide range of options available to the classroom teacher encourages innovation, creativity, and risk taking. However, it also leaves open to question the issue of whether or not all curriculum objectives are effectively being taught. Therefore, the concern among some educators is that consistent curriculum delivery and comparable standards are seldom found between classroom teachers in a school, between schools in a district, and between districts in a state.

There appears to be significant evidence to support this concern as indicated from reading test scores on the National Assessment of Education Progress (1994). The National Assessment of Education Progress is a standardized test given to randomly selected fourth grade students in forty states. The 1994 test results reported that there was a significant decline in the reading scores for students in the state of Virginia. The National Center for Educational Statistics, the federal agency that administers the test, also reported that Virginia was the only state of the forty tested to record a significant drop in reading proficiency.

Further data to support these concerns was gathered from two local surveys pertaining directly to the reading program in the Virginia Beach City Public Schools. The first Language Arts Survey (Appendix A) was administered to all certified elementary school classroom teachers and reading teachers. The results indicated that eighty one percent of the teachers agree or strongly agree with the statement that, "Consistency is needed in the language arts program." Only seven percent of the educators who teach reading in the elementary schools...
disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement above.

A second Language Arts Survey (Appendix B) was also administered to the parents of students who attend elementary school in the Virginia Beach School Public System. The results of this survey indicated that eighty three percent of the parents agreed with the statement that, "Language arts should be taught the same in all schools in Virginia Beach." Seventeen percent neither agreed nor disagreed, and zero percent of the parents disagreed with the previous statement.

Therefore, to address these concerns and measure the progress of a philosophical and curricular reform of this magnitude, it is imperative that we operationally define the program and set specific goals and guidelines. Secondly, it is vital to research and develop appropriate tools to measure the achievement of the stated goals. Finally, in order to assess the present program and develop strategies for program improvement, it is important to carefully monitor real student outcomes. Responsible educators must insure that the selected curricula and methods are indeed doing a better job of teaching students to read.

Questions to be Explored

The main objective of this study was to compare the effects of two different formats for daily reading instruction on the reading achievement of first grade students in an urban setting. This study addressed the following questions:

1. Was there a significant difference between the letter / sound correspondence, vocabulary, and comprehension
Effects of Direct scores of students in the control and experimental groups as measured by the Gates MacGinitie Reading Test Level (R) and Level (1)? Was there a significant difference between the scores of the two groups for those students ranked in the top, middle, and bottom thirds as determined by the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Pretest?

2. Was there a significant difference between the decoding skills of students in the control and experimental groups as measured by the Cunningham Names Test? Was there a significant difference between the scores of the two groups for those students ranked in the top, middle, and bottom thirds nationally as determined by the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Pretest?

3. Was there a significant difference between the attitude scores for academic and recreational reading of first grade students in the control and experimental groups as measures by the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey? Was there a significant difference between the scores of the two groups for those students ranked in the top, middle, and bottom thirds as determined by the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Pretest?

4. Was there a significant difference between the dictation, vocabulary, and reading level scores for Case Study students in the control and experimental groups as measured by the Observation Survey subtests designed for the Reading Recovery Program?
Significance of the Study

This study researched and discussed the effects of specific strategies for primary reading instruction on reading achievement. The study also addressed strengths and weaknesses found in the current Virginia Beach City Public Schools whole language / literature based reading curricula. These are some of the most important and significant issues being discussed in this school district and in elementary education throughout the country.

The discussion concerning the philosophy of reading instruction that should be implemented is debated often, and vigorously, by both educators and the general public. The debate focuses not only on reading achievement, for students of all ability levels, but also on the effect of the curriculum on students' attitude toward reading. The data collected from this research will enable educators in Virginia Beach to critique the first grade language arts curriculum, answer some difficult questions raised by the system wide survey, and help to determine whether we are successfully meeting the needs of beginning readers of all ability levels.

Research Design

This study encompassed a quasi-experimental design using four groups of intact first graders. There were approximately twenty students in each classroom. The random assignment of students helped to insure a representative population in each
Within the class assignment each group was divided into four different subgroups. The Gates-MacGinitie Level (R) was used as a pretest to divide students into the top, middle, and bottom third, based on where student scores fell on national percentiles. The fourth subgroup was called Case Study students. These students were identified as at-risk readers based on a locally developed Title 1 screening test. After test scores were recorded, the students were screened again by the Reading Recovery program. The lowest ranked students who were not accepted into the Reading Recovery program were identified as Case Study students. The Case study students were administered a separate battery of tests, but were also considered members of the bottom third subgroup.

The teachers were selected based on the results of a voluntary survey that allowed them to self-identify their reading orientation. The instrument, Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP), was developed by Deford (1985). The results of the survey identified the teacher’s reading orientation as either phonics based, skills based, or whole language.

All four teachers selected for participation in this study then received further training about the whole language philosophy and strategies that are used during classroom instruction. From interviews, observations, and TORP scores, two teachers were selected to instruct students in the control group. These teachers delivered the Virginia Beach City
Effects of Direct Public Schools reading curriculum, with whole language / literature based strategies, as initially designed.

The other two teachers were assigned to the experimental group and delivered the same reading curriculum. The only planned difference was in the instructional mode of delivery. The experimental group implemented instructional strategies that operationally defined the delivery procedures for the current language arts program.

The instructional procedures and strategies that were used by the experimental group were developed by Dr. Patricia Cunningham (1994). Her model is designed to divide the reading lesson into four individual blocks of instruction each day.

During each period of time the classroom teacher will implement strategies to address specific skills that students will utilize to improve reading achievement. The first block involves writing, editing, spelling, and punctuation strategies. The second instructional block incorporates phonics, word patterns, rhyming, and language practice working with commonly used words. The third block of time is allocated for literature selections chosen by the teacher. Students practice reading, discuss the selections and develop creative activities that address themes found within the stories. The fourth and final period of time is set aside for students to select, read, and share authentic literature for personal enjoyment.

In-service training with these instructional strategies
was provided by Dr. Patricia Cunningham during September 1994. Further training and additional literature and materials concerning Cunningham's four instructional strategies were provided at the school site throughout the year.

Each teacher was observed twice a week for two weeks, during program implementation, and periodically throughout the year. Lesson plans were also reviewed periodically to track the specific instructional strategies that were delivered in the classroom. This helped to ensure that the teaching strategies were consistent with the instructional philosophies of the experimental and control groups.

Proven research tools were used to measure improvements in reading achievement for first grade students of all levels of ability. The available data helped to answer questions about the reading program that have not yet been quantitatively researched. This study also provided valuable data which will help to determine strengths and weaknesses of the current reading program and identify instructional strategies for potential implementation in the Virginia Beach City Public Schools.

Assumptions of the Study

There are several assumptions made in this study:

1. The Cunningham treatment was the only significant difference between the reading curriculum and instruction that all students received.
2. The students, teachers, classroom environments, and educational opportunities were comparable so that results could be viewed as valid and reliable.

3. The Gates MacGinitie Reading Tests Level (R) and Level (1), the Cunningham Names Test, the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey, and the Reading Recovery subtests were an accurate reflection of first grade reading achievement.

Limitations of the Study

There were several limitations to be recognized in this study:

1. The limited size of the subject population reduced the strength of the results.
2. The pool of teachers was limited to volunteers from four schools that qualified as urban schools.
3. The study can not be generalized to all populations. The data will be valid only when the recipient of this research determines that the population of students tested, instructional strategies used, and curricula are similar.

Definitions of Terms

The following presentation of terms, unique or specific to this study, is provided to assist the reader in focusing on the intended meanings found in this research. For purposes of this study:

at-risk students will be defined as students who are not experiencing academic (reading) success in the classroom.
authentic literature will be defined as books, poems, passages etc. that were not specifically designed for a formal reading program or as part of a basal reader.

basal reader will be defined as a book compiled of stories designed for a particular reading program that introduces prerequisite skills to a specific level of reader.

Case Study Students will be those students who were screened with a Chapter I reading test and identified as academically at-risk readers in kindergarten. These students were then pretested and posttested with a battery of tests developed for the Reading Recovery program.

Cunningham Names Test will be defined as a test used to assess a student’s word attack skills and ability to decode unfamiliar words.

curriculum will be defined as a reading program of study with specific goals and objectives that will be taught to first grade students.

direct instruction will be defined as teacher led instruction were the teacher assumes control for the focus and direction of the lesson. Explanation, modeling, guided and independent practice are strategies often used with this method.
Elementary Reading Attitude Survey will be defined as a nationally normed test (1989) to measure a first grade students attitude toward reading.

Gates MacGinitie Reading Tests will be defined as standardized and nationally normed reading tests (1988) designed to assess decoding, vocabulary, and comprehension skills.

invented spelling will be defined as a student’s attempt to use letters and sounds that they know in an effort to spell and write a word that they don’t know.

literacy achievement will be defined as a statistically significant improvement in the areas of oral reading, reading comprehension, decoding, and writing skills.

literature based reading program will be defined as a reading program that incorporates many concepts of the whole language philosophy using authentic literature. However, some skills practice and limited phonics instruction are still incorporated into the program.

phonics will be defined as an approach designed to teach children about the relationships between spelling patterns and sound patterns.
systematic instruction will be defined as a format for reading instruction designed to follow the same general schedule and procedures while introducing new concepts and material.

Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP) will be defined as a survey tool that allows teachers to self select their reading orientation as either phonics based, skills based, or whole language.

traditional reading program will be defined as a basal reading program that is phonics based and skills oriented.

whole language will be defined as an evolving philosophy with the understanding that listening, speaking, writing, and reading are not isolated processes, but permeate the entire curriculum. Language is taught as a "whole", not in fragmented skills. Teachers and students take significant responsibility for learning and are actively involved in the above processes each day.
CHAPTER II. LITERATURE REVIEW

During the last several years there have been many articles and discussions concerning the whole language philosophy of reading instruction versus more traditional reading instruction. Chall (1989) and Carbo (1987) helped to fuel the debate with a series of articles expressing very different beliefs on this subject. Eldredge (1991) writes that the whole language reform movement is probably the most discussed trend in language arts today. And Deegan (1995) and Spiegel (1995) have continued to debate and discuss differing views on this topic. Most of the discussions have centered around the amount of emphasis that should be placed on the use of phonics, skills practice, direct instruction, and authentic literature in a beginning reading program.

Background

There are many reading educators who have strong opinions about this issue. For example, Cullinan (1990) and Goodman (1990) believe that whole language is undoubtedly the best approach to reading instruction. The whole language philosophy differs from the traditional reading programs that focus on phonics, skillwork, and teacher directed instruction. Whole language advocates believe that a philosophy focusing on meaning through the use of authentic literature is the most successful method to teach reading.

However, educators such as Zalud and Hoag (1995), believe that the traditional reading program has many strengths and
that teachers should continue to incorporate phonics and direct instruction. According to Pearson (1990), opposing views such as these make it difficult for those who try to incorporate the principles of more than one approach. It is especially troublesome when the research by Morrow (1992) suggests that a combination of literature based and basal reading instruction is more powerful than either approach by itself. Rather than combining the best of all reading approaches the debate has often become an all-or-nothing argument about philosophy. Unfortunately, Stanovich (1990) believes that educators have again turned an instructional issue into a "zero-sum game" where one’s gain must mean another’s loss. In a sense, the philosophical approach that one embraces may overshadow the individual needs and learning styles of the students in the classroom. McKenna (1994) also believes that this difference of opinion has begun to develop into a confusing and somewhat adversarial relationship between educators who hold different philosophical views about primary reading instruction.

Whole Language

According to Goodman (1986), a major proponent of whole language instruction in this country, "If kids are in whole language programs with whole language teachers right from the beginning, there are going to be a lot fewer readers and writers in trouble" (p. 58). This belief that has grown and strengthened among many educators and has cast a shadow of doubt on reading teachers who are not utilizing whole language
strategies. Whole language advocates are excited and positive about the value and importance of this approach to the success of beginning readers.

Unfortunately, there is still a great deal of uncertainty and there are many unanswered questions that have been raised about this philosophy. One major area of misunderstanding and confusion lies in the definition of whole language reading instruction. Barnett and Irwin (1995) believe that a definition of whole language is poorly defined and that few people can agree on a clear cut view of what whole language is or is supposed to be. Farris, & Kaczmarski (1988) attempted to describe the framework of whole language but were forced to admit that it appears to be abstract, and relies mainly on attitudes and beliefs. Whole language teachers often describe whole language as an attitude and frame of mind that provides guidance for classroom instruction. And Goodman (1986) shares his view of a whole language program as an educational program conducted by a whole language teacher. He further suggests that a whole language teacher is one who operates from the theory that language, thought, and knowledge develop holistically and in support of one another.

There appear to be few specific guidelines for teachers to follow when whole language instruction is discussed. Therefore, it is easy to see why there are so many disagreements concerning what a whole language reading program is, how it should be implemented, and who is actually conducting the approach properly.

Further confusion surrounding the whole language approach
is also due to the insistence on the part of whole language proponents that it is not a program, but a philosophy of literacy instruction (Macdonald & Burris, 1995; & Altwerger, Edelsky, & Flores, 1987). Research by Tierney, Carter, and Desai (1990) further describes whole language as a child-centered philosophy that accepts responsibility for helping each child reach their potential in whatever directions are most useful. Hence, the definition of what the whole language philosophy is, and how it translates into reading instruction varies greatly. Even with the best intentions there is often little resemblance between the classroom curriculum of any two whole language programs.

Newman (1985) believes that whole language is so complex and comprehensive that it defies a definition. However, according to Eldredge (1991) some beliefs and principles that are generally agreed upon concerning the implementation of the whole language philosophy in the classroom are listed below:

1. Recognize the interrelatedness of reading, writing, speaking, and listening.
2. Utilize a child's own language productions to help them make the transition from oral to written language.
3. Encourage students to write as soon as they enter school.
4. Read the best literature available to students, and widely utilize authentic literature in the classroom.
5. Organize literacy instruction around themes or units of study that are of interest to students.
6. Ensure that language learning and its use are primarily based on personal relevance.

7. Provide numerous opportunities for social interaction during classroom activities and instruction.

8. Plan activities that allow students to teach and learn from each other.

9. Focus literacy instruction on student centered rather than teacher centered activities.

10. Teach skills within the context of the literature lesson. Develop lesson objectives from holistic language experiences based on student needs.

For purposes of this study, whole language will be defined as an evolving philosophy that encompasses listening, speaking, writing, and reading. These concepts are not isolated processes, but permeate the entire curriculum. Language is taught as a "whole", not in fragmented skills. Teachers and students take significant responsibility for learning and are actively involved in the above processes every day.

The above statements are accepted beliefs that are considered important strategies for any whole language or literature based classroom. Proponents also advocate using whole stories, reading aloud, assisted and repeated readings, and shared book experiences (Wallace, 1995; Holdaway, 1982). Whole language educators believe that implementing these strategies while emphasizing comprehension and meaning from the literature will help children begin to read spontaneously.
Most reading experts do agree that the use of quality children's literature is a great tool to help promote a child's love of reading. For this reason, whole language and literature-based programs appear to be able to motivate, captivate, and excite children about their reading experiences. Many experts such as Cullinan (1990) believe that children learn language most readily when it is whole, functional, and meaningful. Spiegel (1992) also acknowledges that whole language focuses on writing, reading children's literature, and authentic assessment to instruct and motivate students. She notes that we have become literacy educators, not just reading and writing teachers. Research concerning the whole language philosophy and successful strategies in the classroom will be valuable and welcomed information for all reading educators.

**Authentic Literature**

Koeller (1981) was one of the first strong advocates for the use of children's literature in the elementary reading curriculum. The initial publication of his article in 1981 garnered the attention of many reading educators. Since then there has been an unprecedented increase in research theory that supports the use of children's literature in reading instruction (Spiegel, 1995; Tunnel & Jacobs, 1989).

One reason for the strong support of authentic literature can be found in research based theory that has been available for years. As Fielding, Wilson & Anderson (1984) note, reading and experiencing authentic literature helps students
to understand written language and expand their knowledge base. They also believe that limited language growth occurs from most basal readers. Students seldom enjoy reading basal stories and they generally have little character development, few plot complications, and less character interaction than is found in an authentic text. Barnett and Irwin (1994), and Tunnell and Jacobs (1989) believe that a positive attitude toward reading is developed when teachers and parents allow students to select their own books.

Pinnell (1989) writes that those who implement the whole language philosophy believe that children learn to read by reading, and that the best texts are those that are interesting, use natural language, and relate to experiences that children understand. Spiegel (1995) agrees, and believes that a true whole language curriculum is focused on the rich resources of children's literature, especially the use of quality trade books.

A view that Stahl (1992) shares about authentic literature is that letter-sound instruction by itself makes no sense to a child unless they have an overall concept of what reading truly is. Children must have language experiences, understand how print functions, and be exposed to books very early in their preschool and early school years.

As studies have shown, children will absorb the language that they hear and read, and will make that language a part of their own (White, 1984). Therefore, "the richer the language environment, the richer the language learning" (Cullinan, 1987, p.286). Trachtenburg (1990) concurs, and states that if
the goal is to stimulate imagination, encourage reading, provide strong language models, and share experiences, then we must provide students with quality and memorable literature. And according to Goodman (1986) the alternative to high quality authentic literature is a text that is often unnatural, irrelevant, and dull.

These views have had an effect on the development of new reading programs and existing curricula throughout the country. A prime example can be found in the state of California. The California State Department of Education developed The California English - Language Arts Framework (1987). This document proposed the development of a literature driven curriculum to communicate culture and promote a desire for lifelong learning through reading (Smith, 1989).

From previous documentation it is apparent that many educators strongly believe that the use of authentic literature in whole language curricula holds great benefits for young readers. As Watson (1989) states, whole language has freed many children to experiment with and explore literacy and that learning is both joyous and fulfilling. Goodman (1989) has stated that when children are given the opportunity to read and write in holistic, authentic, and functional contexts they are learning faster and producing more than their teachers thought possible.
Effects of Direct

Phonics

Phonics instruction is the first of several strategies that has caused disagreement between traditional reading educators and advocates of the whole language/literature based reading philosophy. The dispute stems from the emphasis and value that reading educators feel should be placed on the use of phonics instruction in the curriculum. For example, outspoken proponents of the whole language philosophy, such as Kenneth Goodman believe that teaching phonics or skills in a systematic format is actually counter-productive when teaching the young reader. This viewpoint has become widespread and accepted among whole language educators.

As research by Eldredge (1991) shows, some educators interpret the whole language philosophy as a rebuke of all skills practice. The concern about the overuse of skills practice in the classroom has made phonics a strategy that is off limits for many reading teachers. Eldredge has also determined that the movement toward whole language is a movement away from phonics and a distancing from all skill work and direct instruction.

Spiegel (1995) and Chall (1993) relate that in their view the anti-phonics movement seems to imply that a pro-literature, pro-writing, and pro-thinking curriculum are exclusive to whole language. And that those who strive to teach a combination of reading strategies including phonics and decoding are opposed to these excellent aims.

On the other hand, many reading experts hold differing views from those who advocate whole language instruction.
These differences appear to be most notable concerning the importance of phonics and direct instruction. For example, as Chall (1993) explains in a literature review, systematic teaching of phonics will benefit all students. However, those students at-risk will reap more significant rewards if they receive phonics instruction early in their school career.

Paulu (1988) has written that the best evidence available shows that children who receive phonics instruction benefit from a better start in school. Additional research has shown that these children learn to read more quickly, and are more successful in the early grades than children who are not taught phonics (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985).

Vellutino (1991) and Stanovich (1994) concluded, that phonemic awareness and alphabetic coding are the best predictors of later reading achievement. These measures have shown the ability to predict future success in reading that is even superior to predictions from IQ scores. Snider (1990) also indicates that the decoding skills acquired by students who receive direct instruction in phonics provide a firm foundation for reading, and these skills are not eroded by time or lack of practice.

Adams (1990) notes that research evidence indicates a positive correlation between spelling, vocabulary, word recognition, and reading achievement and the acquisition of phonics knowledge. She further indicates that phonics instruction will increase a student’s ability to achieve independence in word recognition, which will develop and improve fluency, and will in turn improve reading
comprehension. As Stahl (1992) has found in his studies, "The moral is that phonemic awareness is easily taught, but absence of it leads to reading difficulties" (p. 621).

Supporters of this method also believe that phonics instruction used in conjunction with direct instruction are absolutely necessary for any successful reading program in the primary grades (Chall, 1990). Stahl (1992) also states, "The fact is that all students, regardless of the type of instruction that they receive, learn about letter - sound correspondences as part of learning to read" (p. 619).

However, as Paulu (1988) relates, as valuable as phonics instruction is, it should aim to teach only the most important and regular sound-symbol relationships. She also believes that the percentage of phonics instruction should be lessened each year and that it should be completed by the end of second grade. Stahl (1992) notes, that phonics is necessary, but should only be a part of the reading program and encompass about twenty-five percent of the curriculum. These views, as well as, considerable research, document the importance of early, intensive phonics instruction so that children acquire independence in word identification (Chall, 1983; Johnson & Baumann, 1984; Pflaum, Walberg, Karegianes, & Rasher, 1980).

Stahl also shares the following concerning phonics instruction:

Because phonics can be so many things, some people treat it as a dirty word, others as the salvation of reading. It is neither. With these strong feelings, though, extreme views have been allowed.
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to predominate, seemingly forcing out any middle position that allows for the importance of systematic attention to decoding ... comprehension and interpretation of quality literature and expository text (p. 618).

It is important to continue to review previous research and study current data concerning the value of phonics instruction in the primary reading classroom. Most research indicates that phonics instruction and decoding skills have an important place in the reading curriculum. However, it is necessary to find the appropriate place and function for phonics instruction in the modern classroom that utilizes whole language strategies and authentic literature.

**Direct Instruction**

A second area of philosophical disagreement between whole language and more traditional reading educators lies in the emphasis that is placed on direct instruction. Educators who favor the whole language philosophy such as Routman (1991) believe that the most important role of the classroom teacher is as a mentor and coach. Opposing this view are more traditional educators like Snider (1990) who believe that one approach to instruction that is research-based is the use of direct instruction by the classroom teacher.

Direct instruction is a strategy that has historically provided significant results with many concepts, including phonics. Chall (1989) indicates that research evidence during
the past seventy years overwhelmingly proves that direct
instruction in phonics is a valuable strategy. The data shows
that this approach contributes to better development of
decoding, word recognition, and comprehension skills.

There is an important place for direct and systematic
instruction in a whole language or literature based reading
program. Eldredge (1991) states that students in whole
language classrooms who do not receive direct instruction may
not learn the skills necessary to become proficient readers.
Spiegel (1992) concurs and describes the value of direct
instruction as a strategy in which the students and the
teacher stay focused on a specific goal. Each student in the
class knows the objective of the lesson and why it is
important to learn it. Other research indicates that learning
is more likely to occur if the lessons are teacher-directed
and the student knows what the specific learning tasks are
(Adams, 1990; Duffy, Roehler, & Putnam, 1987). The conclusion
of Snider’s (1990) study also "supports the use of a highly
structured, directed approach that includes training in
auditory and phonetic skills. This type of instruction is
beneficial to average children and critical for low performing
children" (p. 148).

Direct instruction is a time honored approach to teaching
that has proven successful in all academic arenas. Although
the role of the classroom teacher has changed, teachers are in
the classroom to teach students. All successful classrooms
have teachers who directly instruct the children, guide
student learning, and assist those in need.
Effects of Direct Writing

One area of general agreement between whole language educators and those who favor a more traditional approach to reading can be found in the belief that students need to write more often. Cunningham (1994) has noted that until recently, writing in kindergarten and first grade classrooms usually referred to handwriting instruction. Students were not usually allowed or encouraged to write until they could make most of the letters correctly and spell most of the words. The concern was that if children were allowed to write before they could spell correctly, they would acquire 'bad habits' that would be difficult to break.

Emergent literacy research by Sulzby, Teale, and Kamberelis (1989) has shown that early writing opportunities, even when words and letters are incorrect and unreadable, are of great value. When young students participate in writing activities they learn about important relationships between letters, sounds, meanings, and print. Chall (1989) also states, "all effective reading programs expose children to a variety of activities that include a wide array of reading and writing" (p. 523).

However, whole language and traditional reading educators disagree on the importance of the connection between reading and writing and how it should be implemented in the curriculum. Traditional teachers often view writing as an isolated activity for older students with little relationship to the reading process.
On the other hand, whole language teachers strongly believe that there is a close correlation between reading and writing. Whole language advocates such as Altwerger, Edelsky, and Flores (1987) view oral and written language systems as structurally related. Pinnell (1989) also relates that when children read and write, they learn to connect the two processes and develop understandings that form their basic knowledge about reading and writing. Understanding and utilizing these connections is an important aspect in the development of literacy.

In her research Clay (1991) admonishes that:
A poor writing vocabulary may indicate that, despite all his efforts to read, a child may in fact be taking very little notice of the visual differences in print. He requires an all out teaching effort and a great deal of help to elicit early writing behaviors. In this learning the hand and the eye supplement each other.

Zalud and Hoag (1995) also suggest that the combination of reading, writing, and spelling will improve student achievement. These skills may aid in the progression and development of the alphabetic principal, which is an important key to the acquisition of phonemic awareness, and letter-sound relationships.

One strategy that is often used with young children in whole language classrooms is invented spelling. As with many whole language strategies there is limited, but encouraging,
Effects of Direct research to support this approach. The reported data and evidence that is available, is positive. Clarke (1989) conducted a study that compared invented spelling and journal writing with a traditional spelling and writing program. The results showed that the students using invented spelling were significantly better with decoding and comprehension skills.

Stahl (1992) believes that writing with the use of invented spelling does not lessen a student’s reading or spelling abilities and certainly improves a child’s writing. It soon becomes obvious that the more students write, the more skilled they will become as readers and writers.

At-Risk Students

Many children who attend urban schools are considered to be at-risk students. For purposes of this study at-risk students will be considered first grade children who are not achieving success with prereading and beginning reading activities. These students often have little experience with language or literature of any kind. Therefore, they are at a distinct disadvantage when the objective is not taught directly or they are required to draw on information and knowledge from previous experiences.


Lie (1991) continued research in this area that supports
the belief that children of high or average ability acquire phonological awareness through the usual reading and writing activities in almost any curriculum. However, children with lower intelligence levels and limited language experiences require more intense and specific training in word analysis skills than is usually presented in even the best whole language classrooms.

Pinnell (1989) concurs and believes that it is imperative that at-risk students have many opportunities to explore the reading and writing process. Many children who are labeled as at-risk have not had the literacy experiences necessary to provide a framework for the instruction they receive in school (Wallace, 1995).

As research by Jett-Simpson (1989) indicates, readers bring certain background knowledge to a lesson that helps them to construct meaning as they participate and discuss the information and literature that is presented. The student who is having difficulty with whole language lessons, due to limited language experiences outside the classroom, is at a major academic disadvantage in this situation. Clay (1985) suggests that poor readers may be learning different things during instruction than those students who are viewed as good readers. It appears that the at-risk student often has a limited range of experience and fewer reading strategies to call upon. Therefore, during instruction the poor reader will often apply their limited knowledge in a narrow and rigid way.

Also, the disadvantaged student often has difficulty recognizing and transferring reading skills from a whole
language lesson to practical experience. Gee and Olsen (1991) state that a child with limited language experience and background knowledge will have difficulty linking new information to previous knowledge. The lack of background knowledge necessary to relate and process new information efficiently will negatively effect comprehension. Pinnell's (1989) research also shows that at-risk students have difficulty fully participating in most literacy activities in the classroom.

Morrow (1992) also suggests that certain process approaches, such as whole language, are inappropriate and unsuccessful for some groups of at-risk students. If the instruction does not include direct teaching strategies, at-risk and minority students appear to have more difficulty acquiring accepted forms of reading, writing, and oral language.

Students with limited language experiences, less than average ability, or a learning disability, may also have difficulty with whole language lessons for another reason. These lessons often require a transfer of skills from one lesson to another. According to Spiegel (1992) a lesson without direct instruction can become confusing to an at-risk student and the transfer of a specific skill to authentic material may not occur without additional practice. As Corlett (1991) expressed in her research, many at-risk students have not been taught or developed strategies that enhance their learning strengths and allow them to be successful with new material. Lie (1991) also believes that
the less skilled reader often finds holistic lessons difficult and demanding and would benefit more from a systematic and direct approach.

From the above research, as well as, practical classroom experience, a high percentage of classroom teachers believe that reading instruction should encompass a variety of different strategies and techniques. A combination of effective strategies including direct instruction, will increase the chance that all students will succeed. It appears that benefiting most notably from this approach will be those students with lesser developed skills and limited language experiences.

Research Data

As previously mentioned, there have been numerous articles and books written that express the value of whole language instruction. However, there is little quantitative evidence to support the dramatic shift toward such widespread implementation of whole language programs. In fact, there are only a limited number of studies that have been completed, most without quantitative research data. According to Slavin (1989) this can be a precarious situation for educators. He recommends that all innovative practices be carefully and thoroughly evaluated before implementation. Slavin feels that this is extremely important in order to slow the drastic pendulum swings in education.

Despite this concern, only a few significant studies were found, (Eldredge, 1991; Reutzel & Cooter, 1990), that
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attempted to compare whole language with traditional reading approaches. Interestingly, the results of these studies showed no significant differences between the two programs.

However, from these few studies, and other available data, Stahl and Miller (1989) suggest that, overall, whole language approaches and basal reader approaches are approximately equal in their effects, with few exceptions. Whole language approaches appear to be more effective in kindergarten than in first grade, while the basal seems to be more effective in helping first grade students master the decoding skills prerequisite to effective comprehension. Eldredge (1991) concurs and states, "Existing research does not substantiate the claim that whole language programs are superior to basal programs in the first grade. In fact, there is some justification for the claim that basal approaches may be better than whole language approaches, in the first grade, for certain reading objectives" (p. 26). Stahl (1992) also notes that prereaders and beginning readers initially benefit from whole language experiences, but as they become more sophisticated they tend to progress more rapidly with a systematic format for reading instruction.

Presently, there are no clear answers concerning the comparison of reading achievement for students in whole language / literature based classrooms versus those in traditional programs. The limited quantitative data that is available, has been difficult to research and analyze. There is even less data concerning studies involving a combination of whole language and traditional reading strategies.
This is partially due to the limited number of studies in this area. However, there are also many educators working within the context of whole language programs who are opposed to administering any type of standardized test. It appears that whole language advocates reject virtually all quantitative testing, and have effectively rebuffed most attempts to apply these measures. (Kameenui, 1995; Reutzel & Cooter 1990).

Tierney, Carter, and Desai (1990) relate, that whole language proponents believe that traditional assessment is not an accurate reflection of the integrated learning found in whole language classrooms. Goodman (1986) also states, most standardized tests of reading and writing focus on isolated skills and do not test effective use of the language. Therefore, he believes that standardized testing is an ineffective and inappropriate method of assessing students in a whole language program.

With the lack of quantitative research on whole language, most supporting data appears to be found in the form of testimonials and anecdotal evidence written in journal articles. An article written by McKenna, Miller, & Robinson (1990) concurs with this perspective and states that:

"In essence it is no longer a scientific issue since whole language people share a system of beliefs and they claim to have evidence to support their beliefs. But when you look up what they cite as evidence, it is often just someone else's published literature" (p. 12).
It is obvious that the opinions about the best philosophy of instruction for beginning readers will span the entire spectrum of reading theory. However, classroom teachers view the wisest approach to reading instruction as the one that is most successful with their children. This frequently results in a combination of different philosophies and approaches to teaching reading in the classroom. As Heymsfeld (1989) acknowledges, there is a great deal of energy and excitement during whole language instruction. However, she disagrees with the removal of all skill based instruction, and urges the use of "common sense and experience to create a combination program." 

For example Speigel (1992) believes that giving systematic, direct instruction a more prominent role in whole language classrooms will allow teachers to more successfully meet the needs of all students. A similar approach has been taken by Trachtenburg (1990) who proposes integrating phonics instruction with quality children’s literature. Also, research by Stevens, Slavin, and Farnish (1991) concluded, that the use of cooperative learning and direct instruction in reading comprehension are complimentary and together form an effective and dynamic instructional process. And finally, Cunningham (1991) describes her program and philosophy of reading as a combination of several different strategies and viewpoints. She believes that an effective reading program should be integrated and use direct instruction to teach speaking, listening, writing, and reading skills.

The answer to the question about which reading approach
is the best, lies somewhere between the polarized viewpoints. Educators need to explore and measure the results of a combination of valuable strategies. To sum this up, Cunningham (1991) relates the following:

Throughout the years, phonics, basal, literature, language experience/writing have been in and out of favor. Generally, one approach has predominated for just long enough for people to realize its shortcomings, and then it has been abandoned for a different approach with different shortcomings. The question of which method is best cannot be answered because it is the wrong question. Each method has its undeniable strengths" (p. 59).

Successful teachers realize that every child has a unique and different learning style. These teachers attempt to meet the learning needs of each individual student at their own respective ability level. This understanding acknowledges the fact that a technique that is successful for one student may in turn be inappropriate for a classmate. For example, Ehri’s (1989) research analysis of significant problems experienced by poor readers suggests that they will not successfully learn to read in the absence of explicit instruction in phonics and spelling. This implies that poor readers could significantly benefit from direct instruction, including phonics strategies, within a whole language program.

Combining the strengths of traditional, literature based, and whole language reading philosophies in a systematic
method will enable educators to work together to improve the overall reading program for young students. For Yatvin (1991) warns that the danger of a schoolwide program without systematic instruction may result in each teacher developing their own version of the curriculum. Farr (1990) has stated we should not encourage educators to take sides and argue about which group they belong to, but rather we should discuss the effective strategies of reading and writing.

This study will provide researchers an opportunity to operationally define a whole language / literature based program, implement and compare systematic strategies and quantitatively measure the results. As Trachtenburg (1990) states there is strong evidence to support early phonics instruction. There is also evidence to document that the value and benefit of reading high quality children’s literature. Therefore, direct instruction, including the teaching of phonics, in association with children’s literature maximizes the opportunity for literacy achievement with beginning readers.
CHAPTER III. DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Sample Population

This study was undertaken to determine if systematic and direct reading instruction would effect the literacy achievement of urban first grade students. The subject population for this study was a total of fifty-five students enrolled in four first grade classrooms in the Virginia Beach City Public Schools. The four classrooms of students were representative based on the random selection of classroom assignments during July, 1994.

The students participating in this study attended class with the selected teachers at the targeted schools for the entire 1994-95 school year. Transfer students who were not administered pre-tests were not included in the posttest scores. The study encompassed a quasi-experimental design using four first grade teachers and four intact groups of first grade students. The control group, consisting of two classes, was taught with the standard first grade reading curriculum.

The first grade curriculum encompasses a series of textbooks that utilize authentic literature, a teacher's guide that helps teachers plan lessons, and a curriculum guide that gives further examples of lessons that teachers may wish to implement. Teachers may choose to use any of the lessons or ideas provided or they can develop their own. The language arts objectives taught in the control group were delivered...
Effects of Direct with the whole language philosophy and integrated themes as the guide for all classroom instruction. However, the teachers did use much of the authentic literature available and many whole language lessons that were outlined in the teacher's edition or curriculum guide.

The experimental group also received the standard curriculum and incorporated whole language strategies using literature based materials and authentic literature. However, the format for curriculum delivery was Cunningham's four block method of reading instruction.

The teachers and students selected for this study were identified from a public elementary school with urban characteristics located in the city of Virginia Beach. For purposes of this study, the operational definition of a school with urban characteristics was one that received Title 1 services, had a minority population above the city average, and had a large percentage of high density housing. Based on this definition there were only four public elementary schools in Virginia Beach that met all criteria for this study. These schools were Lynnhaven, Newtown Road, Seatack, and Birdneck Elementary Schools.

Case Study Students

Each classroom had a minimum of two students selected to participate in the case study section of this research. These students were identified from the scores earned on a Title 1 locally developed screening test administered to kindergarten students during May, 1994. A score of 65 or less was
considered below average. Those students who scored 65 or below were then screened during September, 1994 for possible eligibility in the Reading Recovery Program. The Case Study participants were those students who were identified by the Chapter 1 screening, then administered the Reading Recovery Observation Survey, but were not accepted into the Reading Recovery Program.

Marie Clay (1993) was instrumental in the development and utilization of The Observation Survey as a screening tool for primary literacy achievement. The Survey is composed of six different subtests. Of the six different subtests, three will be used to measure the literature achievement of the Case Study students. Each subtest will be given in the Fall, as a pretest, and the Spring, as a posttest. This battery of tests is used exclusively with Reading Recovery programs worldwide.

Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile

The classroom teachers selected for participation in this research were chosen with the use of a survey tool that allows each teacher to self-identify their reading orientation. The instrument, Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP) [Appendix C], was developed by Deford (1985). Research conducted by Deford indicates that the TORP has proven to be a valid and reliable instrument for discriminating reading orientation. The results of the survey will identify a teacher's reading orientation as either phonics based, skills based, whole language, or a combination of the above.

TORP surveys were sent to all first grade teachers in the
four public schools identified as having urban characteristics in Virginia Beach. The surveys received from the teachers at these sites were scored and reviewed to determine potential candidates for this study.

The purpose of utilizing the TORP survey during this project was to identify the reading philosophies and instructional methods of the teachers who were selected to participate in this research. Other variables under consideration during the selection process were years of experience teaching first grade, number of years teaching whole language / literature based strategies, and desire to participate in the study. The TORP score indicating the weight of orientation toward whole language, skills, or phonics instruction was also an important consideration.

For purposes of this study, an average TORP score was indicated by a rating of 3.0 or below in the area of orientation. Those teachers who scored 3.0 or below, in a specific area of orientation were further interviewed to determine if the score accurately reflected the teacher's reading methods and beliefs. The TORP results of those teachers identified as potential candidates were further analyzed and the scores for the second and third area of orientation were reviewed.

All data was evaluated and four teachers were chosen to participate in this study. Through an in-depth review of the TORP surveys, further interviews, and classroom observations, the two teachers with the strongest whole language orientation were assigned to the control group. The remaining two
Effects of Direct teachers with average or above average whole language orientation were assigned to the experimental group. These two teachers used the Cunningham four block instructional model to deliver the language arts curriculum.

Site consideration was another important factor that was reviewed during the selection process. There were acceptable scores from potential teachers at all four urban schools. However, the difficulty in observing instruction and controlling historical and extraneous influences made the selection of only one school a more viable choice.

Based on the above concerns, Birdneck Elementary was selected as the site for this research project. The eleven first grade teachers available, and the potential for more frequent and in-depth observation at this site were additional variables that were favorable to this selection.

Instructional Delivery / Training

The two groups of first grade classrooms were taught in distinctly different ways. Each classroom teacher addressed the School Board directed objectives for the first grade language arts program. The objectives for each group were addressed entirely through teacher developed lessons based on the Virginia Beach Language Arts Curriculum, student interest, and student need.

However, these objectives were introduced and taught differently. Group #1, the experimental group, included classrooms numbered (1) and (2). These teachers used a modified whole language / literature based approach
implementing Cunningham's strategies for direct and systematic instruction each day.

Group #2, the control group, included classrooms numbered (3) and (4). These teachers provided instruction in a modified whole language / literature based classroom without the Cunningham format for instructional delivery. The four classrooms were similar in all ways except that Group #2 did not implement the Cunningham strategies, or utilize any format for systematic and direct instruction. Therefore, the only intentional and significant difference between classroom instruction in the two groups was the experimental treatment, Cunningham's instructional model. To ensure that all teachers participating in this research were well versed in the methods to be used in the classroom, in-service training was provided. The two teachers in experimental Group #1 received training from Dr. Cunningham and a certified Reading Recovery teacher. These sessions were conducted during the Summer and Fall of 1994, before and during the research project.

The two teachers in control Group #2, using the modified whole language / literature based approach also received in-service training. The beginning sessions were also conducted during the Summer and Fall of 1994.

Although, the teachers in both groups have received previous instruction concerning whole language strategies, all teachers received additional in-service training on methods and strategies. The sessions addressed the most recent concepts discussed in whole language reading instruction and focused on the successful strategies that are most often used
with this philosophy. The training sessions were conducted periodically throughout the year. (Appendix D).

Cunningham Model

The teachers in the experimental group received thorough training in the Cunningham methods and procedures used during the four blocks of reading instruction. Dr. Patricia Cunningham presented an in-service addressing this instructional format to the experimental teachers during the first week of September 1994 at Kempsville Elementary School in Virginia Beach. Additional literature and materials pertaining to the Cunningham model were provided throughout the year.

For purposes of this study, the Cunningham model will be defined as a systematic method of reading instruction that incorporates four specific blocks of direct instruction into the reading program each day. The four blocks are writing, working with words, teacher directed literature selection and student selected reading materials. Cunningham (1991) attempts to address the needs of all beginning readers through a program combining strategies and strengths from several different reading philosophies. Through a block of four strategies that are taught each day, students receive direct instruction in the areas ofphonics, including patterning, and reading, writing, and editing strategies. Students also have ample opportunity to experience authentic literature through the use of quality teacher and student selected reading materials. Cunningham (1995) believes that when each of
these strategies is implemented on a daily basis, students of all abilities will show significant improvement in literacy achievement.

This instructional program incorporates several effective reading strategies that are documented in research. The four strategies of the Cunningham method are teacher directed each day and should be considered integrated components of the overall language arts program. For this reason, further opportunities to implement whole language strategies throughout the instructional day are encouraged.

The following paragraphs give an overview of each strategy. The first strategy is a "Writing mini lesson". This involves the selection of an interesting topic by the students. During the early months of the school year students will begin this block using a strategy called "driting". Cunningham (1994) explains that this method is a combination of drawing and writing. The student has an opportunity to draw a picture and write a sentence that corresponds to the artwork. Students find this exercise enjoyable and it allows them to become more comfortable with the writing process and to personalize the results. The teacher then models invented spelling, writing, and punctuation. Students edit board work or a neighbor's work to read for misspelling, punctuation errors and clarification. The five rules that children use as a guide are as follows:

1. Every sentence makes sense.
2. Every sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with a punctuation mark.
3. People and place names have capital letters.
4. Possible misspelled words are circled.
5. The writing stays on topic.

The writing lesson is teacher directed and provides students with an opportunity to practice writing and editing skills on a daily basis.

The second strategy is called "Working With Words." This lesson involves the use of a word wall and the most commonly used words in the English language. Students are introduced to new words and use those available on the word wall to develop sentences and stories. Part of this lesson involves a section called "Making Words." This is a hands-on activity that encourages students to use letters and patterns to create words. This lesson uses rhyming words, familiar spelling patterns, and phonetic skills to help students with writing, spelling and decoding. The teacher often directs students toward a "key word" that was created during this portion of instruction.

The third strategy in the Cunningham approach is called the "Basal" section. Although for purposes of this study, authentic literature or literature based materials will often be used. The "key word", (strategy #2), that students created is used as a focal point of the literature selection that is chosen. The background for the story is discussed during the pre-reading activities. Students then break into pairs or groups and practice reading together. Over a period of several days students have an opportunity to read silently and orally together. They also act out parts from the story and discuss
it with the class.

The fourth and final strategy involves "Self Selected Reading". During this strategy the student will select a book of interest for recreational reading. The teacher will provide many opportunities in the classroom for students to choose books that are related to the topic or objective of the lesson. These books will be selected by the teacher after careful consideration to make sure that they are interesting and appropriate to the topic. The teacher will also ensure that there are books at all levels of readability. This will help each student select a book that is comfortably challenging for independent reading. Scheduled students may then choose to read their favorite section of the book to the class.

Classroom Observation

All teachers chosen for participation in this study were observed two times a week for two weeks, by independent observers. This helped to make sure that the teaching strategies were consistent with the TORP survey results, and that whole language / literature based strategies and Cunningham methods were being implemented.

Listening, speaking, writing, and reading were specific strategies that observers were looking for in all classes. These concepts were integrated and taught throughout the entire curriculum. Reading was taught with authentic books and literature based texts. Language was taught as a "whole", with actual literature, not as a fragmented and isolated part.
of reading instruction. Teachers and children took significant responsibility for learning and were actively involved in the processes of listening, speaking, writing, and reading every day.

The classroom observers visited all classrooms and evaluated reading instruction. The observers included the principal, two assistant principals and a reading recovery teacher. These educators have received training on different reading strategies, including whole language, literature based, skills based, phonics, and the Cunningham instructional strategies. During the classroom visits the observers reviewed the lesson plans and the authentic literature selected. The observers used a form developed by Hollingsworth, Reutzel, and Weeks (1990) as a guide, to identify whole language reading strategies that were evident during instruction. (Appendix E).

Student involvement, student input, and student participation were some of the areas reviewed during the lessons. Other issues noted were whether or not the students received direct and explicit phonics instruction and whether it was within the context of the chosen literature. Observers also looked for evidence of patterning strategies and how phonics objectives were addressed within the lesson. The observers also looked for evidence to determine if the Cunningham format for daily lesson delivery was being properly implemented in the experimental classrooms.

The frequent observations indicated that instructional strategies were being appropriately delivered to the students.
in both groups. Therefore, no interventions, retraining, or administrative corrections were necessary during the study.

During the observation and the review of lesson plans, the observers were looking for those strategies listed above, and how they were used during the lesson. The lesson plans for the teachers in both groups were also evaluated for organization and thoroughness.

The teachers who were using the standard whole language/literature based curriculum used a typical lesson plan format to list their objectives and describe the strategies that they used during instruction. The lesson plans were reviewed during observations and periodically throughout the year. This helped to ensure that the instructional strategies originally identified were continuing, and that no other treatments were being implemented.

Lesson plans for the teachers in the experimental group were reviewed for organization and thoroughness, and also documented how each of the four strategies was incorporated each day. To assist in planning and documentation, a special lesson plan form was given to the teachers. This form designated a block for each of the four Cunningham strategies that were taught each day. (Appendix F).

These procedures were designed in an effort to gather valid and reliable data from this research. As the 1994-1995 school year progressed, the reading achievement of students in all four classrooms was carefully observed, monitored, tested, and analyzed.
Methods of Data Collection

The following measures were used to compare the literacy achievement results of the two groups studied during this research.

**Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test - Level (R) - (1988)**

The Gates-MacGinitie Level (R) is a standardized and nationally normed reading test designed to assess the decoding and comprehension ability of first grade students. Decoding ability is measured through assessments of letter-sound correspondence using both consonants and vowels. Comprehension skills are assessed through the use of sentence context. The Level (R) is especially useful when measuring beginning reading skill levels and the ability of students who are entering first grade. The test is also a valuable tool when assessing the skill level of students who may have made less than satisfactory progress by the end of first grade.

The Gates-MacGinitie Level (R) Reading Test will help to identify strengths and weaknesses in reading ability in four basic areas listed below:

1. Use of letter-sound correspondences: Initial consonants and consonant clusters
2. Use of letter-sound correspondences: Final consonants and consonant clusters
3. Use of letter-sound correspondences: Vowels
4. Use of sentence context
The Level (R) is divided into three parts for purposes of test administration, but consists of four individual subtests. The teacher will read all items aloud to the students during each section. Each subtest has fifteen items and the questions become increasingly more difficult as the test progresses. This helps to more accurately measure those students who have made consistent improvement by the end of the school year.

**Level (R) Pretest (Fall)**

The pretest was administered to all students participating in this study during October of 1994. The scores for each student and each group were then calculated. Based on the test results, each student was classified as having scored in the top, middle, or bottom third of the national percentiles for this normed test.

The purpose of the differentiation of this data was to determine significance between the two groups, but also to determine if there were significant differences in reading achievement within the groups based on a student’s ability range. The scores for the two classes in each group were computed to determine a composite pretest score for each group. The combined scores for each subgroup were also calculated for the total group. Level (R) contained four subtests with a total of sixty items. Reliability scores for Test Level (R) administered during October are listed below.
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Initial Consonants / Clusters - Reliability (.80)
Final Consonants / Clusters - Reliability (.83)
Vowels - Reliability (.80)
Use of Sentence Context (.79) Total Score (.94)

Level (R) Posttest (Spring)

The posttest was administered to all students participating in this study during May of 1995. The scores for each student and each group were then calculated. The scores for the two classes in each group were computed to determine a composite posttest score for each group. The combined scores for each subgroup were also determined for the total group. Reliability scores for the Level (R) posttest administered during May are listed below.

Initial Consonants / Clusters - Reliability (.77)
Final Consonants / Clusters - Reliability (.77)
Vowels - Reliability (.79)
Use of Sentence Context (.86)
Total Score (.94)

Level (R) - Analysis

A t-test was performed to determine if there were significant differences between the two groups. Next, an Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was computed. This statistically controlled for differences between the pretest groups, and determined the significance between the pretest and posttest scores for each group on the Level (R) Posttest.
The same testing format was used to measure significant differences between the scores in the two groups for those students who scored in the top, middle, and bottom third of the national percentile scores for this test.

Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test Level (1) - (1988)

The Gates-MacGinitie Level (1) is a standardized and nationally normed reading test designed to assess the decoding, vocabulary, and comprehension ability of students completing the first grade. The teacher reads all initial test directions aloud to the students. However, once the test has begun the student will read all items by themselves without further teacher assistance.

The test is divided into two separate sections that are administered on different days. The first section is the vocabulary test that is primarily a test of decoding ability. The student is measured through the use of assessments consisting of four printed words and a picture illustrating one of the words. The words listed all look and sound similar to each other. Therefore, it is important for the students to know letter to sound correspondence for individual letters and sequences of letters in order to choose the correct answer.

The second section is the comprehension subtest. This section requires students to demonstrate the ability to read and understand entire passages. The first passages are simple sentences, but the items become increasingly more difficult as the test progresses. The latter passages requiring an understanding of more complex verbal relationships in order to
The Level (1) comprehension passages are chosen to demonstrate examples of the various kinds of text that students are exposed to. For example the selected passages include items written in fiction, nonfiction, and narrative modes. The passages are also written utilizing a variety of different semantic structures.

The comprehension section is composed of forty-six passages. Each passage is accompanied by three pictures that illustrate or answer a question about the written selection. After carefully reading the passage, the student is asked to choose the response that best answers a question about the written selection.

The Gates-MacGinitie Level (1) is an especially useful assessment tool when measuring reading achievement levels of students who are exiting first grade. The test is also a valuable tool when assessing the skill level of students who may have made superior progress by the end of first grade.

Level (1) Posttest (Spring)

The posttest was administered to all students participating in this study during May of 1995. The test is designed to measure the vocabulary and comprehension ability of students nearing the end of first grade. The individual and group scores were calculated. Next, the two class scores were computed to receive a composite posttest score for each group. The combined scores for each subgroup were also determined for the total group. The Level (1) posttest is

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Effects of Direct

Effects of Direct

Effects of Direct

divided into three subtests with a total of forty-six items. Reliability scores for the Level(1) administered during May are listed below.

Vocabulary - Reliability (.93)
Comprehension - Reliability (.94)
Total Score - Reliability (.97)

Level (1) - Analysis

An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was computed to determine significance between the Level (1) posttest scores of the two groups in the area of reading comprehension.

The same testing format was also used to measure significant differences between the scores in the two groups for those students who scored in the top, middle, and bottom third of the national percentiles for the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Pretest Level (R).

Cunningham Names Test (1990)

The Cunningham Names Test (Appendix G) is designed to assess the decoding ability of primary readers. Students decode formal names that require specific word attack skills including phonetic strategies and patterning. Individual students are shown a card and asked to tell the test administrator what the person's name is. Students are given the time necessary to state the first and last name printed on the card without any teacher assistance. Twenty-five names are shown to the students and all student responses are recorded on audiotape.
Effects of Direct

This measure has been field tested with a reliability of (.98). More recent research by Dufflemeyer, Kruse, Merkley, & Fyfe (1994) substantiates the validity.

Names - Pretest

The pretest was administered to all students participating in this study during a three day period in December of 1994. Students were recorded on audiotape as they decoded the individual names on the test. A reading recovery teacher, trained to score this test, randomly selected and independently scored the audiotape results of several students. This was done to ensure that the results were accurate and reliable. The two scores for each student were recorded and a composite score for each class was calculated. The scores for the two classes in each group were computed to receive a composite pretest score for each group. The combined scores for each subgroup were also determined for the total group.

Names - Posttest

The posttest was administered to all students participating in this study during a three day period in May of 1995. Students were recorded on audiotape as they decoded the individual names on the test. A reading recovery teacher, trained to score this test, randomly selected and independently scored the audiotape results for several students. This was done to ensure that the results were accurate and reliable. The two scores for each student were
recorded and a composite score for each class was calculated. The scores for the two classes in each group were computed to receive a composite pretest score for each group. The combined scores for each subgroup were also determined for the total group.

**Names Test - Analysis**

A t-test was performed to determine if there were significant differences between the scores of the two pretest groups. An ANCOVA was performed to control for differences between the pretest groups and determine significance between the pretest and posttest scores in the area of decoding skills.

The same testing format was used to measure differences between the scores in the two groups for those students who scored in the top, middle, and bottom third of the Gates - MacGinitie Reading Test - Level (R).

**Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (1989)**

The Elementary Reading Attitude Survey is a nationally normed test with a reliability coefficient of (.87) for first grade students. This measure has previously been used in the Virginia Beach City Public Schools to assess the attitudes of students toward reading. The students are given a statement and asked to respond by circling one of four pictures of the newspaper comic strip character, Garfield the Cat. The four pictures are standard for each question and represent four different responses to how students feel about the question.
being asked. The Garfield picture choices are very happy, mildly happy, mildly upset or very upset. (Appendix H)

Attitude - Pretest

The pretest was administered to all students participating in this study during October of 1994. The scores for each student and each class were calculated. The scores for the two classes in each group were computed to receive a composite pretest score for each group. The combined scores for each subgroup were also determined for the total group.

Attitude - Posttest

The posttest was administered to all students participating in this study during May of 1995. The scores for each student and each class were calculated. The scores for the two classes were computed to receive a composite posttest score for each group. The combined scores for each subgroup were also determined for the total group.

Attitude - Analysis

An Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was computed to determine significance between the pretest and posttest scores in the area of reading attitude. The same testing format was used to measure differences between the scores in the two groups for those students who scored in the top, middle, and bottom third of the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test - Level (R).
The following three subtests were used to measure literacy achievement results of the Case Study participants studied during this research. A pretest for each test item was given during September, 1994. The posttest was administered during May, 1995. Each measure is considered a valid and reliable diagnostic tool used by the Reading Recovery Program. The Writing Vocabulary, Dictation, and Reading Level Test were used as pretest and posttest measures of literacy achievement for the Case Study students.

**Writing Vocabulary Test**

Each student was given ten minutes to write down as many words as they knew and could write. Administrative guidelines and teacher prompts were specially designed and strictly followed.

Raw scores were recorded for each correct word on the Fall and Spring tests. A mean score was compiled from the pretest and posttest scores of all Case Study members in a group. A t-test was performed to determine significance between the two groups. Test reliability measured during the period between spring 1990 and fall 1990 indicated Pearson r = 0.62

**Dictation Test**

A Reading Recovery teacher dictated one of five specific sentences to each student. Raw scores were recorded for each correct sound heard within the words in the sentence.
A mean score was compiled from the pretest and posttest scores of all case study members in a group. A t-test was performed to determine significance between the mean scores of the two groups. Test reliability measurements during fall 1990 indicated Pearson $r = .92$

**Reading Level Test**

A Reading Recovery teacher administered the entry level reading book to each Case Study student. The texts were specifically chosen based on level of difficulty, and each level is more difficult than the previous one. Students proceed through each level in which they are able to master more than ninety percent of the material. When the student fails to score higher than ninety percent at two consecutive levels, mastery is not attained and the testing ends at the last successful level.

To analyze each reading session, the teacher performed a running record as the student read the text orally. Each item was scored, and the pretest and posttest levels for each group were compiled to produce a mean reading level score. A t-test was performed to determine significance between the mean scores of the two groups. Test reliability measurements during fall 1990 indicate Pearson $r = 0.83$. 

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CHAPTER IV. DATA ANALYSIS

Sampling Concerns

The original sample size for this study was eighty students. However, circumstances were encountered that required a reduction in the number of students who were eligible to participate in this research. During a review of class lists it was noted that several students in both groups had previously been retained in the first grade. It was also brought to the attention of this researcher that several other students from both groups were conditionally accepted into the Reading Recovery Program.

A determination was made that the identified students in these categories would receive or have already received additional instruction outside of the controlled classroom environment necessary for this project. The participants who were declared ineligible were withdrawn because of the concern that the inclusion of their test results may invalidate the data and skew the findings. Secondly, due to the transient nature of the student population at this site, the sample size was further reduced due to student transfers to other schools.

Based on these occurrences, the original sample size of the control group was reduced from thirty-nine students to thirty students. The experimental group was reduced from thirty-five students to twenty-five students.

The number of participants involved in this study was not considered large. Although fifty-five students housed in four
different classrooms does provide a representative data base for research analysis. Even though a reduction in sample size was a concern, fifty-four of the students took all tests necessary for group comparisons. The researcher is confident that the sample size is acceptable based on the number of respondents in the two groups who were able to successfully complete all test measures in the project.

However, the sample sizes for the three subgroups of students ranked in the bottom, middle, and top thirds were much smaller than anticipated. The small number of participants in the subgroups, especially the middle, and top groups, raised some serious concerns about the original statistical design. The issue in question revolved around the validity of the data that would be provided if an analysis of covariance procedure was performed on such small sample sizes.

Data Analysis Procedures

The data collected during this study were analyzed using several different measures of relationships and significance. First, the individual data were compiled for all students in the experimental and control groups. Mean scores and standard deviations were calculated for pretest measures of the Gates-MacGinitie Level (R), the Cunningham Names Test, and the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey for each of the two groups (Table 1). Finally a t-test for Equality of Means was calculated on the scores from each group.
Table 1

Descriptive Results for all Pretest Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Experimental</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Control</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-M(R) Pre</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-M(R) Post</td>
<td>49.8</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>47.9</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNT Pre</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNT Post</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERAS Pre</td>
<td>63.2</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>67.9</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERAS Post</td>
<td>61.8</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>62.4</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. G-M(R) = Gates-MacGinitie Level (R), CNT = Cunningham Names Test, ERAS = Elementary Reading Attitude Survey, Pre = Pretest, Post = Posttest.

The t-test results from the Gates-MacGinitie Level (R) (Table 2), the Cunningham Names Test (Table 3), and the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey are displayed in (Table 4). Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances demonstrated that there were no significant differences between the pretest variances of the experimental and control groups.
### Table 2

**t-tests for Independent Samples - Gates-MacGinitie Level (R)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>2-Tail Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>-1.20</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>-1.20</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>.237</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** This series of t-tests indicates that there is not a significant difference between the pretest means for the experimental and control groups based on the test results of the Gates-MacGinitie Level (R). Mean Difference = -2.9

### Table 3

**t-tests for Independent Samples - Cunningham Names Test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>2-Tail Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>-.975</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>-.975</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>.336</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** This series of t-tests indicates that there is not a significant difference between the pretest means for the experimental and control groups. Mean Difference = 2.1
Table 4

t-tests for Independent Samples - Elementary Reading Attitude Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>2-Tail Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>63.2</td>
<td>-1.55</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>67.9</td>
<td>-1.55</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>.127</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* This series of t-tests indicates that there is not a significant difference between the pretest means for the experimental and control groups based on the test results of the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey.

Mean Difference = -4.7

These calculations were performed to determine if the two groups were significantly different before the experimental treatment was administered. This series of t-tests indicates that there were no significant differences between the pretest means for the experimental and control groups. Therefore, in relationship to this study, any significant statistical differences based on a comparison of pretest and posttest results could be inferred to be the result of the experimental treatment administered.
Effects of Direct Data Analysis Results

Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test Level (R)

The Gates-MacGinitie Level (R) is a standardized and nationally normed reading test that is designed to assess the decoding, vocabulary, and comprehension skills of beginning first grade students. The pretest was administered during October 1994 and the posttest was administered during May 1995.

Analysis of Covariance - All Students

An analysis of covariance was performed on the tests results comparing all students in the control and experimental groups. Fifty-five cases were processed and there were no test results missing. The pretest mean for the experimental group was 26.24 and the posttest mean was 49.84. The results indicate a positive gain of 23.60 in the mean score for students in the experimental group. The pretest mean for the control group was 29.17 and the posttest mean was 47.90. The results indicate a positive gain of 18.73 in the mean score for students in the control group. The mean results (Table 5) indicate that the students in the experimental group began with a lower mean score and ended with a higher mean score than the students in the control group.
Table 5
Mean Scores for Gates-MacGinitie Level (R) - All Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Pretest</th>
<th></th>
<th>Posttest</th>
<th></th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>26.24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>49.84</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>+ 23.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>29.17</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>47.90</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>+ 18.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next statistical measure used to analyze the Gates-MacGinitie Level (R) test results was an analysis of covariance. This tool was used to determine if the test results were significantly different for the two groups. The descriptive results are listed in (Table 6).
### Table 6

**Analysis of Covariance for Gates-MacGinitie Level (R) Pretest and Posttest Results - All Students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Sum of Sq</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>M Sq</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig of F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Covariate</td>
<td>1494.48</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1494.48</td>
<td>38.75</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-M(R) Pre</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Eff. Group</td>
<td>177.83</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>177.83</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>.036 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explained</td>
<td>1545.80</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>772.90</td>
<td>20.04</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>2005.58</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>38.57</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3551.38</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>65.77</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** Sum of Sq = Sum of Squares, M Sq = Mean Square, Sig of F = Significance of F, G-M(R) Pre = Gates-MacGinitie Level (R) Pretest. *p < .04.

The analysis of covariance demonstrated that the difference between the pretest and posttest scores for the experimental group was significantly higher than those of the control group. The combined scores for decoding, vocabulary, and comprehension showed a positive significance of .036 (Table 6) on the Gates-MacGinitie Level (R).
Analysis of Covariance - Bottom Third

An analysis of covariance (Table 7) was performed on the tests results comparing all students in the control and experimental groups that were ranked in the bottom third. There were nineteen cases in the experimental group and sixteen case in the control group. Thirty-five cases were processed and there were no test results missing or invalidated. The pretest mean for the experimental group was 22.37 and the posttest mean was 47.58. The results indicate a positive gain of 25.21 in the mean score for students in the experimental group. The pretest mean for the control group was 22.93 and the posttest mean was 42.31. The results indicate a positive gain of 19.38 in the mean score for students in the control group.
Table 7

Analysis of Covariance for Gates-MacGinitie Level (R) Pretest and Posttest Results - Students Ranked in the Bottom Third

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Sum of Sq</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>M Sq</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig of F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Covariate</td>
<td>199.71</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>199.71</td>
<td>4.62</td>
<td>.039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-M(R) Pre</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Eff.</td>
<td>267.70</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>267.70</td>
<td>6.19</td>
<td>.018 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explained</td>
<td>440.61</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>220.31</td>
<td>5.09</td>
<td>.012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>1384.36</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>43.26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1824.97</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>53.68</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Sum of Sq = Sum of Squares, M Sq = Mean Square, Sig of F = Significance of F, G-M(R) Pre = Gates-MacGinitie Level (R) Pretest. *p < .02.

The analysis of covariance demonstrated that the difference between the pretest and posttest scores for the experimental group was significantly (p < .02) higher than those of the control group.

Data Results - Middle Third

The pretest mean for the experimental group was 33.50 and the posttest mean was 56.50. The results (Table 8) indicate a positive gain of 23.00 in the mean score for students in the experimental group. The pretest mean for the control group
was 33.27 and the posttest mean was 53.00. The results indicate a positive gain of 19.73 in the mean score for students in the control group. Comparing the group difference between the experimental and control groups, the experimental group recorded a mean gain of 3.27 above the control group.

Table 8
Mean Scores for Gates-MacGinitie Level (R) - Middle Third

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Pretest M</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Posttest M</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Difference M</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>33.50</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>56.50</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>23.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>33.27</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>53.00</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The subgroup scores for decoding, vocabulary, and comprehension on the Gates-MacGinitie Level (R) showed a positive gain in the mean score for experimental students ranked in the middle third. An analysis of covariance was originally designed to be performed on the tests results comparing all students in the control and experimental groups that were ranked in the middle third. However, the ANCOVA was not completed because there were only four students in the experimental group and eleven students in the control group. The small number of participants in this subgroup created a
situation in which an analysis of covariance may have provided invalid results.

Data Results - Top Third

The pretest mean for the experimental group was 48.50 and the posttest mean was 58.00. The results (Table 9) indicate a positive gain of 9.50 in the mean score for students in the experimental group. The pretest mean for the control group was 47.33 and the posttest mean was 59.00. The results indicate a positive gain of 11.67 in the mean score for students in the control group.

Table 9

Mean Scores for Gates-MacGinitie Level (R) - Top Third

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Pretest M</th>
<th>Posttest M</th>
<th>Difference M</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>48.50</td>
<td>58.00</td>
<td>9.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>47.33</td>
<td>59.00</td>
<td>11.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The subgroup scores for decoding, vocabulary, and comprehension on the Gates-MacGinitie Level (R) showed a positive gain of 2.17 in the mean score for students in the control group. An analysis of covariance was originally
designing to be performed on the tests results comparing all students in the control and experimental groups that were ranked in the top third. However, the ANCOVA was not completed because there were only two students in the experimental group and three students in the control group. The small number of participants in this subgroup created a situation in which an ANCOVA may have provided invalid results.

**Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test Level (R) and Level (1)**

The Gates-MacGinitie Level (1) is a standardized and nationally normed reading test that is designed to assess the vocabulary and comprehension abilities of students nearing the end of first grade. The Gates-MacGinitie Level (R) pretest was administered during October 1994. The Gates-MacGinitie Level (1) posttest was administered during May 1995.

**Analysis of Covariance - All Students**

All students in the experimental and control groups were measured. Fifty-four cases were processed and there was one case missing due to an out of city transfer before test completion. The pretest mean for the experimental group was 26.24 and the posttest mean was 52.83. The results indicate a positive gain of 26.59 in the mean score for students in the experimental group. The pretest mean for the control group was 29.17 and the posttest mean was 47.13. The results indicate a positive gain of 17.96 in the mean score for the students in the control group. The mean results (Table 10)
indicate that the students in the experimental group began with a lower mean score and ended with a higher mean score than the students in the control group.

Table 10
Mean Scores for Gates-MacGinitie Pretest Level (R) and Gates-MacGinitie Posttest Level (1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Pretest M</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Posttest M</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Difference M</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>26.24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>52.83</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>26.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>29.17</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>47.13</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17.96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next statistical measure used to analyze the Gates-MacGinitie Level (R) and Level (1) test results was an analysis of covariance. This tool was used to determine if the test results were significantly different for the two groups. The descriptive results are listed in (Table 11).
Table 11

Analysis of Covariance for Gates-MacGinitie Level (R) Pretest and Gates-MacGinitie Level (1) Posttest Results - All Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Sum of Sq</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>M Sq</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig of F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Covariate G-M(R) Pre</td>
<td>8740.76</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8740.76</td>
<td>47.95</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Eff. Group</td>
<td>944.24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>944.24</td>
<td>5.18</td>
<td>.027 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explained</td>
<td>8983.49</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4491.74</td>
<td>24.64</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>9295.94</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>182.27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18279.43</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>344.90</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Sum of Sq = Sum of Squares, M Sq = Mean Square, Sig of F = Significance of F, G-M(R) = Gates-MacGinitie Level (R) Pretest. *p < .03.

The analysis of covariance demonstrated that the difference between the pretest and posttest scores for the experimental group was significantly higher than those of the control group. The combined scores for decoding, vocabulary, and comprehension showed a positive significance of .027 (Table 11) when comparing test results on the Gates-MacGinitie Level (R) pretest and Level (1) posttest.
Analysis of Covariance - Bottom Third

There were nineteen students in the pretest experimental group and eighteen students in the posttest group. There were sixteen students in the control group. Thirty-five pretest cases were processed and there were no test results missing or invalidated. Thirty-four posttest cases were processed with one student transferring from the experimental group. The pretest mean for the experimental group was 22.37 and the posttest mean was 48.17. The results indicate a positive gain of 25.80 in the mean score for students in the experimental group. The pretest mean for the control group was 22.93 and the posttest mean was 42.31. The results indicate a positive gain of 19.38 in the mean score for students in the control group. An analysis of covariance (Table 12) was performed on the tests results comparing all students in the control and experimental groups that were ranked in the bottom third.
Table 12

Analysis of Covariance for Gates-MacGinitie Level (R) Pretest and Gates-MacGinitie Level (1) Posttest Results - Bottom Third

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Sum of Sq</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>M Sq</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig of F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Covariate</td>
<td>578.38</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>578.38</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>.069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-M(R) Pre</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Eff.</td>
<td>1383.59</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1383.59</td>
<td>8.50</td>
<td>.007 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explained</td>
<td>1806.63</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>903.32</td>
<td>5.55</td>
<td>.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>5047.87</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>162.84</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6854.50</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>207.71</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Sum of Sq = Sum of Squares, M Sq = Mean Square, Sig of F = Significance of F, G-M(R) Pre = Gates-MacGinitie Level (R) Pretest. **p < .01.

The analysis of covariance demonstrated that the difference between the pretest and posttest scores for the experimental group was significantly higher than those of the control group. The combined scores for decoding, vocabulary, and comprehension showed a positive significance of .007 (Table 12) when comparing test results on the Gates-MacGinitie Level (R) pretest and Level (1) posttest.
Data Results—Middle Third

The pretest mean for the experimental group was 33.50 and the posttest mean was 65.75. The results (Table 13) indicate a positive gain of 32.25 in the mean score for students in the experimental group. The pretest mean for the control group was 33.27 and the posttest mean was 56.55. The results indicate a positive gain of 23.28 in the mean score for students in the control group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pretest</th>
<th>Posttest</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group</strong></td>
<td><strong>M</strong></td>
<td><strong>n</strong></td>
<td><strong>M</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>33.50</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>65.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>33.27</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>56.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The subgroup scores for decoding, vocabulary, and comprehension showed a positive gain of 8.97 in the mean score for experimental students ranked in the middle third.

An analysis of covariance was originally designed to be performed on the tests results comparing all students in the control and experimental groups that were ranked in the middle third. However, there were only four students in the
Effects of Direct experimental group and eleven students in the control group. The small number of participants in this subgroup created a situation where an ANCOVA may have provided invalid results.

**Data Results - Top Third**

The pretest mean for the experimental group was 48.50 and the posttest mean was 69.00. The results (Table 14) indicate a positive gain of 20.50 in the mean score for students in the experimental group. The pretest mean for the control group was 47.33 and the posttest mean was 85.67. The results indicate a positive gain of 38.34 in the mean score for students in the control group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Pretest M</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Posttest M</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Difference M</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>48.50</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>69.00</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>47.33</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>85.67</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>38.34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The subgroup scores for decoding, vocabulary, and comprehension showed a positive gain of 16.67 in the mean score for control students ranked in the top third.
An analysis of covariance was originally designed to be performed on the tests results comparing all students in the control and experimental groups that were ranked in the top third. However, there were only two students in the experimental group and three students in the control group. The small number of participants created a situation in which an ANCOVA may have provided invalid results.

**Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test Level (1)**

The Gates-MacGinitie Level (1) is a standardized and nationally normed reading test that is designed to assess the vocabulary and comprehension abilities of students nearing the end of first grade. The Gates-MacGinitie Level (1) posttest was administered during May 1995.

**t-test - All Students**

All students in the control and experimental groups were measured. Fifty-four cases were processed and there was one case missing due to an out of city transfer before test completion. The posttest mean for the experimental group was 52.83. The posttest mean for the control group was 47.13. The mean results (Table 15) indicate a positive difference of 5.70 in the mean score for students in the experimental group.
Table 15
Mean Scores for Gates-MacGinitie Level (1) Posttest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Pretest</th>
<th>Posttest</th>
<th>Group Diff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>52.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>47.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Group Diff = The difference between the mean scores for the two groups.

The next statistical measure used to analyze the Gates-MacGinitie Level (1) test results was a t-test. This tool was used to determine if the test results were significantly different for the two groups. The descriptive results are listed in (Table 16).

Table 16
t-test independent samples Gates-MacGinitie Level (1) Posttest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>2-Tail Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>52.8</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>.407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>.407</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Effects of Direct

Note. This series of t-tests indicates that there is not a significant difference between the posttest means for the experimental and control groups based on the test results of the Gates-MacGinitie Level (1). Mean Difference = 4.3

Cunningham Names Test

The Cunningham Names Test is designed to assess the decoding ability of primary readers. Students decode formal names that require specific word attack skills including phonetic strategies and patterning. The Cunningham Names Pretest was administered during October 1994 and the posttest was administered during May 1995.

Analysis of Covariance - All Students

All students in the control and experimental groups were measured. Fifty-four cases were processed and there was one case missing due to an out of city transfer before test completion. The pretest mean for the experimental group was 4.54 and the posttest mean was 19.54. The results indicate a positive gain of 15.00 in the mean score for students in the experimental group. The pretest mean for the control group was 6.63 and the posttest mean was 13.33. The results indicate a positive gain of 6.70 in the mean score for students in the control group. The mean results (Table 17) indicate that the students in the experimental group began with a lower mean score and ended with a higher mean score than the students in the control group.
Table 17

Mean Scores for the Cunningham Names Test - All Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Pretest</th>
<th>Posttest</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>4.54</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>19.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>6.63</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>13.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next statistical measure used to analyze the test results was an analysis of covariance. This tool was used to determine if the test results were significantly different for the two groups. The descriptive results are listed in (Table 18).
Table 18

Analysis of Covariance Cunningham Names Test - All Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Sum of Sq</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>M Sq</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig of F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Covariate CNT Pre</td>
<td>6660.18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6660.18</td>
<td>107.41</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Eff. Group</td>
<td>1112.34</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1112.34</td>
<td>17.94</td>
<td>.001 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explained</td>
<td>7174.10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3587.05</td>
<td>57.85</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>3162.44</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>62.01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10336.54</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>195.03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Sum of Sq = Sum of Squares, M Sq = Mean Square, Sig of F = Significance of F, CNT Pre = Cunningham Names Test Pretest. ***p < .001.

The analysis of covariance demonstrated that there was a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores for the experimental and control groups. The combined scores for the Cunningham Names Test showed a positive significance of .001 for the test results in the experimental group.

Analysis of Covariance - Bottom Third

There were eighteen students in the experimental group and sixteen students in the control group. Thirty-four cases were processed and there were no test results missing or invalidated. The pretest mean for the experimental group was 3.44 and the posttest mean was 16.83. The results indicate a
positive gain of 13.39 in the mean score for students in the experimental group. The pretest mean for the control group was 2.06 and the posttest mean was 6.13. The results indicate a positive gain of 4.07 in the mean score for students in the control group.

An analysis of covariance (Table 19) was performed on the tests results comparing all students in the experimental and control groups that were ranked in the bottom third.

Table 19
Analysis of Covariance Cunningham Names Test - Bottom Third

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Sum of Sq</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>M Sq</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig of F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Covariate</td>
<td>2225.68</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2225.68</td>
<td>49.69</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNT Pre</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Eff.</td>
<td>455.61</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>455.61</td>
<td>10.17</td>
<td>.003 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explained</td>
<td>3196.99</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1598.49</td>
<td>35.69</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>1388.57</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>44.79</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4585.56</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>138.96</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Sum of Sq = Sum of Squares, M Sq = Mean Square, Sig of F = Significance of F, CNT Pre = Cunningham Names Test Pretest. **p < .001.

The analysis of covariance demonstrated that the difference between the pretest and posttest scores for the experimental group was higher than those of the control group.
The combined scores for decoding showed a positive significance of .003 when comparing test results on the Cunningham Names Test.

Data Results - Middle Third

The pretest mean for the experimental group was 5.50 and the posttest mean was 25.75. The results (Table 20) indicate a positive gain of 20.25 in the mean score for students in the experimental group. The pretest mean for the control group was 8.64 and the posttest mean was 15.73. The results indicate a positive gain of 7.09 in the mean score for students in the control group.

Table 20
Mean Scores for the Cunningham Names Test - Middle Third

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Pretest M</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Posttest M</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Difference M</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>5.50</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25.75</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>8.64</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15.73</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The subgroup scores for decoding showed a positive gain of 13.16 in the mean score for experimental students ranked in the middle third. An analysis of covariance was designed to
be performed on the test results comparing all students in the control and experimental groups that were ranked in the middle third. However, there were only four students in the experimental group and eleven students in the control group. The small number of participants in this subtest created a situation in which an ANCOVA may have provided invalid results.

**Data Results - Top Third**

The pretest mean for the experimental group was 12.50 and the posttest mean was 31.50. The results (Table 21) indicate a positive gain of 19.00 in the mean score for students in the experimental group. The pretest mean for the control group was 23.67 and the posttest mean was 43.00. The results indicate a positive gain of 19.33 in the mean score for students in the control group.

---

**Table 21**

**Mean Scores for the Cunningham Names Test - Top Third**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Pretest M</th>
<th>Posttest M</th>
<th>Difference M</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>12.50 2</td>
<td>31.50 2</td>
<td>19.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>23.67 3</td>
<td>43.00 3</td>
<td>19.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The subgroup scores for decoding showed a positive gain of .33 in the mean score for control students ranked in the top third. An analysis of covariance was designed to be performed on the test results comparing all students in the control and experimental groups that were ranked in the top third. However, there were only two students in the experimental group and three students in the control group. The small number of participants in this subgroup created a situation in which an ANCOVA may have provided invalid results.

Elementary Reading Attitude Survey

The Elementary Reading Attitude Survey is a nationally normed perception test for first grade students. This measure has previously been used in the Virginia Beach City Public Schools to assess the attitudes of students toward reading.

Analysis of Covariance - All Students

All students in the control and experimental groups were measured. Fifty-four cases were processed and there was one case missing due to an out of city transfer before test completion. The pretest mean for the experimental group was 63.21 and the posttest mean was 61.79. The results indicate a decline of 1.42 in the mean score for students in the experimental group. The pretest mean for the control group was 67.93 and the posttest mean was 62.37. The results indicate a decline of 5.56 in the mean score for students in the control group. The mean results (Table 22) indicate that

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the students in the experimental group began with a lower mean score and ended with a slightly lower mean score than the students in the control group. The scores for both groups were lower in the spring than they were in the fall. However, the reduction for the experimental group was smaller than that of the control group.

Table 22
Mean Scores Elementary Reading Attitude Survey - All Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Pretest M</th>
<th>Pretest n</th>
<th>Posttest M</th>
<th>Posttest n</th>
<th>Difference M</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>63.20</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>61.79</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>-1.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>67.93</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>62.37</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-5.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next statistical measure used to analyze the results of the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey was an analysis of covariance. This tool was used to determine if the test results were significantly different for the two groups. The descriptive results are listed in (Table 23).
Table 23

Analysis of Covariance Elementary Reading Attitude Survey -All

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Sum of Sq</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>M Sq</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig of F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Covariate ERAS Pre</td>
<td>19.53</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19.53</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.683</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Eff. Group</td>
<td>8.90</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.90</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.782</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explained</td>
<td>23.94</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.97</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>5887.40</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>115.44</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5911.33</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>111.54</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Sum of Sq = Sum of Squares, M Sq = Mean Square, Sig of F = Significance of F, ERAS Pre = Elementary Reading Attitude Survey Pretest.

The analysis of covariance demonstrated that the difference between the pretest and posttest scores for the experimental group was not significant. The combined scores for the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey showed a significance of .782 when comparing final test results.

Analysis of Covariance - Bottom Third

All students ranked in the bottom third of the control and experimental groups were measured. Thirty-four cases were processed and there was one case missing due to an out of city transfer before test completion. The pretest mean for the
The mean results indicate that the students in the experimental group began with a significantly lower mean score and ended with a slightly lower mean score than the students in the control group. The scores for both groups were lower in the spring than they were in the fall. However, the difference in the mean score for the experimental group was -1.17, while the difference in the mean score for the control group was reduced by -6.31. Therefore, the mean difference for the two groups of 5.14 was considered a less negative result for the experimental group.
### Table 24

**Analysis of Covariance for the ERAS - Bottom Third**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Sum of Sq</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>M Sq</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig of F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Covariate ERAS Pre</td>
<td>19.53</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19.53</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Eff. Group</td>
<td>46.51</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>46.51</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explained</td>
<td>52.94</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>26.47</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>4688.50</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>151.24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4741.44</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>143.68</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Sum of Sq = Sum of Squares, M Sq = Mean Square, Sig of F = Significance of F, ERAS Pre = Elementary Reading Attitude Survey Pretest.

The analysis of covariance demonstrated that the difference between the pretest and posttest scores for the two groups was not significant when comparing final test results.

**Data Results - Middle Third**

The pretest mean for the experimental group was 64.75 and the posttest mean was 63.00. The results (Table 25) indicate a decline of -1.75 in the mean score for students in the experimental group. The pretest mean for the control group was 64.45 and the posttest mean was 61.45. The results indicate a decline of -3.00 in the mean score for students in the control group.
Table 25

Mean Scores Elementary Reading Attitude Survey - Middle Third

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Pretest</th>
<th>Posttest</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>64.75</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>63.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>64.45</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>61.45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mean results indicate that the students in the experimental group began with a slightly higher mean score and ended with a slightly higher mean score than the students in the control group. The scores for both groups were lower in the spring than they were in the fall. However, the difference in the mean score for the experimental group was -1.75, while the difference in the mean score for the control group was reduced by -3.00. Therefore, the mean difference for the two groups of 1.25, although not significant, was considered a more positive result for the experimental group.

An analysis of covariance was designed to be performed on the test results comparing the pretest scores with the posttest scores for the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey. All students ranked in the middle third of the control and experimental groups were measured. However, an ANCOVA was not completed due to the small sample size of the two subgroups.
There were only four students in the experimental group and eleven students in the control group.

Data Results - Top Third

All students ranked in the top third of the control and experimental groups were measured. However, the ANCOVA was not completed due to the small number of participants in the two subgroups.

The pretest mean for the experimental group was 66.00 and the posttest mean was 63.00. The results (Table 26) indicate a decline of -3.00 in the mean score for students in the experimental group. The pretest mean for the control group was 71.33 and the posttest mean was 60.33. The results indicate a decline of -11.00 in the mean score for students in the control group.

Table 26

Mean Scores Elementary Reading Attitude Survey - Top Third

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Pretest M</th>
<th>Pretest n</th>
<th>Posttest M</th>
<th>Posttest n</th>
<th>Difference M</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>66.00</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>63.00</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>71.33</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>60.33</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-11.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Effects of Direct

The mean results indicate that the scores for both groups were lower in the spring than they were in the fall. However, the difference in the mean score for the experimental group was -3.00, while the difference in the mean score for the control group was reduced by -11.00. Therefore, the mean group difference of 8.00, is considered a less negative result for the experimental group.

**Observation Surveys - Case Study Students**

The three Observation Surveys administered were the Writing Vocabulary Test, the Dictation Test, and the Reading Level Test (Table 27). The pretests were given during September 1994 and the posttests were given during May 1995.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Experimental</th>
<th>Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WV Pre</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WV Post</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>45.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dict Pre</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dict Post</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>33.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RL Pre</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>.375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RL Post</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
Note. WV = Writing Vocabulary, Dict = Dictation, RL = Reading Level, Pre = Pretest, Post = Posttest.

**Writing Vocabulary Test**

During this test students write down as many words as they can recall from memory. They are given credit for each word that they can write correctly.

**Descriptive Results**

All Case Study students in the experimental and control groups were measured. The ANCOVA was not completed because the small sample size of each subgroup was less than desired.

The pretest mean for the experimental group was 10.00 and the posttest mean was 45.63. The results (Table 28) indicate a positive gain of 35.63 in the mean score for students in the experimental group. The pretest mean for the control group was 8.56 and the posttest mean was 35.33. The results indicate a positive gain of 26.77 in the mean score for students in the control group.
Table 28
Mean Scores for the Writing Vocabulary Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Pretest M</th>
<th>Pretest n</th>
<th>Posttest M</th>
<th>Posttest n</th>
<th>Difference M</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>10.00 8</td>
<td></td>
<td>45.63 8</td>
<td></td>
<td>35.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>8.56 9</td>
<td></td>
<td>35.33 9</td>
<td></td>
<td>26.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mean results indicate that the students in the experimental group began with a slightly higher mean score and ended with a higher mean score than the students in the control group. The scores for both groups were higher during the testing in the fall. However, the difference in the mean score for the experimental group was 35.63, while the difference in the mean score for the control group was 26.77. Therefore, the mean difference for the two groups of 8.86, was considered a positive result for the experimental group.

Dictation Test

A Reading Recovery teacher dictated one of five specific sentences to each student. Raw scores were recorded for each correct sound heard within the words in the sentence.
**Descriptive Results**

Mean scores (Table 29) for all Case Study students in the experimental and control groups were recorded. Seventeen cases were processed and there were no cases missing.

Table 29

**Mean Scores for the Dictation Test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Pretest</th>
<th>Posttest</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>M 13.25</td>
<td>M 33.75</td>
<td>M 20.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>M 10.22</td>
<td>M 31.56</td>
<td>M 21.34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The pretest mean for the experimental group was 13.25 and the posttest mean was 33.75. The results indicate a positive gain of 20.50 in the mean score for students in the experimental group. The pretest mean for the control group was 10.22 and the posttest mean was 31.56. The results indicate a positive gain of 21.34 in the mean score for students in the control group.
Effects of Direct Reading Level Test

This measure is used by educators in the Reading Recovery Program to assess the reading ability of first grade students entering and exiting the program. A Reading Recovery teacher administered the entry level reading book to each Case Study student. The texts were specifically chosen based on level of difficulty, and each level is more difficult than the previous one. Students proceed through each level in which they are able to master ninety percent or more of the material. When the student fails to score at least ninety percent at two consecutive levels, mastery is not attained and the testing ends at the last successful level.

Descriptive Results

Mean scores (Table 30) for all Case Study students in the experimental and control groups were recorded. Sixteen cases were processed and there was one case missing due to a student transfer.
The pretest mean for the experimental group was .38 and the posttest mean was 13.14. The results indicate a positive gain of 12.76 in the mean score for students in the experimental group. The pretest mean for the control group was .56 and the posttest mean was 8.67. The results indicate a positive gain of 8.11 in the mean score for students in the control group.

Summary

The analysis of variance performed on each of the test and subtest measures has indicated that there are several areas of significance to be reported from this study. Based on the ANCOVA results from the Gates-MacGinitie Level (R) and Level (1), and the Cunningham Names Test, students assigned to the experimental group showed marked improvements. The
Effects of Direct 102

Experimental group showed significant and measurable increases in decoding, reading vocabulary, and reading comprehension skills in comparison with the control group.

These results indicate that the Cunningham format for direct and systematic instruction delivered to students each day was successful in improving the literacy achievement of primary reading students.
CHAPTER V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary of Findings

Reading educators, including Deegan (1995) and Spiegel (1995) have continued a valuable debate concerning the different philosophies and methods for teaching young children to read. The discussion has centered around the effectiveness of whole language instruction as opposed to more traditional reading strategies.

Educators such as Cunningham (1994) believe that reading programs focusing on direct instruction will continue to be effective with young students. She also feels that a format emphasizing authentic literature and utilizing reading strategies such as phonics, patterning, and decoding are valuable components of any reading curriculum. When implemented in the proper format these strategies are flexible enough to successfully address the needs of all students within a literature based classroom.

This is especially true for the low to average reader and the at-risk student. Classroom instruction that is delivered with limited strategies, and focused on a narrow range of ability levels will often cause difficulty for poor readers who may not fully understand the objective. These students may also misunderstand important concepts, or miss valuable information entirely. Unfortunately, this could lead to the development of significant gaps in learning and push the lower
achieving student farther behind.

Another area of concern occurs when objectives are presented at a level of difficulty that is too complicated for the student. Clay (1993) notes that when reading material is continually presented to a student at his level of frustration, the student's ability to read may actually regress. Students must be able to grasp the objective, transfer knowledge, and practice the skills taught, or their reading ability will become stagnant and may even decline.

For significant learning to occur it is important that the presentation of new material, and the level of difficulty, create challenges that the student can build upon, yet not disorganize the skills and knowledge that they have already obtained. Therefore, when an at-risk reader brings limited experience and background information to a whole language lesson, the lesson is often unsuccessful and becomes confusing and frustrating for the student.

An effective reading program should address different strengths, different styles of learning, and all ability levels during classroom instruction. Educators such as Cunningham (1994) and MacGinitie (1991) have often emphasized this viewpoint. They believe that combining the best ideas from different philosophical approaches will enable more young students to maximize their abilities and become successful readers.
Conclusions

This research has explored the complicated relationship between two specific reading philosophies, the corresponding instructional formats and strategies, and student achievement in reading. The main objective of this project was to research and assess the effect that a format utilizing direct instruction and a combination of strategies would have on the reading achievement of urban first grade students. A second research question was designed to study the effect of the same instructional format on the literacy achievement of three ability subgroups and a Case Study group.

This study utilized a quasi-experimental design with four classes of intact first graders. The final count showed a total of twenty-four students in the experimental group and thirty students in the control group. These students remained in the classroom for the entire year and completed all test measures. The classroom teachers were selected through the use of the (TORP) survey designed to self-identify reading orientation. The survey results identified the teacher’s reading philosophy as either phonics based, skills based, or whole language.

The only planned difference between the two groups was in the instructional mode of delivery for the chosen curriculum objectives. The control group provided reading instruction implementing whole language and literature based strategies consistent with the Virginia Beach Language Arts program. The experimental group implemented an instructional format developed and modified by Dr. Patricia Cunningham (1994). Her
four block model of writing, working with words, teacher directed literature, and self selected literature was taught daily.

The reading achievement of first grade students was analyzed through several tests that measured decoding, vocabulary, and comprehension skills. A measurement tool was also used to assess the students' attitude toward recreational reading and their feelings toward academic reading assignments at school.

The analysis of data from this research has provided valuable and important information regarding reading strategies that are successful with primary readers. The results clearly indicate that the Cunningham strategies were highly effective in development of decoding, vocabulary, and comprehension skills for most primary readers. The four block guide for daily instruction appeared to be especially effective with students who fell within the average to below average range of reading ability. The experimental students benefitted greatly from a consistent instructional format that utilized direct instruction, authentic literature, and integrated decoding strategies. These instructional blocks implemented within a whole language / literature based environment helped most experimental students make significant progress.

Students in the top third subgroup who entered the first grade with a strong vocabulary and good decoding skills seemed to achieve and progress at a quicker rate in the whole language environment. This supports the findings of Klesius,
Griffith, and Zielonka (1991) who indicate that strong readers require little to no phonics instruction and limited direct instruction during the language arts period. Therefore, it is logical to assume that the whole language philosophy would appeal to their strengths and interests. The flexibility of a whole language classroom may also allow top students more opportunities to explore literature at a higher level of ability and personal interest.

The Elementary Reading Attitude Survey is a valid and reliable tool used to measure a student’s attitude toward leisure reading and classwork reading assignments. However, the data presented by McKenna and Kear (1990) seems to indicate that it is more useful and reliable as the students get older, their reading ability improves, and their attitudes toward reading become more stable. Their conclusions appear to be supported by the results from this study.

The posttest scores on the Attitude Survey, for both groups and all subgroups, were lower in the spring than they were in the fall. Although the scores were not significantly different between the two groups, the mean scores for students in the experimental group and all experimental subgroups were more positive than the results from the control group.

This is an important area of distinction because many whole language proponents, such as Deegan (1995), believe that whole language is a superior approach when attempting to foster a child’s interest in reading. This research seems to indicate that a daily format of direct and systematic instruction within a whole language / literature based
Effects of Direct classroom does not erode a student's interest in reading.

A review and analysis of data from the Case Study group provides results that are more complicated and difficult to interpret. Research by Stahl and Miller (1989) notes that whole language strategies may be more successful with kindergarten students than with first grade students. However, as students begin to develop more sophisticated reading skills, they seem to achieve reading success at a faster rate with methods that utilize direct instruction.

The final results from this research project appear to support this belief. Since the Case Study students were functioning at a prereading level similar to kindergarten students this may help to explain why there were only minor differences between the results of the two groups. The Case Study students in both groups benefitted from whole language strategies which provided children with numerous opportunities to experience all types of authentic literature. The use of authentic literature is a valuable strategy that is especially important for students at the prereading level. However, all students in this study were exposed to significant experiences with quality children's literature.

This may help to explain why the Case Study students appeared to progress at similar rates in both groups. However, the remaining experimental students in the bottom third, who were not in the Case study group, improved at a far superior rate with the Cunningham format. It appears that these students had progressed beyond the prereading stage and were ready for more complex reading instruction. This
interpretation also supports the research previously mentioned by Stahl and Miller.

The Cunningham method has shown that it is an effective approach to help students achieve reading success. The combination of strategies including working with words, phonics, decoding, writing, authentic literature, and direct instruction have effectively enabled students of all ability levels to achieve progress.

The most significant gains achieved in this study were from those students who scored within the average to below average range of ability. This is an important distinction because the majority of students who attend urban schools fall within this range of ability when they first begin school. The Cunningham model is an effective approach for these students and should be carefully studied by any urban school or school district that utilizes authentic literature.

Research has shown that direct instruction and the use of authentic literature are necessary components of any quality reading program. However, the use of authentic literature without a consistent format for instruction often raises the concern that important curriculum objectives are not being addressed or are being neglected.

This research indicates that direct instruction is the key to increased reading achievement for primary students. The Cunningham format focuses on teacher directed instruction that is designed to improve the quality and consistency of reading instruction that is being provided in the urban classroom. With this method students receive direct
Effects of Direct instruction in writing, integrated decoding skills, and reading strategies, in conjunction with the use of authentic literature. And as Stanovich (1995) has stated:

That direct instruction in alphabetic coding facilitates early reading instruction is one of the most well-established conclusions in all behavioral science....Conversely, the idea that learning to read is just like learning to speak is accepted by no responsible linguist, psychologist, or cognitive scientist in the research community (p. 22).

Direct reading instruction, including decoding and word attack skills, are effectively provided to students when the Cunningham model is implemented. Students, especially those with average to below average reading ability will continue to make significant progress utilizing this format and these important strategies.

Implications for Further Research

The final results of the data collected in this study are interesting and quite compelling. The results appear to address some important questions regarding strategies that have been successful with beginning readers of varying knowledge and experience levels. There were high levels of statistical significance on all three reading skills tests administered to students in the experimental group. There were also high levels of statistical significance on these tests for the experimental students in the bottom subgroup.
Although this data is valuable, further research with a larger sample size and in other settings is needed to replicate these findings.

Further research is also necessary to validate the results found with the students in the middle group who scored in the average range. The scores for experimental students in the middle group improved considerably in comparison with the middle subgroup of students in the control group. An analysis of covariance was not completed due to the small sample size. However, the experimental students did score much higher on the two Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests and the Cunningham Names Test. Further research with a larger sample size of average students would yield important data.

An analysis of test results evaluating the students in the top group provided very different data. Top students in the control group scored much higher on the Gates-MacGinitie Tests, and produced minimally higher scores on the Cunningham Names Test. These results are completely opposite those gathered from the bottom and average groups where the experimental groups were considerably more successful. Although the sample size for this subgroup is extremely small, the data appears to be consistent. Further study with top ranked students in this area would be a valuable addition to the present research base.

The results from the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey in this study showed a reduction in posttest scores for both groups and all subgroups. The posttest mean scores for the experimental group and all subgroups were reduced by less than
the scores for all of the control groups. For this reason it is apparent that this section of the study would benefit greatly from additional research, midyear testing, and possibly other methods of measuring reading attitude.

Another important question to be researched further involves the difference in scores between the Case Study students who were the lowest ranked students and those in the bottom third subgroup. Experimental students in the bottom third scored significantly higher on all skill testing in comparison with those in the control group. However, the Case Study students who were also assigned to the bottom third of the experimental group showed no statistical differences with Case Study students in the control group.

Continued research and comparisons of different reading philosophies and strategies will provide valuable documentation. And further data collection and analysis will help to guide educators toward the best path to follow in the development of reading curricula and the implementation of instructional strategies that are successful with primary reading students.

However, despite the limited sample size, the present data gathered from this research is powerful. The use of a combination of strategies focusing on teacher directed instruction appears to be the most important factor in the success of the Cunningham format. Statistical significance for students in the experimental group was gained in the areas of decoding, vocabulary, and comprehension. For students of low to average reading ability this format has proven to be a
valuable and effective method to help them achieve reading success in the classroom.
References


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Effects of Direct


Effects of Direct 122


At the request of the Superintendent, an Elementary Language Arts Research Action Team, composed of teachers, instructional coordinators, administrators, parents, and university representatives, was formed to conduct and review related research. This information will be used by the team in formulating recommendations for the future direction of the language arts curriculum development and textbook adoption committees.

All elementary classroom teachers and reading resource teachers were asked to complete a survey relating to future directions for language arts instruction in the school division. A total of 855 teachers completed and returned the survey. The percentage of teachers selecting each response choice is listed below.

1. Opportunities should be provided daily for students to write.
   
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>78 %</td>
<td>18 %</td>
<td>2 %</td>
<td>1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 %</td>
<td></td>
<td>0 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Writing activities should be an integral part of all content area instruction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>68 %</td>
<td>26 %</td>
<td>5 %</td>
<td>1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 %</td>
<td></td>
<td>0 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Language arts instruction should be coordinated with the school library staff to reinforce and enhance instruction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>58 %</td>
<td>33 %</td>
<td>7 %</td>
<td>1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 %</td>
<td></td>
<td>0 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Language arts instruction should provide opportunities for whole group reading.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>62 %</td>
<td>31 %</td>
<td>5 %</td>
<td>1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 %</td>
<td></td>
<td>0 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Language arts instruction should provide opportunities for small group reading.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>63 %</td>
<td>32 %</td>
<td>4 %</td>
<td>1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 %</td>
<td></td>
<td>0 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. A variety of reading instructional strategies should be used by the teacher.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>83 %</td>
<td>16 %</td>
<td>1 %</td>
<td>0 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Writing instructional strategies should be modeled by the teacher.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>73 %</td>
<td>25 %</td>
<td>2 %</td>
<td>0 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. Flexible groups should be used to meet varied student needs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>46 %</td>
<td>37 %</td>
<td>13 %</td>
<td>4 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. Language arts instruction is most effective when integrated with all subject areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50 %</td>
<td>29 %</td>
<td>14 %</td>
<td>6 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. A new basal series is needed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13 %</td>
<td>10 %</td>
<td>27 %</td>
<td>32 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. A spelling textbook is needed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35 %</td>
<td>19 %</td>
<td>14 %</td>
<td>18 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. Trade books are needed to support the basal reading series.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>58 %</td>
<td>29 %</td>
<td>10 %</td>
<td>3 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13. A comprehensive language arts guide is needed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32 %</td>
<td>28 %</td>
<td>15 %</td>
<td>17 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14. Using a thematic approach in language arts is effective.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>41 %</td>
<td>33 %</td>
<td>20 %</td>
<td>5 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15. Consistency is needed in the citywide language arts program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<td>49 %</td>
<td>32 %</td>
<td>12 %</td>
<td>6 %</td>
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</table>
16. Intensive staff development should be an on-going part of the language arts program.
   Strongly Neither agree Strongly Agree Agree nor disagree Disagree Disagree
   34 % 39 % 18 % 8 % 2 %

17. Phonics instruction is an essential part of the language arts program.
   Strongly Neither agree Strongly Agree Agree nor disagree Disagree Disagree
   61 % 30 % 6 % 2 % 1 %

18. Phonics instruction should be incorporated into the development of vocabulary and comprehension rather than taught separately.
   Strongly Neither agree Strongly Agree Agree nor disagree Disagree Disagree
   46 % 31 % 10 % 10 % 3 %

19. Opportunities for students to do some oral reading daily is important.
   Strongly Neither agree Strongly Agree Agree nor disagree Disagree Disagree
   49 % 37 % 8 % 6 % 0 %

20. Opportunities for students to do recreational reading daily is important.
   Strongly Neither agree Strongly Agree Agree nor disagree Disagree Disagree
   66 % 30 % 3 % 1 % 0 %

21. Students should be grouped by reading ability when organizing classes for instruction.
   Strongly Neither agree Strongly Agree Agree nor disagree Disagree Disagree
   17 % 22 % 18 % 26 % 17 %

22. Handwriting instruction should be an important part of elementary language arts instruction.
   Strongly Neither agree Strongly Agree Agree nor disagree Disagree Disagree
   36 % 45 % 12 % 6 % 1 %

23. English grammar and mechanics should be an important part of the language arts program.
   Strongly Neither agree Strongly Agree Agree nor disagree Disagree Disagree
   67 % 27 % 4 % 2 % 1 %

24. English grammar and mechanics should be taught and applied in correlation with reading and writing instruction rather than as a separate subject.
   Strongly Neither agree Strongly Agree Agree nor disagree Disagree Disagree
   45 % 27 % 9 % 5 % 7 %
25. An English textbook is needed for language arts instruction.

<table>
<thead>
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<td>38 %</td>
<td>20 %</td>
<td>16 %</td>
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Should _______ be used as an assessment in language arts?

26. tests

Yes  No  I don’t know

89 % 9 % 2 %

27. daily work

Yes  No  I don’t know

92 % 7 % 1 %

28. running records

Yes  No  I don’t know

59 % 21 % 20 %

29. writing samples

Yes  No  I don’t know

88 % 10 % 2 %

30. projects

Yes  No  I don’t know

75 % 17 % 8 %

31. oral reading

Yes  No  I don’t know

71 % 25 % 4 %

32. retelling

Yes  No  I don’t know

75 % 17 % 8 %

33. participation in class discussion

Yes  No  I don’t know

82 % 14 % 4 %

34. discussions

Yes  No  I don’t know

71 % 23 % 6 %
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<td>37. portfolios</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. some other strategies (please describe)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Should ______ be used as a teaching strategy in English ?</td>
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<td>44. games / centers</td>
<td>71</td>
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45. some other strategies (please describe)

Yes  No  I don't know
15 %  18 %  67 %

I feel _____ is an effective approach to teach reading.

46. whole language (trade books, no basal textbook, no citywide curriculum guide)

Yes  No  I don't know
26 %  67 %  7 %

47. balanced literature - based / basal reader / whole language (current program)

Yes  No  I don't know
80 %  17 %  2 %

48. basal reader

Yes  No  I don’t know
30 %  64 %  6 %

49. some other combination of approaches (please describe)

Yes  No  I don’t know
17 %  21 %  62 %
A survey was sent to parents of students in randomly selected classes of students in grades 1 to 5. The number of parents returning completed surveys for each grade level are as follows:

Grade 1 - 161 parents
Grade 2 - 170 parents
Grade 3 - 160 parents
Grade 4 - 198 parents
Grade 5 - 167 parents

Their responses to each of the questions on the survey are listed below.

In our school division's language arts program, do you think:

1. opportunities should be provided daily for students to write.

   (All numbers are percentages)

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2. writing activities should be include as part of instruction in all subject areas.

   (All numbers are percentages)

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3. small instructional groups of students with similar strengths, weaknesses, or interests should be formed as needed.

(All numbers are percentages)

<table>
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<tr>
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4. children should have a spelling textbook.

(All numbers are percentages)

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5. language arts should be taught the same in all schools in Virginia Beach.

(All numbers are percentages)

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6. phonics should be an essential part of the language arts program.

(All numbers are percentages)

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7. Students should have opportunities to read books of their choice each day in school.

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8. Handwriting instruction should be an important part of language arts.

<table>
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9. English grammar and mechanics should be an essential part of the language arts program.

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10. An English textbook is needed for language arts instruction.

<table>
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11. Use of the library should be an important part of language arts instruction.

(All numbers are percentages)

<table>
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<tr>
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Do you think, in our language arts instructional program, the methods listed below should be used in determining a student’s language arts grade?

12. Tests

(All numbers are percentages)

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13. Daily work

(All numbers are percentages)

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14. Writing samples

(All numbers are percentages)

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### 15. projects

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### 16. oral reading

(All numbers are percentages)

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### 17. participation in class

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### 18. discussions

(All numbers are percentages)

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### 19. silent reading

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21. portfolios

(All numbers are percentages)

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22. some other methods (methods identified are listed below)

Grade 1
- More individual challenges or goals
- Creative writing skills
- Journals
- Extra credit assignments
- Book reports
- Grammar exercises
- Comprehension
- Verbal testing
- Oral creativity / reciting or telling a story or thought
- Forming reading groups by skill or need for help

Grade 2
- Effort
- Quizzes
- Memorization (poetry, small dialogues)
- Handwriting (printing)
- Homework and extra credit work with parents signature

Grade 3
- Problem solving / communications
- Observed ability and improvements
- Group participation
- Effort

Grade 4
- Projects to encourage creative writing diaries, journals, plays poetry, etc.
- Debates
- Computers
- Phonics
- Public speaking / speeches
Effects of Direct

Grade 5
Behavior
Interviews
Quizzes
Book reports
Extra credit
Appendix C
The DeFord
Theoretical Orientation to Reading
Profile (TORP)

Name

Directions: Read the following statements, and circle one of
the responses that will indicate the relationship of the
statement to your feelings about reading and reading
instruction.

1 2 3 4 5

(select one best answer that reflects the strength
of agreement or disagreement).

1. A child needs to be able to verbalize 1 2 3 4 5
the rules of phonics in order to assure SA SD
proficiency in processing new words.

2. An increase in reading errors is usually 1 2 3 4 5
related to a decrease in comprehension. SA SD

3. Dividing words into syllables according 1 2 3 4 5
SA SD
to rules is helpful instructional
practice for reading new words.

4. Fluency and expression are necessary 1 2 3 4 5
SA SD
components of reading that indicate
good comprehension.

5. Materials for early reading should be 1 2 3 4 5
SA SD
written in natural language without
concern for short, simple words and
sentences.

6. When children do not know a word, they 1 2 3 4 5
SA SD
should be instructed to sound out its
parts.

7. It is a good practice to allow children 1 2 3 4 5
SA SD
to edit what is written into their own
dialect when learning to read.

8. The use of a glossary or dictionary is 1 2 3 4 5
SA SD
necessary in determining the meaning and
pronunciation of new words.

9. Reversals (e.g., saying "saw" for "was") 1 2 3 4 5
SA SD
are significant problems in the teaching
of reading.
10. It is a good practice to correct a child as soon as an oral reading mistake is made.

11. It is important for a word to be repeated a number of times after it has been introduced to insure that it will become part of sight vocabulary.

12. Paying close attention to punctuation marks is necessary to understanding story content.

13. It is a sign of an ineffective reader when words and phrases are repeated.

14. Being able to label words according to grammatical function (nouns, etc.) is useful in proficient reading.

15. When coming to a word that's unknown, the reader should be encouraged to guess upon meaning and go on.

16. Young readers need to be introduced to the root form of words (run, long) before they are asked to read inflected forms (running, longest).

17. It is not necessary for a child to know the letters of the alphabet in order to learn to read.

18. Flashcard drills with sightwords is an unnecessary form of practice in reading instruction.

19. Ability to use accent patterns in multi-syllable words (pho'to graph, pho to' gra phy, and pho to gra' phic) should be developed as part of reading instruction.

20. Controlling text through consistent spelling patterns (The fat cat ran back. The fat cat sat on a hat.) is means by which children can best learn to read.

21. Formal instruction in reading is necessary to insure the adequate development of all the skills used in reading.

22. Phonic analysis is the most important form of analysis used when meeting new words.
23. Children’s initial encounters with print should focus on meaning, not upon exact graphic representation.

24. Word shapes (word configuration) should be taught in reading to aid in word recognition.

25. It is important to teach skills in relation to other skills.

26. If a child says "house" for the written word "home," the response should be left uncorrected.

27. It is not necessary to introduce new words before they appear in the reading text.

28. Some problems in reading are caused by readers dropping the inflectional endings from words (e.g., jumps, jumped).
Appendix D

Early Literacy Strategies
Birdneck Elementary

Grades (K, 1, 2, & Special Education)
10 hours total - 1 hour per week

October 12, 1994 - December 14, 1994
Library 4:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Instructors: Beth Holland & Diane MacKay
Reading Recovery Teachers - Birdneck

This course will explore early literacy observational and teaching techniques through which to promote the development of strategic readers within a K - 2 classroom.

Sessions

I. What is reading? What is strategic reading?
II. Use of cues and early strategies.
III. Higher level strategies / Observation.
IV. Running records / Continuum of reading abilities in K - 2.
V. Guided reading: What is it? How to achieve it.
VI. Book instruction selection and focus.
VII. Small group literacy plan.
VIII. Reading fluency / Writing.
IX. Assessment.
X. Conclusion.

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Appendix E

Categories for Teacher Behavior
Observational Instrument

Observer_________________ School/Teacher__________ Date________

Categories for Teacher Behavior: Descriptions

WHOLE LANGUAGE BEHAVIORS

1. **Teacher instructs using whole stories, poems, or books.**
   * Everything that children are asked to read has characteristics of whole, real, functional language.
   * Trade books, big books or language experience charts are used for the reading lesson.
   * Reading lesson begins with the teacher reading stories or poem aloud to the children to build background and interest.
   * Teacher reads to students for enjoyment.
   * Children are encouraged to reread favorite stories, large charts or big books.

2. **Teacher emphasizes the meaning of language.**
   * The focus of instruction is how to make sense of the whole.
   * The teacher builds comprehension strategies as a way of using information to construct meaning.
   * Teacher promotes discussion about what was read.

3. **Teacher uses whole texts appropriate to specific contexts to teach reading strategies.**
   * A whole sentence, paragraph or poem that is meaningful to the students is used for skill development.
   * A daily teacher’s message to the children is used for skill development.
   * Instruction moves from the whole to the parts.
   * Phonetic cue systems are presented in context such that each are orchestrated to support effective use.
   * One system of phonics may be highlighted in an instructional context, but never outside of natural use.

4. **Teacher uses brain-storming and predicting to build background experiences for instruction.**
   * Teacher uses brain-storming and predicting to build background prior to reading.
   * Children are actually involved in sharing their knowledge about the story topic and making predictions about the setting, plot, and resolution of the story prior to reading.
   * Reading is a process of predicting and confirmation.
   * Teacher uses brain-storming as a prewriting activity.
5. **Teacher teaches by example.**
   * Teacher demonstrates proficient reading and writing.
   * Teacher demonstrates what it means to be strategic.
   * Teacher varies the process by content and context.
   * Teacher helps children make connections.
   * Teacher reads during a sustained silent reading period.

6. **Teacher emphasizes trying and risk taking.**
   * Teacher encourages children’s attempts to read and write through frequent praise even though the attempts are approximations of mature reading and writing behaviors.
   * Teacher does not interrupt reading to correct miscues but allows the child to self correct and develop strategies.

7. **Evaluation is informal.**
   * Teacher observes children who are engaged in reading activities involving whole and connected language sources.
   * Teacher makes audio and/or video tapes of children reading.
   * Teacher conferences with individual children.
Categories for Teacher Behavior
Observational Instrument

Observer__________________ School/Teacher__________ Date__________

Categories for Teacher Behavior: Descriptions

WHOLE LANGUAGE ENVIRONMENT

1. **The atmosphere is homelike.**
   * There are comfortable and inviting places where children can curl up with their favorite books.
   * There are large carpeted areas for reading, teaching, or discussing.
   * Desks are pushed aside in an informal way or are replaced by tables.

2. **Environment is "littered" with children’s and teacher’s printed language.**
   * Children’s compositions, dictation, and artwork are abundantly displayed throughout the classroom on bulletin boards, walls, ceiling, windows, and floor.
   * There are printed messages from the teacher.
   * Most everything possible is labeled.

3. **Numerous and varied books are provide for children’s use.**
   * Books are attractively displayed inviting children to read.
   * Books are easily accessible to the children.

4. **Classroom fosters cooperation and collaboration.**
   * Children are working together on a common interest or goal.
   * Children are allowed to help each other with their reading and writing.
   * Busy noise is allowed as children work collaboratively.

5. **Flexible grouping patterns are used.**
   * There are no fixed achievement groups for reading instruction.
   * Teacher forms groups for interest.
   * Teacher forms groups for instruction based on a common need.

6. **Thematic learning centers are provided.**
   * Learning centers focus on a single topic or theme.
Appendix F

Lesson plans - Cunningham Format

Teacher ____________________  Date ____________________
Literary Selection / Textbook Edition ____________________

1) Writing Mini-Lesson -
   Objective:

   Procedure:

   Evaluation:

2) Working With Words -
   Objective:

   Procedure:

   Evaluation:

3) Authentic Literature / Textbook -
   Objective:

   Procedure:

   Evaluation:

4) Self Selected Reading -
   Objective:

   Procedure:

   Evaluation:
## Appendix G
### CUNNINGHAM NAMES TEST

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### Elementary Reading Attitude Survey

**Scoring Sheet**

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<th>Grade</th>
<th>Administration Date</th>
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**Scoring Guide**

- 4 points: Happiest Garfield
- 3 points: Slightly smiling Garfield
- 2 points: Mildly upset Garfield
- 1 point: Very upset Garfield

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**Raw score:** _____

**Full scale score (Recreational + Academic)** _____

**Percentile ranks**

- Recreational: _____
- Academic: _____
- Full scale: _____
Elementary Reading Attitude Survey Questions

1. How do you feel when you read a book on a rainy Saturday?

CHOICES

Happy Slightly Mildly Upset
Happy Upset

2. How do you feel when you read a book during free time?
3. How do you feel about reading for fun at home?
4. How do you feel about getting a book for a present?
5. How do you feel about spending free time reading?
6. How do you feel about staring a new book?
7. How do you feel about reading during summer vacation?
8. How do you feel about reading instead of playing?
9. How do you feel about going to a bookstore?
10. How do you feel about reading different kinds of books?
11. How do you feel when the teacher asks you questions about what you read?
12. How do you feel about doing reading workbook pages and worksheets?
13. How do you feel about reading in school?
14. How do you feel about reading your school books?
15. How do you feel about learning from a book?
16. How do you feel when it's time for reading class?
17. How do you feel about the stories you read in class?
18. How do you feel when you read out loud in class?
19. How do you feel about using a dictionary?
20. How do you feel about taking a reading test?
Autobiographical Statement

Steven M. Scarcelli
B.A. May 1979, Virginia Wesleyan College
M.S. August 1988, Old Dominion University

Steven M. Scarcelli was born in Portsmouth, Virginia in 1957. He attended elementary, middle, and high school in the state of Virginia. As an adult, he has worked as a letter carrier, supervisor, and station manager for the United States Postal Service. However, most of his adult career has been spent as a teacher and administrator with the Virginia Beach City Public Schools. He presently works as an assistant principal at Birdneck Elementary School.