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# Elementary Principals' Literacy Practices and Their Relationship to Student Achievement in Reading

Sandra Carper Cox  
*Old Dominion University*

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**ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS' LITERACY PRACTICES AND THEIR  
RELATIONSHIP TO STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IN READING**

by

Sandra Carper Cox  
B.S. June 1973, Longwood College  
M.S. August 1976, Old Dominion University  
Ed.S. May 1997 The George Washington University

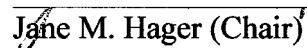
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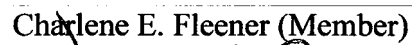
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Approved by:

  
Jane M. Hager (Chair)

  
Charlene E. Fleener (Member)

  
William A. Owings (Member)

## **ABSTRACT**

### **Elementary Principals' Literacy Practices and Their Relationship To Student Achievement in Reading**

Old Dominion University, 2010

Sandra Carper Cox

Director: Dr. Jane Hager

Principal behavior is under intense scrutiny, particularly in light of increased demands for higher and higher levels of student achievement. Reading achievement is the measure by which schools as well as principal leadership are judged. This study examined principals' literacy practices and their relationship to student achievement in reading. Measures used for analyses included a researcher-developed survey instrument, the Principal Quality Literacy Practices Survey, and results from the grade five Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) English: Reading test.

Survey data from 109 principals and 160 reading specialists from Southeastern Virginia were utilized. Principals and reading specialists reported that overall principals' actions were either proficient or exemplary. Principals rated as proficient were reported to demonstrate practices that have made a positive and measurable impact on the teaching and learning of reading. Principals rated exemplary were reported to demonstrate literacy practices that exhibited clear, convincing, and consistent evidence of a significant and measurable impact on student achievement in reading. Principals were rated highest in the areas of assessment, diagnosis and evaluation, and professional development. Further analysis of survey responses revealed statistically significant differences in principals' and reading specialists' responses by question.

Data from seventy-four schools, in which the principal and reading specialist both completed the study survey, were utilized to investigate the relationship between principals' literacy practices and grade five SOL scores. No significant statistical relationship between principals' literacy practices, as reported by the Principal Quality Literacy Practices Survey, and student achievement was found.

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## Chapter I

### INTRODUCTION

"Position Opening: School Principal

Anytown School District

Qualifications: Wisdom of a sage, vision of a CEO, intellect of a scholar, leadership of a point guard, compassion of a counselor, moral strength of a nun, courage of a firefighter, craft knowledge of a surgeon, political savvy of a senator, toughness of a soldier, listening skills of a blind man, humility of a saint, collaborative skills of an entrepreneur, certitude of a civil rights activist, charisma of a stage performer, and patience of Job.

Salary: lower than you might expect.

Credential required. For application materials, contact..." (Copland, 2001, p. 528).

Who would lead schools in America? Over 87,000 men and women answer this call in elementary schools across our country every day (United States Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics, 2007). Copland is accurate in his description of the multitude of skills required of principals. Instructional leadership is at the forefront of the required competencies expected of principals.

#### Background and Context

##### *Increased Accountability*

The passage of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 brought accountability for school performance to new levels in the United States. Signed in January, 2002 by former President George W. Bush, the law outlined unprecedented challenges for schools "to implement a tightly prescribed accountability model with the goal of all students achieving grade level proficiency in reading or language arts and mathematics within twelve years" (Erpenbach, Foree-Fast and Potts, 2003, p. 1). Its purpose is to articulate a framework on how to improve the performance of America's

schools, while ensuring that no children are educated in a failing school. President Bush stated that "too many of our neediest children are being left behind" despite the fact that close to \$200 billion of Federal dollars had been invested in the public schools since the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (Executive Summary, NCLB).

Measures of student achievement, according to NCLB, include proficiency related to various sub-groups: students for whom English is their second language, those receiving special education services, and disadvantaged students (as calculated by the number of students receiving free or reduced-price meals). As a result many states revamped and redeveloped their definitions of proficient using existing state assessments as the measure.

#### *Virginia Standards of Learning*

The Commonwealth of Virginia developed standards and expectations for student learning, K-12, in 1995. The standards outlined the goals and objectives taught at each grade level and for each subject. Current standards include English, mathematics, science, history/social science, technology, the fine arts, foreign language, health and physical education, and driver education (Virginia Department of Education Standards of Learning, 2009). The Standards of Learning (SOL) provide guidance to school districts for developing local curriculum and local assessments. Standards of Learning tests are administered to elementary students in grades 3, 4, and 5. Table 1 illustrates the SOL assessments for each elementary grade and the required proficiency performance level.



Table 1

*Standards of Learning Test Administration and Required Proficiency*

	<u>English</u>	<u>English</u>	<u>Math</u>	<u>History/Social</u>	<u>Science</u>
	<u>Reading</u>	<u>Writing</u>		<u>Science</u>	
Grade 3	* 75%	-	* 70%	* 70%	* 70%
Grade 4	* 75%	-	* 70%		
Grade 5	* 75%	* 70%	* 70%	*70%	* 70%

\* Test administered at this grade level

Results from these high-stakes tests assess whether a school had earned accreditation by the Commonwealth of Virginia. Each school is rated on a School Performance Report Card which is published on the Virginia Department of Education web site (<http://www.va.doe.gov>), school division web sites, and local school web sites. Data is also widely published in the local print media.

SOL test results are tied to the requirements of NCLB with implications for school districts as well as individual schools for those that do not meet required yearly benchmarks. Consequences for schools in low-income areas that receive Title I funds are particularly stringent. Schools that do not achieve accreditation or make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for three consecutive years face sanctions that could consist of removal of the principal, re-staffing of the school, and school choice for students.

Required scores for accreditation on the Standards of Learning tests have been expressed as minimal competences. For many schools student achievement in reading is a reflection of the school's literacy programs as a whole. For purposes of this study fifth grade achievement on the SOL English:Reading Test was used as the measure of student achievement.

### *Reading Achievement*

A child's ability to read well is the standard by which we measure and judge our schools. Strong readers create successful students. "What was a satisfactory level of literacy in 1950 probably will be marginal by the year 2000" (Anderson, 1985, p. 3) as quoted in *Becoming a Nation of Readers* was prophetic. The demands of the new century for higher levels of literacy as well as different types of literacy are staggering.

Some experts paint a bleak picture of the state of reading achievement in America today (Murphy, 2004).

"The most basic expectation for children attending school is that they will learn to read and write. Sadly, this expectation is not always fulfilled for school children in the United States, far too many of whom fail at the basic school task of literacy acquisition." (p. 40).

"Far too many children have trouble reading and writing. About 20 percent of elementary students nationwide have significant problems learning to read; at least another 20 percent do not read fluently enough to enjoy or engage in independent reading" (p. 40).

"Approximately 25 percent of elementary school students are not adequately learning to read [and] write" (p. 41).

Others state that there is an "epidemic of reading failure" and "a crisis in American reading education" (Murphy, 2004, p. 40). Murphy reports that the reading problem in American must be put in perspective, for "most children do learn to read adequately" (Brown & Fulton, 1990, p. 225). "As a number of analysts have demonstrated, the overall level of reading achievement in the U.S. has remained fairly stable since 1970" (Taylor et al., 2000, p. 267). In fact "...children in grades K-8 today read as well or better than children at any time in the history of the United States" (Klenk & Kibby, 2000, p. 667; see also Kaestle et. a., 1991)" (Murphy, 2004, p.41). These conflicting messages, which flood the media, portray educators as failing to do the job they are hired to do. Whether there is an actual crisis in failing to teach our children to read or a crisis in confidence, it is clear that leaders in schools must bring reading and literacy instruction to the forefront.

### *Instructional Leadership*

Instructional leadership of the elementary principal has followed a long tradition of multiple and expanding roles. Principals, who were once viewed as social and moral leaders, as well as managers and bureaucrats, are now considered to hold the pivotal role of instructional leader (Beck and Murphy, 2003). In 1996 the International School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) developed standards that describe expectations for principals. The standards require that principals "possess the knowledge, beliefs, and skills that create a common shared vision and motivate others toward it, direct the teaching and learning process, manage the operations of the school, unite the entire learning community, deal with legal and external forces, and have ethics that are beyond approach" (Irvin & White, 2004, p. 21). Within the framework of increased

accountability to ensure achievement for all students, the principal must make certain that his/her time is spent on building and improving the instructional program at his/her school.

### *Literacy Leadership*

Strong instructional leadership is one of the four factors that make a difference in reading achievement (Weber, 1971). Leadership related to literacy is a direct outgrowth of instructional leadership. Literacy related routines are often at the forefront of the daily practices of principals (Spillane, 2005). These actions and behaviors, associated with school programs, are called the "hand of leadership" by Thomas Sergiovanni (2007, p. 19). Through the hand of leadership the school principal then prioritizes learning as the most significant goal in the school (Dufour, 2003). It stands to reason that literacy leaders make the teaching of reading their number one priority (Hoffman and Rutherford, 1984; Liekteig, et. al, 1995; Murphy, 2004; Ylimaki and McClain, 2005; and Sherman and Crum, 2007). Literacy leadership as described by Taylor and Gunter (2006) charge principals to create a "fail-safe system of literacy so that all students have access to the standards based curriculum" (p. 2) through actions that encourage students to become active readers. The effective school principal exercises a strong influence on the reading program in his/her school.

Reading specialists serve in a key position in the elementary school. Working alongside the principal and the school's literacy team, the reading specialist fulfills a multitude of roles including: coordinating the school wide literacy plan, recommending and collecting resources, developing and using assessment data, working with classroom teachers, providing professional development for teachers, modeling lessons and

providing intervention services for children. In addition, the reading specialist often serves as a resource for the principal (IRA, 2000; Quatroche and Wepner, 2008) by keeping him/her abreast of the current practices as well as the state of reading instruction and achievement in the school. This type of collaborative community "is characteristic of schools that show positive literacy results for students (Guth and Pettengill, 2005, p. 13).

#### Statement of the Research Problem

The purpose of this study is to explore principals' literacy practices associated with reading among a group of elementary principals and reading specialists in school districts in Southeastern Virginia. Elementary principals' literacy practices and their relationship to student achievement, as measured by the Virginia Standards of Learning English: Reading Test will be examined.

#### Research Purpose and Questions

The study will answer the following questions:

1. How do elementary principals rate themselves as literacy leaders based on their actions associated with reading instruction?
2. How do elementary reading specialists rate their principals as literacy leaders based on their actions associated with reading instruction?
3. What is the relationship between elementary principals' literacy actions associated with reading and student reading performance?

#### Importance and Significance of the Study

A number of researchers have examined the implications of principal leadership (Weber, 1971; Hallinger and Murphy, 1985; Andrews and Soder, 1987; Heck et. al, 1990; Heck, 1993; McEwan, 1998; Cotton, 2003; Marzano, 2003; Hallinger, 1996, 2003;

Leithwood and Mascall, 2008). Strong instructional leadership is listed as second only to the influence of classroom instruction on student learning (Leithwood, Anderson, & Walstrom, 2004). Leithwood and Montgomery (1982) explained that while principals promote student achievement they work within a framework by "attempting to influence a complex set of classroom-based and school-wide factors" (p. 334). Blase and Blase (2004) described behaviors and common traits of effective principals. Providing professional growth activities for all staff members and supervision that highlights collaboration versus control are just two examples that demonstrate the breadth of school-based activities. However, a correlation between principal leadership actions and student achievement is less clear due to a number of competing variables. Within the intricacies of the school setting, instructional organization, school governance, and school climate influence principal effectiveness (Bossert et. al. 1982; Leithwood and Montgomery, 1982; Heck, Larsen and Marcoulides, 1990; Heck, 1993; Leitner, 1994; Hallinger and Heck, 1996; O'Donnel and White, 2005).

Principals' literacy practices have been identified generally, but explicit literacy practices have not been measured in isolation nor examined in relationship to student achievement in reading. This study will identify the strength of the relationship between principals' specific literacy practices associated with reading and student achievement in reading. Results will add to the existing body of literature associated with instructional leadership specific to reading.

## Methods

### *Research Design*

A quantitative research design was employed for this study. Descriptive statistics were used to identify the sample as well as the participants' practices based on identifying factors. Correlation coefficients provided a measure of the relationship between principals' literacy practices associated with reading instruction and student achievement in reading. Quantitative methods included a researcher developed Principal Quality Literacy Practices Survey based on the International Reading Association Standards for Reading Professionals (2004).

### *Participants*

Participants in this study included elementary principals and reading specialists who currently work in schools in Southeastern Virginia. Principals represented a cross-section of schools including Title I and non-Title I, as well as urban, suburban and rural schools.

### Summary

Changing demands on schools require high levels of leadership. In an era of increased accountability and call for higher achievement for all students, the role of the elementary principal has transformed from manager to instructional leader. Lawrence Lezotte (1994) stated, "When researchers find a school where all students master the intended curriculum, they soon realize they are in the presence of an anomaly — a school where the normal flow has been altered by some powerful force. In the individual school, that search for the source of this powerful force leads in most cases to the principal's office" (p. 21). Leadership in the area of literacy in particular is paramount

since reading performance is considered the foundation for school success. This study will quantify and describe elementary principals' literacy leadership practices and their relationship to student achievement in reading.

### Overview of the Study

Chapter I includes an introduction, background and context for the study and statement of the research problem. Chapter II includes a review of the literature. The review provides a historical context in which reading has been taught in the United States including governmental influences and accountability measures. Changing roles of elementary principals will be discussed in light of instructional as well as literacy leadership. Chapter III will include a discussion of the methodology used in the study, including research design used to collect and analyze data. Chapter IV describes an analysis of the data related to the research questions. Chapter V includes a summary and discussion of the findings. Limitations of the research will be discussed as well as implications for future research and practice.

### Definition of Terms

Elementary Principal:

The elementary principal is the administrator of a local school that serves students in any combination of grades prekindergarten through grade five.

Literacy Leadership:

Literacy leadership, for the purposes of this study, is defined by identifying daily practices of the principal related specifically to reading instruction.



- Principal Literacy Practices: Literacy practices are identified based on the Principal Literacy Practices Survey, the instrument used for this research.
- Reading Specialist: The reading specialist is a teacher who has earned an advanced professional endorsement in the field of literacy. He or she fulfills a variety of roles in the school including leading the literacy team, working with teachers and students, providing professional development, developing and analyzing assessment data.
- The Standards for Reading Professionals: The Professional Standards and Ethics Committee of the International Reading Association developed standards for Reading Professionals. The standards describe competencies for various levels of reading leaders including paraprofessionals, classroom teachers, reading specialists/coaches, teacher educators, and administrators.
- Standards of Learning (SOL) Test: The SOL test is a measure of student performance in reading, writing, math, history/social science, and science used throughout the state of Virginia. All subjects are assessed in grade five, reading and math in grade 4, and reading, math, history/social

science, and science in grade three. For the purposes of this study the grade five English: Reading scores will be used.

Student Performance:

Student performance will be measured by the academic performance on the reading portion of the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) Test.

Delimitations of the Study

Two delimitations will affect the generalizability of the current study.

1. The participants in the study will represent schools in Southeastern Virginia
2. Student performance is restricted to one measure, one grade, and one year of grade 5 reading scores on the Virginia Standards of Learning Test.

## Chapter II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Introduction to the Literature

An historical perspective plays an important role, providing a framework for the national literacy journey. "In the last ten years or so a major shift has occurred in the research in the field traditionally called "reading". An emblem of this shift is the adoption of the term *literacy* to refer to the phenomenon under study. The term literacy signals a recognition of the complex relationships among reading, writing, ways of talking, ways of learning, and ways of knowing" (Murphy, 2004b, p. 17). Literacy and literacy leadership in particular, will form the basis for this literature review.

The changing role of the elementary principal as an instructional leader and its affect on student achievement will be considered. A dimension of literacy leadership will be examined in light of characteristics and effective school practice. The reading specialist's perception of the principal's practice as a literacy leader will be explored. Finally, the principal's influence on student achievement will be investigated.

#### Historical Perspective

The definition and understanding of literacy in the United States has changed dramatically over the past one hundred years. Signing one's name with an "X", once considered a measure of literacy, has now developed into an intricate and complicated description that includes high levels of reading and writing, critical thinking, and inferential comprehension. Today, as we enter the twenty-first century, literacy is considered a birthright, particularly to Americans (Gordon and Gordon, 2003). It is vital to review the definition of reading education within an historical context since many

changes in instruction as well as measurement are due to historical factors that occurred during various time periods in American history.

### *Early America*

The earliest period of American reading instruction followed the customs and beliefs of the mother country, England. As the Church of England changed from Catholicism to Protestantism, the control of the schools by the church was essential. Therefore the materials for teaching students included scripture, the Psalter, the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the Ten Commandments, and the Catechism (Smith, 1965). Students learned letters by memory followed by memorizing syllables. After mastering letters and "the syllabarium" (p. 32) the student would then begin reading the primer, so called because it contained the primary religious instruction for the child.

Reading instruction for the next sixty-five years followed the focus of the country as the nation continued to grow. The purpose was to build strong citizens. Even the titles of the readers captured a patriotic tone such as *The American Spelling Book*, *An American Selection of Lessons in Reading and Speaking*, *The Columbian Orator*, *The American Preceptor*, *American Popular Reader*, to name a few (Smith, 1965). For the latter part of the nineteenth century through the 1870's the motivation for teaching the citizenry to read was to develop the intelligence of the people who would elect the leaders and determine laws and policies. Following the Civil War a new era of peace and tranquility was accompanied by an interest in reading that would elevate one's cultural development in music, literacy, and art (p. 115).

*Measurement of Literacy*

Measurement of literacy has taken many forms in American history, including the ability to sign one's name or make a mark, how many books one owned, and memorization, comprehension, and performance on written examinations. The source of these measures included the census, wills, deeds, inventories, marriage records, petitions, military recruit records, depositions, criminal records, business records, and job applications (Graff, 1987). Nila Banton Smith (1965) describes the period beginning in 1910 as ushering in the "first truly great break-through in American reading instruction" (p. 157). While there was no outcry for a stronger reading instruction, Thorndike's presentation of a handwriting scale to the American Association for the Advancement of Science, gave birth to the scientific movement in education, that is, "measuring educational products scientifically" (p. 157). Following Thorndike's presentation other tests soon followed: arithmetic, composition, spelling, and then a reading test - The Gray Standardized Oral Reading Paragraphs (Smith, 1965). One of the most significant historical influences on reading instruction came as a result of educational measurement. During the period of 1917-1918 as the United States became involved in World War I, it was discovered that many of the soldiers could not read well enough to follow printed instructions needed to fulfill their various roles in the military. Newspaper articles, speeches by educators, and articles in educational journals contained "many spirited discussions lamenting this situation and vigorously urging that reading instruction should be improved" (p. 158). Following this debate, several innovations were introduced which thrive to this day: a change from oral to silent reading, the expansion of reading research, and the development of remedial reading techniques. Other "firsts" as described by

Smith, included using experience charts for teaching early reading skills, the beginning of individualized instruction in reading, and a growing interest in how to improve the teaching of reading (p. 158).

#### *Early Twentieth Century*

Throughout the rest of the 1920s and 1930s reading research was expanded, the concept of reading readiness was established, and diagnosis of reading difficulties was extended. The first reading supervisors were appointed. The period of 1935 through 1950 was marked by national and international conflict and unrest, including World War II and the dropping of the first atomic bomb. Again, the skill level of American soldiers was questioned and an effort to teach young men in Army camps how to read quickly was instituted. Renewed attention was drawn to teaching high school and college students as well. The affect of worldwide strife limited reading research and the development of materials used for instruction.

#### *Mid-Twentieth Century*

Reading instruction was shaped from 1950 through 1965 by a period of rapidly changing knowledge and technology. Americans believed themselves to be leaders in the world, particularly in the areas of science and technology. When the first Russian satellite, Sputnik, was released in 1957, it was feared that the United States was being left behind and would soon fall to Communism. William Carr remarked, "The first Sputnik was followed by a thundering public demand for education" (Smith, 1965, p. 312). Criticism was leveled against the methods of reading instruction during this period as well. Rudolph Flesch published *Why Johnny Can't Read* (Flesch, 1955) maintaining students must be taught using the alphabetic principle as opposed to the whole word

method. Flesch blamed "the "word method" for just about everything that was wrong with the country and politicized what had previously been largely an educational issue, stating, "I say, therefore that the word method [look-say/whole word] is gradually destroying democracy in this country; it returns to the upper middle class the privileges that public education was supposed to distribute among the people. The American Dream is, essentially, equal opportunity through free education for all. This Dream is beginning to vanish in a country where the public schools are falling down on the job" (McEwan, 1998a, p. 22). Flesch continued as an outspoken critic of teaching methods, penning a second book in 1981 entitled *Why Johnny Still Can't Read: A New Look at the Scandal of Our Schools*.

#### *The Great Debate*

Jean Chall (1967) authored *Learning to Read: The Great Debate*. The book was written as a response to the controversy on how best to teach beginning reading. Chall (1999) explained, "It was the heated disagreements regarding the best way to teach beginners to read that convinced the Carnegie Corporation to sponsor my historical analysis and synthesis of past research"(p.8). "Chall visited classrooms, interviewed experts, and analyzed programs. Yet it was her review and analysis of the then-available research on instructional practices that yielded the most stunning conclusions" (Snow, 1998, p. 173). Her research found that "stronger phonics or decoding programs produced higher reading achievement" (Chall, 1999, p. 8). "Chall found substantial and consistent advantages for programs that included systematic phonics, as measured by outcomes in word recognition, spelling, vocabulary, and reading comprehension at least through third grade" (Snow, p. 173).

### *Late Twentieth Century*

The work of Marie Clay, Don Holdaway, Kenneth and Yetta Goodman, Elfrieda Hiebert, and Jerome Harste, to name a few, characterized the researchers and practitioners who reported on how reading should or should not be taught in the 1980s and early 1990s. The debate on the subject of whole language versus skills instruction was prominent at this time. "Chall's (1967) study, as well as the finding of the NRP [National Reading Panel], concluded that one type of approach [to teaching phonics] is not superior to the other" (Barone, 2005, p. 82). While teaching children to use and apply phonics in their reading, it is imperative that students learn other strategies so that they do not become over-reliant on sounding out words.

The terms authentic texts, literature based approach, big books, running records, miscue analysis, thematic units, developmentally appropriate practice, and holistic teaching, were current during the latter part of the twentieth century (Goodman, 2000). Dorothy Strickland (2000) expressed her concern about the "growing polarization and politicization of issues in our field: skills versus meaning; direct versus in-direct instruction; content versus process; textbooks versus trade books; standardized tests versus informal assessment" (p. 385). She maintained those who, like her, hold a moderate view, have a responsibility to find a common ground on which to form the basis of best practices for the benefit of all children.

### Government Influence

The U.S. Government's first serious involvement in education was supported by the interest of President John Kennedy followed by President Lyndon Johnson's war on poverty and joblessness, as well as "civil rights" for all citizens (Smith, 1965, p. 313).



Education in general, and reading specifically, was viewed as the medium for meaningful social change. In 1965, President Johnson proposed an aid-to-education program for the staggering sum of \$1.3 billion to finance the initiatives.

In 1975 the Committee on Reading was appointed by the Executive Council of the National Academy of Education. Its task was to study existing scientific knowledge related to reading and to discover what knowledge was still needed to achieve universal literacy. A result of the committee's work was the publication of *Toward a Literate Society* co-edited by John B. Carroll and Jean Chall (Anderson et al., 1985).

#### *A Nation at Risk*

Secretary of Education Terrence Bell created the National Commission on Excellence in 1981 to examine the quality of education in the United States. Among the charges given to the commission were to: assess the quality of teaching and learning in public and private schools at all levels; compare American schools and colleges with those in other countries; define problems that must be overcome if schools are to become high achieving. The commission was created based on his concern about "the widespread public perception that something is seriously amiss in our education system" (A Nation at Risk, 1|2).

The report, A Nation at Risk, was released on April 26, 1983. It contained a scathing assessment of the state of education in the United States, including strongly worded statements such as, "Our nation is at risk. The educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people" (Coeyman, 2003, | 2). President Ronald Reagan responded to the report by suggesting that "school vouchers, school prayer, and the

abolition of the Department of Education would fix education" (Jfl 8). Chester Finn, a senior fellow at the Hoover Institute at Stanford University, believed that the "publication of *A Nation at Risk* was a major event for the US, but it did more to shock than to correct. He continued, "The report made a lasting contribution by changing national conversation about education" (f 13).

### *Becoming a Nation of Readers*

*Becoming a Nation of Readers: The Report of the Commission on Reading* was published in 1985. In this report sponsored by the National Academy of Education's Commission Education and Public Policy, various experts presented their "interpretations of our current knowledge of reading and the state of the art and practice in teaching reading" (Anderson et. al, 1985, Foreword). In turn, implications based on current research for reading instruction were summarized and a report was written to reach a wide audience of educators as well as laymen. The report concluded, "America will become a nation of readers when verified practices of the best teachers in the best schools can be introduced throughout the country" (p. 120).

### *The National Reading Panel*

Near the turn of the twenty-first century, at the request of Congress, fourteen individuals including "leading scientists in reading research, representatives of colleges of education, reading teachers, educational administrators and parents" (Report of the National Reading Panel, p. 1) were commissioned to study and report upon the status of current research-based knowledge and the effectiveness of various instructional strategies and approaches to teaching children to read. Their conclusions were based on findings "from a meta-analysis of experimental studies conducted on five topics: phonemic

awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension" (Braunger, 2006, vi). In the 1999 report to Congress, the Panel's research suggested that teaching children to read is complex and multi-faceted: learning to read requires a combination of skills including phonics, phonemic awareness, comprehension and fluency (Report of the National Reading Panel, FAQ, While not disputing the findings of the panel, some have been critical of the narrow review of reading described, while omitting important research related to oral language, concepts about print, children's home literacy experiences and text (Coles, 2001;Barone, 2005). Despite its critics, the National Reading Panel report was instrumental in forming the foundation for future reading initiatives, research and publications. The National Reading Panel report continues to influence literacy instruction today.

### *Standards Based Reform*

The standards based reform movement in the United States began in the mid 1990s. At the National Education Summit, governors of 44 states as well as 60 chief executive officers set priorities that they believed necessary to achieve excellence for students in grades K-12 (Duttweiler, 1998). These priorities included high academic standards for all students, rigorous testing, and accountability systems that provided rewards and incentives for all stakeholders who work together to reach the new standards. "Virginia and other states' governors touted standards as the measure for bringing America's schools back to a competitive level" (Bierbauer, 1996, p.1). At the time of the summit, only 14 states had developed content standards for their students. Within two years "almost every state had implemented, or was in the early stages of implementing academic standards for their students in math and reading" (Duttweiler, 1998, 1). There

continues to be on-going debate about standards. "Despite continuing controversy, state content standards have emerged as the most powerful manifestation of the school reform that began with *A Nation at Risk* more than 20 years ago" (O'Shea, 2005, p. 1).

### Reflections on History

The definition of reading literacy has evolved over time from signature literacy, recitation literacy, and the ability to read unseen text and decoding to analytic literacy. Today's definitions of reading attempt to explain the complexity of making meaning with text. Braunger and Lewis (2006) offer several views of the reading process through varying lenses:

Reading is an interactive and constructive process involving the reader, the text, and the context of the reading experience. Reading involves the development of an understanding of text, thinking about text in different ways, and using a variety of text types for different purposes (p. 3).

Reading is a complex and purposeful sociocultural, cognitive, and linguistic process in which readers simultaneously use their knowledge of spoken and written language, their knowledge of the topic of the text, and their knowledge of their culture to construct meaning with the text for different purposes (p. 4).

"Being literate in contemporary society means being active, critical, and creative users not only of print and spoken language but also of the visual language of film and television, commercial and political advertising, photograph, and more" (p. 4).

Reflecting on the historical landmarks that have characterized reading instruction and practice, similar concerns for what students of the next era will face are not new. Over thirty-five years ago Austin and Morrison (Baumann, 2000) stated:

Today we live in a time when tomorrow's citizens will be faced with decisions that would have staggered the imagination of their counterparts of yesterday—decisions related to the spatial revolution, the technological revolution, and the literary revolution. Accordingly, educators cannot long continue to remain content with the kinds of reading instruction that have hitherto satisfied and with merely an inherited instructional diet that makes no provisions for today's readers, much less for those of tomorrow (p. 362).

History reminds us that challenges remain for today's literacy educators. The principal has, throughout American history, played a pivotal role in guiding schools to meet social and political challenges of the time.

#### Leadership of the Principal

Ellwood P. Cuberley, the first dean of Stanford University's School of Education asserted, "As is the principal, so is the school" (Gordon, 2003, p. 41). "Leadership could be considered the single most important aspect of effective school reform" (Marzano, 2003, p. 172). There is no doubt that educational leadership is at the forefront of local, state, and national reforms and initiatives today. The leading models in the field of educational leadership, "as measured by the number of empirical studies, are instructional leadership and transformational leadership" (Hallinger, 2003, p. 329).

The term *principal* occurred as early as 1841 in the writing of Horace Mann. In the earliest days of schooling in America, principals were teaching members of the school staff. Administrative, clerical, and janitorial responsibilities as well as supervision and discipline of students, were part of the job description until the 1920s. At that time the Department of Elementary School Principals was established within the National

Education Association and the position of principal was officially recognized (Beck and Murphy, 2003). Several overriding themes characterized the role of the principalship throughout the last century. The role of the principal in the form of symbolic themes was based on the values, conceptions and standards as well as social and historical forces present in each decade. Table 2 illustrates the themes as described by Beck and Murphy (2003).

Table 2

*Themes of the Principalship*

<u>Decade</u>	<u>Roles and themes</u>
1920s	<p>Role: honorable, with leadership in the community</p> <p>Purpose of education: spiritual truths and values as well as a scientific manager</p>
1930s	<p>Role: administrative, not instructional; chief executive in the school, including organization and supervision</p> <p>The principalship is becoming a separate profession from teaching</p>
1940s	<p>Role: democratic leader, curriculum developer, coordinator, supervisor and public relations representative</p>
1950s	<p>Role: a skilled administrator, combining the skills of teaching with managing; expected to defend educational work with current theories</p> <p>Time management and analyzing and prioritizing tasks at the</p>

Table 2 (*continued'*)

	forefront.
1960s	Role: part of an educational bureaucracy with power and responsibility; expected to use scientific strategies for measuring and planning  Political demands and accountability pressures affect the principal's role and his/her understanding of it.
1970s	Role: leader of teachers, students, and community; encourager of facilitating positive interactions among all groups; juggling many roles; humanistic and socially relevant
1980s	Role: instructional leader; lead with urgency in businesslike atmosphere; establish and cultivate a mission and vision for the school; educational reform at the forefront
1990s	Roles: leader, educator servant, organizational and social architect,  Demographic shift, change in social fabric, crisis in economy

Through the middle of the last century, principals were viewed primarily as administrative managers who kept the school running smoothly. As the federal government became more involved with education in the 1960s and 1970s, principals became responsible for managing programs such as compensatory education, bilingual education, education for the handicapped, and other federal entitlements. Policy makers

developed many of the innovations associated with federal programs; therefore the principal became the manager of the program, often more concerned with compliance than program outcomes or results (Hallinger, 1992).

In the 1960s, researcher James Coleman, was tasked and funded by the United States Office of Education to research and present a federal paper discussing the effectiveness of the educational system in America. His research concluded that public schools did not make a significant difference for children. He credited the family background of the student as the key indicator for school success. He went on to propose that students who came from poor families and who lacked the proper values to support schooling, could not learn, no matter what the schools did (Coleman et al., 1966). The results of this research became an explanation for why students did not achieve, particularly in urban, high poverty school districts. Many researchers attempted to "replicate or in some cases discredit the findings of the Coleman report" (Hoffman and Rutherford, p. 80, 2004). Ron Edmonds, Director of the Center for Urban Studies at Harvard University, responded forcefully. While he acknowledged that family background does have an effect on student achievement, he and others embarked on a search for schools where children from low-income families were successful. In time, Edmonds and others were able to locate many such schools and continue their research. From their studies emerged effective schools research and characteristics or correlates that define a highly successful school. "Edmonds showed that high student achievement correlated very strongly with strong administrative leadership, high expectations for student achievement, an orderly atmosphere conducive to learning, an emphasis on basic skill acquisition, and frequent monitoring of student progress"(Cawelti, 2003, p. 19).



Called a "watershed conclusion" by Hallinger (1992, p. 2), principals were called on to become instructional leaders within the effective schools framework. Edmonds stated, "We can whenever, and wherever we choose, successfully teach all children whose schooling is of interest to us. We already know more than we need in order to do this. Whether we do it must finally depend on how we feel about the fact that we haven't so far" (p. 23, 1979). Thus, the principal's role transitioned from being one of a manager to instructional leader. Warren Bennis eloquently described the difference: "The manager administers; the leader innovates. The manager has a short-range view; the leader has a long-range perspective. The manager asks how and when; the leader asks what and why. The manager accepts the status quo; the leader challenges it; the manager does things right, the leader does the right thing" (McEwan, 1998, p. 7). Definitions of leadership have shifted from bossing to managing to leading. Patterson (1998) adds that the concept of "openness" has become an important value in today's workplaces. This includes openness to active participation, diversity, conflict for the purpose of problem solving, reflection and acknowledging mistakes and learning from them.

In 1996 the International School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) developed standards outlining new roles for principals. Principals are required to "possess the knowledge, beliefs, and skills that create a common shared vision and motivate others toward it, direct the teaching and learning process, manage the operations of the school, unite the entire learning community, deal with legal and external forces, and have ethics that are beyond approach" (Irvin & White, 2004, p. 21). The ISLLC Standards (1996) further describe the roles and requirements of principals:

- Develop, communicate, implement and monitor the vision for learning.

- Develop, monitor and evaluate a culture for learning.
- Promote and manage the organization, operations and resources for successful teaching and learning.
- Collaborate with families and other community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.
- Demonstrate integrity, fairness, and ethics in learning.
- Successfully work within the political, social, economic, legal, and cultural contexts of learning.

The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), a national professional organization dedicated to the advocacy and support of elementary and middle schools principals, published *Standards for What Principals Should Know and Be Able to Do* (2001). The standards include indicators of a quality school as well as six standards that detail what a principal should know and be able to do in order to provide strong instructional leadership. The six standards state that principals should:

1. Lead the school in a way that puts students and teaching at the center.
2. Set high expectations for all students and adults.
3. Demand content and instruction that ensure student achievement of agreed upon academic standards.
4. Create a culture of continuous learning for adults tied to student learning and other school goals.
5. Use multiple sources of data as diagnostic tools to assess, identify and apply instructional improvement.

6. Actively engage the community to create shared responsibility for student and school success.

During the regular school day principals balance a myriad of activities including encounters with students, parents, teachers, phone calls, e-mails, school plant emergencies, and the like. Bredeson (2003) explains that highly successful principals have learned what the most important work of the day entails: "...balancing what others expect them to do with their own work priorities and goals as educational leaders" (p. 68). Edgar Schein (1985) pointed out that if one wants to know what a principal values, pay attention to what he does, rather than what he says is important.

Persell and Cookson (1982) reviewed more than seventy-five studies and reported the characteristics and behaviors of strong principals. These include demonstrating a commitment to academic goals and functioning as a forceful and dynamic instructional leader; they consult effectively with others and gather needed resources; they create order and discipline, use time well, and evaluate their results (McEwan, 1998, p.8). Several features are frequently identified as "critical factors of effective leadership" (Nettles and Herrington, 2007, p. 726). The principal:

- provides a safe and orderly environment.
- states and identifies a clear mission and vision.
- involves a variety of stakeholders throughout the community.
- monitors student progress using school-wide and individual data.
- uses data to guide program and instructional improvement decisions.
- maintains an intense focus on instruction.
- communicates high expectations to students and staff.

- offers and participates in professional development opportunities.

Andrews and Soder (1987) studied elementary and secondary schools in Seattle, Washington to examine how the behavior of the principal affected student performance, focusing on students who achieved below expectations. Interactions between teachers and principals in four key areas were studied: the principal as an instruction resource, the principal as a communicator, the principal as a visible presence, and the principal as a resource provider (McEwan, 1998, p. 9). "Their findings showed that, as perceived by the teachers...the normal equivalent gain scores of students in schools led by strong instructional leaders were significantly greater in both total reading and total mathematics than those students in schools rated as having average or weak leaders"(p. 9).

Hallinger (1996) describes the mood of the country and policy makers during the 1980's as having a "preoccupation with issues of educational productivity" recasting "the issue of principal effects largely in terms of the effects of administrative leadership on student learning" (p. 527). By the 1990s an era of accountability, reform, and change was apparent. Hallinger explains the principal's role at this juncture as transformational. "The new context of the principalship also dramatically highlights the importance of participatory leadership..."(Hallinger, 1992, p. 80). School restructuring "emphasizes the diffuse nature of school leadership (p. 79). Sergiovanni (1990) stated instructional leaders should be teachers. It is the responsibility of the principal to develop the leadership in their teachers so that they can share and/or assume some of the leadership roles in the school. Heck, Larsen, and Marcoulides (1990) concluded, "principals in high achieving schools involve teachers to a much greater extent in instructional decision making" (p.18). This phenomenon has been described as "distributed leadership",

"shared", "collaborative", "democratic", and "participative" (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson and Wahlstrom, 2004, p. 6). Whatever the label, it is clear, that in this time of increased accountability and responsibilities, the principal alone cannot make important decisions, begin new initiatives, and make significant changes in isolation. Reeves (2006) stated that educational organizations must "create an environment in which the leaders are empowered to create complementary teams. Although no single leader will possess every dimension of effective leadership, the team will surely do so" (p. 29). In addition, the United States Department of Labor estimates that 50 percent of the nation's 93,200 principals will retire over the next fifteen years (Cunningham and Cordeiro, 2003 p. 3). It is imperative to not only share leadership, but also develop leaders for the future.

Instructional leadership has also been defined as a series of behaviors that successful principals exhibit in their schools. Blase and Blase (2000) examined the characteristics of school principals and their influence on the teachers' classroom instruction through "instructionally oriented interactions" (p. 7). Through these formal and informal conversations a profile of effective principals emerged as those who strive "to participate fully in instructional and school improvement; to develop a collaborative, democratic, trusting community of leader-learners; and to involve all others from the school community in participative, inquiry-oriented constructivist decision making" (p. 194). These behaviors, skills, and attitudes exhibited by principals are further described by Blase and Blase as "academic leadership" (p. 194). Cotton (2003) identified twenty-five leadership behaviors and traits, which are "positively related to student achievement, attitudes, and social behavior" (p. 67).

The term instructional leader has remained "... a vague concept, supported by anecdotal evidence at best" (Waters et al., 2003, p. 48). The Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) set out to examine the effects of leadership practices on student achievement, including formative and standardized measures. The meta-analysis based on research collected over a thirty-year period found that there is a "substantial relationship between leadership and student achievement" (p. 3) with an average effect size between leadership and student achievement of .25. Twenty-one leadership responsibilities were identified which significantly correlated with student achievement. The top five practices used by principals and their effect size were listed as:

1. Situational awareness (.33): The principal is sensitive to and uses information gleaned from the grapevine to address current and potential problems in the school; is also aware of subgroups and staff relationships within the school.
2. Intellectual stimulation (.32): The faculty and staff are kept abreast of current theories and practices.
3. Change agent (.30): The principal is willing to challenge the status quo and is comfortable leading initiatives even when the outcome is uncertain.
4. Input (.30): The principal involves teachers in decision making related to important changes in policy and the implementation of new initiatives.
5. Culture (.29): The principal fosters shared beliefs and promotes cooperation, a sense of well-being, and cohesion among the staff. (Waters, et. al, 2003)

Waters and Marzano (2003) also indicate that leaders must focus their attention on these practices, but also understand them within the context of change. They argue,

"not all change is of the same magnitude" (p.6); there are specific characteristics of "first order" and "second order" change. Table 3 illustrates these critical differences.

When making changes in organizations to improve student achievement, leaders must understand that not all initiatives will require the same order of change. In a school these changes could include altering methods of reading instruction or assessment, experimenting with new materials, collecting formative data in a new format and analyzing that data from varying viewpoints. "Recognizing which changes are first and second order for which individuals and stakeholder groups help leaders to select leadership practices and strategies appropriate for their initiatives" (Waters, et. al, 2003, p. 8).

Table 3

*First and Second Order Change*

<u>First order change</u>	<u>Second order change</u>
An extension of the past	A break with the past
Within existing paradigms	Outside of existing paradigms
Consistent with prevailing values and norms	Conflicted with prevailing values and norms
Focused	Emergent
Bounded	Unbounded

Table 3 (*continued*)

<u>First order change</u>	<u>Second order change</u>
Incremental	Complex
Linear	Non linear
Marginal	A disturbance to every element of a system
Problem and solution oriented	Neither problem or solution oriented
Implemented by experts	Implemented by stakeholders

Michael Fullan (2002) addressed the central role of the principal as an instructional leader and stated that it "has been a valuable first step in increasing student learning, but it does not go far enough" (p. 17). Leaders are needed "who can create a fundamental transformation in the learning cultures of schools and of the teaching profession itself" (p. 17). A deeper understanding of the school's culture and the role it plays within the framework of student improvement is essential. Furthermore, the leader's influence will have a far reaching and lasting impact on the organization itself if the principal assumes the role of a "Cultural Change Principal", (p. 17) one who can see the big picture and transform the school through the people and teams who work there. Fullan advocates intensive training for principals in the form of "job embedded, organization embedded, and system embedded" (2009, p. 46) leadership development to fully understand instructional leadership.



The Learning First Alliance identified five high poverty districts that made improvements raising student achievement. The purpose of the study was to learn "more about how districts promoted good instruction across their system" (Togneri, 2003, p. 1). Through interviews, school visits, and focus groups, a report entitled *Beyond Islands of Excellence* was published. While the actions of many stakeholders played important roles in the districts' successes, "...district leaders viewed principals as the primary leaders of instructional improvement at the school level" (p. 38). Most principals described their roles in terms of supporting the instructional program at their school and providing leadership in several crucial ways: used and fostered the use of data to guide instructional decisions; observed in classrooms on a regular basis; created "structures and time for teacher collaboration" (p. 39); partnered with teacher leaders; refocused professional development to meet district vision and principals. One administrator observed, "Our principals are among the best instructional leaders in the state. They are eager learners. They are not resistant to change, and they are thoughtful about change. They learn from each other"(p. 39).

Principal quality was operationally defined using a researcher-developed rubric aligned with the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium standards by Kaplan, Owings, and Nunnery (2005). In a study of sixty-two elementary, middle, and high school principals the relationship between principal quality and student achievement was examined. Their research found that at third and fifth grade, in particular, student achievement, as measured by Virginia Standards of Learning Tests (SOL), was higher in schools where the principal was rated most positively on the quality index rubric.

Researchers concluded, "principal quality is linked statistically and practically to student achievement" (p. 43).

How the principal views instructional leadership is critical to improvement in student learning. Richard DuFour (2003) describes his own journey as an instructional leader, which began in the mid 1970s. As a dedicated leader, he spent countless hours over many years observing in classrooms and providing helpful feedback to the teachers under his supervision. The focus of observations was the improvement of instruction. He then shifted "from a focus on teaching to a focus on [student] learning..." (p.13). "More succinctly, teachers and students benefit when principals function as *learning leaders* rather than *instructional leaders* " (p. 13). While this powerful statement may seem like an issue of semantics, DuFour elaborates, "when learning becomes the preoccupation of the school" (p. 13) only then can the school change in substantial ways.

Reitzug and West (2008) interviewed principals to determine how the principals viewed their leadership practices and the impact on teaching and learning in their schools. Four themes and qualities formed a conceptual analysis of instructional leadership styles: relational, linear, organic and prophetic. While the styles differed, each of the principals viewed their purpose within a framework for improving instruction and student achievement.

Five major findings from leadership research are summarized below: (Leithwood, 2003).

1. Leadership of the principal and its effect on student achievement is second only to a strong curriculum and classroom instruction by the teacher.

2. Teacher leaders and the principal provide the majority of leadership in schools. The principal exerts leadership through "constellations of actions" (p. 3) that describe models of leadership including transformation, instructional, and shared or participative leadership.
3. Three practices are essential for educational success: setting a vision and direction for the school; developing the staff and creating a strong culture for learning within the organization.
4. Accountability policies challenge leaders and encourage them to respond with positive action.
5. Student diversity offers a challenge for leaders to respond to children and families' cultures in an affirmative manner.

Thomas Sergiovanni (2007) explained leadership as personal to each individual who assumes the role of the principal. "Leadership is a personal thing. It comprises three important dimensions - - one's heart, head, and hand" (p. 19). The *heart* of leadership embraces the leader's beliefs and vision for what makes a school a great place. When a principal uses the *head* of leadership, he or she applies the theories, knowledge, and skills gleaned from experience to every new situation or problem. The *hand* of leadership involves the principal's actions, behaviors, and decisions related to school programs and procedures. "Each principal must find her or his way, develop her or his approach if the heart, head, and hand of leadership are to come together in the form of successful principalship practice" (p. 20).

## Literacy Leadership

Instructional leadership is complex. However multifaceted instructional leadership may be, a focus on literacy learning is imperative. A literacy leader, then, combines the characteristics of instructional leadership within the framework of particular actions that increase teacher and student focus on reading. "Building principals and others serving as reading leaders can have a major impact on student growth in reading and writing. The substance, humanism, and style that leaders bring to daily decision making can mean the difference between productive or mediocre language arts outcomes" (Sanacore, 1994, p. 64).

Ylimaki and McClain (2005) conducted a qualitative study of literacy leaders to "gain a more in-depth understanding of the impact of current reading policies on evolving understandings of effective (holistic) literacy philosophy practice" (p.268). Their findings indicated that while the teachers and administrators identified as literacy leaders remained committed to their philosophies of effective reading instruction, they felt pressure to: refrain from using such terms as "whole language" or "balanced literacy"; align the language of curricula and grants to more closely resemble current ideologies; provide fewer services to the lowest achieving students in favor of assisting students whose standardized test scores could make the greatest impact on overall student achievement at the school. In a subsequent qualitative study, Sherman and Crum (2007) queried principals on how they "facilitate and serve as catalysts for successful reading instruction" (p. 396) in their individual schools. The findings concluded that in spite of the many challenges and changes inherent in their schools, each principal made reading a priority in his or her school.

Burch and Spillane (2003) determined that principals' "leadership activity" (p. 533) related to literacy and math was specific to "subject matter norms" (p. 533). In the area of literacy principals encouraged discussion about, and the development of, literacy curriculum with teachers in all subject areas as a common practice. James Spillane (2005) found differences in leadership practices depending on the subject matter as well. In a mixed-method longitudinal study, leadership practices and routines were examined between the subject areas of reading, math, and science. Findings showed that the principal was involved to a greater extent in literacy-related routines than in either math or science. This was also true for other school leaders, including curriculum coordinators, lead teachers, and assistant principals.

#### *Characteristics of a Literacy Leader*

It is clear that "literacy stands at the forefront of the important concerns on a leader's agenda, with the presiding question being: how should schools be organized so that teachers can help children to develop as proficient readers and writers?" (Booth and Roswell, 2002, p.9). Reading achievement, especially, is of concern to many elementary principals since the focus of literacy instruction is centered on teaching children to read. "Weber (1971), one of the first researchers to test the hypothesis that schools can make a difference in reading achievement, found that one of the four factors common in every effective school was strong instructional leadership" (p.27). Chance (1991) reiterated that the instructional leadership of the principal is the key to student achievement. "Cox (1978) concluded that the effectiveness of the reading program depends to a great extent on the leadership of the principal" (p. 27).

Mackey et al. (2006) studied the influence of four elementary principals and the impact on their schools' reading programs and second grade students' reading scores. Four principal composites emerged and were analyzed within the context of the reading program used and National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) standards. "Three concepts that enable an elementary principal to influence the school reading program and student test scores are" (1) the principal's vision of the reading program, (2) the educational background the principal brings with her/him; and (3) how the principal defines her/his role as an instructional leader within the school" (p. 52). One of the four principals interviewed and observed for the study exhibited strong competencies in each of the aforementioned categories. The authors concluded that the principal's capability led to an increase in student reading test scores.

Lickteig, Parnell and Ellis (1995) summarized the findings of Manning and Manning (1981) who surveyed principals to find what they believed were their roles in improving the reading program. The majority reported that, as principals, they should support the professional development of their teachers by attending reading training with them, assist teachers in diagnosing reading problems, and be familiar with current programs in use as well as the approaches that support those materials. All principals agreed that their teaching experience was the greatest influence on their own growth and that "all principals should have first-hand experience in teaching reading" (p.300).

#### *Practices of Literacy Leaders*

The actions and practices of a principal who is a "literacy leader will always speak louder than words" (Cobb, p. 473, 2005). Hoffman and Rutherford (1984) analyzed outlier studies that focused on effective reading programs. The schools studied were

successful in the face of characteristics that may identify them at risk for failure. They discussed three dimensions to effective reading programs that were common to all studies. One dimension of special interest to this review was the leadership behavior of the principal, who either had expertise in reading, or who worked closely with a reading specialist. Practices included:

- Improvement of reading is viewed as a program priority.
- Reading goals are set in terms of student achievement.
- The leader is knowledgeable about reading instruction and has made a firm commitment to a particular method or approach. In fact, in many of the effective schools, the leader had either brought the program with him/her or was responsible for implementation of the new program.
- The leader is actively involved in decisions related to reading instruction.
- The leader continuously monitors student achievement, through the maintenance of an assessment system.
- The leader observes classroom instruction often and provides feedback to teachers (p. 88).

Ediger (2000) provided practical suggestions for how the principal can demonstrate leadership in relationship to reading instruction. First, the principal should guide teachers and students to value personalized and individual reading experiences. Second, and closely related, the principal should ensure there are multiple levels of reading books available in the library for all ages of children to select. Third, poetry should be included in the library collection. Fourth, the principal should stay abreast of current trends and better approaches for teaching reading. Fifth, the principal should

attend and encourage her teachers to attend local, state, and national conferences related to literacy.

Teachers clearly express the values and activities that principals demonstrate which show a strong support of literacy. First and foremost, principals place literacy development as the top priority in the school. Special events celebrate literacy throughout the school year. The principal is involved in professional reading organizations. Support is evident when principals acquire adequate books and materials as well as provide professional development opportunities for the staff (Lickteig, et. al, 1995).

Joseph Murphy (2004) reviewed the "knowledge base of instructional leadership in the area of literacy" (p. 67). Murphy defined the "key leverage points for improvement of literacy programs in the early grades of the elementary school, especially for groups of youngsters who have not fared particularly well in the existing educational system" (p. 92). The connections between school factors and reading achievement were outlined and organized into 10 functions of leadership that impact literacy.

1. Each principal established literacy as a priority by making it clear "that reading is the most important activity undertaken" (p. 75) in classrooms and throughout the school. Resources are linked to this priority through funding and resources for staff, materials, and professional development.
2. The leader and teachers have "an appropriate platform of beliefs" (p. 74), that is, "there is a bedrock belief in the educability of all youngsters in schools that promote mastery of literacy skills" (p.77). All adults in the schoolhouse share responsibility for how students perform.
3. Quality instruction from knowledgeable teachers is key.



4. Principals value instructional time and understand that productive use of and expanded time for literacy instruction is invaluable.
5. Quality programs include: a well-supplied library of multiple levels of texts with varying difficulty and interest; teachers work with students for extended amounts of time in small group learning; a code-emphasis takes center stage for beginning readers.
6. The principal develops and implements systems school wide that include frequent assessments, program monitoring, and early intervention.
7. There is alignment of the reading program from class to class and grade to grade.
8. Principals ensure that appropriate and on-going staff development related to literacy is afforded to all staff members.
9. Parents are involved in their children's literacy development. All members of the school community recognize the importance of parents in helping their children learn to read and make reading improvements.
10. Schools led by effective principals build the capacity by creating a safe, orderly, purposeful, and caring environment.

Murphy concludes that these leverage points "provide the wagon to which leadership must be hitched if it is to serve to strengthen literacy in our elementary schools" (p. 93).

David Booth and Jennifer Rowsell in *The Literacy Principal* (2002) advocate a "whole school approach to literacy" (p.76). This type of approach requires a commitment from the entire school community including students, staff, and parents. It may also call for changes or adjustments in the school calendar, master schedule, or the

manner in which personnel are assigned. For example, teachers need dedicated preparation time for planning, professional development, and reflecting on their students' literacy growth. Literacy instruction must receive top priority by ensuring an hour-and-a-half to a two-hour block for instruction every day. Teachers and staff leaders require coaches and mentors to help continue their own literacy growth. All students who experience difficulty learning to read must be provided assistance to reinforce needed strategies and skills. Finally, it is vital that school families are kept informed regarding their children's literacy development.

Ten elementary principals in Florida were identified as "success stories" in leading reading improvement in their schools. They were chosen as exemplary due to their accomplishments as compared to other schools with a student population who had similar demographics and were not making expected reading gains. Hilliard and Guglielmino (2007) examined their leadership approaches to find what commonalities existed among them. Four characteristics and principals' actions were credited as leading to the success of the schools: innovative practices, teacher empowerment, shared leadership, and use of data to improve student achievement.

#### Literacy Leadership of the Reading Specialist

The principal's leadership, without question, impacts teaching and learning in his or her school. However, leadership does not occur in a vacuum. Principals rely on the expertise and direction of specialists within the building to guide the instructional program. Called "integrated leadership" by Marks and Printy (2003), this type of leadership combines the dimensions of shared and transformational leadership. The

reading specialist often serves an important role in sharing leadership tasks when developing goals and objectives for the school's literacy program.

The role of the reading specialist is diverse, complex, and multidimensional. The position has changed significantly since it was originally defined by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965. Title I funding was the first federal initiative for "compensatory reading education in U.S. Schools" (Dole, 2004, p. 462). The Title I teacher's role was to provide remedial instruction to struggling readers in pull out programs. Roles of the reading specialists described by the International Reading Association have changed substantially in the past three decades. Table 2 illustrates those changes. The newest standards (2003) describe knowledge and skills related to reading professionals on a continuum ranging from paraprofessionals through administrators. Revised standards are proposed for release in spring, 2010.

Table 4

Changes in IRA Standards for Reading Professionals through Three Decades

<u>Decade</u>	<u>Description of Roles</u>
1980	Diagnostic/remedial specialist Developmental reading/study skills specialist Reading consultant/reading resource teacher Reading coordinator/supervisor
1990	Teacher or clinician Consultant/coordinator

*Table 4 (continued')*

	Teacher educator/researcher
2000	Paraprofessional
	Classroom Teacher
	Reading specialist/literacy coach
	Teacher educator
	Administrator

Under the reauthorization of ESEA in 2000, new goals for reading instruction were added to include hiring highly qualified classroom teachers, and the use of scientifically based reading strategies and classroom-based reading assessments. The National Research Council report, *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998), recommended reading specialists for all schools because of the leadership and instructional expertise they provide to students and teachers alike. In a position paper The International Reading Association, in *Teaching All Children to Read: The Roles of the Reading Specialist*, defined the leadership role of the reading specialist. He or she is viewed as one who exhibits a strong influence on the school's reading program, acts as change agent, coordinates the school wide literacy program, develops curriculum, selects materials, and provides professional development. It is clear that today's reading specialists "are expected to serve as leaders of literacy for teachers, schools, and the community because they have responsibility for the literacy performance

of readers in general and of struggling readers in particular" (Quatroche and Wepner, 2008, p. 99).

Bean, Swan & Knaub (2003) investigated the role of the reading specialist in schools with exemplary reading programs. They found that the leadership role undertaken by the reading specialist, albeit an informal one could be described as shared leadership. Shared leadership consists of partnership with other instructional personnel to improve classroom instruction and learning for all students. The reading specialist also may be viewed as a "collaborative consultant serving as a resource to teachers and parents, providing classroom demonstrations, and sharing ideas about instructional strategies and ongoing staff development" (p. 447). Allington and Baker (1999) further explained the role of the reading specialist as one who must not only provide specialized and intensive instruction to students, but should also assist in improving the instruction of the classroom teachers with whom she works. These responsibilities require more than instructional expertise; they involve leadership in the entire school reading program.

Quatroche, Bean, and Hamilton (2008) suggest six major responsibilities that encompass the role of the reading specialist: instruction, assessment, leadership, resource/consultant, collaborator and student advocate. This combination of roles is used to build the instructional capacity of classroom teachers and has transformed the reading specialist's role from one who works with children to one who primarily works with teachers as a coach. The teacher as coach follows a model for professional development that describes various types of support and assistance that is provided to classroom teachers. Dole (2004) explained five dimensions of support available to classroom teachers from the reading coach:

1. Theory - The coach provides background knowledge on specific strategy use through readings, lectures, and discussions.
2. Demonstration - The coach models lessons for the teacher either in person or through videotape.
3. Practice - The coach assists the teacher as she practices the newly learned skills.
4. Feedback - The coach provides specific and focused feedback to teachers regarding their lesson delivery.
5. In-class coaching - The coach helps the teacher solve problems related to a lesson.

This expanding role of the reading specialist from remedial reading teacher to coach and mentor puts specialists in a unique position to recognize the level of expertise regarding reading instruction in his or her school. With this understanding he or she can play the critical role of not only working with struggling students but also helping teachers provide the best reading instruction possible for their students.

#### Implications for Student Achievement

Research that highlighted the relationship between leadership and student achievement viewed the association through various lenses over time. In the 1980s instructional leadership "dominated inquiries.. .transformational leadership received attention in the extant literature of 1990s. Today, the research is dominated by inquiries examining the relationship between vision and school effectiveness" (Knoeppel and Rinehart, 2008, p. 501).

The search for the link between the actions of school leaders and student achievement was described as "elusive" by Witziers, Bosker, and Kruger (2003). In a quantitative meta-analysis these researchers studied the direct effects of educational leadership on student achievement between 1986 and 1996. Their findings suggest a small effect size. However, their research also revealed that principals believe that "improvement in student achievement is central to their role" (Glasman, 1984, p. 289). Gurr, Drysdale and Mulford (2007) further illustrated a variety of "pathways to attaining outstanding student outcomes" (p. 20) including a clearly articulated vision and mission, building relationships with staff, and understanding the various contexts within which they work. The principal does not impact learning in the same fashion as teachers, namely, at the student level. They may, however, "impact teaching and classroom practices through such school decisions as formulating school goals, setting and communicating high achievement expectations, organizing classrooms for instruction, allocating necessary resources, supervising teachers' performance, monitoring student progress, and promoting a positive, orderly environment for learning" (Heck, Larsen, and Marcoulides, 1990, p. 95).

In a study of four principals who led challenging schools, Ylimaki (2007) found that each of the principals improved student achievement in their schools with assorted leadership strengths. Differences included sharing leadership roles, strong pedagogical knowledge, ensuring a safe school, and creating environments for teaching and learning. In a similar study Jacobsen et al. (2007) examined the leadership of three principals in high-poverty elementary schools who improved student achievement following their tenure at the schools. Common practices of the principals incorporated the establishment

of a safe learning environment, setting high expectations for students, parents, and teachers, and holding everyone accountable for the achievement of their students.

Hallinger, Bickman, and Davis (1996) studied the nature and extent of the effect of the principal's leadership on reading achievement. Their results showed no direct effects of the principal's instructional leadership on student achievement. However, the results "supported the belief that a principal can have an indirect effect on school effectiveness through actions that shape the school's climate" (p. 527). The leadership of the principal is influenced by contextual variables such as gender, social economic status, and parental involvement. Therefore, the principal's role in school effectiveness should be viewed through a contextual lens that "places the principal's leadership behavior in the context of the school organization and its environment" (p. 527). While researchers cannot definitively measure direct effects of a principal's leadership on test scores, Hallinger states that it probably does not matter. The important point is that "both for research and practice, is understanding the ways in which principals shape effective educational programs by working with teachers, staff, parents, and students" (p. 545).

Results from the Learning for Leadership Project (Leithwood et. al., 2004) illustrated that successful school leadership plays a significant role in improving student learning in two ways. First, "leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn in school" (p.3). Second, the "effects of successful leadership are considerably greater" in schools who face more challenges (p.3). "There are no documented instances of troubled schools being turned around without the intervention by a powerful leader. Many other factors may contribute to such turnarounds, but leadership is the catalyst" (p. 3).



## Summary

The work of educational leaders is complex. Three interconnected themes appear to dominate the current educational landscape in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (Lugg, et. al, 2002). First, the shift from "muscle-work" to "mind-work" (p. 37) created the demand for a more highly educated work force, therefore creating the sense that the health of the American economy is dependent on the success of the public schools. "Economic concerns will continue to be crucial in shaping public education policies and practices (p. 37)." Second, the economy has given states a much larger role in considering and providing funding for schools. More stringent requirements for teacher licensure, changes in curricula, graduation prerequisites, and professional development are often mandates attached to funding. Third, regulation is accompanied by an increase in required state-mandated standards and the accountability for results that follow. Educational leaders must be aware of how each of these components shape the way schools operate in America today.

An historical overview in terms of literacy acquisition, the political climate, how children learn to read, and school leadership provide perspective to educators regarding literacy instruction in the early twenty-first century. It is clear that administrators have the tools and knowledge to make significant improvements at the school level to impact student achievement in all areas of literacy. Application of that knowledge is the means by which one becomes a literacy leader.

## Chapter III

### METHODOLOGY

Principal behavior is under intense scrutiny in light of increased demands for higher and higher levels of student achievement. Reading achievement, in particular, is the measure by which we judge our schools and the leadership of the principal.

"Significant relationships have been identified between selected school leadership practices and student learning, indicating that evidence existed for certain principal behaviors to produce a direct relationship with student achievement" (Nettles and Harrington, 2007, p. 724). It is this belief that frames the methodology for this study. Leadership related to literacy is a direct outgrowth of instructional leadership. Literacy related routines are often at the forefront of the daily practices of principals (Spillane, 2005).

#### Research Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore principals' literacy practices associated with reading among a group of elementary principals and reading specialists in school districts in Southeastern Virginia. Elementary principals' literacy practices and their relationship to student achievement, as measured by the Virginia Standards of Learning English: Reading Test, was examined.

#### Research Questions

The questions for this study are:

1. How do elementary principals rate themselves as literacy leaders based on their actions associated with reading instruction?

2. How do elementary reading specialists rate their principals as literacy leaders based on their actions associated with reading instruction?
3. What is the relationship between elementary principals' literacy actions associated with reading and student reading performance?

### Research Design

Using a non-experimental descriptive design, the research questions investigated the relationship between literacy practices of the principal and student reading achievement in grade 5. Principals' and reading specialists' gender, ethnicity, administrative experience, and school type (Title I or non-Title I) provided context and descriptive data for the study.

### Study Sample

Potential survey participants were identified from twenty school districts in Regions I and II, as identified by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE). Contact was made with school division representatives to gain permission to contact elementary principals and reading specialists for the study. A letter to request permission to survey in the district, (Appendix A), a copy of the survey (Appendix B), and the letter to potential participants (Appendix C) were used as part of the application packet. Additional requirements from individual districts were met. Of the twenty districts that were initially contacted, permission was granted from seventeen school districts to conduct the study. One district representative denied permission because of the research burden on principals in that geographical area of Virginia. The second district representative stated via e-mail that teachers were not allowed to rate principals in their school district. The negative response from the third district arrived well after the researcher had closed the

survey to respondents.

Experience as a principal and years in their current assignment were taken into consideration for inclusion in the study. While experience and continuity at the current school is frequently a factor in the principal's success as a principal (Papa, Lankford, Hamilton, & Wyckoff, 2002) as well as "assessing their effect over time on student achievement" (Kaplan, Owings, & Nunnery, 2005), principals were not excluded from the study based on this factor alone.

An initial list of school participants was identified by district at the end of the 2008-2009 school year. At the beginning of school year 2009-2010, a new list of schools and principals was generated to ensure that principals' names were accurate. Principals newly assigned to their school for the 2009-2010 school year were not included in the study. Table 5 illustrates the potential and final number of survey participants included in the survey.

Table 5

*Elementary Schools Included in the Study*

<u>District</u>	<u>Number of</u>	<u>New</u>	<u>Total Schools</u>
	<u>Elementary</u>	<u>Principals in</u>	<u>Included in</u>
	<u>Schools, K-5</u>	<u>2009-2010</u>	<u>Survey</u>
	24	9	15
<b>2</b>	5	3	<b>2</b>

Table 5 (continued)

<u>District</u>	<u>Number of</u>	<u>New</u>	<u>Total Schools</u>
	<u>Elementary</u>	<u>Principals in</u>	<u>Included in</u>
	<u>Schools. K-5</u>	<u>2009-2010</u>	<u>Survey</u>
	19		16
4	3	0	3
5	3	0	3
7	<b>2</b>	1	1
8	14	0	14
9	54	0	54
10	8	1	7
11	14	0	14
12	1	0	1
13	10	<b>2</b>	8
14	23	4	19
15	<b>2</b>	1	1
16	4	0	4
17	4	0	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>200</b>

## Protection of Human Subjects

The study was reviewed and deemed exempt by the Human Subjects Review Committee of the Darden College of Education at Old Dominion University. The following steps were taken to protect human subjects including confidentiality and anonymity.

1. Focus group members were advised of the purpose of the study and asked for consent prior to participation in the focus group.
2. Survey participants were advised of the purpose of the study and asked for consent prior to proceeding with the survey.
3. No identifying information concerning the principal, reading specialist, individual schools, or school districts were included in the study.
4. Only the researcher reviewed individual survey responses and school test data.
5. Individual survey responses and school test data were stored in a password-protected file.
6. Print copies of survey data were kept in a secured location with access limited to the researcher.
7. The final report does not include information that will identify individuals, schools or school districts.
8. After the completion of the research project all survey data, both print and electronic, will be destroyed.

## Measures

### *Principal Quality Literacy Practices Survey*

The measure utilized for the study was the Principal Quality Literacy Practices Survey. A rubric was adapted in both form and design, from the Principal Quality Rubric developed by Kaplan, Owings, and Nunnery (2005) and used with the consent of the authors for survey development. Descriptors for the survey were derived from the Standards for Reading Professionals developed by the Professional Standards and Ethics Committee of the International Reading Association (IRA, 2004). Permission was granted from the International Reading Association (IRA) for the use of the Standards for Reading Professionals, Revised 2003, for dissertation purposes (Appendix D). The Standards for Reading Professionals describe the five standards and accompanying competencies expected of various reading professionals including paraprofessionals, classroom teachers, reading specialists/coaches, teacher educators, and administrators. Standards include:

1. Knowledge of the foundations of reading and writing processes and instruction.
2. Use of a wide range of instructional practices, approaches, methods, and curriculum materials to support reading instruction.
3. Use of a variety of assessment tools and practices to plan and evaluate effective reading instruction.
4. Creation of a literate environment that fosters reading and writing by integrating foundational knowledge, use of instructional practices,

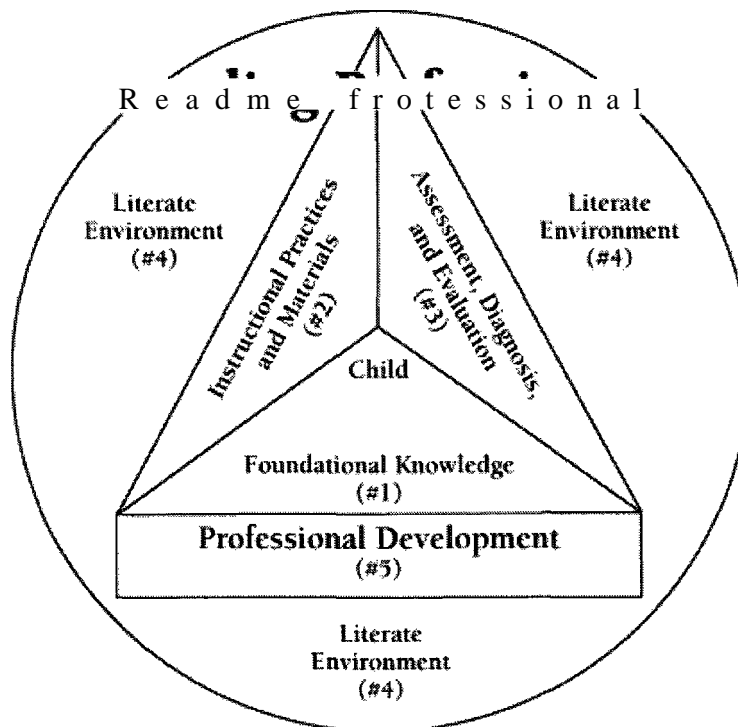
approaches and methods, curriculum materials, and the appropriate use of assessments.

5. Viewing professional development as a career-long effort and responsibility (IRA, 2004, p. 8).

Figure 1 further illustrates the combination of standards used to assess the qualities of the reading professional (IRA, 2003, p. 9). The reading professional forms the summit of the figure with professional development forming the theoretical base. Foundational knowledge, instructional practice, and assessment combine to create the rich literate environment needed for cultivating strong literacy instruction.

Figure 1

International Reading Association Reading Standards





The original performance criteria included in the category for administrator candidates of the IRA 2003 document were used to identify actions and categorized as proficient. These descriptors were used as a starting point to develop a rubric that would ultimately serve as the foundation for the Principal Quality Literacy Practices Survey. The researcher subsequently added descriptors for the unsatisfactory, basic, and exemplary categories.

#### Validity and Reliability

The Principal Literacy Practices Rubric is based on Standards for Reading Professionals developed by the Professional Standards and Ethics Committee of the International Reading Association. A task force of reading experts from across the United States developed this document over a three-year period. Modifications of the standards were based on "hundreds of contributing comments from members of the education community" (iv, IRA, 2004). In addition, the task force considered twenty-five years of reading research (Appendix E) from acknowledged authorities in the reading field to develop the standards.

To ensure validity of the Principal Literacy Practice Rubric, a draft was presented to six elementary administrators, three reading specialists, and a research/assessment specialist from a local school district for review and feedback. Letters of consent were obtained from each participant (Appendix F). Experience of the administrators who participated ranged from 1 to 15 years. The reading specialists' teaching experience ranged from 15 to 35 years.

Members of the focus group were asked to explain if the descriptors accurately depicted principals' literacy practices and if the format was easily read and understood. Based on the oral and written feedback the rubric was revised. Points of discussion included:

1. The term "distinguished" was used to describe the highest level of principal quality (Kaplan, Owings, and Nunnery 2005) in the original draft. Principals stated that the term "exemplary" more accurately described behaviors.
2. Principals wanted to ensure that the descriptors showed increasing levels of competency from unsatisfactory to basic, proficient, and exemplary. Therefore the verbs to illustrate principal actions were carefully analyzed using Bloom's taxonomy as a guide (Bloom, 1956; Huitt, 2004).
3. Standard 3 Professional Development: The term "ethical" as it referred to the learning context was troublesome for some administrators. Principals stated that they thought if they were not rated highly in that category did that infer that the principals would be considered unethical in their actions? It was ultimately determined by the researcher to remove the descriptor from the rubric.
4. Standard 5 Professional Development: According to the focus group members actions related to planning professional development must be aligned with current assessment data. In addition, evaluation of any professional development effort must be analyzed based on implementation in the classrooms.

5. The researcher originally paraphrased descriptions of competencies included in the IRA document for inclusion in the rubric. However the final rubric contains exact wording in the proficient category as written by the Professional Standards and Ethics Committee of the International Reading Association.

Based on focus group feedback the basic and exemplary categories were revised by the researcher. Noteworthy additions and deletions were made to the rubric based on feedback from administrators and reading specialists (Appendix G).

#### *Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL)*

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) administers SOL tests annually to elementary students in grades three through five in reading. Virginia Standards of Learning test data is available publicly through local print media as well as school and Virginia Department of Education web sites.

#### *Validity and Reliability*

Content validity for the SOL tests includes the development of a blueprint, a content review committee process including expert review, as well as statistical analyses of field test items. Test reliability statistics utilize the Kuder-Richardson Formula #20 (KR-20) to determine the degree to which the SOL test questions consistently measure the same content and skills. Scores on the KR-20 values range from 0 to .99. The KR-20 reliability coefficient for the fifth grade English: Reading/Literature and Research test, which will be used for this research, is 0.89 (Virginia Department of Education, 1999).

#### Analytic Approaches

- Descriptive information on seven demographic variables of the principals and reading specialists were collected.

- Comments provided by principals and reading specialists on the survey were coded and included to elaborate on quantitative data.
- Scores on the Principal Quality Literacy Practices Survey from the principal and reading specialist were obtained for each of the five reading standards yielding a score of between four and fifteen.
- Fifth grade scores on the English: Reading Test of the Virginia Standards of Learning Test were utilized as the measure of student achievement. The reported SOL score will signify the percentage of students who scored at least 75% on the assessment during the spring 2008-2009 test administration.
- A t-test of independent means measured the difference in responses of the principal and reading specialist, by question, on the Principal Quality Literacy Practices Survey.
- A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) compared the principal literacy practices composite score with the student achievement on the Virginia Standards of Learning Test.

### Limitations

There is no known survey, at this time, which measures a similar construct of specific literacy practices of elementary principals that was used in the current study. Although the items for the survey were based on work by other researchers and the International Reading Association, the researcher was unable to compare the current survey to another to measure for internal consistency or validity. The use of a survey alone does not allow for probing by the researcher or explaining misunderstandings of test items to participants.

Since respondents are self-reporting there is volunteer bias. Self-reporting may affect principals' view of social desirability; many may not want to be perceived as lacking strong leadership skills in this area, so may not answer truthfully or at all. "Self-report bias is particularly likely in organizational behavior research" because participants want to "respond in a way that makes them look as good as possible" (Donaldson and Grant-Vallone, 2002, p.247).

Additionally, only principals from a specific area of Virginia have been selected for inclusion in the study, further lowering the generalizability of the study.

The number of principal and reading specialists who chose to respond to the survey could be a limitation in relation to quantitative analysis for research question three. That is, both the principal and reading specialist must respond to receive a composite school literacy score for measurement of the relationship between literacy practices and student achievement in reading. In addition, those who respond to the survey may only be leaders who view themselves as literacy leaders or who have a strong background in reading instruction.

### Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore principals' literacy practices associated with reading among a group of elementary principals and reading specialists in school districts in Southeastern Virginia. Elementary principals' literacy practices and their relationship to student achievement, as measured by the Virginia Standards of Learning English: Reading test was examined. A quantitative method, including an electronically delivered survey/rubric, was utilized to gather data. Descriptive as well as statistical analyses were employed. The results provide insight into which literacy practices are at

the forefront of literacy practice by practicing principals. Chapter IV reports analyses of the three research questions.

## Chapter IV

### RESULTS

Chapter IV presents data and analyses related to three research questions:

1. How do elementary principals rate themselves as literacy leaders based on their actions associated with reading instruction?
2. How do elementary reading specialists rate their principals as literacy leaders based on their actions associated with reading instruction?
3. What is the relationship between elementary principals' literacy actions associated with reading and student reading performance?

This chapter includes analyses of quantitative and qualitative data collected from the researcher-developed Principal Quality Literacy Practices Survey. Using the Principal Quality Literacy Practices Survey principals rated themselves on their literacy practices related to reading instruction. Reading specialists rated their principals on the same twenty-three questions using four rating categories: unsatisfactory, basic, proficient, or exemplary. Information was provided to survey respondents to explain each rating category:

**Unsatisfactory:** There is evidence that the principal's actions have harmed the teaching and learning of reading.

**Basic:** There is evidence that the principal's actions have made little impact on the teaching and learning of reading.

**Proficient:** There is clear evidence that the principal's actions have made a positive and measurable impact on the teaching and learning of reading.

**Exemplary:** There is clear, convincing, and consistent evidence that the principal's actions have made a significant and measurable impact on the teaching and learning of reading.

An optional comment section was provided to allow participants an opportunity to elaborate and respond further to each question.

Electronic surveys were delivered to 456 potential respondents through participant's school e-mail addresses. Respondents represented 200 elementary schools in Regions I and II, as identified by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE). Neither the principal nor reading specialist responded to the survey in thirty-nine schools. Of the 271 principals and reading specialists who began the survey, 269 principals and reading specialists from fourteen school districts completed the survey, resulting in an overall response rate of 58.9%.

Data from 161 schools were analyzed using Survey Monkey© and SPSS 16.0 GP. The survey contained demographic information, survey questions, and a section for optional comments from respondents. Analysis was conducted for data collected from all respondents on the survey questionnaire to answer the first two research questions: how do elementary principals rate themselves as literacy leaders based on their actions associated with reading instruction and how do elementary reading specialists rate their principals as literacy leaders based on their actions associated with reading instruction? A t-test of independent means was conducted to compare the differences in the scores for the principal and reading specialists for each question.

In order to address the third research question, what is the relationship of elementary principal's literacy actions and student achievement in reading, two measures



of data were collected: principal quality literacy practices score and grade 5 reading scores on the Virginia Standards of Learning: English test. A potential pool of 200 schools was identified, with the requirement that a school qualified for inclusion for this portion of data analysis if both the principal and reading specialist from the same school responded to the survey. For twenty-eight of the identified schools, the principal responded but the reading specialist did not; for fifty-nine schools the reading specialist responded but the principal did not. A final group of seventy-four schools was selected for analysis in which both the principal and reading specialist from the same school completed the survey. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) compared the principal literacy practices composite score to grade five reading scores on the Virginia Standards of Learning test.

## Findings

A discussion of each component of The Principal Quality Literacy Practices Survey is included in six sections:

1. Demographics
2. Knowledge of the foundations of reading processes and instruction
3. Instructional strategies and curriculum materials
4. Assessment, diagnosis, and evaluation
5. Creating a literate environment
6. Professional Development

### *Demographics*

Demographic information provided context for the study including respondents' job title, gender, race/ethnicity, number of years in education, number of years in the

current school, type of school district (urban, suburban, rural), school Title I designation, and percentage of students eligible for free and reduced-price meals. Table 6 illustrates the demographics of all study participants.

Table 6

*Demographic Information of Survey Respondents*

<u>Question</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>Percentage of Respondents</u>
1. Job Title		
Principals	109	40.4%
Reading Specialists	160	59.6%
2. Gender		
Male	39	14.4%
Female	232	85.6%
3. Race/Ethnicity		
African American	76	28%
Asian	1	0.4%
Caucasian	190	70.1%
Hispanic	1	0.4%
Other	4	1.5%
4. Years in Education		
1-4 years	0	0.0%

Table 6 (continued)

<u>Question</u>	n	<u>Percentage of Respondents</u>
5-10 years	21	7.9%
10 - 15 years	49	18.4%
16 + years	196	73.7%
5. Years at Current School		
1-4 years	125	46.5%
5-10 years	90	33.5%
10-15 years	25	9.3%
16 + years	29	10.8%
6. Type of School District		
Rural	<b>22</b>	<b>8.1%</b>
Suburban	123	45.6%
Urban	127	47%
7. Title I Designation		
Yes	141	52.4%
No	128	47.6%
8. Percentage of Students Who Receive		

*Table 6 (continued)*

## Free/Reduced Meals

<u>Question</u>		<u>Percentage of</u> <u>Respondents</u>
0 - 25%	58	21.8%
25% - 49%	85	32%
50% - 74%	63	23.7%
75% - 100%	<b>60</b>	<b>22.6%</b>

## Knowledge of the Foundations of Reading Processes and Instruction

Four survey questions addressed the principal's knowledge of reading processes and instruction. Table 7 reports the principals' and reading specialists' responses to the question, "Which statement best describes the principals' actions related to his/her knowledge of reading processes and instruction?" Comments related to the question appear after the table.

Table 7

*Principals' Actions Related to Knowledge of Reading Processes and Instruction*

	<u>Unsatisfactory</u>	<u>Basic</u>	<u>Proficient</u>	<u>Exemplary</u>	<u>Total</u>
Principal	0	2(1%)	57(54.8%)	45(42%)	104
Reading	3(1%)	34(21.3%)	61(38.3%)	61(38.3%)	159

*Table 7 (continued)*

	<u>Unsatisfactory</u>	<u>Basic</u>	<u>Proficient</u>	<u>Exemplary</u>	<u>Total</u>
Specialist					
Total	3(1%)	36(13.6%)	118(44.8%)	106(40.3)	263

*Principals' comments*

"I am also a certified reading specialist and served as a Reading Speicalist [szc] and Title 1 teacher fori 5+ years before becoming a principal."

"I was a former reading specialist from 1992- 2006 before becoming principal at this current school. I was the reading specialist at this current school from 1996 to 2006."

"My most important role is understanding and leading."

I feel strange rating myself. I was a speech pathologist before coming into administration and I have attended many sessions with Carol Ann Tomlinson, studied Gay Su Pinnel and Irene Fontas's [s/c] model on Guided Reading. I have provided and attended extensive training on reading strategies for my staff at three different schools. My reading scores have soared every year as reported by the SOLs.

*Reading specialists' comments*

"She was a high school English teacher and told me that she knew nothing about teaching reading."

"Principal spent teaching career in middle school-limited reading knowledge, but she is learning!"

"principal/szc/ is a former reading specialists [szc]"

"Our Principal works as a literacy advocate. She listens intently to the needs of the building. She sets forth school goals aligned with the needs."

"My principal was a former reading teacher AND language arts coordinator!"

My Principal [szc] was a music teacher with no training in Reading [szc], so she has had to learn about it during her principalship. She is eager to learn and make sure that effective literacy practices are implemented; however, she has never personally taught them.

The principals' knowledge of the history of reading, reading research and use of methods and materials is detailed in Table 8. Written comments from principals and reading specialists related to the question appear after the table.

Table 8

*Principals' Knowledge of the History of Reading, Reading Research, and Use of Methods and Materials*

	<u>Unsatisfactory</u>	<u>Basic</u>	<u>Proficient</u>	<u>Exemplary</u>	<u>Total</u>
Principal	2(1%)	6(5%)	64(61.5%)	32(30.7%)	104
Reading Specialist	7(4%)	42(26.7%)	68(43.3%)	40(25.4%)	157
TOTAL	9(3%)	68(27%)	102(40.6%)	72(28.6%)	251

*Principals' comments*

"Principal has masters in reading education from ODU"

*Reading specialists' comments*

"Exemplary for history of reading within last ten years, but not so much prior to that period."

"to my knowledge the principal has not looked at reading materials since he was a teacher and used a basal series in his classroom ."[s\*"c]

"Exemplary [sz'c]"

The principals' knowledge of the developmental progression of reading is described in Table 9. Written comments from principals and reading specialists related to the question appear after the table.

Table 9

*Principals' Knowledge of the Developmental Progression of Reading*

	<u>Unsatisfactory</u>	<u>Basic</u>	<u>Proficient</u>	<u>Exemplary</u>	<u>Total</u>
Principal	2(1%)	6(5%)	64(61.5%)	32(30.7%)	104
Reading Specialist	7(4%)	42(26.7%)	68(43.3%)	40(25.4%)	157
TOTAL	9(3%)	48(18%)	132(50.5%)	72(27.5%)	261

*Principals' comments*

None

*Reading Specialists' Comments*

Although I am a trained Reading Recovery teacher (I was in that position a number of years ago in a different school district), my current principal has never specifically asked about or utilized my knowledge of reading progression in the first grade.

The principals' knowledge of oral language as it related to reading instruction is explained in Table 10. Written comments from principals and reading specialists related to the question appear after the table.

Table 10

*Principals' Knowledge of Oral Language Related to Reading*

	<u>Unsatisfactory</u>	<u>Basic</u>	<u>Proficient</u>	<u>Exemplary</u>	<u>Total</u>
Principal	0(0%)	13(12.5%)	48(46.1%)	43(41.3%)	104
Reading Specialist	8(5%)	40(25.4%)	60(38.2%)	49(31.2%)	157
TOTAL	8(3%)	53(20.3%)	108(41.3%)	92(35.3%)	261

*Principals' Comments*

None

*Reading Specialists' Comments*



"She may not "develop" systems now, but she encourages their development through collaboration with grade level teachers who are writing curriculum "

"Previously was a speech and language therapist"

"Exemplary"

Principals and reading specialists responded to the question, "Which statement best describes the principal's knowledge of how the components of reading (phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, background knowledge, and motivation) are integrated during fluent reading?" Table 11 illustrates the principals' knowledge of the components of reading and how they are integrated during fluent reading. Written comments from principals and reading specialists related to the question appear after the table.

Table 11

*Principals' Knowledge of How the Components of Reading Are Integrated During Fluent Reading*

	<u>Unsatisfactory</u>	<u>Basic</u>	<u>Proficient</u>	<u>Exemplary</u>	<u>Total</u>
Principal	1(.009%)	9(8%)	46(44.6%)	47(45.6%)	103
Reading Specialist	9(5%)	41(25.7%)	59(37.1%)	50(31.4%)	159
TOTAL	10(3%)	50(19%)	105(40%)	97(37%)	262

*Principals' Comments*

None

*Reading Specialists' Comments*

"Great question. I would like to ask my principal to hear the answer."

"Exemplary"

"The principal does not know the difference between phonics and phonemic awareness"

All of the responses are based on my personal observations of responses given by colleagues. I attend many of the PD [professional development] for reading and rarely do I see principals. They should be required to keep up with the knowledge that the teachers must have. You can easily replace the term principal in your stems with "educators". It is a silent pandemic that includes teachers too!

Summary of the Ratings of Principal's Knowledge of the Foundations of Reading  
Processes and Instruction

In each of the five questions in the category, knowledge of the foundations of reading processes and instruction, principals rated themselves overall as proficient, (M=3.16 - 3.41). Principals rated themselves as follows: proficient knowledge of oral language related to reading (M= 3.16); proficient knowledge of oral language as it relates to reading (M= 3.16); proficient knowledge of the history of reading, reading research and the use of methods and materials (M= 3.21); proficient knowledge of the developmental progression of reading (M= 3.29); proficient knowledge of the components of reading (M= 3.35); and proficient knowledge of reading processes and instruction (M= 3.41).

Reading specialists rated their principals as having basic knowledge on four of five questions related to their knowledge of foundations of reading processes and instruction. Principals were rated as proficient in one area. Reading specialists rated their principals as follows: basic knowledge of oral language as it relates to reading ( $M=2.87$ ); basic knowledge of the history of reading, reading research, and the use of methods and materials ( $M=2.90$ ); basic knowledge of the components of reading ( $M=2.94$ ); basic knowledge of the progression of reading ( $M=2.96$ ); proficient knowledge of reading processes and instruction ( $M=3.13$ ).

An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the differences in the scores for the principal and reading specialists on each of the five questions in this category. There were significant difference in the scores between principals and reading specialists on all questions in the knowledge of reading processes and instruction category, ( $p<.05$ ).

- Reading processes and instruction: principals ( $M=2.81$ ,  $SD=.533$ ); reading specialists ( $M=3.13$ ,  $SD=.812$ )  $<3.120$ ,  $t = .002$
- History of reading, reading research, and use of methods of materials: principals' ( $M=3.21$ ,  $SD=.634$ ); reading specialists ( $M=2.90$ ,  $SD=.833$ )  $<3.261$ ,  $t = .001$
- Developmental progression of reading: principals ( $M=3.29$ ,  $SD=.678$ ); reading specialists ( $M=2.96$ ,  $SD=.880$ )  $<3.270$ ,  $p = .001$
- Knowledge of oral language as it relates to reading: principals ( $M=3.16$ ,  $SD=.659$ ); reading specialists ( $M=2.87$ ,  $SD=.801$ )  $<3.058$ ,  $p = .002$
- Principals' knowledge of how the components of reading (phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, background knowledge, and

motivation) are integrated during fluent reading: principals, ( $M= 3.35$ ,  $SD = .682$ ); reading specialists ( $M= 2.94$ ,  $SD = .895$ )  $t(3.926), p = .000$

### Instructional Strategies and Curriculum Materials

Three survey questions addressed the principals' use of a wide range of instructional practices, approaches, methods and curriculum materials that support reading instruction. The principals' understanding of grouping options for specific purposes during reading appears in Table 12. Principal practices could include the ability or inability to discuss grouping practices for reading, evaluating and supporting grouping practices, or formulating and coaching teachers' use of grouping strategies for students. Written comments from principals and reading specialists related to the question appear after the table.

Table 12

#### *Principals' Understanding of Grouping Options for Specific Purposes for Reading*

	<u>Unsatisfactory</u>	<u>Basic</u>	<u>Proficient</u>	<u>Exemplary</u>	<u>Total</u>
Principal	2(1%)	3(2%)	45(42.8%)	55(52.3%)	105
Reading Specialist	5(3%)	22(13.9%)	82(51.8%)	49(31%)	158
TOTAL	7(2%)	25(9%)	127(48.2%)	104(39.5%)	263

#### *Principals' comments*

"I have an outstanding reading specialist who makes recommendations for grouping in the classroom. I rely heavily on her expertise."

*Reading Specialists' Comments*

"Our district has implemented a mandatory grouping process"

"Makes changes in student groupings without teacher input or suggestion"

"principal [*sic*] does not discuss teachers' grouping practices except to ask why students are below grade level or haven't made more progress in a year"

"She sets up classes using the DRA levels of students."

"We use the Daily 5 and Cafe from "the sisters" [*sz/c*] model and have implemented skill groups for mini-lessons."

"He is quite supportive to use grouping but allows the higher grades to be so flexible in grouping that it has lost its effectiveness."

"All grades (K-5) in our school implemment [*sic*] best practices under the Balanced Literacy Framework"

Specific grouping practices for reading, including technology, were addressed with this survey item. Principal and reading specialists were asked to describe which statement best illustrates the principal's understanding of grouping options for specific purposes for reading, including technology-based practices. Principals' practices were described as the ability or inability to discuss grouping practices for reading instruction and to be able to evaluate specific grouping practices in the classroom. In this category the principal was also tasked with coaching teacher's use of grouping practices for reading, including technology based practices. Results are described in Table 13. Written

comments from principals and reading specialists related to the question appear after the table.

Table 13

*Principals' Understanding of Grouping Options for Specific Purposes Including Technology*

	<u>Unsatisfactory</u>	<u>Basic</u>	<u>Proficient</u>	<u>Exemplary</u>	<u>Total</u>
Principal	2(1%)	8(7%)	62(59.6%)	32(30.7%)	104
Reading Specialist	8(5%)	35(22.1%)	77(48.7%)	38(24%)	158
TOTAL	10(3%)	43(16.4%)	139(53%)	70(26.7%)	262

*Principal's Comments*

None

*Reading Specialists' Comments*

"We are a technology/engineering magnet school. We tie all areas of learning into technology including reading. She supports the purchasing of software that has known benefits of reading success."

"I'm not sure if this is even an appropriate question because of the minimal use of technology in the classroom."

"Understands how Scholastic's Read About program works but doesn't verbalize it's importance. Principal accepts that it is a program we are to use based on district guidelines."

"This is actually an N/A question for our school/district as we do not group based on technology based practices."

"We use Earobics, AR, and ReadAbout."

The principal's understanding of curriculum materials includes the ability or inability to discuss materials related to reading; evaluating, supporting and coaching teachers' use of a wide range of curriculum materials, and creating a system for determining the effectiveness of curriculum materials related to reading. The principals' understanding of curriculum materials related to reading instruction is detailed in Table 14. Written comments from principals and reading specialists related to the question appear after the table

Table 14

*Principals' Understanding of Curricular Materials Related to Reading*

	<u>Unsatisfactory</u>	<u>Basic</u>	<u>Proficient</u>	<u>Exemplary</u>	<u>Total</u>
Principal	0(0%)	12(11.5%)	62(59.6%)	30(28.8%)	104
Reading Specialist	8(5%)	37(23.5%)	79(50.3%)	33(21%)	157
TOTAL	8(3%)	49(18.7%)	141(54%)	63(24.1%)	261

*Principals' Comments*

"Our instruction is trully [sz/c] data driven."

*Reading Specialists' Comments*

"She expects us to form Professional Learning Communities with others in the building to consider and evaluate various materials and methods regarding reading (and all LAs)."

"Principal depends on Instructional Leaders to keep up with current practices."

"As an Rtl pilot school in our county, we have researched several stand-alone interventions such as Reading Mastery, Corrective Reading, Foundations [sz/c], Read for Real, etc."

I would not say that she "creates" [sz/c] a system for determining the effectiveness of curricular materials, but that she supports our faculty in their choices of what materials we feel best meets the needs of our students. Our teachers embrace the responsibility of meeting the students' needs and will do anything to get the student where he is, to where he needs to be. A major part of this process is continual analysis of the data gathered on each child.

Summary of Ratings of Principals' Knowledge of Instructional Strategies and Curriculum Materials

In the category, knowledge of instructional strategies and curriculum materials, principals' ratings included basic, proficient, and exemplary (M= 3.17 - 3.46).

Principals rated themselves as follows: basic understanding of grouping options for specific purposes, including technology (M= 3.46); proficient understanding of curricular



materials related to reading ( $M = 3.19$ ); and exemplary for understanding grouping options for specific purposes for reading ( $M = 3.46$ ).

Reading specialists rated their principals as proficient on all three questions in this category ( $M = 2.92 - 3.11$ ): understanding of curriculum materials related to reading ( $M = 2.87$ ), understanding of grouping options for specific purposes for reading, including technology ( $M = 2.92$ ), and understanding grouping options for specific purposes for reading ( $M = 3.11$ ).

A t-test of independent means compared the differences in the scores for the principals and reading specialists on the three questions in this category. There were significant differences in the scores between principals and reading specialists on all questions in the knowledge of instructional strategies and curriculum materials category, ( $p < .05$ ).

- Understanding of grouping options for specific purposes for reading: principals ( $M = 3.46$ ,  $SD = 6.51$ ); reading specialists ( $M = 3.11$ ,  $SD = .754$ )  $< 3.886$ ),  $p = .000$
- Understanding of grouping options for specific purposes for reading, including technology: principals ( $M = 3.10$ ,  $SD = .655$ ); reading specialists ( $M = 2.92$ ,  $SD = .814$ )  $< 2.881$ ),  $p = .004$ .
- Understanding of curricular materials related to reading: principals ( $M = 3.17$ ,  $SD = .614$ ); reading specialists ( $M = 2.87$ ,  $SD = .798$ )  $< 3.252$ ),  $p = .001$

### Assessment, Diagnosis, and Evaluation

Six survey questions addressed the principals' use of assessment tools and practices to plan and evaluate effective reading instruction. The principals' understanding of the role of assessment in the delivery of excellent reading instruction is explained in Table 15. Written comments from principals and reading specialists related to the question appear after the table.

Table 15

#### *Principals' Understanding of the Role of Assessment In Excellent Reading Instruction*

	<u>Unsatisfactory</u>	<u>Basic</u>	<u>Proficient</u>	<u>Exemplary</u>	<u>Total</u>
Principal	1(.09%)	1(.09%)	35(33%)	68(64.7%)	105
Reading Specialist	4(2%)	19(12%)	56(35.6%)	78(49.6%)	157
TOTAL	59(22.5%)	20(7%)	91(34.7%)	146(55.7%)	262

#### *Principals' Comments*

None

#### *Reading Specialists' Comments*

"We are very data-based and use a lot of informal and formal assessments."

"wants assessment data about reading but doesn't discuss it with teachers"

"REquires [s/c] teachers to complete a DRA on all students at the end of the year not just at assigned times."

Our school is limited to minimal testing, twice a year DRA and occasionally [szc] 3 times for struggling readers. I'm concerned b/c there is little push for DRA training/retraining, no emphasis for word study assessment, and no discussion on regrouping based on testing results.

The role of the principal in the development of a school reading assessment plan is explained in Table 16. Written comments from principals and reading specialists related to the question appear after the table.

Table 16

*Principals' Participation in the Development of a School Reading Assessment Plan*

	<u>Unsatisfactory</u>	<u>Basic</u>	<u>Proficient</u>	<u>Exemplary</u>	<u>Total</u>
Principal	1(.09%)	9(8%)	59(57.2%)	34(33%)	103
Reading Specialist	11(7%)	36(23.2%)	63(40.6%)	45(29%)	155
TOTAL	12(.03%)	45(17.4%)	122(47.2%)	79(30.6%)	258

*Principals' Comments*

"I am not involved in developing assessment plans. The division has developed them."

*Reading Specialists' Comments*

"the [jɪˈtɪ] building principals in (city) do not develop the assessment plan. The assessment tools and timelines for administration are determined by central administration."

"This is a responsibility at a division level."

"The district mandates one and my principal fully backs it."

"Again, principal depends largely on myself or Instructional Leaders"

"He has a vision and a goal, but allows me to use my knowledge and expertise to implement best practices."

"But this is her baby. She does not accept input from the reading specialists",

"fortunately [*sic*] the principal is not involved with the development of the school's reading assessment plan"

"School does not have plan"

The principals' knowledge of student reading performance includes understanding the range of students' performance, as well as the use of multiple measures. Results are described in Table 17. Written comments from principals and reading specialists related to the question appear after the table.

Table 17

*Principals' Knowledge of Student Reading Performance*

	<u>Unsatisfactory</u>	<u>Basic</u>	<u>Proficient</u>	<u>Exemplary</u>	<u>Total</u>
Principal	0(0%)	4(3%)	45(43.6%)	54(52.4%)	103

*Table 17 (continued)*

Reading	1(.006%)	33(21.2%)	57(36.7%)	64(41.2%)	155
Specialist					
TOTAL	1(.003%)	37(14.3%)	102(39.5%)	118(45.7%)	258

*Principals' Comments*

"I track each child in my school!"

*Reading Specialists' Comments*

"The discussion of students' reading performance centers around the analysis of district-wide benchmark assessments (simulated SOL tests in grades 3-5)."

"requires [szc] all assessment material turned in often so she can review data"

"Principal views this as the role of the classroom teachers."

The principals' use of assessment data includes the collection, monitoring, and development of a system for collecting data. Table 18 details the results related to the principals' use of reading assessment data. Written comments from principals and reading specialists related to the question appear after the table.

Table 18

*Principals' Use of Reading Assessment Data*

	<u>Unsatisfactory</u>	<u>Basic</u>	<u>Proficient</u>	<u>Exemplary</u>	<u>Total</u>
Principal	0(0%)	2(1%)	49(47.1%)	53(50.9%)	104

*Table 29 (continued)*

Reading	2(1%)	27(17.4%)	53(34.1%)	73(47%)	155
Specialist					
TOTAL	2(.007%)	29(11.1%)	102(39.3%)	126(48.6%)	259

*Principals' Comments*

"Used throughout the year!"

*Reading Specialists' Comments*

"Monitors the reading assessment data from SOL tests and benchmark assessments only—not running records, PALS, spelling assessment (DSA) etc".

"Excellent data available from the Data Support Specialist to review on a regular basis"

"A lot of the data collection responsibility falls on our assistant principal."

"Encourages, but there is no principal monitoring"

"the principal collects and uses reading assessment data to harass teachers whose students are not progressing at "normal" standards and are not reading "on grade level"."

"The system[sz'c] is designed for us!"

"Our Literacy team continually collects reading assessment data and submits it on spreadsheets by grade level."

"As an Rtl pilot we use AIMSweb for universal screening and progress monitoring along with Running Records, basal unit tests, "cold reads', etc."

"Gathers data monthly, forms flexible groups to meet students' needs."

Principals communicate reading assessment data to staff members and constituents in variety of ways. Table 10 explains the principals' methods of communicating reading assessment information. Written comments from principals and reading specialists related to the question appear after the table.

Table 19

*Principals' Methods of Communicating Reading Assessment Information*

	<u>Unsatisfactory</u>	<u>Basic</u>	<u>Proficient</u>	<u>Exemplary</u>	<u>Total</u>
Principal	1(.009%)	8(7.6%)	39(37.1%)	57(54.2%)	105
Reading Specialist	7(4%)	24(15.3%)	44(28.2%)	81(51.9%)	156
TOTAL	8(3%)	32(12.2%)	83(31.8%)	138(52.8%)	261

*Principals' Comments*

None

*Reading Specialists' Comments*

"Again, principal uses Instructional Leaders to communicate assessment information to staff members."

"It is expected that the teachers do this."

"withsz'c] the help of our School Instructional Leader for Language Arts"

"With the help of our data support specialist!"

"Communicates through Reading Specialists when necessary"

"A spread sheet is developed for all teachers/classes that shows the data of all students in that class. (DRA, SOL, LA diagnostic tests, Reading grades on report card)

Data charts displayed in hallways, [sz'c]"

The principal's use of assessment data includes the ability or inability to identify how assessment should be used for instructional purposes. Further, understanding and explaining how assessment should be used for instructional purposes, as well as demonstrating how assessment should be used for instructional purposes is detailed in Table 20. Comments from principals and reading specialists appear after the table.

Table 20

*Principals' Uses of Assessment Data for Instructional Purposes*

	<u>Unsatisfactory</u>	<u>Basic</u>	<u>Proficient</u>	<u>Exemplary</u>	<u>Total</u>
Principal	0(0%)	3(2%)	44(41.9%)	58(55.2%)	105
Reading Specialist	4(2%)	30(19.1%)	64(40.7%)	59(37.5%)	157
TOTAL	4(1%)	33(1%)	108(41.2%)	117(44.6%)	262

*Principals' Comments*

"All our instruction is driven through data. Each assessment and benchmark drives our next period of learning based on key needs that we spiral back to."

"we [sz'c] only use assessment data to drive instruction"



"We constantly look at data and adjust instruction accordingly. Staff developments are secured based on data results."

"Application to classroom instruction discussed monthly with LA teachers."

"On-going review of the data drives instruction as well as remediation and reinforcement"

*Reading Specialists' Comments*

"She assigns our data tech to disaggregate [s/c] the data and he then presents to the staff once or twice a year."

"only uses reading assessment data to identify students who need help but makes no suggestions about how that data should be used for instructional purposes"

Summary of Ratings of Principals' Knowledge of Assessment, Diagnosis, and Evaluation  
of Reading

Principals rated themselves as exemplary in four of five categories, and proficient in one category regarding knowledge of assessment, diagnosis, and evaluation of reading ( $M= 3.22-3.62$ ). Principals rated themselves as follows: proficient participation in the development of the school assessment plan ( $M= 3.22$ ); exemplary use of methods to communicate reading assessment information ( $M= 3.45$ ); exemplary knowledge of student reading performance ( $M= 3.49$ ); exemplary use of reading assessment data ( $M= 3.49$ ) exemplary; use of assessment data for instructional purposes ( $M= 3.52$ ) and exemplary understanding of the role of assessment in excellent reading instruction ( $M = 3.62$ ).

Reading specialists rated their principals as exemplary in three of five categories and proficient in two categories ( $M = 2.92-3.32$ ). Reading specialists rated their principals as

follows: proficient participation in the development of a the school assessment plan ( $M = 2.92$ ); proficient use of reading assessment data for instructional purposes ( $M = 3.13$ ); exemplary knowledge of student reading performance ( $M = 3.19$ ); exemplary use of reading assessment data ( $M = 3.27$ ); exemplary use of methods of communicating reading assessment data ( $M = 3.28$ ); and exemplary understanding of the role of assessment in excellent reading instruction ( $M = 3.32$ ).

An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the differences in the scores for the principals and reading specialists on the six questions related to principals knowledge of assessment, diagnosis and evaluation, ( $p < .05$ ). There were significant differences in the scores of principals and reading specialists on four of six questions:

- Understanding of the role of assessment in excellent reading instruction: principals ( $M = 3.62$ ,  $SD = .561$ ); reading specialists ( $M = 3.32$ ,  $SD = .786$ )  $< 3.311$ ,  $p = .001$
- Participation in the development of the school assessment plan: principals ( $M = 3.22$ ,  $SD = .641$ ); reading specialists ( $M = 2.92$ ,  $SD = .897$ )  $< 3.207$ , ( $p = .003$ )
- Knowledge of student reading performance: principals ( $M = 3.49$ ,  $SD = .575$ ); reading specialists ( $M = 3.19$ ,  $SD = .788$ )  $< 3.302$ ,  $p = .001$
- Uses of assessment data for instructional purposes: principals ( $M = 3.52$ ,  $SD = .556$ ); reading specialists ( $M = 3.13$ ,  $SD = .809$ )  $< 4.304$   $p = .000$

There was no significant difference in the scores of the principal and reading specialists on two questions:

- Use of reading data: principals ( $M = 3.49$ ,  $SD = .540$ ); reading specialists ( $M = 3.27$ ,  $SD = .792$ )  $< 2.466$ ,  $p = 0.14$

- Methods of communicating reading assessment data: principals (M= 3.45, SD = .679); reading specialists (M= 3.28, SD = .884) <1.686)  $p = .093$

### Creating a Literate Environment

Four survey questions speak to the principal's actions that create a literate environment. The questions address the principal's actions that foster reading by integrating foundational knowledge, use of instructional practices, approaches and methods, curriculum materials, and the appropriate use of assessments. Principals may direct, support, or provide input to the professional staff in the design of curriculum based on students' interests and reading abilities answering the question, "Which statement best describes the principal's action related to curriculum development based on students' interests and reading abilities?" Results appear in Table 21. Written comments from principals and reading specialists related to the question appear after the table

Table 21

*Principal's Actions Related to Curriculum Development Based on Students' Interests and Reading Abilities*

	<u>Unsatisfactory</u>	<u>Basic</u>	<u>Proficient</u>	<u>Exemplary</u>	<u>Total</u>
Principal	0(0%)	9(9%)	51(51%)	40(40%)	100
Reading Specialist	3(1%)	39(25%)	68(43.5%)	46(29.4%)	156
TOTAL	3(1%)	48(18.7%)	119(46.4%)	86(33.5%)	256

*Principals' Comments*

"Our division utilizes a prescriptive curriculum which doesn't actually allow for much curriculum development at all."

"The reading specialist coaches staff members and I support the curriculum by providing funding for high-interest reading materials correlated *[sic]* to the content areas.

District provides curriculum, not principals."

"School does not develop curriculum"

*Reading Specialists' Comments*

"centrally [57c] determined in our system"

"Our principal is a strong proponent of determining and using students' interests to facilitate learning in all areas, particularly reading."

"Principals do not make these decisions - our downtown Instructional Specialists do."

"Again, this is N/A as curriculum development is addressed at the division level."

To the extent that the district will allow "in-house" development of curriculum at a struggling Title 1 school, which is to say, not at all. Student interests and reading abilities are not part of the district provided pacing guide. If given this freedom, however, the principal would be instrumental

I was reprimanded [vz'c] for taking small group of students to the library to instruct them on how to choose a just right book and introduce areas/authors that interest them. She clearly did not care about what was best for the students.

The principal's involvement in selecting reading materials may be in the form of direction to the staff, supporting the staff, or selecting books, technology-based

information, and non-print materials him or herself. Table 22 describes the principals' involvement in selecting reading materials. Neither principals nor reading specialists wrote responses to this question.

Table 22

*Principals' Participation in Selecting Reading Materials*

	<u>Unsatisfactory</u>	<u>Basic</u>	<u>Proficient</u>	<u>Exemplary</u>	<u>Total</u>
Principal	3(2%)	10(9%)	68(67.3%)	20(19.8%)	101
Reading Specialist	13(8%)	39(25%)	80(51.2%)	24(15.3%)	156
TOTAL	16(6%)	49(19%)	148(57.5%)	44(17.1%)	257

The principals' view of reading as a lifelong activity may include several levels of literacy practice: modeling reading, participating and supporting the staff in modeling reading as a lifelong activity, or leading and enthusiastically supporting the staff in modeling reading as a valued lifelong activity. Table 23 describes the principals' view of reading as a lifelong activity. Written comments from principals and reading specialists related to the question appear after the table.

Table 23

*Principals' View of Reading as a Lifelong Activity*

Table 23 (continued)

	<u>Unsatisfactory</u>	<u>Basic</u>	<u>Proficient</u>	<u>Exemplary</u>	<u>Total</u>
Principal	0(0%)	1(.009%)	30(29.4%)	71(69.6%)	102
Reading Specialist	4(2%)	20(12.8%)	34(21.7%)	98(62.8%)	156
TOTAL	4(1%)	21(8%)	64(24.8%)	169(65.5%)	258

*Principals' Comments*

None

*Reading Specialists' Comments*

"Principal emphasizes the use of sustained silent reading, reads to classrooms, supports an after school program where volunteers come in and read with students."

"Often participates in book swaps with other teachers, then they have discussions re regarding *[sic]* the books."

"frequently sits in his office and reads"

"Always sharing latest books read and provides staff with books to read."

"In our school, it is more important that our students become strategic readers rather than

"love" reading. Our principal believes in equipping *[szc]* our students with tools."

The principal's participation in programs that motivate students to read can be characterized as directing the staff to design programs, supporting the staff in designing

intrinsic and extrinsic programs to encourage student reading, or creating and participating in motivational programs to encourage student reading. Table 24 details the principals' participation in programs that motivate students to read. Written comments from principals and reading specialists related to the question appear after the table.

Table 24

*Principals' Participation in Programs That Motivate Students to Read*

	<u>Unsatisfactory</u>	<u>Basic</u>	<u>Proficient</u>	<u>Exemplary</u>	<u>Total</u>
Principal	0(0%)	3(2%)	44(42.7%)	56(54.3%)	103
Reading Specialist	8(5%)	21(13.4%)	69(44.2%)	58(37.1%)	156
TOTAL	8(3%)	24(9%)	113(43.6%)	114(44%)	259

*Principals' Comments*

"I admittedly frown upon much extrinsic motivation of any learning, including reading"

"I have a "Read to the Principal" program - with "Read-to-the-Principal" buttons as rewards - AND personally [sic] give out AR awards - in each classroom."

"I [sic] Read to the Principal program"

*Reading Specialists' Comments*

"The principal does not direct the staff in designing programs to encourage student reading, but gives basic support to the reading specialist in these endeavors."

"has[i'/c] made statements to professional staff that he is opposed to motivational reading programs because all students should be motivated to read without rewards"

"We do One Book, One School, Reading Month, Reading Olympics, Read Across America."

"She relies on staff for this."

"Reading Lotto"

"DEAR (Drop Everything and Read)"

"Our principal is an advocate for reading incentive programs. I can always count on administrative support as I plan these programs."

#### Summary of Ratings of Principals' Ability to Create a Literacy Environment

Principals rated themselves proficient on three of the four questions regarding creating a literate environment; principals rated themselves as exemplary on one question (M = 3.04 - 3.69) Principals rated themselves, in order from least to greatest as follows: participation in selecting reading materials (M= 3.04); actions related to curriculum development based on students' interests and reading abilities (M= 3.31); participation in programs that motivate students to read (M= 3.69); and principal's view of reading as a lifelong activity (M= 3.69).

Reading specialists rated their principals as proficient on three of four questions and exemplary on one question on the ability to create a literate environment. Reading specialists rated principals as exhibiting proficient participation in selecting reading materials (M= 2.74), developing curriculum based on students' interests and reading abilities (M= 2.95), and participation in programs that motivate students to read (M=



3.13). Principals were rated as demonstrating an exemplary view of reading as a lifelong activity ( $M= 3.45$ ).

A t-test of independent means was conducted to compare the differences in the scores for principals and reading specialists in the area of creating a literate environment. There were significant differences in the scores of principals and reading specialists on all questions in this category ( $p < .05$ ).

- Developing curriculum based on students' interests and reading abilities: principals ( $M= 3.31$ ,  $SD = .631$ ); reading specialists ( $M= 2.95$ ,  $SD = .893$ ) ( $<3.521$ ),  $t = 0.001$ .
- Participation in selecting reading materials: principals ( $M= 3.04$ ,  $SD = .631$ ); reading specialists ( $M= 2.74$ ,  $SD = .820$ ) ( $<3.129$ ),  $t = 0.002$ .
- Viewing reading as a lifelong activity: principals ( $M= 3.69$ ,  $SD = .487$ ); reading specialists ( $M= 3.45$ ,  $SD = .814$ ) ( $<2.653$ ),  $t = 0.008$ .
- Participation in programs that motivate students to read: principals ( $M= 3.51$ ,  $SD = .558$ ); reading specialists ( $M= 3.13$ ,  $SD = .853$ ) ( $<4.056$ ),  $t = 0.000$ .

#### Professional Development

Five survey questions address the principal's view of professional development as a career-long effort and responsibility. The principals' view of professional development varies from not stating the importance of professional development, to supporting teachers and reading specialists in development of their professional knowledge about reading, to initiating, designing, and leading professional development in reading aligned to student assessment data. Table 25 describes the principals' view of professional

development for reading. Written comments from principals and reading specialists related to the question appear after the table.

Table 25

*The Principals' View of Professional Development for Reading*

	<u>Unsatisfactory</u>	<u>Basic</u>	<u>Proficient</u>	<u>Exemplary</u>	<u>Total</u>
Principal	1(.009%)	0(0%)	60(57.6%)	43(41.3%)	104
Reading Specialist	3(1%)	15(9%)	80(51.6%)	57(36.7%)	155
TOTAL	4(1%)	15(5%)	140(54%)	100(39.6%)	259

*Principals' Comments*

"We often work/plan professional development together to help the needs of our staff."

*Reading Specialists' Comments*

"the professional development options for reading are completely driven by the reading specialist and school board office. The principal must be convinced to provide time for professional development."

"This item is also centrally determined in our system"

"Foremost proponent of Professional Development to make an impact on the instruction in our school."

"Does not deliver this development, but actively recruits others to do so."

"at [*sic*] the request of the Reading Specialist or Curriculum Specialists"

"Again, our principal encourages us (teachers) rather than mandates. She works with us, but doesn't tell us what we have to do—she lets us come to those decisions, knowing there is more buy-in that way!"

"Will not allow teachers to attend conferences."

"On the first faculty meeting of each month, our principal and assistant principal teach the staff development sessions."

"Books/materials purchased for staff (professional/ personal development) Book talks implemented"

Principals' support for professional development includes providing opportunities to teachers and reading specialists to advance their learning. In addition principals may identify specific professional development opportunities as well as provide financial support for teachers and reading specialists. Table 26 explains the principals' support of professional development opportunities for staff members. Written comments from principals and reading specialists related to the question appear after the table.

Table 26

*Principal's Support of Professional Development Opportunities for Staff Members*

	<u>Unsatisfactory</u>	<u>Basic</u>	<u>Proficient</u>	<u>Exemplary</u>	<u>Total</u>
Principal	1(1%)	3(3%)	21(21%)	75(75%)	100
Reading Specialist	4(2%)	19(12.2%)	48(30.9%)	84(54.1%)	155

*Table 29 (continued)*

TOTAL	5(1%)	22(8%)	69(27%)	159(62.3%)	255
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Financial and budgetary restraints limit principals' ability to support professional development opportunities for staff members as evidenced by the principals' specialists' comments in particular.

*Principals' Comments*

"Financial support is driven by budget allocations within our division"

"within [SJC] budgetary constraints!"

"Budget limits this also."

"When funds are available."

"I collaborate with the reading specialist on staff development."

*Reading Specialists' Comments*

"works [szc] to provide financial support, but sometimes the funds are limited or not available."

"Again, the principal has not offered or encouraged staff development. It has been several key staff members who have advocated for and made available opportunities for staff development."

"Professional development is made available through our division."

"forwards [szc] emails from Central Office about professional development opportunities"

"Purchases books to be used for a TAR group."

Table 27 describes the principals' provisions for bringing in specialists, both district level, and outside specialists, to the school for professional development. Written comments from principals and reading specialists related to the question appear after the table.

Table 27

*Principals' Provisions for Bringing District Level and Outside Specialists to the School for Professional Development*

	<u>Unsatisfactory</u>	<u>Basic</u>	<u>Proficient</u>	<u>Exemplary</u>	<u>Total</u>
Principal	6(5%)	34(33.3%)	43(42.1%)	19(18.6%)	102
Reading Specialist	31(20.1%)	51(33.1%)	44(28.5%)	28(18.1%)	154
TOTAL	37(14.4%)	85(33.2%)	87(33.9%)	47(18.3%)	256

*Principals' Comments*

"Our school has a reading specialist who receives monthly training from consultants. She then delivers the training she received to the staff monthly."

"Multiple professional development opportunities for reading are provided each year through the school system. They may not be at our school, but teachers from our school are always encouraged to participate."

"The Reading Specialist at this school is a trainer who knows more than the district level specialists. At my previous school, I used the district level consultants a few times a year."

"I have a staff of Highly Professional Specialists in Reading .. [sic] therefore do not need outside support like other schools."

*Reading Specialists' Comments*

"This is usually something coordinated by the district."

"She doesn't have to because the head of the reading department does that for her on a regular bases [sic]."

"District provides the professional development the majority of the time."

"Does not have that authority. Professional development arranged at the district level."

If the need arises [sic]. We have 2 reading specialists within our building but she does give the freedom within those roles to have us provide mini workshops as need is seen. Specialists outside the building are called if larger goals are needed.

In the past when funding was available, our principal did bring in consultants from the school system and outside. Due to major cut backs in funding for schools locally and statewide, the professional development provided for teachers has strictly been through the Professional Development Program established by the school system. However our principal keeps abreast of seminars or classes provided by the school system and informs the faculty of them herself or through myself and fellow Reading Specialist in our building.

Principals may support classroom teachers' and reading specialists' professional development by providing opportunities for them to attend conferences and programs related to reading outside of the school building. Table 28 details the principals' support

for staff members attending professional development activities outside of the school building. Written comments from principals and reading specialists related to the question appear after the table.

Table 28

*Principal's Support for Staff Attending Professional Development Activities*

	<u>Unsatisfactory</u>	<u>Basic</u>	<u>Proficient</u>	<u>Exemplary</u>	<u>Total</u>
Principal	0(0%)	10(9%)	29(28.1%)	64(62.1%)	103
Reading Specialist	2(1%)	30(19.4%)	48(31.3%)	74(48%)	154
TOTAL	2(.007%)	40(15.5%)	77(29.9%)	138(53.6%)	257

*Principals' Comments*

"Our school division takes care of this for us"

"Our division is cautious about sending teachers to outside PD on reading as it may conflict with the division's purpose, goals, and practices."

"Difficult to assess due to funding limitations—if I had funds to use, I would rate myself [szc] as proficient"

*Reading Specialists Comments*

"Key staff members have provided the staff development on their own and asked for attendance. The principal has been in support of this."

"Opportunities are limited due to funding."

"\$[sic] is the limiting factor"

"Has actually not attended meetings regarding reading when she was asked to attend."

"Lack of funds"

"However, this is due to financial constraints, not due to unwillingness."

there [sic] are tight budget constraints on professional development and the principal send whomever he selects to conferences sponsored by the school division—whether or not the person wants to go or if the topic is relevant to that person

Principals provide feedback on instructional practices related to reading as an outgrowth to professional development in reading. The principal may encourage, facilitate, and evaluate collaboration between staff members about their instructional practices related to reading. Table 29 describes principals' collaboration and dialogue between staff members about their instructional practices in reading. Written comments from principals and reading specialists related to the question appear after the table.

Table 29

*Principals' Collaboration and Feedback on Reading Instructional Practices*

	<u>Unsatisfactory</u>	<u>Basic</u>	<u>Proficient</u>	<u>Exemplary</u>	<u>Total</u>
Principal	0(0%)	5(4%)	42(40.3%)	57(54.8%)	104
Reading Specialist	1(.006%)	37(23.8%)	58(37.4%)	59(38%)	155



*Table 29 (continued)*

TOTAL	1(.003%)	42(16.2%)	100(38.6%)	116(44.7%)	259
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*Principals' Comments*

"has scheduled "vertical teaming" meetings throughout the year

-has scheduled grade level and specialists' meeting times

- encourages PLCs [sic] among the staff'

"We are meeting in Professional Learning Communities which allows dialogue between staff members."

*Reading Specialists' Comments*

"Principal believes in a professional learning community."

"Teachers are asked to reflect on benchmark assessment results and plan remediation accordingly."

"Encourages collaboration but does not have follow through. Doesn't take teachers opinions/thoughts into consideration regarding reading practices."

"We are using learning communities to help us collaborate and have dialog about both reading and math."

"Each staff memeber [szc] is asked to present at faculty from a workshop they have attended."

"May encourage but is not involved in the facilitation and collaboration."

Last year the principal developed a plan for everyone on the staff to observe another teacher—however the principal told each teacher whom they could

observe and on what date. It did not matter that some of the observations were during quarterly testing.

### Summary of Ratings for Principals' View of Professional Development

Principals rated themselves as either proficient or exemplary related to their view of professional development as a career-long effort and responsibility (M= 2.74 - 3.70). Principals rated themselves as follows: proficient for bringing district level and outside specialists to the school for professional development (M= 2.74); proficient view of professional development for reading (M = 3.39); exemplary work with staff members to collaborate and provide feedback on each other's instructional practices related to reading (M= 3.50); exemplary support for staff attending professional development activities (M = 3.52); exemplary support of professional development opportunities for staff members (M= 3.70).

Reading specialists rated their principals on a continuum from basic to exemplary on the principal's view of professional development as a career-long effort and responsibility (M= 2.45 - 3.37). Reading specialists rated their principals on the basic level for bringing district and outside reading consultants to the school for professional development (M= 2.45); principals were rated proficient for supporting teachers and reading specialists in developing their professional knowledge about reading (M= 3.23). Principals were rated as exemplary in three areas related to professional development: providing collaborative feedback on reading instructional practices (M= 3.13); providing opportunities throughout the school year for various staff members to attend professional development programs related to reading (M = 3.26); and identifies specific professional development opportunities and provides financial support for teachers and reading specialists (M= 3.37).

A t-test of independent means was conducted to compare the differences in the ratings for the principal and reading specialists in the area of professional development, ( $p < .05$ ). The data suggest that there were significant differences in the scores of principals and reading specialists on all five areas in the professional development category.

- Principal's view of professional development: principals ( $M = 3.30$ ,  $SD = .547$ ); reading specialists ( $M = 3.23$ ,  $SD = .701$ )  $< 1.985$ )  $p = .048$ .
- Principal's support of professional development opportunities for staff members: ( $M = 3.70$ ,  $SD = .577$ ); reading specialists ( $M = 3.37$ ,  $SD = .798$ )  $< 3.599$ )  $p = .000$
- Principal's provision for bringing district and outside reading consultants to the school for professional development: principals ( $M = 2.74$ ,  $SD = .832$ ); reading specialists ( $M = 2.45$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ )  $< 2.386$ )  $p = .018$
- Principal's support for staff attending professional development activities outside of the school building: principals ( $M = 3.52$ ,  $SD = .669$ ); reading specialists ( $M = 3.26$ ,  $SD = .815$ )  $< 2.734$ )  $p = .007$
- Principal's work with the staff members to collaborate and provide feedback on each other's instructional practices related to reading: principals ( $M = 3.50$ ,  $SD = .591$ ); reading specialists ( $M = 3.13$ ,  $SD = .795$ )  $< 4.062$ )  $p = .000$

#### Principals' Self-Rating of Literacy Practices

Principal's rated themselves overall as exhibiting exemplary literacy practices for twelve of twenty-three items (52.1%) and proficient for nine of twenty-three items (39.1%). Principals rated themselves highest in the category of assessment, diagnosis and evaluation, with exemplary ratings on five of six survey items. Using percentage of

items by category which the principals rated themselves as exemplary, principals' reading practices can be characterized in the subsequent rank order: assessment, diagnosis and evaluation (83%), professional development (60%), creating a literate environment (50%), instructional strategies (33%) and knowledge of the foundations or reading processes and instruction (20%).

Principals' comments about their literacy practices were most often explanatory. Principals elaborated on the multiple-choice portion of the questions most often in the assessment, diagnosis, and evaluation, and professional development categories of questions.

#### Reading Specialists' Rating of Principals' Literacy Practices

Reading specialists rated their principals overall as proficient for thirteen of twenty-three items (56.5%), exemplary for nine of twenty-three items (39.1%) and basic on one item (.04%). Reading specialists rated principals highest in the category of professional development with exemplary ratings on three of five survey items. Using percentage of items by category in which the reading specialists rated principals as exemplary, principals' reading practices can be characterized in the subsequent rank order: professional development (60%) assessment, diagnosis, and evaluation (33%), creating a literate environment (25%), knowledge of the foundations of reading processes and instruction (20%), and instructional strategies and curriculum materials (0%).

Reading specialists' comments about their principal's literacy practices fell into three categories: positive, critical, or explanatory. Positive and explanatory comments were provided most often,  $n = 42$  and  $n = 43$  respectively. Reading specialists' elaborated on

the multiple-choice portion of the questions most often in the assessment, diagnosis, and evaluation, and professional development categories of questions.

### Differences in Principals' and Reading Specialists' Ratings

Principals and reading specialists agreed, overall, on the same rating for 74% of the questions on the Principal Quality Literacy Practices Survey. Table 30 illustrates principals' and reading specialists' ratings by category and question.

Table 30

#### *Principals and Reading Specialists' Ratings by Question*

<u>Survey Item</u>	<u>Principal Response</u>	<u>Reading Specialist Response</u>
Knowledge of the Foundations of Reading		
Processes and Instruction		
Knowledge of reading processes and instruction	Proficient	Proficient/Exemplary
Knowledge of the history of reading, reading research, and use of methods and materials	Proficient	Proficient
Knowledge of the developmental progression of reading	Proficient	Proficient
Knowledge of oral language as it relates to reading	Proficient	Proficient
Knowledge of how the components of reading are integrated during fluent reading	Exemplary	Proficient

Table 30 (continued)

<u>Survey Item</u>	<u>Principal</u>	<u>Reading Specialist</u>
	<u>Response</u>	<u>Response</u>
Instructional Strategies and Curriculum		
Materials		
Understanding of grouping options for specific purposes for reading	Exemplary	Proficient
Understanding of grouping options for specific purposes for reading including technology	Proficient	Proficient
Understanding of curricular materials related to reading	Proficient	Proficient
Assessment, Diagnosis, and Evaluation		
Understanding of the role of assessment in the delivery of excellent reading instruction	Exemplary	Exemplary
Participation in the development of a school reading assessment plan	Proficient	Exemplary
Knowledge of student reading performance	Exemplary	Exemplary
Use of reading assessment data	Exemplary	Exemplary
Communication of reading assessment data	Exemplary	Exemplary

Table 30 (continued)

<u>Survey Item</u>	<u>Principal Response</u>	<u>Reading Specialist Response</u>
Use of reading assessment data for instructional purposes	Exemplary	Proficient
Creating a Literate Environment		
Development of curriculum based on students' interests and reading abilities	Proficient	Proficient
Participation in selection of reading materials	Proficient	Proficient
View of reading as a lifelong activity	Exemplary	Exemplary
Participation in programs that motivate students to read	Exemplary	Proficient
Professional Development		
View of professional development for reading	Proficient	Proficient
Support of professional development opportunities for staff	Exemplary	Exemplary
Provision for bringing reading consultants to the school for professional development	Proficient	Basic
Support for staff attending professional development activities	Exemplary	Exemplary
Collaboration with staff to provide feedback on instructional practices related to reading	Exemplary	Exemplary



### Elementary Principals' Literacy Practices and Student Reading Performance

Two measures were utilized to analyze the third research question: "What is the relationship between elementary principals' literacy actions associated with reading and student reading performance?" These measures represented total scores from the Principal Quality Literacy Practices Survey grade five reading scores on the Virginia Standards of Learning: English test.

Composite scores from seventy-four schools and twelve school districts on the Principal Quality Literacy Practices Survey were utilized. Schools represent those where both the principal and reading specialist responded to the survey. Table 31 illustrates the participating schools and type of school district.

Table 31

#### *Participating Schools for Research Question Three*

<u>School Number</u>	<u>Number of Schools</u>	<u>Type of District</u>
1	6	Suburban
2	1	Rural
3	4	Urban
4	4	Suburban
5	1	Rural
6	2	Urban
7	26	Urban

*Table 31 (continued)*

<u>School Number</u>	<u>Number of Schools</u>	<u>Type of District</u>
8	4	Urban
9	3	Rural
10	3	Rural
11	2	Rural
12	17	Suburban

Total possible scores from the Principal Quality Literacy Practices Survey instrument ranged from a low score of twenty-three to a high score of ninety-two. In an analysis of principals' and reading specialists' scores the following was noted:  $M = 73.9$ , scores ranged from 47 - 89 with a difference of 44 points between the lowest and highest scores. Figure 2 illustrates the differences in principals' and reading specialists' scores from the same school. The positively skewed histogram illustrates a higher frequency of differences in literacy survey scores clustered at the low end of the scale; fewer scores are clustered toward the high end of the scale.

Grade five English: Reading scores on the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) Test were utilized as the measure of student achievement. Pass rate, set by the Virginia Department of Education, is 75%. All schools in this sample met the state benchmark for fifth grade reading. Figure 3 illustrates the SOL scores for the schools in the sample. The histogram illustrates that there is a greater frequency of higher SOL scores clustered at the high end of the scale.

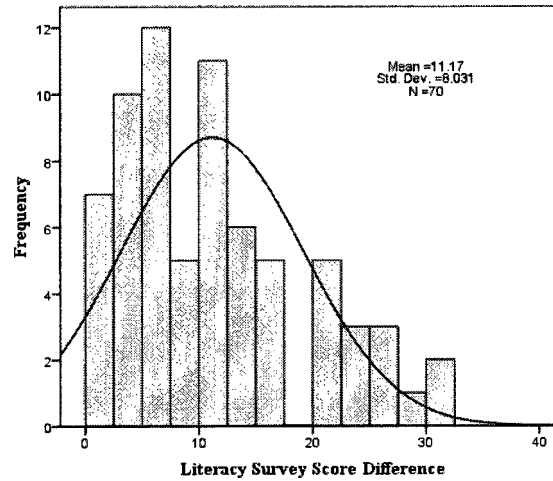


Figure 2. Differences in the Principal Quality Literacy Practices Survey Score of the Principal and Reading Specialist

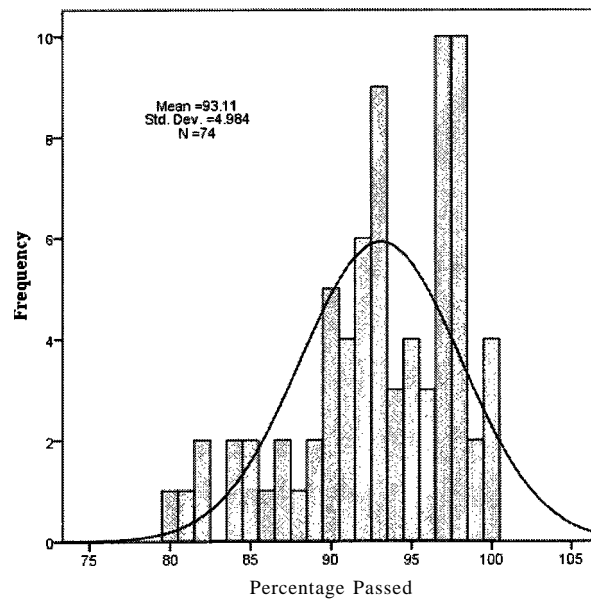


Figure 3. Percentage of students who passed the Virginia Standards of Learning grade five Reading Test

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) compared the mean percentage of Principal Quality Practices Scores and student scores on the Virginia Standards of Learning Grade Five English: Reading Test. There was no significant relationship between principal literacy practices and student achievement in reading,  $F(1, 30) = 1.726$ ,  $p = .060$ .

## Chapter V

### SUMMARY, FINDINGS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Chapter I stated the purpose of the study and significance of the research.

Chapter II reviewed the literature related to the (1) historical perspective of literacy in the United States, (2) the influence of the government on literacy practices (3) leadership of the principal (4) characteristics of literacy leaders and (5) leadership of the reading specialist. Chapter III detailed the research methodology and statistical analyses utilized in the study. Chapter IV reported results concerning each research question. This chapter presents an overview of the study, conclusions based on findings, instructional implications, study limitations and opportunities for future research.

#### Overview of the Study

The standards-based movement combined with accountability mandates, and government influences through the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) have changed the way that schools operate. These initiatives have placed immense pressure on teachers and school leaders to raise student learning and achievement, especially on high-stakes assessments, such as the Virginia Standards of Learning Tests (SOL). An outcome of the increase in school, district, and state assessments as well as the transparency of school data to community and media alike has changed the role of elementary principals. Principals who were once considered managers of people and operations in their schools now must serve as the instructional leader. Principals are tasked with understanding curriculum, assessments, materials, and analysis of data. Furthermore, making decisions on how to use assessment data to influence classroom instruction through professional development is expected.

The principal's role as instructional leader is crucial. Numerous studies have examined the principal's role as instructional leader and identified characteristics of those leaders (Sergiovanni, 1990; Heck, Larsen, and Marcoulides, 1990; Hallinger, 1992; McEwan, 1998; Blase and Blase, 2000; Persell and Cookson, 2003; Togneri, 2003; Irvin and White, 2004; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson and Wahlstrom, 2004; Nettles and Harrington, 2007). Results from these studies suggest that principals must possess a wide range of characteristics and beliefs to be considered an effective instructional leader. He or she must focus on teaching and learning above all other tasks while creating a culture of learning for students and teachers, monitoring student progress, focusing on a safe environment, and sharing leadership roles. Further, studies determine that the principal's influence can be linked to student achievement (Andrews and Soder, 1987; Cotton, 2003; Waters and Marzano, 2003; Kaplan, Owings, and Nunnery, 2005; and Reitzug and West, 2008).

Helping students become strong and independent readers is viewed as the primary measure of school success. An extension of instructional leadership is a focus on reading in the form of literacy leadership. Several studies reported that principals' leadership actions were one factor in improving reading achievement in schools. (Hoffman and Rutherford, 1984; Sanacore, 1994; Ylimaki and McClain, 1995; Burch and Spillane, 2003; Murphy, 2004; Spillane, 2005; Mackie, et. al, 2006; Hillard and Guglielmino, 2007; Sherman and Crum, 2007).

The job of the reading specialist in elementary schools has evolved from diagnostician, to remedial reading specialist, to coach (IRA, 2003). In this expanding role

the reading specialist works closely with the school principal and leadership team to plan and implement the literacy program in the school (Bean, Swan & Knaub, 2003; Dole, 2004; Quatroche, Bean, and Hamilton, 2008; Quatroche and Wepner, 2008). These varied responsibilities place the reading specialist in a position to be able to understand and recognize the principal's actions and attitudes related to reading instruction.

This study contributes to existing literature in two ways. First, the study identifies principals' and reading specialists' views on the principal's daily actions related to reading instruction. Second, the study describes specific literacy practices exhibited by the principal that principals and reading specialists agree upon and consider as proficient or exemplary.

#### Purpose and Research Design

The purpose of this study was to explore principals' literacy practices associated with reading among a group of elementary principals and reading specialists in Southeastern Virginia. Elementary principals' literacy practices and their relationship to student achievement, as measured by the Virginia Standards of Learning English: Reading Test was examined. The study answered the following questions:

1. How do elementary principals rate themselves as literacy leaders based on their actions associated with reading instruction?
2. How do elementary reading specialists rate their principals as literacy leaders based on their actions associated with reading instruction?
3. What is the relationship between elementary principals' literacy actions associated with reading and student reading performance?

The Principal Quality Literacy Practices Survey, a researcher-designed instrument, was electronically delivered to study participants. The survey was based on a rubric developed and adapted from the International Reading Association Standards for Reading Professionals (2004). Twenty-three questions were aligned to the rubric. Five areas of proficiency in the area of reading instruction were included in the survey: 1) knowledge of the foundations of reading processes and instruction, 2) instructional strategies and curriculum materials, 3) assessment, diagnosis and evaluation, 4) creating a literate environment, and 5) professional development. Principals rated themselves on each question on a four-point scale (unsatisfactory, basic, proficient, and exemplary); reading specialists rated their principals using the same questions and rating scale. An optional comment section was provided after each question to give participants the opportunity to add information and/or further explain their rating.

Two statistical measures were used for data analysis. A t-test of independent means was conducted to compare the differences in the ratings of the principals and reading specialists on the Principal Quality Literacy Practices Survey. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) compared the principal literacy practices from the Principal Quality Literacy Practices Survey composite score to fifth grade reading scores on the Virginia Standards of Learning Test for school year 2008-2009.

## Findings

### *Research Question One*

"How do elementary principals rate themselves as literacy leaders based on their actions associated with reading instruction?"



Overall principals rated themselves as proficient or exemplary on each question of the survey. In the areas of assessment, diagnosis, and evaluation as well as professional development, principals considered themselves especially skillful, scoring themselves exemplary on 80% or more of the questions. It is important to note that in the era of increased accountability, principals are keenly aware of the collection and reporting of assessment data, particularly as it relates to school improvement. Gray (2009) affirms, "an unintended consequence of NCLB is its de facto redefinition of the principal's role as an instructional leader (p. 3)." Literature related to instructional leadership supports these findings (Cotton, 2003, Togneri, 2003, Nettles and Harrington, 2007; Blink, 2007; and Hilliard and Guglielmino, 2007). The National Association of Elementary School Principals in *What Principals Should Know and Be Able to Do* (2001) identified one of the six standards required for instructional leadership as the principal's ability to use multiple sources of data as diagnostic tools to assess, identify, and apply instructional improvement.

These findings contrast with an earlier study by Jacobson, Reutzell, and Hollingsworth (1992). Researchers surveyed principals to ascertain their perceptions and understandings of issues in reading education. Principals responded that there were four unresolved issues related to reading education: whole language, assessment of students' reading progress, use of trade books as opposed to basal readers, and ability grouping for reading. Researchers stated that principals "may not feel sufficiently confident about their understanding of the issues to implement innovative changes in school reading programs" (p. 376). In the current study, assessment of student reading progress and grouping for reading were areas in which principals rated themselves either proficient or exemplary.

Clearly, principals' understanding and application of reading knowledge has shifted over time based on the changing roles and expectations of the principalship.

Likewise, professional development was viewed as a key literacy practice by principals. The International School Leaders Licensure Consortium standards as well as the National Association of Elementary School Principals standards both establish the importance of principals creating professional learning communities as well as cultures for continuous learning for staff members. The data suggest that principals are confident in their literacy practices related to professional development, rating themselves as either exemplary or proficient.

Principals rated themselves less proficient in the areas of creating a literate environment, instructional strategies, and knowledge and foundations of reading processes and instruction. These findings are not unexpected since knowledge of the practices included in these categories is less likely a focus in administrative and supervisory training required of principals. If an elementary principal did not have more than the minimum reading courses required as an undergraduate, these practices would be less familiar to them.

Principals were much less likely to make optional comments following questions than reading specialists at a rate of one to three. Principals who elected to make comments did so to explain their credentials or further elaborate upon their answers.

### *Research Question Two*

"How do elementary reading specialists rate their principals as literacy leaders based on their actions associated with reading instruction?"

Reading specialists rated their principals as proficient or exemplary overall on each question. Similar to principals, reading specialists rated their principals the highest in the areas of professional development and assessment, diagnosis, and evaluation. The data suggest that reading specialists view their principals, most often, as proficient literacy leaders

Reading specialists wrote optional comments following questions at a rate of three to one of principals. The number of reading specialists who made comments was small in comparison to the total number of respondents. Written remarks following survey questions included explanations to elaborate upon answers, positive comments in support of the principal's actions, as well as criticism of the principal's knowledge of reading strategies or practices.

### *Differences in Literacy Practices of the Principal and Reading Specialist*

The data suggest that principals and reading specialists both considered principals as either proficient or exemplary literacy leaders. However, an unintended and unexpected survey result was the significant differences in the responses of the principal and reading specialist by survey question. Upon analysis, data showed that reading specialists rated their principals basic or unsatisfactory on survey questions to a much higher degree than principals. Principals were much less likely than reading specialists to rate themselves as demonstrating basic or unsatisfactory literacy practices by question or category. Although the number of reading specialists who rated their principal as basic

and unsatisfactory was relatively small in comparison to the total number of reading specialists who completed the survey, the number skewed the results when comparing principals and reading specialists scores and result in a statistically significant difference.

### *Research Question Three*

"What is the relationship between elementary principals' literacy actions associated with reading and student reading performance?"

Analysis of principals' literacy actions utilized the school composite score on the Principal Literacy Practices Survey and school pass rate scores on the grade five Reading Test of the Virginia Standards of Learning Assessment for school year 2008-2009. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to identify the relationship of literacy practice scores and student achievement on the SOL test. No statistically significant relationship between principal literacy practices and student achievement in reading was found.

## Discussion

### *Literacy Practices as Reported by Principals*

Several conclusions can be drawn based on principals' ratings as proficient or exemplary in all areas of the Principal Literacy Quality Literacy Practices Survey. First, ratings reveal principals' self-confidence in the ability to understand various components of reading instruction. Reading instruction and achievement are critical to teacher and student success. Therefore the principal's familiarity and understanding of reading processes and instruction, instructional strategies and curriculum materials, assessment, diagnosis and evaluation, professional development, and creating a literate environment are essential. "As literacy leaders, principals are expected to be knowledgeable about all

instructional trends and practices in general as well as what is specifically happening in each classroom in the building" (Jay and McGovern, 2007, p. 51). The principal must be able to identify strong literacy instruction in the classroom when he or she sees it. Then when discussions ensue between the principal and teachers regarding methods to improve classroom instruction, the principal's credibility is maintained when there is content knowledge to back up specific suggestions. Second, principals scored themselves as exemplary in the category of assessment, diagnosis and evaluation of reading instruction. Understanding reading data and how to use it effectively is a mandatory competency in an era of accountability. However, making meaning of the massive amount of formative and summative reading data available to school leaders is another issue altogether. Principals must be able to "organize data use around essential questions about student performance" (Ronka, et. al, 2009, p. 21). Having the ability to utilize the information gleaned from data to help teachers shift classroom practice is vital to making instructional changes that will improve student learning. Because the importance of reading assessment and achievement is at the forefront of school improvement efforts, principal knowledge and self-confidence in this area is positive and encouraging. Lastly, principals rated themselves overall as exemplary in the category of professional development responding that they not only initiated and designed professional development activities in reading, but also led them. In addition, principals' responses revealed that they believed it was important to support professional development through bringing in consultants or providing financial assistance and opportunities for staff members to attend sessions outside of the school building. Facilitating dialogue between staff members about their instructional practices as related to reading was also considered

imperative. This kind of professional development is the key to improving teaching that affects classroom instruction. Research confirms this finding as it highlights effective professional development as a prolonged effort held with the teachers' needs in mind, as it includes "deepening teachers' knowledge of the content they are to teach" (Wylie, Lyon, and Goe, 2009, p. 3). A format for professional development, which has been carefully designed by the principal, encourages collegiality. When teachers are given opportunities to talk about their daily practice and are afterward offered support through informal observations and feedback among their teammates, teacher learning is enhanced (Hoerr, 2010).

#### *Principals' Literacy Practices as Reported by Reading Specialists*

Reading specialists hold a distinctive position in their elementary schools. Often they are the only staff member with specialized knowledge and skill in the area of reading instruction. They are called upon to diagnose reading difficulties, work with students, and share their expertise with teachers and administrators. In addition, reading specialists frequently lead school wide literacy initiatives. School administrators, who have limited knowledge of reading instruction, rely heavily on the advice of their reading specialist. This puts the reading specialist in the position of having first hand knowledge of their principals' understanding about reading instruction.

Responses on the Principal Quality Literacy Practices Survey confirmed that reading specialists believe that they have more detailed and specific knowledge related to reading instruction than their principals. Overall reading specialists rated their principals as proficient or exemplary on the survey. However, a small number of reading specialists rated their principals as having basic or unsatisfactory literacy practices related to reading

instruction, perhaps under the condition of anonymity. Additionally, some reading specialists indicated that they did not approve of the principal's support of various reading programs.

*Principals' Literacy Practices and the Relationship to Student Achievement in Reading*

Analysis identified no statistically significant relationship between principal literacy practices and student achievement in reading. The probability of statistically significant findings was reduced by several factors. These factors include leadership of the principal, changes in classroom instruction, the scores on the Virginia Standards of Learning assessment, and the reported scores of principals and reading specialists on the Principal Quality Literacy Practices survey.

Expectations for student achievement have changed dramatically since 1998 when the Virginia Standards of Learning assessments began. Combined with the tenets of the No Child Left Behind Act (2001), a new era of accountability and responsibility began in Virginia. Materials that aligned learning objectives between grades, Standards of Learning curriculum framework, enhanced scope and sequence documents, and test blueprints that outlined specific objectives covered by each grade level made expectations clear. Principals were called to be "instructional leaders who possess the requisite skills, capacities, and commitment to lead the accountability parade, not follow it" (Tirozzi, 2001, p. 438).

School leaders were charged with using assessment data to improve classroom instruction, student learning and student performance on high-stakes state assessments. Subsequently, principals increased their efforts to plan and present professional development to focus instructional efforts on the rigorous standards set forward by the

Commonwealth. In a period of intense public pressure and scrutiny, principals became leaders, exhibiting the characteristics as explained by the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP). Standard five of the NAESP standards calls for instructional leaders to "use multiple sources of data as diagnostic tools to assess, identify, and apply instructional improvement" (NAESP, 2001). Principals changed what they knew about instructional leadership into action steps at the school level, which transformed the way schools operated on a daily basis. They essentially filled the "knowing-doing gap" (Pfeffer and Sutton, 2000, p. 4).

Classroom teachers met the challenge of increased expectations by implementing a broad range of instructional skills and strategies focused specifically on state curricula. Locally developed common formative assessments based on standards, analysis of data by grade level and vertical teams, and changes in the method of using data became the norm in many schools. Teachers became adept at analyzing their own students' data and using that information to make instructional changes in the classroom as well as planning intervention groups based on student need. Teachers planned together and shared strategies as well as best practices as collaborative teams.

As a result of the efforts of principals and classroom teachers, test scores on the Virginia Standards of Learning tests have risen steadily since testing began in 1998. Between 1998 and 2005 fifth grade reading scores rose seventeen percentage points from a 68% pass rate to 85% pass rate across Virginia (VA Department of Education, 1998-2005 Statewide Standards). Based on data collected for the elementary schools included in this study from spring 2009, the pass rate for fifth grade students on the SOL Reading Test ranged between 79% and 100%. The mean pass rate, 93.15%, illustrated scores



clustered near the highest possible score, or ceiling, on the SOL test. When scores continue to improve toward the ceiling it becomes much more difficult for scores to get any higher. This ceiling effect, a positive sign of increasing student achievement on a given measure, decreases variability in a statistical study.

The overall scores of the principals and reading specialists on the Principal Quality Literacy Practices Survey were high. Principals were rated overall as proficient or exemplary on each category of the survey. The Standards of Learning test scores for the 2008-2009 school year, which were utilized for calculations, were also high. Therefore a statistical relationship between literacy practice scores and student achievement could not be obtained.

Study outcomes correspond to research findings that describe the complexity of aligning principals' leadership practices with student achievement (Glasman, 1984; Heck, et. al, 1990; Hallinger, Bickman, and Davis, 1996; Witziers, Bosker, and Kruger, 2003; Leithwood et. al, 2004). Principals' practices can be identified and associated with student learning, yet the direct statistical relationship is often intangible.

#### Study Limitations

Several limitations may have contributed to the results and conclusions described in this study.

1. The response rate of 58.9% affected the generalizability of the study. The number of principals and reading specialists who chose not to respond (43.5%) may have influenced the final results.
2. The method of survey delivery was problematic. Each prospective participant received a letter via United States mail to explain the study. Within one week

the survey was delivered electronically through e-mail addresses located on school web sites. In some cases e-mail addresses and personnel were not updated. In addition Spam traps did not allow e-mails from an unknown source to be delivered. While electronic delivery of the survey was the most expedient, principals in particular, may have ignored an e-mail from an unknown source. Another likely occurrence is that principals, who are inundated with daily e-mails, may have lost track of the e-mail request.

3. The study was limited to one area of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Those principals and reading specialists who chose to answer the survey may have had either a personal interest in the topic or a more positive view of their own actions as a principal.
4. Principal responses to the survey questions were generally favorable. In an anonymous survey, self-report bias occurs which may inflate scores
5. Reading Scores of participating schools were generally high, mirroring an overall trend of increasing Standards of Learning Scores in the Commonwealth of Virginia.
6. Data from twelve school districts (74 schools) were used for final analysis representing five rural, three suburban, and four urban schools districts. However data from two larger adjoining school districts comprised 58% of the schools included in the study: an urban district, n= 26; a suburban district, n = 17.

7. Virginia Standards of Learning test scores used for analyses did not represent a normal distribution due to the increasing level of student achievement across the Commonwealth.

#### Implications for Instructional Practice

The principal and reading specialist both agreed, essentially, on the proficiency of the principal in relationship to literacy practices identified on the Principal Quality Literacy Practices Survey. Elementary principals and reading specialists work closely together toward a common goal of improved literacy for all students in their schools. Therefore a shared view of and agreement on quality literacy practices benefits teachers and ultimately students.

It is important that school leaders know what they know, particularly in an area as critical as reading instruction. As a tool for self-evaluation the Principal Quality Literacy Survey provided insight into specific areas of reading practice deemed proficient by the International Reading Association. By the same token, principals were given the opportunity to reflect honestly, and anonymously, on areas related to reading instruction where they felt less certain.

Statistical analysis could not link principal literacy practices with student achievement, according to the results of this study. However, the report of positive scores on the Principal Quality Literacy Practices Survey in the areas of assessment, diagnosis, and evaluation as well as professional development paint a clearly optimistic picture of the principals' daily practices which enhance teacher and student learning. Combined with increasing SOL test scores, one could state simply, "Someone is doing something right."

### Future Research

Future research to study principals' literacy practices and the relationship to student achievement in reading address some of the limitations of the current study.

1. Conduct in depth interviews to discuss each area of literacy with exemplary principals. Include school visitations and observations of the actions of principals related to literacy.
2. Focus on one school district and track student achievement over time. Include a longitudinal examination of test data with student cohort groups and the relationship with principals' literacy practices.
3. Investigate the similarities and differences in the reading specialist's and principal's vision for reading instruction.
4. Further investigate areas of instructional strength, assessment, for example, as identified by the principal on the Principal Quality Literacy Practices Survey. In a like manner, investigate areas in which principals believed they were less proficient, i.e. knowledge of reading research.
5. Explore principal differences in literacy beliefs and practices for those with a strong classroom or reading background as opposed to principals who have less classroom oriented experience, i.e. fine arts, physical education, math and science, etc. Examine how those without a reading background have become knowledgeable in this vital instructional area.
6. Develop and pilot a more far-reaching survey instrument that expands the areas of research in each of the five areas suggested by the International Reading Association Standards (2004). Further explore the reading specialists' leadership

role as described by Quatroche, Bean, and Hamilton, 2008. Investigate the interaction with the principal as instructional leader.

7. Study the relationship between student achievement and schools whose principals have an endorsement in reading.

### Summary

The convergence of our country's educational history, government influence, the instructional leadership of the principal, as well as the changing roles of the principal and reading specialist formed the basis for this study. Principals and reading specialists reported that overall the principals' actions were either proficient or exemplary in each of the areas surveyed. Based on the survey principals rated as proficient were reported to demonstrate practices that have made a positive and measurable impact on the teaching and learning of reading. Further, principals rated exemplary were reported to demonstrate literacy practices that exhibited clear, convincing, and consistent evidence of a significant and measurable impact on student achievement in reading. This study found no significant statistical relationship between principals' literacy practices, as reported by the Principal Quality Literacy Practices Survey and student achievement on the Virginia Standards of Learning Reading test. However, reading specialists' and principals' confidence in the school leader's knowledge and practice related to reading instruction is an encouraging and positive result of this study. This finding, alone, illustrates the principals' true role as an instructional leader.

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## Appendix A: District Permission to Survey Letter

Date

To: County or City Official

From: Sandra C. Cox, Doctoral Candidate, Old Dominion University

Re: Request for Permission to Survey Elementary Principals and Reading Specialists for Doctoral Study

I respectfully request permission to contact elementary staff members in Schools to collect data for my doctoral study.

Title of Study: Elementary Principals' Literacy Practices and their Relationship to Student Achievement in Reading

Purpose of Study: To examine elementary principals' literacy practices from the viewpoints of the school principal and the reading specialist at the same school. An association with the student achievement on the fifth grade Standards of Learning English:Reading test will be explored.

Participants and Means of Contact: Elementary principals and reading specialists from fifteen districts in Region II in southeastern Virginia (220 schools) have been identified as potential survey participants. Survey participants will be contacted electronically via e-mail through Survey Monkey. The survey, based on a rubric, consists of 30 questions.

Data: 5<sup>th</sup> grade SOL English: Reading scores will be gathered from the Virginia Department of Education web site.

This study has met the requirements for an exempt study by the Human Subjects Review Committee of the Darden School of Education at Old Dominion University. Participation is strictly voluntary. Confidentiality and anonymity will be assured for all schools, school personnel, and school data.

If you have any questions regarding any portion of this study, you may contact me at [sccox@odu.edu](mailto:sccox@odu.edu) or at xxx-xxx-xxxx

Thank you very much for your assistance.

## Appendix B: Principal Quality Literacy Practices Survey

Directions: The first seven questions ask about your experience as a principal or reading specialist. The last twenty-three questions ask about literacy practices of the principal.

### **I. Demographic Information.**

1. What is your job title?

- Principal
- Reading specialist

2. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

3. Race/Ethnicity:

- African American
- Asian
- Caucasian
- Hispanic
- Other

4. How many years have you worked in education?

- 0 - 4 years
- 5 - 10
- 11 - 15
- 20 + years

5. How many years have you worked as a principal or reading specialist in your current school?

- 0 - 4 years
- 5 - 10
- 11 - 15
- 20 + years

6. In which area is your school district located?

- rural area
- suburban area
- urban area

7. Is your school designated as a Title I school?

- Yes
- No

8. Percentage of students at your school who receive free or reduced-price meals.

- 0 % - 25%
- 25% - 49%
- 50%-74 %
- 75 - 100%

## II. Knowledge of the Foundations of Reading Processes and Instruction

Questions address the principal's knowledge of reading processes and instruction.

### **KEY**

**Unsatisfactory:** There is evidence that the principal's actions have harmed the teaching and learning of reading.

**Basic:** There is evidence that the principal's actions have made little impact on the teaching and learning of reading.

**Proficient:** There is clear evidence that the principal's actions have made a positive and measurable impact on the teaching and learning of reading.

**Exemplary:** There is clear, convincing, and consistent evidence that the principal's actions have made a significant and measurable impact on the teaching and learning of reading.

9. Which statement best describes the principal's actions related to his/her knowledge of reading processes and instruction?

- a. UNSATISFACTORY: Demonstrates no foundational knowledge of reading.
- b. BASIC: Identifies foundational reading knowledge
- c. PROFICIENT: Recognizes and explains foundational reading knowledge
- d. EXEMPLARY: Recognizes, explains, and compares foundational reading knowledge.

Comments (optional)

10. Which statement best describes the principal's knowledge of the history of reading, reading research, and use of methods and materials?

- a. **UNSATISFACTORY:** Does not know general patterns of the history of reading, reading research, methods and materials.
- b. **BASIC:** Knows a limited number of general patterns of the history of reading, reading research, methods and materials.
- c. **PROFICIENT:** Knows general patterns of the history of reading, reading research, methods and materials.
- d. **EXEMPLARY:** Demonstrates and shares extensive knowledge about the history of reading, reading research, methods and materials.

Comments (optional)

11. Which statement best describes the principal's knowledge of the developmental progression of reading?

- a. **UNSATISFACTORY:** Does not show understanding of the developmental progression of reading.
- b. **BASIC:** States general aspects of the developmental progression of reading.
- c. **PROFICIENT:** Summarizes the developmental progression of reading.
- d. **EXEMPLARY:** Demonstrates extensive knowledge of the developmental progression of reading.

Comments (optional)

12. Which statement best describes the principal's knowledge of oral language as it relates to reading?

- a. **UNSATISFACTORY:** Is unable to describe the developmental aspects of oral language and the relationship to reading.
- b. **BASIC:** States the developmental aspects of oral language and the relationship to reading.



- c. **PROFICIENT:** Clearly articulates the developmental aspects of oral language and the relationship to reading.
- d. **EXEMPLARY:** Develops systems for the integration and use of oral language strategies and reading.

Comments (optional)

13. Which statement best describes the principal's knowledge of how the components of reading (phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, background knowledge, and motivation) are integrated during fluent reading?

- a. **UNSATISFACTORY:** Is unable to describe how the components of reading are integrated into fluent reading in the classroom.
- b. **BASIC:** Describes how some of the components of reading are integrated into fluent reading in the classroom.
- c. **PROFICIENT:** Explains how each of the components of reading is integrated into fluent reading in the classroom.
- d. **EXEMPLARY:** Interprets and explains how each of the components of reading is integrated into fluent reading in the classroom.

Comments (optional)

### **III. Instructional Strategies and Curriculum Materials**

Questions address the principal's use of a wide range of instructional practices, approaches, methods and curriculum materials that support reading instruction.

14. Which statement best describes the principal's understanding of grouping options for specific purposes for reading?

- a. **UNSATISFACTORY:** Is unable to discuss teachers' grouping practices for reading

- b. **BASIC:** Discusses teachers' grouping practices for reading
- c. **PROFICIENT:** Evaluates and supports teachers' grouping practices for reading
- d. **EXEMPLARY:** Formulates and coaches teachers' grouping practices for reading

Comments (optional)

15. Which statement best describes the principal's understanding of grouping options for specific purposes for reading including technology-based practices?

- a. **UNSATISFACTORY:** Is unable to discuss teacher's grouping practices for reading including technology-based practices.
- b. **BASIC:** Discusses teachers' grouping practices for reading including technology-based practices.
- c. **PROFICIENT:** Evaluates and supports teachers' use of grouping practices for reading including technology based practices.
- d. **EXEMPLARY:** Formulates and coaches teachers' use of grouping practices for reading including technology based practices.

Comments (optional)

16. Which statement best describes the principal's understanding of curricular materials related to reading?

- a. **UNSATISFACTORY:** Is unable to discuss teacher's use of a wide range of curricular materials related to reading
- b. **BASIC:** Discusses teachers' use of a wide range of curricular materials related to reading
- c. **PROFICIENT:** Evaluates and supports and coaches teachers' use of a wide range of curricular materials related to reading

d. **EXEMPLARY:** Creates a system for determining the effectiveness of curricular materials related to reading.

Comments (optional)

#### **IV. Assessment, Diagnosis, and Evaluation**

Questions address the principal's use of assessment tools and practices to plan and evaluate effective reading instruction.

17. Which statement best describes the principal's understanding of the role of assessment in the delivery of excellent reading instruction?

- a. **UNSATISFACTORY:** Is unable to identify the role of assessment in the delivery of excellent reading instruction.
- b. **BASIC:** Identifies the role of assessment in the delivery of excellent reading instruction.
- c. **PROFICIENT:** Understands the role of assessment in the delivery of excellent reading instruction.
- d. **EXEMPLARY:** Clearly articulates the role of assessment in the delivery of excellent reading instruction.

Comments (optional)

18. Which statement best describes the principal's participation in the development of a school reading assessment plan?

- a. **UNSATISFACTORY:** Is not involved in the development of a school reading assessment plan.
- b. **BASIC:** Directs reading professionals to develop a school reading assessment plan.
- c. **PROFICIENT:** Works with reading professionals to develop a school reading assessment plan.
- d. **EXEMPLARY:** Leads the development of a school reading assessment plan.

Comments (optional)

19. Which statement best describes the principal's knowledge of student reading performance?

- a. UNSATISFACTORY: Is unaware of the range of students' reading performance.
- b. BASIC: Identifies the range of students' reading performance.
- c. PROFICIENT: Knows and describes the range of students' reading performance
- d. EXEMPLARY: Explains the range of students' reading performance.

Comments (optional)

20. Which statement best describes the principal's use of reading assessment data?

- a. UNSATISFACTORY: Is unable to describe professional uses and collection of reading assessment data.
- b. BASIC: Describes professional uses and collection of reading assessment data.
- c. PROFICIENT: Encourages and monitors collection and use of reading assessment data.
- d. EXEMPLARY: Designs a system for collection and use of reading assessment data.

Comments (optional)

21. Which statement best describes the principal's methods of communicating reading assessment information?

- a. **UNSATISFACTORY:** Does not communicate reading assessment information to staff members.
- b. **BASIC:** Communicates reading assessment information to staff members.
- c. **PROFICIENT:** Communicates reading assessment information to staff members and constituents.
- d. **EXEMPLARY:** Charts assessment data and communicates that information to staff and constituents.

Comments (optional)

22. Which statement best describes how the principal uses assessment data for instructional purposes?

- a. **UNSATISFACTORY:** Is unable to identify how assessment should be used for assessment purposes.
- b. **BASIC:** Identifies how assessment should be used for assessment purposes.
- c. **PROFICIENT:** Understands and explains how assessment should be used for assessment purposes.
- d. **EXEMPLARY:** Demonstrates how assessment should be used for assessment purposes.

Comments (optional)

## **V. Creating a Literate Environment**

Questions address the principal's actions which foster reading by integrating foundational knowledge, use of instructional practices, approaches and methods, curriculum materials and the appropriate use of assessment.

23. Which statement best describes the principal's actions related to curriculum development based on students' interests and reading abilities?

- a. **UNSATISFACTORY:** Is uninvolved with the professional staff in the design of curriculum based on students' interests and reading abilities.
- b. **BASIC:** Directs the professional staff to design curriculum based on students' interests and reading abilities
- c. **PROFICIENT:** Supports the professional staff in the curriculum based on students' interests and reading abilities
- d. **EXEMPLARY:** Provides input to the professional staff in the design of curriculum based on students' interests and reading abilities

Comments (optional)

24. Which statement best describes the principal's participation in selecting reading materials?

- a. **UNSATISFACTORY:** Is uninvolved with the professional staff in the selection of books, technology-based information and non-print materials.
- b. **BASIC:** Directs the professional staff to select books, technology-based information and non-print materials.
- c. **PROFICIENT:** Supports the professional staff in selecting books, technology-based information and non-print materials
- d. **EXEMPLARY:** Selects books, technology-based information and non-print materials.

Comments (optional)

25. Which statement best describes the principal's view of reading as a lifelong activity?

- a. UNSATISFACTORY: Does not model reading as a valued lifelong activity.
- b. BASIC: Models reading as a valued lifelong activity.
- c. PROFICIENT: Participates and supports the staff in modeling reading as a lifelong activity.
- d. EXEMPLARY: Leads and enthusiastically supports the staff in modeling reading as a lifelong activity.

Comments (optional)

26. Which statement best describes the principal's participation in programs that motivate students to read?

- a. UNSATISFACTORY: Is uninvolved with the professional staff in designing intrinsic and extrinsic motivational programs to encourage student reading.
- b. BASIC: Directs the professional staff to design intrinsic and extrinsic motivational programs to encourage student reading.
- c. PROFICIENT: Supports the professional staff in designing intrinsic and extrinsic motivational programs to encourage student reading.
- d. EXEMPLARY: Creates and participates in motivational programs to encourage student reading.

Comments (optional)

## **VI. Professional Development**

Questions address the principal's view of professional development as a career-long effort and responsibility.

27. Which statement best describes the principal's view of professional development for reading?

- a. **UNSATISFACTORY:** Does not state the importance of teachers and reading specialists in developing their professional knowledge about reading.
- b. **BASIC:** States the importance of teachers and reading specialists developing their professional knowledge about reading.
- c. **PROFICIENT:** Supports teachers and reading specialists in developing their professional knowledge about reading.
- d. **EXEMPLARY:** Initiates, designs, and leads professional development in reading aligned to student assessment data.

Comments (optional)

28. Which statement best describes the principal's support of professional development opportunities for staff members?

- a. **UNSATISFACTORY:** Does not offer professional development opportunities for teachers and reading specialists.
- b. **BASIC:** Describes professional development opportunities for teachers and reading specialists.
- c. **PROFICIENT:** Identifies specific professional development opportunities for teachers and reading specialists.
- d. **EXEMPLARY:** Identifies specific professional development opportunities and provides financial support for teachers and reading specialists.

Comments (optional)

29. Which statement best describes the principal's provision for bringing in reading consultants (district level and outside specialists) to the school for professional development?



- a. **UNSATISFACTORY:** Does not bring consultants to the school to provide professional development for reading.
- b. **BASIC:** Brings a minimum (1-2) number of consultants to the school to provide professional development for reading.
- c. **PROFICIENT:** Brings consultants to the school to provide professional development for reading several (3-4) times a year
- d. **EXEMPLARY:** Brings consultants to the school to provide professional development for reading regularly (monthly or more often).

Comments (optional)

30. Which statement best describes the principal's support for staff attending professional development activities (i.e. conferences and programs) outside of the school building?

- a. **UNSATISFACTORY:** Does not provide opportunities for staff members to attend professional development programs related to reading.
- b. **BASIC:** Provides limited opportunities for staff members to attend professional development programs related to reading.
- c. **PROFICIENT:** Provides opportunities each year for staff members to attend professional development programs related to reading.
- d. **EXEMPLARY:** Provides opportunities throughout each year for various staff members to attend professional development programs related to reading.

Comments (optional)

31. Which statement best describes how the principal works with staff members to collaborate and provide feedback on each other's instructional practices related to reading?

- a. **UNSATISFACTORY:** Does not encourage collaboration among staff members about their instructional practices related to reading.
- b. **BASIC:** Encourages collaboration among staff members about their instructional practices related to reading.

- c. PROFICIENT: Encourages and facilitates collaboration among staff members about their instructional practices related to reading.
- d. EXEMPLARY: Encourages, facilitates, and evaluates collaboration and dialogue among staff members about their instructional practices related to reading.

Comments (optional)

*Thank you for participating in this study!*

## Appendix C: Letter Mailed to Prospective Survey Participants

W W



Dear Principal and Reading Specialist,

I am conducting a study on elementary principals' literacy practices and their association with student achievement in order to complete my Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree requirements. The study will focus on principals' literacy practices and the relationship to student achievement in reading on the fifth grade Virginia Standards of Learning Test. I have received permission from your school district to contact you.

Elementary principals' literacy practices will be studied through a survey instrument adapted from the International Reading Association Standards for Reading Professionals (2004). Your honest responses as a principal or reading specialist will be extremely helpful and valuable. The survey should take no more than 10-12 minutes of your time to complete. As a former reading specialist and practicing principal in southeastern Virginia, I understand how precious your time is.

Confidentiality will be maintained at all times. No individuals, schools, or assessment data will be identified except in general terms. Participation in this study means that you consent to using your information in aggregate form for this study.

You may access the Principal Quality Literacy Practices Survey at the following link: [\[link\]](#). Please complete the survey by (date, TBD). If you have questions regarding any portion of this study please contact me at [sccox@odu.edu](mailto:sccox@odu.edu) or my dissertation chairperson, Dr. Jane M. Hager, [jhager@odu.edu](mailto:jhager@odu.edu).

I am deeply grateful for your consideration and participation in this effort.

Sandra C. Cox  
 Doctoral Candidate  
 Old Dominion University

## Appendix D: Permission to Use International Reading Association Standards

INTERNATIONAL

**Reading Association**

800 BARKSDALE ROAD, PO BOX 8139, NEWARK, DE 19714-8139, USA

Asociacion Internacional de Lectura • Association Internationale pour la Lecture  
Telephone 302-731-1600 • Fax 302-731-105? • www.reading.OJg

May 27, 2009

Sandra C- Cox  
Norview Elementary School  
6401 Chesapeake Blvd.  
Norfolk VA 23513FAX: 757-852-4658  
EMAIL: scox@nps.k12.va.ua

RE: Excerpt standards 1-5 (p. 8), excerpt "Administrator Candidates" (p. 10-19), and Figure 2 (p. 9) from Standards for Reading Professionals (Revised 2003). Copyright 2004 by the International Reading Association. Reprinted with perraisskm-

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Appendix F: Letter of Consent to Participate in a Focus Group

B b m i n j o n  
UNIVERSITY

Dear

I am a doctoral candidate in the Ph.D. program at Old Dominion University with a Literacy Leadership concentration. My proposed dissertation title is "Elementary Principals' Literacy Practices and Their Relationship to Student Achievement in Reading". The purpose of this study is to explore principal's literacy practices associated with reading as reported by elementary principals and their school reading specialist. Elementary principal's literacy practices and their relationship to student achievement, as measured by the English: Reading scores on the grade five Virginia Standards of Learning Test, will be examined.

One of the measures that will be used in the study is the Principal Quality Literacy Practices Rubric. You are invited to participate in a focus group to review and provide feedback regarding the content and components of the Principal Quality Literacy Practices Rubric.

All reviewers will remain anonymous. Any information that you provide, in written or oral form in connection with this study, will remain confidential. Written feedback will be kept in a secure location. At the conclusion of the study all information, print as well as electronic, will be destroyed.

Your participation is strictly voluntary. If you decide to participate I will have a copy of this letter available for your signature. Please feel free to e-mail me at [scox@nps.k12.va.us](mailto:scox@nps.k12.va.us) if you have any questions.

Thank you for your consideration of my request.

Sandra C. Cox

I give my consent to participate in the above focus group under the conditions stated above.

Printed Name

Signature Cox

## Appendix G: Changes to Principal Quality Literacy Practices Rubric

	<i>Unsatisfactory</i>	<b>Basic</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<i>Exemplary</i>
Standard 1	<i>There is evidence that the principal's actions have <u>harmed</u> the teaching and learning of reading</i>	<i>There is evidence that the principal's actions have made <u>little impact</u> on the teaching and learning of reading</i>	<i>There is clear evidence that the principal's actions have made a <u>positive and measurable impact</u> on the teaching and learning of reading</i>	<i>There is clear, convincing and consistent evidence that the principal's action have made a <u>significant and measurable impact</u> on student achievement in reading</i>
Deleted Added				
Foundational Knowledge	> <i>Demonstrates no knowledge of reading processes and instruction</i>	> <i>Identifies foundational reading knowledge</i>	> <i>Recognizes and explains general patterns in the history of reading, reading research, methods and materials</i>	> <i>Recognizes, compares and explains foundational knowledge</i>
Knowledge of the foundations of reading processes and instruction	> <i>Demonstrates no knowledge of reading research and histories of reading</i> > <i>Demonstrates no knowledge of oral language and it's relationship to reading and writing</i> > <i>Demonstrates no knowledge of the major components of reading: phonemic awareness, word identification and phonics, vocabulary and background knowledge, fluency, comprehension and motivation</i>	> <i>Knows a limited number of general patterns of the history of reading, reading research, methods and materials</i> > <i>States general aspects of the developmental progression of reading</i> > <i>States developmental aspects of oral language and the relationship to reading</i> > <i>Describes how some of the components of reading are integrated during fluent reading in the classroom</i>	> <i>Knows general patterns of the history of reading, reading research, methods and materials</i> > <i>Summarizes the developmental progression of reading</i> > <i>Clearly articulates developmental aspects of oral language and its relationship to reading</i> > <i>Explains how each of the components of reading are integrated in the classroom</i>	> <i>Demonstrates extensive knowledge in the history of reading, reading research, methods, and materials</i> > <i>Demonstrates extensive knowledge of the developmental progression in reading</i> > <i>Develops systems for the integration and use of oral language strategies and reading in classrooms in his/her school</i> > <i>Interprets and explains how each of the components of reading are integrated in the classroom</i>



	<i>Unsatisfactory</i>	<b>Basic</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Exemplary</b>
Standard 2 Deleted Added	<p><i>There is evidence that the principal's actions have <u>harmed</u> the teaching and learning of reading</i></p>	<p><i>There is evidence that the principal's actions have made <u>little impact</u> on the teaching and learning of reading</i></p>	<p><i>There is clear evidence that the principal's actions have made a <u>positive and measurable impact</u> on the teaching and learning of reading</i></p>	<p><i>There is clear, convincing and consistent evidence that the principal's action have made a <u>significant and measurable impact</u> on student achievement in <u>reading</u></i></p>
Instructional Strategies and Curriculum Materials	<p>&gt;Is unable to discuss teachers' grouping practices for reading</p> <p>&gt;Is unable to discuss teachers' grouping practices for reading including technology based practices</p> <p>&gt;Is unable to discuss teachers' use of a wide range of curricular materials related to reading</p>	<p>&gt; Discusses teachers' use of instructional grouping options for specific purposes</p> <p>&gt;Discusses teachers' use of grouping practices for reading including technology based practices</p> <p>&gt;Discusses teachers' use of a wide range of curricular materials related to reading</p>	<p>&gt;Evaluates, supports, and coaches</p> <p>- teachers' use of instructional grouping options for specific purposes</p> <p>-teachers' use of a wide range of instructional practices, approaches, methods, to support reading instruction</p> <p>- a variety of curriculum materials based on their appropriateness for those purposes and accommodating developmental cultural, and linguistic differences among their students</p>	<p>Effectively models various research-based instructional practices and approaches</p> <p>&gt;Initiates purchase of and use of a variety of curriculum materials</p> <p>&gt;Evaluates and carefully selects a variety of curriculum materials based on data and designed to meet students' needs.</p> <p>&gt;Creates an evaluation system for determining the effectiveness of curricular materials</p>
Knowledge of a wide range of instructional practices, approaches, methods, and curriculum materials to support reading and writing instruction.				

	<i>Unsatisfactory</i>	<b>Basic</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<i>Exemplary</i>
Standard 3  Deleted Added	<i>There is evidence that the principal's actions have harmed the teaching and learning of reading</i>	<i>There is evidence that the principal's actions have made little impact on the teaching and learning of reading</i>	<i>There is clear evidence that the principal's actions have made a positive and measurable impact on the teaching and learning of reading</i>	<i>There is clear, convincing and consistent evidence that the principal's action have made a significant and measurable impact on student achievement in reading</i>
Assessment Diagnosis and Evaluation  Principal demonstrates understanding of a variety of assessment tools and practices to evaluate effective reading instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;Is unable to identify the role of assessment in the delivery of excellent reading instruction</li> <li>&gt;Is not involved in the development of a school reading assessment plan</li> <li>&gt;Is unaware of the range of students' reading performance</li> <li>&gt;Is unable to describe professional uses and collection of reading assessment data</li> <li>&gt;Does not communicate reading assessment information to staff members</li> <li>&gt;Is unable to identify how assessment should be used for assessment purposes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;Identifies the role of assessment in the delivery of excellent reading instruction</li> <li>&gt;Directs reading professionals to develop a school reading assessment plan</li> <li>&gt;Identifies the range of student reading performance</li> <li>&gt;Describes professional uses and collection of reading assessment data</li> <li>&gt;Communicates reading assessment information to staff members</li> <li>&gt;Identifies how assessment should be used for instructional purposes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;Understands the role of assessment in the delivery of excellent reading instruction</li> <li>&gt;Works with reading professionals to develop a school reading assessment plan</li> <li>&gt;Knows and describes the range of students' reading performance</li> <li>&gt;Encourages and monitors collection and use of reading assessment data</li> <li>&gt;Communicates reading assessment information to staff and constituents</li> <li>&gt;Understand and explains how assessment should be used for instructional purposes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Clearly articulates the role of assessment in the delivery of excellent reading instruction</li> <li>&gt; Leads the development of the school reading assessment plan</li> <li>&gt;Explains the range of students' reading performance using multiple measures</li> <li>&gt;Designs a system for collection and use of reading assessment data</li> <li>&gt;Charts assessment data and communicates that information to staff and constituents</li> <li>&gt;Demonstrates how assessment should be used for instructional purposes</li> </ul>

	<i>Unsatisfactory</i>	<b>Basic</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<i>Exemplary</i>
<p>Standard 4</p> <p>Deleted</p> <p>Added</p>	<p><i>There is evidence that the principal's actions have harmed the teaching and learning of reading</i></p>	<p><i>There is evidence that the principal's actions have made little impact on the teaching and learning of reading</i></p>	<p><i>There is clear evidence that the principal's actions have made a positive and measurable impact on the teaching and learning of reading</i></p>	<p><i>There is clear, convincing and consistent evidence that the principal's action have made a significant and measurable impact on student achievement in reading</i></p>
<p>Creating a Literate Environment</p> <p>Principal helps create a literate environment that fosters reading by integrating foundational knowledge, use of instructional practices, approaches and methods, curriculum materials, and the appropriate use of assessments</p>	<p>&gt;Is uninvolved with the professional staff in the design of curriculum based on students' interests and reading abilities</p> <p>&gt;Is uninvolved with the professional staff in the selection of books, technology-based information and non-print materials</p> <p>&gt;Does not model reading as a valued lifelong activity</p> <p>&gt;Is uninvolved with the professional staff in designing intrinsic and extrinsic motivational programs to encourage student reading</p>	<p>&gt;Directs the professional staff to design curriculum based on students' interests and reading abilities</p> <p>&gt;Directs the professional staff to select books, technology-based information, and non-print materials</p> <p>&gt;Models reading as valued lifelong activity</p> <p>&gt;Directs the professional staff in designing intrinsic and extrinsic motivational programs to encourage student reading</p>	<p>&gt;Supports the professional staff in the design of curriculum based on students' interests and reading abilities</p> <p>&gt;Supports the professional staff in select books, technology-based information, and non-print materials</p> <p>Participates and supports the staff in modeling reading as a valued lifelong activity</p> <p>&gt;Supports the professional staff in designing intrinsic and extrinsic motivational programs to encourage student reading</p>	<p>&gt;Selects books, technology-based information, and non-print materials</p> <p>Provides input to the professional staff in the design of curriculum based on students' interests and reading abilities</p> <p>&gt;Leads and enthusiastically supports the staff in modeling reading as a valued lifelong activity</p> <p>&gt;Creates and participates in motivational programs to encourage reading</p>

	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>Basic</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Exemplary</b>
Standard 5	<i>There is evidence that the principal's actions have <u>harmed</u> the teaching and learning of reading</i>	<i>There is evidence that the principal's actions have made <u>little impact</u> on the teaching and learning of reading</i>	<i>There is clear evidence that the principal's actions have made a <u>positive and measurable impact</u> on the teaching and learning of reading</i>	<i>There is clear, convincing and consistent evidence that the principal's action have made a <u>significant and measurable impact</u> on student achievement in reading</i>
Deleted Added				
Professional Development	>Principal does not ensure an ethical learning context for reading	>Principal ensures an ethical learning context for reading	>Principal ensures an ethical learning context for reading	>Initiates, designs, and leads PD for staff
The principal views professional development (PD) as a career-long effort and responsibility.	instruction that respects students, families, teachers, colleagues and the community >Does not state the importance of teachers and reading specialists in developing their professional knowledge about reading >Does not offer PD opportunities for teachers and reading specialists	instruction that respects students, families, teachers, colleagues and the community >States the importance of teachers and reading specialists in developing their professional knowledge about reading >Describes PD opportunities for teachers and reading specialists	instruction that respects students, families, teachers, colleagues and the community >Supports teachers and reading specialists in developing their professional knowledge about reading identifies specific PD opportunities for teachers and reading specialists	>Principal makes presentations to local, state, and/or national organizations with a literacy/reading focus >Identifies specific PD opportunities and provides financial support for teachers and reading specialists

	<i>Unsatisfactory</i>	<b>Basic</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<i>Exemplary</i>
Standard 5 (continued)	<i>There is evidence that the principal's actions have harmed the</i>	<i>There is evidence that the principal's actions have made little</i>	<i>There is clear evidence that the principal's actions have made a positive and</i>	<i>There is clear, convincing and consistent evidence that the principal's action</i>
Deleted	<i>teaching and learning of reading</i>	<i>impact on the teaching and learning of reading</i>	<i>measurable</i>	<i>have made a significant and</i>
Added			<i>impact on the teaching and learning of reading</i>	<i>measurable impact</i>
	<p>&gt;Does not bring consultants to the school to provide PD for reading</p> <p>&gt;Does not provide opportunities for staff members to attend PD related to reading</p> <p>&gt;Does not encourage collaboration among staff members about their instructional practices related to reading</p>	<p>&gt;Brings a minimum (1-2) number of consultants to the school to provide PD for reading</p> <p>&gt;Provides limited opportunities for staff members to attend PD related to reading</p> <p>&gt;Encourages collaboration among staff members about their instructional practices related to reading</p>	<p>&gt;Brings consultants to the school to provide PD for reading several (3-4) times a year</p> <p>&gt;Provides opportunities each year for staff members to attend PD programs related to reading</p> <p>&gt;Encourages and facilitates collaboration and dialogue between staff members about their instructional practices related to reading</p>	<p>&gt;Brings consultants to the school to provide PD for reading regularly (monthly or more often)</p> <p>&gt;Provides opportunities throughout each school year for various staff members to attend PD programs related to reading</p> <p>&gt;Encourages, facilitates, and evaluates collaboration and dialogue between staff members about their instructional practices related to reading</p>

## VITA

Sandra Carper Cox graduated from W.T. Woodson High School in Fairfax, Virginia in June 1969 and entered Longwood College in the fall. She graduated from Longwood College in December of 1972 with a Bachelor of Science degree in elementary education. She began teaching in Norfolk Public Schools and shortly thereafter enrolled at Old Dominion University where she completed a Master of Science degree in early childhood education in August 1976. Teaching experiences included working in primary classrooms, and serving as a reading specialist. As a teacher specialist she focused on elementary reading and writing curriculum, instruction, and professional development at the district level. She completed an Education Specialist degree in administration and supervision at the George Washington University in May 1997. In May 2010 she completed her Ph.D. at Old Dominion University, with a concentration in Literacy Leadership. She currently serves as an elementary principal in Norfolk, Virginia and resides in Virginia Beach, Virginia.