

A PROFILE OF THE LITERACY PRACTICES OF K-5 CENTRAL FLORIDA
TEACHERS OF THE YEAR 2004-2005

by

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ABSTRACT

The problem of this study was to develop a literacy teaching profile of the 2004-2005 Teachers of the Year in Kindergarten through grade 5 in four central Florida school districts. Of primary interest was the extent to which these teachers indicated their use of exemplary literacy practices as defined using the domains and indicators of the National Exemplary Literacy Teacher Assessment (NELTA). The NELTA results were analyzed using frequencies and percentages. The results of the NELTA were also evaluated and discussed when total length of years teaching, and length of years at present grade level were considered.

The data were derived from the 66 (59.4%) classroom Teachers of the Year who responded to the survey. Overall, the findings showed little congruency between exemplary teaching practices as measured by the NELTA and teachers' self-described practices. Many teachers indicated utilizing grade level practices best suited for grade levels higher than the ones they were presently teaching. Demographic variables did little to clarify the profile of the Teachers of the Year; however, 18 teachers with 7 or more years of teaching experience (27.2%) responded with the highest levels of congruency. Furthermore, using the domains and indicators of the NELTA, 13 grade 4 teachers (19.7%) demonstrated the highest level of congruence with grade 4 best practices. Conclusions were made to explain this along with recommendations for future research.

This study is dedicated to my grandparents, Stephen and Dora Jobtanski, and to the memory of my uncle, John Robert Cowern.

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CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND DESIGN COMPONENTS

Introduction

Thousands of children in Florida and Texas are repeating 3rd grade this fall [2003] after failing to meet state promotion requirements mandated for the first time this year. Both states are taking a strict approach by linking 3rd graders' reading ability, as measured by state assessments, to their chances of progressing in school...local newspaper reports estimated that 32,000 Florida students would repeat 3rd grade, or 16% of the state's 192,711 3rd graders. (Reid, 2003 p. 25)

High stakes testing, especially with regard to reading, has become the norm in Florida, and with implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act, it has spread across the nation. While public education has been under intense scrutiny since the publication of "A Nation at Risk" (1983), it is arguable that the scrutiny had never been quite as intense as that observed at the beginning of the 21st century. Schools and school districts were making renewed efforts to educate children and maximize learning outcomes as measured by specific tests.

Many have questioned the role of the classroom teacher in the midst of this increased accountability. Furthermore, with regard to literacy and reading instruction, others have scrutinized textbooks, curriculum, and instructional strategies in an effort to produce the best possible learning outcomes. Current researchers have indicated that teachers, not methods or textbooks, play a large part in determining the success of their

students. Teaching expertise plays a role in the acquisition of literacy, and effective teachers share characteristics that contribute to their success (Block, 2001).

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study was to develop a literacy teaching profile of the 2004-2005 Teachers of the Year in Kindergarten through grade 5 in four central Florida school districts. Of primary interest was the extent to which these teachers indicated their use of exemplary literacy practices as defined using the domains of the National Exemplary Literacy Teacher Assessment (NELTA). Differences by grade level and within selected professional variables (total years of teaching, and years of teaching at present grade level) were also examined.

Definitions

The following definitions are included to clarify terminology usage in the present study:

The National Exemplary Literacy Teacher Assessment (NELTA): A 12-item instrument developed by Block and Mangieri (2003). The NELTA (Appendix A) is used to assess instructional practices of literacy teachers using six domains and a series of indicators in order to determine how close teachers come to employing “exemplary” practice.

Exemplary Literacy Practices: The required skills that a professional needs to provide instruction in reading and writing in an outstanding manner.

NELTA Domain: The six categories (Dominant Role, Motivation, Reteaching, Relating to Students, Classroom Qualities, Lesson Characteristics) used in the assessment of exemplary literacy practices of preschool through grade 5 elementary teachers (Block & Mangieri, 2003).

NELTA indicators: Descriptive behaviors used within the six domains to describe teachers' literacy teaching.

Teacher of the Year: An honorary title given to a teacher, typically elected by popular vote of the faculty, at each school during the academic school year as part of a statewide recognition program. For the purposes of this paper, Teacher of Year indicates selection during the 2003-2004 school year.

Delimitations

This study was delimited to public school teachers assigned to teach in regular education Kindergarten through grade 5 classrooms who have also been designated during the 2003-2004 academic school year as the 2004-2005 Teacher of the Year for their school. Since the research is focused on literacy teaching, Teachers of the Year who taught in special areas such as music, art, or special education were excluded.

The study was delimited to public primary schools, public elementary schools designated Kindergarten through grade 5, and public schools designated as Kindergarten through grade 8 in Orange, Osceola, Seminole, and Volusia counties, Florida. Teachers

of the Year from schools classified as alternative education, and teachers who teach grades 6, 7, or 8 were excluded from the survey population.

Assumptions

The specific assumptions of the study were as follows:

1. It was assumed that all public Elementary schools in the four counties had selected a Teacher of the Year.
2. It was assumed that Teachers of the Year in regular education classrooms were involved in literacy teaching.
3. It was assumed that the NELTA was an appropriate instrument to be administered to Teachers of the Year in order to assess their literacy teaching.
4. It was assumed that selection as Teacher of the Year indicated a perception of superior effectiveness in working with students.
5. It was assumed that teachers responding to the NELTA would respond honestly so as to accurately convey their practices.

Limitations

This study was limited by the focus of Block and Mangieri's (2003) instrument and was concerned only with the extent to which the six competency domains of exemplary literacy practices were able to be associated with the self-reported practices of

Florida Teachers of the Year. These teachers had been recognized for their classroom teaching in their respective districts.

Significance of the Study

In light of current accountability legislation and reform efforts, there is a need to examine the role of teacher expertise with regard to literacy instruction. Block and Mangieri (2003) have developed a continuum of teaching domains by grade level and have specified exemplary practices associated within each of the domains. The present research was thought to have the potential to provide useful information about the literacy practices of Teachers of the Year who participated in the study. It was also thought to have the potential for extending Block and Mangieri's (2003) work and for determining the extent to which their findings are applicable to Florida teachers.

Because literacy teaching has been viewed as critical to the success of elementary learners, further refinement of strategies and matching of appropriate teaching styles for teaching various grade levels are important. There are implications for the professional development of teachers, for pre-service institutions who are interested in producing effective literacy teachers, and for school districts who might better place teachers through the use of literacy teaching assessment.

Conceptual Framework

Historically, literacy instruction has been at the heart of education. Reading, writing, and arithmetic have been the core subjects in which curriculum debates have

been and continue to be rooted. Of these, reading and writing are the foundations of literacy.

The invention of the alphabet facilitated one approach to reading instruction that relied on letter recognition and sound association. This knowledge was then further expanded to include learning how to read syllables and eventually more complicated words (Matthews, 1966; Smith, 1986). This approach has been commonly referred to as phonics instruction or a skills-based approach. Phonics is an instructional strategy designed to teach sound letter relationships and the combinations they make by having students “sound out” words. Phonics skill instruction occurs independent of learning meaning. The emphasis is placed on decoding or reading words. It is expected that once the sound/letter relationships are learned, the meaning will follow. (Johnson, 1999).

In the mid 19th century, the word method came to be offered as an alternative to the skills-based approach. Students were taught words before receiving instruction in letters or sounds (Pressley, Allington, Wharton-McDonald, Block, & Morrow, 2001). The emphasis of this approach was on meaning and comprehension. It was asserted that learning whole words was more natural than sounding out their parts. At the time of the present study, the whole word approach had been somewhat expanded and refined and was often referred to as a whole language approach. It incorporates not just written words but also spoken words.

These two approaches to literacy instruction, along with their variants, have remained very much at the center of debate and research. In 1967, Bond and Dykstra attempted to determine which method of reading education was best for teaching reading.

Their research focused on effective first grade teachers and the multitude of approaches being used in their classrooms. Their study concluded that the approach being used was not what made the teachers or the instruction effective; rather, it was the teachers' expertise that made a difference in student learning. They concluded that effective teachers shared certain characteristics that transcended, or over reached, the method of instruction they employed.

In 1998, Hoffman studied a mandated transition from a skill based (phonics) to a literature based (whole language) basal in Texas. He concluded that the most successful teachers in that situation were "adaptive." Rather than abandoning the "old" basal in favor of the "new" program, the most effective teachers were integrating the best methods from the old series with the best methods and strategies from the new series to meet the educational needs of their students.

Shanahan and Neuman (1997) recognized this adaptive behavior evidenced by successful teachers in what they termed "methodological eclecticism." Similarly, Stahl (1997) referred to this same quality as "principled eclecticism." These researchers indicated that effective teachers share the characteristic of method flexibility. They do not rely on one method alone. Instead, they use their professional judgement and expertise to select and adapt strategies to suit the needs of the learner in every situation.

Additional studies have further affirmed that improvements in reading instruction require that teaching expertise must be examined rather than expecting improvement (with regard to reading achievement) as a result of adopting new materials (Allington, Guice, Michelson, & Li, 1996; Baumann, Hoffman, Moon, & Duffy-Hester, 1998). Duffy

and Hoffman (1999) have stated quite simply, "...the answer is not in the method, it is in the teacher" (p.11).

It is this idea that Block and Mangieri (2003) have explored in their research and promoted in their resultant book, *Exemplary Literacy Teachers*. They have identified and categorized qualities that define effective teaching and expert literacy teaching behavior by grade level. They have developed a questionnaire (NELTA) to assist teachers in identifying their strengths and weaknesses and developing their own literacy teaching expertise. Their work is based on research that has emerged from two bodies of knowledge. The first was information regarding the qualities that define effective teaching; the second was an analysis of studies that identified indicators of expert behavior (Block, Oakar, and Hurt, 2002). The NELTA emerged from two intensive research studies that spanned a period of two years and was conducted using a sample of 647 experts from 32 states of the United States, and five countries outside North America.

To identify teaching literacy expertise, we contacted the International Reading Association for a list of its members who (a) possessed a doctoral or master's degree with a specialization in elementary literacy, and (b) had served as supervisors of literacy instruction in school districts in an English-speaking country for at least 4 years. To be selected, school district literacy supervisors also had to indicate that they had attended symposiums, sessions, and preconvention institutes of the 1998 and 1999 annual meetings of the International Reading Association. This attendance was an indicator that they were making a commitment to stay current about latest research practices. In addition, every supervisor had to have completed at least 36 hours of advanced training in literacy research and pedagogy. (Block, Oakar, and Hurt, 2002 p. 184)

Phase one of the first study involved compiling a master list of indicators of teaching expertise. Phase two consisted of collapsing the collected data into categories.

Phase three involved writing summaries and selecting examples of expertise at each grade level. Phase four involved a cross validation process in which practitioners' and researchers' responses were compared. This phase involved 17 university researchers not involved in Phase one or Phase two. These researchers were selected using the following criteria.

They had to be members of the Reading Hall of Fame, authors of articles in the Distinguished Educator Series for *The Reading Teacher*, authors of a chapter in the *Handbook of Reading Research*, or invited presenters at the International Symposium on Reading Instruction at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana, Summer 2000. (Block, Oakar, and Hurt, 2002 p. 186)

Research Questions

The following questions guided this research:

1. To what extent can the literacy teaching of 2004-2005 elementary Florida Teachers of the Year be described as exemplary using the indicators and domains of the NELTA?
2. What differences, if any, exist in the literacy practices of 2004-2005 elementary Florida Teachers of the Year when total years of teaching are considered?
3. What differences, if any, exist in the literacy practices of 2004-2005 elementary Florida Teachers of the Year when length of years teaching at present grade level are considered?
4. To what extent can the literacy teaching of 2004-2005 elementary Florida

Teachers of the Year be described as exemplary by grade level using the indicators and domains of the NELTA?

Methodology

The population for this study consisted of the Teachers of the Year for 2004-2005 selected at 210 public elementary schools in Orange, Osceola, Seminole and Volusia counties in Florida during the 2003-2004 school year (Appendix B). Due to the specific nature of the survey with regard to literacy instruction, surveys were mailed only to regular education public schools serving Kindergarten through grade 5. Schools serving students with special needs and teachers of subjects other than Kindergarten through grade 5 were not included in this initial population.

The schools selected for inclusion were schools that had been classified as regular education public schools and included some or all of grades Kindergarten through 5 as listed in the 2003-2004 Florida Education Directory by FASA. The names of the 2004-2005 elementary Teachers of the Year to whom the surveys were addressed were obtained initially from school district publications and web sites, and verified for accuracy with the respective school districts.

Instrumentation and Other Sources of Data

The researcher used an instrument developed by Block and Mangieri (2003) the National Exemplary Literacy Teacher Assessment (NELTA). The NELTA was supplemented by additional questions (Appendix C) designed to gain data related to

demographic variables. These data were used in developing an overall profile of the population and assisted in answering the research questions. The NELTA is divided into six major competency domains that are indicative of exemplary literacy teaching behavior. These six domains are: Dominant Role, Motivation, Reteaching, Relating to Students, Classroom Qualities, and Lesson Characteristics. Within these major domains, Block and Mangieri (2003) have specified specific indicators or behaviors by grade level that effective teachers display (Appendix D).

Data Collection

A survey of the 210 Central Florida Teachers of the Year was conducted using the NELTA supplemented by additional questions (Appendix C). Surveys were mailed to recipients at their respective school addresses. The instrument, a cover letter (Appendix E), and a postage-paid self-addressed stamped envelope were mailed to the 210 potential respondents on April 26, 2004. The cover letter congratulated and thanked the teachers in advance for their participation, explained the purpose of the research and requested an immediate return response. The surveys were coded for verification purposes, but respondent confidentiality was maintained, as only group data were analyzed. A follow-up email and additional copies of the instrument with postage paid

return envelopes were sent to those teachers who did not return the instrument by May 14.

Data Analysis

The first phase of data analysis consisted of scoring the NELTA for each respondent. Scoring the NELTA involved the use of a NELTA score sheet (Appendix F) on which each respondent's letter response was recorded and converted to a grade level equivalent assigned value. Each of the six domains (Dominant Role, Motivation, Reteaching, Relating to Students, Classroom Qualities, and Lesson Characteristics) generated scores and equivalencies for the two indicators associated with each domain. Next, the level of strength in exemplary literacy practices was categorized using levels of strength associated with the 12 indicators. The third step in this first phase of data analysis involved the calculation of the percentages conducive to "best practices" for each domain at the teacher's assigned grade level. This permitted the determination of the extent to which the literacy teaching of each teacher could be described as exemplary. The entire data set permitted a profile of the responding 2004-2005 elementary Florida Teachers of the Year and thereby provided an answer to Research Question 1.

Phase 2 consisted of further analysis using descriptive statistics. SPSS was employed to enter data prior to the determination of the extent to which the literacy teaching of each teacher can be described as exemplary by total years of teaching (Research Question 2) and number of years of teaching at present grade level (Research Question 3). For Research Question 4, discussion was focused on the extent to which

selected indicators, namely the two most important grade level indicators as identified by Block and Mangieri (2003), were evidenced by Florida Teachers of the Year.

Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 has introduced the problem statement and its design components. Chapter 2 contains a review of the literature as it pertains to the problem of this study. Chapter 3 presents the methodology and procedures used in data collection and analysis. Chapter 4 presents a summary of the analysis of the data. Chapter 5 contains a summary and discussion of the findings of this study, the implications for practice and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter was organized to permit a review of the related literature on literacy and literacy education. Included are information related to the evolution of written language and the history of reading education. The history of different methods of reading instruction and the evolution of the modern debate are also addressed. Research relative to current literacy education issues was also reviewed. Finally, research related to the topic of effective literacy teaching is presented.

The Evolution of Written Language

The written word, and alphabet, as it has come to be known, is the end result of centuries of interaction of governing groups, different languages, and varying pronunciations transcribed into an alphabetic code. “A surprising fact about the writing system we use in English is how recently it was invented: The first alphabet came into being only about 1500 BC” (Balmuth, 1982, p. 15).

Writing has been described as a system for conveying or recording messages through constellations of visual symbols (Adams, 1990). Within the history of the evolution of written language, there have been numerous systems of writing. Some of the earliest written records consisted of pictures or pictograms. These symbols were used to represent an idea instead of a word or a sound. A modern example of a pictogram would

be a cartoon character with a light bulb floating over his head or an arrow indicating which direction one should walk to reach the nearest restroom (Balmuth, 1982).

Since pictures were subject to many interpretations, pictographic writing gave way ultimately to a logographic system that could more explicitly convey the author's intentions. Logograms are written symbols that stand for a specific word or phrase (Balmuth, 1982). Since some words were unable to be portrayed in a picture, symbols were introduced to represent them. The Chinese written language is logographic, and examples of modern logograms include the % symbol, and any of the Arabic numerals, e.g., 1, 2, 3. About 4,000 years ago, word look alike (pictograms) shifted to word sound alike. Instead of using symbols to represent words in a picture, symbols were used to represent the sounds in words initially through syllables (Hempenstall, 1997).

A syllabic system based on syllables or combinations of vowels and consonants represents yet another evolutionary step in the trend initiated through logograms toward using written forms to represent spoken language. An example of an early syllabic type of writing system is the Mesopotamian cuneiform writing. Beginning around 2100 BC, Egyptians also developed a number of syllabic signs in their hieroglyphic system (Balmuth, 1982).

Finally, the system of writing that evolved from the syllabic method was the alphabet. The term, alphabet, is derived from the first two letters of the Greek alphabet: alpha and beta. An alphabet is a set of symbols representing sounds. It is composed of characters each one representing a distinctive sound (Firmage, 1993). Thus, within the evolution of written words, single characters ultimately took the place of syllables. The

oldest alphabet writing in existence is said to have been prepared during the reign of Sent, an Egyptian monarch who ruled in 4700 BC (Smith, 1986).

The phonic method of reading instruction emerged as a part of the alphabet's evolution. It involved the teaching of letter names and the sounds they represent.

“Quintilian, the great Roman educator of the first century mentioned wooden tablets with letters for teaching children reading and writing” (Smith, 1986, p. 6).

In general, the method used by those who taught beginners to read in the sixteenth century was virtually that employed by the Greeks and Romans: first one learned the names of the letters; then one learned letter sounds through work on vowel-consonant, consonant-vowel combinations and syllables. When enough drill of this type had been engaged in, one began to read. (Matthews, 1966, p.19)

Historical Development of Reading Education

The first teachers of reading in English were priests in the 7th Century (Davis, 1973). In this early time period, reading instruction was focused upon religious instruction with the ultimate goal of salvation. Early in the history of religious instruction, it was believed that some readings were of such fundamental value that all adults and children should memorize them. This prompted the creation of the first books with religious selections specifically for the instruction of children. In the Middle Ages, this book contained the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and a few Psalms, among others. It was called a primer not because it was the first book of reading instruction but rather because it contained the passages deemed to be of primary or fundamental importance in fostering one's spiritual existence. Eventually, the alphabet

and lists of syllables and words were added to the religious manual, and it became the standard book for instruction in reading (Smith, 1986).

During this same time period, in conjunction with the primer, a separate book known as the *ABC* came into existence. Since the primer was not intended as a schoolbook, but rather as a religious tool, there was a need for a companion book to meet the demand for reading instruction. The *ABC* filled that need. Though widely used in England through the 17th century, the *ABC* was not popular in America (Smith, 1986).

Historically speaking, reading was defined as consisting mostly of oral reading and the recitation of Bible verses. Comprehension of what was being read was not seriously considered. The emphasis was on decoding or simply reading aloud the words as presented. Religious instruction was at the heart of reading instruction in both England and America. In America, religious freedom was of the utmost importance and the reason most colonists left England. Massachusetts was the leader in shaping the policies of early American schools. The purpose for teaching reading can be found in the 1647 law passed by the General Court of Massachusetts:

It being one chief point of that old deluder, Satan, to keep men from the knowledge of the Scriptures, as in former times, by keeping them in an unknown tongue, so in these latter times, by persuading from the use of tongues, that so at last the true sense and meaning of the original might be clouded by false glosses of saint-seeming deceivers, that learning might not be buried in the grave of our fathers in church and commonwealth, the Lord assisting our endeavors. It is therefore ordered that every township in this jurisdiction, after the Lord hath increased them to the number of fifty householders, shall then forthwith appoint one within their town to teach all such children as shall resort to him to write and read. (Smith, 1986, p. 13)

During this time period, the techniques used in teaching reading were simplistic. Children first learned the alphabet, backwards and forwards. Upon mastering rote memorization, they were introduced to a syllabarium. Learning these two things were preparation for reading where the child would begin with the primer that contained the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments and was also to be memorized. Children were introduced to reading through the alphabetic method, the only method known at that time. Memorization and oral reading were crucial during this period of time. If families were wealthy or fortunate enough to own a book, it was a Bible. Furthermore, most colonists could not read, so they would gather and listen to those who could read or remember (Smith, 1986).

The passage of time and the birth of a new nation in 1776 broadened the reasons for reading education in America. No longer simply concerned with the salvation of souls, the country sought to build national strength and produce good citizens. During this period, the concepts of nationalism and moralism began to receive attention. These concepts were evidenced and reflected in the primers of the day. No longer were primers confined to religious matter. Instead, they contained patriotic selections designed to impart a love of country, historical selections designed to record the history of America and Europe, and oratorical selections intended to cultivate elocutionary ability (Smith, 1986). In an effort to promote citizenship, primers began to provide vignettes that included lessons of morality. It was during this period of American history that the purpose of reading shifted. Reading was no longer simply a means toward salvation but a

tool to be used for teaching about topics other than God. Despite this shift, the methods of teaching reading remained largely unchanged.

In 1837, Horace Mann was selected as the first Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education. He became well acquainted with the condition of schools in Massachusetts. He and other American educators of his time also became acquainted with the ideals of German education reforms being used in Prussia. He was convinced that traditional alphabetic methods of reading instruction were outdated and in need of changing. Mann has been quoted as describing the alphabet letters as “skeleton-shaped, bloodless, ghostly apparitions and hence it is no wonder that the children look and feel so death-like when compelled to face them” (Matthews, 1966, p. 77). He advocated using whole words to teach reading and comprehension, a technique he believed he had seen while visiting Prussia.

According to Matthews (1966), Gedike, a German teacher, was one of the first people to deviate from the alphabetic or code emphasis approach to reading instruction. Gedike, who was inspired by the “naturalist” approach and educational theories of Rousseau, began to endorse a “whole word” with meaning emphasized approach to teaching reading. He thought children should first learn whole words, then letters, moving from the whole to its parts. In an excerpt from his primer published in 1791, Gedike wrote, “It is neither necessary nor useful to begin learning to read with a knowledge of the individual letters, but it is not only far more pleasant but also far more useful for the child if it learns to read entire words at once....” (Matthews, 1966, p. 39).

Gedike viewed his analytic approach as a way to make the task of learning to read more pleasing and meaning-driven than the traditional alphabetic method (Balmuth, 1982).

Gedike's methods, though not widely used, became known in Germany and other European countries. Jacotot, a French scholar, further developed Gedike's whole word approach to mean an entire text. He would present beginning readers with entire storybooks that would ultimately be divided into chapters, sentences, words and letters. His approach focused on meaning rather than decoding. The intent was for the reader to move from word recognition and understanding to reading. This method gained popularity in Germany, though its acceptance came with modifications. The idea of presenting an entire book was too complex; and ultimately, the whole book became a word. The word, thus simplified, evolved simply into a different method for presenting alphabetic instruction. This interpretation was neither Gedike's nor Jacotot's intent with their creation of "meaning emphasis instruction" (Balmuth, 1982). Primers were printed that started with single words. Children were taught the words and what their letters represented. This was the beginning of the "Normal Word" method that became the standard for instruction in Germany and all of Europe. "In essence, it's what today we call phonics" (Flesch, 1981, p. 18).

While Jacotot and his methods were gaining acceptance in Germany, Gallaudet was reinventing the "look say" (whole word) method in the United States. Gallaudet was an educator of the deaf who had developed a visual method of teaching reading. He felt that all children could learn to read by using his method. His primer, published in 1836, consisted of 50 words that children were to memorize by sight. Then, children would

learn their letters by analyzing the words. Bumstead, Webb, Worcester, and Mann's wife, Mary, also published look say primers around this time (Flesch, 1981).

Having honeymooned in Germany in 1843, Mary and Horace Mann had witnessed a demonstration of German schooling. Unable to speak German, Mann thought he was observing a demonstration of the look say method; however, what he saw was the Normal Word method. Upon returning to the United States, Mann wrote a famous Seventh Annual Report to the Massachusetts Board of Education wherein he passionately argued for the end of the alphabetic/syllabic method of teaching currently in use and promoted the look say method. Mann's writings and ideas about phonic instruction were not immediately well received and drew sharp criticisms from a committee of 31 Boston grammar school masters.

Popularity and support of the look say or word method grew over time, due in part to the influences of Parker, Dewey, and Hall. Parker was the superintendent of Quincy, Massachusetts public schools from 1875-1883. He was also the principal of a teacher-training institute, the Cook County Normal School, in Chicago from 1883-1899. At both schools, he gained fame for educational innovations that developed into the progressive education movement (Balmuth, 1982). Parker and his teachers spread the whole word method across the country with an emphasis on reading for meaning.

In 1900, Parker became the director of the University of Chicago's School of Education where he came to know Dewey. Upon Parker's death, Dewey succeeded him as director of the School of Education and ultimately founded a laboratory school in order to practice his progressive education ideas. In this laboratory setting, Dewey exerted

great influence on his colleagues and students and consequently upon the training of teachers and administrators throughout the country. His ideas were based on philosophies espoused by Parker and Hall. Hall, who was a pioneer in the field of child study and one of Dewey's teachers, stressed the importance of education based on knowledge of child development. Hall, Dewey, and Parker developed similar ideas about reading and its place in the curriculum. Central to their ideas was the belief in a whole word method within a child-centered, incidental-learning curriculum that was incorporated into the progressive education movement that began during the late 19th century (Balmuth, 1982). This approach as part of the progressive education curriculum was widespread.

By 1920, while there was still a good deal of phonics instruction in the schools, the *in* theoretical approach was the whole word approach. From 1920 on, leaders in the field of reading began to attack the extensive phonics practice that still existed. (Balmuth, 1982, p. 197)

Huey, according to Balmuth (1982) was another important figure in the whole word or reading for meaning movement that occurred at the turn of the century. Huey was deeply influenced by the work of Hall and others. In 1908, he published *The Psychology and Pedagogy of Reading* in which he described "reading for meaning" as it existed at that time. The book was republished in 1968 as interest in the word method continued to grow.

During the time between 1920 and 1960, Gray and Gates were prominent figures in the field of reading education. Dewey and his philosophies heavily influenced both men. Both men authored widely used whole word basal reading series. Gray was Dean of the University of Chicago's School of Education from 1918-1931. Gates was the

director of the Institute of Educational Research at Columbia University from 1921-1930. Gray's philosophy centered on whole word reading, and he eventually formulated the 20th Century whole word doctrine (Balmuth, 1982). Gray authored numerous editions of *Curriculum Foundations*, a whole word basal reading series in which children learn to read with Dick and Jane. "Gray's approach, followed by practically all the authors of the most widely used, commercially published reading programs, remained almost unchallenged as the second quarter of the twentieth century advanced" (Balmuth, 1982, p.198).

Evolution of the Modern Debate

In 1955, Flesch published a book written as an open letter to parents, that challenged the look say (whole word) method and called for a return to an alphabetic (phonic) method of beginning reading instruction.

...[A]ccording to our accepted system of instruction reading isn't taught at all. Books are put in front of the children and they are told to guess at the words or wait until Teacher tells them. But they are not taught to read....(Flesch, 1955, p.17)

The book was widely received, and it included 86 pages of phonics materials that parents were urged to use to teach their children to read at home. Publication of this book sparked numerous examinations of the basal reader/whole word method (Pressley, Allington, Wharton-McDonald, Block, & Morrow, 2001).

The United States Department of Education funded a series of large-scale comparisons aimed at producing a better understanding of beginning reading instruction. This research was comprised of 27 separate studies focused on approaches to beginning

reading. Known as *The First-Grade Studies*, it was coordinated by Bond and published in 1967. Its goal was to settle the phonics/whole word debate. What emerged was, by most accounts, somewhat less than a definitive answer. *The First Grade Studies* did not document the superiority of the basal whole word approach over other methods being compared. Instead, the researchers concluded that a basal plus phonics approach produced the best outcomes. Furthermore, the researchers concluded that other factors relating to the setting in which instruction took place were also important to educational achievement (Bond & Dykstra, 1967).

Chall (1967) analyzed different programs of beginning reading instruction. She attempted to synthesize the research that existed regarding phonics and look say methods up to that point. She defined synthetic phonics programs as those that teach “letters representing certain sounds that are then blended to form words” (p 16). Ultimately, Chall concluded that such synthetic phonics instruction was more effective than whole word or look say approaches to reading instruction. “...A code emphasis tends to produce better overall reading achievement by the beginning of fourth grade than a meaning emphasis” (Chall, 1967, p.137). As a result of the publication of her book in combination with *The First Grade Studies*, the “Dick and Jane” reading series, were never again published as a basal reader (Pressley et al., 2001).

In 1971, Smith began advocating a “meaning construction centered” approach to beginning reading. This approach differed from the letter and sound (phonics) approaches and the whole word (look say) approaches. Smith’s approach advocated the use of context clues and strongly denied the need for phonic instruction. Smith believed

that the teaching of phonics probably interfered with, rather than facilitated, learning to read (Smith, 1979).

Goodman's (1965) work supported Smith's with the idea that learning to read was largely about using meaning cues in text and prior knowledge to predict words. He argued, from a psycholinguistic perspective, that reading involved the use of multiple cue systems rather than those only contained in printed words. He described reading as a "psycholinguistic guessing game." Goodman found that children could recognize words in context that they could not recognize in isolation. Goodman believed syntactical cues and meaning were critical to word recognition and was opposed to focusing attention on letters and sounds.

While Smith and Goodman theorized, Holdaway and Hansen focused on operationalizing their strategies in classrooms. Holdaway (1979) proposed shared reading as an alternative to the look say basals. Hansen (1987) outlined a reading/writing workshop method that integrated learning to read and write. The writings and teachings of Smith, Goodman, Holdaway, and Hansen inspired what became known as "whole language" instruction (Pressley et al., 2001). Constructing an understanding of what was read was emphasized in the whole language philosophy. When encountering an unknown word, a child was encouraged to look at pictures and think about what word would make sense. Children's writing, replete with invented spelling, was a tenet of the whole language philosophy. So, too, was the use of authentic children's literature in place of a basal reading series. "Whole language became the predominant approach to

beginning literacy education in the United States by the 1990's" (Pressley et al., 2001, p. 18).

During the years of its evolution, the whole language movement has not been without its detractors. In his second book, Flesch (1981) criticized the work of Smith and Goodman. He insisted their whole language methods were merely newly revised look say approaches.

In 1983, the government publication of "A Nation at Risk" called into question the quality of American education. Though this report was directed at the nation's secondary schools and the preparedness of graduates, the focus of improvement was not centered exclusively on the upper grades. This report, followed by several other national assessments indicated a need for more effective reading instruction in the elementary grades (Pressley et al., 2001). The pressure for improvement in reading scores throughout the elementary grades only increased as the United States contemplated meeting the challenges of the 21st century. The perceived need for overall improvement in reading and achievement of school-age children throughout the United States fueled the discussion as to what children need to know and how teachers can best help them learn. The result has been intensive study and research on reading as well as legislation at the state and federal levels that have brought increasing pressure on administrators and

teachers to raise the literacy levels of American youth. This initiative, and the accompanying pressures, had only intensified at the time of the present research.

Research on Reading

The stance of devotees of the whole language approach was typified in the sentiment expressed by Daniels, Zemelman, and Bizar (1999) that “Whole language works. The proof is massive and overwhelming” (p.32). In 1989, Stahl and Miller published a review of studies comparing whole-language approaches with basal approaches using standardized methods of measuring reading achievement. They reported finding that whole language approaches were effective at the Kindergarten level, but the outcomes by the end of first grade were mixed. While Stahl and Miller concluded that whole language approaches were less effective than basals with at-risk first grade students, Tunnell and Jacobs (1989) showed a broad, recurrent pattern of achievement gains among students in literature-based, whole language classrooms studied over 20 years. Weaver, Gillmeister-Krause, and Vento-Zogby (1996) reported that children in whole language classrooms perform as well as or better than other students on standardized reading tests.

In 1991, Freppon reported that attending whole language classrooms improved children’s understanding of reading and writing as well as increased their tendencies to participate in literate activities. Graham and Harris echoed these conclusions in 1994. Exposure to literature, as it occurs in whole language classrooms, has resulted in increased word knowledge and the development of a larger vocabulary (Elley, 1989;

Robbins & Ehri, 1994). Other researchers have indicated that attending whole language classrooms, where book sharing occurred, resulted in increased student comprehension and ability to draw inferences (Cochran-Smith, 1984).

In 1995, Dahl and Freppon conducted a study comparing the whole language classrooms with skills oriented classrooms. They concluded there were many differences between the groups of students, most of which favored the whole language students. They reported whole language students coped better when encountering reading difficulties in that they were better able to rely on context clues while their skill based counterparts more often attempted to sound out unfamiliar words. They also reported that whole language students were more likely to see themselves as readers and writers and were more often engaged in reading and writing than their skills based peers.

Proponents of phonics instruction, however, took an opposing position and continued to cite the work of Chall, Bond, and Dykstra. In 1990, Adams summarized the research supporting skill instruction in beginning reading instruction. She argued passionately for phonics instruction.

In 1997, The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) was asked by Congress to appoint a panel to conduct a comprehensive investigation of research in the field of reading (Garan, 2001). The National Reading Panel (2000) reported among their findings “strong evidence” of the impact of phonics instruction on learning to read. Furthermore, the panel stated that phonics instruction programs were significantly more effective than non-phonics programs. These findings,

coupled with the perception that American students cannot read due to the predominance of whole language instruction during the past decades, have fueled intense debates.

For much of the past two decades, the proper method for teaching children to read and write was under the divergent influences of two powerful schools of thought, embroiling educators in the so-called 'reading wars.' Determining the best means of teaching children to read is of particular concern in light of dismal national reading proficiency scores. On the 2003 National Assessment of Educational Progress, 38 percent of 4th graders and 28 percent of 8th graders could not demonstrate basic reading skills for their grade-level. (Starsina, n.d.)

Emerging from the wars was the argument for a balanced literacy approach. This approach incorporates both phonics and whole language methods of instruction into the classroom. Guthrie, Schafer, and Huang (2001) wrote: "A substantial number of reading experts recommend balanced reading instruction at the elementary grades" (p.147).

Cromwell (1997) summarized the case for balance with the following assertion:

The majority of experts now contend that neither approach by itself is effective all the time but that both approaches possess merit. What does succeed then, many experts say, is a carefully designed reading program that employs part whole language approach and part phonics and takes into account each student's learning style and demonstrated strengths and weaknesses. (p.2)

High Stakes Testing

In 2002, President George W. Bush signed The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act into law. This legislation was a reauthorization of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The overall purpose of the law was to ensure that every child in America was able to meet high learning standards as established by the state where he or she lived. Specific requirements of the law included annual testing of all

students against state standards in math and reading in grades 3-8 and in science one time each during elementary, middle, and high school for a total of three assessments. States also were required to define and provide a timeline for determining whether a school, district, and state was making “adequate yearly progress” (AYP) toward the goal of all students meeting state standards by scoring “proficient” on state assessments by the 2013-2014 school year (Rebora, n.d.). The state of Florida has designed the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) to meet these requirements of NCLB.

In addition to outlining what states must do, NCLB also mandated consequences for schools and districts that repeatedly failed to produce the required learning gains. NCLB legislation put increasing pressure on teachers in terms of accountability and linked funding to academic achievement. Teachers were expected to produce consistent learning gains, as measured by state assessments, in their students. NCLB also stated that by the end of the 2005-2006 school year, teachers must be “highly qualified” to teach their assigned subject or subjects. In order to be considered highly qualified, a teacher would be required to hold a bachelor’s degree, demonstrate competence in the subject taught, hold full state certification (or pass the state licensure exam), and hold a license to teach (North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, n.d.).

NCLB made provisions for the use of “scientifically based” programs and strategies. The label “scientifically based” means there is reliable evidence that the program or practice works (United States Department of Education, n.d.). Specifically with regard to reading, the legislation referenced the findings of the National Reading

Panel (2000) and stipulated the use of phonics instruction. NCLB legislation called attention to the importance of having quality teachers in the classroom. It further demonstrated the need to examine and define the qualities that comprise excellent teachers.

The Role of the Teacher

Researchers have concluded that good teaching makes a difference, and that effective teachers produce greater learning gains in their students than their less effective peers (McCabe, n.d.). The balanced literacy approach focuses attention on the role of the classroom teacher in the acquisition of literacy. In a position statement, the International Reading Association (2000) stated, “Excellent reading teachers understand that all components of reading influence every stage of reading, but they also realize that the balance of instruction related to these components shifts across the developmental span and shifts for individual children” (p.2). Pressley, Rankin, and Yokoi (1996) surveyed the practices of effective reading teachers and concluded that teachers’ education should “include exposure to a number of approaches and practices intermingling different types of instruction” (p. 380). This exposure enables teachers to employ adaptive behavior in order to select the method that best suits the needs of the situation and the learner. Shanahan and Neuman (1997) called this “methodological eclecticism.”

Yet, researchers and experts have often disagreed as to the definition of good teaching. Discussions on teacher quality have often centered on teacher training, salary

enhancement, and certification requirements. Few researchers have attempted to define what makes a teacher good especially with regard to literacy.

Bond and Dykstra (1967) in their *First Grade Studies* attempted to determine which method for teaching reading was best. One of their conclusions was that the method used was not as important as the teacher who did the teaching. Bond and Dykstra noted that effective literacy teachers shared certain characteristics regardless of what method they employed. The idea that effective teachers share characteristics that make them effective was echoed in the Position Statement of the International Reading Association (2000).

Every child deserves excellent reading teaches because teachers make a difference in children's reading achievement and motivation to read. This position statement provides a research-based description of the distinguishing qualities of excellent classroom reading teachers. Excellent reading teachers share several critical qualities of knowledge and practice.... In addition, excellent reading teachers have many characteristics of good teachers in general. They have strong content and pedagogical knowledge, manage classrooms so that there is a high rate of engagement, use strong motivation strategies that encourage independent learning, have high expectations for children's achievement, and help children who are having difficulty.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards was founded in 1987 with the goal of establishing rigorous standards for identifying what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do. The National Board established a voluntary system to assess and certify teachers who met the standards. The standards vary by type of certification but were all based on the following five core propositions:

1. Teachers are committed to students and their learning.

2. Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.
3. Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.
4. Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.
5. Teachers are members of learning communities. (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2002)

Goldhaber and Anthony (2004) studied National Board teachers in order to determine if National Board certification was indicative of effective teaching. Their study consisted of reviewing more than 600,000 student records from students in North Carolina. The researchers concluded that National Board was succeeding at identifying those teachers who were effectively producing student learning gains. Students who were taught by National Board certified teachers had a small but statistically significant advantage over students taught by teachers who had applied for certification but did not achieve it. The researchers and National Board supporters have argued that this study supports the idea that it is possible to identify shared characteristics and assess teacher effectiveness.

Domains and Indicators of Exemplary Literacy Teaching

In their study of the teaching practices of effective literacy teachers, Wray, Medwell, Fox, and Poulson (2000) concluded that it was possible to determine common characteristics present in literacy teaching of effective teachers. Adding further to the body of research defining effective teaching characteristics is the work of Block and

Mangieri (2003). Their research on effective literacy teaching was aimed at determining the qualities that “good teachers” shared. It was their belief that if they could identify and name these qualities, all teachers could work towards exhibiting those same qualities and thereby improve their teaching. The researchers found that not only could they identify and name the qualities of good teachers, they could identify them relative to specific grade levels in preschool through grade 5. Berliner (as cited in Block, Oaker, and Hurt, 2002) states:

If we can identify grade-level indices of teaching expertise, more children may receive consistently effective instruction at every grade. Such data could also provide preservice teachers with information to make more informed decisions about the grade levels they want to serve. As a result, educators’ most valued and advanced skills and talents could be used more consistently. More veteran and first-year teachers might remain and grow in the profession long enough to accrue the experiential component necessary to achieve high levels of expertise (p.181).

The qualities of good teachers, or exemplary literacy teachers, were classified by Block and Mangieri (2003), using six domains. The domains, are: Dominant Role, Motivation, Reteaching, Relating to Students, Classroom Qualities, and Lesson Characteristics. Within these domains, a series of indicators or descriptors are used to describe the qualities and habits comprising exemplary literacy practices exhibited by effective teachers at the respective grade levels (Appendix D).

Block and Mangieri (2003) defined Dominant Role as the set of talents and skills that make up a teaching repertoire. It is the manner in which a teacher assumes responsibility as the leader of a classroom and the demeanor exhibited when engaging in literacy lessons. Block and Mangieri (2003) have maintained that effective literacy

teachers not only display a Dominant Role appropriate for the specific grade level they teach, but they also exhibit a high degree of expertise in the way discharge their duties. The Dominant Roles exercised by teachers not only vary by grade level taught, but they are characterized by more direct control and supervision at the lower grades and increasing facilitation in the upper elementary grades. Block and Mangieri's (2003) indicator of Dominant Role for preschool teachers is "Guider." These teachers build students' confidence to discover print by rewarding their curiosity and involving children in literacy activities. The indicator for Kindergarten is that of "Guardian." These teachers guard children's first discoveries about print and their first attempts at reading. The Dominant Role indicator in first grade is that of "Encourager." First grade teachers are Encouragers and supporters who differ from other teachers in that they are teaching literacy all day. The indicator of Dominant Role is "Demonstrator" for grade 2. These teachers help students use what they have learned in previous grades by consistently demonstrating the processes of literacy in action. In third grade, the indicator of Dominant Role is "Manager." These teachers are exceptionally talented at working with many groups and multiple materials at once. The Dominant Role indicator for grade 4 is "Coach." These teachers are skillful in the way they teach students to extract information from text and apply comprehension strategies to the content area reading. These teachers most distinguishing characteristic is their ability to instruct students on various levels of literacy during the same lesson. The role of Coach as a Dominant Role domain is the most distinguishing quality of exemplary fourth grade teachers. The Dominant Role indicator is "Adaptor" for grade 5. Effective grade 5 teachers are especially competent in

their ability to divide large amounts of knowledge into smaller, learnable pieces in such a way that inspires their students to want to learn.

The second domain is Motivation. It has been defined as the actions a teacher takes to increase students' desire to read as well as to refocus their interest in becoming better readers. Exemplary literacy teachers recognize how to connect with students at a particular point on the developmental scale and ignite a personal desire for literacy success by varying content, variety of materials, or other interventions used in instruction. In preschool, the motivational indicator of an exemplary teacher is that of a "Pathfinder." Pathfinders find ways to relate print concepts to objects and experiences used at home for learning. In Kindergarten, the motivational indicator is that of "Fun Agent." These teachers motivate and help students develop an interest in literacy by singing, acting out stories, or using objects to teach. They stimulate students' imaginations. First grade teachers' motivational indicator is that of "Stimulator." These teachers motivate students by varying the depth, rate, and breadth of lessons. They also are skilled at helping their students make connections between life experiences and print. In second grade, teachers are described as acting as "Connectors" demonstrating literacy by tying together the parts into one whole. Third grade teachers are found to be "Promoters of Books" that introduce students to a variety of genres. This was the second most important indicator of an exemplary third grade teacher. Fourth grade teachers act as "Involver", keeping students engaged in learning by varying their instructional statements to meet the needs of their students. Finally, fifth grade teachers are "Producers" who motivate students by providing instructional activities that balance two

equally important literacy goals at once. They produce units of study intended to develop students' critical thinking and self-efficacy as readers.

Reteaching is the third domain identified by Block and Mangieri (2003). It consists of the methods a teacher uses to plan and implement lessons and assess students when they have not learned a concept the first time. The methods used to reteach material not mastered during the initial attempt vary at every grade level. The indicator for Reteaching at the preschool level is that of "Synthesizer." These teachers use the five senses to reteach along with hands on manipulations of letters and words. Kindergarten teachers are "Strategic Repeaters", because that is precisely the method they often employ. First grade teachers are "Expectationists", who reteach by communicating their high, but attainable expectations continuously. This quality is the second most important indicator of effective first grade teaching. The indicator for second grade is that of "Creator." These teachers reteach by designing and implementing strategies that have not previously been used with the students. Third grade teachers act as "Portrayers" who can cultivate interest in content that helps children through obstacles that block their individual learning curves. Fourth grade teachers take on roles as "Tutors of Thinking." They encourage students to ask questions of themselves when they have not learned a concept. These teachers are skilled at teaching critical thinking. The indicator of Reteaching evidenced by fifth grade teachers is that of "Analyzer." These teachers reteach by analyzing content and emphasizing its critical components.

Relating to Students is the fourth domain identified by Block and Mangieri(2003). It describes the actions a teacher takes to establish rapport with students and maintain the

most positive and amicable learning environment possible. This domain also includes strategies used to meet individual students' literacy needs. Exceptional teachers gain the respect of students while creating relationships with them that lead to high levels of literacy success. This domain was not indicated to be of primary or secondary importance at any grade level. The indicator for Relating to Students at the preschool level is "Nurturer." Preschool teachers are perceived as friends, and the classroom is a second home with print added. The indicator of Relating to Students in Kindergarten is that of "Relentless Reinforcer." These teachers honor all attempts at decoding and reading, and never say that a child is wrong. They celebrate the class's attempts and successes at reading. The indicator for first grade is that of "Challenger." These teachers praise learning in progress and are quick to positively point out errors in phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, decoding, comprehension, and fluency. They gain student respect by teaching self-regulation, and giving children input into decisions about their learning. Exemplary second grade teachers relate to students as "Confident Communicators." These teachers listen appreciatively and reflectively to build student rapport. They encourage students to converse, which allows them to learn by vocalizing newly forming concepts of literacy. The indicator for this domain at third grade is "Individualizer." Third grade teachers relate to their students by expressing a genuine concern for each student's development. The indicator for Relating to Students exhibited by fourth grade teachers is that of "Optimist." They are so labeled because of their ability to transform negative student attitudes towards reading into positive ones. The indicator for fifth grade is that of "Humorist." These teachers use their own well-developed sense

of humor to relate to their students and cope with the wide ranges of ability and maturity levels in their classrooms.

Classroom Qualities, the fifth domain, is comprised of the ways in which a teacher organizes desks, furniture, learning materials, books, and teaching aids within the classroom to maximize learning outcomes. Energy that radiates from exemplary classrooms can be felt. Classroom Qualities are the most important indicator of excellence in Kindergarten, and the second most important indicators in grades 2, 5, and preschool. The dominant classroom quality indicator in preschool is that of “Engager.” Preschool teachers help students relate to print through sensory experiences of smell and taste. The quality indicator exhibited in Kindergarten is that of “Writing Promoter.” Kindergarten teachers create classrooms that are inviting, print-rich, and home like. The grade 1 indicator is that of “Safety Netter.” These teachers create print-rich space for students to explore resources on their level. The grade 2 indicator is that of “Challenger.” These teachers create a classroom environment that challenges students to think at a deeper level. Grade 3 teachers who are exemplary literacy teachers are “Organizers.” These teachers manage classrooms so that their students are reading to themselves and to one another. Fourth grade teachers serve as “Authenticators.” These teachers mentor pupils on how to locate resources that will enable them to make decisions about the books that they read. The classroom quality indicator for fifth grade teachers is that of

“Planner.” Teachers exemplify this quality when they plan for and teach large amounts of material while stimulating interest in the concepts being taught.

The sixth and last domain identified by Block and Mangieri (2003) is Lesson Characteristics. These lesson planning strategies are the features, methods, and approaches that are used in the literacy lessons taught. The traits and assessments of effective lesson plans vary by the grade level taught. This domain is the most important indicator of exemplary teaching in preschool, grade 1, grade 2, and grade 5. It was also the second most important indicator for grade 4. The quality indicator of Lesson Characteristics in preschool is “Conductor.” Exemplary preschool teachers vary the tones, pitches, and body movements that they use in their lessons to more clearly demonstrate visually and kinesthetically the rhyme and rhythm of language. The indicator in Kindergarten is “Positive Pacer.” These teachers create lessons that allow for an individualized pace of learning. The first grade indicator is that of “Opportunist” whereby teachers use opportunities throughout the day to teach literacy and share the fun of learning with students. Second grade teachers, termed “Inventors”, plan more creative methods of teaching decoding and comprehension than do teachers at other grade levels. Third grade teachers are called on to serve as “Catalysts.” These teachers teach abstract concepts by making them more concrete. Fourth grade teachers, or “Option Quarterbacks”, create lessons that establish many goals and strategies from which

students can choose their own goals. Exemplary fifth grade literacy teachers are termed “Empowerists.” They build lessons that instill a desire to produce excellent work.

Summary

This review of the literature has provided an overview of the evolution of written language and the development of reading education. Literature and research related to different methods of reading instruction were also reviewed. Finally, a review of research focused on current literacy education issues and effective literacy teaching was presented with special emphasis on Block and Mangieri’s (2003) domains and indicators of exemplary literacy teaching.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the methodology and procedures used in determining the extent to which Teachers of the Year in four central Florida school districts could be described as exemplary teachers of literacy as defined by Block and Mangieri (2003). Collection and analysis of survey data served to identify teachers' self-described practices in the classroom. Comparative and descriptive analysis of the data provided the bases on which to determine the extent to which these practices were in alignment with practices of exemplary literacy teachers.

This chapter is divided into six sections. The first section contains a statement of the problem. The second section provides a description of the population of the study. In the third section, the data collection process is explained. The instrumentation is described in the fourth section, and the fifth section contains the research questions. The sixth and final section details the data analysis. A summary of the six sections concludes Chapter 3.

Problem Statement

This study was developed to produce data about the overall practices of selected teachers in four central Florida school districts. The problem of this study was to develop a literacy teaching profile of the Kindergarten through grade 5 Teachers of the Year and

to examine the extent to which these teaching profiles could be described as exemplary using the domains of the National Exemplary Literacy Teacher Assessment (NELTA). Furthermore, the profiles were examined to determine what relationship if any existed when total years of teaching and total years teaching at present grade level were considered. The results of this study added to the research on effective literacy teaching (Block & Mangieri, 2003; Bond & Dykstra, 1967) in an era of increased focus on accountability and rigorous curriculum standards. The results may be valuable to researchers interested in the subjects of teacher quality and effectiveness.

Population

The population of this study was comprised of the 210 elementary school Teachers of the Year in Orange, Osceola, Seminole, and Volusia counties, Florida during the 2003-2004 academic school year. Teachers of the year are typically elected by a popular vote of the faculty. Teachers of Year were selected as the population of this study due to the availability of their names, and to ensure inclusion of every school in the selected counties. These 210 teachers were identified based on information indicating a public school teaching assignment serving regular education students in Kindergarten through grade 5 in the four identified counties. Teachers who did not teach language arts

to regular education students in Kindergarten through grade 5 were excluded from this population.

Data Collection

Survey instruments (see Appendix A), a cover letter (see Appendix E), and return stamped envelope were mailed addressed to the attention of the Teachers of the Year at the 210 elementary schools in Orange, Osceola, Seminole and Volusia counties (see Appendix B) on April 26, 2004. The letter requested that each teacher complete the survey and return it to the researcher by mail in the envelope provided.

Returned responses were considered unusable if the Teacher of Year was not a classroom teacher of Kindergarten through grade 5. The first mailing yielded a return of 77 surveys (36.7%). A follow up email (see Appendix G) was sent on May 10, 2004 to the remaining 133 teachers whose surveys had not been returned. This email reminded teachers of the survey, requested they be returned immediately, and provided an opportunity for teachers to request a new survey. The email reminder resulted in the return of 34 additional surveys (16.2%). The two contacts yielded a total return of 111 surveys (52.9%). Of the 111 surveys returned, 66 met the criteria of being Kindergarten through grade 5 classroom teachers. It was these 66 respondents who provided data appropriate for analysis and yielded a useable return rate of 59.4%. The

researcher was unable to find any other research indicating the use of the NELTA in this manner.

Instrumentation

Data were collected using the survey instrument, the National Exemplary Literacy Teaching Assessment or NELTA, developed by Block and Mangieri (2003). The 12-item instrument resulted from the combination of information regarding the qualities that define effective teaching and an in depth analysis of indicators of expert teaching behavior. Furthermore, the NELTA was the end product resulting from two research studies that spanned a period of two years and included a sample of 647 experts representing 32 of the United States and five countries outside North America. The NELTA was designed to determine the extent to which teachers utilize the best teaching practices with regard to literacy by grade level in preschool through grade five.

The NELTA consists of twelve multiple-choice research questions that are divided into six domains of competency. The domains are: Dominant Role, Motivation, Reteaching, Relating to Students, Classroom Qualities, and Lesson Characteristics. There are two questions for each domain. Each question offers respondents seven possible choices. Each choice represents a best practice for each grade level (a = preschool, b = Kindergarten, c = grade 1, d = grade 2, e = grade 3, f = grade 4, g = grade 5).

In an effort to gain demographic data about respondents, the researcher added three questions to the NELTA. These questions sought to determine the grade level

taught by the respondent, the number of years teaching at that specific grade level, and the total number of years teaching (Appendix C).

Research Questions

The following questions guided this research:

1. To what extent can the literacy teaching of 2004-2005 elementary Florida Teachers of the Year be described as exemplary using the indicators and domains of the NELTA?

2. What differences, if any, exist in the literacy practices of 2004-2005 elementary Florida Teachers of the Year when total years of teaching are considered?

3. What differences, if any, exist in the literacy practices of 2004-2005 elementary Florida Teachers of the Year when length of years teaching at present grade level are considered?

4. To what extent can the literacy teaching of 2004-2005 elementary Florida Teachers of the Year be described as exemplary by grade level using the indicators and domains of the NELTA?

Data Analysis

The researcher completed all analyses of the collected data. All surveys were initially reviewed and scored by the researcher using Block & Mangieri's recommended scoring system (see Appendix F). Data were entered into SPSS in order to obtain the descriptive statistics, primarily frequencies and percentages, essential to answering each

of the research questions. The responding teachers were also grouped using selected demographic variables with the number and percent of respondents being reported by (a) present grade level, (b) years teaching at present grade level, (c) total years of teaching. Specific procedures related to the data analysis for each of the research questions are described in the following paragraphs.

Data Analysis for Research Question 1

Research Question 1 focused on the extent to which respondents' self-described literacy teaching practices can be described as exemplary using the indicators within the domains of the NELTA. The frequencies and percentages of respondents' answers to each indicator within each domain by grade level were calculated in order to determine the present level of strength in literacy teaching practices by grade level for all respondents. The results were presented in tabular form and discussed.

Data Analysis for Research Question 2

To answer Research Question 2 regarding the differences that exist in the literacy practices of 2004-2005 elementary Florida Teachers of the Year when total years of teaching are considered, teachers were categorized using data provided regarding total years of teaching. Four categories (1-3 years, 4-6 years, 7-9 years, and 10 or more years) were established.

Using the 12 indicators, respondents' present levels of strength were then reported by total years teaching as very high, satisfactory, or below average. The selection by

respondents of 5-12 grade level indicators indicated a very high level of strength; 4 grade level indicators indicated a satisfactory level of strength; and 3 or fewer grade level indicators indicated a below average level of strength in practices used by teachers at their respective grade levels.

Total years of teaching were also used to group and display information regarding each of the six domains with each domain being comprised of two indicators. Two appropriate grade level indicators within a domain yielded a 100% or complete congruency of teacher behaviors with best practices. A response of only one appropriate grade level indicator within a domain by teachers indicated a partial or 50% congruency. If no appropriate grade level indicator was selected within a domain, 0% or no congruency was determined to exist.

Data Analysis for Research Question 3

To answer Research Question 3 as to the differences that exist in the literacy practices of 2004-2005 elementary Florida Teachers of the year when years of teaching at present grade level were considered, teachers were categorized using data provided regarding their years teaching at present grade level. Four categories (1-3 years, 4-6 years, 7-9 years, and 10 or more years) were established.

Using the 12 indicators, respondents' present levels of strength were then reported by years teaching at present grade level as very high, satisfactory, or below average. The selection by respondents of 5-12 appropriate grade level indicators indicated a very high level of strength; 4 grade level indicators indicated a satisfactory level of strength; and 3

or fewer grade level indicators indicated a below average level of strength in practices used by teachers at their respective grade levels.

Years teaching at present grade level were also used to group and display information regarding each of the six domains with each domain being comprised of two indicators. Two appropriate grade level indicators within a domain yielded a 100% or complete congruency of teacher behaviors with best practices. A response of only one appropriate grade level indicator within a domain by teachers indicated a 50% or partial congruency. If no appropriate grade level indicator was selected within a domain, 0% or no congruency was determined to exist.

Data Analysis for Research Question 4

For Research Question 4, as to the extent to which literacy teaching of Florida Teachers of the Year could be described as exemplary by grade level, tables were developed for each of the K-5 grade levels. These tables permitted a detailed display of the NELTA results for all domains by grade level and enabled a discussion of teachers' self-reported practices with particular emphasis on the two most important domains at each grade level as identified by Block and Mangieri (2003).

Summary

This chapter has described the methodology and procedures used to determine the extent to which the 2004-2005 central Florida Teachers of the Year were practicing Exemplary Literacy Teaching behaviors as identified by Block and Mangieri (2003). It

contains a description of the population and a statement of the problem. Information related to the development of the survey instrument and the procedures used in data analysis were also presented.

Tables and accompanying narratives summarizing the data analysis and organized around the four research questions will be presented in Chapter 4. The conclusions, discussion and implications for practice and future research will be presented in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 4
ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Introduction

This study was developed to profile the 2004-2005 elementary Teachers of the Year in Florida and determine the extent to which their literacy teaching practices could be described as exemplary using the indicators and domains of the National Exemplary Literacy Teachers Assessment (NELTA). It was also intended to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on teacher effectiveness and teacher quality.

Population and Demographic Characteristics

The population of this study was comprised of the 210 elementary Teachers of the Year in Orange, Osceola, Seminole, and Volusia counties in Florida during the 2003-2004 school year. Data were generated from 66 teachers who responded to the survey instrument. Demographic data obtained from respondents are presented in Tables 1-3. Table 1 presents the number and percentage of respondents at each grade level. The 66 respondents that made up the survey population were comprised of 12 Kindergarten teachers (18.2%), 9 grade 1 teachers (13.6%), 14 grade 2 teachers (21.2%), 11 grade 3 teachers (16.7%), 13 grade 4 teachers (19.7%), and 7 grade 5 teachers (10.6%).

Table 1
 Respondents' Present Grade Level (N=66)

Grade	n	%
Kindergarten	12	18.2
First	9	13.6
Second	14	21.2
Third	11	16.7
Fourth	13	19.7
Fifth	7	10.6
Total	66	100.0

Table 2 shows the number and percentage of years respondents reported having taught at their present grade level using four categories: 1-3 years, 4-6 years, 7-9 years, and 10 or more years of experience. Over two-thirds of all respondents reported having taught at their present grade level for either 1-3 (n= 23, 34.8%) or 4-6 years (n= 25, 37.9%). In only two grade levels, Kindergarten (3 or 25%) and grade 1 (3 or 33.3%), teachers' experience at present grade level reached or exceeded 25%. Over 80% of third, fourth, and fifth grade teachers reported having taught at their present grade for six or fewer years.

Table 2
 Respondents' Number of Years Teaching at Present Grade Level (N=66)

Grade (n)	1-3 years		4-6 years		7-9 years		10+ years	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
K (12)	2	16.7	5	41.7	2	16.7	3	25.0
1 (9)	3	33.3	3	33.3	3	33.3	0	
2 (14)	4	28.6	5	35.7	3	21.4	2	14.3
3 (11)	6	54.5	3	27.3	0		2	18.2
4 (13)	5	38.5	6	46.2	1	7.7	1	7.7
5 (7)	3	42.9	3	42.9	0		1	14.3
Total	23	34.8	25	37.9	9	13.6	9	13.6

Table 3 shows the number and percentage of respondents' total years of teaching reported in four categories: 1-3 years; 4-6 years; 7-9 years; and 10 or more years of teaching experience. Over three-fourths of respondents reported having 7-9 (n=13, 19.7%) or 10 or more (n=37, 56.1%) total years of teaching experience. Only 4 or 6% of the Teachers of the Year were in the least experienced group (1-3 years).

Table 3
 Respondents' Total Years of Teaching (N=66)

Grade (n)	1-3 years		4-6 years		7-9years		10+ years	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
K (12)	0		1	8.3	4	33.3	7	58.3
1 (9)	0		2	22.2	1	11.1	6	66.7
2 (14)	0		1	7.1	6	42.9	6	42.9
3 (11)	1	9.1	2	18.2	1	9.1	7	63.6
4 (13)	2	15.4	3	23.1	0		8	61.5
5 (7)	1	14.3	2	28.6	1	14.3	3	42.9
Total	4	6.0	12	18.2	13	19.7	37	56.1

Research Question 1

To what extent can the literacy teaching of 2004-2005 elementary Florida Teachers of the Year be described as exemplary using the indicators and domains of the NELTA?

In order to address Research Question 1, it was necessary to examine the responses from each of the participating teachers for items associated with each of the 12 indicators within the 6 domains. Respondents were asked to select one practice from a series, thereby yielding information as to the grade level of their teaching practices for each of the 12 indicators.

Table 4 presents the number and percentage of teachers' responses that indicated an exemplary literacy teaching practice for their grade level for the indicators within each of the domains measured by the NELTA. Overall, the numbers and percentages of

Table 4

Indicators 1-12: Responses Indicating Use of Best Practices at Grade Level

	K (144)		1 (108)		2 (168)		3 (132)		4 (156)		5 (84)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Dominant Role												
1	0		5	55.6	0		1	9.1	5	38.5	0	
2	2	16.7	1	11.1	5	35.7	0		2	15.4	2	28.6
Motivation												
3	5	41.7	0		0		1	9.1	4	30.8	3	42.9
4	0		1	11.1	5	35.7	0		3	23.1	1	14.3
Reteaching												
5	1	8.3	1	11.1	7	50.0	1	9.1	0		1	14.3
6	1	8.3	1	11.1	2	14.3	0		8	61.5	1	14.3
Relating												
7	1	8.3	0		1	7.1	4	36.4	0		5	71.4
8	2	16.7	0		0		2	18.2	9	69.2	3	42.9
Classroom Qualities												
9	0		3	33.3	5	35.7	1	9.1	0		0	
10	1	8.3	3	33.3	0		1	9.1	2	15.4	0	
Lesson Characteristics												
11	3	25.0	3	33.3	6	42.9	4	36.4	0		1	14.3
12	2	16.7	0		0		2	18.2	6	46.2	1	14.3
Total	18	12.5	18	16.7	31	18.5	17	12.9	39	25	18	24.4

Each responding teacher could have generated 12 exemplary grade level indicator responses resulting in potential grade level totals for Kindergarten of 144; grade 1, 108; grade 2, 168; grade 3, 132; grade 4, 156; and grade 5, 84

exemplary grade level indicators were low as indicated by the percentage totals which ranged from 12.5% in Kindergarten to 25% in grade 4. When individual grade levels were considered, the highest number of best practices for their grade level was observed in grade 4 and 5 where 9 (5.8%) and 8 teachers (9.6%) respectively selected the grade 4 best practice for the indicator of Optimist (grade 4) and Humorist (grade 5) in the domain

of Relating to Students. Similarly, grade 4 respondents produced the highest overall total number (39) and percentage (25%) of grade appropriate responses to the 12 indicators of the NELTA. A total of 9 (5.8%) grade 2 teachers selected a grade 2 response of Creators for one of the two indicators comprising Reteaching.

Table 5 presents, by grade level, the number and percentage of teachers who were described as being “very high,” “satisfactory,” or “below average” in their use of exemplary teaching behaviors. Teachers categorized as very high responded with 5 or more of 12 possible indicator responses that were conducive to best practices for the grade level they taught. Teachers described as satisfactory responded with 4 responses conducive to best practices. Teachers labeled below average had 3 or fewer responses conducive to best practices. Only 3 (4.5%) respondents (1 Kindergarten and 2 grade 4) were ranked as very high. A total of 7 (10.6%) teachers (1 grade 1, and 2 in each of grades 2, 3, and 4) were determined to have a satisfactory level of strength. The remaining 56 (84.8%) teachers were categorized as below average in their present level of strength in use of exemplary teaching behaviors. When considered by grade level, over 80% of the teachers at every grade level were identified as having a present level of strength that was below average. The single exception was grade 4 teachers where a lesser number (9 or 69.2%) were identified as below average.

Table 5
 Respondents' Present Level of Strength in Use of Exemplary Teaching Behavior

Grade	Very High		Satisfactory		Below Average		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
K	1	8.3	0		11	91.7	12	100.0
1	0		1	11.1	8	88.9	9	100.0
2	0		2	14.3	12	85.7	14	100.0
3	0		2	18.2	9	81.8	11	100.0
4	2	15.4	2	15.4	9	69.2	13	100.0
5	0		0		7	100.0	7	100.0
Total	3	4.5	7	10.6	56	84.8	66	100.0

Research Question 2

What differences, if any, exist in the literacy practices of the 2004-2005 elementary Florida Teachers of the Year when total years of teaching are considered?

Table 6 presents the number and percentage of respondents who were described as being “very high,” “satisfactory,” or “below average” in their use of exemplary teaching behaviors by the total number of years teaching. Teachers were grouped by total number of years taught into four categories: 1-3 years; 4-6 years; 7-9 years; and 10 or more years. Teachers categorized as very high responded with 5 or more of 12 possible responses that were conducive to best practices for the grade level they taught. Teachers described as satisfactory responded with 4 responses conducive to best practices. Teachers labeled below average had 3 or fewer responses conducive to best practices.

Table 6
 Respondents' Present Level of Strength in Use of Exemplary Teaching Behaviors by
 Total Years Teaching

Years	Very High		Satisfactory		Below Average		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1-3	0		0		4	100.0	4	100.0
4-6	1	8.3	2	16.7	9	75.0	12	100.0
7-9	1	7.7	1	7.7	11	84.6	13	100.0
10+	1	2.7	4	10.8	32	86.5	37	100.0
Total	3	4.5	7	10.6	56	84.8	66	100.0

Teachers categorized as very high (3 or 4.5%) or satisfactory (7 or 10.6%) had at least 4 years of teaching experience. When categorized by total years of teaching, the great majority of teachers (56 or 84.8%) fell into the below average category. All four (100%) of the teachers with only 1-3 years experience were categorized as below average. Teachers with 10 or more years total teaching experience had the second highest percentage (86.5%) of below average levels of strength followed by teachers with 7-9 years experience (84.6%) and teachers with 4-6 years experience (75%).

Table 7 displays the percentage and number of responses within each of the six domains of the NELTA. Each domain was comprised of two indicators. Two appropriate grade level indicators within a domain yielded a 100% or complete congruency of teacher behaviors with best practices. A response of only one appropriate grade level indicator

Table 7
 Congruency: Responses Conducive to Best Practices by Domain for Total Years of Teaching

Years	1-3		4-6		7-9		10+		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Dominant Role										
No	4	100.0	9	75.0	11	84.6	22	59.5	46	69.7
Partial			3	25.0	1	7.7	13	35.1	17	25.8
Complete					1	7.7	2	5.4	3	4.5
Motivation										
No	3	75.0	5	41.7	10	76.9	27	80.0	45	68.2
Partial	1	25.0	7	58.3	3	23.1	8	21.6	19	28.8
Complete							2	5.4	2	3.0
Reteaching										
No	2	50.0	6	50.0	10	76.9	26	70.3	44	66.7
Partial	2	50.0	6	50.0	3	23.1	10	27.0	21	31.8
Complete							1	2.7	1	1.5
Relating to Students										
No	1	25.0	8	66.7	11	84.6	24	64.9	44	66.7
Partial	2	50.0	4	33.3	1	7.7	12	32.4	19	28.8
Complete	1	25.0			1	7.7	1	2.7	3	4.5
Classroom Qualities										
No	3	75.0	12	100.0	7	53.8	29	78.4	51	77.3
Partial	1	25.0			6	46.2	7	18.9	14	21.2
Complete							1	2.7	1	1.5
Lesson Characteristics										
No	3	75.0	7	58.3	8	61.5	22	59.5	40	60.6
Partial	1	25.0	5	41.7	4	30.8	15	40.5	25	37.9
Complete					1	7.7			1	1.5

Note: 0, 50, and 100 indicate percentages of congruency within domains and represent no, partial, and complete congruency respectively

within a domain indicated a 50% or partial congruency. If no appropriate grade level indicator was selected within a domain, 0% or no congruency was determined to exist.

Overall, a relatively low level of congruency was determined to exist. However, 11 teachers did demonstrate complete congruency in at least one of the domains. In

particular, three teachers with varying total years of teaching (1-3, 7-9, and 10+) indicated 100% congruence in the Relating to Students domain. Additionally, a total of four teachers with 10 total years of teaching achieved 100% complete congruency in the categories of Motivation, Reteaching, and Classroom Qualities. In only four instances was a 50% partial congruency identified by 50% of the respondents. Two teachers with 4-6 years of teaching experience attained partial congruency with best practices for two of the domains (Motivation, 58.3% and Reteaching, 50%). In the domains of Reteaching and Relating to Students, two of the teachers with 1-3 years of experience also demonstrated partial congruency with grade level appropriate practices. In considering each domain separately, the most congruence was demonstrated in the domain of Dominant Role for teachers having 10 or more years of experience with 2 (5.4%) demonstrating complete congruency and 13 (35.1%) demonstrating partial congruency for this group.

Research Question 3

What differences, if any, exist in the literacy practices of 2004-2005 elementary Florida Teachers when length of years teaching at present grade level are considered?

Table 8 presents the number and percentage of teachers who were described as being “very high,” “satisfactory,” or “below average” in their use of exemplary teaching behaviors by the length of years teaching present grade level. Teachers were grouped by length of years taught at present grade level into four categories: 1-3 years; 4-6 years; 7-9 years; and 10 or more years. Teachers categorized as very high responded with 5 or more

of 12 possible responses that were conducive to best practices for the grade level they taught. Teachers described as satisfactory responded with 4 responses conducive to best practices at their respective grade levels. Teachers labeled below average had 3 or fewer responses conducive to best practices.

Table 8
 Respondents' Present Level of Strength by Years Taught at Present Grade Level

Years	Very High		Satisfactory		Below Average		Total
	n	%	n	%	n	%	
1-3	1	4.3	4	17.4	18	78.3	23
4-6	2	8.0	1	4.0	22	88.0	25
7-9			1	11.1	8	88.9	9
10+			1	11.1	8	88.9	9
Total	3	4.5	7	10.6	56	84.8	66

When years taught at present grade level were considered, only three teachers (4.5%) were determined to be very high in their present level of strength in regard to best practices. A total of 7 (10.6%) were rated as satisfactory while the largest number (56 or 84.8%) were judged to be below average. A significant number of the satisfactory or very high responses belonged to teachers with less than 6 years of teaching at present grade level, as only 2 teachers with 7 or more years experience were found to be satisfactory in

their present level of strength. The majority of teachers, regardless of length of years at present grade level, reported a below average level of strength in practices.

Table 9 displays the percentage and number of responses within each of the six domains of the NELTA. Each domain is comprised of two indicators. Two appropriate grade level indicators within a domain yielded a 100% or total congruency of teacher behaviors with best practices. A response of only one appropriate grade level indicator within a domain indicated a 50% or partial congruency. If no appropriate grade level indicator was selected within a domain, 0% or no congruency was determined to exist.

Overall, a relatively low level of congruency was determined to exist. However, 10 teachers did indicate complete congruency of teacher behaviors with best practices in at least one of the domains. Four teachers with 1-3 years of teaching at present grade level provided responses indicating complete congruence in Dominant Role, Motivation, Relating to Students and Classroom Qualities domains. Similarly, responses of five teachers with 4-6 years experience at grade level indicated complete congruence in Dominant Role, Motivation, Relating to Students and Lesson Characteristics. One teacher with 7-9 years of teaching at grade level was completely congruent in responses in the Reteaching domain. In only two instances was partial congruency identified by half of the respondents. Teachers with 7-9 years of teaching experience at their present grade level indicated partial congruency in the Classroom Quality domain (55.6%) while their

Table 9
 Congruency: Responses Conducive to Best Practices for Domains by Length of Years
 Teaching at Present Grade Level

Years	1-3		4-6		7-9		10+		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Dominant Role										
No	18	78.3	18	72.0	6	66.7	6	66.7	48	72.7
Partial	4	17.4	6	24.0	3	33.3	3	33.3	16	24.2
Complete	1	4.3	1	4.0					2	3.0
Motivation										
No	15	65.2	14	56.0	8	88.9	8	88.9	45	68.2
Partial	7	30.4	10	40.0	1	11.1	1	11.1	19	28.8
Complete	1	4.3	1	4.0					2	3.0
Reteaching										
No	16	69.6	15	60.0	4	44.4	8	88.9	43	65.2
Partial	7	30.4	10	40.0	4	44.4	1	11.1	22	33.3
Complete					1	11.1			1	1.5
Relating to Students										
No	13	56.5	19	76.0	7	77.8	4	44.4	43	65.2
Partial	9	39.1	4	16.0	2	22.2	5	55.6	20	30.3
Complete	1	4.3	2	25.0					3	4.5
Classroom Qualities										
No	17	73.9	22	88.0	4	44.4	8	88.9	51	77.3
Partial	5	21.7	3	12.0	5	55.6	1	11.1	14	21.2
Complete	1	4.3							1	1.5
Lesson Characteristics										
No	14	60.9	14	56.0	6	66.7	5	55.6	39	59.1
Partial	9	39.1	10	40.0	3	33.3	4	44.4	26	39.4
Complete			1	4.0					1	1.5

Note: 0, 50, and 100 indicate percentages of congruency within domains and represent no, partial, and complete congruency respectively

senior colleagues with 10+ years of grade level experience indicated congruency in the Relating to Students domain (55.6%).

Research Question 4

To what extent can the literacy teaching of 2004-2005 elementary Florida Teachers of the year be described as exemplary by grade level using the indicators and domains of the NELTA?

Table 10 is the first in a series of tables that present the entire range of responses of teachers at each grade level (K, 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5) and displays their literacy teaching practices using Block and Mangieri's (2003) domains. In order to be described as exemplary, it was necessary for a majority of literacy practices of teachers to be at grade level for each of the six domains comprised of two indicators. Each table will be examined with this in mind. Additionally, each table contains notations indicating the domains of primary and secondary importance for the respective grade levels according to Block and Mangieri (2003). These benchmarks will be compared with any which appear important to the teachers in the present study.

In examining Table 10, little congruency with best practice was observed for Kindergarten responses. Rather, a very wide range of grade level responses is presented in all domains. The domains congruent with Kindergarten best practices that were most indicated by teachers of Kindergarten were Lesson Characteristics and Motivation (n=5

or 20.8 for each). This indicates Kindergarten teachers are assuming the roles of Positive Pacers and Fun Agents.

According to Block and Mangieri (2003), Lesson Characteristics and Classroom Qualities are the two most important domains for Kindergarten. Yet, nearly 30% (29.2%) of Kindergarten teachers reported utilizing Classroom Qualities that were most congruent

Table 10
Literacy Practices of Kindergarten Teachers by Grade Level and Domain (n=24)

Grade Level Indicated	Dominant Role		Motivation		Reteaching		Relating to Students		^a Classroom Qualities		^b Lesson Characteristics	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
K	2	8.3	5	20.8	2	8.3	3	12.5	1	4.5	5	20.8
1	4	16.7	1	4.5	1	4.5	1	4.5	7	29.2	4	16.7
2	2	8.3	5	20.8	6	25.0	3	12.5	3	12.5	3	12.5
3	4	16.7	1	4.5	0		1	4.5	2	8.3	1	4.5
4	5	20.8	7	29.2	9	37.5	4	16.7	1	4.5	2	8.3
5	3	12.5	2	8.3	2	8.3	2	8.3	0		3	12.5

Note. n=24 was established to permit consideration of 2 grade level best practice indicators and the respective percentages for each of the 12 Kindergarten teachers. Not all teachers responded to every item. ^aMost important and ^bSecond most important domains, according to Block and Mangieri for Kindergarten.

with first grade best practice. In other words, instead of assuming the role of Writing Promoters, Kindergarten teachers are acting as grade 1 Safety Netters. In regard to Lesson Characteristics, Kindergarten best practices were most selected by the responding Kindergarten teachers (20.8%). The highest percentage of Kindergarten teachers reported utilizing practices best suited for fourth grade in the domains of Dominant Role (20.8%), Motivation (29.2%), Reteaching (37.5%), and Relating to Students (16.7%). This would

indicate, according to Block and Mangieri (2003), that these respondents were not meeting the needs of the Kindergarten learners.

Table 11 indicates the practices of grade 1 teachers by domains and grade level. Examination of this table indicates that, according to Block and Mangieri (2003), the domains of Reteaching and Lesson Characteristics were most important to this grade level. In the domain of Reteaching, the highest number of respondents for that domain (33.3%) did indicate the use of best practices conducive to grade 1 and those teachers were assuming the role of Expectationist for their learners. For Lesson Characteristics, however, only 16.7% of responses indicate using of the role of Opportunist. Grade 1 teachers in this domain more frequently reported assuming the roles of Challenger or Authenticator (best practices of grade 2 or grade 4) with 22.2% indicated for each

Table 11
Literacy Practices of Grade 1 Teachers by Grade Level and Domain (n=18)

Grade Level Indicated	Dominant Role		Motivation		^b Reteaching		Relating to Students		Classroom Qualities		^a Lesson Characteristics	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
K	0		1	5.6	0		0		0		1	5.6
1	6	33.3	1	5.6	2	11.1	0		6	33.3	3	16.7
2	2	11.1	4	22.2	6	33.3	2	11.1	5	27.8	4	22.2
3	4	22.2	2	11.1	3	16.7	3	16.7	1	5.6	2	11.1
4	2	11.1	5	27.8	4	22.2	1	5.6	1	5.6	4	22.2
5	1	5.6	3	16.7	1	5.6	6	33.3	2	11.1	1	5.6

Note: n=18 was established to permit consideration of 2 grade level best practice indicators and the respective percentages for each of the 9 grade 1 teachers. Not all teachers responded to every item.
^aMost important and ^bSecond most important domains, according to Block and Mangieri for grade 1.

domain. This again indicated a minimal amount of congruency between the practices of teachers in this study and best practice for grade 1.

Table 12 displays the self-described literacy practices of grade 2 teachers. The two most important domains for this grade level, according to Block and Mangieri (2003), were Classroom Qualities and Lesson Characteristics. Within Lesson Characteristics, 21.4% of responses indicated the use of this best practice (Inventors) for grade 2; however, the most frequently indicated grade level practice belonged to grade 4 (Option Quarterbacks), with 28.3%. The majority of responses in this grade level indicated the use of literacy practices that were suited for older learners with the exception of those associated with the Classroom Qualities domain. Although it is a most important indicator for grade 2, a higher percentage of responses indicated more second grade teachers were utilizing a grade 1 Safety Netter approach rather than a grade 2

Table 12
Literacy Practices of Grade 2 Teachers by Grade Level and Domain (n=28)

Grade Level Indicated	Dominant Role		Motivation		Reteaching		Relating to Students		^b Classroom Qualities		^a Lesson Characteristics	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
K	1	3.6	2	7.1	0		0		0		0	
1	5	17.9	3	10.7	2	7.1	1	3.6	9	32.1	3	10.7
2	2	7.1	5	17.9	9	32.1	3	10.7	5	17.9	6	21.4
3	11	39.9	3	10.7	0		6	21.4	6	21.4	3	10.7
4	8	28.3	7	25.0	11	39.9	8	28.3	0		8	28.3
5	1	3.6	7	25.0	7	25.0	3	10.7	1	3.6	5	17.9

Note: n=28 was established to permit consideration of 2 grade level best practice indicators and the respective percentages for each of the 14 grade 2 teachers. Not all teachers responded to every item.

^aMost important and ^bSecond most important domains, according to Block and Mangieri for grade 2.

Challenger approach. This would indicate that teachers were emphasizing safety and security in the establishment of a learning environment

Table 13 displays the Literacy practices of grade 3 teachers. With regard to Block and Mangieri's (2003) most important domains of Reteaching and Motivation, only one teacher (4.5%) indicated the use of grade 3 best practices in each of these domains. Most frequently, respondents indicated a grade 4 Tutors of Thinking approach for the domain of Reteaching. Respondents most frequently reported a grade 5 Analyzer approach for the domain of Motivation. The responses were also evenly distributed with 4 responses each in grades 2 and 4 (for 8 total). These grade levels immediately precede and follow grade 3 and were indicative of a split in teaching approach with regard to this domain. Careful examination of the table shows a relatively high number of grade 3 teacher responses indicated the utilization of best practices appropriate for grades 4 and grade 5 with one

Table 13
Literacy Practices of Grade 3 Teachers by Grade Level and Domain (n=22)

Grade Level Indicated	Dominant Role		^b Motivation		^a Reteaching		Relating to Students		Classroom Qualities		Lesson Characteristics	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
K	0		2	9.1	0		0		0		0	
1	3	13.6	3	13.6	3	13.6	1	4.5	7	31.8	1	4.5
2	4	18.9	4	18.9	4	18.9	2	9.1	8	36.4	2	9.1
3	4	18.9	1	4.5	1	4.5	6	27.3	2	9.1	6	27.3
4	6	27.3	4	18.9	8	36.4	5	22.7	0		5	22.7
5	4	18.9	5	22.7	1	4.5	4	18.9	1	4.5	2	9.1

Note: n=22 was established to permit consideration of 2 grade level best practice indicators and the respective percentages for each of the 11 grade 3 teachers. Not all teachers responded to every item.

^aMost important and ^bSecond most important domains, according to Block and Mangieri for grade 3.

exception. The domain of Classroom Qualities was more frequently characterized by the use of best practices for grades 2 (36.4%) and 1 (31.8%).

Table 14 displays the literacy practices of grade 4 teachers by level and domain. At this grade level, Block and Mangieri (2003) have identified Dominant Role and Lesson Characteristics as the two most important domains indicating teachers would appropriately take the roles of Coaches and Option Quarterbacks. Across domains at this grade level, grade 4 teachers, more than any other grade level, have indicated their use of grade 4 best practices. A significant number of responses indicated the use of best practices appropriate for grade 4. Often, however, they matched or were exceeded by grade 1 or 2 responses for the indicators. With regard to Dominant Role, 26.9% of responses indicated a grade 4 Coaches approach, while the same percentage indicated a grade 2 Demonstrators approach. Likewise for the domain of Reteaching, where 30.8% of responses indicated a grade 4 approach of Tutors of Thinking and an identical percentage chose the grade 1 approach of Expectationist. For Lesson Characteristics, 23.1% of responses indicated a grade 4 approach of Option Quarterback, while 26.9% indicated a grade 1 Opportunist approach.

Table 14
Literacy Practices of Grade 4 Teachers by Grade Level and Domain (n=26)

Grade Level Indicated	^a Dominant Role		Motivation		Reteaching		Relating to Students		Classroom Qualities		^b Lesson Characteristics	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
K	1	3.8	5	19.2	0		1	3.8	0		1	3.8
1	6	23.1	2	7.7	8	30.8	3	11.5	13	50.0	7	26.9
2	7	26.9	6	23.1	6	23.1	2	7.7	7	26.9	4	15.4
3	2	7.7	1	3.8	0		3	11.5	2	7.7	3	11.5
4	7	26.9	7	26.9	8	30.8	9	34.6	2	7.7	6	23.1
5	3	11.5	3	11.5	1	3.8	4	15.4	0		2	7.7

Note: n=26 was established to permit consideration of 2 grade level best practice indicators and the respective percentages for each of the 13 grade 4 teachers. Not all teachers responded to every item.

^aMost important and ^bSecond most important domains, according to Block and Mangieri for grade 4.

Table 15 displays the Literacy practices of grade 5 teachers by grade level and domain. Classroom Qualities and Lesson Characteristics were the two most important domains identified by Block and Mangieri (2003) for grade 5. Only 14.3% of grade 5 responses indicated the use of best practices for grade 5 in Lesson Characteristics. More

Table 15
Literacy Practices of Grade 5 Teachers by Grade Level and Domain (n=14)

Grade Level Indicated	Dominant Role		Motivation		Reteaching		Relating		^b Classroom Qualities		^a Lesson Characteristics	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%	n	%	n	%
K	1	7.1	1	7.1	0		0		0		0	
1	2	14.3	3	21.4	0		1	7.1	4	28.6	1	7.1
2	0		0		3	21.4	0		5	35.7	2	14.3
3	5	35.7	2	14.3	0		2	14.3	2	14.3	4	28.6
4	4	28.6	4	28.6	6	42.9	2	14.3	1	7.1	4	28.6
5	2	14.3	4	28.6	2	14.3	8	57.1	0		2	14.3

Note: n=14 was established to permit consideration of 2 grade level best practice indicators and the respective percentages for each of the 7 grade 5 teachers. Not all teachers responded to every item.

^aMost important and ^bSecond most important domains, according to Block and Mangieri for grade 5.

than half of respondents identified utilizing the Lesson Characteristics of a grade 3 Catalyst or a grade 4 Option Quarterback. No respondents reported assuming the role of a grade 5 Planner for Classroom Qualities. This was the only domain where a significant number of responses indicated the use of primary grade best practices. A majority (57.1%) of responses indicate teachers exhibited the best practice associated with grade 5 within the Relating to Students by utilizing a Humorist approach. Some grade 5 teacher responses were evenly divided among two grade levels in three different domains: Relating to Students, Lesson Characteristics, and Motivation. In the domains of Relating to Students and Lesson Characteristics, equal percentages of responses occurred at the grade 3 and grade 4 indicators. In the domain of Motivation, the most frequently occurring responses were equal among grade 4 and grade 5.

Summary

An analysis of the data obtained from the respondent Teachers of the Year to the National Exemplary Literacy Teacher Assessment along with selected demographic information was presented in this chapter. Data analyses in the form of frequencies and percentages were presented. Results of the analysis were also displayed in tables. A summary and discussion of these findings are present in Chapter 5. Conclusions drawn from this research are presented, as well as recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Problem Statement

This study was developed to produce data about the overall practices of selected teachers in four central Florida school districts. The problem of this study was to develop a literacy teaching profile of the Kindergarten through grade 5 Teachers of the Year and to examine the extent to which these teaching profiles could be described as exemplary using the domains of the National Exemplary Literacy Teacher Assessment (NELTA). Furthermore, the profiles were examined to determine what relationship, if any, existed when total years of teaching and total years teaching at present grade level were considered.

Methodology

Population and Data Collection

The population of this study was comprised of the 210 Elementary Teachers of the year in Orange, Osceola, Seminole, and Volusia counties in Florida during the 2003-2004 school year.

The survey instrument was mailed to the 210 Teachers of the Year at their respective schools on April 26, 2004. A cover letter congratulated and thanked all the teachers in advance for their participation, explained the purpose of the research, and requested a return response in the addressed, stamped envelope provided. The first

mailing yielded a return of 71 surveys. A second contact yielded a return of 43 surveys. Of the 114 surveys that were returned, 66 (57.9%) were usable.

Instrumentation

Data were collected using the survey instrument, NELTA, developed by Block and Mangieri (2003). The NELTA was supplemented with additional questions to gain data related to demographic variables. These data were used in developing an overall profile of the population and assisted in answering the research questions. The NELTA is divided into six major competency domains that are indicative of exemplary literacy teaching behavior. These six domains are: Dominant Role, Motivation, Reteaching, Relating to Students, Classroom Qualities, and Lesson Characteristics. Within these major domains, Block and Mangieri (2003) have identified specific indicators or behaviors by grade level that effective literacy teachers display.

Data Analysis

The NELTA surveys were collected and scored using a NELTA score sheet on which each respondent's letter response was recorded and converted to a grade level equivalent. Each of the six domains generated scores and equivalencies for the two

indicators associated with each domain. The level of strength in exemplary literacy practices was categorized using levels of strength associated with the 12 indicators.

Summary and Discussion of the Findings

The summary and a discussion of the findings for the collected data in response to the four research questions for this study were as follows:

Research Question 1

To what extent can the literacy teaching of 2004-2005 elementary Florida Teachers of the Year be described as exemplary using the indicators and domains of the NELTA?

Using the indicators and domains of the NELTA, it was determined that teachers responding to this survey demonstrated low levels of congruency with exemplary literacy teaching behaviors as identified and described by Block and Mangieri (2003). Percentage of responses conducive to best practices ranged from 0 to 55.6%. Of the 66 teachers who responded to survey only 7 or 10.6% were found to exhibit a present level of strength that

could be described as satisfactory. Furthermore, only 3 or 4.5% could be described as very high in their present level of strength.

Research Question 2

What differences, if any, exist in the literacy practices of 2004-2005 elementary Florida Teachers of the Year when total years of teaching are considered?

To answer this question, teachers were grouped by the total number of years taught into four categories: 1-3 years, 4-6 years, 7-9 years, and 10 or more years. Within these categories, teachers' responses were analyzed by present level of strength and by responses conducive to best practices by domain. Given the fact that the overall present levels of strength were low, as indicated in Research Question 1, it is still possible to see trends within the groups. There were four teachers with 10+ years of experience that were determined to exhibit a satisfactory present level of strength by total years. Similarly, when examining responses conducive to best practices by domain, it was the 10+ length of total years of teaching category that produces the most 100% congruency

scores (7). Experienced teaching makes a difference with regard to exemplary literacy teaching as measured by the NELTA.

Research Question 3

What differences, if any, exist in the literacy practices of 2004-2005 elementary Florida Teachers of the Year when length of years at present grade level are considered?

To answer this question, teachers were grouped by length of years at present grade level into four categories: 1-3 years, 4-6 years, 7-9 years, and 10 or more years. Within these categories, teachers' responses were analyzed by present level of strength and by responses conducive to best practices by domain. Of the three teachers identified as very high in present level of strength by length of years, two of them reported belonging in the 4-6 year group. Of the seven teachers identified as satisfactory, a majority of four teachers reported belonging to the 1-3 year group. When examining the responses conducive to best practices by domains the seven 100% congruent scores are found within the two groups of least length of years (1-3 and 4-6).

Research Question 4

To what extent can the literacy teaching of 2003-2004 elementary Florida Teachers of the Year be described as exemplary by grade level using the indicators and domains of the NELTA?

To answer this question, tables were developed to display the data for each grade level K-5. The results of the NELTA for all domains were displayed and discussed. One

theme common to all grade levels was that teachers commonly described utilizing best practices that were prescribed for grade levels that are higher than the ones in which the teachers were presently placed. Furthermore, within each domain, grade 4 best practices were reported by the most respondents no less than two times within each grade level. The highest number and percent of Kindergarten teachers reported using grade 4 best practices for four different domains: Dominant Role (20.8%), Motivation (29.3%), Reteaching, (37.5%), and Relating to Students (16.7%). Grade 1 teachers indicated grade 4 best practices most frequently in the domain of Motivation (27.8%), and in Lesson Characteristics with 22.2% (a tie with grade 2). Grade 2 teachers indicated grade 4 best practices most frequently in the domains of Reteaching (39.9%) and Relating to Students (28.3%), Lesson Characteristics (28.3%), and Motivation (25.0% tie with grade 5). Grade 3 teachers indicated grade 4 best practices most frequently in the domains of Dominant Role (27.3%) and Reteaching (36.4%). Grade 4 teachers reported themselves to be congruent with best practice for their grade level in Motivation (26.9%), Relating to Students (34.6%), and in Dominant Role (30.8% tie with grade 1). Grade 5 teachers indicated grade 4 best practices most frequently in the domains of Reteaching (57.1%) and Motivation (28.6% tie with grade 5).

Conclusions

This study sought to profile the 2004-2005 elementary Teachers of the Year in Florida and to determine the extent to which their literacy teaching practices could be described as exemplary using the indicators and domains of the National Exemplary

Literacy Teachers Assessment (NELTA). It also sought to examine those same teachers' literacy teaching practices in light of selected demographic variables such as total length of years teaching and length of years teaching at present grade level. Based on a review of the literature and the research findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. It was concluded that overall very little congruency existed between the teachers' self-described practices and exemplary literacy teaching as measured by the NELTA. By and large, with the exception of grades 4 and 5, teachers were routinely utilizing inappropriate developmental classroom strategies that were better suited for students older than their current students. This could be the result of the high stakes testing environment in which teachers and students in Florida, and throughout the United States, find themselves.

2. With minimal congruency being demonstrated by Florida's 2004-2005 Teachers of the Year, the demographic variables being considered (total years of teaching and years teaching at grade level) did little to explain or clarify the profile of the Teachers of the Year. However, teachers with 7-9 or 10 or more years of teaching experience did provide the highest levels of congruency among those who responded to the survey. A total of 7 teachers with 7-9 or 10 or more years of experience responded with very high or satisfactory levels of strength compared to only 3 who could accurately be described as satisfactory or very high among the respondents with 6 or fewer years of teaching experience. Additionally, a total of 93 responses in the 7-9 and 10 or more total years of teaching categories indicated partial or complete congruency within the domains while the responses from teachers with 1-3 or 4-6 years of teaching indicating total or partial

congruency totaled only 29. This indicated that using the NELTA as a measure, the practices of experienced teachers were more congruent with exemplary literacy teaching than were the practices of less experienced teachers.

3. When analyzed by grade level, grade 4 teachers reported utilizing literacy teaching most congruent with best practice in that grade 4 teachers indicated using grade 4 best practices most often for three out of the six domains, more than was exhibited at any other grade level. This could perhaps be attributed to the scope of accountability in grade 4 with regard to standardized testing. For many years, in Florida, the focus with regard to reading and writing had been the grade 4 Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) formerly called Florida Writes. Statewide inservice education efforts have focused on this test, and have had an effect on literacy instruction at all grade levels. The scope of FCAT has broadened to include standardized testing at every grade level beginning with grade 3. The findings in this study may indicate that inservice and preservice education on literacy has not been specifically focused on grade level age appropriate practice.

Implications and Recommendations

The results of this study indicated that many 2004-2005 Teachers of the Year in central Florida were not teaching literacy in a manner that is conducive to the optimum learning outcomes for their students. Several circumstances in the state and the nation could provide possible explanations for this. The high stakes testing environment has increased pressure on teachers and administrators who, in turn, must stress academic

growth and push their students to attain more knowledge at earlier ages. In the state of Florida, students who do not achieve a passing score on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) are denied promotion to the next grade level. The need to achieve, not only in regard to FCAT but also to all demands of No Child Left Behind legislation, has caused intense scrutiny to be focused on pupils, teachers, and administrators. Principals and teachers, whose schools consistently fail to achieve specified learning gains as measured by the FCAT, often face reassignment. The pressure to succeed and produce significant learning gains could be translated into teachers teaching more, earlier, and at a swifter pace in order to help meet the annual learning gains as required to be demonstrated by state law.

Another possible explanation for the high majority of teachers who reported use of best practices indicated for grade levels other than the one they were teaching is that there may have been a mismatch between teachers' talents and natural predispositions and the grade levels they have been assigned to teach. At the time this study was concluded, the state of Florida was grappling with a statewide, class size reduction initiative. State law mandated in 2002 required a reduced teacher pupil ratio to begin in the early elementary grades and gradually impact all students at all grade levels by the year 2010. This created a huge number of vacant teaching positions. These positions were being staffed by a varied array of teachers, those who were beginning teachers and recent graduates from teacher preparation programs, others by teachers who have received

training through an alternative certification program, and in some cases, by teachers with emergency certifications who may or may not have had any formal teacher preparation.

In the process of recruiting, selecting, and inducting this wide array of teachers into school settings, little attention may be able to be devoted to the best “match” of teacher talents with student needs. This tremendous influx of varying experience and preparation levels highlights the need for teacher inservice training aimed at educating teachers to recognize and use grade and age appropriate learning strategies. It also demonstrates the value of educating administrators of the need to, as carefully as possible, select and place new teachers in grade levels and positions where their natural talents would be best utilized. In further support, the use of mentors would seem to be a beneficial strategy in providing models of best practice and ensuring that new or inexperienced teachers are provided with guidance from an experienced mentor teacher to help them fully develop their skill sets and teaching expertise.

In Florida, the Teacher of the Year program has been designed, as have many state programs, to bring recognition to teachers as a group. Teachers of the Year have most often been elected by a majority vote of the faculty at their school. Faculty who are recognized are those best known and respected as valued colleagues by their fellow teachers. It should be remembered that these faculty are not judged by their colleagues on the extent to which they exhibit exemplary teaching behaviors or on their skill as literacy teachers. In fact, a relatively high number of Teachers of the Year were excluded from this study because they were not classroom teachers. Rather, they were guidance counselors, physical education teachers, specific learning disabilities teachers, music

teachers, and art teachers, all of whom serve an entire school, not just one class of students.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research needs were identified using the data analyses from this present study. Future needs include:

1. This study could be repeated using the teacher population of an entire school.
2. This study could be repeated using a different sample of teachers such as all of those teaching a specific grade level, National Board Certified teachers, or teachers who have earned merit pay.
3. This survey could be administered to groups of teachers in geographical areas experiencing less growth than Florida in order to further validate the instrument with a more stable population.
4. Conduct research into the teacher recruitment, selection, and induction practices of districts to determine the emphasis that is placed on matching teacher skills with best grade level practices or in helping teachers, through induction, to develop needed skills.

APPENDIX A

NATIONAL EXEMPLARY LITERACY TEACHING ASSESSMENT

National Exemplary Literacy Teaching Assessment

Instructions: For each item on the National Exemplary Literacy Teaching Assessment, you are to give the response that *most closely* describes the action you would take *first* as a response to the question.

In order to receive optional benefit from this assessment, you are reminded that it will yield accurate information if, and only if, the responses to the items reflect actual situational frequencies in your literacy teaching. You should not try to guess what response you *should* give to an item. Instead, you are to be as precise as possible in using the alphabetical response that denotes the action that you most frequently employ when teaching reading. Place the letter that denotes your response in the square that precedes each item.

Answer each item as it relates to your most recent literacy teaching experiences. Take as much time as you need to select an accurate response to each item. Remember, there is no right or wrong answer. The value of the information you will receive from the NELTA is directly dependent on the degree to which your responses reflect your teaching actions.

For each item, you are to write the letter that best describes the action that you most often take when the event described in that item occurs in your classroom.

1. When adults enter your classroom during whole-class lessons, they would normally see you:

- a. Singing songs, or leading the class in reciting rhyming verses
- b. Praising students by complimenting the parts of words that they said correctly while also not emphasizing the parts that were incorrect
- c. Teaching literacy all day so that every lesson, regardless of the content area, would include a reading skill that you wanted your students to acquire or utilize
- d. Demonstrating the reading process so students could emulate it, regardless of how much prior knowledge they possess
- e. Managing a wide variety of groups simultaneously that may be different in size as well as student ability levels
- f. Coaching students, whether alone or in small groups, with the goal of motivating and challenging them so that they will attain higher levels of reading achievement
- g. Teaching large chunks of knowledge in a manner that motivates students to want to learn

2. If you had to describe the role you most often perform for your students, that role would be as a:

- a. Vocational guide – supporting students until they have the ability and confidence to use print on their own
- b. Guardian – celebrating students’ discoveries and successes as they initially attempt to decode or comprehend
- c. Encourager – utilizing many forms of assessments for the purpose of identifying and correcting immediately areas in which students make errors while reading
- d. Demonstrator – performing daily at least one “think-aloud,” during the introduction of literacy lessons, with a high level of teaching ability
- e. Manager – coordinating students as they read multilevel materials whether in small groups, pairs, or alone so that students would be reading at their independent level, or at their instructional level when working with you
- f. Coach – introducing a lesson in which students can select from several different options the manner in which they will work to attain the established goal
- g. Adaptor – adapting a lesson instantly and successfully because a student indicates that the approach you are using is not working

3. When you know that the class is becoming unmotivated to read, you would first:

- a. Seek to make the literacy instruction contain more objects found in the child’s home
- b. Enact the story yourself, or stop and tell a story about the part that is causing difficulty for the class
- c. Vary the depth, breadth, and pace of the lesson, teaching up to 20 skills in a single lesson if such an action would keep students engaged
- d. Demonstrate how adults would read a particular book and describe what you would enjoy about the book
- e. Help students to realize that they can turn to print to locate answers, even though they may lack the confidence that they can do so successfully
- f. Create an educational activity that excites students because it relates to an interest/hobby/problem that they have outside of school

- g. Bring forward new, intriguing reference material that generates enthusiasm on the part of students that will enable them to become more deeply involved in the subject matter



4. When you walk into the classroom and see a child who is not motivated to read, you would first:

- a. Go to a shelf and get an object that represents the word or concept you are trying to teach
- b. Teach that student the same lesson and read the same book again
- c. Have the child read a section to you, praise something read correctly, point out something to improve, ask the child to do it, and indicate that you will be back in a moment to see if it was done correctly by the time you return
- d. Initiate on the spot a new creative idea designed to get the unmotivated student to read
- e. Hand the student a book written by a new author or of a new genre to try
- f. Alter the goal that you had set for the lesson by moving it up or down the cognitive scale based upon the amount that the child understood as you stood by that child's side
- g. Ask the students to use what they read to produce something new, which either adds to the classroom, helps their peers, or contributes to the community in which the school is located



5. You have just completed the best reading lesson that you have ever taught, but as you survey the room, you realize your students have not learned. Their eyes are the blankest you have ever seen! What in the world are you going to do tomorrow to reach them? You plan to:

- a. Create a hands-on activity
- b. Repeat the literacy lesson, using the same book in order to attain the same objective
- c. Repeat the same lesson, but use a different book, content, or method than you used previously
- d. Creatively invent a new way to demonstrate the concept, and explain it in a new way that the students are likely not to have experienced in prior years of schooling
- e. Change to a new content area from the one that students were reading so that its new content or genre could stimulate increased interest on their part to build their reading power

- f. Teach them how to think on a higher level (e.g., how to draw inference) as you reteach the concept at a different cognitive level than was utilized previously by you
- g. Analyze the critical components of the concept so that you can add another layer of meaning to it that students are not likely to have been taught previously

6. If a student asks you a question about a reading skill that you taught yesterday, most often you would:

- a. Use as many learning modalities as feasible in order to answer the question by taking such actions as: letting the student hold an object that represents the concept, writing the words to be learned, asking the student to say the word, saying the words for the child, and finding a way for the student to take physical action consistent with the lesson
- b. Call one of the adult volunteers (or teaching assistants) in the room over to talk with the child and to answer all questions about the literacy concept in a one-to-one setting
- c. Answer the question immediately, regardless of how insignificant the query
- d. Be physically present and educationally supportive until the student finds the answer
- e. Stop the class's work briefly, repeat the question so that all can hear it and learn from the masterful answer that you give
- f. Praise the student for asking the question, then ask the child whether he or she can identify a resource that can be used to find its answer, and if he or she cannot, prompt the student by taking the first steps in finding the answer to the question
- g. Engage a child in a process that you have designed after you have analyzed that student's ability to respond to the question, and after this has occurred, ask the students to explain the process followed to find the answer

7. Your students respect you. You relate to them exceptionally well. Which of the following actions is most important to you in building and maintaining this rapport?

- a. Creating a class that is as much like a second home for your students as possible
- b. Praising correct portions of students' answers rather than telling students what is wrong with their literacy attempts

- c. Acknowledging that students are learning while concurrently correcting their slightest errors in a positive manner
- d. Listening appreciatively, effectively, and actively when engaged in one-on-one student conferences
- e. Taking actions each day that are designed to build an internal value for reading within students
- f. Identifying pupils' talents rapidly and focusing your lessons on these talents
- g. Using a sense of humor to which students can relate and being able to think like you did when you were their age to understand their motivations

8. Your students would say that you most value their:

- a. Desire to explore and discover through the use of concrete objects
- b. Pace of learning
- c. Ability to engage in independent actions
- d. Competence in sustaining substantive conversations about literacy
- e. Individual reading interests and independent reading ability
- f. Willingness to share their ideas about reading, to ask questions, to obtain deeper meanings, and to change their past negative attitudes toward reading to more positive ones
- g. Attempts to think "outside the box" as they read, and to express the ideas that were stimulated by this action

9. When you reflect on the way that you have organized your classroom for literacy instruction, it would best be described in the following way:

- a. Objects you can use to help students relate their oral language to print through the use of smell, taste, touch, and movement are handy
- b. Puppets as well as labels for physical objects that can be used to enact stories or to review concepts previously taught
- c. Print-rich shelves are at students' level and materials are placed so that students can reach and use them independently
- d. Very positive and print-rich – but a relaxed learning environment that challenges students to comprehend on a deeper level than the grade levels that precede the one you teach

- e. The wise use of space enables you to work, through your careful management, with a wide range of reading proficiency groups
- f. Bulletin boards relating to common, important issues confronting the whole of humanity are prevalent
- g. Activities culminate in projects that take longer than a week to complete and these are often designed to be valued/used by others outside the classroom

10. Which of the following is among the most distinguishing features of your classroom?

- a. Children's hands-on exploration centers (e.g., sufficient space available and objects are used by students to increase their comprehension and appreciation of concepts read)
- b. Most of the print and drawings on the bulletin boards will remind us of displays found on the refrigerators of proud parents who frequently display their students' work
- c. Trade books and children's literature in every subject are abundant within the classroom as literacy is taught throughout the day
- d. Charts demonstrate a wide range of reading abilities, describe how to complete reading processes independently, and teach students to self-correct mistakes when they are reading and writing
- e. The class is reading independently, to you, and to each other, and are working in different sizes of groups at one time
- f. Visual displays of student products about material read are related to the role that literacy abilities can serve in living a fulfilling life that includes contributing to the welfare of others
- g. Your expert planning abilities ensure that all literacy materials are in place before each day's lesson begins and everything runs smoothly even if students' needs dictate change

11. If you had to select one of the following, which would be seen most often in the literacy lessons that you teach?

- a. Engaging poems that are printed on charts and that are used for choral reading
- b. Pictures that depict a single skill and/or concepts that are being taught during literacy
- c. Rapid-paced lessons in which you are sharing in the fun of learning literacy with students

- d. Differentiated and highly creative instruction that reflects your need to teach concepts in ways that students would not have been taught in prior years
- e. Abstract concepts are made concrete because your directions are clear and effective
- f. Many goals and strategies are established at the introduction of lessons so that the students can select their own goals and assume the responsibility for learning them
- g. Students have the desire to sign, display, and be identified with their work because you have taught them how to organize their thoughts and to strive for excellence in their literacy tasks

12. When you ask students to listen to a children's book, you would most likely follow that activity by:

- a. Developing one of the concepts contained in it
- b. Matching sounds to print
- c. Teaching a word and then, by integrating reading and writing, you would expect students to write this newly taught word
- d. Creating word plays and sorting words into categories
- e. Mentoring students as they read a related book independently so they will have a high degree of comprehension
- f. Focusing subsequent lessons with the goal of students becoming independent readers while working on teacher-generated but student-selected long-term literacy projects related to concepts in the book read
- g. Asking students to identify individual interests within the material read and develop a plan for reading more about that topic so as to produce an end product that could be useful to others

APPENDIX B

LIST OF SCHOOLS INCLUDED THIS STUDY

Orange County

Aloma Elementary
Apopka Elementary
Arbor Ridge School
Audubon Park Elementary
Avalon Elementary
Azalea Park Elementary
Bay Meadows Elementary
Blankner (K-8)
Bonneville Elementary
Brookshire Elementary
Camelot Elementary
Catalina Elementary
Cheney Elementary
Chickasaw Elementary
Citrus Elementary
Clarcona Elementary
Clay Springs Elementary
Columbia Elementary
Conway Elementary
Cypress Springs Elementary
Cyprus Park Elementary
Deerwood Elementary
Dillard St. Elementary
Dommerich Elementary
Dover Shores Elementary
Dr. Phillips Elementary
Dream Lake Elementary
Durrance Elementary
Eccleston Elementary
Endeavor Elementary
Engelwood Elementary
Fern Creek Elementary
Frangus Elementary
Grand Avenue Elementary
Hiawassee Elementary
Hidden Oaks Elementary
Hillcrest Elementary
Hungerford Elementary
Hunter's Creek Elementary
Ivey Lane Elementary
John Young Elementary
Kaley Elementary

Killarney Elementary
Lake Como Elementary
Lake Gem Elementary
Lake George Elementary
Lake Silver Elementary
Lake Sybelia Elementary
Lake Weston Elementary
Lake Whitney Elementary
Lakemont Elementary
Lakeville Elementary
Lancaster Elementary
Lawton Chiles Elementary
Little River Elementary
Lockhart Elementary
Lovell Elementary
Maxey Elementary
McCoy Elementary
Meadow Woods Elementary
MetroWest Elementary
Mollie Ray Elementary
NorthLake Park Community
School
Oak Hill Elementary
Oakshire Elementary
Ocoee Elementary
Orange Center Elementary
Orlo Vista Elementary
Palm Lake Elementary
Palmetto Elementary
Pershing Elementary
Pinar Elementary
Pine Castle Elementary
Pine Hills Elementary
Pineloch Elementary
Pinewood Elementary
Princeton Elementary
Richmond Heights Elementary
Ridgewood Park Elementary
Riverdale Elementary
Riverside Elementary
Rock Lake Elementary
Rock Springs Elementary
Rolling Hills Elementary

Rosemont Elementary
Sadler Elementary
Shenandoah Elementary
Shingle Creek Elementary
Southwood Elementary
Spring Lake Elementary
Sunrise Elementary
Tangelo Park Elementary
Thornebrooke Elementary
Three Points Elementary
Tildenville Elementary
Union Park Elementary
Ventura Elementary
Washington Shores Elementary
Waterbridge Elementary
Waterford Elementary
Wheatley Elementary
Windermere Elementary
Windy Ridge School (K-8)
Winegard Elementary
Zellwood Elementary

Osceola County

Boggy Creek Elementary School
Canoe Creek Charter School
Celebration School
Central Ave Elementary School
City of Kissimmee Charter
School
Cypress Elementary School
Deerwood Elementary School
Four Corners Charter School
Harmony Neighborhood Charter
Hickory Tree Elementary School
Highlands Elementary School
Kissimmee Elementary School
Lakeview Elementary School
Michigan Ave. Elementary
School
Mill Creek Elementary School
Narcoossee Community School
P.M. Wells Charter School
Partin Settlement Elem.

Pleasant Hill Elementary School
Poinciana Elementary School
Reedy Creek Elementary School
Ross E. Jeffries Elementary
School
Thacker Ave Elementary School
Ventura Elementary School

Seminole County

Altamonte Elementary
Bear Lake Elementary
Bentley Elementary
Carillon Elementary
Casselberry Elementary
Choices In Learning Charter
School
Eastbrook Elementary
English Estates Elementary
Evans Elementary
Forest City Elementary
Geneva Elementary
Goldsboro Elementary
Hamilton Elementary
Heathrow Elementary
Highlands Elementary
Idyllwilde Elementary
Keeth Elementary
Lake Mary Elementary
Lake Orienta Elementary
Lawton Elementary
Longwood Elementary
Midway Elementary
Partin Elementary
Pine Crest Elementary
Rainbow Elementary
Red Bug Elementary
Sabal Point Elementary
Spring Lake Elementary
Stenstrom Elementary
Sterling Park Elementary
Wekiva Elementary
Wicklow Elementary
Wilson Elementary

Winter Springs Elementary
Woodlands Elementary

Volusia County

Blue Lake Elementary
Bonner Elementary
Chisholm Elementary
Coronado Beach Elementary
DeBary Elementary
Deltona Lakes Elementary
Discovery Elementary
Orange City Elementary
Ormond Beach Elementary
Ortona Elementary
Osceola Elementary
Osteen Elementary
Palm Terrace Elementary
Pathways Elementary
Pierson Elementary
Pine Trail Elementary
Port Orange Elementary
R.J. Longstreet Elementary
Reading Edge Academy Charter
Read-Pattillo Elementary
Samsula Elementary
Seville Public School
South Daytona Elementary
Spruce Creek Elementary
Sugar Mill Elementary
Sunrise Elementary
Sweetwater Elementary
Timbercrest Elementary
Tomoka Elementary
Turie T. Small Elementary
Volusia Pines Elementary
W.F. Burns Oak Hill Elementary
Walter A. Hurst Elementary
Westside Elementary
Woodward Ave. Elementary

Edgewater Public
Edith I. Starke Elementary
Enterprise Elementary
Forest Lake Elementary
Freedom Elementary School
Friendship Elementary
George W. Marks Elementary
Holly Hill Elementary
Horizon Elementary School
Indian River Elementary
Louise S. McInnis Elementary

APPENDIX C

NELTA WITH DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

If you are a regular education K-5 classroom teacher*, please circle the grade level you teach and indicate your years of experience including this year.

K 1 2 3 4 5

_____ years teaching at this grade level

_____ total years of teaching

**Complete this survey only if you are a regular education classroom teacher. If you are NOT a K-5 regular classroom teacher, please indicate your teaching assignment below and simply return the survey (unanswered) in the stamped envelope provided.*

National Exemplary Literacy Teaching Assessment

Instructions: For each item on the National Exemplary Literacy Teaching Assessment, you are to give the response that most closely describes the action that you most often take when the event described occurs in your classroom. Answer each item as it relates to your most recent literacy teaching experiences.

1. When adults enter your classroom during whole-class lessons, they would normally see you:

- a. Singing songs, or leading the class in reciting rhyming verses
- b. Praising students by complimenting the parts of words that they said correctly while also not emphasizing the parts that were incorrect
- c. Teaching literacy all day so that every lesson, regardless of the content area, would include a reading skill that you wanted your students to acquire or utilize
- d. Demonstrating the reading process so students could emulate it, regardless of how much prior knowledge they possess
- e. Managing a wide variety of groups simultaneously that may be different in size as well as student ability levels
- f. Coaching students, whether alone or in small groups, with the goal of motivating and challenging them so that they will attain higher levels of reading achievement
- g. Teaching large chunks of knowledge in a manner that motivates students to want to learn

2. If you had to describe the role you most often perform for your students, that role would be as a:

- a. Vocational guide – supporting students until they have the ability and confidence to use print on their own
- b. Guardian – celebrating students’ discoveries and successes as they initially attempt to decode or comprehend
- c. Encourager – utilizing many forms of assessments for the purpose of identifying and correcting immediately areas in which students make errors while reading
- d. Demonstrator – performing daily at least one “think-aloud,” during the introduction of literacy lessons, with a high level of teaching ability
- e. Manager – coordinating students as they read multilevel materials whether in small groups, pairs, or alone so that students would be reading at their independent level, or at their instructional level when working with you
- f. Coach – introducing a lesson in which students can select from several different options the manner in which they will work to attain the established goal
- g. Adaptor – adapting a lesson instantly and successfully because a student indicates that the approach you are using is not working

3. When you know that the class is becoming unmotivated to read, you would first:

- a. Seek to make the literacy instruction contain more objects found in the child’s home
- b. Enact the story yourself, or stop and tell a story about the part that is causing difficulty for the class
- c. Vary the depth, breadth, and pace of the lesson, teaching up to 20 skills in a single lesson if such an action would keep students engaged
- d. Demonstrate how adults would read a particular book and describe what you would enjoy about the book
- e. Help students to realize that they can turn to print to locate answers, even though they may lack the confidence that they can do so successfully
- f. Create an educational activity that excites students because it relates to an interest/hobby/problem that they have outside of school

- g. Bring forward new, intriguing reference material that generates enthusiasm on the part of students that will enable them to become more deeply involved in the subject matter



4. When you walk into the classroom and see a child who is not motivated to read, you would first:

- a. Go to a shelf and get an object that represents the word or concept you are trying to teach
- b. Teach that student the same lesson and read the same book again
- c. Have the child read a section to you, praise something read correctly, point out something to improve, ask the child to do it, and indicate that you will be back in a moment to see if it was done correctly by the time you return
- d. Initiate on the spot a new creative idea designed to get the unmotivated student to read
- e. Hand the student a book written by a new author or of a new genre to try
- f. Alter the goal that you had set for the lesson by moving it up or down the cognitive scale based upon the amount that the child understood as you stood by that child's side
- g. Ask the students to use what they read to produce something new, which either adds to the classroom, helps their peers, or contributes to the community in which the school is located



5. You have just completed the best reading lesson that you have ever taught, but as you survey the room, you realize your students have not learned. Their eyes are the blankest you have ever seen! What in the world are you going to do tomorrow to reach them? You plan to:

- a. Create a hands-on activity
- b. Repeat the literacy lesson, using the same book in order to attain the same objective
- c. Repeat the same lesson, but use a different book, content, or method than you used previously
- d. Creatively invent a new way to demonstrate the concept, and explain it in a new way that the students are likely not to have experienced in prior years of schooling
- e. Change to a new content area from the one that students were reading so that its new content or genre could stimulate increased interest on their part to build their reading power

- f. Teach them how to think on a higher level (e.g., how to draw inference) as you reteach the concept at a different cognitive level than was utilized previously by you
- g. Analyze the critical components of the concept so that you can add another layer of meaning to it that students are not likely to have been taught previously

6. If a student asks you a question about a reading skill that you taught yesterday, most often you would:

- a. Use as many learning modalities as feasible in order to answer the question by taking such actions as: letting the student hold an object that represents the concept, writing the words to be learned, asking the student to say the word, saying the words for the child, and finding a way for the student to take physical action consistent with the lesson
- b. Call one of the adult volunteers (or teaching assistants) in the room over to talk with the child and to answer all questions about the literacy concept in a one-to-one setting
- c. Answer the question immediately, regardless of how insignificant the query
- d. Be physically present and educationally supportive until the student finds the answer
- e. Stop the class's work briefly, repeat the question so that all can hear it and learn from the masterful answer that you give
- f. Praise the student for asking the question, then ask the child whether he or she can identify a resource that can be used to find its answer, and if he or she cannot, prompt the student by taking the first steps in finding the answer to the question
- g. Engage a child in a process that you have designed after you have analyzed that student's ability to respond to the question, and after this has occurred, ask the students to explain the process followed to find the answer

7. Your students respect you. You relate to them exceptionally well. Which of the following actions is most important to you in building and maintaining this rapport?

- a. Creating a class that is as much like a second home for your students as possible
- b. Praising correct portions of students' answers rather than telling students what is wrong with their literacy attempts

- c. Acknowledging that students are learning while concurrently correcting their slightest errors in a positive manner
- d. Listening appreciatively, effectively, and actively when engaged in one-on-one student conferences
- e. Taking actions each day that are designed to build an internal value for reading within students
- f. Identifying pupils' talents rapidly and focusing your lessons on these talents
- g. Using a sense of humor to which students can relate and being able to think like you did when you were their age to understand their motivations

8. Your students would say that you most value their:

- a. Desire to explore and discover through the use of concrete objects
- b. Pace of learning
- c. Ability to engage in independent actions
- d. Competence in sustaining substantive conversations about literacy
- e. Individual reading interests and independent reading ability
- f. Willingness to share their ideas about reading, to ask questions, to obtain deeper meanings, and to change their past negative attitudes toward reading to more positive ones
- g. Attempts to think "outside the box" as they read, and to express the ideas that were stimulated by this action

9. When you reflect on the way that you have organized your classroom for literacy instruction, it would best be described in the following way:

- a. Objects you can use to help students relate their oral language to print through the use of smell, taste, touch, and movement are handy
- b. Puppets as well as labels for physical objects that can be used to enact stories or to review concepts previously taught
- c. Print-rich shelves are at students' level and materials are placed so that students can reach and use them independently
- d. Very positive and print-rich – but a relaxed learning environment that challenges students to comprehend on a deeper level than the grade levels that precede the one you teach

- e. The wise use of space enables you to work, through your careful management, with a wide range of reading proficiency groups
- f. Bulletin boards relating to common, important issues confronting the whole of humanity are prevalent
- g. Activities culminate in projects that take longer than a week to complete and these are often designed to be valued/used by others outside the classroom

10. Which of the following is among the most distinguishing features of your classroom?

- a. Children's hands-on exploration centers (e.g., sufficient space available and objects are used by students to increase their comprehension and appreciation of concepts read)
- b. Most of the print and drawings on the bulletin boards will remind us of displays found on the refrigerators of proud parents who frequently display their students' work
- c. Trade books and children's literature in every subject are abundant within the classroom as literacy is taught throughout the day
- d. Charts demonstrate a wide range of reading abilities, describe how to complete reading processes independently, and teach students to self-correct mistakes when they are reading and writing
- e. The class is reading independently, to you, and to each other, and are working in different sizes of groups at one time
- f. Visual displays of student products about material read are related to the role that literacy abilities can serve in living a fulfilling life that includes contributing to the welfare of others
- g. Your expert planning abilities ensure that all literacy materials are in place before each day's lesson begins and everything runs smoothly even if students' needs dictate change

11. If you had to select one of the following, which would be seen most often in the literacy lessons that you teach?

- a. Engaging poems that are printed on charts and that are used for choral reading
- b. Pictures that depict a single skill and/or concepts that are being taught during literacy
- c. Rapid-paced lessons in which you are sharing in the fun of learning literacy with students

- d. Differentiated and highly creative instruction that reflects your need to teach concepts in ways that students would not have been taught in prior years
- e. Abstract concepts are made concrete because your directions are clear and effective
- f. Many goals and strategies are established at the introduction of lessons so that the students can select their own goals and assume the responsibility for learning them
- g. Students have the desire to sign, display, and be identified with their work because you have taught them how to organize their thoughts and to strive for excellence in their literacy tasks

12. When you ask students to listen to a children's book, you would most likely follow that activity by:

- a. Developing one of the concepts contained in it
- b. Matching sounds to print
- c. Teaching a word and then, by integrating reading and writing, you would expect students to write this newly taught word
- d. Creating word plays and sorting words into categories
- e. Mentoring students as they read a related book independently so they will have a high degree of comprehension
- f. Focusing subsequent lessons with the goal of students becoming independent readers while working on teacher-generated but student-selected long-term literacy projects related to concepts in the book read
- g. Asking students to identify individual interests within the material read and develop a plan for reading more about that topic so as to produce an end product that could be useful to others

APPENDIX D

NELTA TEACHING DOMAINS BY GRADE LEVEL

DOMAINS OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL LITERACY ASSESSMENT
(NELTA)

	Dominant Role	Motivation	Reteaching	Relating to Students	Classroom Qualities	Lesson Characteristics
Pre-Kindergarten	Guiders	Pathfinders	Synthesizer	Nurturers	**Engagers	*Conductor
Kindergarten	Guardians	Fun Agents	Strategic Repeaters	Relentless Reinforcers	*Writing Promoters	**Positive Pacers
Grade 1	Encouragers	Stimulators	**Expectationist	Challengers	Safety Netters	*Opportunist
Grade 2	Demonstrator	Connectors	Creators	Confident Communicator	**Challenger	*Inventors
Grade 3	Managers	**Promoters of books	*Portrayers	Individualizers	Organizers	Catalysts
Grade 4	*Coaches	Involvers	Tutors of Thinking	Optimists	Authenticator	**Option Quarterbacks
Grade 5	Adaptors	Producers	Analyzers	Humorists	**Planners	*Empowerist

The NELTA is a 12-item instrument (2 items for each domain, each having 7 choices dictating grade level) that permits assessment of teacher's literacy teaching and how close the teacher comes to "exemplary" practice as determined by the research of Block and Mangieri.

* = most important indicator at the grade level

** = second most important indicator

APPENDIX E
COVER LETTER

Stephanie Cowern
652 Roaring Drive #236
Altamonte Springs, FL 32714

April 26, 2004

Dear :

Congratulations on being selected to represent your school as the Teacher of the Year. As a fellow teacher, I am well aware of the effort and excellence demonstrated in the Teacher of the Year program and extend my best wishes.

As a doctoral student at the University of Central Florida, I have chosen to conduct my research regarding the literacy practices of Elementary Teachers of the Year in four central Florida counties, and am requesting your assistance. The enclosed survey, consisting of 12 questions, will require you to reflect on your literacy practices and should take only 15 minutes of your time.

Rest assured your responses will remain anonymous, and only group data will be analyzed. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 407-320-3015. Thank you in advance for your assistance. Again, congratulations on your accomplishment, and thanks for all that you do for your students.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Cowern

Please include your name and mailing address below and return with your completed survey if you would like a summary of the results of my research.

Name _____

Street Address _____

City, State, ZIP _____

APPENDIX F
NELTA SCORE SHEET

NELTA SCORE SHEET

Respondent's grade level _____ #of years _____ # years total teaching _____

NELTA Question	Letter Response	Grade Level Equivalent
Domain 1: Dominant Role		
1		
2		
Domain 2: Motivation		
3		
4		
Domain 3: Reteaching		
5		
6		
Domain 4: Relating to Students		
7		
8		
Domain 5: Classroom Qualities		
9		
10		
Domain 6: Lesson Characteristics		
11		
12		

GRADE	# of responses**
Preschool	
Kindergarten	
First Grade	
Second Grade	
Third Grade	
Fourth Grade	
Fifth Grade	

Domain	Percent of responses conducive to BEST PRACTICE
Dominant Role	
Motivation	
Reteaching	
Relating to Students	
Classroom Qualities	
Lesson Characteristics	

**5-12 responses indicate a “very high” level of strength in practices used by exemplary literacy teachers at grade level

4 responses indicate a “satisfactory” level of strength

3 or fewer responses “below average” level of strength

APPENDIX G
EMAIL REMINDER

Hi!

About two weeks ago, you should have received a survey I sent you regarding your literacy teaching. This is just a gentle reminder that if you haven't returned your survey, I'd still love to hear from you. As a second grade teacher myself, I realize this is a very busy time of year, but the way you are teaching in your classroom is important and of great interest to me. If you haven't, would you please take a moment to fill out and return the survey to me? I really would appreciate it. If you never received yours or have misplaced it, please reply to this email and I'd be happy to send another one.

Thanks in advance,

Stephanie Cowern

APPENDIX H
PERMISSION FOR HUMAN SUBJECTS



Office of Research

April 24, 2004

Stephanie Cowern
652 Roaring Drive #236
Altamonte Springs, FL 32714

Dear Ms. Cowern:

With reference to your protocol entitled, "Profile of the Literacy Practices of Central Florida Teachers of the Year 2004-2005," I am enclosing for your records the approved, executed document of the UCFIRB Form you had submitted to our office.

Please be advised that this approval is given for one year. Should there be any addendums or administrative changes to the already approved protocol, they must also be submitted to the Board. Changes should not be initiated until written IRB approval is received. Adverse events should be reported to the IRB as they occur. Further, should there be a need to extend this protocol, a renewal form must be submitted for approval at least one month prior to the anniversary date of the most recent approval and is the responsibility of the investigator (UCF).

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at 823-2901.

Please accept our best wishes for the success of your endeavors.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Grayson".

Chris Grayson
Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Copies: Dr. D.P. Magann
IRB File

APPENDIX I
PERMISSION TO USE INSTRUMENT

Subj: Re: Permission to copy/use
Date:12/12/2003 11:13:08 AM Eastern Standard Time
From: Kathy.Kuehl@guilford.com
SENT FROM THE INTERNET ([DETAILS](#))

Dear Stephanie Cowern:

A one-time non-exclusive permission is granted at no charge to photocopy and distribute without charge up to 300 copies of NELTA for your dissertation research. No other use is permitted with out written permission.

Regards,

Kathy Kuehl

Rights and Permissions

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ph#212 431 9800, ext. 245 fax# 212 966 6708
kathy.kuehl@guilford.com www.guilford.com

To the Permissions Department,

I am a doctoral student at the University of Central Florida in Orlando, Florida. I would like permission to use the NELTA (National Exemplary Literacy Teaching Assessment) as it appears in the book, Exemplary Literacy Teachers Promoting Success for all Children in Grades K-5 by Cathy Collins Block and John N. Mangieri on pages 18-23. I do own a copy of the book.

As part of my dissertation research, I would like to survey the current "Teachers of the Year" in the central Florida area and have them take the NELTA to look at their commonalities, differences, and to examine the extent to which they are displaying the exemplary qualities described by Block and Mangieri.

I would need to make (or purchase) approximately 300 copies. I would be most willing to share the results of my research with the Guilford Press and the authors of the book.

Thank you for your consideration,
Stephanie Cowern

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