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READING PARADIGMS, SCHOOL READING PROGRAMS AND
THE IMPACT ON THE OUTCOME OF STUDENTS'
STANDARDIZED TEST SCORES

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Education:
Reading/Language Arts

by
Margaret Elizabeth VerHaar Matanane

June 2006

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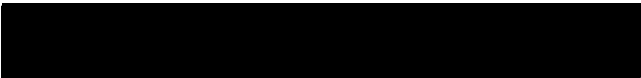
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ABSTRACT

With the passing of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law, accountability has become an immense issue in school districts across the nation. By the year 2014 all students from grades three to twelve are to be reading at a proficient level. Standardized tests are the measurement used. Reading is a major component in ensuring students' success on standardized tests. Reading programs, and reading paradigms, which are the models and methods for implementing the programs, are being looked at with closer scrutiny than ever before. Determining which reading paradigm is most effective for teaching children to read proficiently becomes imperative, not only for standardized tests results, but for life-long reading comprehension and application. Several factors effect students' ability to perform well on standardized tests including the reading programs and paradigms available to them, their socio-economic status and how they are viewed by society, which this study looks into. It is called deficit thinking.

This study is a meta analysis, which is a study of a pool of studies already in existence. It looks at reading paradigms, reading programs in five Southern California cities and compares their median household income to test

scores. It also presents the theoretical frameworks of the influences of Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky on American education and poverty. Both have a role in reading outcomes and the results of standardized tests.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

No one gets through life successfully without the help and knowledgeable assistance of others. To complete this thesis I had the aid of each of my instructors at California State University San Bernardino in the Master's Reading Program. Each one contributed thought provoking tasks, assignments, projects, lectures and conversations which helped shape this thesis.

I would especially like to acknowledge and thank Dr. Barbara Flores for her advice and showing me the value of teaching second language learners the joy of learning to read English. Your wisdom and humor made class and conversations delightful.

I also want to thank Dr. Diane Brantley for her tireless commitment to read and reread this thesis. You went above and beyond helping and advising in a light-hearted manner that was always gracious. I enjoyed every meeting and correspondence as you helped me work so many months on this thesis. Thank-you for being such a great reminder of what a noble profession teaching truly is.

DEDICATION

To all the wonderful teachers I have had in my life who taught me the joy of reading and learning new things I would like to show you that your hard work paid off.

To my Aunt Elizabeth who taught school for more than fifty years and shared lots of wonderful conversations with me about her teaching career and her master's thesis in reading, I thank-you.

To Abbi and Jared for doing what they were supposed to do, (like homework and helping dad) when I was at school and working on this project.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	v
LIST OF TABLES	viii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	
Background for the Study	1
Statement of the Problem	10
Purpose of the Study	11
Rationale for the Study	12
Research Questions	14
Significance of the Study	15
Assumptions/Limitations of the Study	16
Organization of the Remainder of the Study	17
Definition of Terms	18
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	
Introduction	21
Reading Paradigms	22
Phonics	22
Skills	35
Sociopsycholinguists	43
National Reading Panel	52
California Schools	55
Theoretical Framework	58
From Thought to Action	62

Systemic Organization of the Child's Thought	63
The Role of Language	64
In the Classroom	65
Poverty and Performance on Standardized Tests	69
Deficit Thinking	71
Historical Background of Deficit Thinking	74
Deficit Thinking and Standardized Tests	80
Libraries	87
CHAPTER THREE: DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	
Introduction: Design of the Investigation	93
Data Collection	97
Sample Populations	99
Data Analysis	101
CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS	102
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
Summary	108
Conclusions	110
Recommendations	114
REFERENCES	116

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Socioeconomic Statistics of Cities in Southern California	5
Table 2. Jeffery Wilhelm's Learning-Centered Teaching	34
Table 3. Ken Goodman's Cueing Systems in Reading (2003)	46
Table 4. Similarities and Differences between Lev Vygotsky and Jean Piaget	61
Table 5. Numbers of Book in Homes and Libraries of Students of Different Income Levels	90
Table 6. Socioeconomic Statistics of Cities in Southern California	98
Table 7. Increased Proficiency Reading Rate by Year	103
Table 8. Elementary School's Adequate Yearly Progress and Reading Program	105
Table 9. Socioeconomic Statistics of Cities in Southern California	113

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Teachers have been asked to put more emphasis on improving scores on standardized tests leaving less time for teaching "true academics." Some educators believe that teaching to a test takes away from teaching a comprehensive curriculum. Others feel that the ever-swinging pendulum of educational instruction, which is presently on the conservative, one-size-fits-all side, eventually will move back toward the middle and eventually back to normal. Then teachers will be free to teach what is best for the student, not necessarily for the government. Graves discusses how supervisors are gaining more control of the classroom while teachers' control lessens. "Decisions once made locally are being made further and further from the teacher-child transaction," (Graves, 2002, p. 41).

Background for the Study

When the Bush administration passed the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in 2001, a challenge mandated for the American education system was that 100 percent of the nation's students need to be proficient in reading and

mathematics by 2014. When President Bush signed the legislation, he made the following statement:

We're going to spend more money, more resources, but they'll be directed at methods that work, not feel-good methods, not sound-good methods, but methods that actually work, particularly when it comes to reading. So this bill focuses on reading. It sets a grand goal for the children. Our children will be reading by the third grade, And so, therefore, we tripled the amount of federal funding for scientifically based early reading programs. We've got money in there to make sure teachers know how to teach what works. We've got money in there to help promote proven methods of instruction. There are no more excuses, as far as I'm concerned, about not teaching children how to read. We know what works. (Coles, 2003, p. 2)

NCLB is far more stringent and accountability is much higher than the previous legislation of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, which was passed under the Johnson Administration. In order for schools to receive federal funding under the No Child Left Behind law, they must test all children in grades three through

eight in math and reading every year. The schools must prove that they are working toward every child becoming 'proficient' and provide proof, which the scores of the high-stakes standardized tests are to do.

According to the law, states can determine and qualify the meaning of "proficient," but among educators the term "proficient" already carries much weight. Bracey (2003) calls the term a trap that is not easily attained by many students. "The word *proficient* is a trap, too. According to the law, each state decides how to define it, but the word already has great currency in education circles as part of the lingo surrounding the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP)" (Bracey, 2003, p. 3). According to Goodman, (1966) a reader's proficiency depends on the semantic background brought to any given reading task, therefore even the alleged objectiveness of the test becomes subjective by the author. Webster's II New Riverside Dictionary defines proficient as, "highly competent in an art, skill or field of knowledge" (Houghton Mifflin Co., 1966, p. 547). Even if every state did agree on the same definition of the word proficient, implementing the interpretation would take much work.

Although the United States government paid \$1.4 billion in 2003 to states to implement NCLB, the cost to provide all the necessary mandates was \$84-\$148 billion. Besides costing a lot of money, time and resources and abandoning reading programs schools districts may have been working on for decades, harsh penalties are put into effect if test scores are not achieved. Schools are labeled 'failing' if they do not make their "adequate yearly progress" (AYP), which are the ratings given to schools by the federal government based on standardized test scores. If AYP is not met, staff can be fired, students are sent to another district and the district can be abolished (Bracey, 2003, p. 3).

The higher the stakes, the greater is the amount of pressure applied in order to comply with the law. A great injustice is served if all schools are compared to one another and treated as if they were identical. School districts in California have very diverse populations made up of different cultural backgrounds, languages and socio-economic status. These two factors greatly affect schools and districts.

According to the California Department of Education (2000) California has a growing population of foreign-born and non-English-speaking students in its schools, which is

projected to swell to 12 million by 2020. These second language learners are at a disadvantage when taking standardized tests because not only is the vocabulary foreign, but the content asked on the test is likely to be culturally unfamiliar. As the table below (see Table 1) indicates all cities are not the same and to hold every school in every city in the state to the same standard is an injustice.

Table 1. Socioeconomic Statistics of Cities in Southern California

City of California	Median Income (2002)	Percent Below Poverty Level Family of four	Percent of High School graduates	Percent receiving Bachelor's /Above
Rancho P. Verdes	\$95,503	2.9	95.8	58.0
Chino Hills	\$84,700	5.1	89.9	37.6
Ontario	\$50,700	15.5	62.5	10.5
Montclair	\$47,100	17.4	60.4	9.6
San Bernardo	\$37,000	27.6	64.9	11.6

quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06000.html - 47k - Sep 10, 2005

According to the 2005 Federal Poverty Guideline, the poverty level for a family of four is \$19,350.00. Within the population of Ontario, California, 15.5% live at the poverty level (1999) with a median income of \$43,252. In Chino Hills, California 5.1% of the population live below the poverty level with a median income of \$78,374.00 and

2.9% live below the poverty level in Rancho Palos Verdes, California where median income is \$95,503.00. The likelihood of a large range of test scores also increases because the gaps in income and educational levels are huge.

Students from middle to upper class homes come to school with greater expectations to succeed and the tools and resources to make them happen. If a tutor or a computer is needed, they are provided by parents, sometimes the school makes these provisions, because there is more funding available. Usually, one, if not both, parents are educated beyond high school graduation; and bachelor or master of arts degrees are not uncommon. For instance, according to the U.S. Census Bureau in 1999, 95.8% of the population of Rancho Palos Verdes graduated from high school, and 58.0% went on to receive bachelor degrees or higher. Chino Hills, California can boast that 89.9% of its city's population graduated from high school and 54.5% received a bachelor of arts degree or higher. In Ontario, California only 62.5% graduated from high school and just 10.5% went on to receive a B.A. or higher. The reasons may be varied, but it cannot be denied that a greater emphasis is placed on education. Within the lower

income homes, Bracey provides more staggering statistics to support these class and educational trends.

Poor children get off to a bad start before they're born. Their mothers are likely to get prenatal care late, if at all, which can impair the children's later intellectual functioning. These children are more than three times as likely as non-poor children to have stunted growth. They are about twice as likely to have physical and mental disabilities, as are seven times more likely to be abused or neglected. And they are more than three times more likely to die. Poverty stifles school performance.

(Bracey, 2003. p. 46)

The bottom line is that students in homes where socioeconomic status is lower do not have the same academic advantages as those coming from middle and upper-class homes. These points are important because they help explain how access to resources has just as large an impact on student achievement as the lack of resources has. Relating to this topic is the student's ability to sustain and preserve what they have learned during the school year.

Knowledge from the previous school year that is not maintained, or lack of academic stimuli during the summer months, is referred to as summer loss. Summer loss for students of low socioeconomic status is much higher than that of middle to upper class students, who actually hold their own math and gain over the summer months in reading (Bracey, 2003). "One study found that poor and middle-class students gained the same amount during the school year; but, because of summer losses, the poor students fell farther behind their middle-class peers as they moved from first to fifth grade" (Bracey, 2003, p. 8).

Another topic related to the resources available to students is the amount of money now being spent by districts on test preparation, reading programs, and tutoring firms because NCLB has such high standards. "There is some \$24.3 billion for companies to lust after in aid to high-poverty schools, reading programs, technology improvements, and building and running charter schools," (Bracey, 2004, p. 80). Not only must districts provide these products and services to keep up with and compensate for NCLB mandates, the funds used are not being spent on items in the schools that might be necessary. School are quickly losing funding for the arts, sports

programs and vocational classes such as wood shop, mechanic and domestic training. Teachers and students are being pushed into classes geared for test accountability. In more and more schools the policy is becoming: "if it's not being tested, we aren't teaching it."

Because several factors influence the outcome of student test scores, school districts must put serious consideration into the reading programs they chose. Districts must be able to justify these programs if they cannot or do not meet their Academic Performance Index (API). The Academic Performance Index (API), is a rating given to schools by the state of California based on standardized test scores. The API is a score on a scale of 200 to 1000 that annually measures the academic performance and progress of individual schools in California. On an interim basis, the state has set 800 as the API that school should strive to meet. Schools that meet their target growth rates of or above 800, receive rewards, while those that do not reach their target API must participate in Immediate Intervention/Underperforming Schools Program (IIUSP). The IIUSP provides resources to schools to improve their academic achievement at the district's expense (California Department of Education Policy and Evaluation Division, 2005).

The question for this study will be how the factors of reading programs as well as paradigms and poverty effect student scores on standardized tests, which affect many other things about the ways schools are run.

Statement of the Problem

Teachers are responsible for helping students succeed on standardized tests. A key component to the outcome of the tests is the student's ability to read, regardless of the subject, making the emphasis on reading even greater with the passing of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law, accountability has become a colossal issue in school districts across the nation. Reading is a monumental element in ensuring students' success on standardized tests. Reading programs, and therefore reading paradigms which are the models and methods for the programs, are being looked at with closer scrutiny than ever before. Therefore, it becomes imperative to determine which reading paradigm is most effective for teaching children to read proficiently, not only for standardized tests results, but for life-long reading comprehension and application.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to find out if one reading paradigm is better than another in relationship to its ability to help students improve test scores. Teachers, schools and school districts are held accountable for the way their students perform on standardized tests. Since the No Child Left Behind law requires annual testing for every child from third to twelfth grade, reading is an important key in student and school success.

Standardized test results from several school districts in the southern California area will be examined. Schools will be asked which reading program they use and which of the three reading paradigms of phonics, skill and whole language or socio-psycholinguistics, is emphasized in that program. Then, among these schools a comparison will be made of the standardized test results.

A close look at deficit thinking, which places the blame on the student because of internal deficiencies and poverty also will be examined. It will determine whether either of these two factors have any bearing on standardized test results.

Rationale for the Study

Reading is one of the most important aspects of education because virtually every subject requires it. Students must not only learn to read, but they must learn to read with competence and fluency so that comprehension is mastered and maintained. Yet, Smith asserts that it is not the teachers' responsibility to teach children to read, but rather to make reading available for them (p. 5). "Children can't be taught to read. A teacher's responsibility is not to teach children to read but to make it possible for them to learn to read, (Smith, 1997). Teachers must organize the structure of reading instruction so that it will be the most effective and efficient for students to learn.

School districts must consider different reading programs before they are purchased from publishers, and state standards and budgets must be included in these district studies. Different models of reading instruction are available, yet with the accountability and scrutiny of NCLB, California has put heavy emphasis on the phonics and skills methods of reading instruction. Although these two methods may or may not be the type of expertise needed to achieve higher test scores, are they really best for achieving reading comprehension for students?

If the phonics reading paradigm, which maintains that reading is learned by knowing the letter/sound correspondence first, is considered above skills, which believes reading is knowing, recognizing, and pronouncing the words correctly or sociopsycholinguistics, which states reading is a meaningful and socially constructive process is emphasized more than the others in instruction, students' life-long achievement could be placed in jeopardy for the sake of a test. Is it right to put so much emphasis on one form of measurement, such as a standardized test, rather than multiple forms of measurement of student performance? How much classroom instruction is spent teaching ways and methods of gaining higher test scores rather than true reading comprehension? Do the two co-exist, or is it possible to present a blend of all three reading paradigms in classroom instruction?

An examination of the three reading paradigms, phonics, skills, and sociopsycholinguistics, will be conducted in order to determine whether there is only one "best" method for teaching reading, or whether a blend is better for improving students' reading comprehension and in turn, their test scores. Multiple-measures are not considered when labeling a school or entire school district "needs improvement" for not meeting AYP or API

scores. Has the NCLB become so big and powerful that teachers, principals and superintendents are being forced to give way to everything they know works rather than a set curriculum that emphasizes phonics and leaves behind comprehension?

Can comprehension be measured with multiple-choice questions on standardized tests? Scoring short answer or essay questions tests would not only be very time consuming, but costly. School districts are already spending more money than they can afford to keep up with the demands of NCLB, yet multiple choice questions limit the true ability that can be measured. Written responses to reading comprehension questions show a truer picture of what a student understands and to what degree they are able to make connections among a text, themselves, other texts, and the world. This study will investigate different reading paradigms and reading instruction in California schools.

Research Questions

1. Has "No Child Left Behind" left behind some valuable pieces of reading instruction because it limits the way school districts must account for scores of standardized tests?

2. Is students' reading comprehension sacrificed when one reading paradigm is lauded above another?
3. Does poverty have a large influence on students' standardized test scores?

Significance of the Study

Reading is vital to success. If schools limit the type of reading instruction to phonics and forsake comprehension, society will pay the price. If the only schools teaching reading comprehension are schools that decline NCLB money and teach the type of reading program they believe meets students needs and encourages comprehension over "word-calling" of purely phonics instruction, the rich will continue to get richer and the poor will stay in poverty. Stanovich refers to this as the Matthew effect from the Biblical gospel of Matthew, where students who are slow starting to read and do not make good initial progress in learning to read will always have a hard time trying to read. There is ample evidence that students who do not make good initial progress in learning to read find it increasingly difficult to ever master the process. Stanovich (1986, 1988, 1993) outlines a model in which problems with early phonological skills can lead to a downward Spiral where even higher cognitive skills are

affected by slow reading development. Stanovich (1986) uses the label *Matthew Effects* (after the Biblical Gospel according to St. Matthew) to describe how the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. Children with a good understanding of how words are composed of sounds (phonemic awareness) are well placed to make sense of our alphabetic system. Their rapid development of spelling-to-sound correspondences allows the development of independent reading, high levels of practice, and the subsequent fluency which is critical for comprehension and enjoyment of reading" (Hempemstall, 1996). Poor schools cannot afford to decline the funding that NCLB provides, and the tests are formatted to phonics and skills reading instruction.

This study looks at different reading paradigms, reading instruction and standardized test scores and how poverty influences the outcome of student scores.

Assumptions/Limitations of the Study

No Child Left Behind has put reading programs under great pressure and scrutiny to produce proficient test scores for all students in grades three through twelve by the year 2014. Reading instruction is driven by reading paradigms and school districts are being forced to choose

reading programs that emphasize phonics instruction and forsake comprehension. Some students will succeed in spite of any reading program, but the majority will be at the mercy of a program, which may or may not teach them reading comprehension.

No Child Left Behind affects education throughout the United States. The entire country cannot be surveyed or reached for this study. In these pages, only a small part of the effect can be recorded as well as a sampling of the effect and outcome No Child Left Behind. The sample size of the standardized test results will be based on some schools in San Bernardino and Los Angeles Counties for the 2004 school year.

Organization of the Remainder of the Study

This study will gain information through research and review of the literature in all four of the main categories: standardized test scores in school districts in California, reading paradigms, and reading instruction in schools and how poverty plays a part in student readiness to get the most out of their education.

Spring 2004 test scores will be examined and compared between schools in the Southern California area.

Definition of Terms

API Scores - Academic Performance Index. Numeric ratings from 200 to 1000 given to schools by the state of California, based on standardized test scores (California Department of Education).

AYP Scores - Adequate Yearly Progress. Numeric ratings given to schools by the Federal Government, based on standardized test scores, which summarize a school's or local educational agency's (LEA) academic performance and progress on statewide assessments. The API also is used as an additional indicator for federal Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirements. (California Department of Education) Expressive language - Words used by a person to communicate meaning.

Generational Poverty - Having been in poverty for at least two generations (Payne, 2001).

Situational Poverty - Lack of resources due to a particular event such as a death, chronic illness, divorce, etc. (Payne, 2001).

Standardized tests - Commercially generated tests given by school, which all students in a particular grade take on an annual basis.

Reading paradigms - models or ways of teaching reading.

Phonics - A reading paradigm using a letter to sound correspondence to decode words.

Scaffolding - The gradual release of control and support as a student gains proficiency in a given task (Gibbons, 2002).

Skills - A reading paradigm which defines reading as knowing, recognizing and pronouncing words correctly (Weaver, 1994).

Socio-psycholinguists - A reading paradigm which uses a whole language approach to seek meaning and understanding and then dissects for semantics and syntax (Goodman, 1989).

Summer Loss - Knowledge from previous school year is not maintained during the summer, effecting the next academic year's performance (Bracey, 2003).

Miscues - Errors a reader makes while reading orally (Wilder, 2000).

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) - Federal Legislation passed by the Bush Administration in 2001, stating that all children would be able to read by the end of third grade. This legislation was to replace the previous Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 passed by the Johnson Administration.

Zone of Proximal Development - The distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (Vygotsky, 1978).

Receptive language - The ability to understand other's language.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Reading paradigms are models or ways of teaching reading. Over time the following three models have emerged: phonics/decoding, skills and socio-psycholinguistics. During certain points in educational history each has had its heyday of popularity and fame. During most of the 20th Century basal reading programs (1930's) and phonics (1960's) played a vital role in teaching children in the United States to read (Strickland, 1998, p. 9). Proponents of the phonics method are Patricia Cunningham, Janiel Wagstaff, Dorothy Strickland, Gay Pinnell, Irene Fountas, Lucy Calkins, and Marilyn Adams, and Rudolph Flesch. A strong advocate for the skills method of reading instruction, which emerged in the 1960's, is Marie Clay. In the early 1980's, whole language and socio-psycholinguistics became more widely used in classrooms across the United States. Some proponents of this method are Frank Smith, Ken Goodman, Jeffery Wilhelm, Richard Allington and Constance Weaver.

Because NCLB (2001) has placed more accountability on teachers and school districts, reading instruction has

received more attention than ever. In order to increase scores on high stakes testing, reading ability must improve and therefore reading instruction becomes a more vital piece of education. According to the mandates of NCLB, by the year 2014 all children in the United States in grades three through twelve should be reading at the proficient level.

Built within the NCLB Act is a definition of reading that supports phonics. While the act advocates teaching reading phonics and skills, many teachers and researchers do not advocate these methods of instruction. In order to make informed, instructional decisions it is necessary to understand each of the reading paradigms. Perhaps more than one method is correct and perhaps teachers are able to have more flexibility in the programs that districts purchase for their schools to show improvement in reading. The following sections will present the most relevant research on the three reading paradigms.

Reading Paradigms

Phonics

The phonics model defines reading as what is learned by knowing the letter/sound correspondence, with meaning being the by-product of sounding out letters. Children

must learn the letter/sound correspondence in a sequential order. "Reading means getting meaning from certain combinations of letters. Teach the child what each letter stands for and he can read," (Flesch, 1955, p. 3). Flesch has a rule-of-thumb belief that phonics saves a year of teaching in all subjects, and if started in kindergarten or first grade it can save up to two years of teaching. He believes that phonics is the bases for all deciphering and understanding of any word within one's vocabulary. As students increase their phonics to increase their vocabulary, they will also increase their reading comprehension. Flesch does not believe that the "word" (sight reading vocabulary) method of exposing children to twelve hundred words in three years is reading. Rather, teaching them letter to sound correspondence is the formula to get them reading any material presented to them, once they understand the correspondence of the letters and sounds. "With phonics-first, you teach a child to read the word *fish* by telling him about the sounds of *f*-- '*ff*'--short *I*--and *sh*--'*sh*.'" Then you tell him to blend the sounds from left to right to read the word: '*fish*' (Flesch, 1955, p. viii). Not only is Flesch a proponent of phonics, he is adamantly opposed to what he calls the "...'*look-and-say*' system, where a child is given a

picture of a fish with *fish* printed underneath and encouraged to memorize the group of letter that make up the word fish" (Flesch, 1955,p. viii). He also believes that in 90% of our schools reading is not being taught, but students are given books, asked to guess words from the list they memorized, or wait until the teacher tells them the work (Flesch, 1955).

Cunningham agrees with Flesch that when a child encounters a words of the first time and decodes the word, phonological access routes to the memory for the decoded word are formed. "These access routes are built using knowledge of grapheme-phoneme correspondences that connect letters in spelling to phonemes in pronunciations of the words," (Cunningham, 1995 p. 188). Wagstaff (1994), further states that when readers encounter unknown words, they are likely to look for patterns in the words. They use their knowledge of the patterns and chunk sounds together to form whole words, (Wagstaff, 1994).

Since standardized tests are made up of phonics and skills based questions, the type of reading instruction becomes important for a student if he is to be successful. In the phonics/decoding model a lot depends on the reader's ability to make the connection between the letter/sound correspondence and then decode the word. In

English, the letter to sound correspondence does not always help because there are inconsistencies in the sounds letters represent. Students who are being taught phonics need to shown that the relationship is a possibility, not a certainty (Gibbons, 2002). Although Calkins is more a skills-based advocate, she sees the importance of phonics. In her book Calkins (2001), states phonics is the stepping stone that helps students learn to read. "Phonics and hard work: Teachers support students as they work with word recognition, word building, word solving, and spelling patterns. This word will also be woven into shared reading, interactive writing, the writing workshop and independent reading" (Calkins, 2001, p. 45). A student's ability to decode is supposed to lend itself to the understanding of that which has been decoded. This may not be the case.

Smith (1992) strongly supports the idea supports that reading and reading instruction must make sense to the learner, and that phonics makes sense to people who can read. If the meaning of a word is already known, this helps in the application of phonics. For instance the /th/ in father and fathead is "easy to detect if it is taken into account that 'father' is one word and 'fathead' is two" (Smith, 1997, p. 47). To make a reasonable prediction

what a word might be, the reader must be able to make some sense of what is being read. Reading words in context gives that sense, whereas letter-to-sound correspondence, does not (Smith, 1997). To follow through on Smith's thinking, phonics needs a context, or setting, to make sense.

Word families are groups of words that have similar letters at the base, such as am, ham, Sam, jam and clam. This can be an effective tool in helping students hear and say a word, but they give no clue as to the meaning of the word.

The use of word families, phonograms, or spelling patterns has been validated in several research efforts as an important strategy for identifying words. Both children and adults find it more effective to divide syllables into their *onsets* (all letters before the vowel) and *rimes* (the vowel and what follows) than into any other units. (Cunningham, 1998, p. 17-18)

Phonics has letter-to-sound correspondence as its basis for meaning. Words that sound alike do not necessarily mean the same thing, or even close to the same meaning. If the purpose of reading instruction is to teach meaning, the words must eventually be embedded in some

context. Cunningham (1995) believes that when children become aware of these phonological patterns, they will have greater success rate as beginning readers. "The ability to manipulate sounds is called phonological awareness, and children's level of phonological awareness is very highly correlated with their success in beginning reading," (Cunningham, 1995, p. 10). Cunningham states that children learning to read must be exposed to a great deal of print. Teachers must be sure that children clearly know what they are trying to learn and how it will be useful to them. "Students need active practice manipulating letters and sounds, looking at words for patterns and learning to expect some predictability in our sound system, (Cunningham, 1995, p. 172).

Another proponent for phonics is Marilyn Adams who sees phonics as the "meat and potatoes" of reading, in other words phonics instruction is at the center of reading instruction. "With respect to the knowledge that is critical to reading, that which can be developed through phonics instruction represents neither the top nor the bottom, but only a realm in between," (Adams, 1990. pp. 421-422). Adams believes that phonics should be taught in a systematic, intensive sequence with skills and started early in a child's schooling. As students learn

about parts of a whole they build toward the whole word and move toward automaticity and correct word identification.

One of the reasons such a huge importance has been put on the phonics model in regard to standardized tests, is that this model is easy to assess and evaluate because questions have only one right answer and do not expect deep thought. "Standardized tests are in a multiple-choice format, with only one right answer. They reward the ability to quickly answer superficial questions that do not require real thought" (<http://www.fairtest.org/facts> March, 2004). Standardized test questions are answered and scored on a scan-tron, which means they must be questions that can be read and answered with multiple choice responses, rather than short answers or essays. For test preparation, teaching phonics can be very rote, and assessment can be completed frequently to gauge students' ability and progress. However, some wonder if this is really measuring reading ability or grammar conventions.

The proponents of the phonics method assume that the decoding of words is important, but according to Weaver (1994) heavy phonics instruction places teachers and students in a position of being devalued and disempowered. Weaver goes on to state that phonics may be appealing to

business people and politicians because it causes students to be obedient and passive. Referring to the hidden curriculum, she says that students who are taught exclusively with heavy phonics are kept in the place in society where they are not making decisions that effect their lives. Rather, decisions are made for them all the time, and this starts in school where classrooms are organized and structured in an authoritarian way.

Heavy phonics instruction reflects the assumptions of a transmission model of education, [where students are viewed as empty vessels waiting to be filled], and the hidden curriculum inherent in that model. Some basics of that model are that:

1. Learning consists primarily of mastering skills and facts; it requires correct habit formation.
2. Teachers are expert technicians, dispensing the curriculum directly. The curriculum controls what teachers will teach and what students will learn.
3. Students are passive recipients of knowledge. They learn primarily by practicing skills taught by the teacher or

the workbook, and by memorizing information. (Weaver, p. 298)

There is an integration of elements, a letter-sound correspondence taught in isolation, which follows a particular order and sequence. This method holds the child responsible for making the connection. Should the child fail, blame is not placed on the material or the teaching method. Not everyone agrees that phonics is the best method of teaching reading.

Frank Smith calls phonics both cumbersome and unreliable. As he puts it, "Better ways of identifying unfamiliar words exist, such as asking somebody, using clues in context and making comparisons with known words of similar construction," (Smith, 1997, p. 57). Students' struggles may come when they cannot see the word in context, and make every effort they know to pronounce and decode a word correctly. This is especially true for second language learners when the letter sound in English is different from the sound in their first language. For instance in Spanish the double "l" is pronounced like a /y/, as in the word "tortilla". If the learner transfers that to English, "hello" becomes heyow. This can become confusing for the reader or writer, even though it is clear when the learner hears it. The transfer of

letter/sound correspondence can be difficult for the second language learner.

English language learners have a far greater success rate when they learn written language in a variety of meaningful contexts, especially in an integrated curriculum, where they are seeing, hearing and reading words in many contexts. Language is learned by all learners through use, and letters and words must be embedded in a context in order for them to make sense (Gibbons, 2002). "What is important is that children learn about sound-letter relationships inductively, within the context of something that is meaningful and whole, rather than through abstract and unrelated phonics exercises" (Gibbons, 2002, p. 98).

If one knows what a word is likely to be in the first place and if the reader understands the meaning of the word, they are more likely to be able to read it (Smith, 1997). Words that are recognized by the reader from previous exposure are referred to as 'sight words.' Just as a person recognizes familiar objects and people, so can they recognize words they have seen before. Sight words become part of a person's vocabulary when seen, not when they are sounded out phonically. Furthermore, saying a

word is not necessary to understand meaning; in fact, Smith says the opposite is true.

It is not necessary to say what a word is to comprehend its meaning. Quite the reverse; it is often necessary to comprehend the meaning of a word before you can say what it is. In other words, *meaning* is directly related to the spelling of words rather than sound. (Smith, 1997 p.)

Spelling and meaning have a lot to do with how a word is used. For instance, *hear* and *here* sound the same, but it is the spelling that tells the reader what is meant in the following sentence. The boy cannot hear/here what you say until he gets hear/here. Phonics alone would not indicate what the meaning of the word is and these homophones are only given their meaning when they have a context surrounding them.

Phonics is very concrete. Letter-to-sound correspondence is a very tangible way of teaching reading, yet in studies with retarded children, Vygotsky (1978) established that this belief is a illusion, and letter-to-sound correspondence is not reading. Phonics can be the foundation or springboard of reading, but it cannot

be the totality of reading instruction. This is further supported by Vygotsky in the following passage:

It turned out that a teaching system based solely on concreteness—one that eliminated from teaching everything associated with abstract thinking-- not only failed to help retarded children overcome their innate handicaps but also reinforced their handicaps by accustoming children exclusively to concrete thinking and thus suppressing the rudiments of any abstract thought children should have. (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 89)

At what point in reading instruction should the connection from the concrete to the abstract be made? Remembering with phonics that letter-to-sound correspondence equals meaning, then phonics is too concrete and the connection is not really made. More renown today in educational and psychological circles for his theory of Zone of Proximal Development, (ZPD) Vygotsky knew students needed direct instruction. The zone of proximal development is the level at which students can do things with help that they cannot do alone. Vygotsky saw that the concreteness of phonics is necessary. Yet if students are taught only concrete phonics, any abstract

thought in reading could be suppressed. Wilhelm explains Vygotsky's theory in practice as the teacher performing complex, meaningful tasks with the student helping.

"Vygotsky's notion of instruction would have teachers doing complex tasks in meaningful contexts with students helping as much as they can," (Wilhelm, 2001). Table 2 demonstrates this theory in practice.

Table 2. Jeffery Wilhelm's Learning-Centered Teaching

I DO	I DO	YOU DO	YOU DO
YOU WATCH	YOU HELP	I HELP	I WATCH

(Wilhelm, 2001, p. 11)

Both Smith and Wilhelm believe that the more the student is involved in their own learning instruction, the more effective that learning will be. In the traditional classroom, the teacher was the main, often the only, source of information and the authority in the room. Contemporary teaching has moved away from that style and toward a more learning-centered type of instruction where the student becomes more responsible for their learning. Wilhelm cites one of the problems with reading in the process is not tangible. "One of the problems with reading is that the processes are internal, hidden and abstract," (Wilhelm. 2001, p.). This makes the importance of reading

instruction greater because teachers have to be able to assess student ability and progress, then organize how they teach. If the foundation of phonics is needed, it should be taught, but if reading in context gives more meaning to learning a word, it should be utilized.

Pinnell and Fountas (1998), not only believe very strongly in the phonics method in the classroom, but they have included in their book lists of high frequency word, words with initial and final consonants, consonant clusters, short and long vowels and charts filled with homophones, onomatopoeic and others. Also included are rules to teach for word strategies, references, and working with a buddy (1998, appendixes 1-50). These appendixes are to give a practical application of phonics rules for new and veteran teachers.

Skills

The governing gaze in the skills paradigm is that reading is knowing, recognizing and pronouncing the words correctly. Proponents of the skills paradigm assume that reading is a precise process and that if students can read rapidly and accurately, they will automatically comprehend the text. Sight words are memorized in lists which constitutes reading and "part + part = whole".

The skills reading paradigm also assumes that all students learn using the same materials and techniques. Some of the instructional practices used in the skills model are found in basal reading programs and include worksheets, flash cards, word families, decodable texts, word sorts, fluency drills (timed passages read orally by the student) and grammar in isolation (Weaver, 1994). Rules are taught first in the skills model, and often a word wall is used to place new words where they are visually available for the students. Weaver states four specific "Laws of Learning" designed by behavioral psychologist, Edward Thorndike which reflect the design of basal series used in classroom today.

1. The law of readiness: *Learning is ordered; efficient leaning follows one best sequence.* This law results in readiness materials and the tight sequencing of skills in basal programs.
2. The law of exercise: *Practice strengthens the bond between a stimulus and a response.* This law results in drills and exercises through direct instruction, workbooks, and skill sheets.

3. The law of effect: *Rewards influence the stimulus-response connection.* This supports the idea of first learning words and skills and then "rewarding" the learner with the reading of more complete, more meaningful texts.
4. The law of identical elements: *The learning of a particular stimulus-response connection should be tested separately and under the same conditions in which it was learned.* This law results in the focus on isolated skills in testing, and in the close match between items in the exercises and items in the tests. (Weaver, 1994, p. 54-55)

NCLB has a strong suggestion of this belief as it demands that all children will read proficiently by the year 2014. Word lists and phonics that contain more of an emphasis on meaning are derived from the skills model. Weaver describes the skills method as learning to identify words and understand their meaning," (Weaver, 1994, p. 15). She continues to assert that when meaning of the individual words are understood, the reader can then determine the idea of the sentence, paragraph, page, etc.

The implication of this method is that once a reader knows a word's meaning, they will automatically understand the meaning of the passage or thing read. Multiple choice and one answer, fill-in-the-blank questions are some of the instructional practices in the skills model, as are sight words and fluency tests, (Weaver, 1994).

In this model students learn strategies like the beginning of the word carries most of the meaning, while the second part of the word is second in importance. Consider the word "running"; the base word tells us that the verb is run, therefore the subject is somehow performing the act that causes his legs to go at a faster pace than walking. The suffix, ing, gives information about tense, and while the suffix helps the reader understand more about the time of the verb, it could not stand on its own. Students must learn the phonics/decoding and skills methods as a foundation, as in a building block approach. Phonics are introduced, then other strategies are added, like importance of word parts. Even the environment has plays a major role in word recognition and acquisition.

Pinnell and Fountes (1998) promote the classroom itself has a lot to do with the amount of print students are exposed to. Word walls, where student have a constant,

visual list of words they have learned and are learning, are placed accessible to students visually and physically (height). Labels placed around the room, charts with student names, jobs, alphabets are also examples of environmental print that help the students. This also addresses the phonics and skills model.

However, as Frank Smith suggests, the skills model gets into the deep structure, stating that the deep structure "is at a level far below superficial aspects of language," and has to do with meaning and not just what is visually taken in by the eye (Smith, 1997, p. 59).

Comparing deep structure to surface structure, surface structure is what the eye visually takes in, like the print on the page or board. Deep structure has to do with the meaning of the words in context and content. Readers apply both types of structures all the time and are constantly making adjustments with homophones, homographs, multiple meaning words, idioms and figures of speech.

The English language is full of ambiguity and because it is often unavoidable, words must be embedded in context and prior knowledge must be tapped if the reader is going to understand what the writer's intended meaning is.

Consider the following sentences and phrases for more than one possible meaning. *Visiting professors may be*

interesting. The reader could ask: are the professors interesting or it is the act of making the visit that is interesting? *Joey runs through the sand and waves*. Ambiguously stated, the reader may wonder if Joey is waving his arm or is he running through both the sand and waves of water. *My reservations regarding the trip were confirmed*. One reader may think the sentence means that the reservations refer to flights, hotels and restaurants that will be utilized on the trip. Another reader may think the reservations are feelings or thoughts the traveler is having about the upcoming adventure (Smith, 1997). Not only does the writing need to be clear, but the reader benefits from knowing about homophones and homographs, and idioms, etc, in the English language.

The application of surface (actual print) and deep (meaning of the words) elements is important for the teacher to understand and teach the students, which the skills method begins to do through grammar conventions and worksheets. Without the written words on the page, obviously the reader could receive no meaning. The expanding of vocabulary is important, but words need to be understood in context.

Most school districts in California are using Open Court and Houghton Mifflin along with decodable texts

because they have all of the above components. The instruction is scripted and the teacher acts as a technician moving students through the program. The actual time used for reading is limited and more time is spent on phonics and worksheets. As stated earlier with the "Laws of Learning" isolated skills are tested in classroom and in preparation for standardized tests. Annual Yearly Progress (API) scores, which are watched with great scrutiny because of NCLB, must reach 800 (on a rating scale of 200 to 1000) for the year of 2006. With the pressure to produce and maintain these scores, efficiency is at a premium. The skills model encourages immediate and frequent evaluation of the students by its worksheets and fill-in-the-blank responses.

Marie Clay (1991), a noted researcher in the field of reading, defines reading as follows:

I define reading as a message-getting, problem solving activity, which increases power and flexibility the more it is practiced. My definition states that within the directional constraints of printer's code, language and visual perception responses are purposefully directed by the reader in some integrated way to the problem of extracting meaning from cues. In

a text, in sequence, so that the reader brings a maximum of understanding to the author's message. (p. 6)

Clay recognizes the demand that reading places on the brain and that much detail must be analyzed. She is an advocate of pre-school and early childhood education exposing students to great amounts of printed material. Clay also believes that all of the exposure to people, print, objects and scenes a child has prior to becoming a candidate for reading must be channeled into a set direction of rules. The one-way routes of reading English left to right, top to bottom, the front cover to the back, must be learned and that this directional sequence is important for successful reading (Clay, 1991). According to Clay, children who fail to learn to read by the second or third year in school will not catch up with their classmates. She says studies document that two to three years after a child starts school, his rank in reading in his class will be the same place in the seventh or eighth year. Clay strongly supports not only the early acquisition of language and print, but the early detection of a child falling behind in reading. Therefore literacy tasks must be available to the child as early as preschool (Clay, 1991).

Sociopsycholinguists

The third and final reading paradigm to be discussed is sociopsycholinguistics. Within this paradigm, reading is defined as a meaningful and socially constructive process (Goodman, 2003). This paradigm assumes that reading is not an exact and precise process, that every reader has strengths that they bring to reading and that the reading should be authentic, meaningful and connected to the reader. This paradigm is based on the social constructivist theory of Piaget and sociocultural theory of Vygotsky, which maintains that learning is an active process, where the learners construct new ideas or concepts based on current/past knowledge (Bruner, 1960).

In this paradigm the instruction tries to encourage the reader to discover new ideas by reading words in context and engaging in dialogue with the teacher and peers regarding the material read. Of the three paradigms, socio-psycholinguistics spends the most time learning to read through reading. Vocabulary is learned in context with different genres (types) of material, read alouds by the teacher or student, literature studies/ circle, and other authentic reading situations. Rather than a single text like the Houghton Mifflin series, this paradigm uses predictable (so called because the reader can guess the

outcome) "trade" books, which are short chapter books, a variety of young or adolescent literature, and newspaper stories for current events and social interest and information. Krashen (2004) states that the more we read, the more we know, and that the more children read, the better their literacy levels. Believing that to be the case, more reading would benefit student comprehension, hence further understanding of material and possible improved test scores. This reading paradigm, like the constructivist theory of learning is not received by all, especially strong supporters of the phonics paradigm.

Goodman (2003), defines reading as the active reconstruction of the message from written language. He further states that reading must involve some level of comprehension and without it, reading really is not taking place. Some other supporters who agree with the constructivist approach to reading instruction include Constance Weaver, Margaret Moustafa, David Johnson, Roger Johnson and Stephen Krashen. They believe that readers learn from reading and that reading is a very active process.

Sociopsycholinguistics phonics/decoding and skills are all necessary building blocks for reading and without these basic abilities the reader will have a difficult

time making sense of any text. The top layer of the building block structure is reading for meaning. This is where the socio-psycholinguistic model is applied. With the socio-psycholinguistic method of reading instruction, it is impossible to separate semantics and syntax, and if readers cannot make a mind movie, or picture what they have read, they probably do not understand what they have read. It is in this model that the affective, or emotional domain comes into reading with thoughts and feelings being connected to the reading. Reading for meaning, not just pronouncing the words correctly is the true goal in this paradigm. When these paradigms are put into practice in school reading programs, standardized tests are directly affected by the type of program chosen by our schools. Ken Goodman developed a cueing system which charts the way readers interact with written material, (Goodman, 2003) as seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Ken Goodman's Cueing Systems in Reading (2003)

<p><u>Within Words There Are:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter-sound relationships • Shape (or word configuration) <p>Known "little words" in bigger words</p>	<p><u>In the Flow of Language There Are:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patterns of words (or function order) • Inflection and inflectional-agreement (example: The boy runs. The boys run). • Function words such as noun markers (the, a, that, one, etc) • Intonation (which is poorly represented in writing by punctuation). • The referential meaning of prior and subsequent language elements and whole utterances.
<p><u>Cues external to language and the reader include:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pictures • Prompting by teacher or peers • Concrete objects • Skill charts 	<p><u>Cues within the reader include:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • His language facility with the dialect of his subculture • His dialect (his own personal version of the language) • His experiential background (the reader responds to the cues in terms of his own real or vicarious experiences) • His conceptual background and ability (a reader can't read what he can't understand) • Those reading attack skill and learning strategies he has acquired or been taught

Goodman, K. (1989). *On the revolution of reading*. Edited by Flurkey, A. and Jingguo, X. Portsmouth, NH:Heinemann.

Although each of these paradigms is important and actually builds upon one another, in the order listed

above, it is only sociopsycholinguistics that defines reading as the construction of meaning. If meaning is the goal and purpose of reading, then perhaps this should be the type of reading program utilized in our schools.

An important aspect of this paradigm is that it works in tandem with miscue analysis in checking for comprehension with retelling. Since the teacher needs to know how much the student understands, regardless of the number of miscues, the retelling of the reading gives an accurate account of the understanding (Wilde, 2000). The purpose of the retelling is to gain a holistic sense of the reader's understanding, and show another aspect of the reading process. This retelling should be student-centered with the teacher taking an active role in the exchange about the reading. The teacher encourages the student to expand upon the answers as well as ask probing questions to check on some of the miscues and how they may have impacted the reader's understanding. The retelling is initiated by the teacher and is unaided beyond a request for the reader to tell everything they recall about the reading. An important principle at this point in the retelling is not to assume because the reader hasn't mentioned a particular point that they are unaware of that it happened in the reading. The Unaided Retelling is to

help the teacher get a sense of how the reader conceptualizes the story on their own.

Next, the teacher engages the reader in an Aided Retelling retelling with more probing and prompting based on statements the reader makes. For example if the reader says, "The people felt sorry for the puppy in the story," the teacher could ask "How do you know that? What clues in the story lead you to think that? What kind of people do you think they were?" There may be particular things or aspects in a reading that the teacher may want to check for understanding. This is a way to go about finding out the level of comprehension without directly asking (Wilde, 2000). Miscue analysis and retelling help remind the student and the teacher why we read. Sometimes in all the demands put on them, teachers may forget why they are doing what they do. " We work so hard to help our students read that we sometimes lose sight of that essential question: Why do we read?" (Burke, 2000. p. 86).

Reading books and literary works outside the basal program is more important and carries more weight in the Whole Language and sociopsycholinguistic paradigm according to Laughlin and Swisher (1990). They believe that educators using the basal are challenged to give readers stories outside of the basal to vary their reading

experience. "Children need the skills provided by basal readers, but they need more experiences during the critical first years. Basal readers alone cannot provide enough experiences for all children learning to understand their language," (Laughlin & Swisher, 1990, p. x). They further state that learners' imagination and motivation can be limited by controlled vocabularies and story contents. In contrast, these authors deem that the whole language approach to literature is more fulfilling, helps children's efforts in expressing themselves in reading and writing, improves spelling, and improves flexibility and fluency of receptive and expressive language skills. They also feel that children see that communication must be meaningful (Laughlin & Swisher, 1990).

The state of California uses phonics and decoding programs which are heavily laden with worksheets, drills of letter/sound correspondence, and multiple-choice comprehension questions. Although these skills are necessary in the reading process, they are not reading per se. They are grammar and writing conventions. They are quick checks for the teacher and they give children the wrong idea about what reading really is. Students are not spending the 90 minutes per day they should be reading, which Allington says is a must. Instead, they are laboring

over activities that have more to do with grammar and writing conventions. Putting more class time into reading, the grammar and conventions would more than likely evidence themselves in student writing just by sheer exposure.

Students often recognize misspelled words and sentences that are not correct in syntax or subject/verb agreement by being exposed to them. Often the very things students are drilled in with worksheets would be learned better and last longer in a more natural setting as takes place when reading in context using a "real" book. According to Laughlin and Swisher, (1990), teachers who use the Whole Language or sociopsycholinguists approach do not use specific texts, but rather use textbooks as a resources rather than allowing it to guide their instruction. Motivating students to read for the joy of it is not an easy task, and teachers must work hard at times, to get students to connect with a story or piece of literature. But according to Goodman (1975), it is worth the effort. "...because of their aesthetic, stylistic qualities" in any program teaching reading. They yield a kind of pleasure and satisfaction which creates further appetite for literature," (Goodman, 1975, p. 20).

Teachers deciding what books and reading experiences are made available in their classroom help make reading experiences pleasant and relevant to the readers. "If teachers are choosing the books and literature that students are reading, relevancy can be assured," (Laughlin & Swisher, 1990, p. xii). Goodman (1975) agrees and says students must know there is a connection with what they are reading and what they think and do. "It's hard to motivate kids when the stuff they are asking to read, write, hear and say has no relation to who they are, what they think, and what they do," (Goodman, 1975, p. 20).

It may come as a surprise to parents to learn that more and more school districts across the country are putting a massive emphasis on phonics reading programs. These programs put less time into actual reading and more time into building letter/sound correspondences. Is this having any effect on our students reading ability or comprehension? Some believe it is while others argue for stronger phonics programs as the only answer. One group that propounds the phonics approach is the National Reading Panel, which came together as a precursor to our present law of No Child Left Behind.

National Reading Panel

In his write-up on the National Reading Panel Report from March 1998, Coles showed how seemingly one-sided the panel actually was. The panel was comprised of fifteen members who were selected from nearly 300 nominations. Some were nominated by individuals, others by companies or corporations. One member was a major researcher for the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD). This institute believes "that 95% of learning-impaired children can become effective readers if taught by scientifically proven methods," (Coles, 2003, p. 3) This institute also considered the Whole Language approach as a "fad" of the 1970s where children were allowed to wander through books, making up individual approaches to reading. Coles' concern with this was that there was not one researcher on the panel whose viewpoint differed from the NICHD.

Another panelist was on the then-Governor George W. Bush's Reading Initiative Taskforce. Again the concern from Cole (2003) is that no representative from a group supporting alternatives was on the panel. A third panelist was an editor of a journal that had devoted an entire issue to NICHD reading research, and again, no counter balance editor was selected. A fourth person on the panel

worked on how important sound-symbol connections are, while a fifth used very narrow models of information processing like phonemic, visual, and letter-order information, for readers to gain comprehension. According to Coles, the sixth and seventh panelists had performed a lot of work on a model of the reading process that corresponded with the NICHD paradigm.

Panelist number eight had published work sympathetic to views contrary to NICHD research and may have had the opportunity to oppose some of the panel's opinion. Two more panelists were educational researchers, but not in the field of reading. Another panelist was a middle school teacher from Houston, Texas where prominent NICHD research was done and those instructional views reigned. While a principal and former teacher who tended to lean toward whole language was on the panel, she admitted she did not have the research background of the "dense, detailed and often abstruse empirical research," (Coles, 2003, p. 26). There was only one practicing teacher on the panel and although some of the researchers had been teachers, they had not taught in many years. The chair of the panel was the chancellor of the University of Maryland, and a physicist by profession.

With all of this being said, Coles' greatest concern was the imbalance of the National Reading Panel, which was actually organized 1998 at a request by congress to report on two things. The first thing was to discover the effectiveness of different reading approaches. The second was to report the best classroom application, (Coles, 2003). Coles argues that the "various approaches" were not represented at all and that only people sympathetic to the panel's view were asked to participate.

It seems like they made up their minds about what the best way to teach reading was even before they had all the evidence. Living in the land of the free and the home of the brave, Americans are used to "freedom of choice," and when told there is only one way to do something, it usually equates to throwing down the gauntlet in a dual.

Initially told that 100,000 studies were read by the reading panel in order to decide what constitutes the true teaching of reading, Coles reports the inflated number was exposed when researchers started taking a closer look at the study. The numbers dropped down to "52 on phonemic awareness, 38 on phonics 14 on silent reading and 203 on sixteen categories of comprehension instruction," (Coles, 2003, p. 43). The total for the above number of studies reviewed was 307. Coles continues to say that the report's

figures don't add up and they draw erroneous conclusions. Apparently the definition of reading changes throughout the report and "seldom does it mean comprehending text," (Coles, 2003, p. 43).

When the panel was brought together to try and prepare a report for legislation, perhaps it assumed that such legislation was necessary. If the panel was to try to convince teachers that one size fits all, and that reading is only phonemic awareness, Coles points out in his concluding statement that there are no choices.

"Remarkably absent are genuine alternative approaches to teaching skills that would provide a true contrast in findings," (Coles, 2003, p. 71). Whether the panel reviewed 100,000 or 307 studies, the effects of its published conclusions had far-reaching effects. California schools felt those effects.

California Schools

In most schools in California, students are in a reading class from 9:00 a.m. until 10:30 or 11:00 every morning. How much of that time is actually spent reading? If students were practicing reading 80-90% of that seven-and-a-half to ten hours a week rather than doing worksheets, reading ability would increase. The increase in reading ability might well translate to overall higher

achievement and increased test scores. Reading effects everything in school life. It's the actual act of reading that improves reading.

Even the mechanics of oral and silent reading differ from one another. Oral reading, which requires the reader to say the words as the brain attempts to translate the meaning from the page to the mouth, is non-threatening for the reader who already knows how to read. But for students to practice the mechanics of moving their eyes across, following with their eyes in the book while someone reads along orally, is a far better, (and positive and less frightening) experience for someone learning to read. Silent reading does not demand pronunciation, pitch and tone from the reader at the same time the reader tries to make sense of the text. When students must read for oral assessment, they may react to experience and not read as clearly or smoothly as they read silently.

When assessing a student's reading oral ability, teachers often use running records to record the number of mistakes read in a passage. Although running records give a picture of ability, miscues, which are the type of error made, focus more on the strengths of the reader, and show a different perspective. Similar to how phonics and skills can lay a foundation for sociopsycholinguists, it is in

reading for meaning that the desire and drive to read more come out. The reading required to complete a workbook page is not teaching the higher order thinking of analysis and evaluation in Bloom's Taxonomy and teachers aren't really teaching reading, or even reading comprehension by assigning workbook pages. Frank Smith (1997) talks about kids being kept out of the literacy club when they cannot read. Those who can read get to enter a world of fun, travel, adventure, information, and enter a special club where written work is the connection to the world. "To understand reading children must become members of a group of written language users: they must join the literacy club," (Smith, 1997, p. 113).

For some it could be in the category of "tough love," or perhaps even offensive to correct students' oral reading and speaking on a consistent basis, but realizing what is at stake it's more cruel not to correct. How a person reads and speaks orally does have a social effect on how that person is perceived. "It wasn't until a few years ago that I realized grammar was an indication of class and cultural background in the United States and that there is a bias against people who do not use language 'correctly,'" (Christiansen, 2000, p. 100). Certainly not every error students make requires

correction, or it would drive them crazy. But they need to be informed that there is a standard English that is expected in writing and speech.

It would be misleading to suggest that people in our society will value my thought or my student's thought as readily in our home language as in the "cash language," as Jesse Jackson calls it. Students need to know where to find help, and they need to understand what changes might be necessary, but they need to learn in a context that doesn't say, "The way you said this is wrong." (Christiansen, 2000, p. 101)

Throughout modern history of the United States, different theoretical frameworks have emerged in the field of education. Two important men eventually emerged and enjoyed great influence in shaping the way American classrooms are organized today. These men were Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky. The following discusses some of their influences.

Theoretical Framework

At the same time America was looking at its educational system and reshaping reading instruction in the 1920's, the fields of education and psychology in

Europe were going through an evolution that would eventually have a far reaching effect on education in the United States.

The face of American education was changed by Swiss psychologist, Jean Piaget and Russian psychologist, Lev Vygotsky who were not noticed much by American educators until the 1960's and 1980's respectively. They were contemporaries of one another, making their contributions in European psychology in the 1920's. Although both men saw some major differences in one another's beliefs about child development, Piaget and Vygotsky also shared some significant commonalities. Neither man believed that a child was a small person with an adult mind, or an empty vessel waiting to be filled, which apparently was the belief and teaching of the day. Both believed that children went through definite developmental stages which allowed cognitive development to take place (Kouzlin, 1998). Much of Vygotsky's work was with mentally retarded children and the belief during the 1920's was that mentally retarded children were not capable of abstract thinking. However, this limited thinking proved to be a handicap, because it prevented these children from any encouragement to think in the abstract (Vygotsky, 1978).

This may have been why Vygotsky's work was overlooked until much later.

To understand how teaching in the American classroom has shifted its focus because of the work of these two men, Kozulin (1998) explains it in his book, *Psychological Tools*. He stated that although both men saw some major differences in their beliefs of child development, Piaget and Vygotsky shared some significant common ground. Table 4 compares and contrasts the developmental theories put forth by both men.

Table 4. Similarities and Differences between Lev Vygotsky and Jean Piaget

SIMILARITIES	DIFFERENCES
<p><u>School of thought:</u> <u>Vygotsky:</u> Did not see children as miniature adults with adult minds. <u>Piaget:</u> A child is not a miniature adult with an adult mind.</p>	<p><u>Psychological Activity:</u> <u>Vygotsky:</u> Social cultural Characteristics <u>Piaget:</u> Cognitive individualism</p>
<p><u>From Action to Thought:</u> <u>Vygotsky:</u> Should take into account the sociocultural nature of action and its development and internalization in children. <u>Piaget:</u> Believed thought was an operational structure derived from actual behavior performed by the child. Thinking lies in the practical activity.</p>	<p><u>The Role of Language:</u> <u>Vygotsky:</u> Central theme to cognitive development <u>Piaget:</u> Language not necessary for cognitive development</p>
<p><u>Systemic Organization of the Child's Thought:</u> <u>Vygotsky:</u> In relationship to different psychological <u>Piaget:</u> Two major notions: group of operations, for development</p>	<p><u>In the Classroom:</u> <u>Vygotsky:</u> Scientific and spontaneous concepts are distinguished. <u>Piaget:</u> Child brings much to the classroom, the adult steps in as needed.</p>

Kozulin, A. (1998). Psychological tools. A socio-cultural approach to education. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

The next section will provide a brief review of some of the similarities in each theory before distinguishing the differences. Many books have been written about both men and this is by no means an exhaustive literary review

of their works. The contributions they made to education and the study and understanding of child development are much greater than this study could give full justice. Instead the research will focus on their contributions to education that are specifically related to cognitive development in relation to literacy acquisition. This section will begin with an overview of their theories of learning and then move into the specifics of implementing these theories within the classroom in order to promote literacy learning.

Vygotsky listed four stages of thought-language relationship of child development. They were: the primitive or natural stage, naïve psychology, egocentric speech and the in-growth stage. Piaget distinguished four major stages of development: sensory-motor, intuitive, concrete operational and formal operational (Kozulin, 1998). Piaget believed that every child went through these stages, in the same order and would relate to "life" depending on the stage at the time of the interaction.

From Thought to Action

Vygotsky and Piaget both were in agreement to swim against the tide of the day which taught that action was manifested after thought. First an idea, then an action was the order of schema. Other psychologists were teaching

reality became and was influenced by what a person thought. Vygotsky and Piaget believed the reverse. "In his theory of sensory-motor intelligence, Piaget challenged this position" (Kozulin, p. 36). "Believing that thought has an operational structure which is derived from actual behavior that the child has previously performed," (p. 36) Piaget taught that as a child acts upon, or with an object, for instance building a sand castle, she will eventually internalize this and "reuse" the action later. Thus, action precedes thought in this thinking. Piaget infers that action must take place before any reality occurs.

Although Vygotsky, agreed with the order, he believed that society and the things surrounding the object and the child as she interacted with it, was a larger influence. For instance, the location and person/people present when a child build a sand castle would be considered. Vygotsky's theory regarding our social culture consisted of how and with whom, and when we interact will influence our thoughts and actions.

Systemic Organization of the Child's Thought

"Both Piaget and Vygotsky argued against the popular attempt to present the child's mind as a sack filled with discrete cognitive skills and pieces of information,"

(Kozulin, 1998, p. 37). Piaget believed that a child's mind was organized into operations and how a thought interacted with other thoughts. Something like Lego blocks connecting together, the operation must have something else to attach itself to. The word *home* would have to have something to associate all the connections a child could put on it. Family, emotion, belongings, neighbors are all things a child might classify with the home. Thought, words, and emotions were "individual operations which always appear as elements of the whole, and their nature is determined by the nature of this whole system," (Kozulin, 1998, p. 37). In other words, thoughts depend on other things for them to make sense.

Vygotsky saw systemic organization from a "point of view of the relationships among different psychological functions," (Kozulin, 1998, p. 37). For instance, small children reason by remembering things in the concrete, whereas the adolescent uses recall to describe what led up to an event.

The Role of Language

According to Piaget, language and reading were not essential to cognitive development. In other words, language was not required for a child to be able to think. Reading and writing did not contribute to cognitive

development. The child's actions were still essential to the development.

Vygotsky, on the other hand, believed that language was central to cognitive development. He believed that the two were intertwined, co-dependents, so to speak, and he also made the connection in reading and writing and speech.

In the Classroom

Jean Piaget viewed four distinct stages of development as sensory-motor, intuitive, concrete operational and formal operational, that held to a strict order, depending on cognitive development. These stages would effect a classroom. Piaget's theory requires that teachers allow the students to make sense of a problem more independently as student becomes interested in the issue at hand. Once a child has found a way the adults then try to find out how much the child knows and understands and instruct from there (Kozulin, 1998).

Piaget stipulates that the child brings a certain amount of knowledge to the task or problem, and then figures some things out of his/her own. The adult steps in when needed, rather than assuming the "all-knowing" role. Since reasoning plays such a large role in the Piagetian theory, the sequencing of curriculum of material depends

on the child's cognitive development. Piaget believed material should be delayed until the child is ready, which clearly does not match California's public school systems, where NCLB demands curriculum that matches the state's high-stakes test (Kozulin, 1998).

Vygotsky came from the point of view of relationships functioning with perception, memory or logical reasoning. Understanding this development could have a huge impact on how educators, organize and scaffold teaching. Vygotsky's theory holds the important premise that "when a child enters the formal schooling framework," he must change his *natural* position from a son or daughter to an *artificial* position of a student," (Kozulin, 1998, p. 46). Vygotsky made a clear and definite distinction between spontaneous and scientific concepts which compare "home, street, friendly" learning to more formal "book or formal, logical and decontextualized structure," (Kozulin, 1998, p. 48). A big difference in the two theories becomes evident because Piaget believed the developmental level is achieved before conceptual learning starts. Vygotsky believed that scientific learning which is more formal and logical promotes the cognitive development (Kozulin, 1998).

Perhaps becoming more widely known for the ZPD, Zone of Proximal Development, many now embrace Vygotsky's idea

that "scientific concepts introduced by teachers interact with spontaneous concepts preexistent in children," (Kozulin, 1998 p. 49). In Vygotsky's words, the ZPD is "the distance between the child's actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the higher level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" according to Wertsch's work (as cited in Kozulin, 1998). A Vygotskian perspective does not assume that a child will learn on their own, but rather someone more knowledgeable will plan and guide learning (Dixon-Krauss, 1996).

Collaboration among students, which is a large part of the Vygotskyian theory, organizes the classroom for students to work together with, or after, they have the help of the teacher. A very important feature that must be emphasized here is the instruction and input of the teacher. Scaffolding, which is the gradual release of control and support as a student gains proficiency in a given task, must take place, prior knowledge must be tapped into, and students must be guided. According to Flores (1982) children need to be associating with peers who are proficient so they can learn from those students. Because of the social construction of knowledge students

must be exposed to proficient adults and peers, in order to understand a particular cognitive process (Flores, 1982).

To suggest students can do the learning on their own, goes back to the idea, and the Piagetian camp, that children can learn alone, and the adult only steps in when needed. Students get their understanding and scaffolding from the adults teaching them, and even peer tutoring and students working in groups, get their knowledge from teachers, books (written by adults), and other adults, such as their parents.

Vygotsky felt that bringing background knowledge to reading is very beneficial for students. The recognition and importance of each developmental stage and the child's need for help and guidance as well as allowing them to work their way through some things independently was the core of his philosophy.

Because both of these men were convinced about the absoluteness of these stages, they built theories and a large following on their beliefs and research findings. Today we recognize the Piagetians and Vygotskians as two important camps in the fields of psychology and education.

Based on the cognitive and developmental theories proposed by Piaget and Vygotsky, shouldn't children learn

at the same rate and achieve the same results when they attend school? According to on the results of standardized tests, this is not the case. The next sections considers some possible reasons for these discrepancies.

Poverty and Performance on Standardized Tests

Many in the teaching profession are more than aware that materials used are only a small portion of what teachers do to help kids learn as that relates to the whole testing climate. Money is important, but not the only thing necessary to solve schools ailments. "You can't cure schools' problems by throwing money at them, (Bracey, 2004, p. 181). Graves agrees with this sentiment that it's not the materials and methods that make the difference in a child's education and it is a good teacher, (Graves, 2002).

Ogle pointedly remarks that any effective reading program needs a teacher to implement it, if the expected high results are to follow. "Reaching children with good technique is only part of the answer for building a strong reading program. Effective reading programs also need teachers who understand how to reach children who have fashioned barriers to effective learning" (Ogle, 2001, p. 1). When she made this statement in October 2001, Donna

Ogle, president of the International Reading Association (IRA), was speaking about partnership between the IRA and National Urban Alliance (NUA) in an effort to improve instruction in urban schools in poverty in New Jersey. Poverty is rarely something that lasts as short as one year, it often impacts generations of any one family. Speaking specifically about poverty, Ogle stated "that the impact of poverty on children's learning is not mediated by a single year or a single focus program" (p. 1).

For most people in this situation, poverty is a lifestyle from which they often have no way to escape. Poverty effects standardized test scores because of the limited resources of the students and sometimes their schools and school districts. When students come to school hungry and/or tired because they have no food in the house, or they have stayed up late to watch a younger sibling because parents are working at night, it influences test scores. The physical and emotional burden placed on children of poverty has a huge impact on scores, schools and society. Tests cannot measure what good teacher observation can: the physical and emotional well-being of the students about to take the test. If they are hungry, cold, and tired from having no food, inadequate clothing and/or housing or heat, their

concentration will be impacted. If their concentration is effected, their learning will also be effected, which inevitably leads to potentially lower test scores. Students can become prey to own environment without even knowing it, and the price they pay has long-term consequences for the rest of their life, and the lives of generations to come. This cycle has been referred to as "intergenerational poverty." Compounding familial poverty, these students often face the consequences of deficit thinking by various members of society. The following section will address the impact of such thinking on students.

Deficit Thinking

Deficit thinking is a social practice which puts blame on the victim. To consider that students are victims of poverty because of deficit thinking or that their thinking is deficit because of poverty, and that either of these factors can have an impact on school outcome, one must look at what lies behind the social culture of poverty. "Blaming the children's parents, the culture, and their language for their lack of success in school has been a classic strategy used to subordinate and continue to fault the "victim," (Flores, 1991, p. 371). The background of the close association between poverty and

deficit thinking began with the early foundations of the United States, and has increased in numbers through our nation's history.

In this context, deficit thinking is to state or imply that the person who is the underdog is in the wrong, simply because he is the underdog. According to Richard Valencia, (1997), "deficit thinking is tantamount to the process of 'blaming the victim'. It is a model founded on imputation, not documentation" (Valencia, 1997, p. x). Deficit thinking means they are poor because they don't have the ability to succeed and never will. In other words, their plight of poverty is inherited, and something that they cannot control. Valencia believes that the term 'deficit thinking' was coined by scholars in the 1960's who "launched an assault on the orthodoxy that asserted the poor and people of color caused their own social, economic and educational problems" (Valencia, 1997, p. x). Culturally disadvantaged or deprived, or underachievement are other terms used to describe these groups of people and their social plight (Valencia, 1997).

Academic and social shortcomings and the responsibility to repair them is placed on the student within the deficit thinking structure, not on the school or educational institution. According to the deficit

thinking paradigm, students who fail in school, do so because of alleged internal deficiencies, (such as cognitive and/or motivational limitations) or shortcomings socially linked to the youngster such as familial deficits and dysfunctions (Valencia, 1997). Flores believes even more emphatically that factors of social bias and prejudice are harmful for student performance when the language of students from different cultures is viewed as inadequate (Flores, 1991).

Students from other cultures and ethnics backgrounds must work much harder to get closer to the goal of academic achievement than their English speaking peers.

The connection between poverty and deficit thinking comes when a perceived lack of intellectual ability (which prevents a person from doing well in school) also prevents that person from being able to get and keep a job that allows them to take care of themselves and their family. Without some form of income or an income listed as "below the poverty level, a person is categorized as poor. Other means, such as government assistance or help from family or friends, much be tapped on a consistent bases to keep them clothed, fed and housed.

Flores points out that the spending power of the Latino/as in the United States in 800 billion dollars

annually (Flores, 2005). That is an economic force to be taken seriously. The state of California cannot afford to ignore its Hispanic population, educationally or any other way. The country only benefits when its citizens are educated, and there is no reason to continue with deficit thinking, schooling practices, or inequitable educational practices (Flores, 2005).

Because education is such a huge factor in a person's success in life, and high school graduation is a minimal requirement to being able to provide for themselves, a critical predictor of economic success is linked to achievement in school (Valencia, 1998). While this may seem like a modern concept, deficit thinking dates back to our roots as a nation.

Historical Background of Deficit Thinking

In the United States deficit thinking and poverty began when freedom from England was gained in 1776, and the founding fathers passed policy for non-whites and slaves that guaranteed them basic rights. Even though the British were coming to a land already inhabited by native Americans, they decided they would claim it as their own, and as they acquired land, manpower would be needed to work it. When the British military launched a campaign of destruction against the Indians by killing so many causing

near decimation of the population, it became necessary to import slaves (Valencia, 1997).

After most Indians were massacred, land became available to every British settler, wealthy and poor alike. These estates required massive amounts of slave labor if profit would be made. By the late 1600's, Great Britain had sent 2 million slaves to America and the West Indies colonies of Jamaica and Barbados. Manpower meant money, prestige, and power to the landowners, from the moderate to the very rich. In order for landowners to retain that power, they had to insure a constant source of a work force that only cost the fee to feed and house it (Valencia, 1982).

Policy was passed that made non-whites inferior and subordinate to whites, and slavery was legal when the 13 colonies ratified their first constitutional legislations. "In the passage of the first Naturalization Act of 1790 our founding fathers declared that only free 'white' immigrants had the right to apply for citizenship, when Indians and blacks were denied that right," according to Manchaca's work (as cited in Valencia, 1997).

As slavery continued, slaves and children of slaves were denied education. Slave owners did not want their slaves to be educated for two reasons: one: it would take

them away from the work they were to do for the master. The second reason is probably the one with more weight, and that is education is freedom. If slaves learned to read and write and found out what freedom was like, they would want it. This would make them very dangerous to themselves, for wanting freedom, and to their master because they would teach their families. With the knowledge of freedom, they would want freedom.

The price of freedom was worth it, as evidenced by former slaves like Harriet Tubman and Fredrick Douglas, who refused to be denied the right to freedom and education simply because of the color of their skin. Tubman put herself in danger nineteen times after she gained freedom from her master. Once she reached Canada, she returned to help 319 other slaves to freedom and become a conductor on the underground railroad. A high price on her head, Tubman was very courageous, because she suffered sudden bouts of sleep caused by a anvil being thrown at her head by her master before she escaped. These episodes could last several minutes or several hours, causing those traveling with here to wait until she woke and continued to lead the way. She died a free woman in 1913, at the age of 93 (<http://www.ministry.com/harriettubmanlife.htm#early>).

Born into slavery, Fredrick Douglass refused to be denied an education and escaped to Boston at age 23. Later traveling to England, he was educated, became an internationally renowned speaker on the subject of slavery, painting vivid pictures from personal experience. While traveling in England on an abolitionist speaking tour, his freedom was bought when he was 28 years old. Douglass met President Lincoln twice and was asked by Lincoln to come up with a plan to lead slaves out of the south if the states were not united at the end of the Civil War. He died a free man who influenced many at 78 in 1895 (<http://www.ministry.com/fredrickdouglasslife.htm#early>).

The American Indian suffered a similar plight, only considered three-fifths of a person for taxation and census counts. They were also prohibited from passing on property to their heirs. It was seized by the federal government when they died, and they were considered substandard citizens not worthy of having the same rights as white men, according to Manchaca's work (as cited in Valencia, 1997).

Non-whites were not allowed to be educated from the beginnings of our country, thus allowing the concept of deficit thinking to take root. If uneducated, it becomes

difficult to keep up with those who are, and the competition becomes grossly unbalanced. When public education was granted for white students in the early United States history, this privilege was not given to non-white students. "In most communities in the U.S., racial minorities were prohibited from being schooled and when public education became available to whites in the U.S., denying schooling to racial minorities continued to be strongly motivated by economic interests. After whites were extended public education, nearly a century passed until racial minorities were given the same privilege. Yet, such schooling for students of color typically was segregated and inferior--thus demonstrating the pernicious impact of deficit thinking on schooling practices," (Valencia, 1997, p. xiii).

Even within their own race, a discourse about mixed blood and the degree of intelligence took place, which provides more insight on deficit thinking. A theory called the 'mulatto hypothesis' reasoned that the more white blood the greater the white contribution the mulatto had, (referring here specifically to black-white races mixing), the greater the intellectual abilities. "That is, as the proportion of white blood increases, the higher the measures intelligence in the racially mixed offspring. The

hypothesis did not last and researchers such as Herkivits, (1926, 1934), Peterson and Lanier (1929), and Klineberg (1928) concluded that the association among the amount of white ancestry, Negroid features, and intelligence was not significant (as cited in Valencia, 1997).

Because the reality existed that the mulatto children were the offspring of the master, they were treated differently and considered less inferior than darker skinned Negroes. One researcher, Strong, suggested that "black children of lighter complexions outperformed their darker skin peers," (Valencia, 1997, p. 63). Even after slaves were freed, education was not part of their freedom, and they did not receive the equality that whites did. "In 1865, the abolitionists' movement triumphed in the United States and slavery was abolished under the 13th amendment. This, however, did not mean that blacks and other non-whites were declared equal. Quite the contrary happened according to Menchaco (as cited in Valencia, 1997). The passing of the 13th amendment did not mean that non-whites were equal to whites, it simply meant that no man, woman or child could be enslaved. Deficit thinking continues to impact students in schools today.

Deficit Thinking and Standardized Tests

Deficit thinking suggests that non-white people who do not do well in school or in social situations become the discourse of intellectuals who study trends of failures in or of schools. This is also to suggest that educational success and standardized tests are not only influenced, but very much driven and met by the value of education of that which is performed for the people of color. With the passing of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB), standardized tests are the most telling form of accountability and therefore the most scrutinized report for schools today. Not only must deficit thinking be investigated for students of poverty, but also any student from a background or culture where English is not the primary language spoken. It also becomes important to consider whether any particular reading paradigm is better than another for educating all students, regardless of SES, language proficiency or race.

Perhaps for middle class citizens who have their needs met having been born into situations that provided what was needed to get along in the world, poverty is not something that comes to mind in the grand scheme of things. Perhaps many do not know what it means to have to try and secure food and shelter on a daily basis for their

families. But in the bigger picture, it may be difficult to understand what it means to be poor.

Ruby Payne addresses these issues in her research. In her book *A Framework of Understanding Poverty* (2001), Payne writes about two different types of poverty: generational and situational. Generational poverty is said to span a minimum of two generations. Situational poverty, on the other hand, is described as being without resources because of a specific event such as a death, a chronic illness, a divorce, etc. (Payne, 2001). Natural disasters could cause poverty as the recent world events of Indonesia's tsunami in 2004, New Orleans' devastation of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, and the 1930's dustbowl of Kansas and Oklahoma. Both types have the same result: lack of resources, which place a person into a low socio-economic status, or class.

In every class of people there are rules which are expected to be followed; some are overt, spoken, explained. Some of these rules are hidden, and must be discovered, attained and assimilated to survive. Poverty is no different with rules that exist at home and at school. Even the way different people in different socioeconomic classes defend themselves is something we should acknowledge. Physical fighting is seen in poverty

when someone is defending their property or themselves. "Cooling off" with some space or distance is the way the middle class tend to their problems. Ruby Payne compares the crowded lower class to the sprawling middle class who have the money to buy the space away from their neighbors. "They purchase enough land so they are not encroached upon; they live in neighborhoods where people keep their distance," (Payne, 2001, p. 37). Poverty stricken students don't have the luxury of space, much less all of their physical needs being met, which effects their school life.

If students are constantly concerned about safety, food and, how much concentration is placed on learning and tests? Poverty has a huge impact on standardized test scores and if no child is to be left behind, how our educational funding is spent becomes an imperative issue. Some vital resources for students should be considered which effect their standardized test scores.

Before a person can learn, they must have cognitive skills, which means the ability to think about something they are taught and then knowing how to process it in the brain. Knowing what one knows and thinking about it is another way to define cognitive skills. Flores reminds the reader that we can validate students by acknowledging what they bring to school via their language, culture and

learning, (Flores, 1982). Payne compares this process to putting the information into a mental filing cabinet or on a piece of software, (Payne, 2001). Payne also promotes that in addition to cognitive skills, students must have concepts which store information and allow it to be retrieved at will; skills, for instance reading, writing, computing, and language which make up the processing of the content. The content, then, is what is being learned; information that comes to a person every day, (Payne, 2001). When students are learning to read, it becomes very important for all of these pieces to start falling into place. Flores explains the need for non-English speaking children to learn concepts in their native language and bring their experiences to the classroom. In the Whole Language paradigm, the student's background knowledge not only validates their present knowledge and can use it as a starting point for further reading and literature, (Flores, 1982).

Teachers have a large part in organizing classroom and reading instruction for students of poverty as well as all students in a classroom. Flores suggests using approaches where students engage in authentic language and literacy, organized by the teacher who acts as cultural mediator teaching students and letting them teach one

another, (Flores, 1982). Daily routines become very important in a classroom and throughout a day. When students know what to anticipate, it lowers the affective filter, and lets them know what is expected of them. This reassurance not only saves time, but becomes very productive in helping students to set daily goals. Once a goal is set in the morning, (perhaps, written out in a journal), students should also be allowed to check the goal before going home to see if they met it.

Opportunities for students to read should be given throughout the day with a variety of venues. Possible practices might include teachers reading aloud, peer reading, or literature studies, (Flores, 1982).

Hodgkinson's (1995) studies show a connection between poverty and achievement. "Low achievement is closely correlated with lack of resources, and numerous studies have documented the correlation between low socioeconomic status and low achievement," (as cited in Payne, 2001). Payne believes the connection between achievement, instruction and instructional arrangements are in need of rethinking, as well, (Payne, 2001).

Fine discusses some other underlying problems that keep the playing field from being equal. She refers them

as fetishes and thinks their impact have contributed to why education is not always equal, (Fine, 1999).

Ideological Fetish 1: Universal Access stating that all students have the same educational opportunity, leaves out the reality of students entering school already privileged leave the same way. Low income, limited English speakers, disabled or special education students do not have the same chance to succeed. Coupled with the overcrowding, the opportunity to a public education is hollow (Fine, 1991).

Ideological Fetish 2: Good Intentions is the reasoning that because educators have good intentions, are caring and subversive for the students, everything will be fine. This does not remove the damage done by the structure, policies and practices which work in the other direction.

Fetish 3: The Naturalness of the Public-Private Split is a misguided practice that the student can be separated from his home, family, community and personal make-up, and check them at the door fosters the unequal outcomes of education. It cannot be ignored. One of these fetishes in a student's life would be bad enough. With two or three at work, the outcome is almost certain dropout, because there is nothing to prevent it.

Fine sites over and over in her book how some students do not have the same educational opportunities as those in more privileged schools, and their behavior is largely caused by this knowledge. To know they must work harder and will never receive close to that of more privileged students receive is embedded into their beliefs and experiences. All the good intentions in the minds of teachers will not help students if these problems are not addressed. The practices and behaviors of the school must change in order for the good intentions to be effective (Fine, 1991).

Like every person alive, students cannot be separated from who they are or where they come from. Taking care of family is a priority for many of the students and they cannot and will not ignore that for the sake of an education that has such unequal outcomes.

Students in middle to upper class families expect to graduate from high school and go on to college. One of Christensen's students summed it up this way, "At West Linn, students didn't ask each other if they are attending college, they asked each other where they are going. Attending college was a given," (Christensen, 2001, p. 100). Expectations start at an early age and carry great influence in our lives. Material resources are as

important as psychological ones as the next section discusses in the need for libraries in homes and schools.

Libraries

A topic related to standardized tests scores is libraries and all they make available to students. The lack of adequate libraries has an impact on the students in poverty areas. This impact reaches into the heart of standardized test results because a basic component is missing.

So how does poverty and lack of adequate library resources effect the schools, the classrooms, and eventually our test scores? With vital assets missing, the playing field becomes out of balance and test scores drop. If teachers are unaware of the lack of resources their students have to operate with, they can make virtually impossible demands upon them. On the other hand, if teachers become aware of the rules and demands placed on poor children, they can understand better the types of resources we can reasonably provide.

Richard Allington (2001) explains in great length, the need for school libraries to be updated, as many across this great nation are not. This seems like a bit of a paradox considering that the goal of NCLB is for all

students grades 3 to 12 are to be reading proficiently by 2014.

Many libraries in major cities across the country do not have enough contemporary books. "The typical Boston public school elementary library contain 1,000-2,000 volumes but with half or more of those books woefully outdated," (Allington, 2001, p. 56). Obviously Boston is not the only city guilty of this crime, but again, getting books into students' hands is important. Krashen (2004) documents that California is the worst offender for having understaffed school libraries in the entire country. Krashen sites data from the National Center for Library Statistics showing that California has on 79% of its schools have libraries compared with the national average of 92%. Only 24% of California schools certified library media specialist, compared to the national average of 75%. These two statistics rank California the last or lowest in the country. "Research tells us that better libraries mean higher reading scores. California spends \$1.53 per child on school libraries, compared to the national average of about \$20 per student," Krashen, 2004, acceptance speech. To further document the tragic situation that California public libraries are in, Krashen sites some staggering statistics a report from the University of Wisconsin of

Miller's work in 2004, (as cited by Krashen). Entitled "America's Most Literate Cities" the report ranks 79 cities with Los Angeles ranked 73rd, Sacramento at 76th, Anaheim at 78 and Santa Ana's public libraries were 79th. "No wonder California's reading scores are so low," (Krashen, 2004, Acceptance speech).

Information needs to be current and authentic, or not only will students disregard it, outdated material also does damage to our promotion of reading. Kids are no more interested in reading old material than they are watching an "old, black and white films," or wearing clothes that are not fashionable. School and public library need to be updated with current books, authors, periodicals and newspapers for students to have easy access, regardless of their socioeconomic status.

If we spend so much time, effort and money on trying to get students to raise test scores, it seems logical to move toward getting more books in public and school libraries. Richard Allington talks specifically about the need of books in libraries of children of poverty to replace the lack of them at home. "Children from lower-income homes especially need rich and extensive collections of books in the school library and in their classrooms if only because these are the children least

likely to have a supply of books at home," (Allington, 2001, p. 57.) Allington shows a chart in his book, which "point to the enormous inequity in access to books that exists in the United States," (Allington, 2001, p. 57)

Table 5. Numbers of Book in Homes and Libraries of Students of Different Income Levels

Books At Home		Books in Classroom Library
Middle Income:	199	392
Lower Income:	54	2.6
Lowest Income:	47	.4

Allington, R. (2001). *What really matters to struggling readers*. New York. Longman.

Availability of books at the right level affects students on a multiplicity of layers. If books are not a part of the home culture of poor children, which the chart above indicates, then they must be supplied in classroom, school and public libraries. If a school wants to see success in evaluating how well students comprehend literature, a rich array of books must be available. McQuillan (1998) has shown a high correlation between reading performance and the accessibility of books, (McQuillan, 1998).

In some of Allington's earlier work, he noted that in more affluent neighborhoods, there were more libraries in schools and classrooms, more books in those libraries, larger collections and students had more time to read the books (Allington, 1996; Guice, 1997; Johnson, 1998). These schools were higher achieving with the higher test results to prove it. Keeping the necessary tools from students because of funding may be the reality, but the result is likened to that of the apprentice carpenter who has no tools to do the job. As educators' job is not to figure out the budget, it is to teach students how to use the tools.

California has recently launched a campaign to convince parents of the need and benefits of preschool. This is the parents' decision and commitment, since most preschools are not cheap. The campaign suggests that students will achieve more academically, and fare better socially. "Head Start," the federally funded pre-school for child with learning disabilities or in need of financial assistance, is active in every state of the union and helps children of poverty.

Reading instruction, reading paradigms, and poverty all impact the outcome of students' results in standardized tests. With the accountability imposed by

NCLB educators continue to seek solutions for the best way to help students.

CHAPTER THREE
DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction: Design of the Investigation

Is one reading paradigm better than the others for teaching all students to read fluently and with comprehension or is a blend of phonics, skills and socio-psycholinguistics better? Many educators have very definite thoughts and beliefs regarding the issue of what the best way to teach children to read actually is. Few are interested in a blend of more than one paradigm; indeed it seems more common to find the "either-or" approach in reading programs. If the phonics method is chosen, often a literature-rich program is sacrificed. In the sociopsycholinguistic approach, phonics is taught in the context of its use, although some educators mistakenly assume that phonics is not taught in Whole Language. But it is, just not taught as the main focus. Is it possible for both to co-exist if the teacher recognizes that all three paradigms have their merits?

Reading instruction is not determined strictly by the materials in a program but also by the instructional style a teacher implements. When NCLB updated the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, states were put under

great scrutiny and accountability to raise test scores. Like every other state in the union, California was forced to comply with a reading program that could assure increased test scores. The state chose Houghton Mifflin's Reading First program and McGraw-Hill's Open Court program because they were the only publishers who aligned their reading material with the state standards. State standards are academic requirements set by the state that all students are expected to meet. The reading programs were laced with phonics, drills and skills worksheets, and the basal used had excerpts and passage from stories, but not entire stories.

However, more than just the materials themselves, Houghton Mifflin and McGraw-Hill provided a scripted set of instructions for teachers with each lesson which was mandated by the state and school districts. This mandate was to insure that every teacher, in every classroom, in every school that purchased the Houghton Mifflin or the McGraw-Hill series, would teach the same thing. The assumption being that if reading instruction and material was uniformly given, increased test results could be traced to the material and duplicated by other teachers. Schools and districts would then meet their targeted API and AYP goal, and all would be well. This assumption did

not play out exactly as planned. Graves (2002) talks about good teachers knowing and having a sense for what method will work for a particular student. Making that choice or decision is based on professional experience and the student under consideration. These programs eliminated the teachers' professional input and therefore the scripted lessons got mixed reactions.

For some teachers, this was a welcomed relief because it meant they did not have to come up with daily lesson plans. All of the work and planning was completed for them and ready to use. Unfortunately for Houghton Mifflin and McGraw-Hill, many teachers did not want to have a pre-scripted set of instructions to determine what they would say and when they would say it. They had seen the teaching methods they were already employing work and wanted to continue using them. In most schools teachers were asked to use the purchased reading program in the way it was prescribed by the publishers, because it was believed that the publishers knew what they had in mind when they compiled the material. Therefore if a small percentage of teachers in a school had been successful with a different reading paradigm using different materials and strategies, and wanted to teach reading in a different way the entire school, even the successful

teachers, had to go the route of the newly purchased program. Teachers were given an ultimatum of using the mandated program or leaving the school site. In other words, alternatives were not made available to teachers. This did not sit well in many schools. Needless to say, many educators are now looking for alternatives to the Houghton Mifflin's Open Court and McGraw-Hill's Reading First series that will satisfy the mandates, yet allow them to engage their brain and use their knowledge to teach children how to read.

As a teacher in California with a solid background in literacy education, I believed it was necessary to conduct research to determine the impact such programs were having on our students. This led me to try and find answers to the following questions.

Does having one or two prescribed reading programs, Reading First or Open Court, affect the scores on students' standardized tests? If the assumption is correct that a phonics and skills program are the main influences on improving reading and subsequently increasing test scores, all of the schools in California that are using the Houghton Mifflin or McGraw-Hill programs should see scores go up. But perhaps there are more factors at work when we look at the bigger picture.

Consider that in the city of San Bernardino, CA 27.6% of the population lives below the poverty level (2000) with children from these families attending schools that are receiving Title 1 federal money. While the purpose of Title I funding is to provide academic and physical resources for students from low income households, is this enough to make up for the impact of the Matthew Effect as they progress through school? Should the poor get poorer while the rich get richer? Are they doomed to fail because they often start school with economic disadvantages? The following section explains how the data was collected to help substantiate the need to take a serious look at funding and reading and answer the questions presented.

Data Collection

This paper is a meta-analysis of existing research, which is a pool of studies that already exist and bringing the ideas together to come to a conclusion about an issue. "Meta-analyses are reanalysis that pool data from the large number of existing studies," (Thorndike, 2005, p. 193). Thorndike states the term applies to a systematic pooling of results from many different studies (Thorndike, 2005). This study does that by specifically utilizing the research from Chapter Two by reviewing of some of the

existing literature relating to academic achievement and SES within each of the three reading paradigms.

Data was collected from school districts in five southern California cities. As Table 6 indicates, where students live has a huge impact on a predictable potential of how they will fare in school. The cities selected for this study range from wealthiest to poorest in financial rank. The data analysis will examine if test scores are lower because of reading programs and instruction or socioeconomic status. Perhaps both will have an impact. These cities include: Rancho Palos Verdes, Chino Hills, Ontario, Montclair, and San Bernardino. Table 6 compares the cities' median income, percent of the population living below the poverty level, and the educational backgrounds of their residents.

Table 6. Socioeconomic Statistics of Cities in Southern California

City of California	Median Income (2002)	Percent Below Poverty Level Family of four	Percent of High School graduates	Percent receiving Bachelor's /Above	Difference of % receiving H.S. diploma /higher education
Palos Verdes	\$95,503	2.9	95.8	58.0	37.8
Chino Hills	\$84,700	5.1	89.9	37.6	52.3
Ontario	\$50,700	15.5	62.5	10.5	50
Montclair	\$47,100	17.4	60.4	9.6	50.8
San Bernardo	\$37,000	27.6	64.9	11.6	53.3

quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06000.html - 47k - Sep 10, 2005

The data collected from the school districts includes test scores from the California Academic Test (CAT6) test for reading and language in grades three (3) and seven (7) for the 2004-2005 school year. The name or type of the specific reading programs that the schools were using was also collected and a comparison was made to determine if the students in schools using one reading paradigm fared better on standardized tests.

Sample Populations

The sample populations for this study included schools from the following cities: Palos Verdes, Chino Hills, Ontario, Montclair and San Bernardino. These statistics are from the 2000 state census.

Palos Verdes, where the medium income was \$95,503 in 2002, had only 2.9% of its population was living below the poverty level. An impressive 95.8% of its population graduated from high school and 58% went on to college to receive a Bachelor of Arts degree or above.

Chino Hills residents earned \$84,700 average per year with 5.1% living below the poverty level. Of the 89.9% that graduated from high school, 37.6% went on to post secondary education, receiving degrees of higher education.

While Ontario checked in with a median income of \$50,000 per year, 15.5% lived below the poverty line. The percent to graduate from high school was 65.5 and only 10.5% sought higher education.

The city of Montclair had a slightly lower median income of \$47,100 per year. Seventeen point four percent of its population lived below the poverty level, and 60.4% of its population graduated from high school. Only 9.6% of the population earned Bachelor of Arts degrees or above.

San Bernardino came in the fifth of the five cities in all categories but one. The median income in 2002 was \$37,000, and 27.6% lived below the poverty level of \$19,350 for a family of four. Sixty four point nine percent graduated from high school (this is the only category where San Bernardino was not the lowest of the cities compared), and 11.6% of the population pursued post secondary education.

To make comparisons for the cities' economic status and test scores, data regarding the five cities' was obtained on the Internet through the census and state of California's Department of Education data base website. The test scores are also public record and can be obtained in school offices.

Data Analysis

In order to give a truer picture of the test results for the 2004-2005 school year, schools within a district were looked at and analyzed using the following four main questions:

1. Did the majority of schools meet their AYP scores? If so, was there any glaringly obvious difference from the rest of the district? Or did the majority of the district also meet their APY? What was the range of scores?
2. What was the ethnic make-up of each schools?
3. What was the median income for the district?
4. What percentage of the districts' population fell below the poverty level?
5. What reading program and reading paradigm did the school use?

The findings to the these questions will be discussed at length in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR
PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

Because of NCLB the state of California is not unlike other states which must prove that test scores are improving every year. Billions of federal dollars for school funding depend upon the test performance of students throughout the state. School districts that meet their AYP are often financially rewarded when they do so, yet precious teaching time is taken up in test preparation to achieve and maintain those scores. Instead of valuing initiative and the ability to formulate questions and think problems through, timed test and multiple choice questions are the measurement used (Graves, 2002). Schools that do not meet their AYP are labeled "improvement" schools and are put under strict sanctions and guideline until they show the mandated improvement.

From the time NCLB was implemented in 2001, graduated increases were mandated and schools not only had to keep up with the increase, but they also had to prepare for the next year's increase. As Table 7 shows, measurable student progress must increase until 2014, when 100% of all students in schools receiving federal NCLB money will be reading at a proficient level.

Table 7. Increased Proficiency Reading Rate by Year

School Year	Percent of Students Proficient in a School
2001-2004	13.6
2004-2007	24.4
2007-2008	35.2
2008-2009	46.0
2009-2010	56.8
2010-2011	67.6
2011-2012	78.4
2012-2013	89.2
2013-2014	*****100*****

(Success For All Foundation, 2004)

For instance, in 2001 a base of 13.6% was established that all students would be reading at a proficient level. This percentage of proficiency was mandated by the federal government for all states, but states could decide what "level" of reading they would call proficient. The levels were separated into five categories: Advanced, Proficient, Basic, Below Basic and Far Below Basic. If a state decided they would start at "basic" rather than "proficient" and begin moving toward proficient, that was their prerogative. California chose to start at the proficient level, making the climb to the top harder from the onset. For a school to make their AYP in 2001-2003, 13.6% of a student population in a school had to be proficient in

reading. From 2004 to 2007 the stakes were raised to 24.4% of students being proficient. In 2007 they will climb to 35.2%. In 2008 the scale goes up 10.8% to 46%, and by 2009 it will be 56.8%. In 2010, 67.6% of students must reading at the proficient level, and in 2011 the number will be 78.4%. In 2013 89.2% of all students must be reading at proficiency. Gradually, the percent of proficient readers in schools will climb until 2014, when 100% of all students in all schools in the United States who received No Child Left Behind funding will be required to be reading at proficiency. What a great and glorious day that will be for students, teachers and parents (Success For All Foundations, 2004).

If this is going to happen, more resources must be made available in many schools throughout the state. Some of those resources should be more teachers. The table below (8) shows that all districts do not have equal resources and do not have the same opportunity for their students to progress at the rate the federal government demands they must.

Table 8. Elementary School's Adequate Yearly Progress and Reading Program

<u>City & School District</u>	<u>Numbers of school considered</u>	<u>Did the schools meet AYP?</u>	<u>Largest Ethnic Population</u>	<u>Median Income</u>	<u>Reading Program</u>
Palos Verdes Palos Verdes Peninsula Unified	11	Yes: 118 No: 0	White	\$95,503	Houghton Mifflin
Chino Hills, Chino Valley Unified	8	Yes: 6 No: 2	Hispanic & White	\$84,700	Houghton Mifflin
Ontario Ontario-Montclair	21	Yes: 3 No: 18	Hispanic	\$50,700	Houghton Mifflin, Success for all
Montclair Ontario-Montclair	7	Yes: 1 No: 6	Hispanic	\$47,100	Houghton Mifflin
San Bernardino San Bernardino Unified	12	Yes: 1 No: 11	Hispanic	\$37,000	Houghton Mifflin

As Table 8 indicates, all five cities, two of which are in the same school district, Ontario and Montclair, have a close correlation between average income levels and the number of students at the proficient level passing tests. Now the question remains if reading paradigms and test scores correlate.

Looking at the table, it becomes obvious that of the five districts, the correlation between median income and ethnic populations in a district also have the highest test scores and made their AYP. Students from more affluent communities who have English as their primary language have a great advantage over students from lower incomes and whose primary language is not English.

Another point to consider is the percentage of students who graduated from high school and then went on to receive a degree of higher learning. In Palos Verdes, 95.8% graduated from high school and 58% went on to receive higher degrees. That is a difference of 37.8% of the students who did not receive at least a Bachelor of Arts degree. Chino Hills had a significantly larger number of high school graduates not receive a degree at 52.3%. In Ontario the difference was 52%, Montclair was 50.8% but San Bernardino was the highest percent of the five cities with 53.3% of its high school graduates not going on to higher education. Nearly the same amount of students who went on to college and received a Bachelor's degree or above in Palos Verdes was the amount that did not go on to college in San Bernardino. Although San Bernardino had nearly the same percent not go on to college as Chino

Hills, San Bernardino had 24.9% fewer graduate from high school to begin with.

Interestingly, all five cities' school districts stated they used Houghton Mifflin's Open Court reading program, which is highly scripted, and not literature rich. When asked if teachers were adhering to the program, district personnel reported with an affirmative answer. Teachers were expected to be teaching the lesson or the page posted on the board in their classrooms. When supervisors or administrators came into a classroom, they expected to know exactly what every teacher in every classroom was teaching: Reading standards were posted on the board for students to see and know what they were expected to learn that day. According to the district personnel in these five cities, phonics and skills are being taught in California school for two to three hours every day. No one reported teaching with a Whole Language or sociopsycholinguistic approach. Even schools that met the AYP continue to use the Houghton Mifflin program.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

When President Bush announced his plan to improve the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965 of the Johnson Administration by updating it with No Child Left Behind Act, harsh mandates were put into place. School districts quickly got the message that if they were going to receive the federal funding from the No Child Left Behind Act, they would have to tow the line, be accountable and make their AYP and prove their growth.

As the year 2014 grows closer, the gap between proficient readers and non-proficient readers must close by large percentages. Considering that an increase of 10.8% is supposed to take place between the end of 2006 and the end of 2007, bringing the number of proficient students in a school to 35.2%, many schools will have to cover a lot of ground..

Districts have already made sacrifices in the area of rich literacy and switched to pre-scripted programs with students spending large amounts of time on worksheets and phonics. Older students who know how to read find the programs dull because of the repetition and shallow

content. Stories are not read in their entirety, rather portions or passages of a story. From a true reading point of view, the meat comes when a book is given adequate time and print to let the reader "see it" develop.

Regardless of the argument whether phonics or socio-psycholinguistics is better for learning or instruction, the only schools in California that stand a chance to decide which type of reading programs they will teach, and therefore which reading paradigm they will employ, are schools that make the Annual Yearly Progress. Apparently none of the schools in the districts in this study made that choice, even when they met the AYP, although that is difficult to imagine. If teachers are teaching more literature rich content with sociopsycholinguistics or Whole Language, they are keeping quiet about it, at least as far as district personnel are concerned. Private schools who do not receive NCLB money can also make choices about reading programs.

Income effects student scores, but what about reading programs? Most teachers can probably attest to examples in their classrooms when a child/student could read the letters, even words. This does not mean they are reading, nor does this mean they had comprehension of what they

read. If the teaching of phonics is all a student is going to receive, a lot could be left out.

Most school districts in California are using Houghton Mifflin, or McGraw-Hill's Open Court for Reading First because these two programs most closely align with the state standards. These teacher-scripted programs rely heavily on repeated practice of a grammatical rule or point that a student is expected to learn. Actual reading is limited to short passages or excerpts and follow up discussion questions are mainly to recall information in the text with a quick re-read of the material. One could ask if students are reading throughout the day in other content areas like math, science, social studies and health. However, there is no time.

Rich literary works are not be presented in the majority of California elementary school unless the teacher decides to veer away from the scripted reading program that is being utilized in the school. Vocabulary can be taught in both paradigms, but is one better than the other?

Conclusions

Without the written words on the page, obviously no meaning could be constructed by the reader. The expanding

of vocabulary is important, but words need to be understood in context. This is the underlying principle of socio-psycholinguistics. Reading authentic text for meaning is richer, but what about students who cannot figure out the pronunciation of a word? Will they learn that in a whole language or socio-psycholinguistics classroom? Yes, they will.

Poverty has a big impact on what is available to students in their education. Resources to educate cost money and the more money available the more resources can be purchased. The school districts that fared the best in this study were the two wealthiest. When school populations are made up of upper-middle class households where children do not have to be concerned about where their next meal is coming from and can focus on school work, the test results are greater. When students in homes where English is the second language and they must translate for their parents so the utilities can be turned on, it is very likely that their test scores will be effected. For all districts to have the to same requirement regardless of SES or language does not give the true picture of what students are actually capable of doing. If one test that is given once a year is the only

measure by which schools are judged, the balance and reality seem to be skewed.

Not only were more materials made available, but students who attend wealthier districts usually have parents who have higher education levels. More emphasis is put on education because other basic needs are met. These students usually have more accessibility to parental educational background knowledge. The students usually had more stability in their life and expected to make great gains in education. In addition, a study conducted with parent responses from 362 first grade questioners was analyzed and a direct correlation was made to children's achievement test scores. The findings are not surprising. "The children of actively supportive parents scored highest, followed by the children of passively involved parents, and then the children of noninvolved parents," (Walson, Brown, & Swick, 1983, p. 176). Parents are an extremely valuable resource for students and their educational success.

Returning to a table used previously in this project, statistics help explain a connection between education, socio economic status, reading paradigms, and test score outcomes.

Table 9. Socioeconomic Statistics of Cities in Southern California

City of California	Median Income (2002)	Percent Below Poverty Level Family of four	Percent of High School graduates	Percent receiving Bachelor's /Above	Difference of % receiving H.S. diploma /higher education
Palos Verdes	\$95,503	2.9	95.8	58.0	37.8
Chino Hills	\$84,700	5.1	89.9	37.6	52.3
Ontario	\$50,700	15.5	62.5	10.5	50
Montclair	\$47,100	17.4	60.4	9.6	50.8
San Bernardo	\$37,000	27.6	64.9	11.6	53.3

quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06000.html - 47k - Sep 10, 2005

These numbers tell a story. Why did so many more go to college in the more affluent city than the others? Perhaps parental education and expectation had a lot to do with it, but resources also played a role. For many in the agricultural areas of San Bernardino, Ontario and Montclair where migrant laborers made up a big part of the population in the 1940's and 50's, many students graduating in 2000 could have been the first in their family to receive a high school diploma. The expectation would then be to go to work and help support the extended family. College tuition costs money and many families were holding down two and three jobs just to make ends meet. The added expense of college tuition was just not feasible. Besides not being able to contribute to the family income and costing a lot, college education would

tie a person up for at least four years and families simply could not afford to be without the extra help of a student in school and the added expense without huge sacrifices to the entire family. The picture in Palos Verdes looks very different where college tuition is paid for by parents and once students receive their degree, the earned income is theirs to keep. The expectation to help take care of other family members is rare, because most households can financially care for themselves.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are offered based on the study: What appears to be one of the greatest factor of numbers of students being able to read well and become life-long learners is availability of materials and the knowledge and enthusiasm of the teacher. Students must have adequate school and classroom libraries to encourage their growth. Lots of books in a wide variety of genres are needed, as well as computers to do further study and research. Most importantly, students in every socioeconomic levels need good, solid, consistent educators who not only instill a love for learning, but teach students meta cognitive skills. Students need to know what they are thinking about and how that effects

their learning. Based on my nineteen years of experience, in all socio economic levels, at elementary, middle and high school grade levels, I believe teachers must take a stand on what goes on in their classrooms. Reading instruction makes sense in the context of real, authentic material. Students must be shown and taught that beyond the basis of phonics comes literature which explains living in the real world. We cannot expect them to enjoy something that is taught only for the purpose of testing that leads to a label or reward, for a school or district. Reading is about understanding the world around us and all the things we can explore to make that understanding happen. A child only learns to read once, an opportunity that can be bitter or sweet, depending on our instruction and influence.

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