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The Relationship between Primary Grade Teachers' Theoretical Orientation to Reading and Endorsement of Developmentally Appropriate Practice

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The Relationship between Primary Grade Teachers' Theoretical Orientation to Reading and Endorsement of Developmentally Appropriate Practice

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Abstract

The Relationship between Primary Grade Teachers' Theoretical Orientation to Reading and Endorsement of Developmentally Appropriate Practice

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between primary grade teachers' theoretical orientation to reading and their endorsement of developmentally appropriate practices, as well as to determine the relationship between certain demographic variables and theoretical orientation to reading. The study consisted of a survey sent through inter-school mail to 156 randomly selected kindergarten through third grade teachers in the Millard, Nebraska, Public Schools. The survey included the DeFord Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile and the Smith Primary Teacher Questionnaire, as well as questions about the respondent's age, teaching experience, grade level taught, and educational background. The relationships among the variables were assessed using correlational analysis and one-way analysis of variance with *a posteriori* multiple comparisons. Results indicated that there is a correlation between primary grade teachers' theoretical orientation to reading and their endorsement of developmentally appropriate practices. There were also correlations between theoretical orientation to reading and some of the demographic variables, especially grade level taught and educational background in reading and early childhood education.

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Chapter 1: The Problem

Currently, two of the most heatedly debated issues in the education of children in the primary grades are reading instruction and "developmentally appropriate practices." Research on these two issues reveals that both have been discussed extensively, although not as they relate to each other.

The need for a definition of developmentally appropriate practice became apparent during the development of the National Association for the Education of Young Children's (NAEYC) accreditation system, the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs (NAECP), because many of the criteria for accreditation refer to "developmentally appropriate activities,. . . materials,. . . or expectations" (Bredekamp,1987, p. iv) without specifically stating what developmentally appropriate means. Therefore, the current NAEYC definition of developmentally appropriate practice was developed. The consensus definition of a program's developmental appropriateness is "the extent to which knowledge of child development is applied in program practices. . . [taking into account] two dimensions: age appropriateness and individual appropriateness" (Bredekamp, 1987, p. 1-2).

This definition of developmentally appropriate practice has been endorsed by all of the national educational associations that have published position statements dealing with early childhood education, including the National Association of Elementary School Principals, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, and the National Association of State Boards of Education (Greenberg, 1990). The Association for Childhood Education International and the Southern Association on Children Under Six have similar positions (Vance & Boals, 1989). Although they represent a

consensus in the early childhood profession, there are various conflicting opinions as to the value of these guidelines (Fowell & Lawton, 1992; Spodek, 1988). In addition, not every early childhood professional has interpreted the guidelines in the same way, or in the way in which they were intended (Bredekamp & Rosegrant, 1992; Kostelnik, 1992).

Similarly, since the introduction of the first reading texts in America in the 1800's, educators have been debating the value of various methods of teaching reading in the primary grades. At different times during the past two centuries, phonics, sight word instruction, whole language or language experience approaches, oral and silent reading, and several other trends have been widely accepted, only to be replaced temporarily by other methods as these new ideas gained favor.

Currently whole language, a relatively new approach to teaching reading, is receiving wide-spread attention. The interest in whole language as an alternative to the basal reading series used in most classrooms has renewed controversy over the effectiveness and appropriateness of the teaching methods primary grade teachers are now using. It has also led to a body of research into the reasons teachers choose a certain philosophy over others and studies of the formation of beliefs about reading instruction.

Much of this research focuses on the idea of a "theoretical orientation" toward reading instruction. Moss (1980) defines theoretical orientation as a "particular system of beliefs that helps establish a person's decisions. . . to help determine what instructional techniques and materials will be utilized in the classroom" (p. 2). According to Duffy and Anderson (1984), "The premise is that teachers organize instruction according to a conceptual frame or cognitive structure [their theoretical orientation] which drives them to select certain

instructional alternatives over others" (p. 97).

It seems logical that teachers with different backgrounds and experiences would develop different theoretical orientations to reading instruction, and that there will be predictable trends among teachers in their beliefs about reading instruction. It also seems logical that teachers' background experiences influence their knowledge and endorsement of developmentally appropriate practices, producing predictable patterns in this area as well.

Teachers' beliefs about what is appropriate for young children should influence the instructional methods and materials they use in their primary grade classrooms. Those who are knowledgeable about developmentally appropriate practices, for instance, could be expected to favor a philosophy of reading instruction that is consistent with the guidelines for developmentally appropriate practice. On the other hand, teachers who endorse more traditional practices when making other classroom decisions will probably also endorse an orientation to reading that is consistent with their beliefs. Therefore, it is reasonable that primary grade teachers' beliefs about developmentally appropriate practice will relate to their beliefs about reading instruction.

A review of the literature reveals considerable research on teachers' theoretical orientation to reading and the decisions teachers make in the classroom regarding reading instruction. There is also considerable research into teachers' beliefs about developmentally appropriate practice for children in the primary grades.

There is, however, a lack of research that deals with these two areas together. Since certain orientations to reading instruction are more developmentally appropriate than others, teachers in the primary grades need

to be knowledgeable about developmentally appropriate practices, as well as alternatives for teaching reading, when they decide how to teach young children to read. As teachers and teacher educators attempt to determine the most effective and appropriate ways to teach young children to read, a study that investigates the current relationship between teachers' beliefs about reading and endorsement of developmentally appropriate practices would be valuable. Such a study would provide a foundation for changing inappropriate instructional practices in reading in kindergarten and the primary grades.

Problem

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between teachers' endorsement of developmentally appropriate practices and their theoretical orientation to reading. This research will attempt to answer the questions: Is there a correlation between primary grade teachers' endorsement of developmentally appropriate practice and their attitudes toward reading instruction? Are there other factors, such as years of experience, level of education, or training that can also be used to predict a teacher's theoretical orientation to reading?

Hypothesis

The researcher expects that:

1. There will be a relationship between teachers' theoretical orientation to reading and endorsement of developmentally appropriate practice. Specifically, it is predicted that teachers who have higher scores on the measure of theoretical orientation to reading will also have higher scores on the measure of endorsement of developmentally appropriate practices.

2. There will be a relationship between teachers' level of education, training, and years of teaching experience and their beliefs about reading instruction and developmentally appropriate practice. Specifically, it is predicted that:

2. a. Teachers with more years of teaching experience will tend to have lower scores on the measure of theoretical orientation to reading, while teachers with less experience will be more likely to have higher scores, as well as higher levels of endorsement of developmentally appropriate practices. Older teachers will be less likely to have high scores on the measure of theoretical orientation to reading.

2. b. Teachers with education beyond a bachelor's degree will be more likely to favor developmentally appropriate practices and score higher on the measure of theoretical orientation to reading.

2. c. Teachers with more background in reading and background in early childhood education, through undergraduate, graduate, and inservice courses, will be more likely to have high scores on the measure of theoretical orientation to reading.

Limitations

Since this study was conducted through a mail survey, there will be limitations due to the methodology. First, the return rate must be high for the results to be meaningful. Second, with the current interest in the whole language approach to reading instruction and in developmentally appropriate practice, teachers may tend to over-report their beliefs in these areas. In addition, the Millard Public Schools is currently implementing a new language arts curriculum and is placing a major emphasis on reading instruction in required teacher inservice training; all teachers in the district have received

considerable information about the characteristics of reading-writing, or whole language, classrooms. The questionnaires used are designed to limit the effect of knowledge of "key words" or phrases which would lead teachers to agree with certain statements because they contain these words or phrases. This will reduce the chance of teachers simply over-reporting their endorsement of the whole language orientation because they know it is what the school district endorses. Third, with a mail questionnaire, there may be a discrepancy between self-reported beliefs and actual classroom practices. However, since the researcher is not attempting to establish a correlation between beliefs and actual classroom practices, this should not be considered a limitation. Finally, this is a small sample of suburban Midwestern teachers, and the reader must use caution when generalizing the results to other populations in different grade levels, types of school systems, or areas of the country.

Definitions

Basal Readers--a series of books, usually with controlled vocabulary, including stories, articles, poetry, and plays, developed specifically to teach reading; the series may have a phonics, skills, or whole language orientation

Developmentally Appropriate Practice--the consideration of knowledge of child development, including both children's age and individual differences, in the activities, materials, expectations, and practices of a program

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)-- an organization for professionals who work with young children; NAEYC is responsible for developing the standards of developmentally appropriate practices in early childhood education for programs serving children

through age eight

Phonics--a method of teaching reading focusing on dissected portions of words and the teaching of sound-symbol relationships in isolation, with the belief that decoding skills precede comprehension

Primary Teacher Questionnaire (PTQ) (Smith, 1993)--a measure of teachers' endorsement of statements about developmentally appropriate practices which was based on the NAEYC guidelines for developmentally appropriate practice

Skills Approach--a method of teaching reading focusing on words and the development of a large sight word vocabulary; word attack skills are taught in texts with controlled vocabulary and are hierarchically arranged

Theoretical Orientation to Reading--the beliefs, attitudes, and conceptual framework that define teachers' ideas about and decisions relating to reading instruction

Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP) (DeFord, 1985)--a measure of teachers' endorsement of statements about reading instruction; it is used to classify teachers' beliefs about reading instruction as belonging to a phonics, skills, or whole language orientation

Whole Language--a method of teaching reading focusing on larger units of language and the teaching of reading in the context of quality children's literature; skills are taught as needed by individual children, and the language arts skills of reading, writing, listening, speaking, and thinking are integrated

Chapter 2: Review of Related Literature

Reading instruction has been a controversial topic for more than a century in this country. Consequently, there is a large body of research in this area. Research has focused on many aspects of reading, from children's readiness to learn to read to teachers' attitudes and beliefs about reading and methods used to teach reading.

Research in the area of developmentally appropriate practice includes attempts to describe existing programs and their fit or lack of fit with the NAEYC guidelines. There have also been attempts to identify teachers' knowledge of and level of endorsement of developmentally appropriate practices.

This literature review will focus first on a description of developmentally appropriate practices and research in this area. It will then discuss research dealing with teachers' formation of beliefs about reading instruction, as well as their decisions regarding actual classroom practices in the teaching of reading. It will conclude with a discussion of reading instruction as it relates to the guidelines for developmentally appropriate practice in the primary grades.

NAEYC Guidelines for Developmentally Appropriate Practice

The current definition of developmentally appropriate practice was developed by the NAEYC. NAEYC believes that:

> A high quality early childhood program provides a safe and nurturing environment that promotes the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of young children while responding to the needs of families. Although the quality of an early childhood program may be affected by many factors, a major determinant of program quality is. . .the

> degree to which the program is developmentally appropriate (Bredekamp, 1987, p. 1).

The guidelines on developmentally appropriate practices provide a framework for programs serving young children (Bredekamp & Rosegrant, 1992).

Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth Through Age 8 (Ed. Bredekamp, 1987) outlines and explains the NAEYC guidelines for developmentally appropriate practice. The guidelines deal with curriculum, adult-child interaction, relationships between the home and program, and assessment and evaluation of children. They are based on a Piagetian theory of development and are consistent with a constructivist approach (Bredekamp, 1987).

Description of Developmental and Psychometric Approaches

According to Piagetian theory, learning arises from a child's active interaction with the environment and manipulation of objects and events (Fowell & Lawton, 1992). The central theme of Piaget's work and of the constructivist approach, which is based on his ideas, is that the child is active in constructing both knowledge and intelligence (DeVries, 1987). Constructivists focus on the process of change as children organize their understanding and knowledge and move from one cognitive stage to the next (i.e. preoperational to concrete operational thinking) (DeVries, 1987). The High/Scope "Cognitively Oriented Preschool Curriculum" is one example of a developmental approach to early childhood education. High/Scope's framework for early childhood programs is based on Piagetian theories of development and focuses on active learning and child choice in teaching specified "key experiences" to young children (Hohmann et al., 1979).

Elkind (1989) contrasts the two most prevalent educational philosophies currently favored in early childhood programs, the developmental approach and the psychometric educational philosophy, which he says "now dictates educational practice in the majority of our public schools" (p. 113). Elkind says that educational reform cannot occur until the more prevalent psychometric philosophy is replaced by a developmentally appropriate one. According to Elkind, in a developmental philosophy the learner is viewed as having developing mental abilities, and all learners are assumed to be able to develop these abilities, although not necessarily at the same age. Curriculum should be matched to the children's level. Learning is viewed as an active, constructive process, with the learner, the content to be learned, the learning environment, and the learning process all interacting. The goal of a developmental approach is to produce learners who want to know and are creative, critical thinkers.

The goal of a psychometric approach, the traditional approach in many kindergarten and primary grade classrooms, is to produce students who have learned quantifiable bits of knowledge and skills. According to this way of thinking, knowledge is separate from the learning process, and thinking skills or strategies can be taught separately from content, with the assumption that transfer will occur to the desired content area. In addition, individual differences are seen as differences in ability, and children are matched with others of equal ability (Elkind, 1989).

Questions about the NAEYC Guidelines

Spodek (1988) questions whether developmental appropriateness alone is an adequate assessment of the quality of early childhood programs. He points out that no guidelines address the issue of whether the program is

educationally worthwhile. Fowell and Lawton (1992) also have questioned the NAEYC guidelines. They believe that early childhood programs must be concerned with instructional theory as well as development, and they compare a program based on these views with the NAEYC guidelines. For example, they assert that the NAEYC definition of developmentally appropriate practice excludes programs where structured, teacher-directed activities are used for small group instruction, which the authors find to be an appropriate and necessary instructional practice. Bredekamp (1993) has responded by stating that the NAEYC guidelines encourage child-directed activities while recognizing that teacher-directed activities are also appropriate at times.

Research about Developmentally Appropriate Practice

Research on the topic of developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs often deals with teachers' knowledge and beliefs about developmentally appropriate practice, as defined in the NAEYC guidelines. Snider and Fu (1990), for instance, studied the effects of education and experience on teachers' knowledge of developmentally appropriate practice. From their research, they concluded that a degree in child development or early childhood education, the content areas covered in training, and a combination of practical experience and early childhood/child development courses were the factors that had the most effect on teachers' knowledge of developmentally appropriate practice. Interestingly, they also found that length of employment and experience without training had little influence, indicating that for experiences to be valuable, they must be accompanied by formal training.

Mangione (1992), in an interview study, found that teachers involved in a two year teacher training project based on the High/Scope philosophy and in

accordance with the NAEYC guidelines had significantly changed their classroom practices and environment to make them more developmentally appropriate. In addition, 94 percent of the 18 teachers interviewed had discussed their training with colleagues or their principal, and 66 percent had conducted or organized a workshop for colleagues.

A number of studies (Charlesworth, 1990; Hoot et al., 1989; Smith, 1993; Vance & Boals, 1989) have attempted to measure teachers' and administrators' knowledge of and agreement with developmentally appropriate practices. In a study designed to identify sources of inappropriate practices in kindergarten classrooms, Vance and Boals (1989) found no significant differences between classroom teachers' and elementary administrators' knowledge of developmentally appropriate practice. The researchers used a Q-sort technique, in which teachers and administrators were asked to rank 26 statements of appropriate practices and 26 statements of inappropriate practices in order from the most important component of a quality kindergarten program to the least. From the responses, they identified three distinct types who chose inappropriate statements as appropriate, all of which favored approaches that conflict with the professional organizations' position statements: those who favor authority; those who favor programmed learning; and those who place a high priority on test results. Hoot et al. (1989), in a large, state-wide study, found that teachers and administrators generally had reasonable knowledge of developmentally appropriate practice, although there were significant differences among the groups in knowledge of specific areas. They concluded that special education teachers, prekindergarten teachers, and special education and elementary education administrators had significantly more knowledge of developmentally appropriate practices than did primary and

intermediate teachers, who, they say, are likely to be hired to teach in the increasing number of public school preschool programs.

Instruments to Measure Knowledge of Developmentally Appropriate Practices

Smith (1993) and Charlesworth (1990) have both developed questionnaires based on the NAEYC guidelines to obtain information about teachers' knowledge of developmentally appropriate practices. Smith's (1993) Primary Teacher Questionnaire (PTQ) is based on the "NAEYC Position Statement on Developmentally Appropriate Practice in the Primary Grades Serving 5 through 8 Year Olds" (Bredekamp, 1987). It was developed "to assess the degree to which primary grade teacher beliefs and values match these principles" (p. 3). The PTQ consists of two scales, which measure developmentally-oriented beliefs (DAP Scale) and traditionally-oriented beliefs (TRAD Scale).

The Teacher Questionnaire (Charlesworth, 1990) contains a Teacher Beliefs Scale and an Instructional Activities Scale. The Checklist for Rating Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Kindergarten Classrooms (Charlesworth, 1990) was developed to determine the accuracy of the teachers' self reports on the questionnaire. Using these measures, Charlesworth (1990) found that the teachers' use of developmentally appropriate practice correlated moderately with their beliefs about developmentally appropriate practice, that most teachers viewed appropriate beliefs as having some importance, and that most teachers included some appropriate activities in their classrooms.

Description of Various Theoretical Orientations to Reading

Teachers' beliefs about reading instruction, as well as their knowledge and endorsement of developmentally appropriate practices, influence their classroom practices and instructional activities. Many researchers (DeFord, 1985; Duffy & Anderson, 1984; Moss, 1980; Richards, Gipe & Thompson, 1987) have proposed that teachers' choice of methods for reading instruction is based on their theoretical orientation toward reading instruction. DeFord (1985) describes three theoretical orientations that define current beliefs about and practices in reading instruction, and she categorizes instructional programs according to their theoretical orientation into three clusters. The three orientations differ in the unit of language which is emphasized, such as dissected portions of words, words, or longer sections of text (Richards & Levitov, 1985).

The first class, phonics or graphophonics oriented, emphasizes smaller than word level language units, including letters and letter combinations, with a gradual movement toward words and instruction in comprehension. Pesce (1990) defines phonics as a code-emphasis approach focusing on sound-symbol relationships and teaching letters and sounds in isolation. A teacher using a phonics approach would first introduce isolated letters and combinations of letters, then short words containing the studied letter/sound relationship. Later, the teacher would introduce more letter combinations and harder words, believing that decoding skills lead to comprehension (Moss, 1980).

The next category is skills oriented, in which word attack skills are hierarchically arranged and taught using controlled-vocabulary reading texts (DeFord, 1985). The skills approach emphasizes development of a large sight

word vocabulary, comprehension skills such as main idea, cause/effect, and sequence, and structural analysis skills such as compound words and suffixes and prefixes. These skills are taught individually in isolation, using basal readers whose vocabulary increases in difficulty with each new book in the series (Moss, 1980; Pesce, 1990).

DeFord's final orientation is whole language. A whole language approach to reading instruction emphasizes the development of a sense of story as a framework for instruction in the smaller units of language. The whole language philosophy is based on the premise that to learn about language, children need to use it in natural, meaningful contexts (Hayward, 1988). Writing, reading, listening, and speaking are integrated to provide children with a wide variety of experiences in developing language skills. Skills are introduced as individuals or groups demonstrate a need to learn them.

Duffy and Anderson (1984) developed five categories of beliefs, based on a search of standard reading methods texts used in teacher education courses. Their categories are similar to DeFord's, although they created more divisions in orientations. The five beliefs focus on: basal readers, linear skills, interest base of the children, natural learning, and integrated curriculum models. After developing and piloting a questionnaire to assess teachers' theoretical orientation toward reading instruction, they narrowed their categories to two broader classifications: content-centered, which encompasses the basal and linear skills models, and child-centered, which includes the interest, natural learning, and integrated curriculum models.

Instruments to Measure Theoretical Orientation to Reading

Much of the research on teachers' theoretical orientation toward reading

instruction (DeFord, 1985; Levande, 1990; Richards et al., 1987; Stice et al., 1989) uses DeFord's Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP) to assess teachers' beliefs about reading instruction. The TORP has been tested for its validity by piloting it on teachers of known theoretical orientation. It was revised based on the results into a questionnaire consisting of 28 statements regarding reading instruction which the teacher rates on a five degree Likert scale (DeFord, 1985).

Another commonly used measure (Moss, 1980; Richards & Levitov, 1985) is the Classroom Analysis of Teachers' Theoretical Orientation to Reading (Moss, 1980), which is an observational system used to rate teachers' instructional behaviors as a function of their theoretical orientation. It was devised to provide a concise, systematic way to observe the teacher's theoretical orientation toward reading in the classroom and contains items to rate the frequency of instructional activities while children are directly interacting with the teacher as well as during individual or small group times in which they are working independently. Observed activities include use of drill in phonics rules or word families, practice in structural analysis and study skills, the use of trade books and newspapers in the classroom, and inclusion of time for sustained silent reading, among others (Moss, 1980). This measure was also tested for reliability and validity and generally performed as expected, although some items did not correlate as predicted; all of these, however, were infrequently indicated in the observations. Test/retest reliability, both inter- and intra-observer, was found to be stable (Richards & Levitov, 1985). Other researchers (Levande, 1989) use both the TORP and Moss' scale, while many others (Duffy & Anderson, 1984; Pesce, 1990) have developed their own measures, either used individually or in combination with these.

Factors that Influence Formation of Theoretical Orientation to Reading

According to research (Levande, 1990; Richards et al., 1987; Stice, Bertrand, Leuder, & Dunn, 1989; Troyer & Yopp, 1990) various factors influence the teacher's formation of a theoretical orientation toward reading instruction. Levande (1990), for instance, found that the teacher's classroom experience was the most significant factor in determining theoretical orientation. If the teacher had experienced success and felt that students were learning effectively with a traditional phonics or skills approach to reading, the teacher was likely to maintain a theoretical preference for the orientation which she/he had been using. If, on the other hand, the teacher had experienced dissatisfaction with the basal reader and a skills or phonics approach, this negative experience influenced the teacher's receptiveness to a different approach, such as whole language.

Richards et al. (1987) also concluded that experience plays a major role in determining a teacher's theoretical orientation. They found that teachers with more diverse teaching experiences and training were more likely to favor a whole language approach, while teachers with fewer years of teaching experience and who had taught in fewer different grade levels tended to exhibit a graphophonics orientation. Troyer and Yopp (1990), however, found that teachers who were less experienced and more recently graduated from college were more familiar with whole language. Pesce (1990) also found that teachers who had been teaching less than ten years were more likely to use whole language approaches to reading instruction. Other research has shown that older, more experienced teachers are more content-centered, rather than child-centered, in their approach to reading instruction (Duffy & Anderson, 1984).

Educational training has also been shown to affect theoretical orientation to reading. Teachers who favor a skills orientation have reported feeling that their training in reading methods was inadequate (Levande, 1990). These teachers also had completed fewer undergraduate reading courses (Richards et al., 1987). Teachers reported learning about whole language in graduate courses, and those with Masters degrees tend to be more familiar with the whole language orientation (Pesce, 1990; Troyer & Yopp, 1990).

Research (Stice et al., 1989) has also attempted to correlate psychological characteristics and teachers' theoretical orientation, using the TORP and the Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator; Kolb Learning Styles Inventory; Torrence Right, Left, and Whole Brain Dominance Index; Rokeach Dogmatism Scale; and Rotter Locus of Control Scale. The researchers obtained few statistically significant results but several interesting trends. There were no statistically significant differences among teachers with different orientations, as measured with the TORP, on brain dominance or the locus of control measure. However, teachers whose TORP scores were higher, identifying a whole language orientation, had significantly lower scores on the index of dogmatism, which indicates that as a group teachers who favor whole language may be more willing to try new ideas than those who favor the skills or phonics approaches. The researchers also found that a statistically significant percentage of the phonics teachers were "judgers," according to their Meyers Briggs scores, and that 81 percent of the skills teachers were "feelers." As measured on the learning styles indicator, about half of the skills teachers were Type 1, or concrete experiencers who are influenced by the advice of experts, while about the same percentage of whole language teachers were Type 4, active experimenters who are risk takers.

While researchers tend to agree that teachers do possess a theoretical orientation toward reading instruction, they disagree as to whether the teacher's theoretical orientation determines actual classroom practice and choice of methods. Levande (1989) tried to clarify the extent to which teachers behave consistently with their theoretical orientation during reading instruction. He identified teachers' theoretical orientation with the TORP and then used Moss' classroom analysis to determine the teachers' actual practice. He concluded that 53 percent of the teachers taught reading in a manner inconsistent with their theoretical beliefs; all of the phonics teachers (three) were actually using skills methods, and five of the eleven skills teachers were primarily using whole language techniques. The whole language teacher in this study was consistently using whole language strategies. Only one whole language teacher was included in the sample, a stratified random sample of the respondents to the TORP, and the small size of all three groups could have affected the results. Through follow up interviews with the teachers, Levande found that the materials available to the teachers had more impact on their teaching than did their theoretical orientation. For instance, all of the phonics teachers were using a basal reading series with a skills emphasis that was chosen by the district, and the skills teachers who used whole language techniques taught in a school that was encouraging a transition to whole language. Their scores on the TORP also were in the high end of the skills orientation, indicating that they were leaning toward whole language.

In another study, Levande (1990) found that teachers who favored a skills or phonics orientation felt that the decisions about reading programs and materials were made by others, such as principals or district curriculum guidelines. On the other hand, whole language teachers felt encouraged but

not mandated to implement whole language programs in their classrooms.

Other factors have also been shown to affect teachers' theoretical orientation to reading. Theoretical orientation may be situational (Richards & Levitov, 1985). Richards et al. (1987) found that classroom management problems, the students' abilities and grade level, and administrative demands all influenced teachers' decisions about reading instruction. Duffy and Anderson (1984) hypothesized that significantly different belief systems about reading should predict different classroom practices and expected outcomes for students, and that the clarity and depth of a teacher's beliefs, rather than specific beliefs, would have more impact on actual practices in the classroom. This was not found to be true. After observing 24 teachers for two years, Duffy and Anderson concluded that there was not a strong relationship between theoretical orientation and classroom practice, and that teachers tend to make instructional decisions based on other factors, such as management and classroom routine, the ability and grade level of students, and students' social needs.

Developmentally Appropriate Reading Instruction

While it is not the purpose of this study to judge one philosophy of reading instruction as more valid than others, it is necessary to describe a reading program that is based on the guidelines for developmentally appropriate practice and that therefore could be considered more appropriate in the education of young children than other methods.

Strickland (1990) discusses one perspective on children's acquisition of early reading and writing skills, or emergent literacy. According to Strickland, learning to read and write are interrelated processes that begin early in life and

are ongoing in conjunction with oral language development. Literacy development requires active participation in meaningful, relevant experiences. She says that an "emergent literacy curriculum emphasizes the ongoing development of skill in reading and writing and stresses participation in literacy activities that are meaningful and functional from the child's point of view (p.19)." From a developmentally appropriate perspective, this view of literacy means that reading instruction is integrated into every aspect of the curriculum, and that content is interesting and relevant to children. The classroom is a print-rich environment, and children experience constant exposure to books and other forms of language. Skills are not taught hierarchically or in isolation but in context as needed, building on what children already know, and assessment is ongoing and authentic.

DeVries and Kohlberg (1987) believe that appropriate reading instruction should follow the same guidelines as instruction in other areas. They offer 14 guidelines for reading instruction in early childhood programs. These include taking into consideration the child's current knowledge; respecting and encouraging errors and predictions; exposing children to a wide variety of written materials; allowing time for meaningful reading and writing activities, both individually and in social groups; and grouping children heterogeneously for reading instruction. The NAEYC guidelines for developmentally appropriate practice also specifically address reading instruction. According to these standards, the goal of a language program in the primary grades is to expand children's enjoyment of and abilities to communicate through written and oral language. Skills should be taught only as needed by individual children and in a variety of enjoyable, meaningful contexts in which children are actively involved (Bredekamp, 1987).

Summary

The current guidelines for developmentally appropriate practices in early childhood programs were developed by the NAEYC and are based on Piagetian theories of development. The guidelines address various aspects of programs serving young children and are inconsistent with the psychometric philosophy of education that is common in many kindergarten and primary grade classrooms.

Research indicates that teachers are generally familiar with developmentally appropriate practices and include many appropriate activities in their classrooms. However, there is also considerable evidence that teachers are using traditional techniques that are less developmentally appropriate.

The review of related literature further indicates that teachers tend to favor one of three theoretical orientations to reading instruction: an emphasis on phonics instruction, an emphasis on skills instruction, or a whole language orientation to reading instruction. Various factors have been shown to be influential in teachers' formation of a theoretical orientation to reading instruction, although the research into these factors has produced conflicting results. For instance, some researchers (Pesce, 1990; Troyer & Yopp, 1990) concluded that teachers with less experience and who had recently graduated were more likely to favor a whole language approach to reading instruction. Others (Richards et al., 1987) found just the opposite.

After reviewing the literature about developmentally appropriate practices and theoretical orientation to reading instruction, this researcher finds considerable evidence that there is a relationship between the two areas. Characteristics of the different beliefs about reading instruction either match or

do not match the guidelines for developmentally appropriate practice. Thus, one theoretical orientation to reading instruction may be more appropriate for the education of young children than others.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Selection of Sample Population

The subjects for the study were a random sample of teachers in kindergarten through third grade in the Millard, Nebraska, Public Schools. Millard is a suburban school district in the Midwest with slightly more than 1000 teachers in 18 elementary and six secondary schools. Using the 1993-94 district personnel directory, the researcher compiled a list of all kindergarten through third grade teachers in the district's elementary schools. Surveys were sent to 40 out of 69 first grade teachers, 40 of 60 third grade teachers, 38 of 60 second grade teachers, and 38 of 39 kindergarten teachers. Of those included in the first grade sample, seven taught in either first-second or first-third grade classrooms. All of the subjects were randomly selected, and all were classroom teachers.

Instrumentation

The teachers were sent a mail questionnaire consisting of a survey of demographic information, including age, number of years of teaching, number of years teaching in the current grade level and number of grade levels taught, highest level of education and dates obtained, and number of early childhood and reading courses completed (see Appendix B). The main instrument was a seventy item questionnaire, which included DeFord's (1985) Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP) and Smith's (1993) Primary Teacher Questionnaire (PTQ) (Appendix A). The TORP and PTQ have both been tested for their validity and reliability.

Theoretical orientation to reading instruction

The TORP is a measure of teachers' endorsement of statements about reading instruction. Teachers respond to the statements using a five point Likert response scale. Possible scores range from 0-140. Scores from 0-65 indicate that the teacher endorses a Phonics Orientation; scores from 65-110 indicate a Skills Orientation; and scores from 110-140 indicate a Whole Language Orientation.

Developmentally appropriate practices

The PTQ, a measure of teachers' endorsement of statements about developmentally appropriate practices, consists of two scales, the Developmentally Appropriate Scale (DAP) and the Traditional Scale (TRAD). It uses a four point Likert response scale. DAP scores range from 18-72, with higher scores indicating more knowledge of developmentally appropriate practices. TRAD scores range from 24-96, with higher scores indicating more endorsement of traditional practices. A total score is obtained by reflecting the TRAD score (1=4; 2=3; 3=2; 4=1) and adding it to the DAP score, for a measure of total endorsement of appropriate practices and rejection of inappropriate practices.

Procedure

The research was conducted in the fall semester of the 1993-94 school year, after permission was received from the Millard Public Schools to send the surveys through inter-school mail.

Randomly selected primary teachers received the survey and a letter of explanation of the study on October 26, 1993, along with a pre-addressed envelope in which to return it. Since the surveys were anonymously returned, a

follow-up letter was sent November 16, 1993, to the entire sample, asking teachers to complete and return the survey if they had not yet done so. Each teacher who received a survey was sent a letter of appreciation for participating.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, (SPSS-X User Guide, 3rd edition, Chicago: SPSS, Inc., 1988) on the U. N. O. VAX mainframe computer. The SPSS-X programs FREQUENCIES, MEANS, CORRELATION, AND ANOVA were used for data analysis.

Chapter 4: Results

The demographic variables for this study included teacher gender, ethnic identification, age, experience, reading and early childhood background and education, and year of most recent degree. Dependent variables were TORP score and scores on the DAP Scale and TRAD Scale of the PTQ, as well as PTQ total score. Frequencies and mean values were calculated. In addition, the relationships among the variables were assessed using correlational analysis and analysis of variance with *a posteriori* multiple comparisons using the Least Significant Difference (LSD) procedure.

Description of Sample

Of the 156 teachers who received surveys, 47 percent responded. All but one of the respondents were female, and all but one were white Americans. This reflects a lack of diversity in the staff of the school district as a whole. As shown in Figure 1, approximately the same percentage of respondents was from each grade level, although there were fewer first grade teachers and multi-grade teachers. Figure 2 shows that 62 percent of the respondents were between 30 and 49 years old, and Figure 3 shows their experience in their current grade level, as well as in their careers. Sixty-eight percent had taught in only one or two grade levels, with 47.8 percent teaching in two grades. As indicated in Figure 4, just over half (50.7 percent) of the teachers responding to the survey had earned masters degrees or beyond.

Figure 1

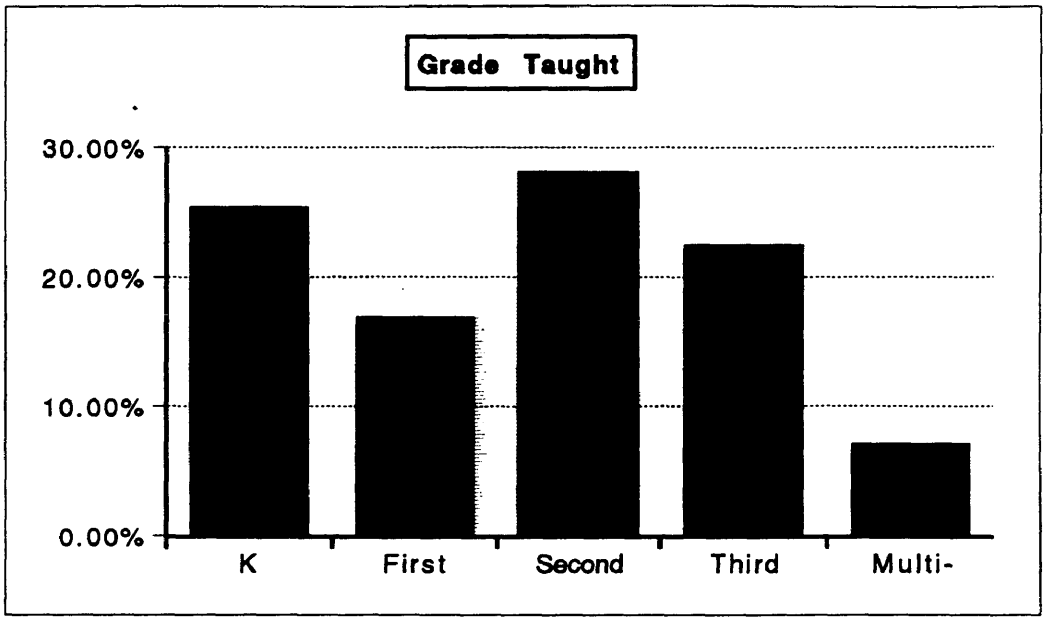


Figure 2

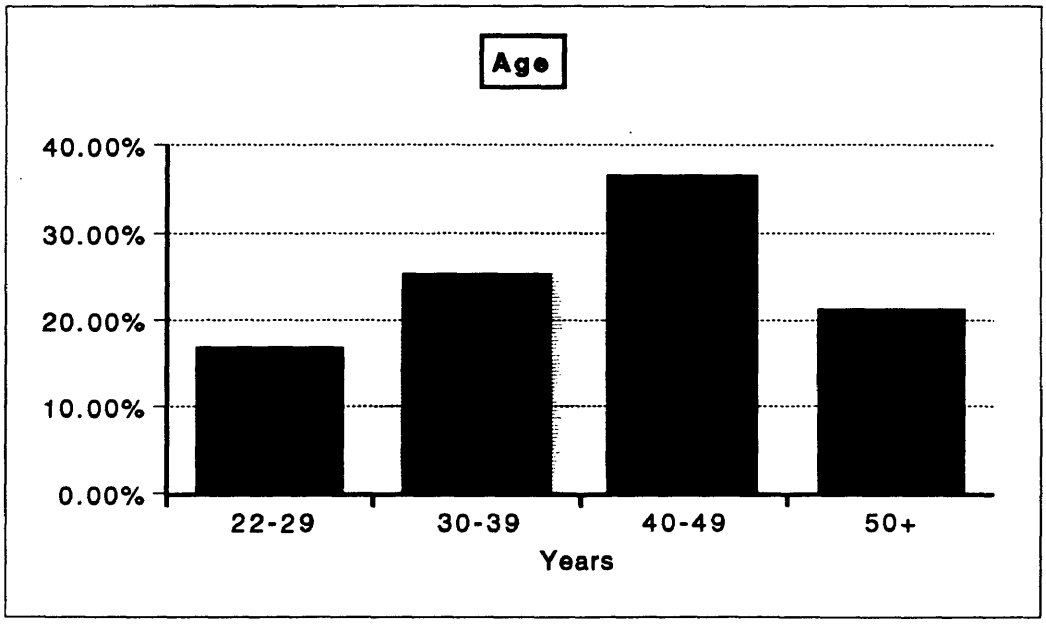


Figure 3

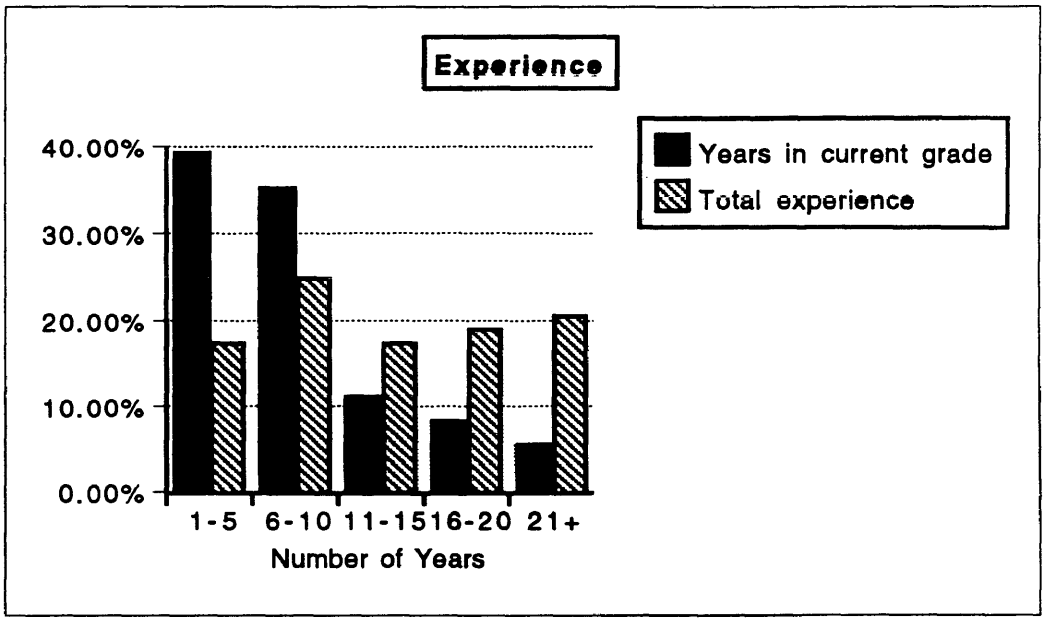
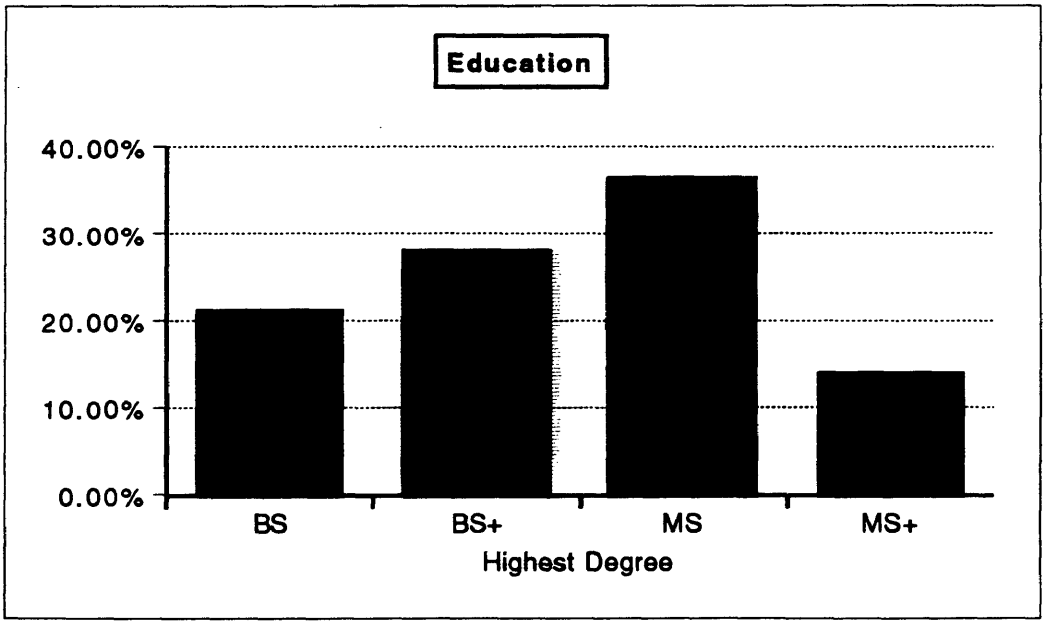


Figure 4



Background in reading and background in early childhood education were calculated by adding the respondents' undergraduate, graduate, and inservice courses in each area to provide composite indicators of overall reading and overall early childhood background experience. The respondents' overall background in early childhood education ranged from two to nine or more total courses. As a group they had slightly more training in reading than in early childhood, with an average of just over two undergraduate reading courses, just under two graduate reading courses, and three or more inservice courses in reading. They had taken an average of two undergraduate courses and one graduate-level early childhood course, as well as two inservice courses in early childhood education (see Figures 5 and 6).

TORP Scores

The possible range of scores on the TORP is 0-140. Scores from 0-65 indicate a phonics orientation; scores from 65-110 indicate a skills orientation; and scores from 110-140 indicate a whole language orientation. For the present sample, the scores ranged from 54-127. One teacher scored in the phonics orientation (1%), 58 in the skills orientation (89.5%), and 6 in the whole language orientation (9.5%), as indicated in Figure 7. Six were incomplete and could not be scored. The only teacher who scored in the phonics range had a score of 54. Of the whole language teachers, three were very close to the skills range, scoring 111. The other three scored 113, 116, and 127. The mean for the skills group was 90.12. Table 1 shows a frequency distribution for those teachers who scored in the skills orientation range.

Figure 5

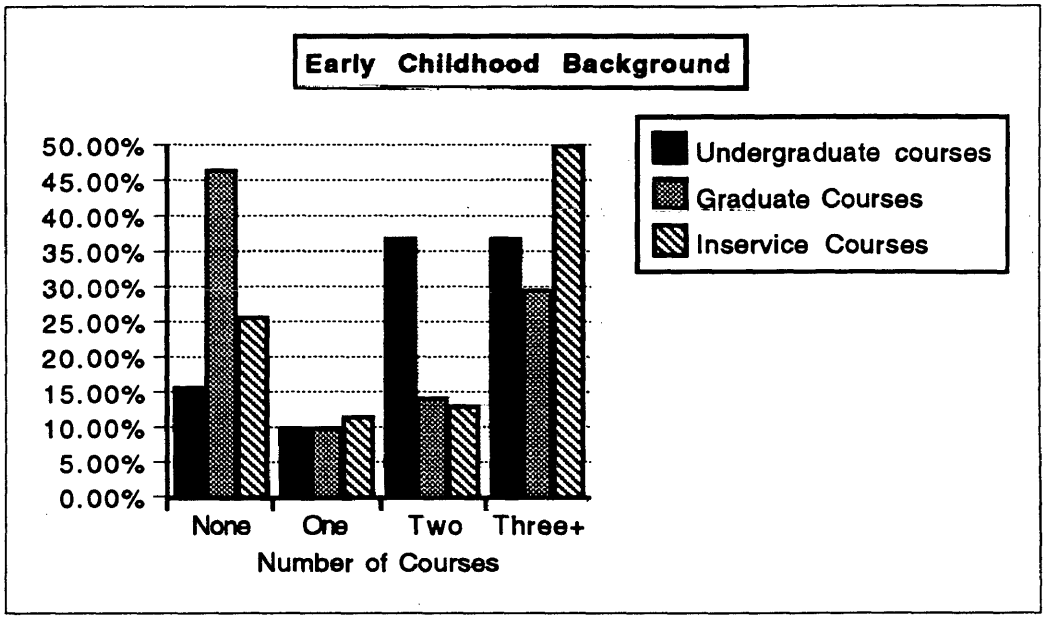


Figure 6

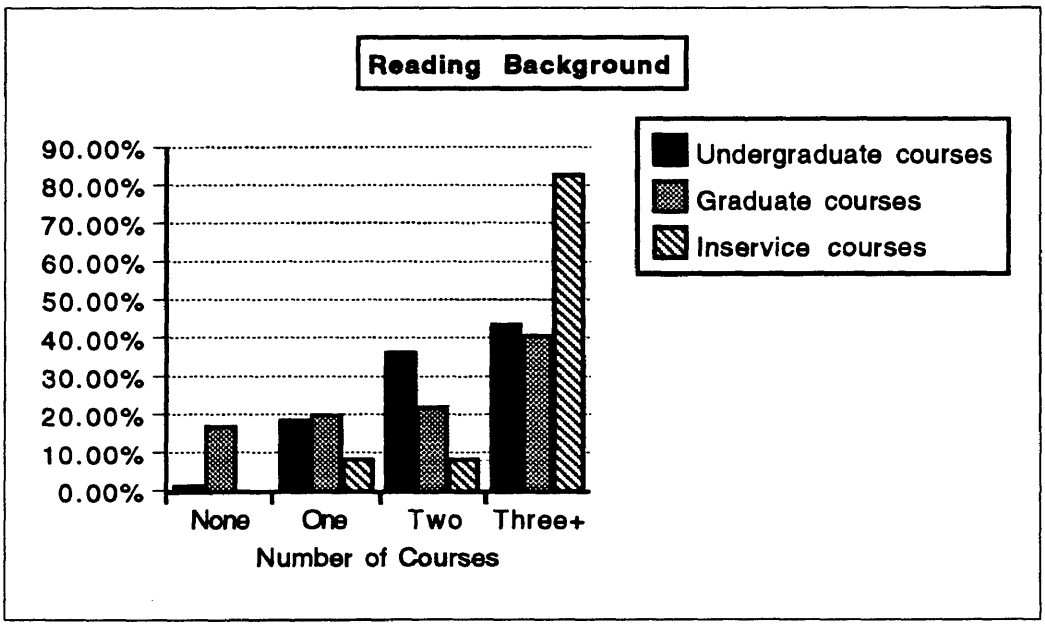
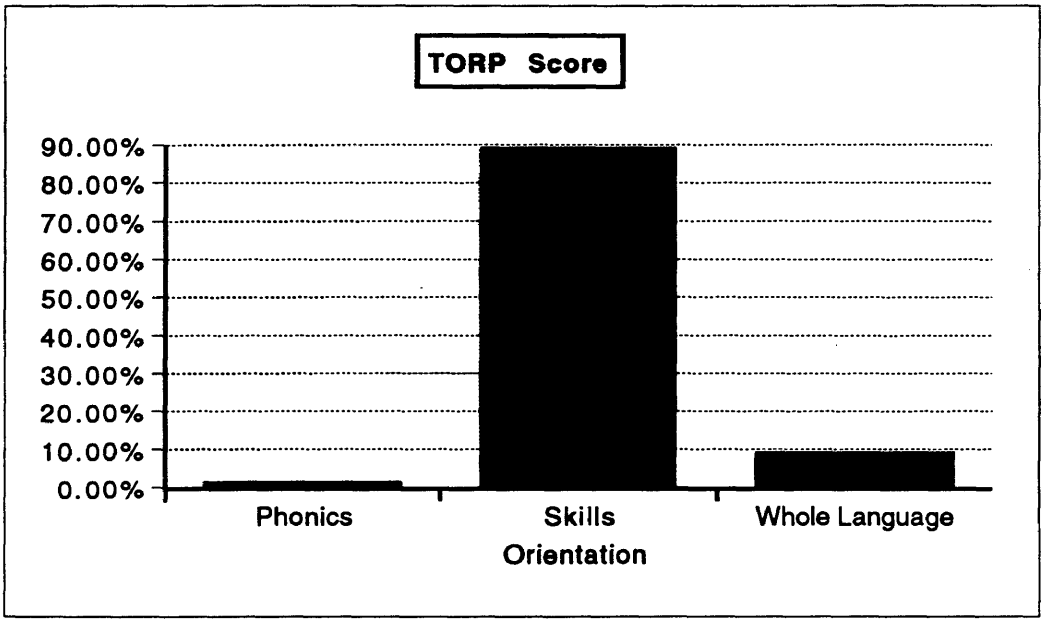


Table 1
TORP Scores for the Skills Orientation group

TORP Score	n
Low (67-81)	15
Moderate (82-96)	21
High (97-110)	22

N=58

Figure 7



PTQ Scores

On the PTQ, possible scores on the DAP scale range from 18-72 (Higher scores indicate more knowledge of developmentally appropriate practices). TRAD scores range from 24-96 (Higher scores indicate more endorsement of traditional practices.). The total score is obtained by reflecting (1=4, 2=3, 3=2, 4=1) the TRAD scale scores and adding them to the DAP scores. In the present study, the sample had a mean DAP score of 57.016 and range from 21-72. Their TRAD scores ranged from 28-83, with a mean of 50.814. PTQ total scores ranged from 97-158, with a mean of 125.536. Tables 2, 3, and 4 show frequency distributions for scores on the sub scales of the PTQ and total PTQ score.

Correlations

Pearson product-moment correlations were calculated for all variables with one another. The intercorrelation matrix revealed many statistically significant correlations among the variables, which are presented in Tables 5, 6, and 7.

As predicted in the first hypothesis, there was a correlation between teachers' TORP scores and PTQ scores. There were statistically significant correlations between TORP scores and scores on both the DAP Scale (r = .4386, $p < .01$) and TRAD Scale (r = -.5529, $p < .01$) of the PTQ. TORP scores also correlated significantly to PTQ composite scores (r = .5759, $p < .01$).

There was a significant positive relationship between teachers' background in reading and their background in early childhood education (r = .2731, $p < .05$). Specifically, there was a positive relationship between inservice courses in reading and inservice courses in early childhood education (r = .2414, $p < .05$), as well as graduate-level reading courses and graduate

Table 2
DAP Scale Scores

Score	n
18-28	1
29-39	1
40-50	8
51-61	35
62-72	19

N = 64

Table 3
TRAD Scores

Score	n
23-33	4
34-44	13
45-55	20
56-66	18
67-77	3
78-88	1

N = 59

Table 4
PTQ Total Scores

Score	n
94-101	3
102-109	4
110-117	10
118-125	14
126-133	10
134-141	6
142-149	5
150-157	2
158-165	2

N = 56

Table 5

Intercorrelations Among Demographic Variables

	1 Age	2 Grade	3 Yrs. in Grade	4 Yrs. Taught	5 No. Gd. Taught	6 Degree
1. Age	–					
2. Grade	-.0823	–				
3. Yrs. in Grade	.4923**	-.3147**	–			
4. Yrs. Taught	.6623**	-.0494	.6602**	–		
5. No. Gd. Taught	.1804	.3796**	-.1792	.1914	–	
6. Degree	.2484*	.-.0461	.3898**	.5414**	.2192	–

Note. Values for gender, ethnic origin and year of degree were omitted.
*$p<.05$
**$p<.01$

Table 6
Intercorrelations Among Variables

	Age	Grade	Yrs. in Grade	Yrs. Taught	No. Gd. Taught	Degree
U.G. ECE	-.0836	-.0530	.0952	-.1595	-.1686	-.2230
Grad. ECE	.3363**	-.3245**	.5083**	.3278**	-.2965*	.3158**
Insrv. ECE	.2755*	-.1219	.2731*	.2443*	.0501	.3796**
U.G. Rdg.	-.2662*	-.0852	.0015	-.1699	.0551	-.1905
Grad. Rdg.	.0072	-.0475	.1887	.2112	-.0431	.2832*
Insrv. Rdg.	-.0491	.0716	.1305	.2028	.0832	.1769
Bkg. ECE	.2737*	-.2403*	.4122**	.2181	-.1941	.2488*
Bkg. Rdg.	-.1279	-.0602	.1945	.1421	.0150	.1794
DAP Score	.0267	-.3117*	.1055	.0525	-.1299	-.0042
TRAD Score	-.0042	-.1029	-.1057	-.0837	-.1478	-.1638
PTQ Score	.0343	-.0728	.0717	.0997	.0577	.1416
TORP Score	-.1910	-.0811	-.0112	-.1651	.0805	.0982

Note. Values for gender, ethnic origin and year of degree were omitted.
*$p<.05$
**$p<.01$

Table 7
Intercorrelations Among Variables

	Grad. ECE	Insrv. ECE	Grad. Rdg.	Insrv. Rdg.	Bkg. ECE	Bkg. Rdg.	DAP Score	TRAD Score	PTQ Score	TORP Score
Grad. ECE	--									
Insrv. ECE	.5346**	--								
Grad. Rdg.	.3287**	.1863	--							
Insrv. Rdg.	-.0570	.2414*	.1984	--						
Bkg. ECE	.8665**	.7610**	.3153**	.0632	--					
Bkg. Rdg.	.1793	.2325	.8639**	.4429**	.2731*	--				
DAP Score	.2681*	.2387	.2995*	.0921	.2785*	.2734*	--			
TRAD Score	.0234	-.1884	-.0933	-.1954	.0139	-.0944	-.2167	--		
PTQ Score	.0820	.2863*	.1974	.1625	.1020	.1607	.7101**	-.8412**	--	
TORP Score	.0172	.1437	.3391**	.1901	.1259	.3602**	.4386**	-.5529**	.5759**	--

Note. Values for undergraduate reading and early childhood courses were omitted.
*$p<.05$
**$p<.01$

level early childhood courses ($r = .3287$, $p < .01$).

It was hypothesized that there would be correlations between some of the independent variables and scores on the PTQ and TORP. As stated in hypothesis 2. a., the researcher expected to find a correlation between teachers' age and experience and theoretical orientation to reading; there were no significant relationships. Similarly, as stated in hypothesis 2. b., the researcher expected to find a correlation between teachers' degree obtained and their TORP scores; there were no significant correlations between these two variables either. However, as predicted in hypothesis 2. c., there was a significant positive relationship between TORP scores and background in reading ($r = .3602$, $p < .01$). Graduate reading courses accounted for nearly all of the relationship ($r = .3391$, $p < .01$), and neither undergraduate reading courses nor inservice courses in reading had significant correlation with TORP scores.

Graduate reading courses also had a significant positive relationship to scores on the DAP Scale of the PTQ ($r = .2995$, $p < .05$). In addition, total reading background correlated positively to DAP scores ($r = .2734$, $p < .05$).

Although total early childhood education background correlated to scores on the DAP ($r = .2785$, $p < .05$), graduate level courses accounted for most of the correlation ($r = .2681$, $p < .05$). However, both early childhood undergraduate and inservice courses were not significantly related to DAP scores, although early childhood inservices did have a significant positive correlation with total PTQ scores ($r = .2863$, $p < .05$). Neither undergraduate nor graduate courses did.

Teachers in higher grades seem to have less knowledge of developmentally appropriate practices than those in lower grades, since there

was a significant negative relationship between grade level taught and score on the DAP Scale (r = -.3117, p < .05).

Number of inservice courses in early childhood education was the only factor that was significantly positively related to PTQ total score (r = .2863, p < .05), although grade level taught, number of graduate level early childhood and reading courses completed, as well as backgrounds in early childhood and reading, all correlated to scores on the DAP Scale.

Analyses of Variance

A series of one-way analyses of variance (ANOVA) was performed to determine if there were significant differences between the mean scores of various groups on the TORP or PTQ. The ANOVA for TORP scores, with level of early childhood background as the independent variable, revealed a near significant effect for group means on the TORP between groups with different backgrounds in early childhood education (F = 1.9995, p = .0576), which is shown in Table 8. The *a posteriori* multiple comparison procedure indicated that the groups with zero courses or one course in early childhood education scored significantly differently on the TORP than the groups with three or more courses, as did the group with one and the group with two courses (p < .05).

The ANOVA for TORP scores, with reading background as the independent variable, revealed a near-significant difference (F = 1.9789, p = .0837) between the mean TORP scores of groups with different backgrounds in reading, as indicated in Table 9. There was also a statistically significant difference (F = 4.3540, p = .0076) between mean TORP scores of groups with different numbers of graduate-level reading courses (See Table 10). The *a posteriori* LSD multiple comparison procedure revealed that teachers

Table 8
ANOVA: TORP Score by Early Childhood Background

S. V.	*d.f.*	*M.S.*	*F*	*F-Prob.*
Between Groups	9	324.3158	1.9995	.0576
Within Groups	53	162.1997		
Total	62			

Table 9
ANOVA: TORP Score by Reading Background

S. V.	*d.f.*	*M.S.*	*F*	*F-Prob.*
Between Groups	6	336.3276	1.9789	.0837
Within Groups	57	169.9611		
Total	63			

Table 10
ANOVA: TORP Score by Graduate Reading Courses

S. V.	*d.f.*	*M.S.*	*F*	*F-Prob.*
Between Groups	3	694.3253	4.3540	.0076
Within Groups	61	159.4670		
Total	63			

with two or more graduate reading courses and those with one scored significantly differently ($p < .05$).

Similarly, according to the ANOVA for TORP scores, using number of reading inservice courses as the independent variable, groups with different numbers of reading inservice courses had nearly significantly different scores on the TORP ($F = 2.9916$, $p = .0576$), as shown in Table 11. The LSD multiple comparison procedure showed that groups with three or more inservice courses in reading and those with two were significantly different in their TORP scores ($p < .05$).

Tables 12 through 14 summarize the results of the ANOVAs comparing the DAP scores of various groups. The ANOVA for DAP scores, using number of reading inservice courses as the independent variable, revealed statistically significant differences in DAP mean scores for groups with different numbers of reading inservice courses ($F = 6.1892$, $p = .0036$) (See Table 12). Teachers with one or three or more inservices had significantly different mean scores than those with two inservice courses in reading ($p < .05$), according to the *a posteriori* multiple comparison procedure. Graduate reading courses produced no significant differences on DAP mean score in the ANOVA for DAP score, using number of graduate reading courses as the independent variable, except between the groups with three or more and with no courses, which was indicated by the LSD multiple comparison procedure ($p < .05$) (Table 13). Table 14 shows the results of the ANOVA for DAP scores, with graduate early childhood courses as the independent variable. There were near significant differences ($F = 2.2154$, $p = .0956$) on DAP scores, with a significant difference between the groups with three or more courses and those with none ($p < .05$), as indicated by the LSD multiple comparison procedure.

Table 11
ANOVA: TORP Score by Inservice Courses in Reading

S. V.	*d.f.*	*M.S.*	*F*	*F-Prob.*
Between Groups	2	522.8009	2.9916	.0576
Within Groups	61	174.7565		
Total	63			

Table 12
ANOVA: DAP Score by Inservice Courses in Reading

S. V.	*d.f.*	*M.S.*	*F*	*F-Prob.*
Between Groups	2	361.0102	6.1892	.0036
Within Groups	60	58.3288		
Total	62			

Table 13
ANOVA: DAP Score by Graduate Reading Courses

S. V.	*d.f.*	*M.S.*	*F*	*F-Prob.*
Between Groups	3	135.1600	2.1199	.1071
Within Groups	60	63.7584		
Total	63			

Table 14
ANOVA: DAP Score by Graduate Early Childhood Courses

S. V.	*d.f.*	*M.S.*	*F*	*F-Prob.*
Between Groups	3	140.6456	2.2154	.0956
Within Groups	60	63.4841		
Total	63			

The ANOVA for PTQ scores, using grade level taught as the independent variable, indicated differences between teachers of different grade levels on PTQ scores. There was a near significant difference in mean PTQ total score for teachers in different grade levels ($F = 2.1462$, $p = .0885$) (See Table 15). The *a posteriori* multiple comparison procedure indicated that the mean for kindergarten teachers was significantly different from that for first grade and third grade teachers ($p < .05$). Further, as shown in Table 16, there was a significant difference in TRAD score between teachers of different grade levels ($F = 2.8789$, $p = .0311$). The LSD multiple comparison procedure indicated significantly different mean scores for kindergarten teachers and first grade teachers, as well as between multi-grade teachers and teachers of first, second, and third grade ($p< .05$).

All other ANOVAs produced no significant differences (See Tables 17-43).

Summary

The analysis of data collected through frequency and mean values, Pearson product-moment correlations, and a series of ANOVAs revealed many statistically significant relationships between the variables studied. Hypothesis 1, that TORP scores and PTQ scores would be related, was confirmed. Hypothesis 2. c., that background in reading and background in early childhood education would be related to TORP scores, was also confirmed. Hypothesis 2. a. and 2. b. were not found to be true, as no significant correlations were found between teacher age, experience, or degree and TORP score. In addition, many other significant relationships among the variables that were not addressed by the hypotheses were discovered.

Table 15
ANOVA: PTQ Total Score by Grade Taught

S. V.	*d.f.*	*M.S.*	*F*	*F-Prob.*
Between Groups	4	435.3919	2.1462	.0885
Within Groups	51	202.8698		
Total	55			

Table 16
ANOVA: TRAD Score by Grade Taught

S. V.	*d.f.*	*M.S.*	*F*	*F-Prob.*
Between Groups	4	310.3609	2.8789	.0311
Within Groups	54	107.8057		
Total	58			

Table 17
ANOVA: DAP Score by Grade Taught

S. V.	*d.f.*	*M.S.*	*F*	*F-Prob.*
Between Groups	4	118.4153	1.8594	.1296
Within Groups	59	63.6834		
Total	63			

Table 18
ANOVA:TORP Score by Grade Taught

S. V.	*d.f.*	*M.S.*	*F*	*F-Prob.*
Between Groups	4	156.8404	.8415	.5044
Within Groups	60	186.3850		
Total	64			

Table 19
ANOVA: DAP Score by Undergraduate Early Childhood Courses

S. V.	*d.f.*	*M.S.*	*F*	*F-Prob.*
Between Groups	3	13.1037	.1846	.9064
Within Groups	59	70.9775		
Total	62			

Table 20
ANOVA: TRAD Score by Undergraduate Early Childhood Courses

S. V.	*d.f.*	*M.S.*	*F*	*F-Prob.*
Between Groups	3	222.0581	1.8860	.1429
Within Groups	54	117.7376		
Total	57			

Table 21
ANOVA: PTQ Score by Undergraduate Early Childhood Courses

S. V.	*d.f.*	*M.S.*	*F*	*F-Prob.*
Between Groups	3	266.3078	1.2044	.3176
Within Groups	51	221.1035		
Total	54			

Table 22
ANOVA: TORP Score by Undergraduate Early Childhood Courses

S. V.	*d.f.*	*M.S.*	*F*	*F-Prob.*
Between Groups	3	218.3861	1.1955	.3192
Within Groups	60	182.6765		
Total	63			

Table 23
ANOVA: TRAD Score by Graduate Early Childhood Courses

S. V.	*d.f.*	*M.S.*	*F*	*F-Prob.*
Between Groups	3	191.0942	1.6195	.1953
Within Groups	55	117.9939		
Total	58			

Table 24
ANOVA: PTQ Total Score by Graduate Early Childhood Courses

S. V.	*d.f.*	*M.S.*	*F*	*F-Prob.*
Between Groups	3	350.0653	1.6492	.1894
Within Groups	52	212.2641		
Total	55			

Table 25
ANOVA: TORP Score by Graduate Early Childhood Courses

S. V.	*d.f.*	*M.S.*	*F*	*F-Prob.*
Between Groups	3	254.2295	1.4037	.2503
Within Groups	61	181.1110		
Total	64			

Table 26
ANOVA: DAP Score by Early Childhood Inservice Courses

S. V.	*d.f.*	*M.S.*	*F*	*F-Prob.*
Between Groups	3	88.5143	1.3200	.2764
Within Groups	59	67.0543		
Total	62			

Table 27
ANOVA: TRAD Score by Early Childhood Inservice Courses

S. V.	*d.f.*	*M.S.*	*F*	*F-Prob.*
Between Groups	3	178.1413	1.4746	.2317
Within Groups	54	120.8086		
Total	57			

Table 28
ANOVA: PTQ Total Score by Early Childhood Inservice Courses

S. V.	*d.f.*	*M.S.*	*F*	*F-Prob.*
Between Groups	3	431.5765	2.0432	.1194
Within Groups	51	211.2206		
Total	54			

Table 29
ANOVA: TORP Score by Early Childhood Inservice Courses

S. V.	*d.f.*	*M.S.*	*F*	*F-Prob.*
Between Groups	3	178.4235	.9584	.4183
Within Groups	60	186.1747		
Total	63			

Table 30
ANOVA: DAP Score by Undergraduate Reading Courses

S. V.	*d.f.*	*M.S.*	*F*	*F-Prob.*
Between Groups	2	52.9187	.7825	.4618
Within Groups	61	67.6254		
Total	63			

Table 31
ANOVA: TRAD Score by Undergraduate Reading Courses

S. V.	*d.f.*	*M.S.*	*F*	*F-Prob.*
Between Groups	2	28.8014	.2302	.7951
Within Groups	56	125.0955		
Total	58			

Table 32
ANOVA: PTQ Total Score by Undergraduate Reading Courses

S. V.	*d.f.*	*M.S.*	*F*	*F-Prob.*
Between Groups	2	45.9114	.2028	.8170
Within Groups	53	226.3416		
Total	55			

Table 33
ANOVA: TORP Score by Undergraduate Reading Courses

S. V.	*d.f.*	*M.S.*	*F*	*F-Prob.*
Between Groups	2	210.3915	1.1453	.3248
Within Groups	62	183.7045		
Total	64			

Table 34
ANOVA: TRAD Score by Graduate Reading Courses

S. V.	*d.f.*	*M.S.*	*F*	*F-Prob.*
Between Groups	3	152.6653	1.2713	.2933
Within Groups	55	120.0901		
Total	58			

Table 35
ANOVA: PTQ Total Score by Graduate Reading Courses

S. V.	*d.f.*	*M.S.*	*F*	*F-Prob.*
Between Groups	3	211.7204	.9613	.4180
Within Groups	52	220.2455		
Total	55			

Table 36
ANOVA: TRAD Score by Reading Inservice Courses

S. V.	*d.f.*	*M.S.*	*F*	*F-Prob.*
Between Groups	2	195.3081	1.6111	.2089
Within Groups	55	121.2267		
Total	57			

Table 37
ANOVA: PTQ Total Score by Reading Inservice Courses

S. V.	*d.f.*	*M.S.*	*F*	*F-Prob.*
Between Groups	2	211.2728	.9435	.3958
Within Groups	52	223.9315		
Total	54			

Table 38
ANOVA: DAP Score by Early Childhood Background

S. V.	*d.f.*	*M.S.*	*F*	*F-Prob.*
Between Groups	9	90.1198	1.3755	.2233
Within Groups	52	65.5165		
Total	61			

Table 39
ANOVA: TRAD Score by Early Childhood Background

S. V.	*d.f.*	*M.S.*	*F*	*F-Prob.*
Between Groups	9	147.3918	1.2170	.3076
Within Groups	47	127.1094		
Total	56			

Table 40
ANOVA: PTQ Total Score by Early Childhood Background

S. V.	*d.f.*	*M.S.*	*F*	*F-Prob.*
Between Groups	9	187.2277	.7945	.6230
Within Groups	44	235.6500		
Total	53			

Table 41
ANOVA: DAP Score by Reading Background

S. V.	*d.f.*	*M.S.*	*F*	*F-Prob.*
Between Groups	5	117.7533	1.8475	.1181
Within Groups	57	63.7365		
Total	62			

Table 42
ANOVA: TRAD Score by Reading Background

S. V.	*d.f.*	*M.S.*	*F*	*F-Prob.*
Between Groups	5	130.9907	1.0638	.3911
Within Groups	52	123.1372		
Total	57			

Table 43
ANOVA: PTQ Total Score by Reading Background

S. V.	*d.f.*	*M.S.*	*F*	*F-Prob.*
Between Groups	5	303.0964	1.4075	.2381
Within Groups	49	215.3367		
Total	54			

Chapter 5: Discussion

The purpose of this study was to answer the following questions: Is there a correlation between primary teachers' endorsement of developmentally appropriate practices and their theoretical orientation to reading? Are there factors, such as age, education, and experience, that are related to theoretical orientation to reading? The researcher also obtained data on the relationships between the independent variables and teachers' endorsement of developmentally appropriate practices.

Conclusions

From the analysis of data collected in the survey, the researcher concludes that there is a relationship between endorsement of developmentally appropriate practice and theoretical orientation to reading. Specifically, teachers who scored higher on the TORP also scored higher on the PTQ. This is a logical relationship, since the whole language philosophy, indicated by a higher TORP score, is a developmentally appropriate way to teach reading in kindergarten and the primary grades.

In general, primary teachers in this district had a high knowledge of and endorsement of developmentally appropriate practices. However, they also favored many practices that are less appropriate. More specifically, kindergarten teachers and teachers in multi-grade classrooms were most likely to endorse developmentally appropriate practices; first and third grade teachers tended to favor traditional classroom methods.

In addition to grade level taught, background in early childhood education also was related to teachers' level of endorsement of

developmentally appropriate practices. Teachers with more background in early childhood tended to endorse developmentally appropriate practices to a greater extent and to be older, more experienced, and to have taught in fewer different grade levels.

While it is encouraging that the kindergarten teachers in the district tended to be knowledgeable about developmentally appropriate practices, the fact that first grade teachers favored more traditional practices is reason for concern. First grade teachers may feel pressured to teach their students academic skills, in less developmentally appropriate ways, because of district or parent expectations. They may believe that they are expected to produce measurable changes in the children's performance, especially in the area of reading. The concern is that children may not be ready to achieve the expected level of performance. Teachers may be using worksheets and drill in order to achieve these inappropriate objectives.

The primary teachers in this sample overwhelmingly favored a skills approach to teaching reading, as indicated by their TORP scores, although this school district's administration endorses "reading-writing classrooms," which are defined in the Millard Public Schools Elementary Language Arts Framework (1993) as programs in which:

> the primary sources of learning are literature, a wide variety of reading materials, children's experiences and their writing. Textbooks are used on a very infrequent basis. In this type of classroom, teachers are moving toward a process-orientation [the steps toward learning are more important than the product] and integrate curriculum as often as possible.

The reading-writing classroom which this district's administrators advocate is

consistent with a whole language orientation to teaching reading. Even with extensive inservice training provided by the district and considerable graduate-level education in reading and early childhood education, these teachers overwhelmingly endorsed a philosophy of teaching reading that is neither developmentally appropriate nor in agreement with official district policy.

Research has shown that various factors affect teachers' formation of a theoretical orientation to reading instruction. These include teaching experience (Duffy & Anderson, 1984; Levande, 1990; Pesce, 1990; Richards et al., 1987), education (Levande, 1990; Pesce, 1990; Richards et al., 1987), perceived degree of teacher control of decision-making (Levande, 1990), and classroom management and student grade or ability level (Richards & Levitov, 1985; Richards et al., 1987). Levande (1990) concluded that teachers who favored a skills or phonics approach to reading instruction felt that principals or district curriculum guidelines dictated their decisions about reading instruction, while those who favored whole language saw themselves as being responsible for their instructional decisions. Perhaps the teachers in this sample are feeling pressured to teach reading skills, or they may be overwhelmed by the amount of new material with which they are expected to familiarize themselves and are favoring approaches to reading instruction with which they are more comfortable and familiar. Many of the pressures that teachers face, such as parent and community expectations, teacher evaluation procedures, and standardized testing, may also be influencing their beliefs about reading instruction.

In this sample, teachers with more graduate reading courses were more likely to have high scores on the TORP. Pesce (1990) also found that the number of graduate reading courses a teacher had taken was related to

theoretical orientation to reading. However, this researcher found no significant relationship between degree earned and theoretical orientation to reading. In addition, although the researcher had expected younger teachers to be more likely to have higher scores on the TORP, there was no correlation between age and theoretical orientation to reading. Years of experience was also not related to beliefs about reading instruction.

The lack of correlation between TORP scores and many of the variables could be due to a lack of diversity in the sample population. For instance, more than 80 percent of the respondents had been involved in at least three reading inservice training sessions, and nearly all were white women. Other studies have obtained contradictory results, with some researchers finding that more experienced teachers favor a whole language approach (Richards et al., 1987), while others report that more experienced teachers are more likely to endorse a skills or phonics orientation (Duffy & Anderson, 1984; Pesce, 1990).

Although the number of graduate courses a teacher had completed was related to beliefs about reading and developmentally appropriate practice, undergraduate courses and inservice training were not. However, early childhood inservice training seemed to produce more significant correlations than reading inservice training. Possibly because most of the primary teachers in this district receive more extensive inservice training in reading than in early childhood education, the effects of reading inservices on teachers' theoretical orientation to reading may be universal among the sample population and thus not reflected in the results of the survey.

Recommendations

Based on the research literature and the findings of this study, this researcher recommends that school district administrators and others involved in curricular decisions should not make assumptions about teachers' beliefs and background knowledge regarding reading instruction. There is a need to clarify the terms and components of the methods which administrators are endorsing to be sure that everyone involved starts with the same definitions. Perhaps an approach to inservice education which encourages teachers and administrators to work together in developing definitions and procedures would be an effective way to clarify the district's goals while giving teachers input into decisions and thus a sense of involvement in the development of their beliefs about reading instruction.

It is further recommended that the district examine the instructional materials teachers are expected to use in their classrooms. It is possible that these do not reflect a whole language approach to reading as much as a skills approach. The basal reading series, for instance, might emphasize skills such as finding compound words, nouns, or antonyms, rather than reading for information or enjoyment. Teachers' use of the materials should also be considered. Are teachers emphasizing suggested skills lessons and excluding the whole language components built into the program?

This researcher also recommends that teacher educators and school district administrators reevaluate the content and philosophy of their courses and inservice training programs to ensure that preservice teachers, as well as currently practicing teachers, are receiving worthwhile and adequate training in reading instruction as it relates to appropriate practices for young children. The results of this survey indicate that teachers are not endorsing a developmentally

appropriate philosophy of teaching reading. This researcher recommends that inservice and graduate-level courses discuss both reading and developmental appropriateness as they relate to each other in the same classes, rather than in separate courses.

Additionally, training in developmentally appropriate instructional strategies and classroom practices should be made available to all primary teachers, especially first and third grade teachers, to increase their endorsement of developmentally appropriate alternatives to traditional classroom practices.

Recommendations for Future Research

Further research into the content and delivery of district inservice training and the philosophy of the basal reading series teachers are using is necessary to clarify the reasons for the results of this survey. Additional studies in other districts might reveal more differences in beliefs about reading as related to teachers' background education, age, and/or experience and thus confirm other studies.

Several questions for future research arose from the results of this study. The hypotheses did not address the correlations between PTQ scores and factors such as teacher experience, education, and grade level taught, although some correlations were obtained. Future research might further examine these relationships. The relationship between teachers' self-reported beliefs and actual classroom practices was also not addressed by this study; such a study could reveal valuable information.

Another subject which could be addressed in future research deals with the comparison of teachers' and administrators' beliefs about whole language

and developmentally appropriate practices. It would be worthwhile to study the similarities and differences between teachers' and administrators' definitions of key terms and beliefs about these two areas.

Finally, the effects of follow-up training in the areas of reading instruction and developmentally appropriate practices could be studied. With this study as a baseline, it could be determined whether specific inservice courses have measurable effects on teachers' beliefs about reading and appropriate practices in primary grade classrooms.

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Appendix A

The purpose of this questionnaire is to find out how much you agree or disagree with statements about classroom practices in general and about reading instruction. This is not a test; there are no right or wrong answers. You are asked to give your honest opinion of each of the statements.

Please record your responses to the questionnaire on the Answer Sheet provided.

SECTION: 1

PRIMARY GRADES TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

A) STRONGLY DISAGREE WITH THE STATEMENT
B) SOMEWHAT DISAGREE WITH THE STATEMENT
C) SOMEWHAT AGREE WITH THE STATEMENT
D) STRONGLY AGREE WITH THE STATEMENT

1. The child is best viewed in terms of a group norm determined by chronological age and grade level.
2. Curriculum should respond primarily to grade level expectations.
3. The school should be organized so that the individual teacher integrates instruction across the areas of the curriculum.
4. Instruction should consist mainly of reading groups, whole-group activities, and seat work.
5. In the child's acquisition of literacy, the teacher's role should be to guide children toward an increasing competence primarily through individual approaches.
6. Curriculum should primarily facilitate the child's meeting of group expectations as defined by grade level.
7. The teacher's primary goal regarding children's behavior should be to establish and maintain teacher classroom control.
8. A child's progress should be reported relative to the performance of other children within grade level.
9. Teachers should deal with parents mainly through formally scheduled meetings and conferences.
10. Learning materials should be symbolic and representational.
11. Instruction should be clearly divided into separate subject areas.
12. Curriculum should respond primarily to individual differences in ability and interest.
13. Teacher preparation time should be used primarily to prepare the materials used in seatwork and teacher-assigned activities.
14. Learning materials should be concrete and relevant to the child's life.
15. Instruction should consist mainly of projects, learning centers, and play managed primarily by children.

16. Children with special needs should receive special instruction outside the regular classroom whenever possible.

17. Opportunities for work-focused peer social interaction should predominate over whole-group and individual experience.

18. Staff assignments in the primary grades should be available only to teachers with specialized training in early childhood education.

19. For most of the time children should be encouraged to work cooperatively in informal small groups.

20. Grades are a better motivator of children than is the acquisition of competence.

21. Children should be retained or placed in a transition grade if they have not mastered basic skills at grade level.

22. Teacher observation is the most valid way to monitor children's performance.

23. Children should be allowed to use space flexibly to pursue a variety of learning activities alone or in small groups.

24. The most effective way to organize instruction is to have a class size large enough to allow for efficient whole-group approaches.

25. Teacher preparation time should be used primarily to prepare the physical learning environment for hands-on activities.

26. Teachers should deal with parents mainly informally, encouraging them to participate in the school, classroom, and at home.

27. Children should move at their own pace in acquiring important skills in areas such as reading and math.

28. Teachers can most effectively promote children's social-emotional development by consistently using rewards and praise to give feedback about the appropriateness of children's behavior.

29. The classroom group should vary frequently in size and age range depending on the needs of the children.

30. The classroom group should be determined primarily by chronological age and should vary little after the beginning of the school year.

31. In the child's acquisition of literacy, the teacher's role should be to diagnose and correct errors in a specified body of subject matter content and skills.

32. A test is the most valid way to monitor children's performance.

33. Teachers can most effectively promote children's social-emotional development by allowing peers to interact to make cooperative choices among appropriate activities.

34. Children should be expected to keep pace with the group in acquiring important skills in areas such as reading and math.

35. For most of the time children should be expected to work quietly on their own and in teacher-led small groups.

36. Primarily, teachers should motivate children's behavior through the careful use of rewards and punishments in the classroom.

37. Curriculum and instruction should primarily develop the child's individual self-esteem, sense of competence, and positive feelings towards learning.

38. The child is best viewed as a unique person with an individual pattern and timing of growth and development.

39. Curriculum should be primarily designed to develop the intellectual domain, stressing the acquisition of carefully defined discreet skills.

40. Primarily, teachers should build on children's internal motivation.

41. Staff assignments in the primary grades should be available to any teacher with elementary certification.

42. Children should be assigned permanent personal space such as a desk where they are expected to work quietly by themselves.

SECTION: II

THE DeFORD THEORETICAL ORIENTATION TO READING PROFILE

Read each statement carefully and then choose the response that indicates the relationship of the statement to your feelings about reading and reading instruction.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THERE ARE FIVE CHOICES

A) STRONGLY DISAGREE
B) SOMEWHAT DISAGREE
C) UNDECIDED
D) SOMEWHAT AGREE
E) STRONGLY AGREE

43. A child needs to be able to verbalize the rules of phonics in order to assure proficiency in processing new words.

44. An increase in reading errors is usually related to a decrease in comprehension.

45. Dividing words into syllables according to rules is a helpful instructional practice for reading new words.

46. Fluency and expression are necessary components of reading that indicat good comprehension.

47. Materials for early reading should be written in natural language without concern for short, simple words and sentences.

48. When children do not know a word, they should be instructed to sound out its parts.

49. It is a good practice to allow children to edit what is written into their own dialect when learning to read.

50. The use of a glossary or dictionary is necessary in determining the meaning and pronunciation of new words.

51. Reversals (e.g., saying "saw" for "was") are significant problems in the teaching of reading.

52. It is a good practice to correct a child as soon as an oral reading mistake is made.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

60. Flash card drill with sight words is an unnecessary form of practice in reading instruction.

61. Ability to use accent patterns in multi-syllable words should be developed as part of reading instruction.

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

63. Formal instruction in reading is necessary to ensure the adequate development of all skills used in reading.

64. Phonic analysis is the most important form of analysis used when meeting new words.

65. Children's initial encounters with print should focus on meaning, not upon exact graphic representation.

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

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

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

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

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

Appendix B

General Information

Please respond to the following questions and return this page with your answer sheet.

Gender: A. Female B. Male

Age: A. 22-29 B. 30-39 C. 40-49 D. 50-59 E. over 59

With which of the following ethnic groups do you primarily identify?

A. Czech
B. German
C. Irish
D. Italian
E. Other European _____
F. Black American
G. American Indian or Alaskan Native
H. Hispanic
I. Asian or Pacific Islander _____
J. Other _____

What grade level do you teach? _____

How long have you taught in your current grade level? _____ in your career? _____

How many different grade levels have you taught? _____

What is your highest degree obtained? _____ Year received? _____

As an undergraduate, how many early childhood courses did you take?
A. None B. One C. Two D. Three or more

As a graduate student, how many early childhood courses have you taken?
A. None B. One C. Two D. Three or more

In how many inservices on early childhood education have you participated?
A. None B. One C. Two D. Three or more

As an undergraduate, how many reading courses did you take?
A. None B. One C. Two D. Three or more

As a graduate student, how many reading courses have you taken?
A. None B. One C. Two D. Three or more

In how many inservices on reading instruction have you participated?
A. None B. One C. Two D. Three or more

Comments:

If you would like a copy of the research results, send me a note at Walt Disney School.

THANK YOU!

Appendix C

Walt Disney Elementary
October 29, 1993

Dear Primary Teacher:

I am a graduate student at the University of Nebraska working on my Master's thesis. Because of the current emphasis on language arts and reading instruction, I have chosen primary teachers' beliefs about reading instruction as the topic of my research. You are a part of a group of teachers randomly selected to participate in the study. Please help me with my thesis by taking time to complete the enclosed survey. I would greatly appreciate your time and assistance.

All information you provide will remain completely confidential; no teachers will be identified, either individually or by building.

It is important that I receive a response from every teacher who received the survey, in order to obtain meaningful results. Please take a few minutes to complete the survey, and indicate your responses on the enclosed answer sheet with a number 2 pencil. Make sure to use the correct scale for your responses, since the scales for each section are different. Return the answer sheet and demographic information to me at **Walt Disney School by November 15, 1993.**

As a fellow Millard teacher, I understand the time pressures you are probably facing. Thank you in advance for taking the time to help with my research!

Sincerely,

Carla S. Ketner

Appendix D

November 16, 1993

Dear Teacher:
I recently sent you a survey through school mail. If you have not yet finished the survey, please take a few minutes to do so. Although you are not required to complete the survey, your response is the only way for me to meaningfully continue my research. I would greatly appreciate your input. Please return the completed survey by November 24, 1993.
Thank you again for your help with this project.

Sincerely,

Carla Ketner

Appendix E

November 29, 1993

Dear Primary Teacher:

Thank you very much for completing my recent survey. The information you provided will enable me to finish my thesis. I greatly appreciate your time and thoughtful input.

Sincerely,

Carla Ketner