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Reading Specialist Practices at the Third Grade Level in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania

Bernadette Josephine Nemeth

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READING SPECIALIST PRACTICES AT THE THIRD GRADE LEVEL
IN ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

by

Bernadette Josephine Nemeth

Submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Education

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School of Education

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December, 2006

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By

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Abstract

This study describes the actual, perceived, and ideal roles of the reading specialist as compared to the Elements found within of the International Reading Association's Standards for Specialized Reading Personnel, Revised, 2003 (IRA, 2004). Reading specialists, classroom teachers, and principals involved at the third grade level participated in this study. The purpose of this study was to discern how closely the practices of the reading specialists in Allegheny County conform to the Standards for Reading Professionals, Revised, 2003 (IRA, 2004) with specific reference to third grade settings. The total research population was 381, 127 each of the subgroups. However, 71 total participants returned surveys and power limited the findings. Overall, the respondents in this study reported that the specialists were following Standards 2, instruction and 3, assessment. The roles of instruction, assessment, and professional development were reported as most ideal. The specialist was reported as performing a resource role but respondents reported a need for the

to model lessons. The most serious limitations, were time to instruct and assess students, time to collaborate with other school personnel, and high student to teacher ratio for specialists. A need to redefine the role of the specialist, to include time to collaborate and provide professional development, was reported.

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Dedication

In God, all things are possible. I dedicate my work first and foremost to Him, who guides my life and provides the purpose for my endeavors. I also dedicate this work to the people with whom He has blessed my life. I dedicate this work to my parents, my first teachers of love and life and to my sisters Rose Marie, Alicia, and Christina, who have been with me throughout it all. I dedicate this to the teachers at Our Lady of Fatima, Bensalem, Pennsylvania and Bishop Conwell, Levittown, Pennsylvania, who took the time to make a difference in my life and who serve as role models for the teacher I am today. I dedicate this work to my committee, Dr. Whordley, Dr. Mautino, and Dr. Schreiber, and to my mentors, Dr. Feldstein and Fred Baraky, for the hours of work they invested on my behalf and for their support, both professionally and personally. I dedicate this work in a special way to my children, Samantha and Jessica, and the depth of inspiration they have given to me. Finally, I dedicate this work to my husband, Mark, who continues to support my dreams.

CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

Reading specialists gather to discuss their jobs. They speak of too many students with low skill levels, too much government interference and not enough real help. They discuss parental support or in some cases, the lack of parental support. They reveal hope and frustration mixed with dedication (A Nation at Risk, 1983), drowned by the overwhelming issues that affect students before school even starts. With corporate sponsorship of education (Snow, 1998) and practical solutions at a minimum, we turn to the government for research-based guidance. This guidance is a wolf in sheep's clothing. Money begets accountability, begets paperwork, and begets less planning time. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation lessened the administrative paperwork, increased local control, and purported that all students will read by grade three (NCLB, 2003). Schools are more than ever accountable to stakeholders and to children and more than ever in need of research-based guidance for their expenditures of resources.

The National Board of Certified Teachers (NCBT) and the International Reading Association (IRA) have documented the right of children to well-informed instruction (NBCT, 2003, IRA, 2000) and it is not that schools do not try. Schools are staffed with qualified personnel and are open to students 180 + days a year with the specific purpose of teaching children. Within the schools, teachers may be burdened with many responsibilities. The elementary classroom teacher, for instance, may prepare six to ten lessons per day and in addition, collect lunch money, take attendance, and provide structure for students to interact socially. This leaves little time for students who require substantial additional coaching in reading, even if the classroom teacher has been formally prepared to remediate students with learning difficulties (Pikulski & Ross, 1979).

Reading Specialists' Initial Impact

The idea of a reading specialist position took hold in the 1920's (Letson, 1959). There was much dissent and not much discourse on how the role of these specialists should be structured. Therefore, the reading specialist was

utilized according to the needs of the school. Some specialists spent their time in their school settings teaching teachers in lieu of students (Negley and Evans (1964). Others were used to organize school libraries, chair textbook committees, supervise paraprofessionals, and provide in-service training (Sophis, 1969). Eventually, schools employing reading specialists were able to offer small group, individualized instruction to students who were found to be at-risk for learning how to read or use the skills to learn from reading (Pikuluski & Ross, 1979). It was also found that the resource role was the most valued role for the specialist in schools (Bean, 1979). Still, despite the variability of the specialist's role, Wylie (1969) maintained that the reading specialists' roles should be "well-defined, understood by all, and agreed upon" (p.522).

Present Day: Issues of Leadership

The Joint District/Federal Reserve Bank Empirical Study in Philadelphia (1979) concluded, "... the choice of reading approach makes a difference to all but the very low achievers, and that the active, direct efforts and time of the teacher (not substitute for the teacher) makes a significant difference and is reflected on several inputs"

(p. 48). The preparation and role of the specialist therefore, may have a significant affect on the performance of low-achieving students. However, the struggle to define the role of the reading specialist persists and at present, this variability in roles often depends upon the needs of the school community in which the specialist serves (Bean, 1979b). She states:

The "remedial" reading teacher generally has little time to interact with teachers...the "reading specialist" who functions as a resource person may never work with children...between these two extremes, one may find many different arrangements, with specialists assuming a resource role as well as an instructional one. Many factors contribute to the differing role emphasis: the type of program, the expectations of a specific institution or agency, as well as the qualifications and values of the individual assuming the role.

For example, a study completed in the Pennsylvania Department of Education, revealed that reading specialists were perceived to carry out a plethora of roles from remedial teacher to school leader (Pennsylvania Department

of Education (PDE) (1993). One recommendation derived from the findings of the Third Joint Survey (PDE, 1993) project was that leadership instruction be included for pre-service teachers at the College/University level. Leadership has continued to be criteria for reading specialists. The Standards for Reading Professionals, 2003 (found in Appendix A) support the need for the specialist to perform a variety of roles, including literacy leader, within the school or school district (IRA, 2004). In fact, the International Reading Association dedicated Standard 5 of the Standards for Reading Professionals, 2003(2004) to the specialist's role of professional development. Additional leadership activities such as collaboration and modeling are interspersed throughout the remainder of the standards (IRA, 2004). The IRA also presented a position statement that indicated that in addition to instruction and assessment, leadership skills were integral to the specialist's ability to perform effectively (IRA, 2000).

Collaboration

Collaboration in the workforce is not entirely a new idea, however, but one that has evolved through time. Hoerr (2005) explores management practices. His chart provides an illustration of the autonomy that workers have

had in their workplace. Of particular note is the relationship of the Predominant Practice and Working Conditions categories. Table 1 summarizes these two sections beginning in the 1900's.

Table 1

Management Practices Through Time

<u>Time Period</u>	<u>Predominant Practice</u>	<u>Working Conditions</u>
1900 - 1960	Scientific management Assembly line Corporate America	Workers have little say Decisions made by the "boss"
1960-1990	Humanistic management Total Quality Management	Leaders understand that workers who feel better about their jobs will perform better
1990 - present	Learning organization Collegiality	Workers learn from colleagues Leaders create conditions that foster growth

Table 1 (continued).

Note: Adapted from *The Art of School Leadership* (p. 39), by T. R. Hoerr, 2005, Alexandria, Virginia: Association for Curriculum and Development.

This model clearly applies to reading specialists. The communication and collaborative duties of the specialist may be thwarted by their role as defined by schools, districts, or legislation. The collaborative efforts of the specialist and other stakeholders within the school setting should result in more than congenial relations with school staff. Communication with staff should result in the establishment of curricular congruence with the core curriculum, which then maximizes the efforts of the specialist (Walp and Walmsey, 1989). The curriculum in pullout settings rarely supports or extends the curriculum of the classroom because specialists may not know about the core curriculum implemented in the classroom (Bean & Eichleberger, 1985) and pullout instruction was not associated with student achievement gains (Slavin, 1987).

Statement of the Problem

National Reading Council findings reinforce the need for research-based standards that are implemented at the local level. Snow, ed. (1998) states the following:

Research affirms that such benchmarks or standards can effectively improve reading outcomes but only to the extent that they are valid, specific, meaningful to teachers, and actually influence instructional conduct on a day-to-day basis.(p. 334)

Snow (1998) and her colleagues go on to recommend that in addition to the establishment of standards, local and state agencies should sponsor research that evaluates their standards as well as "various options for their application" (p. 335). The role of the specialist spans the spectrum from small-group instructor to district-wide leader. The IRA Standards for Reading Professionals represent not only a thorough review of literacy research, but in keeping with the IRA's (1969) vision, also provide a review of practices and summary input from teachers, reading specialists, college professors and researchers. These standards are extensive international guidelines for reading specialists intended to influence practices at the

local level, and therefore, provide the substance for this current research effort.

The purpose of this research is to discern how closely the practices of the reading specialists in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania conform to the Standards for Reading Professionals, 2003 (IRA, 2004) as designed, approved, and disseminated by the IRA (2004) with specific reference to third grade settings. Standards for Reading Professionals, Revised 2003 (IRA, 2004) can be found in the Appendices.

Research Questions

1. Do reading specialists' perceptions of their practices conform to the International Reading Association's (IRA) Standards for Reading Professionals (2003)?
2. Do teachers' perceptions of the reading specialists' practices conform to the IRA'S Standards for Reading Professionals (2003)?
3. Do principals' perceptions of the reading specialists' practices conform to the IRA's Standards for Reading Professionals (2003)?

4. Do students of reading specialists whose perception of their practices conform more highly to Standard 1,2,3,4,or 5 in the International Reading Association's Standards for Reading Professionals (2003) have higher aggregate grade three Pennsylvania State System of Assessment (PSSA) scores (2004) indicating higher performance in reading?
5. Which roles for the reading specialists do respondents report as most valued?

Limitations of the Study

1. The sample size available is needed to control for Allegheny County; however, the small number of participants limits the size of the sample.
2. The sample is not randomly chosen so the convenience of the sample limits the study.
3. The fact that the PSSA scores were compiled in 2004, and for the most part, participants will be reporting on earlier activities of the reading specialist role limits the study.

Definition of Terms

Descriptive Statistics: These include counts, proportions, measures of central tendency, and measures of variation.

(Fink & Kosecoff, 1998).

Differences: These include chi-square, *t* tests, and analysis of variance (ANOVA) (Fink & Kosecoff, 1998).

Professional Development: The goal of professional development is neither entertainment nor popularity but a direct impact on professional practice and, ultimately, improvements in student achievement. (Reeves, 2006).

Good reader: a child has gained a functional knowledge of the principles of the English alphabetic writing system.

(Snow, et. al. 1998 p. 15)

Leadership: always grounded in a particular time and place in a particular culture. And the effective leader inevitably maintains a connection with *this* specific time and place, *this* culture, leading *these* people in *this* moment (Machiavelli, in Jinkins & Jinkins, 1998).

Reading: a complex developmental challenge that we know to be intertwined with many other developmental accomplishments: attention, memory, language, and motivation, for example. Reading is not only a cognitive psycholinguistic activity but also a social activity (Snow, et.al, 1998 p. 15).

Reading Clinic: a clinic for persons with reading problems (Harris & Hodges, eds, 1981).

Reading consultant: a reading specialist who works with teachers and administrators of a school system to carry out a reading program (Harris & Hodges, eds, 1981).

Reading coordinator: a reading specialist whose chief function is to help make the complex reading programs of large school systems work smoothly together (Harris & Hodges, eds, 1981).

Reading deficiency: the lack of one or more specific skills, as those of structural analysis, which keep the individual from reading effectively (Harris & Hodges, eds, 1981).

Reading habit: the use of reading as a regular activity (Harris & Hodges, eds, 1981).

Reading teacher: a teacher, usually a classroom teacher, with special skills in the teaching of developmental reading (Harris & Hodges, eds, 1981)

Remediation: teaching that includes diagnosis of a student's reading ability, and corrective, remedial, or clinical approaches to improve that ability. (Harris & Hodges, eds, 1981).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Reading Instruction: Changes in the 20th Century*Introduction*

The reading specialist role has long been reviewed, studied, and evaluated. Since the passage of such legislation as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA, 1965) and the re-authorization of the Act as Reading First and No Child Left Behind, the role the specialist fills in the schools has included a variety of roles and responsibilities. Standards and other sources of research have supported the need for specialists and have helped to define the role of the specialist. To introduce this chapter, this researcher would like to review a seminal work in the area of role research. Bean, Cassidy, Grumet, Shelton, and Wallis completed the study in 2002. The researchers asked the question, *What do Reading Specialists Do?* The research team completed a national study to determine how reading specialists fulfill in their role within the many contexts and communities across the United States.

The team of researchers developed, reviewed, and sent a survey to more than 4,000 members of the IRA. They received 1517 completed surveys and four major roles emerged from the data. These roles included instruction, assessment, serving as a resource, and administration. Instructional roles included specialized instruction for students as well as support for the classroom instruction. Assessment, both formal and informal, completed by the reading specialist is used for accountability and decision-making. Specialists served as a resource by providing materials, ideas, and support to teachers and included some contact with parents. Administrative tasks were defined as documentation and record keeping. Results reported indicated that in 2002, specialists were working mostly with students individually or in small groups, providing assessment, and few were working with the classes as a whole. Specialists were not satisfied with the limited amount of time they had in their schedules to "interact" with teachers.

In summary, Bean, et.al. noted that although the reading specialists in the study were highly trained and experienced, specialists in general are locked into an

instructional role leaving little time for leadership and/or resource duties. The Commission recommended that:

“Specifically, reading specialists must not only be able to provide specialized instruction for students with reading difficulties, but they must also be able to help their colleagues improve the quality of classroom instruction. School administrators may need to adjust schedules so that reading specialists can handle all aspects of their positions effectively, not only instruction and assessment, but also serving as a resource to teachers, other educators, and parents” (Bean et. al, 2002, p. 743). Past research, in particular this work, affirms that although much effort has been placed on finding the ideal role for the specialist, not many definitive answers have risen to the top. This current review of research that follows brings to light important work on the role of the reading specialist including the areas of standards, role definitions, and practices.

Through the Lens of the Reading Specialist

Imagine yourself a teacher at the turn of the 20th century. You were selected by your principal, taken from your classroom teaching position, and placed in a specialized reading position “for which you neither

anticipated nor trained" (Smith, 1969). Throughout the next few decades, you, as the reading specialist, taught small groups of children who had not mastered reading with regular classroom instruction. You helped some and the rest you sent along to reading clinics. You felt pressure to keep up with advancements in the field of reading as national awareness increased.

Over the 1920's to 1950's, educational advancements helped to define your role. Journal articles on remedial practices were published, college diagnostic clinics provided training for remedial reading teachers, and diagnostic testing emerged. Other topics of interest in this time period included studies on reading comprehension, eye movement, student reading levels, and text readability levels (McCormick & Braithwaite, 1984). You may have belonged to the International Council for the Improvement of Reading Instruction (ICIRI) or to the National Association for Remedial Teaching (NART). These organizations existed until 1956 when they merged to form the International Reading Association (IRA). The IRA continued to publish the ICIRI bulletin (1951) but changed its name to *The Reading Teacher* in 1956. The IRA continues to grow to over 300,000 members worldwide, in 99 countries,

and "support a thriving professional program of publications, meetings, and advocacy and outreach efforts locally, nationally, and internationally" (IRA, 2004).

According to a national study conducted in 1960 by Hagg, Sayles, & Smith (1960), requirements for reading specialists were taken more seriously and the following quote indicates the attitudinal change towards standardizing certification requirements as follows:

The fact that eight of the twelve states which certify special reading teachers and consultants have enacted their requirements within the last five years seems to indicate that an active interest in providing remedial or developmental reading instruction in the schools is relatively recent...it seems reasonable that this trend will continue, and that within the next decade more and more states will be providing for special certification of teachers of remedial and developmental reading.(p. 100)

Haag, Sayles, & Smith went on to recommend that organizations at the helm of reading may "recommend standards for the guidance of state agencies" (p. 100).

The reading certificate during the 1960's required applicants to earn a teaching certificate and complete a bachelor's degree, two years teaching and five or six additional courses. The second level certificate offered recipients the opportunity to become a *Reading Consultant, Supervisor, or Coordinator*. In addition to the bachelor's degree and teaching certificate, these candidates were required to complete a master's degree, three years of teaching and at least ten additional courses.

The National Education Agency (NEA)-American Association of School Administrators also supported the tightening of the membership standards but extended its recommendation to include all education entities. "Every organization in the teaching profession must be concerned with the standards, which determine its own membership, for the members will in the last analysis determine the policies and the program of the organization" (Professional Organizations in American Policies Commission, 1957). The Minimum Standards for Reading Specialists that were adopted in 1959 (IRA, 1959) were sent out to the membership through an article in *The Reading Teacher*. Members were invited to send comments to Dr. Charles T. Letson, Chairman.

The IRA also provided a Code of Ethics around this time that is published virtually intact. Leiberman (1956) made this statement regarding the importance of a standard code of ethics to accompany certification:

A generally accepted characteristic of a profession is a code of ethics, which is formulated, interpreted, and enforced by the professional group itself. Such codes serve many purposes. They provide the basis for distinguishing scrupulous from unscrupulous professional conduct. They help orient the newly initiated practitioner into his professional obligations, rights, and privileges. They serve as a basis for professional etiquette that is for regulating the conduct between practitioners as well as between practitioners and clients. They provide the profession with a basis for excluding the incompetent or unscrupulous or defending the practitioner who is unjustly attacked. They also serve as a guide to lay persons for understanding professional conduct.

The Federal Government responded to researchers and in the early 1960's federal money was provided to reading programs through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965. Under the mandate of this compensatory program,

"one billion dollars was used annually to address the special educational needs of disadvantaged children through Title I of the Bill" (Pelligrino, et al.1999 p.1).

Although it was debated vigorously, program reporting was tied to this bill, and translated into hours of paperwork for the reading specialist or coordinator. In spite of the tracking system, the monies from the Federal Government continued to be placed in the hands of local agencies and these agencies allocated funds in very different venues, albeit with a common goal. A variety of roles for reading specialists emerged and many districts faced the problem of creating an appropriate and effective role for their specialists (Wylie, 1969).

In addition to defining a role for the specialists, the IRA (1967) decided to go on record as opposing the use of non-qualified reading personnel to fill positions created by this newly legislated funding. Deitrich's (1967) research is quoted below:

With the release of federal monies to school districts, many schools who lacked strong reading programs decided to hire reading specialists. Other schools who had already made some attempts to set up

remedial reading programs, or hire consultants, decided to expand their programs. There was a demand for trained reading specialists, who were already scarce. As a result, many school districts have hired partially trained specialists or have elevated classroom teachers to remedial, consultant, and, in some cases, supervisory positions... State and local council groups affiliated with IRA should help administrators within their area become aware of the dangers inherent in hiring unqualified personnel.

(p. 485)

The number of states requiring certification for reading specialists rose from 12 in 1960 to 22 by 1967. Yarrington's (1967) vision for the certification of the reading specialist workforce is summarized in the following statement:

Chronologically, the concern for standards and certification requirements for reading specialists began about eight years ago... Cook in 1963 reported a state of utter confusion in the certification of reading teachers... Hopefully, with a concentrated effort of all IRA members across the country, there will be no need to report periodical percent

increases. The problem should be one of minimum standards, not of whether or not standards exist.

(p.126-7)

So the struggle to define and implement the minimum standards continued. H.A. Robinson (1967) wrote an article that has become a seminal work in the area of standards for reading professionals. He depicted the history of specialists' roles preceding 1967, chronicled the present-day state of the requirements for 1967, and offered his vision for the "proliferation and utilization of reading specialists". The roles prior to 1967 included, (a) identifying, diagnosing, and teaching retarded readers in small and large groups, (b) helping teachers and administrators group for reading instruction, and (c) locating and suggesting materials designed to help teach the skills of reading. In 1967, Robinson explicitly stated the following:

The reading consultant of today is not, and should not be, a teacher of developmental or remedial reading.

His major role and purpose is to work with the staff of a school to develop, implement, coordinate, and evaluate the reading program (p. 479).

He continued in his article to say that in-service education, evaluation, methods and materials, research, public relations, and curriculum development should be the primary focus of the reading specialist. He suggests curriculum-wide reading instruction, emphasis on individual learning differences, teaching of higher-order thinking skills, and a flexible but long-term plan for working with teachers. The reading specialist of the future, according to Robinson (1967), then:

...describes a well-trained specialist who conceives of the school reading program as permeating the total curriculum, who helps all teachers adjust the program to the individual needs of students, and who is not only concerned with reading skills but is deeply concerned with the development of lifetime readers.

(p. 482)

During the 1970's, research centered around defining tasks or titles for the reading specialist. In 1979, Bean found, that although the reading specialist performed many tasks, the resource role was most valued by classroom teachers (1979a). Later that same year Bean published an article that revealed personnel misusing the term reading specialist. Other studies by Frazen (1975), Ivers (1975),

and Flickinger (1977) recommend further efforts to clarify the role of the reading specialist.

Recently, the right of children to well-informed instruction has been documented in legislation (Reading First, 2000; No Child Left Behind, 2003). Published reports such as annual report cards for districts and the development of plans to help teachers of core subjects meet "highly qualified" status by 2005-2006 are accountability goals presently tied to the legislation. However, flexibility of spending and decreased paperwork indicates concessions by the legislators to balance the reporting (U.S. Department of Education (DEP), 2003).

No Child Left Behind gives states and local education agencies more flexibility in the use of their federal education funding. As a result, principals and administrators spend less time filling out forms and dealing with federal red tape. They have more time to devote to students' needs. They have more freedom to implement innovations and allocate resources as policymakers at the state and local levels see fit, thereby giving local people a greater opportunity to affect decisions regarding their schools' programs (DEP), 2003, p. 3).

Position Statements of the International Reading Association (IRA, 2000, 2003) and National Board of Certified Teachers' Propositions (NBCT, 2003) exist to provide research-based guidance to school faculties. The teachers that implement these ideas are responsible for knowing the information and applying that information to inform their practice; ultimately to help each child to be successful in school. Currently, 55 percent of public schools receive Title I funds and although high achieving students' performance continues to increase, lowest-performing students' performance has declined (National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) 2001, in DEP, 2003).

Teachers do not act independently. There are many faculty and staff members who interact on behalf of students. Their communication and leadership are vital to this process (Allington & Shake, 1986). The role that the reading specialist plays in this process is essential to the assessment and instruction of students and to the communication of students' abilities and achievements (IRA, 2004). However, due to a breakdown of communication between legislators and teachers, many reading specialists

taught, and continue to teach, students in either in-class or pullout models (Allington & Johnston, 1989). Clayton (1991) purports that effective programs are the programs that are utilizing resources in creative ways. Collaboration has been shown to produce positive effects (Medway & Updike, 1985).

Due to the effects that collaboration can have on a learning community in a school, Jaeger (1996) explores four roles of collaboration for a reading specialist. These include, 1) curriculum development, 2) instructional problem solving, 3) assessment, and 4) parent liason. Richek and Glick (1991) support obtaining curriculum congruence for a Total Literacy Environment. This experiment by Richek & Glick (1991) included many of the teachers at their school and resulted in "a full-fledged literacy environment... children found themselves writing and reading as an essential part of their daily experiences" (Richek & Glick, 1991, p. 105).

Collaboration and leadership can look very different and yet continue to be effective. The IRA (2002) Bean, Swan & Knaub (2003) found that reading specialists already perform many leadership roles (In Allington & Cunningham, 2002, 2007). In addition to reading specialists whose

current IRA (2004) standards recommend many leadership and collaborative roles for them, there are also Reading Coaches. These coaches are essentially reading specialists who are able to devote much more time to leadership and collaborative efforts for school-wide improvement. Reading coach positions have been created as school districts struggle to meet required benchmarks set by NCLB (2000) and as part of Reading First initiatives. However, just as the reading specialist positions may have been filled in the 1960's and 1970's with personnel that were unqualified, so too are reading coach positions filled, in some cases, by non-certified reading personnel. The IRA (2004) in their position statement on the Role of the Reading Coach in the United States stated the following.

...the association acknowledges that school districts may select candidates who do not meet the standards or have reading specialist certification but who have other qualifications that make them strong candidates for these positions. The goal in such situations should be to provide professional development opportunities, including participation in reading specialist master's degree programs, so that within

three years the reading coaches meet the Association's standards... Reading specialists should supervise reading coaches who do not have reading specialist certification.

(p. 2)

The IRA (2004b) goes on to reiterate that there are at present "little consistency in the general competence of coaches, in part because there are no agreed upon definitions or standards for the roles" (p. 1).

IRA states further:

Reading coaches frequently act as reading specialists when they provide leadership for school, district, and state-, level reading programs. In the leadership role, they design, monitor, and assess reading achievement progress; they provide professional development and coaching for teachers and building personnel; they are responsible for improving reading achievement; and they may also supervise and evaluate staff. These responsibilities are the responsibilities of reading specialists...and if reading professionals are serving in these roles (regardless of their titles) they must meet the standards for reading specialist/ literacy coach as indicated in the

Standards for Reading Professionals, Revised 2003,
(IRA, 2004).

Summary

To this end, reading specialists must be highly trained in the areas of instruction, assessment, leadership, and standards-based practices to ensure that the time spent in classrooms with students produce the most fruitful gains (IRA, 2000, 2004a, 2004b). In this light, the reading specialist can be considered an expert in his/her field, trained in a specialized knowledge base; and possess the ability to apply and convey that knowledge to colleagues (Deitrich, 1959). The reading specialist may also provide leadership by providing staff with professional development focused on research-based practices that are applicable to their school settings (IRA, 2003,2004).

The collaboration among staff is essential in the establishment of curricular congruence (Wahl and Walmborg, 1989, and McCormack, Paratore, and Dahlene, 2003). The personal skills of the reading specialist are key to delivering the message of hope that lies at the core of remedial instruction (Bean, 1979a). It is the right of

children to be taught well and teachers' responsibility to teach them (IRA, 2004b).

Research Related to the Role of the Reading Specialists

Introduction

For many years, researchers have sought to identify, define, and classify the roles that reading specialists play. Reading specialists have carried out their tasks in many settings, and adapted to numerous changes in policy and programs. As reading specialists have made these adaptations they have kept the goals of instruction, assessment, and leadership at the forefront of their practice (IRA, 2003). Reading specialists' must adapt to meet the needs of their school's population. Since learning communities differ among schools, the requirements of the reading specialist may also differ (Bean, 2004).

Historical Perspectives

The history of reading research provides insight into the evolution of reading strategies and practices. Research conducted on roles of the reading specialist lends similar insight into reading specialist duties and responsibilities. A time line of sorts follows in an effort

to convey important findings of role-research that impacted the questions asked in this current research study.

Robinson & Rauch (1965) conducted a study to determine the roles that reading specialists were likely to encounter in the schools. They classified seven roles of the reading specialist that include *Resource Person, Adviser, In-service Leader, Investigator, Diagnostician, Instructor, and Evaluator*. The specialist who worked as a *Resource Person* worked with teachers to evaluate materials and answered reading related questions within the school and community. The specialist in an *Adviser Role* informed the school personnel and community about research results. As an *In-service Leader*, the specialist demonstrated lessons for individual teachers and groups of teachers. They also planned the in-service program and helped new teachers. As an *Investigator*, the specialist created and helped the teachers to implement reading related research projects and shared the results. In the role of a *Diagnostician*, the specialist would diagnose or help teachers to diagnose students and helped teachers to interpret the results. *Instructors* taught teachers and demonstrated new techniques with students. In the final role of an *Evaluator*, the specialist was able to provide school-wide student testing,

teacher training for test interpretation, and periodic evaluations of the reading program.

Because reading specialists were filling many roles within schools at this time, the IRA decided to limit the demands on these specialized teachers. So, in 1968, the International Reading Association consolidated these responsibilities into two major areas. They distinguished between those specialists who worked directly with children and those who worked with teachers and administrators (IRA, 1968). The IRA offered a definition of 4 types of reading specialists (IRA, 1968 in Williamson, 1979, p. 22).

In 1968, the IRA updated its role definition to the following:

(The reading specialist) provides literacy instruction and assessment in cooperation with other literacy professionals and paraprofessionals to students at one or more of the following levels: early childhood, elementary, secondary, or adult; and in one of the following settings: public, private, or commercial schools, reading resource centers, or clinics. (They) provide(s) literacy services to students in compensatory or special-education programs. (They)

provide(s) instructional guidance to paraprofessionals. (They) teach developmental reading or study skills, or both, at the secondary or adult level. (The reading specialist) has a master's degree in reading education. (In Williamson, 1979).

Recommendations from IRA

As reading specialists "proliferated among school districts" (Robinson and Rauch, 1965, p.), state-certifying boards and colleges used the IRA standards revised in 1968 to develop requirements for certification and training (Dietrich, 1967, p. 488). During an IRA-sponsored work conference in 1966, a group of reading specialists has "sought to classify reading specialists and define their role in the schools" (Dietrich, 1967, p. 488). The committee agreed upon five roles that reading specialists were performing. These included *Reading Teacher, Reading Consultant, Reading Coordinator, Reading Clinician, and College Instructor*. The Committee defined each role. The *Reading Teacher* taught remedial, corrective or developmental reading to elementary or junior high students. The *Reading Consultant*, on the other hand, worked directly with teachers and administrators on a program

level. *Reading Coordinators* provided system-wide leadership and made recommendations to administrators. He also guided the reading clinician's efforts. *Reading Clinicians* diagnosed reading problems and taught students with more advanced problems. The *Clinicians* also aided pre-service or in-service teachers. The *College Instructor* provided instruction on the undergraduate and graduate level and conducted research in the field of reading.

In addition, the Committee recommended some personal qualifications for reading personnel. Dorothy M. Dietrich, Chairman of the Professional Ethics and Standards Committee at the time, concluded that reading specialists should be compensated for their additional training and that each specialist should assess his/her own training and continue their professional development. Additionally, reading personnel should possess other qualities such as the ability to build rapport with students, teachers, administrators and parents. She further stated that they should stay abreast of new materials and convey information to the classroom teacher in a non-threatening manner.

Related Research

The debate continued. Although the IRA's (1968) goal was to define the role of the reading specialist as a

teacher of literacy skills, Sophis (1969) found that reading specialists also assumed the duties of running libraries, chairing textbook committees, supervising and evaluating paraprofessionals, and providing in-service training in addition to their primary responsibility of providing remedial reading instruction (Sophis, 1969). In some instances, researchers made recommendations from their findings that limited the reading specialists' role in the schools. Studies completed by Negley and Evans (1964) and Smith (1969) reduced the role of the reading specialist to just one such role when they concluded that an Advisory Role best suited a reading specialist.

Wylie (1969) asked 100 reading specialists and 100 classroom-reading teachers about their perceptions of the reading consultant role. The classroom teachers, in general, reported that the reading consultant in their school supplied materials, demonstrated techniques, and directed efforts of informal diagnosis and corrective classroom practices (Wylie, 1969, p. 522). The classroom teacher also reported that the consultants' additional knowledge in reading and related areas and their willingness to share criticisms as well as information made the consultant most valuable. Wylie concluded that the

role of the reading consultant should be "well defined, understood by all, and agreed upon" (Wylie, 1969, p. 522).

Administrative Roles

In addition to the roles of remedial reading teacher and consultant, the reading specialist also took on instructional leadership duties. The 1976 national *Right to Read* survey of principals and reading specialists found that principals did not feel like literacy leaders. In addition, Sophis (1969) and Irwin (1975) recommended that administrative roles of a reading specialist be explicitly stated and supported financially, and Baker (1976) recommended that the reading specialist and the principal hold the same administrative power and responsibility. Robinson and Petit (1978) studied role definition and they concluded that setting priorities and limiting roles of the reading specialist might lessen the frustration of reading personnel (Robinson & Petit, 1978, In Williamson, p. 29). They state:

...three factors which...affected the role of the reading specialist: 1) roles of reading specialists have been too narrowly defined (by the IRA and others); 2) the professional preparation of some reading specialists has been impractical, largely the

"clinical model" as practiced in university clinics, far removed from what reading specialists may experience in schools; and 3) local interpretations of regulations imposed on recipients of categorical funds may inhibit imaginative use of reading specialists (p. 925).

Schiffman (1967) in his article on the role of the reading specialist reiterates that no one role description will apply to all situations.

Collaborative Structures

Frazen (1974) found that there were significant differences between the actual and ideal roles of both reading resource teachers and reading teachers. Information provided from classroom teachers and principals revealed they collaborated with the resource teacher more than the reading teacher. This was due to time constraints and poor overlap of duties between the two reading positions. It was recommended that teachers in these roles communicate more effectively and efficiently.

The reading specialist is one of many qualified personnel that a school requires to educate students effectively. Ivers (1975) classified the nature of role interaction with respect to adjacent roles within the

school. He classified five important interactions for his study. The function of the specialist included interaction with the classroom reading teacher, the child, the principal, the reading supervisor, the parents, and the community. Ivers asked respondents prior to choosing a topic to designate the greatest area of need in reading instruction. Of the four categories, a need for role clarification was most strongly indicated (Ivers, 1975). The resulting study of elementary school personnel perceptions of the elementary reading specialist's role revealed that the groups were satisfied with the reading specialists' role (Ivers, 1975). It was also found that the reading specialist group, administrator group and the classroom teacher group were not significantly different in their perceptions of ideal and actual roles. The participants cited two of the ideal and actual roles as most important for all groups (Ivers, 1975). He also found that only 69% of the reading specialist participants were satisfied with their current reading program although they reported that their ideal and actual roles were congruent (Ivers, 1975). He concluded that among the professional groups surveyed, the reading specialists were the most dissatisfied group. It also was concluded that

participants "were unable to distinguish" between the ideal and actual roles (Ivers, 1975). Inexperience and lack of role definition were cited as possible causes for this ambiguity (Ivers, 1975).

Guidelines for Professional Preparation of reading Teachers (1978) was published by the IRA and related job tasks in seven roles to activities as opposed to titles. They recommend reading personnel acquire a bachelor's degree plus additional training in foundations courses, research, and teaching experience. Of the seven roles recommended, three are teaching related, one role is consultative, one supervisory in nature and the last two deal with preparation of pre-service teachers or doctoral candidates (IRA, 1978).

Following Ivers' study of the perceptions of school personnel and the newly published guidelines (1978), Williamson surveyed teachers, principals and reading specialists concerning the role of the reading specialist. It was found that classroom teachers preferred the teaching role for the reading specialists; however, principals felt instructional leadership was most important. Both groups agreed on the resource role of the specialist to provide materials (Williamson, 1979).

Bean (1979) summarized a decade of research in her study related to roles of the reading specialist. It was found that teachers valued reading specialists performing in the inservice role, developing new materials (with teachers), conferring with teachers, and individual instruction (out of classroom). Diagnostic roles and classroom instruction were least valued.

Coulter (1986) sought to study the effect of a change in the role and resources of the specialist. Coulter studied the perceived role of the Language Arts Specialists from the specialists' and administrators' point of view. As a result of a 1975 court ordered desegregation, the large urban school district that was investigated was to implement a master plan in reading that included a resource role for the specialist as well as a teacher in-service program. (Coulter, 1986). This 1986 study sought to determine whether the principals' and reading specialists' perceptions would become more congruent as a result of the plan. The increased role of the reading specialist combined with the in-service training was found to significantly increase the congruence of the principals' and reading specialists' perceptions (Coulter, 1986).

Student Achievement

Many changes in the role the reading specialist held within the schools led to a longitudinal study of the changing role of the specialist. Silva (1986) considered three roles for the reading specialist and their effect on student reading achievement over the twenty years from 1966-1986. Federal Programs and district policy dictated the role that the reading specialist would perform in the schools. These roles included *Remedial Reading Teacher*, *Reading Assistant (Consultant)*, and *Basic Skills Specialist (Remedial Teacher)*. The specialist's duties in a *Remedial Teacher's* role consisted of direct remedial teaching of individual or small groups. The reading specialist in a *Consultative* role provided teachers and principals some assistance with the reading program. It was found that a *Consultative* role versus a *Remedial Teacher* role at the third grade level made a significant difference; (Silva, 1986) consequently the conclusion was drawn that a *Consultative* role for the reading specialist working with primary-grade students was more effective than a *Remedial Teacher* role. Conversely, for teaching intermediate grades the pattern of scores suggests that the *Remedial Teacher* role may have a greater effect (Silva, 1986). When looking

at the difference between third-grade students involved in Title I classes and Non-Title I, the gap was closest during the years when the specialist assumed a *Reading Assistants'* role. It was found that roles differed among elementary schools and the reasons given for the discrepancy were time of direct services to students, staff interpersonal skills, and staff communication skills.

It is the goal of this research to define the current role of the specialist in Allegheny County and discern if and how the standards for reading specialists are implemented in the field. The need to continue the effort of role definition for the reading specialist is supported by the research findings to date.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Method

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the practices of reading specialists in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania. A survey was created for this study based on the Standards for Reading Professionals, Revised, 2003 (IRA, 2004). The survey was mailed to the pilot study audience and then to the study participants. Collected data was analyzed using an ex post facto design, descriptive statistics - specifically mean and frequencies, and an analysis of variance.

The intent of this research is to investigate the self-perceived role of the reading specialist working at the third grade level in Allegheny County. To define the role of the specialist, the researcher requested information from a potential pool of 127 principals, 127 teachers of reading, and 127 reading specialists. Respondents were asked to report on the practices of the reading specialists as well as the practices participants would like to see the reading specialists accomplish.

Content Validity: Standards for Reading Professionals, 2003 (IRA, 2004)

To ground the study in a research-based design, the researcher created a matrix of current available state, national, and international literacy standards and international position statements (IRA, 2000; IRA, 2003; IRA, 2004, IRA, 2003, NBCT, 2003). Upon review of the matrix, it was determined that the IRA's Standards for Reading Professionals, Revised, 2003 (IRA, 2004) adhered most closely to the role of the reading specialist and provided the most specific information as to reading specialist activities.

Table 1 shows the percentage of categories represented in five of the major research-based publications that purport to provide guidance to the professional community and specifically, reading professionals. The publications are shown in Table 1 by the numbers listed below and are as follows:

1. National Board of Professional Teachers: Core Propositions (2003)

2. National Board of Professional Teachers: Standards for Reading Professionals
3. International Reading Association: Position Statement, Role of the Reading Specialist (2003)
4. International Reading Association: Role Descriptors and Academic Prep of Reading Professionals (2003)
5. International Reading Association: Standards and Criteria for Judging Performance, Standard for Reading Professionals, Revised, 2003 (2004)

Each of these publications was divided into sections based on indicators of instruction, assessment, and leadership (IRA, 2000). The data were then coded to reflect major themes within the standards. These coding units were counted for each of the publications. The percentages below the Raw Count category indicate the percentage of the coding units found within each publication.

Table 2

Coding Units and Categories for Reading Specialist Activities

<u>Standard</u>	1	2	3	4	5	Totals
<u>Raw Count</u>	64	14	56	18	99	251
<u>Percentage</u>	25%	5%	22%	7%	40%	99%*

Note. Percentages were rounded to the nearest hundredth.

Coding Units were defined as the role-related activities that were explicitly stated in the standards' language and able to be operationalized. For instance, the resource role of the specialist was broken down into categories of actual activities such as selecting textbooks and providing information to teachers. Table 3 shows that the Standards for Reading Professionals, 2003 (IRA, 2004) represented 40% of the coding units found within these publications. The remaining publications represented between 5% and 25% of the coding units. This matrix helped the researcher to decide which of the publications would represent the role of the reading specialist in the schools today.

In addition to the coding units, the process in which IRA constructed and reviewed the Standards for Reading Professionals, Revised, 2003 (2004) provides content validity. The Committee prepared the Standards based on current research and best practices in the field of reading. In 2003, in preparation for publication, the IRA sought information and feedback from the educational community at-large. IRA members were invited to respond to the draft of the standards. The committee then reviewed the responses, made adjustments, and published Standards for Reading Professionals, Revised, 2003 in 2004. Since the process of writing the standards included a review of research studies as well as current practices of the reading specialists in the field, the Standards for Reading Professionals, Revised, 2003 (IRA, 2004) provide a current basis for content validity.

The International Reading Association's updated Standards for Reading Professionals, Revised, 2003 (IRA, 2004) provided the framework of this study. The Standards' language was used to create a 65-item questionnaire. These questions adhered to the Standards language as much as possible to accurately preserve the logical order of the standards and to adhere to the objective wording of the

Standards for Reading Professionals, Revised, 2003 (IRA, 2004). The researcher chose a 5-point Likert-scale including a non-applicable category (Cox, 1996). Three open-ended questions prompted responses on literacy leadership, ideal practices of the reading specialist, and forces that limit the role of the reading specialist.

This study used the IRA's Standards for Reading Professionals, Revised, 2003 (IRA, 2004) to create a survey that elicited information from the respondents regarding information that allows the researcher to gain insight into the responsibilities that a reading specialist carries out through their work. The Standards for Reading Professionals, Revised, 2003 (IRA, 2004) were used to determine the extent that the practices of the reading specialists coincide with the findings of the IRA's research as published in the Standards for Reading Professionals, Revised, 2003 (IRA, 2004).

The Specific Procedures portion of this chapter explains the subjects, instrumentation, design, and proposed analysis of data used in this study. Initially, the school districts in Allegheny County are discussed. PSSA scores and the IRA Standards are described next. Following the processes of the design of instrumentation

and the pilot study are the research questions and analysis. In the following chapter, procedures are offered to provide insight as to this researchers' design of the study, collection of data, and proposed treatment of data. The results of the data analysis to answer the research questions are also provided in Chapter 4.

Specific Procedures

Research Population

The participants selected were reading specialists currently working with students in the third grade in the public schools within Allegheny County. An assumption is made that these teachers have passed certification requirements for reading specialists in Pennsylvania and are currently engaged in reading specialist duties as defined by the district/school. Questions in the demographic section address the individual certifications attained by the participants.

Pilot Study

After obtaining the approval of the dissertation committee and subsequently the Internal Review Board (IRB) at the University, the Pilot Study was conducted. The study was mailed to the pilot study participants and materials included letter of consent, survey with pages for

demographics, Standards 1-3 & 5, and the open questions. In addition to the study itself, an additional checklist was enclosed with the pilot study based on Cox's (1996) work. The researcher sought feedback regarding the ease of use of the survey. Using this feedback, the research team made changes to demographic question #6 for clarity. It was found that Standard 4 questions were not copied with the rest of the materials; no data or feedback was available for this section. Due to the low number of participants in the pilot study (19), the overall positive remarks regarding content and ease of use, and the fact that Standard 4 questions followed the same format as the remainder of the survey, it was determined that there was enough feedback from the pilot study to proceed.

Pilot Study Demographics

Nineteen reading specialists returned surveys; 17 adhered to the construct on the study and were included in this analysis. Each of the 17 respondents were currently working as a reading specialist with at least a grade three level. All had certification as a reading specialist and a master's degree in education. Table 2 shows the number of years that reading specialists have held their reading

specialist degree, have worked in their current position, and have taught in the profession.

Table 3

Years of Service: Pilot Study

<u>Number of Years</u>	<u>Degrees*</u>	<u>Position*</u>	<u>Profession*</u>
1-5	4	5	1
6-10	3	4	4
11-15	2	2	2
16- 20	1	0	2
21-25	5	5	5
30+	2	1	3

Note. The number of years are summarized in this table and do not necessarily intend to reflect individual specialists' years. For example, a specialist may have been in the profession for 1-5 years but have held the degree for 16-20 years.

Pilot Study Internal Consistency

Reliability was measured for the scores of the pilot study responses for Standards 1,2,3, & 5. Table 3 shows the Cronbach's Alpha scores for each Standard.

Table 4

Internal Reliability: Pilot Study

<u>Standard</u>	<u>Number of Items</u>	<u>Cronbach's Alpha</u>
1	6	.836
2	15	.880
3	15	.721
4	n/a	n/a
5	13	.893

Full Study Collection of Data

The 127 elementary schools' principals in Allegheny County were sent three surveys. The principals were asked to distribute the envelopes to one reading specialist and one classroom teacher, both working in grade three literacy programs. If more than one reading specialist or grade three classroom teacher were available, the survey was given to the teacher or specialist whose name appears last alphabetically. This was done to prevent bias that number of years of service or random selection may have added. The participants were provided with a cover letter, consent

to participate form and the survey. In addition, postage and return envelopes were provided. Participants were asked to sign the consent form and send it back separately from the survey, both within three weeks of receipt.

Although a code was placed on the surveys for use in the data analysis phase, the code was cut from the survey following the data analysis to provide, at that time, anonymity for the respondents. Consent letters were also stored separately from the surveys. These materials will be kept for 5 years and then destroyed. They will not be shared with other researchers and no attempt to identify the actual persons who completed the survey will be made.

Allegheny County

Personnel from a total of 127 schools In Allegheny County were invited to participate. Allegheny County was chosen due to its socio-economic diversity; that may make this study more generalizable to the state of Pennsylvania. Another positive aspect of locating this study in Allegheny County is the fact that 75% of the schools performed at or above state averages on the PSSA Reading Test for Grade 3 in 2004 and 78% of Allegheny County schools were above the state mean PSSA Reading Test score in 2003. In planning the study, students' past performance on the PSSA Reading Test

was reviewed. It was observed that individual school PSSA Mean Scaled Scores for Reading (2004) differed within school districts by as much as 129 points and among school districts by as much as 357 points. Due to the variability of the PSSA statewide and countywide scores, the need to conduct accessible research at the school level seemed appropriate. To determine the roles and activities that reading specialists were carrying out, it was decided to send the surveys to school personnel in each elementary school in Allegheny County. The decision to request data from personnel who have influence on grade three level students was made because grade three school level data for the PSSA Reading Test for the school year 2003-2004 was available to the researcher. In addition, national legislation, such as NCLB (2000), determined that grade three was an appropriate grade level in which to measure reading success.

The data collected from the PSSA information available was aggregated from the student level to reflect school level scores. This data, therefore, may produce error due to the presence of scores that reflect teachers or students not directly influenced by the responding reading

specialist. Student and class level scores were not published.

Instrumentation

Because a method to collect the data was needed, a review of possible data collection methods was completed. Due to the vastness of area in the county and the number of participants that would be invited to respond (Oppenheim, 1966), it was decided to mail a survey to respondents. Although the advantages of timeliness, economic frugality, and absence of interviewer bias prevailed, several drawbacks to the survey method were taken into account. One such drawback is nonresponsiveness (Oppenheim, 1966). As nonresponsiveness is not random, the number of responses from a particular geographic area was determined within the county through the use of a code that was placed on the back page of the survey. This code corresponded to a random number given to each school within Allegheny County. This code would also be helpful in matching mean response scores with PSSA scores during data analysis.

Upon review of many databases of testing instruments, no tests were focused on the Standards for Reading Professionals, Revised, 2003 (IRA, 2004). The Standards for Reading Professionals, Revised, 2003 (IRA, 2004) provided

the theoretical basis for the study therefore 3 surveys were created by the researcher. These surveys can be found in the Appendices. Using the actual language and format of the Standards, a survey was designed in hopes of collecting the types of information that were needed to successfully answer the guiding research questions.

A mixture of closed questions with Likert Scale responses and open questions were necessary to collect the data and answer the research questions. The closed questions were designed to elicit "analytically useful" information to be compared with other respondents' answers (Fowler, 1993). Open questions were utilized because the researcher was not present while the survey was completed. The open questions allowed the respondents the opportunity to disclose additional information not anticipated by the researcher (Fowler, 1993). In addition, these responses would be used during data analysis to reinforce the information that was provided in the closed question portion of the survey.

Once the survey was completed, a team review provided feedback and suggestions for improvement. The team suggested that the Likert scale include a 'not applicable' box as well as a scale range of 1 through 5. An alignment

check completed by the researcher revealed that each of the Standards for Reading Professionals, Revised, 2003 (IRA, 2004) were represented and the questions seemed clear and unobtrusive, as well as objective. No bias in the questions was noted during the review.

Full Study Data Analysis

To answer research questions one, two, and three descriptive statistics were used to simply compare the scores from the scale for each group to the standards. To answer question four, three correlations were calculated: specialist and principal scores from the instruments, specialist and teacher scores from the instruments, and principal and teacher scores from the instruments. To answer question five, response patterns among the three groups of respondents were categorized as high collaboration, moderate collaboration, and low collaboration. These three groupings were then used as the independent variable in an ex-post-facto design using a one-way analysis of variance with grade three PSSA scores as the dependent variable.

To answer research question six, the reading specialist scores were broken into quartiles. Those quartile groupings (1,2,3,4) were used as the independent variable in an ex-post-facto design using a one-way analysis of variance with grade three PSSA scores as the dependent variable.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Description of Sample Population

The targeted number of schools in Allegheny country was 127 with 3 surveys released to each school. The total survey count was 381 and of that 127 Principals, 127 Reading Specialists, and 127 Classroom Teachers were sent surveys. Figure 1 shows the school districts' location within Allegheny County. Each of the schools within these districts were sent surveys and invited to participate in this study.

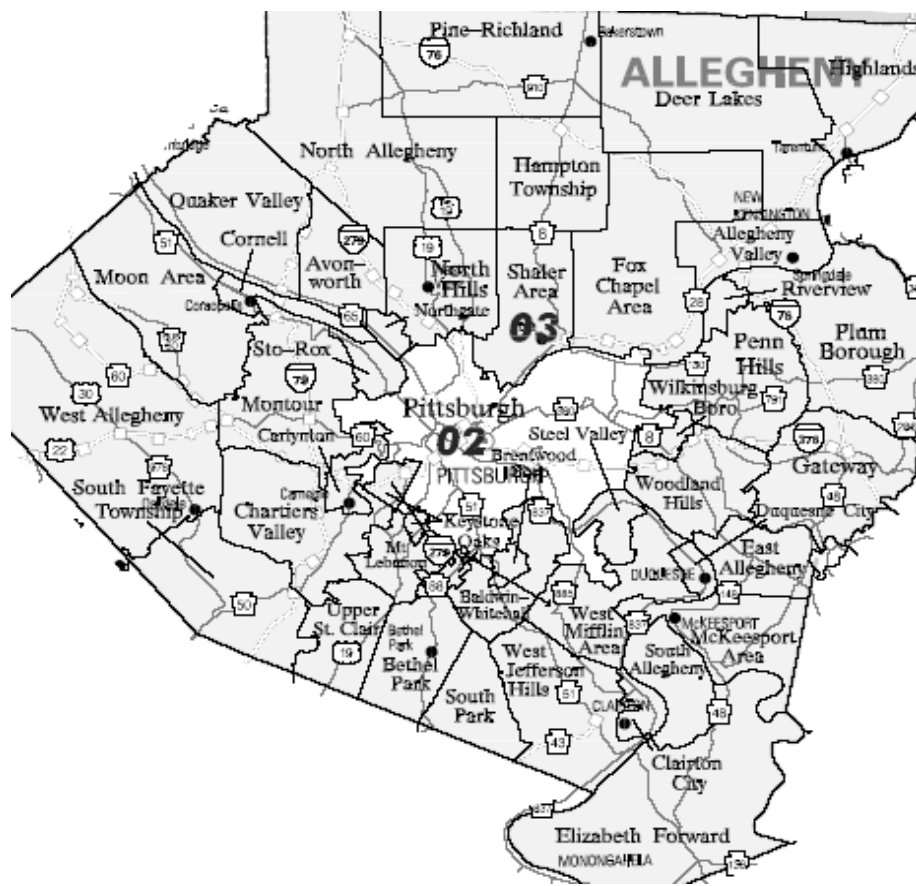


Figure 1. Geographical map of school districts of Allegheny County. Retrieved from:

http://www.Intermediate_Unit_Map_2004_Region02_03.pdf

on August 10, 2006.

In all, 79 surveys or 21% were sent back and 73 or 19% of those surveys adhered to the conditions of the research plan and were used in this study. Pennsylvania has 501

school districts located in its border and 28 school districts were represented in this study. Personnel in 46 schools returned surveys. These schools' PSSA range of scores reported for the returned surveys in this study was 343 points; as compared to the range of 357 points for the state of Pennsylvania.

Allegheny County was selected for this study due to its socio-economic diversity. Table 5 shows the economic diversity of the schools included in this study. The following table shows the economic diversity and corresponding PSSA (2004) scores for the schools of which surveys were returned. Pennsylvania has an average low-income status of 30%.

Table 5

Economic Report of the Returned Schools

<u>Low Income</u>	<u>Schools</u>	<u>Mean PSSA Score</u>
0% to 10%	11	1429.09
11% to 20%	11	1381.33
21% to 30%	9	1360.33
31% +	13	1160.00

Note. Retrieved from: <http://www.paayp.com/county.jsp,2004>

An additional reason that made Allegheny County schools a palatable population was their PSSA scores in relation to the state average. Pennsylvania's state average PSSA score was 1296. 76% of the Allegheny County schools were at or above the mean state score, and 24% were below the state mean (2004).

Demographic Information

The demographic information found in the following tables represent the 71 personnel in the 46 schools and 28 school districts who returned surveys within the time allocated and adhered to the directions of the study.

Grade levels taught.

The survey materials were sent only to reading specialists and classroom teachers who taught students at the third grade level. The following table shows the number of respondents who taught grade three reading as well as the number of respondents whose responsibility included additional grade level students.

Table 6

Current Grade Levels

<u>Grade Levels Taught</u>	<u>Number of Respondents</u>
K	8
1-2	17
3	19
4	7
5-6	0
Other	0

Table 5 shows that of the 19 reading specialists who responded to the study, all 19 were currently teaching students at the third grade level. Eight reading specialists also had responsibilities to teach students at the kindergarten level; 17 specialists also taught students in first and second grade. Seven of the specialists' students were in the fourth grade. This information is important to this study because, as the research has shown that students' learning in primary grades is vital to lifelong learning success, the presence of reading specialists at these grade levels indeed showed efforts to aid students during this time in their school career.

Years in the teaching profession and PSSA reading scores (2004).

The following table illustrates the years of experience in the profession that each reading specialist had taught. This number is the total number of years experience including classroom teaching experience at any grade level, years of service in other states or districts other than their present assignment, and years of service as an administrator.

Table 7

Years in Profession and PSSA scores

<u>Years in Profession</u>	<u>Number of Respondents</u>	<u>Grade 3 PSSA</u>
30+	4	1352
21-29	1	1389
11-20	5	1370
6-10	4	1315
1-5	1	1362

Table 7 shows that 15 reading specialists provided information concerning their total years of experience in the teaching profession. The specialist groups' sum experience between 6 and 20 years and over 30 years were

most likely to respond to the survey. The specialists whose experience totaled between 21 and 29 years indicated the highest student performance on the PSSA Reading test (2004). Specialists whose sum experiences were between 6 and 10 years averaged the lowest PSSA scores for grade-three students in 2004. However, due to the low number of respondents, it cannot be concluded at this time that years of professional teaching experience and students' PSSA Reading scores for 2004 are, or are not, relational.

The comments written by the respondents indicated that time in the profession or in their current position had some impact on the teachers' efficacy as a teacher leader. One reading specialist stated, "I feel I am knowledgeable among my colleagues but not a literacy leader. More time in the field will change that eventually." A more experienced specialist in her first year of a new school stated, "It is my first year in this school. Therefore I am gradually moving into more of a leadership (role) by modeling lessons, planning instruction with classroom teachers, and participation in study groups and school committees."

Years of experience as a reading specialist and PSSA scores.

The following table shows the respondents' number of years experience as a reading specialist. This included experiences in grade levels, schools, districts, or states other than their present assignment as a reading specialist.

Table 8

Years in Reading Specialist Position and PSSA scores

Years as a

<u>Reading Specialist</u>	<u>Number of Respondents</u>	<u>PSSA</u>
30+	1	1361
21-29	2	1394
11-20	2	1356
6-10	3	1342
<u>1-5</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>1322</u>

Table 8 shows that 15 reading specialists provided information regarding their years of service as a reading specialist. Specialists with total years as a reading specialist between 1 and 5 were most likely to respond to the study. However, they also showed the lowest PSSA

Reading score for grade three students (2004). A slight trend was noted for higher number of years and increased PSSA Reading scores for 2004. Due to the low number of respondents' information included in this table, it was difficult to show a positive or negative relationship between the number of years experience as a reading specialist and grade three students' PSSA (2004) scores. Of note is the relation of this study to Bean's work with the Evaluation Committee of the IRA in 1979. It was determined that "as long as 'reading specialist' is treated both as a generic term and a specific certification term, there will be confusion when members are asked to identify themselves professionally (p. 628)." The term "reading specialist" does seem to have been defined since the 1970's insofar as all respondents who completed the reading specialist survey were certified reading specialists and worked in the capacity of remedial reading.

Decade that reading specialist certificate was obtained and PSSA scores (2004).

The following table is offered as a summary of the data that reading specialists provided indicating the year

they received their reading specialist certificate. The dates were modified to show more clearly the decade that the reading specialists received their degrees; as pre-service training may have been modified to reflect the best research based practices of the time. The researcher did not ask respondents to indicate levels of preparedness provided by their institution nor did the researcher seek information regarding their training.

Table 9

Decade of Certification and PSSA scores

<u>Decade of Certification</u>	<u>Number of Respondents</u>	<u>PSSA</u>
1970-1979	4	1345
1980-1989	2	1359
1990-1999	5	1378
2000-2006	4	1325

Table 9 shows that 15 reading specialists provided information regarding the number of years of experience they acquired as a reading specialist. The respondents from all decades were represented. The reading specialists whose degrees were earned in the decade from 1990 through 1999 showed the highest scores for students in grade three on the PSSA Reading test (2004). The four specialists in

the 2000-2006 range showed lowest scores but noting that these are first year teachers and they probably replaced recently retired teachers, the scores may belong in the 1970-1979 year category. However, due to the low return of surveys, it is not possible at this time to determine if the decade that the certificate was earned by the reading specialist and PSSA reading scores (2004) are or are not related.

Degree and education levels of reading specialist respondents.

The following table indicates the degrees that reading specialist respondents had earned. This is an exhaustive list and included in the totals were the reading specialists' degree or certificate.

Table 10

Degrees Held by Reading Specialists

<u>Certification Area</u>	<u>Degree</u>	<u>Number of Reading Specialists</u>
Early Childhood	B.A./B.S.	3
Elementary	B.A./ B.S.	14
	M.S./M.Ed./M.S.Ed.	1
Secondary	B.A./B.S	5
	M.S./M.Ed./M.S.Ed	1
Reading Specialist	M.S./M.Ed./M.S.Ed	15
	Other	3
Other		5

Table 10 shows that of the 18 reading specialists who responded concerning their level of professional training, certificates, and degrees, 15 had a Master's degree as their reading specialist training and 3 have attended a certificate program. They have attained, as a group, 22 Bachelor degrees, 2 Masters degrees, and 5 other degrees, including but not limited to Doctorate of Education. According to a 1977 study, 55% of reading specialists had master's degrees (Flickinger, 1977). The comments from

specialists supported the idea that reading specialists continued training after their degrees were earned. One specialist wrote, "I am in the process of being trained in an ... apprenticeship model... which is research based instruction." Another specialist wrote on the importance of research based instruction, "I have invested a significant amount of personal time and energy in developing my skills and understanding of research based reading instruction and I feel that knowledge makes me a leader in this area." The specialists in this study seemed to value education in general and, as witnessed by the number of advanced degrees earned, were motivated as learners themselves.

Internal Reliability

As a measure of internal reliability, the scores of the full-study were analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha formula. The following table shows the results of the full-study with all respondents. The Specialists' scores are shown in Table 11, principals in Table 12, and the teachers in Table 13.

Table 11

Internal Reliability: Specialist

<u>Standard</u>	<u>Number of Items</u>	<u>Cronbach's Alpha</u>
Standard 1	6	.562
Standard 2	15	.894
Standard 3	15	.880
Standard 4	11	.854
Standard 5	13	.845

Nineteen reading specialists' responses were used to generate the reliability scores for Table 11. Standards 2 and 3 showed the highest rating; therefore, the scores on these two sections of the survey can be considered most reliable.

Table 12

Internal Reliability: Principal

<u>Standard</u>	<u>Number of Items</u>	<u>Cronbach's Alpha</u>
Standard 1	6	.680
Standard 2	14	.933
Standard 3	15	.908
Standard 4	11	.921
Standard 5	13	.917

Table 12 shows that of the five standards analyzed, all but Standard 1 were between .9 and 1.0. This shows a high degree of reliability for this group of scores.

Table 13

Internal Reliability: Teacher

<u>Standard</u>	<u>Number of Items</u>	<u>Cronbach's Alpha</u>
Standard 1	6	.843
Standard 2	14	.880
Standard 3	14	.880
Standard 4	11	.954
Standard 5	13	.846

Table 13 shows that of the five standards analyzed, Cronbach's Alpha scores fell between .8 and 1. This shows a high degree of reliability for this group of scores.

Discussion of Standard One Internal Reliability

Although still in an acceptable range, the scores for Standard 1 were considered an outlier for the reliability analysis for the reading specialists and classroom teachers in the full study. Two possible explanations have been provided in an attempt to acknowledge differences in the scores across respondents. The lower Cronbach's Alpha rating could be due to the low number (6) of questions included for that portion of the survey. However, because two of the groups, pilot study reading specialists and full study principals', Cronbach's Alpha scores fell between .8 and .9, an alternative explanation is explored.

The pilot study reading specialist group as well as the full study principal group were required to attend meetings throughout the year and were provided with district or countywide professional development and opportunities for discourse. The reading specialists and classroom teachers in the full study, however, were engaged in mostly on-site professional development and may have

little district or county-wide professional development or opportunities for discourse.

Perhaps further research will provide insight as to whether professional development or opportunities for discourse on a more widespread and diverse level have an affect on the respondents' scores for Standard 1, Foundational Knowledge of the Standards for Reading Professionals, Revised, 2003(IRA, 2004).

Research Questions

Research Questions 1, 2, 3

How closely do the principals', reading specialists', and teachers' perceptions of reading specialist practices in a 3rd grade setting within Allegheny County conform to the IRA's Standards for Reading Professionals (2004)?

Table 14

Mean Cut-Scores: Reading Specialist Practices and Standards

<u>Standard</u>	<u>Principal</u>	<u>Specialist</u>	<u>Teacher</u>	<u>Total</u>
1	4	3	3	3
2	3	3	3	3
3	4	3	3	3
4	3	2	2	2
5	2	2	2	2
<u>Total</u>	3	3	3	<u>3</u>

Scores used to answer question 1 were mean responses from the groups of specialists, teachers, and principals. Cut scores were determined using a quartile of the means. First quartile ratings included mean scores included 1100 through 1290. 1291-1340 represented second quartile scores, 1340-1390 indicated third quartile, and scores above 1390 fell in the fourth quartile.

All respondents' scores fell into the third quartile as aggregated. While this indicates an above average representation of the standards-based practices found in schools, some variability between the standards was noted. Specialists and Teachers' scores were represented in the same quartile for the individual standards. The principals' scores were higher by one quartile on standards 1, 3, & 4. This indicates that principals, as a group, felt that the reading specialists' role more closely fit those standards than either reading specialists or classroom teachers. The scores for standards 1, 2, & 3, were 3rd quartile or above as opposed to the 4th and 5th standard mean scores that fell into the 2nd quartile. This clearly represents an increase in performance or perceived performance of the reading specialists' activities to be closer to the first three standards.

Bean (1979) found that, "regardless of the skills of a resource person, institutional policy and practice can diminish or destroy his/her effectiveness" (p. 44). This frustration resounded in the comments of some reading specialists. One specialist wrote, "The administration brings in professionals from the (outside agency) to dictate what reading program is to be used in all

classrooms." Another states, "Teachers and the principal come to me when they have questions or need materials or suggestions, but at this time I don't have 'coaching' or similar duties as part of my job description." A third reading specialist commented, " I consider the Title I coordinator the literacy leader in our district." Another states, "I am rarely consulted for text book selections, curriculum implementation or differentiated instruction." Finally, one specialist wrote, "Under the Reading First grant our reading specialist is required to spend time with (the) intervention (of) students. This allows little time for anything else." The specialists in this study, in general, stated that although they would like to provide professional development and affect their school's literacy rich environment, their job description or current role limits their role.

Research Question 4

Do students of reading specialists who conform more highly to Standard(s) 1,2,3,4,or 5 for the Standards for Reading Professionals, Revised, 2003(2004) have higher aggregate grade 3 PSSA scores indicating higher student performance in reading?

Table 15

Specialists' Perceptions and PSSA

<u>Standard</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>PSSA</u>
RS1	4	3	3	2	2	1
RS2	3	3	3	2	2	4
RS3	4	3	3	2	1	3
RS4	3	3	3	3	2	4
RS5	3	3	3	2	3	3
RS6	3	2	1	1	1	1
RS7	3	4	4	4	1	4
RS8	3	3	3	2	1	4
RS9	4	2	2	1	1	1
RS10	3	4	4	3	2	1
RS11	4	3	3	3	3	4
RS12	4	4	4	2	2	4
RS13	4	3	3	1	2	4
RS14	4	1	3	1	1	2
RS15	3	1	2	1	1	3

Table 15 (continued).

<u>Standard</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>PSSA</u>
RS16	3	3	2	2	1	2
RS17	4	4	4	4	4	4
RS18	3	3	3	4	1	3
RS19	4	3	4	4	4	3

This data was collected to be included in the following table. The ANOVA that was performed using the reading specialists' self-reported quartile scores regarding their standard-based practices as well as their schools' PSSA Reading scores (2004) as the dependent variable.

Table 16

Analysis of Variance

ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
standone	Between Groups	.037	3	.012	.039	.989
	Within Groups	4.700	15	.313		
	Total	4.737	18			
standtwo	Between Groups	3.964	3	1.321	2.018	.155
	Within Groups	9.825	15	.655		
	Total	13.789	18			
standthree	Between Groups	2.625	3	.875	1.400	.282
	Within Groups	9.375	15	.625		
	Total	12.000	18			
standfour	Between Groups	3.780	3	1.260	1.031	.407
	Within Groups	18.325	15	1.222		
	Total	22.105	18			
standfive	Between Groups	2.651	3	.884	.835	.495
	Within Groups	15.875	15	1.058		
	Total	18.526	18			

Table 15 shows the relationship between specialists' self-reported practices as they related to the standards and their school's aggregated grade three PSSA (2004) scores. The scores indicated quartile groupings for both standards-based practices as well as PSSA scores. Refer to Table 13 for the quartile grouping of standards-based practices. The PSSA quartiles were grouped according to the following: quartile 1 scores fell between 1100 and

1199, 2nd quartile groupings included scores between 1200 and 1299, 3rd quartile scores were between 1300 and 1399, and 4th quartile scores were above 1399. As shown, the scores did not show a trend towards a relationship.

However, the low number of specialists' whose scores were reported do not represent enough power for a relationship, positive or negative, to be rationalized.

Table 16 shows the analysis of variance score for each standard. The variance that is shown was not significant enough to indicate that reading specialists' adherence to the standards as reported in the Standards for Reading Professionals, Revised, 2003 (IRA, 2004) had an effect on the schools' aggregate performance on the PSSA reading test (2004). However, power was a limitation of the study and as such, limited the ability of an analysis of variance to show a difference that was significant.

Research Question 5

Which of the standard(s) is most valued as an ideal role?

The following table shows the reported ideal role for the subgroups, specialists, principals, and teachers?

Table 17

Percentile of Specialists, Principals, and Teachers/

Standards

<u>Group</u>	<u>Standard</u>				
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
Specialist	0.0	.31	0.0	.04	.07
Principal	0.0	.17	.06	0.0	.14
Teacher	0.0	.25	.01	0.0	.04
Total Mean	0.0	.27	.02	.01	.08

Table 16 shows open-ended responses that were generated from the survey. The researcher coded responses using the language of the Elements of the Standards. The mean percentiles were calculated for the total teachers, reading specialists, and principals who offered responses.

Standard 2, Instruction, had the highest Total Mean score and was reported as the most valued. This coincided

with the reported activities of the specialists that included instruction of small group or individual at-risk readers. Reading specialists concerned with their instructional role commented, "I would love to have a very small self-contained classroom of students whom struggle in reading. My 'classroom' would involve intense intervention and would not have to last a full year." "I would like to see my students for slightly longer blocks of time. However, that would only be able to happen if I serviced fewer children." "I would like to have more time both in frequency of visits and time spent with my students." "I would like to have time to be more effective. I have too many students and feel I am only able to offer very limited assistance." "I would like larger blocks of time and less students per group. I only have a half-hour to accomplish comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, writing, activities and then add something fun."

Classroom teachers reflected similar concerns. "More one on one instruction with students below grade level...more time with students with severe problems in reading." "We would like to move our students from the below basic or basic level of achievement to a proficient level." "(The specialist should) improve the reading level of my

struggling students-bring them up to grade level."

Principals' reflections included, "(The reading specialist should) spend enough time with those students who need him/her the most." "...be afforded time to work with children without interruption of many other duties/expectations."

Standard 1, was not mentioned as an ideal role for the reading specialist. Reasons for this may be that, as Dietrich (1969) points out, reading specialists are "experts in the field" and may simply be seen as such. Another explanation may be the number of advanced degrees and continued interest in research-based professional development that the specialists have reported. Formal training and interest in current research may indicate that specialists are secure in the Elements of Standard 1. In fact, foundational knowledge was not mentioned in the comment section, positively or negatively, with regard to the specialists' content knowledge. Further research may show if reading specialists are indeed seen as experts or if the activities that the reading specialists do encompass the ideal role for the specialist. In sum, foundational knowledge may be a necessary, albeit mute, standard.

Assessment was not as integral a part of the ideal role as compared to instruction and professional development; however, mean scores for assessment showed that reading specialists were in the upper 3rd quartile for the elements for standard 3 within their school settings. Further research based on the assessment issues, activities, and value may discern if teachers, principals, and specialists are satisfied with the level of assessment duties the reading specialists are carrying out. A specialist commented concerning assessment, "...I do not have time to assess other students who are not in my group." Another specialist commented, "(I would like to) train teachers how to assess their students' strengths and weaknesses in reading and how to use that data to accelerate them." One principal stated, "(Specialist should) assess (and) analyze data and adjust instruction via palm pilot - the process would maximize time in the classroom." A classroom teacher wrote, "I would like my reading specialist to communicate more, provide feedback on students' instruction and assessments."

Standard 4 mainly deals with the specialists' role in developing a literate environment. The respondents did not indicate that this was an ideal role. However, specialists

reported other pressing issues such as assessment and instruction, in addition to the limitations of high number of students in their programs, inadequate time and lack of resources. It may well be that the overall literate environment was too much for the specialists to handle even though they are trained to do so. Responsibility for the literate environment of the school may default to the principal and for the classroom, to the teacher. However, one reading specialist commented on activities in which he/she engages that promoted a literate environment in the school. "I orchestrate Read Across America in our building, MS Read a-Thon and a student run bookstore." Another specialist stated, "(I would like to find) ways to promote literacy across the elementary curriculum...emphasize love of reading." Standard 4 stated that the specialists' role included service to develop a literate environment. Future studies may discern the importance of this standard in the reading specialists' role.

Professional Development, Standard 5, received the second greatest percentage of responses behind only instruction. Principals, in particular, responded favorably to this standard. The principals also had the highest mean scores overall for the activities that the

specialists performed. This could indicate that the principal valued the specialists' skills in areas that the Standards for Reading Professionals, Revised, 2003 (IRA, 2004) indicated to be important. Principals' written comments confirm the need for professional development to be a part of the role of the reading specialist. One principal stated, "(The specialist should)...in-service teachers on a regular basis... serve as a coach/resource to classroom teachers." Another principal wrote, "Collaborate and team teach with classroom teachers on a more regular schedule." Another stated, "Provide more parent workshops." Further, a principal stated, "In an idealize(d) situation, more of (the specialists') time would be spent co-teaching with teachers and in-servicing classroom teachers on best practices in the area of literacy." Team or co-teaching, in-service training at the school and community-level, and modeling lessons were among the most often noted ideal roles for reading specialists as reported by the principals.

Specialists indicated similar interests in providing professional development. "I would like to do more modeling in the regular classrooms." Another specialist stated, "I would like to continue to support teachers..."

Another wrote, "(I) would like to spend more time in classrooms modeling literacy strategies and guided reading..would like teachers to be more open to having a reading specialist assist and guide together." Another specialist wrote, "...increase literacy awareness among parents...more modeling needed." Classroom teachers also commented on professional development needs. One teacher stated, "(The specialist) is extremely busy, far over extended. She's a great resource and during previous years got us a lot of staff development,...I wish we could continue to have these programs and opportunities for her to offer staff development." Another teacher stated, "I would like to work closer with the specialist and have them guide me with my reading instruction, help me to make appropriate accommodations for struggling readers...give me materials that I could use in class." Another specialist added, "I would like a more collaborative program. I would like him to provide updated research, strategies, and materials." Others wrote, "I would like to observe more successful teaching strategies." "More planning time to reinforce each others instruction." "It would be helpful if they could work more collaboratively with classroom teachers to differentiate reading instruction and

individualize assessment." "Present one reading lesson per month." "Push-in into the classroom to provide support and model/coach strategies." "I would love time with a reading specialist for differentiated instruction during reading...to be able to target the students who struggle with a certain skill and give them some support." "I would like her support. It feels like she pulls kids out of my class. I would like if we could plan together and co-teach on a weekly basis."

Additional comments from teachers included, "I would like her to help me improve my skills on literacy, fluency and comprehension, as well as help me to group students based on needs on a given day." "I would like more interaction with my specialist. I would enjoy doing a co-teaching with her to help strengthen my skills."

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This research endeavor was intended to discern if the reading specialists in Allegheny County follow the activities recommended by the IRA in the Standards for Reading Professionals, Revised, 2003 (2004). The results of the study brought to light the activities and roles that the reading specialists in the research population performed. A summary of the research has been provided followed by conclusions drawn by the researcher, and finally, implications for future research are recommended.

It is important to note to the reader that these findings were based on a convenient sample and although the targeted research population was substantial, the number of returned surveys was less than expected. These two factors limited the study. General findings may point toward trends that could be verified with a larger population. The readers of this chapter are urged to accept these findings as tentative, due to the lack of power that confounds this study.

Summary

Generally, the reading specialists in the research population reported that they performed the most duties in the areas of instruction, Standard 2, and assessment of students, Standard 3. Duties in the area of developing a literate environment, Standard 4, were neither reported as a role that the specialists' are performing nor a role that the specialists' feel should be an ideal role. Specialists reported that while professional development, Standard 5, was not as widely performed as instruction and assessment, it is an ideal role.

Specialists also provided personal reflections on leadership, limitations to the specialists' role, and an ideal role for the specialist. On the issue of leadership, respondents varied in their definition of leadership. For example, some specialists and teachers felt they were leaders to their students, or to teachers within their school or district, while others felt leadership defaulted to the principal or policy makers. Principals, however, uniformly reported themselves as leaders, while citing the same student, school, and district level leadership activities as the specialists and the teachers. Some principals reported that they were leaders because of their

position within the school. Some specialists noted that they would like to have more of a leadership role within the school or district. Sixty-seven percent of respondents, who self-reported as non-leaders or as unsure of their leadership role; cited inexperience in the field or their current position. Limitations to the role of the reading specialist as reported by principals, specialists, and teachers included lack of sufficient time to instruct students and communicate effectively with the classroom teachers. Fifty percent of the teachers, 34% of the principals, and 73% of the specialists indicated that time was a serious limitation. 31% of teachers, 57% of specialists, and 44% of principals reported that high student-to-specialist ratios limited the role. Teachers also stated that 1)lack of collaboration and 2)insufficient communication with teachers within their current pullout model were limitations.

Respondents reflected upon an ideal role of a specialist. Principals and teachers noted that more specialists were needed to fulfill the needs of all the eligible students in their schools. Dissemination of research and best practices may occur "on the run" as one

specialist noted. The pushin model was cited across the groups as an ideal situation that would, as one principal stated, "provide more collaboration and communication based on time and scheduling issues". Another principal stated, "..in general, pull-out is not working. (The) specialists' role needs to be defined and communicated to teachers". Although no principal, teacher, or specialist cited specifically the term "reading coach", essentially, the role that would be most ideal to increase collaboration, communication, school-wide assessment and professional development, and model best practice-based strategies is that of a coach.

Conclusions

Although the number of respondents did not represent sufficient power to provide statistically significant data, some conclusions were drawn concerning the role of the specialist: (1) All groups reported that time was the most serious limitation to the specialists' role. (2) All groups reported that student-specialist ratio was also a serious limitation. (3) Collaboration and communication were noted in all groups' responses as important but not addressed sufficiently due to limitations of time and high student-

specialist ratio. (4) Respondents would like to see a pushin model replace the pullout model. (5) Principals and teachers would like to have additional specialists in their schools to provide instruction for all students who would benefit from reading support. (6) Specialists would like to perform the following duties: school-wide assessment, grouping, instructional material consultation, modeling best practices for parents and teachers, and motivation for students. (7) A need for the specialists' role to be redefined to include an expanded role was reported. (8) Teachers and principals with advanced degrees in literacy stated that the additional training helped make them leaders in their field. (9) Specialists were reported to perform duties closest to Standard 2, instructional areas, and Standard 3, assessment, while Standard 5 (professional development) was an additional ideal role. (10) Principals perceived the role of their specialists as more varied and more closely aligned to the Standards for Reading Professionals, 2003 (IRA, 2004) than did either the specialists or the teachers. (11) Although many of the ideal role activities fell into the realm of a reading coach, no respondents used the term in their reflections.

Recommendations

Based on the tenuous conclusions that can be drawn at this point, recommendations for future research are offered. This researcher is not aware of another study that collected data in such detail on standards based practices as this current study. The type of information provided was sufficient to provide relatively high Cronbach's Alpha scores based on responses. Therefore, a major contribution of this research effort is the questionnaire itself. This instrument may provide a future researcher with a reliable tool to collect data within a larger scope.

Research into the role that the specialist performs in the professional development realm of the school may also be warranted. Professional development was the one area indicated as an ideal role that was not already being fulfilled. Studies to show the impact of formal, research-based professional development programs implemented by the specialist would support the need for the specialist to perform this role.

Specialists' time at schools is at a premium. Respondents' reflections suggest frustration with the status quo of the pullout model. Meeting all of the students' needs is a mandate of NCLB (2000) and was a goal

reported in all groups' responses. At this time, research to determine the impact of the coaching model may be appropriate. Coaches roles include time to track assessments and make curriculum adjustments, model instructional techniques, and provide professional development. This duality of instruction and coaching may balance the limitations of time and student-specialist ratios. The impact of the coach should be studied to determine if student achievement is affected by their efforts both for the students who require reading support and for the students proficient in most reading skills.

When principals were asked if they considered themselves leaders, they unanimously reported yes. When teachers and reading specialists were asked to consider their leadership role in the school, most were unsure. Roland Barth, in Phi Delta Kappan, (February, 2001) is quoted, "Teachers must be an essential part of [that] leadership, never more so than when issues of instructional leadership are at stake." He reports that there are several areas in which teachers may provide leadership in the school. These areas include: choosing textbooks and instructional materials, shaping the curriculum, designing staff development and in-service programs, and evaluating

teachers' performance. Since these areas are also found within the Standards for Reading Professionals, Revised, 2003 (IRA, 2004), further research is recommended in the area of teacher leadership with special consideration for reading specialists.

It was clear that teachers' and specialists' responses were more aligned than the responses of the principals. The principals, however, may set the parameters of the specialists' role in terms of scheduling, number of students, and the setting in which instruction takes place. Perhaps principals, with additional information on the variety of roles reading specialists are trained to perform, would provide an environment that would foster deeper relationships among administrators, teachers, specialists, parents, and students. Research that would provide school personnel with background information and track instructional changes in specialists' roles and students' achievement would be beneficial.

Finally, collaborative efforts of schools should reflect the standards with the goal of providing best practice models to school personnel. Principals, teachers, and specialists should be trained in implementing the standards on a local level. The changes in the standards,

2003 (IRA, 2004) reflect a paradigm shift in thinking from dictating inputs to reflecting a need to direct outputs. Therefore, studies with a pre-posttest design are necessary to discern the impact of professional development aimed at teaching the standards to professionals in schools. It is the hope of this researcher that this first step in evaluating standards-based activities of reading specialists based on the Standards for Reading Professionals, Revised, 2003 (IRA, 2004) will provide insight for future research endeavors into the role of the reading specialist. Insofar as the specialist can impact students and teachers, research on their role can provide clarity to specialists' roles and provide data to determine the best use of their time in schools.

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APPENDICIES

APPENDIX A

International Reading Association Standards for Specialized
Reading Personnel (2004)

STANDARDS FOR READING PROFESSIONALS

Revised 2003

Developed
by the
Professional Standards
and
Ethics Committee
of the
International
Reading
Association

A REFERENCE FOR THE PREPARATION OF EDUCATORS IN THE UNITED STATES



International Reading Association

A membership organization of literacy professionals

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A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S |
T | U | V | W | X | Y | Z

IRA Style Guide

[Style Guide Special Sections ...](#)

Standards for Reading Professionals

Revised role definitions as of 4/10/06

Category I: The Paraprofessional

Assists in regular education, special education, or reading and writing education in graded or age-grouped classrooms at preschool through high-school levels, and in after school and summer programs.

Has two-year postsecondary degree with an emphasis on human development and educational processes and, for those paraprofessionals who provide reading instruction, 12 semester credit hours, or the equivalent, in literacy and language development.

Category II: The Classroom Teacher

Teaches at the early childhood, elementary, middle, or high school level. This category also includes adult continuing education.

Develops children's reading and related language arts; includes content area teachers who integrate literacy instruction with subject learning.

Has undergraduate or graduate degree that includes a minimum of 12 hours for preK-grade 5 and a minimum of 6 hours for grades 6-12 teachers of coursework in reading and reading instruction.

Category III: The Reading Specialist

Works at the early childhood, elementary, middle, secondary, and/or or adult levels.

Fulfills a number of responsibilities and many have a specific focus that further defines their duties. For example, a reading specialist can serve as a teacher for students experiencing reading difficulties; as a literacy or reading coach; or as a supervisor or coordinator of reading/literacy. The reading specialist must be prepared to fulfill the duties of all three of these:

- **A reading intervention teacher** is a reading specialist who provides intensive instruction to struggling readers. Such instruction may be provided either within or outside the students' classrooms.
- **A reading coach or a literacy coach** is a reading specialist who focuses on providing professional development for teachers by providing them with the

additional support needed to implement various instructional programs and practices. They provide essential leadership for the school's entire literacy program by helping create and supervise a long-term staff development process that supports both the development and implementation of the literacy program over months and years. These individuals need to have experiences that enable them to provide effective professional development for the teachers in their schools.

- **A reading supervisor or reading coordinator** is a reading specialist who is responsible for developing, leading, and evaluating a school reading program, from kindergarten through grade 12. They may assume some of the same responsibilities as the literacy coach, but in addition have responsibilities that require them to work more with systematic change at the school level. These individuals need to have experiences that enable them to work effectively as an administrator and to be able to develop and lead effective professional development programs.

May also include these additional responsibilities:

- Serves as a resource in the area of reading for paraprofessionals, teachers, administrators, and the community.
- Works cooperatively and collaboratively with other professionals in planning programs to meet the needs of diverse populations of learners.
- Provides professional development opportunities at the local and state levels.
- Provides leadership in student advocacy.

It is expected that the reading specialist will meet the following qualifications:

- Previous teaching experience
- Master's degree with concentration in reading education:
 - A minimum of 24 graduate credit hours in reading and language arts and related courses
 - An additional 6 credit-hours of supervised practicum experience.

Category IV: The Reading Teacher Educator

Provides instruction to candidates at the graduate and undergraduate levels. Participates in scholarly work, including researching, writing, and professional development.

Forges university-school partnerships with other educational agencies to promote the advancement of literacy.

Has a minimum of three years' teaching experience including the teaching of reading.

Has a terminal degree that focuses on reading and reading instruction.

Category V: The Administrator

Includes principals, superintendents.

Recognizes and supports reading professionals as they plan, implement, and evaluate effective reading instruction.

Principals (K-12) have a minimum of 6 credits hours in reading and related language arts.

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APPENDIX B
Instrument for Reading Professionals



DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY

600 FORBES AVENUE ♦ PITTSBURGH, PA 15282

January 10, 2006

Dear Reading Specialist,

I am currently completing my dissertation to satisfy the requirements for my doctoral degree. Your help in completing this survey will enable me to collect the data necessary to finish this final phase of my research.

The purpose of this survey is to collect very important information from reading specialists concerning the implementation of standard-based practices within Allegheny County Schools. Because 79% of our schools performed at or above the state mean for the PSSA Reading Test, the practices that you employ may have implications for the rest of the state's school systems.

All information that you provide will be kept confidential. Surveys are coded to match your responses and your school's PSSA scores. Your school's code that appears on the bottom right of the survey will be cut off and discarded. Surveys will be stored according to your school's urban or rural status. This will provide the researcher with information important to her research and provide you and your staff confidentiality.

Please read the informed consent form, and if you choose to participate in this study, sign the consent form and complete the survey. Two self-addressed stamped envelopes are provided. When you have completed this survey, please place the survey in one of the self-addressed, stamped envelopes provided and place the signed consent form in the other envelope. Place both envelopes in the mail.

Surveys can be accepted until January 27, 2006.

Notification of the results of this study will be available on-line after May 1, 2006. A letter will be sent to your school with the URL and date of posting.

Thank you for your participation in this research. If you have questions, please contact Dr. Derek Whordley, Dissertation Chair at (412) 396-6599.

Respectfully,

Bernadette Nemeth

Part I: Personal Information

Directions: Please check the appropriate box to describe your qualifications and background.

1. What is your job title?

- Reading specialist
- Reading consultant
- Literacy coach
- Reading teacher
- Other _____

2. In addition to grade 3 please indicate other grade levels that you teach? Check all that apply.

- K
- 1-2
- 3-4
- 5-6
- Other _____

3. How many years have you held your reading specialist certificate/degree?

- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-20
- 21-29
- 30+

4. How many years have you held a reading specialist position?

- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-20
- 21-29
- 30+

5. How many years have you held a professional teaching position?

- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-20
- 21-29
- 30+

6. In regards to your personal reading, please place a check in the box next to your favorite genre and write in the books you have read for personal enjoyment.

Favorite Genre	Favorite book(s) in each category
<input type="checkbox"/> fiction -general	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> non-fiction	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> historical fiction	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> science fiction	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> mystery	_____

7. Which degrees/certifications have you earned or are currently working towards?

Area of Certification	Degree	Year Obtained
Early Childhood	<input type="checkbox"/> B.A./B.S. <input type="checkbox"/> M.S./M.Ed. <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
Elementary	<input type="checkbox"/> B.A./B.S. <input type="checkbox"/> M.S./M.Ed. <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
Secondary	<input type="checkbox"/> B.A./B.S. <input type="checkbox"/> M.S./M.Ed. <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
Reading Specialist	<input type="checkbox"/> M.S./M.Ed. <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	

Part 2: Perceptions

Directions: To the left of the statements, please respond based on your duties as a reading specialist.

A check in the box indicates that you do not feel that the statement is applicable or you do not know the information.

1 2 3 4 5

Circle (1) if the statement does not reflect your current responsibility or practice.

1 2 3 4 5

Circle (5) if the statement consistently reflects your current responsibility or practice.

Standard 3: Assessment, Diagnosis, and Evaluation

Not Known/ Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I compare and contrast a wide range of assessment tools and practices.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I use a wide range of assessment tools and practices.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I recommend a wide range of assessment tools and practices.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I suggest ideas, strategies, or materials for assessment to teachers.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I use a variety of formal, informal, technology-based, and teacher-made assessments.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I demonstrate appropriate use of assessments in my practice.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I train classroom teachers to administer assessments.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I train classroom teachers to interpret assessment results.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I support the classroom teacher in the assessment of individual students.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I extend assessment to determine proficiencies and difficulties for appropriate services.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I support the classroom teacher in using assessment to plan instruction for all students.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I use in-depth assessment information to plan individual instruction for struggling readers.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I analyze school-wide assessment data to implement and revise school reading programs.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I communicate assessment information to a variety of audiences in the school.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I communicate assessment information to a variety of audiences in the community.

Standard 4: Creating a Literate Environment

Not Known/ Not Applicable <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Disagree 1	2	3	4	Strongly Agree 5	
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	I assist the classroom teacher in selecting materials for individual students.
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	I assist the classroom teacher in selecting books.
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	I assist the classroom teacher in selecting technology-based information.
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	I assist the classroom teacher in selecting nonprint materials.
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	I demonstrate and model reading and writing for real purposes in my daily interaction with my students.
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	I demonstrate and model reading and writing for real purposes in my daily interaction with education professionals.
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	I assist teachers in modeling reading and writing as valued lifelong activities.
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	I use methods to effectively revise instructional plans to motivate all students.
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	I assist the classroom teachers in designing programs that will motivate all students.
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	I articulate the research base that grounds my practice.
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	I assist paraprofessionals in modeling reading and writing as valued lifelong activities.

Standard 5: Professional Development

Statements of Reading Specialist Practices

Not Known/ Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--|-----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I articulate the theories related to the connections between teacher dispositions and student achievement. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I conduct professional study groups for classroom teachers. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I assist classroom teachers with their personal professional development plans. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I advocate to advance the professional research base to expand knowledge-based practices. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I evaluate my own teaching practices. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I evaluate other reading specialist's teaching practices. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I exhibit leadership skills in professional development. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I identify and describe the characteristics of sound professional development programs. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I articulate the evidence base that grounds my professional development practice. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I plan, implement, or evaluate professional development efforts at the classroom level. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I plan, implement, or evaluate professional development efforts at the school level. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I plan, implement, or evaluate professional development efforts at the district level. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I plan, implement, or evaluate professional development efforts at the state level. | 1 2 3 4 5 |

Part III: Perceptions (continued)

Directions: Please respond to the following questions either in essay form or bullet form.

1. Do you consider yourself a literacy leader among your colleagues? Please explain

2. In an idealized situation, what would you like to accomplish in your role as a reading specialist that you are otherwise unable to accomplish in your current situation.

3. What are the most serious limitations on you as a reading specialist in your school environment?

APPENDIX C
Instrument for Principals



DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY

600 FORBES AVENUE ♦ PITTSBURGH, PA 15282

January 10, 2006

Dear Principal,

I am currently completing my dissertation to satisfy the requirements for my doctoral degree. Your help in completing this survey will enable me to collect the data necessary to finish this final phase of my research.

The purpose of this survey is to collect very important information from principals concerning the implementation of standard-based practices within Allegheny County Schools. Because 79% of our schools performed at or above the state mean for the PSSA Reading Test, the practices that you employ may have implications for the rest of the state's school systems.

All information that you provide will be kept confidential. Surveys are coded to match your responses and your school's PSSA scores. Your school's code that appears on the bottom right of the survey will be cut off and discarded. Surveys will be stored according to your school's urban or rural status. This will provide the researcher with information important to her research and provide you and your staff confidentiality.

There are three surveys and six self-addressed stamped envelopes in the packet. Please distribute the surveys to your third grade reading teacher and your reading specialist. If multiple classroom teachers or reading specialist are available, please choose the teacher and specialist whose last name occurs first alphabetically.

Please read the informed consent form, and if you choose to participate in this study, sign the consent form and complete the survey. Two self-addressed stamped envelopes are provided. When you have completed this survey, please place the survey in one of the self-addressed, stamped envelopes provided and place the signed consent form in the other envelope. Place both envelopes in the mail.

Surveys can be accepted until January 27, 2006.

Notification of the results of this study will be available on-line after May 1, 2006. A letter will be sent to your school with the URL and date of posting.

Thank you for your participation in this research. If you have questions, please contact Dr. Derek Whordley, Dissertation Chair at (412) 396-6599.

Respectfully,

Bernadette Nemeth

Part I: Personal Information

Directions: Please check the appropriate box to describe your qualifications and background.

1. What is your job title?

- Principal
- Assistant Principal
- Acting Principal
- Other _____

3. How many years have you held your principal certificate/degree?

- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-20
- 21-29
- 30+

4. How many years have you held your current principal position?

- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-20
- 21-29
- 30+

5. How many years have you held a professional position in education?

- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-20
- 21-29
- 30+

6. In regards to your personal reading, please place a check in the box next to your favorite genre and write in the books you have read for personal enjoyment.

Favorite Genre	Favorite book(s) in each category
<input type="checkbox"/> fiction -general	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> non-fiction	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> historical fiction	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> science fiction	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> mystery	_____

7. Which degrees/certifications have you earned or are currently working towards?

Area of Certification	Degree	Certification	Year Obtained
Early Childhood	<input type="checkbox"/> B.A./B.S. <input type="checkbox"/> M.S./M.Ed. <input type="checkbox"/> Other		
Elementary	<input type="checkbox"/> B.A./B.S. <input type="checkbox"/> M.S./M.Ed. <input type="checkbox"/> Other		
Secondary	<input type="checkbox"/> B.A./B.S. <input type="checkbox"/> M.S./M.Ed. <input type="checkbox"/> Other		
Reading Specialist	<input type="checkbox"/> M.S./M.Ed. <input type="checkbox"/> Ph.D/Ed.D.		
Principal	<input type="checkbox"/> M.S./M.Ed. <input type="checkbox"/> Ph.D/ Ed.D <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Elementary <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary <input type="checkbox"/> K-12	

Part 2: Perceptions

Directions: To the left of the statements, please respond based on the duties your reading specialist performs.

A check in the box indicates that you do not feel that the statement is applicable or you do not know the information.

1 2 3 4 5 Circle (1) if the statement does not reflect your reading specialist's current responsibility or practice.

1 2 3 4 5 Circle (5) if the statement consistently reflects your reading specialist's current responsibility or practice.

Standard 1: Foundational Knowledge

Not Known/ Not Applicable <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Disagree		Strongly Agree		Statements of Reading Specialist Practices	
	1	2	3	4		5
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	My Reading Specialist... ... grounds her practice in the theory of at least one major theorist.
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	... knows historical developments in the history of reading.
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	... knows how seminal research studies impacted reading instruction.
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	... understands theories in the area of language development.
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	... understands theories in the area of learning to read.
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	... is able to determine if students are appropriately integrating the components of fluent reading.

Standard 2: Instructional Strategies and Curriculum Materials

Not Known/ Not Applicable		Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree				
<input type="checkbox"/>		1	2	3	4	5					
My Reading Specialist...											
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	...	supports classroom teachers in their use of instructional grouping strategies.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	...	helps teachers select appropriate instructional grouping strategies options.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	...	demonstrates instructional grouping options for teachers.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	...	explains the evidence-based rationale for changing configurations to meet all students' needs.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	...	supports the classroom teachers in their use of technology-based instructional practices				
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	...	helps teachers select appropriate instructional options				
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	...	explains the evidence-base for selecting practices to meet all students' needs				
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	...	demonstrates instructional options in her teaching.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	...	demonstrates instructional options for teachers through classroom demonstration teaching.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	...	supports the classroom teachers in their use of a wide range of curriculum materials.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	...	helps teachers select appropriate instructional options.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	...	explains the evidence-base for selecting materials to meet all students' needs.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	...	demonstrates curriculum materials options for teachers through classroom demonstration.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	...	supports paraprofessional in matters of instructional strategies and curriculum materials.				

Standard 3: Assessment, Diagnosis, and Evaluation

Not Known/ Not Applicable <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree					
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	...	My Reading Specialist ... compares and contrasts a wide range of assessment tools and practices.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	...	... uses a wide range of assessment tools and practices.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	...	... recommends a wide range of assessment tools and practices.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	...	... suggests ideas, strategies, or materials for assessment to teachers.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	...	... uses a variety of formal, informal, technology-based, and teacher-made assessments.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	...	... demonstrates appropriate use of assessments.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	...	... trains classroom teachers to administer assessments.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	...	... trains classroom teachers to interpret assessment results.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	...	... supports the classroom teacher in the assessment of individual students.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	...	... extends assessment to determine proficiencies and difficulties for appropriate services.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	...	... supports the classroom teacher in using assessment to plan instruction for all students.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	...	... uses in-depth assessment information to plan individual instruction for struggling readers.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	...	... analyzes school-wide assessment data to implement and revise school reading programs.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	...	... communicates assessment information to a variety of audiences in the school.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	...	... communicates assessment information to a variety of audiences in the community.				

Standard 4: Creating a Literate Environment

Statements of Reading Specialist Practices

Not Known/
Not Applicable Strongly
Disagree Strongly
Agree

1 2 3 4 5

My Reading Specialist...

- 1 2 3 4 5 ... assists the classroom teacher in selecting materials for individual students.
- 1 2 3 4 5 ... assists the classroom teacher in selecting books.
- 1 2 3 4 5 ... assists the classroom teacher in selecting technology-based information.
- 1 2 3 4 5 ... assists the classroom teacher in selecting nonprint materials.
- 1 2 3 4 5 ... demonstrates and models reading and writing for real purposes in my daily interaction with my students.
- 1 2 3 4 5 ... demonstrates and models reading and writing for real purposes in my interactions with educational professionals.
- 1 2 3 4 5 ... assists teachers in modeling reading and writing as valued lifelong activities.
- 1 2 3 4 5 ... uses methods to effectively revise instructional plans to motivate all students.
- 1 2 3 4 5 ... assists the classroom teachers in designing programs that will motivate all students.
- 1 2 3 4 5 ... articulates the research base that grounds my practice.
- 1 2 3 4 5 ... assists paraprofessionals in modeling reading and writing as valued lifelong activities.

Standard 5: Professional Development

Not Known/ Not Applicable <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree					
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
<input type="checkbox"/>											My Reading Specialist... ... articulates the theories related to the connections between teacher dispositions and student achievement.
<input type="checkbox"/>											... conducts professional study groups for classroom teachers.
<input type="checkbox"/>											... assists classroom teachers with their personal professional development plans.
<input type="checkbox"/>											... advocates to advance the professional research base to expand knowledge-based practices.
<input type="checkbox"/>											... evaluates my own teaching practices.
<input type="checkbox"/>											... evaluates other reading specialist's teaching practices.
<input type="checkbox"/>											... exhibits leadership skills in professional development.
<input type="checkbox"/>											... identifies and describes the characteristics of sound professional development programs.
<input type="checkbox"/>											... articulates the evidence base that grounds my professional development practice.
<input type="checkbox"/>											... plans implements, or evaluates professional development efforts at the classroom level.
<input type="checkbox"/>											... plans implements, or evaluates professional development efforts at the school
<input type="checkbox"/>											... plans, implements, or evaluates professional development efforts at the district level.
<input type="checkbox"/>											... plans, implements, or evaluates professional development efforts at the state level.

Part III: Perceptions (continued)

Directions: Please respond to the following questions either in essay form or bullet form. Please continue on the back of this paper if you require more space than is provided.

1. Do you consider yourself a literacy leader? Please explain

2. In an idealized situation, what would reading specialists do that they are unable to do now?

3. What are the most serious limitations on your reading specialist in your school environment?

APPENDIX D
Instrument for Classroom Reading Teachers



DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY

600 FORBES AVENUE ♦ PITTSBURGH, PA 15282

January 10, 2006

Dear Classroom Reading Teacher,

I am currently completing my dissertation to satisfy the requirements for my doctoral degree. Your help in completing this survey will enable me to collect the data necessary to finish this final phase of my research.

The purpose of this survey is to collect very important information from classroom reading teachers concerning the implementation of standard-based practices within Allegheny County Schools. Because 79% of our schools performed at or above the state mean for the PSSA Reading Test, the practices that you employ may have implications for the rest of the state's school systems.

All information that you provide will be kept confidential. Surveys are coded to match your responses and your school's PSSA scores. Your school's code that appears on the bottom right of the survey will be cut off and discarded. Surveys will be stored according to your school's urban or rural status. This will provide the researcher with information important to her research and provide you and your staff confidentiality.

Please read the informed consent form, and if you choose to participate in this study, sign the consent form and complete the survey. Two self-addressed stamped envelopes are provided. When you have completed this survey, please place the survey in one of the self-addressed, stamped envelopes provided and place the signed consent form in the other envelope. Place both envelopes in the mail.

Surveys can be accepted until January 27, 2006.

Notification of the results of this study will be available on-line after May 1, 2006. A letter will be sent to your school with the URL and date of posting.

Thank you for your participation in this research. If you have questions, please contact Dr. Derek Whordley, Dissertation Chair at (412) 396-6599.

Respectfully,

Bernadette Nemeth

Part I: Personal Information

Directions: Please check the appropriate box to describe your qualifications and background.

1. What is your job title?

- Classroom Teacher – self-contained
- Classroom Reading Teacher
- Other _____

2. In addition to grade 3, please indicate other grade levels that you teach? Check all that apply.

- K
- 1-2
- 3-4
- 5-6
- Other _____

3. In addition to reading, please indicate other subjects that you teach? Check all that apply.

- math
- science
- social studies
- English
- Other _____

4. How many years have you held your teaching certificate/degree?

- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-20
- 21-29
- 30+

5. How many years have you held your current school position?

- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-20
- 21-29
- 30+

6. How many years have you held a professional teaching position?

- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-20
- 21-29
- 30+

7. In regards to your personal reading, please place a check in the box of your favorite genre and write in the most recent books you have read for personal enjoyment.

Favorite Genre

Most recently read books in each genre

fiction -general

non-fiction

historical fiction

science fiction

mystery

8. Which degrees/certifications have you earned or are currently working towards?

Area of Certification	Degree	Certification	Year Obtained
Early Childhood	<input type="checkbox"/> B.A./B.S <input type="checkbox"/> M.S./M.Ed. <input type="checkbox"/> Other		
Elementary	<input type="checkbox"/> B.A./B.S <input type="checkbox"/> M.S./M.Ed. <input type="checkbox"/> Other		
Secondary	<input type="checkbox"/> B.A./B.S <input type="checkbox"/> M.S./M.Ed. <input type="checkbox"/> Other		
Reading Specialist	<input type="checkbox"/> M.S./M.Ed. <input type="checkbox"/> Other		
Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Part 2: Perceptions

Directions: To the left of the statements, please respond based on the duties your reading specialist performs.



A check in the box indicates that you do not feel that the statement is applicable or you do not know the information.

1 2 3 4 5 Circle (1) if the statement does not reflect your reading specialist's current responsibility or practice.

1 2 3 4 5 Circle (5) if the statement consistently reflects your reading specialist's current responsibility or practice.

Standard 1: Foundational Knowledge

Not Known/ Not Applicable <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	My Reading Specialist...				
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	... grounds her practice in the theory of at least one major theorist.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	... knows historical developments in the history of reading.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	... knows how seminal research studies impacted reading instruction.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	... understands theories in the area of language development.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	... understands theories in the area of learning to read.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	... is able to determine if students are appropriately integrating the components of fluent reading.				

Standard 2: Instructional Strategies and Curriculum Materials

Not Known/
Not Applicable Strongly
Disagree Strongly
Agree

Statements of Reading Specialist Practices

My Reading Specialist...

- | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | ... supports classroom teachers in their use of instructional grouping strategies. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | ... helps teachers select appropriate instructional grouping strategies options. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | ... demonstrates instructional grouping options for teachers. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | ... explains the evidence-based rationale for changing configurations to meet all students' needs. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | ... supports the classroom teachers in their use of technology-based instructional practices |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | ... helps teachers select appropriate instructional options |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | ... explains the evidence-base for selecting practices to meet all students' needs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | ... demonstrates instructional options in her teaching. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | ... demonstrates instructional options for teachers through classroom demonstration teaching. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | ... supports the classroom teachers in their use of a wide range of curriculum materials. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | ... helps teachers select appropriate instructional options. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | ... explains the evidence-base for selecting materials to meet all students' needs. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | ... demonstrates curriculum materials options for teachers through classroom demonstration. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | ... supports paraprofessional in matters of instructional strategies and curriculum materials. |

Standard 3: Assessment, Diagnosis, and Evaluation

Statements of Reading Specialist Practices

Not Known/
Not Applicable
 1 2 3 4 5

Strongly
Disagree
 1 2 3 4 5

My Reading Specialist...

- 1 2 3 4 5 ... compares and contrasts a wide range of assessment tools and practices.
- 1 2 3 4 5 ... uses a wide range of assessment tools and practices.
- 1 2 3 4 5 ... recommends a wide range of assessment tools and practices.
- 1 2 3 4 5 ... suggests ideas, strategies, or materials for assessment to teachers.
- 1 2 3 4 5 ... uses a variety of formal, informal, technology-based, and teacher-made assessments.
- 1 2 3 4 5 ... demonstrates appropriate use of assessments in my practice.
- 1 2 3 4 5 ... trains classroom teachers to administer assessments.
- 1 2 3 4 5 ... trains classroom teachers to interpret assessment results.
- 1 2 3 4 5 ... supports the classroom teacher in the assessment of individual students.
- 1 2 3 4 5 ... extends assessment to determine proficiencies and difficulties for appropriate services.
- 1 2 3 4 5 ... supports the classroom teacher in using assessment to plan instruction for all students.
- 1 2 3 4 5 ... uses in-depth assessment information to plan individual instruction for struggling readers.
- 1 2 3 4 5 ... analyzes school-wide assessment data to implement and revise school reading programs.
- 1 2 3 4 5 ... communicates assessment information to a variety of audiences in the school.
- 1 2 3 4 5 ... communicates assessment information to a variety of audiences in the community.

Standard 4: Creating a Literate Environment

Statements of Reading Specialist Practices

Not Known/ Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 2 3 4 5		

My Reading Specialist...

- 1 2 3 4 5 ... assists the classroom teacher in selecting materials for individual students.
- 1 2 3 4 5 ... assists the classroom teacher in selecting books.
- 1 2 3 4 5 ... assists the classroom teacher in selecting technology-based information.
- 1 2 3 4 5 ... assists the classroom teacher in selecting nonprint materials.
- 1 2 3 4 5 ... demonstrates and models reading and writing for real purposes in my daily interaction with my students.
- 1 2 3 4 5 ... demonstrates and models reading and writing for real purposes in my interactions with educational professionals.
- 1 2 3 4 5 ... assists teachers in modeling reading and writing as valued lifelong activities.
- 1 2 3 4 5 ... uses methods to effectively revise instructional plans to motivate all students.
- 1 2 3 4 5 ... assists the classroom teachers in designing programs that will motivate all students.
- 1 2 3 4 5 ... articulates the research base that grounds my practice.
- 1 2 3 4 5 ... assists paraprofessionals in modeling reading and writing as valued lifelong activities.

Standard 5: Professional Development

Statements of Reading Specialist Practices

Not Known/
Not Applicable

Strongly
Disagree

Strongly
Agree

1 2 3 4 5

My Reading Specialist...

- 1 2 3 4 5 ... articulates the theories related to the connections between teacher dispositions and student achievement.
- 1 2 3 4 5 ... conducts professional study groups for classroom teachers.
- 1 2 3 4 5 ... assists classroom teachers with their personal professional development plans.
- 1 2 3 4 5 ... advocates to advance the professional research base to expand knowledge-based practices.
- 1 2 3 4 5 ... evaluates my own teaching practices.
- 1 2 3 4 5 ... evaluates other reading specialist's teaching practices.
- 1 2 3 4 5 ... exhibits leadership skills in professional development.
- 1 2 3 4 5 ... identifies and describe the characteristics of sound professional development programs.
- 1 2 3 4 5 ... articulates the evidence base that grounds my professional development practice.
- 1 2 3 4 5 ... plans implements, or evaluates professional development efforts at the classroom level.
- 1 2 3 4 5 ... plans implements, or evaluates professional development efforts at the school
- 1 2 3 4 5 ... plans, implements, or evaluates professional development efforts at the district level.
- 1 2 3 4 5 ... plans, implements, or evaluates professional development efforts at the state level.

Part III: Perceptions (continued)

Directions: Please respond to the following questions either in essay form or bullet form. Please continue on the back of this paper if you require more space than is provided.

1. Do you consider yourself a literacy leader among your colleagues? Please explain

2. In an idealized situation, what would you like your reading specialist to accomplish with you?

3. What are the limitations of working with a reading specialist in your environment?
