1995

Early Childhood Educators' Beliefs, Knowledge Bases, And Practices Related To Assessing Early Literacy

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VITA

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EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS' BELIEFS, KNOWLEDGE BASES, AND PRACTICES RELATED TO ASSESSING EARLY LITERACY

A Dissertation

Presented to

The School of Graduate Studies

Department of Elementary and Early Childhood Education

Indiana State University

Terre Haute, Indiana

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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by

Linda G. Marley

May 1995

APPROVAL SHEET

The dissertation of Linda G. Marley, Contribution to the School of Graduate Studies, Indiana State University, Series I, Number 645, under the title Early Childhood Educators' Beliefs, Knowledge Bases, and Practices Related to Assessing Early Literacy is approved as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy Degree.

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Abstract

Two major pedagogical orientations currently dominate literacy education of young children in American schools. These two philosophies, "reading readiness" and "emergent literacy," share the common goal of efficiently and effectively teaching children to read. The purpose of this study was to determine if there has been a split between the theoretical orientation that practitioners believe they hold and the teaching methods that they practice.

A survey instrument was designed to study the relationships among the early literacy assessment beliefs, knowledge bases, and practices of a systematically selected sample of Head Start, kindergarten, and first grade educators within the state of Indiana.

Statistical analysis was used to compare the responses among the reading readiness and emergent literacy groups, using a two-tailed noncorrelated t-test. The totals from each of these sections were combined to produce a total literacy orientation score, which was also analyzed by a two-tailed noncorrelated t-test. The survey instrument also contained checklists to determine the knowledge bases of the practitioners. The difference in frequency of positive responses to items on the checklist was analyzed through a goodness of fit chi-square test. All results were tested for significance at the .05 level.

There was a significant difference in beliefs between early childhood educators who espouse reading readiness and emergent literacy. There was no significant difference between the knowledge bases of early childhood educators who espouse reading readiness and emergent literacy philosophies. There was no significant difference in practice between early childhood educators who espouse reading readiness and emergent literacy philosophies.

The study indicated a steadfast adherence to philosophical beliefs by both groups which was contrasted by a shift in practice, by reading readiness educators, toward emergent literacy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to thank the members of my committee for their assistance in planning and conducting this study: Dr. Sharon Andrews, Committee Chairperson, and Dr. David Gilman, Dr. Karen Liu, Dr. Patricia Wheeler, and Dr. William Smith, Committee members.

I wish to express my gratitude to Dr. Sharon Andrews and Dr. David Gilman, both of whom shared graciously with me their time, knowledge, and support.

Special thanks to my three children, Shawn, Tony, and Amanda, who have encouraged me to pursue doctoral studies, and to my mother who has always believed in me. Loving appreciation to my husband, Bernard, who is, as always, my inspiration to achieve and my helpmate in accomplishment.

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Chapter 1

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

Introduction

Teaching a child to read has always been considered a primary function of education, but the search for the best way to prepare children to read has revealed that the majority of teachers possess two different points of view. At present, in the United States, the two predominant philosophies of early literacy instruction are the reading readiness approach and the emergent literacy approach. Although today many schools of education have embraced the emergent literacy philosophy, the views of most practitioners seem to be divided between these two very different approaches to literacy education and assessment.

Reading readiness educators have felt that reading readiness has been the result of maturation or neural ripeness, and that the child needed to be developmentally ready to approach the task of learning to read. The emergent literacy educators have believed that appropriate experiences can accelerate readiness, and they have felt

that the task of learning to read needs to be designed to be developmentally appropriate for the learning needs of the child (Teale and Sulzby, 1986).

Galda, Cullinan, and Strickland (1993) have defined reading readiness as "the period before formal instruction in reading and writing . . . a time for getting children ready for 'real' literacy experiences through systematic instruction in a variety of discrete prereading and prewriting skills" (p. 77).

The practice of reading readiness has consisted largely of direct instruction in learning letter names, letter-sound relationships, and a variety of visual-perceptual tasks. The task of learning to write has been separated from the task of learning to read. Whether or not a child was considered literate has been commensurate with the degree to which his reading and writing have approximated that of adult models. The common belief among teachers with a readiness orientation has been that children had to be mentally prepared for reading (Strickland, 1990).

The emergent literacy curriculum, in contrast with that of reading readiness, has had an entirely different emphasis. Emergent literacy has emphasized children's ongoing development of skill in reading and writing, and the ways they have developed literacy knowledge and practices. It has been identified as child centered and holistic in nature (Teale and Sulzby, 1989). The readiness approach has

considered the child an "empty vessel," but in emergent literacy, the child has been seen as someone who has entered the classroom possessing his or her particular set of knowledge, including some concept of reading and writing (Sawyer and Sawyer, 1993).

Proponents of both models of instruction have shared a desire to teach children effectively. In both pedagogical models, the goal has been for the child ultimately to acquire recognition of letter-sound connections and sight words, to increase vocabulary, and to comprehend text. While the two philosophies, reading readiness and emergent literacy, have shared these goals, they have been widely divergent, nearly polar opposites, in methodology and assessment, according to Schickedanz (1989).

Many educators, Harste and Burke (1977) among them, believe that instructional decisions are made based on the theoretical orientation or belief system a teacher has holds. These instructional choices greatly affect the way children are educationally impacted. Teachers' beliefs and the resulting courses of action teachers have taken in their classrooms are the subjects investigated in this study.

Have teachers actually practiced what they have professed to be the best way to educate children? Based on their individual bodies of knowledge, and subsequent belief systems concerning literacy instruction, have teachers put into practice methodologies which are consistent with their

knowledge bases and belief systems? The survey designed for use in this study attempted to identify the belief systems, knowledge bases, and practices of the respondents. These elements were then examined for consistency on both an individual item and a group basis.

The purpose of this study was to determine if there was an inconsistency between the theoretical orientation practitioners believe they hold and their methods of practice in early literacy instruction and assessment. Theoretically, a teacher would claim to espouse the philosophy he or she believed to be superior. This study has attempted to discern whether or not, and to what extent, teachers from the selected sample do or do not put the tenets of their individual chosen philosophies into practice. A survey instrument was administered to a varied population of early childhood educators from throughout the state of Indiana to acquire the desired data.

Statement of the Problem

In college and university teacher preparation programs designed to expand and improve the knowledge bases and skills of pre-service early childhood educators, professors have been responsible for seeking new and diverse teaching methods and research results. It also has been imperative that professors involved in the training of future educators remain current and informed regarding the attitudes and practices of professionals working in the field. The

knowledge base an early childhood educator possesses, the level of education each achieves, and the number of years of experience in the field each attains, have all affected the belief systems, attitudes, and practice choices of the individual educator.

The question answered in this study was: what are the relationships among the beliefs, knowledge bases, and practices of three groups of early childhood educators within the state of Indiana -- Head Start, kindergarten, and first grade -- in assessing early literacy?

Purpose of the Study

Relationships among the beliefs, knowledge bases, and practices of early childhood educators concerning early literacy assessment, have remained important to the understanding of current practice in the field of early childhood education. A contribution to this understanding was accomplished in this study through an analysis of survey responses. At the beginning of the survey, each respondent declared which type of literacy learning orientation the respondent believed he or she held, either a readiness philosophy or an emergent literacy philosophy. A comparison was made between the assessed beliefs and the assessed practices of the groups of respondents, with the intent of ascertaining whether each group of respondents espoused the same philosophy in beliefs, knowledge bases, and practices, that they had declared. An examination was made to compare

the respondents' levels of formal education with their beliefs and practices concerning early literacy assessment.

The addition of data to the information core currently available on practices, concerning the level of consistency of the knowledge bases, beliefs, and practices of active practitioners in early literacy assessment, provide for a greater understanding of the state of the field of early childhood education in Indiana.

Significance of the Problem

Documenting the current beliefs, knowledge bases, and practices of early childhood practitioners in assessing early literacy, and exploring the relationships among the three elements, could improve instruction of future early childhood practitioners in the state of Indiana, as well as those in other states. By making available to colleges and universities that offer such preparatory programs the knowledge of the analysis of any inconsistencies between beliefs and practices in the field of early childhood education, those institutions of higher education would be empowered to address this dichotomy through their delivery systems. The survey would benefit the participating early childhood practitioners, through self-examination of their beliefs, knowledge bases, and practices. The survey could also alert practitioners in the field who sought out and read this body of work to trends of inconsistencies found among these three areas.

Limitations

First, the study was limited to the state of Indiana. Second, since the study relied on a self-report instrument, the information was dependent upon the accuracy of teachers' self-knowledge and reporting. Third, the accuracy of the study was limited to the degree to which the sample was representative of the population. Fourth, data were limited to responses collected after two follow up contacts with the respondents. Fifth, the survey population was limited to Head Start, kindergarten, and first grade teachers in Indiana. Finally, the survey was limited to instruction and assessment practices and beliefs in early literacy.

Assumptions

The assumption has been made that this survey is a reasonably appropriate method for collecting these kinds of data. It was also assumed that the early childhood practitioners would respond honestly to the survey instrument, since this was an anonymous report. Another assumption made was that the survey would provide accurate enough information to determine the reported relationships among the beliefs, knowledge bases, and practices of early childhood educators concerning early literacy assessment. The assumption was made that the returned surveys would add to the current conceptual framework of early literacy assessment by informing the reader of the relationships among beliefs, knowledge bases, and practices of early

literacy assessment reflected in the survey responses by early childhood practitioners.

Definition of Terms

1. Literacy, according to Sawyer and Sawyer (1993), is the ability to use language at a level that enables the individual to function effectively as a productive member of society and that the individual finds acceptable (p. 464-465).
2. Early literacy, for purposes of this study, is limited to the levels of literacy abilities of children enrolled in Head Start, kindergarten, and first grade classrooms.
3. Emergent literacy emphasizes children's ongoing development of skill in reading and writing, and how they develop literacy knowledge and practices. It is child centered and holistic in nature (Teale and Sulzby, 1989). Ollila and Mayfield (1992) define emergent literacy as "the natural, gradual development of a young child's listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities" (p. 1) which involve "an awareness of print and writing and other uses of language" (p. 4).
4. Reading readiness was a term used by Galda, Cullinan, and Strickland (1993) to describe "the period before formal instruction in reading and

writing . . . a time for getting children ready for 'real' literacy experiences through systematic instruction in a variety of discrete prereading and prewriting skills" (p. 77).

5. Evaluation refers to the overall process of making judgements, interpretations, or drawing conclusions; this was accomplished by using data gathered through observation, formal or informal testing, or some other form of assessment (Peterson, 1987).

6. Assessment is the ongoing process of gathering data for the purpose of evaluation (Peterson, 1987).

7. Early literacy assessment includes three types of techniques: naturalistic methods, such as portfolios, checklists, anecdotal records, developmental profiles, observation; norm-referenced tests, such as achievement tests; and criterion-referenced tests, such as teacher-made tests (Jalongo, 1988). It is ongoing and an integral part of the teaching process which had as its main purpose, to provide teachers and students with information useful in promoting students' growth in literacy (Galda, Cullinan, and Strickland, 1993).

8. Early childhood practitioners, for the purposes of this study, are limited to the

teachers of Head Start, kindergarten, and first grade.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

History of the Reading Readiness Philosophy

Readiness, as a concept, has been in existence and widely practiced in the United States as an educational concept through most of the twentieth century. Yet, from the late 1800s to around 1920, literature in the field of reading generally discounted any need to examine reading competency before a child entered first grade (Durkin, 1972). The basic educational consensus was that children did not develop any literacy skills until they received formal instruction.

Prior to 1910, only thirty-four studies had been reported in reading. Between 1910 and 1920, two hundred reading research studies were reported, about six times as many as had been reported during the prior history of reading in total (Smith, 1961), due in part to the National Education Association's making public of its support of research on schools in 1912. The Seventeenth Yearbook (1912) for the National Society for the Study of Education

contained eighty-four standard tests for use in the elementary school, many of which became instruments used in reading research at that time.

Although the term, readiness, had appeared in the literature prior to the 1920s, it began to be applied specifically to reading at that time. The Report of the National Committee on Reading published in the 1925 Yearbook of the United States National Society for the Study of Education contained the first explicit reference to reading readiness (Teale and Sulzby, 1986).

The readiness philosophy came to include the concept that learning is exclusively accomplished within various ages and stages. G. Stanley Hall, an educator who accepted Darwin's theory that an organism's characteristics are predetermined through its genetics, strongly influenced the nature-nurture debate of the early part of the century. Durkin (1972) reports that Stanley's widely accepted assumption that nature was the predominant formative force "gave attention to hereditary rather than environmental factors, and to maturation rather than learning and practice" (p. 36).

Additionally, Hall espoused the theory of recapitulation. There were, according to Durkin (1972), "two basic tenets of the doctrine: (a) each individual, as he grows and develops, passes through certain stages, and

(b) these stages follow each other in an inevitable, predetermined order" (p. 37).

One student of Hall's theories was Arnold Gesell. His widely published works were extremely influential in education from the time of World War I until the 1950s. Based on the recapitulation theory, Gesell explained learning through such processes as intrinsic growth and unfolding behavior. These processes were dependent upon spontaneous maturation, or simply getting older (Durkin, 1972).

The term neural ripening, used to describe maturational stages, was advocated by Gesell. His widely accepted beliefs were largely the basis for the reading readiness concept. He felt that cognitive growth or readiness to read was controlled by maturation, which would unfold automatically at a certain point in development. His philosophy convinced educators and parents alike that until a child was maturationally ready to learn a task, whether it was stair-climbing, cutting, or reading, letting the child practice the skill was useless (Weber, 1970).

In 1917, Thorndike conducted a study which redefined reading from a process of sounding out words to a process by which meaning could be derived from reasoning or problem solving processes. Thorndike's contribution with the most enduring consequences was his scale for measuring academic

achievement. This was the beginning of the scientific education movement (Singer, 1970).

Thorndike's study led to the perception throughout the United States that the educational system needed to adopt a "tests and measurements" mentality (Pulliam, 1976). Thut (1957) noted that "Experimental studies were undertaken to determine in what order and at what stage of maturity the skills involved in a specific type of learning, such as reading from a book or long division, could be attempted with the greatest expectation of success" (p. 274).

For a long period of time, beginning in the 1920s, scientific measurement has had a great influence on both education and psychology. These practices sparked tremendous academic interest in studying exactly what and how children were learning (Durkin, 1972). This concept expanded to a desire to measure how much children were learning in school.

Buswell (1920) and Judd & Buswell (1922) reported a shift in emphasis from oral to silent reading in the early part of the century. They also stressed using a variety of materials to teach children to read for a variety of purposes. Gates (1928) published a study which influenced people to use concrete materials and techniques to teach different ways to recognize words in silent reading. Agnew (1939) gave the reading field added insight into the

advantages and disadvantages of phonics instruction (Singer, 1970).

The researchers of the 1920s were alarmed at the large number of children who were retained in the first grade. These retentions were largely due to inadequate reading skills. Since the predominantly accepted assumption was Gesell's, that development takes place in inevitably ordered stages, and that the ability to read begins in one of these stages, the conclusion drawn was that the children who experienced failure were not yet at a stage in which they were ready to read (Durkin, 1972).

A search began to discover what comprised the exact stage in which students were able to begin learning to read. The measurement and testing movement in education was in full bloom when, in 1931, Morphett and Washburne generated a significant study concerning reading readiness. Morphett and Washburne, in an article published in 1931, concluded, "It seems safe to state that, by postponing the teaching of reading until children reach the mental age level of six and a half years, teachers can greatly decrease the chances of failure and discouragement and can correspondingly increase their efficiency" (p. 503). They further declared that "Mental age alone showed a larger degree of correlation with reading progress than did the intelligence quotient or the average of mental and chronological ages" (p. 502-503). Though very poorly researched, this claim was given credence

for an unusually long time, perhaps because of its simplicity (Durkin, 1972). The conclusion, still sometimes quoted today, was that children had to be six years and six months of age to benefit from beginning reading instruction (Singer, 1970). This study helped to advance the maturationists' point of view.

A major opponent of this view was Arthur Gates. His research centered on adjusting the instruction given to students who were experiencing failure, rather than simply postponing reading instruction. His conclusion was that the appropriate method of teaching a child to read was determined by the reading program, such as reading series with texts of graduated levels of difficulty, as well as the nature of the child (Durkin, 1972).

Durkin (1972) summarized the effects of Gates' work by saying:

> Essentially, Gates' message was a simple one: Improve your instruction and watch children read! Apparently, though, the simplicity of the Morphett-Washburne proposal was more appealing. I say this because just as the publications of the 1930s and subsequent decades provide more than ample evidence of the wide acceptance of the mental age concept of readiness, so too do they reveal how little attention went to Gates' findings. He simply did not move with the stream of popular thought. What did, though, were further descriptions of the child thought to be ready for reading. Here I refer to the common practice of listing all kinds of attributes that were added to the mental age requirement. (p. 42)

An example of this type of listing was published in the Thirty-Eighth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study

of Education (1939). Some of the "requisites of readiness for reading" listed in the yearbook were the following:

> Keen interest in reading
> Reasonably wide experience
> Facility in the use of ideas
> Ability to solve abstract problems
> Ability to do abstract thinking of a very elementary type
> Ability to remember ideas, word forms, and the sounds of words
> A reasonable range of vocabulary
> Command of simple English sentences
> Good health, vision, and hearing
> Ability to see likenesses and differences in word forms and to discriminate sounds of words
> Normal speech organs
> Emotional stability
> Some degree of social adjustment (p. 195)

The next logical step in the development of the reading readiness philosophy was for the educational community to try to create instruments which could separate children who had achieved a level of reading development from those who had not. Gathering this information required tasks, skills, and behaviors which could be quantified.

During this period, the "reading readiness test" also gained popularity. In the 1930s and 1940s many of these instruments were designed. Some of these, such as the Metropolitan Readiness Tests, are still widely used today. These tests consist of a number of subtests. The 1933 Metropolitan Readiness Tests, for example, included subtests titled Perception: Similarities; Perception: Copying; Vocabulary; Sentences; Numbers; Information; and the Draw-a-Man Test. The objective of these tests was to measure skills. Another application of this information was a basis

for diagnostic intervention (Teale and Sulzby, 1986). The major emphasis in standardized readiness assessment tests involved isolated skills.

Another innovation of the 1930s was the workbook, which became a lasting part of basal text series. The advent of the idea reinforced idea that readiness to read could be taught through subskills. These workbooks also emphasized the measuring of mastery of isolated skills.

By the 1940s, the concept of reading readiness was a pedagogy accepted by nearly all teachers and most parents. The readiness paradigm came to include several tenets: (a) Children must have mastered a set of basic skills before learning to read; (b) Composition, but not handwriting, must be delayed until after children read; (c) The formal aspects of reading such as sequenced skills were emphasized instead of its functional uses; and (d) All children should progress through a hierarchy of readiness and reading skills which should be monitored by periodic formal testing (Teale and Sulzby, 1986).

In the 1950s and 1960s, the concept of readiness was in ascendancy in the schools, but the "nature versus nurture" contest, nature referring to the concept of neural ripening and nurture referring to learning through experience regardless of age, was shifting toward nurture. Literature in the field which supported the importance of fostering development in the early years became more prevalent. Head

Start emerged to help supply literacy experiences for a target population (Strickland, 1990).

Prior to the 1960s, educators considered intelligence testing a viable criteria to measure the ability to learn to read. Durkin (1966) reported that IQ had an increasing correlation with reading as students progressed through the grades. She reported that the correlation coefficient between IQ and reading, or the degree to which they corresponded, increased steadily from .40 at first grade to .79 at fifth grade. Educators have incorrectly interpreted these results to mean that a child had to possess a certain level of measurable intelligence to learn to read (Singer, 1970). Actually, this study conversely suggested that there was little connection with a child's measurable IQ and his or her readiness to learn to read.

Today, the reading readiness approach, a reading instruction philosophy which has been widely accepted for several decades, is phonics driven, isolated skills loaded, and usually taught through direct instruction. As in the past, today's advocates of reading readiness believe that children must possess certain verbal and psychomotor skills to be "ready" to learn to read (Strickland, 1990). Instruction and assessment in a readiness-oriented classroom has focused on mastering letter names, letter-sound relationships, and a variety of visual-perceptual tasks. The task of learning to write has been kept separate from

learning to read. Ollila and Mayfield (1992) stated that the traditional, formal reading readiness programs contained an emphasis on perceptual-motor skills and abstract, isolated aspects of print. A child's level of literacy proficiency, reading and writing, has been measured against the literacy proficiency of an adult model. Standardized levels of achievement in these tasks have been expected; not meeting these expected levels has constituted failure.

The implementation of the concept of reading readiness has, in the past, led educators to the mistaken and harmful impression that all children must be ready for the same type and amount of instruction at the same age. Indeed, in contrast to an emergent literacy classroom, a readiness classroom has very little individualization of the curriculum to meet needs demonstrated by each child.

Brewer (1992) reflected on reading readiness skills in the following way:

> Readiness activities consisted of exercises such as finding a shape that was different in a row of shapes or finding the pig whose tail was different from the tails of the other pigs in the row. Although visual discrimination ability is necessary for success in reading, attempting to teach it with shapes and pigs is not a very useful reading activity. (p. 250-51)

Schwartz (1988) commented:

> I have observed certain practices that may actually hinder rather than help children in learning to read and write. These practices can impede the operation of the child's native ability, break the natural bridge from listening and speaking to reading and writing, and undermine the internal coherence of the language arts. Some examples: reading instruction may be isolated in a separate period. Reading and writing instruction may

> consist of mastery of a hierarchy of skills. Meaning may be subordinated to form. Word identification may be emphasized while comprehension is neglected, and reading and writing may be completely dissociated from useful, meaningful tasks. (p. 15-16)

Because the expectations of the reading readiness approach do not seem to align with the growth and development of many children, the reading readiness approach to teaching reading has seemed to some researchers developmentally inappropriate. As Strickland (1990) has noted:

> Although learning to speak is accepted as a natural part of the maturation process that doesn't require formal instruction, the mastery of reading and writing has been considered an arduous learning task, requiring a period of intense readiness. Only after children were thoroughly primed with the necessary prereading skills was "real" reading instruction begun. (p. 20)

Response was made by school systems to the educators' perception that there was a need to test children's levels of competency in isolated, readiness skills before they are allowed to enter school. If a child's skill proficiency fell below the prescribed level, the parent was often encouraged to exclude the child from school until the following year (Strickland, 1990).

Critics of today's readiness approach have said it has failed to retain concepts of literacy instruction found early in colonial American education such as recognizing individual differences in students, encouraging the natural use of language, incorporating an ungraded curriculum, having no uniform school entrance age, and perceiving no

need for a child to academically "qualify" to begin formal education. These developmentally appropriate practices have been preserved, however, from an alternate literacy perspective, Teale and Sulzby (1986) recognized that then-current research indicated an overwhelming need to reconceptualize reading readiness, because a new developmental perspective was in evidence. That new perspective was known as emergent literacy.

Development of Emergent Literacy Philosophy

Emergent literacy, as defined by Sulzby (1990), is the reading and writing behavior of young children that precedes and develops into conventional literacy. Many early childhood teachers have realized for years that the language children possess and their literacy development were closely linked. As children enter school for the first time, they have already developed a strong sense of oral language, as well as an awareness and knowledge of written language (Galda, Cullinan, and Strickland, 1993). Literacy, according to Teale and Sulzby (1989), has no longer been seen only as a cognitive skill, but as a complex activity with social, linguistic, and psychological aspects.

Jalongo (1988) cited four levels of learning which have been considered fundamental to emergent literacy: knowledge, skills, dispositions, and feelings. Therefore, emergence of literacy has constituted a broader and more

inclusive perception of education than reading readiness (Ollila and Mayfield, 1992).

Emergent literacy is still in its infancy as an educational concept. Even the term itself has existed for less than thirty years, as Lancy (1994) stated:

> Although the term emergent literacy (EL) was first used by Marie Clay (1966) in her doctoral dissertation, it has only recently come into widespread use and acceptance. (p. xxi)

Developing literacy behaviors such as reading, oral language, and writing, is a lengthy endeavor. This process, in fact, begins before some observers recognize it.

Moffett (1994), in the foreword of Children's Emergent Literacy, commented, in reference to emergent literacy:

> The research underlying this reconceptualization challenges a lot of reading instruction and materials in which schools have heavily invested for generations. The fact is that the pedagogy indicated by this research and by "whole language" approaches can unsettle teachers because it doesn't necessarily require professionals except to direct the process. Once oriented by professionals, virtually any literate person who is willing can midwife the emergence of another's literacy. . . . Communities can arrange for literacy to ripple among its members with only limited guidance from educators. . . . And such a pedagogy certainly unsettles the educational-industrial complex, because it doesn't require all those commercial materials--worksheets, basals, and "skill-building" programs--that the chronic failure of reading instruction has made into a flourishing business. (p. xvii-xviii)

Lancy (1994) stated that the onset of emerging literacy is shortly after birth. He observed:

> Becoming literate, in this view (emergent literacy), occupies every waking moment throughout childhood. This contrasts with the view that literacy begins with literacy instruction, in the first grade, or that,

> prior to first grade, pupils should receive training in pre-reading and reading readiness skills such as learning to identify letters or phonemes. (p. 2)

Even so, emergent literacy has not been considered anti-skill. Routman (1988) discussed this:

> Reading instruction in the United States has long been overfocused on skills. . . . No one would deny the importance of skills, but their usage needs to be strategic. Children's literature . . . creates natural possibilities for moving beyond skills to developing reading strategies and for affirming reading as a process of getting meaning from print. (p. 40)

Strickland and Morrow (1989) have pointed out that the teacher's view of child development is at issue, and when teachers have viewed literacy development as ongoing and natural, they have helped children develop strategies for learning to read and write. It has been the belief of emergent literacy teachers that, as children have acquired strategies, they have also automatically acquired skills.

Holdaway (1979) wrote:

> The major difference between a "skill" and a "strategy" is the coordinating control of a human mind operating in purposeful, predictive, and self-correcting ways. The major difference, then, between "skills teaching" and "strategy teaching" concerns the presence or absence of self-direction on the part of the learner. In skills teaching the teacher tells the learner what to do and then "corrects" or "marks" the response. In strategy teaching the teacher induces the learner to behave in an appropriate way and encourages the learner to confirm or correct his own responses. (p. 136)

Children who became strategic readers were able to employ many techniques which enabled them to read more successfully. Effective use of strategies such as semantic cues (using text and illustrations to derive meaning),

syntactic clues (using knowledge of language patterns and grammatical structure), and graphophonic cues (letter-sound relationships and visual knowledge) have aided children in improving their ability to make sense of print (Routman, 1988).

The reading readiness and emergent literacy philosophies diverge in five areas pertinent to this study: language development, the use of children's literature, the literacy environment, methods of assessment, and teacher beliefs about literacy instruction and assessment.

Language Development

This "new" view of literacy, emergent literacy, began in the 1960s when the understanding of oral language development began to shift away from a behavioral model, in which learners were viewed as passive responders to environmental stimuli, to a psycholinguistic model. The study of psycholinguistics, according to Harste, Woodward, and Burke (1984), "greatly altered the profession's view of language learning. Instead of passively awaiting external reinforcement, children came to be seen as actively attempting to understand the nature of language spoken around them" (p. 56).

Harste, Woodward, and Burke (1984) further contended that children's developing grammar and language use was based on the same set of rules as an adult's, and was acquired at an early age through ongoing social interaction

and interpretation of signs used in familiar contexts in society. "Under this view, comprehension is much less precise; what a reader makes of a text is dependent upon his knowledge of, familiarity with, and interpretation of, available signs" (p. 122). These signs, used within the written communication system, have included, in addition to letter symbols, representations of sounds, notes, and numbers.

In this transactional view of language learning, as advocated by Harste, Woodward, and Burke (1984), language was not acquired through modeling, but through interpretation. From this perspective, language has been viewed as open and active because added knowledge has caused interpretation of the environment to be an ever-expanding process.

It follows that meaningful early writing and reading are based on a child's language development. Learning to use language is a continual process. Neuman and Roskos (1993) support this argument:

> Like language, literacy learning, defined as reading and writing development, begins in infancy. Even in the very first months of life, children come in contact with written language in the form of signs and labels, TV commercials, or toy-like books. These early contacts with print represent the beginnings of a life-long process of learning to read and write. (p. 35)

The child's language development is key in the emergent literacy classroom. Activities which are meaningful to or functional for the child and which incorporate the child's

own language, are stressed throughout the curriculum. A child's expression of his or her own ideas is valued by the emergent literacy teacher, whether or not it is a replica of an adult standard (Strickland, 1990). In not emphasizing conformity to an adult standard, the emergent literacy concept emphasizes the nature and importance of the child's own language development, which is driven by the child's need to learn.

Cazden (1981) has suggested that, as part of the entire reading process, a child should be encouraged write before he or she attempts to read. This contention has been far different from the methodologies previously espoused by readiness educators who reasoned that since children learned to listen before they learned to speak, children should learn to read before they learn to write.

In an emergent literacy classroom, a student learns to recognize letter configuration differences in his or her own writing. These are discussed with and taught to the child at the time the child is most attentive to the discovery. This technique has allowed information to be disseminated at the time of highest interest, opening a window on enhanced and more efficient learning. When a child self-focuses to receive information, he understands it more clearly and therefore presumably remembers it much longer (Cazden, 1981). This methodology coordinates a child's desire to master a concept with appropriate instruction.

Use of Literature

According to Brewer (1992), there are a number of reasons to use literature in a curriculum designed for young children. Literature, especially when chosen by the reader, tends to be a much stronger motivation to learn to read than a programmed, one-size-fits-all textbook. Experiences with literature help children gather information and develop an expanded vocabulary. Vicariously living the experiences of literary characters adds much to a child's awareness of the world around him/her. Reading about a topic can spur a life-long interest. From these early seeds, hobbies and sometimes careers develop.

There are many aesthetic benefits of using literature to teach young children to read. An increased appreciation of the arts through interaction with quality literature is inevitable. Brewer (1992) maintained that "Taste must be developed: it is not innate. Children who are exposed to quality on a regular basis will learn to appreciate it and will learn to choose materials that are well-written and meaningful to them" (p. 217).

Much of the emergent literacy instruction has revolved around literature. Picture books have played a large role in a child's developing sense of literacy. Fields and Lee (1987) stated:

> The research indicates that the earlier adults start to read to youngsters, the greater the benefits. As with many other developmental tasks, the early childhood years are of the greatest significance in exposure to

> literature. Even before babies can talk, they enjoy looking at books and being read to. They are able to understand some of what is read to them, just as they are able to understand some of what is said to them, months before they say their first word. (p. 84)

From literature, children have been able to learn to appreciate skilled writing, and later, their own authorship. Children have been able to develop the ability to interpret and evaluate literature. Literature has afforded children the opportunity to expand their own vocabularies and linguistic complexities. It has also been able to help children broaden their cultural and intellectual perspectives (Jalongo, 1988).

Fields and Lee (1987) claimed that:

> The intimacy of enjoying a story with a parent or teacher adds to a child's pleasurable feelings about reading which make children want to read. Attitudes toward reading can begin in infancy and be enhanced throughout childhood. (p. 84-85)

Salinger (1988) acknowledged additional advantages of the use of children's literature:

> Children must also learn about "book language." The first step is realizing that book language is based on oral language. . . . Books with predictable story lines or repetitive sentence structure or chants help, too, because children can quickly understand the rhythm of the language. Wordless picture books encourage children to create their own stories, as well. (p. 56)

Johnston (1992) explained that literacy development requires many complex types of knowledge which begin to form long before formal education is started. He further stated that:

> From this perspective, the development of literacy is essentially like the development of language. It

> requires social conditions which nurture it, such as good role models, good available and manageable literature, a clear valuing of literate activity, and a supportive, responsive context. (p. 175)

One role model has been adults reading literature aloud to children to help set the scene for early literacy acquisition; as children learn to value literature, they might also begin to value the act of learning to read (Trelease, 1982).

The Learning Environment

One of the "supportive, responsive contexts" to which Johnston (1992) referred is the learning environment. Schickedanz (1986) agreed that the environment in which young children have been asked to develop literacy is vital. Children begin learning immediately after birth and spend their entire lives in pursuit of additional knowledge. For children, being ready to learn is their natural state. Emergent literacy educators recognize this and believe that school curriculum should be designed to ascertain and meet children's learning needs. Beginning with the first steps of infancy, parents and teachers should encourage print awareness. This involvement must be an organized effort to provide varied literacy events and materials, to include props and dramatic play, and to lend adult support to the child's literacy learning (Schickedanz, 1986).

Literacy learning has always been a form of life-long learning. In essence, a child's learning environment is his

or her entire world. Freire (1987) wrote about reading the world before reading the word. Children have always made sense of their world in their own time; emergent literacy educators have allowed children to make sense of the word, also in their own time.

Many learning theorists have supported the emergent literacy philosophy that children learn differently at different ages and stages, and that the learning environment in the classroom should support those differences. Kamii, Manning, and Manning (1991) discussed one learning theory, constructivism, in the following way:

> Jean Piaget developed his theory, constructivism, in opposition to another scientific theory, associationism. According to associationism and its better-known outgrowth, behaviorism, knowledge is acquired by internalizing certain connections, contingencies, and stimuli from sources external to the individual. By contrast, constructivism states that human beings acquire knowledge by building it from the inside in interaction with the environment. For example . . . many children begin by saying that wind is made by trees (because the branches move when wind is present). Upon being asked how the trees move, young children reply that this movement is caused by the wind. Children cannot be said to have acquired this knowledge by internalizing it from the environment. (p. 9)

Foreman and Kuschner (1983) agreed that in addition to increasingly refined perceptual discriminations, Piagetian knowledge acquisition results from an active mind constructing relationships among stimuli found in the learning environment.

Others, such as Harste, Woodward, and Burke (1984), espoused the "experience" approach. In this framework, they

have declared that given proper tools, ample opportunity, and a print rich environment, children produce "literate" activity. These criteria describe the learning environment found in an emergent literacy classroom.

Vygotsky (1978) discussed environment as a zone of proximal development, which is "the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86). Susan Mandel Glazer, in Strickland and Morrow (1989), explained that the zones of proximal development refer to "ranges of social interactions between children and adults. Adults, considered to be more literate, have pushed children from an actual state of development toward their potential" (p. 19). Vygotsky (1978), therefore theorized that children could not learn language without adult intervention and interactions with the child.

As demonstrated by any of these theories, learning is a natural process which should be reflected in the learning environment. Children develop language proficiencies at different ages, just as they have developed physical and emotional growth at differing rates. The emergent literacy philosophy has made allowances, as well as accommodations, for the natural developmental differences among children by integrating language learning with all areas of the

curriculum. Children, through this type of meaningful integrated instruction, begin to understand that all learning connects. Language which is meaningful to the child should be utilized in teaching and assessing literacy learning. The child's own language is used to build a meaningful framework upon which to structure literacy development. By beginning the learning process using familiar, therefore meaningful, language, the child quickly makes sense of the literacy process. In an emergent literacy classroom, these elements are within the literacy learning environment itself.

Assessment

Another area in which reading readiness and emergent literacy philosophies disagree is assessment. Galda, Cullinan, and Strickland (1993) have asserted that "part of good teaching is systematic, ongoing observation and assessment, both formal and informal" (p. 324). According to Spodek and Saracho (1994), teachers have evaluated children's learning in order to make four kinds of instructional decisions: (a) curriculum planning, (b) guidance decisions which help children increase self-understanding, (c) administrative decisions concerning materials selection and placement of children, and (d) research decisions as they study the educational process. Among these decisions, Au, Scheu, Kawakami, and Herman (1990) believed the guidance decisions the most important.

They wrote: "The main purpose of assessment should be to provide teachers and students with information useful in promoting students' growth and literacy" (p. 575). Assessment is the last area in this study in which reading readiness and emergent literacy diverge.

Reading readiness models of education rely heavily on tests in general and on paper/pencil tests in particular (Sawyer and Sawyer, 1993). One method often incorporated into some part of a reading readiness program of early literacy has been standardized testing -- tests that were given to all individuals in the same way (Spodek and Saracho, 1994). For example, standardized screening instruments often have been administered before children entered school. Annual testing, as well as pre- and post-testing have also often been implemented, even though teachers frequently did not find the results of standardized tests very useful for classroom assessment needs (Teale, Hiebert, and Chittenden, 1987). Moreover, Teale (1988) has argued that standardized tests are developmentally inappropriate for young children for the following reasons: (a) young children are not socialized to test taking; the children's capabilities might therefore be underestimated; (b) standardized tests are not continuous; they occur at one point in time in one formal context; (c) standardized tests do not resemble instruction.

Standardized testing is only one form of evaluation used by readiness teachers. Eliason and Jenkins (1994) stated that "curriculum is planned to meet the needs of the individual children in the group or classroom, using meaningful goals. . . . Evaluation is the process of determining the degree to which children's needs are met and desired objectives are achieved" (p. 81). They further stated that, "evaluating can be done both formally and informally with written evaluations, check lists, reports, completed contracts, or anecdotal records and observations. This allows for constant adjustments in curriculum planning" (p. 82).

A perspective on assessment which was favored by the emergent literacy philosophy, in opposition to the ideas of most twentieth century educators, was "authentic assessment" (Galda, Cullinan, and Strickland, 1993). This type of assessment examined children's ability to engage in literacy tasks within the natural context of the classroom. Sawyer and Sawyer (1993) hypothesized that the "fundamental factor that distinguishes authentic assessment from a traditional approach to evaluation is that the former addresses the process of learning in a much more substantial way" (p. 297). Authentic assessment includes gathering information, just as traditional assessment does, but only in relation to the processes by which the student has or has not learned. Authentic assessment has grown out of the whole language

approach which addresses the need for a different form of assessment, one more closely aligned with processes occurring in the classroom.

In whole language, as espoused by emergent literacy advocates, the learning process is not broken down into small pieces to be learned. Johnston (1986) compared using a skills-based assessment within a whole language program to the force it would have taken to attempt to attach a nut and bolt with mismatched threads. The assessment needs to match the instruction. Similarly, Galda, Cullinan, and Strickland (1993) stated that assessment is an ongoing process, and needs to be closely connected to the kinds of teaching which occur in the classroom. They further listed some ways to accomplish this in an emergent literacy classroom which included:

> . . . periodic, formal assessments using structured performance samples; a compilation of the products of individual children's language activities and a variety of records related to children's language activities; and observing children engaged in using language as it occurs naturally in the classroom. (p. 324)

Ollila and Mayfield (1992) added further support for ongoing assessment that matches classroom instruction. They stated that the setting in which assessment takes place affects its outcome. Such elements as the place, time, persons present, and materials influence the child. They concluded:

> Literacy needs to be assessed over time, not just at the end of a unit, book, or school year. A developmental record of reading and writing behaviors

> over several years . . . affords an opportunity to view the child's emerging literacy over time in a variety of contexts. (p. 247)

While proponents of both reading readiness and emergent literacy have acknowledged the importance of assessment in guiding instructional decisions, there have been great differences in the types of assessment implemented. Standardized testing, including screening tests, skills-based paper/pencil tests, as well as other formal evaluation tools have been uniformly administered to all children in the reading readiness classroom. In contrast, assessment in an emergent literacy classroom has included checklists, anecdotal records, and observations of children's individual growth in literacy acquisition. A final educational aspect which affects instructional decision making, and is closely connected to assessment, is the development of teacher beliefs about literacy instruction.

Teacher Beliefs About Literacy Instruction

An intangible but pervasive element in successful reading instruction has been the set of beliefs or attitudes held by the teacher (DeFord, 1985). Ross (1979) found that clarity of beliefs, the ability to perceive a connection between beliefs and practices, and an awareness and understanding of possible alternative practices to be important factors in teachers' ability to implement their beliefs. Shavelson (1983) also reported on research that found that teachers were decision makers who processed

information and acted upon these decisions. He further stated that research on teaching must examine not only teachers' behaviors but also their judgments, plans, and decisions in relation to that behavior. According to DeFord (1985), "Knowledge . . . forms a system of beliefs and attitudes which direct perceptions and behaviors" (p. 352-353).

Harste and Burke (1977) also concluded that teachers made instructional decisions in reading "in light of the theory or assumptions they held about reading and learning" (p. 33). They proposed that "a teacher's theoretical orientation establishes expectancies and influences goals, procedures, materials, and classroom interaction patterns" (p. 33). They further defined a teacher's theoretical orientation in reading as "the particular knowledge and belief system held toward reading, that is, those deep philosophical principles that guide teachers to establish expectations about student behavior and the host of decisions they must make as they teach reading lessons" (p. 34).

If teachers believe that reading is taught through a series of sequenced isolated skills, based on visual perceptual discrimination, and that assessment is based on formalized testing, they espouse a readiness approach. If teachers demonstrate in practice that reading is taught by using workbooks to drill sequenced skills such as letter

names and letter-sound relationships, and if teachers subscribe to building vocabulary exclusively through controlled pre-set lists, they espouse a readiness approach to teaching literacy. If teachers believe that literacy learning and assessment are ongoing individual endeavors in holistic language acquisition, they embrace emergent literacy. If teachers practice immersing children in literature and meaningful language-related activities, then they practice an emergent literacy perspective. If teachers acknowledge that all learning endeavors affect literacy learning, and utilize that point of view when organizing their plan of instruction, their approach is one of emergent literacy.

Not all teachers agree that there is one reading pedagogy which should be practiced. However, to ensure quality instruction, lack of confusion for teachers and students, and no mismatching of instruction and assessment practices, each individual teacher should be consistent in his/her own beliefs and practices.

And, given the importance of consistency between beliefs and practices, as well as the differences between the emergent literacy and reading readiness teaching philosophies in regard to the role of language development, the use of literature, the literacy environment, and methods of assessment, it is important to discover the relationships

between teachers' beliefs about these philosophies and the ways in which teachers implement their beliefs.

The classroom teacher establishes the environment in which s/he teaches reading to students; this includes developing a teaching style, such as lecture or cooperative learning, as well as developing an underlying pedagogical philosophy, such as reading readiness or emergent literacy. What one teaches is often dictated by a set curriculum or established goals, but the method used to teach the curriculum or reach the established goals is chosen by the teacher, based on his/her belief system concerning instruction.

Chapter 3

METHOD OF RESEARCH

The research design involved administering a survey to early childhood practitioners in an attempt to gather information as to their beliefs, knowledge bases, and practices concerning literacy assessment. This survey was developed with assistance from a number of sources. Interviews were conducted, during various stages of the development of this instrument, with Dr. Sharon Andrews, Dr. David Gilman, Dr. Karen Liu, Dr. Patricia Wheeler, and Dr. William Smith, all experts in the fields of measurement, early childhood, or language education. In addition, study was made of other educational survey instruments, most notably the Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP), (DeFord, 1985) which "uses a Likert scale response system to determine teacher beliefs about practices in reading instruction" (p. 351).

After much discussion and revision, a limited pilot of the survey instrument was implemented, with twelve teachers selected for their literacy orientations. (See Appendix A.)

Six of the teachers practiced a reading readiness orientation and six espoused the emergent literacy philosophy. All of the practitioners who piloted the survey were recommended by the Reading Specialist of Oakland City College based on her knowledge of their literacy orientations.

The pilot survey contained potential survey questions. The pilot survey respondents were asked to answer the questions, as well as to comment on them. Their responses, summarized in Appendix B, reflected their opinions. These responses, which pointed out questions which were vague or difficult to answer, inappropriate contexts, and irrelevancies which they noticed, helped immeasurably in developing the final survey instrument. Comparing the respondents' known literacy orientations, the responses given, and the responses which were expected from a teacher with a given literacy orientation, for inconsistencies, helped isolate faulty questions. The pilot study, then, provided data for revision of the survey instrument. The next step was selecting a sample for the major survey study.

The Sample

A sample of practitioners was systematically selected from early childhood educators working with children in Head Start, kindergarten, and first grade in the public schools in the state of Indiana. The names and school addresses of all of the kindergarten and first grade teachers in the

state of Indiana were obtained from the Indiana Department of Education. The sample of kindergarten and first grade teachers to be surveyed was selected systematically from the list from the Indiana Department of Education. Since there were only forty-one Head Start programs in the state of Indiana, the Director of every fifth program on the list was contacted as to how many educators worked in his or her program. Surveys for the appropriate number of educators were then sent to that Head Start facility. All practitioners at each selected facility were surveyed.

Through the systematic sampling of Head Start, kindergarten, and first grade educators, these educators represented a cross section of socioeconomic strata, cultural diversity, and a rural/urban mixture.

The Instrument

The survey instrument was designed to solicit demographic information and to allow the practitioners an opportunity to rank a series of statements on a Likert Scale concerning their beliefs, knowledge bases, and practices in early literacy assessment. An equal number of questions designed to reflect the two instructional approaches, reading readiness and emergent literacy, were on the survey. The first item on the instrument was designed to ascertain whether the respondent considered his or her literacy orientation to be reading readiness or emergent literacy.

Thus, the responses for the first item constituted the independent variable for the study.

A self-addressed stamped envelope was sent with the survey instrument to the respondent. The responses were returned when completed. The responses were coded to allow for a follow-up mailing. Six weeks after the initial mailing, a master list of the survey code numbers was used to identify which surveys remained unreturned. A follow-up letter was sent to the identified respondents who were contacted but had not returned the surveys. After an additional month elapsed, this procedure was repeated once more for the remaining non-responses.

One month after the final mailing, no further inquiries were made of the respondents. A sufficient percentage, 56.02%, or 121 of the 216 practitioners, had responded. To promote confidentiality, the list of code numbers used to match surveys and respondents was then destroyed.

Analysis

The items on each of the Likert Scales were scored to measure the subject's early literacy assessment orientation on a continuum from reading readiness to emergent literacy. Each item in each Likert Scale was analyzed with a two-tailed noncorrelated t-test. Items in each of the three sections were combined and totaled and the sum of these scores also was analyzed with a two-tailed noncorrelated t-test.

The totals from each of these sections were combined to produce a total literacy orientation score. The differences between the total literacy orientation scores of the respondents were also analyzed by a two-tailed noncorrelated t-test.

The survey instrument also contained checklists to determine the knowledge base of the practitioners. The differences in the frequency of positive responses to items on the checklist were analyzed through a goodness of fit chi-square test.

All results were tested for significance at the .05 level.

This study was predicated on the following four null hypotheses:

1. There was no difference in beliefs concerning early literacy assessment between educators who espouse emergent literacy and reading readiness philosophies.
2. There was no difference in knowledge base concerning early literacy assessment between educators who espouse emergent literacy and reading readiness philosophies.
3. There was no difference in practice concerning early literacy assessment between educators who espouse emergent literacy and reading readiness philosophies.

4. There were no overall differences in early literacy assessment between educators who espouse emergent literacy and reading readiness philosophies.

In an attempt to add to the collected knowledge in the field of early childhood, the objectives of this survey study were:

1. To obtain data on the way early childhood educators practice early literacy assessment.
2. To add to the present conceptual framework in the field of early childhood education a survey of the beliefs, knowledge bases, and practices of early childhood educators concerning early literacy assessment.
3. To provide early childhood educators at the post secondary level additional information concerning evaluations of the early literacy assessment practices, as they relate to the beliefs and knowledge bases, of early childhood educators in the field.
4. To give early childhood practitioners an analysis of the field in regard to early literacy assessment.

Sources of Data

The Likert Scale survey was the primary source of data which were collected, analyzed, and evaluated. The source

of the names from which the names of the respondents were systematically selected was the Indiana Department of Education. Information for this study was gathered from the surveys returned from early childhood practitioners. Related literature was obtained from various academic libraries, institutions of higher learning, and public schools within Indiana.

Chapter 4

PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The data obtained through this study has been organized into two sections. The first section reviews the data recorded in the demographic portion of the study. In this section, data from the respondents are collated, reviewed, and presented.

The second section of this chapter is divided into three parts which reviews the data regarding the experimental part of the study. First, a review of early childhood practitioners' beliefs is collated, analyzed, and presented. Second, the practitioners' knowledge bases of terms and theorists are analyzed and presented. Third, the world of practice is collated, interpolated, and presented in written form.

Demographic Data about Early Childhood Practitioners

Of the two hundred and sixteen (216) early childhood practitioners who were surveyed in the state of Indiana, one hundred and twenty-one (121) returned the questionnaire. This represented a return rate of 56.02%.

Based on the demographic data gathered from the 121 respondents, forty-two (42) respondents, or 34.71%, indicated that reading readiness was their primary literacy philosophy. The remaining seventy-nine (79) respondents, or 64.29%, indicated that emergent literacy was their primary literacy philosophy. Table 1 summarizes this basic information.

Table 1

Early Childhood Practitioners, Respondents, and Philosophical Base

Group	Respondents		
	Number Dispatched	Number Returned	Percent of Total Returned
Reading Readiness		42	34.71
Emergent Literacy		79	64.29
Practitioners as a Whole	216	121	56.02

The highest education level completed by the reading readiness respondents indicated the following: five (5), or 11.90%, of this group had only completed high school; zero (0), or 0.00%, had earned a certificate; one (1), or 2.38%, had earned an associate degree; fifteen (15), or 35.71%, had attained a Bachelor's degree; twenty-one (21), or 50.00%, had completed a Master's degree; and zero (0) or 0.00% had completed a doctorate. The emergent literacy respondents indicated the following: zero (0), or 0.00%, of this group had completed only high school; twelve (12), or 15.19%, had

earned a certificate; two (2), or 2.53%, had earned an associate degree; twenty-one (21), or 26.58%, had attained a Bachelor's degree; forty-four (44), or 50.00%, had completed a Master's degree; and zero (0), or 0.00%, had completed a doctorate. These data can be found summarized in Table 2.

Table 2

Education Level of Early Childhood Practitioners

Highest Level of Education	Reading Readiness Number/Percent		Emergent Literacy Number/Percent	
High School	5	11.90	0	0.00
Certificate	0	0.00	12	15.19
Associate Degree	1	2.38	2	2.53
Bachelor's Degree	15	35.71	21	26.58
Master's Degree	21	50.00	44	55.70
Doctorate	0	0.00	0	0.00

The time frame for the respondents' study in Early Childhood Education provided the following data. The reading readiness respondents indicated: zero (0), or 0.00%, of this group studied in the 1950s; seven (7), or 16.67%, studied in the 1960s; ten (10), or 23.81%, studied in the 1970s; seven (7), or 16.67%, studied in the 1980s; and, eighteen (18), or 42.86%, studied in the 1990s. The emergent literacy respondents indicated: one (1), or 1.27%, of this group studied in the 1950s; nine (9), or 11.39%, studied in the 1960s; fourteen (14), or 17.72%, studied in

the 1970s; eighteen (18), or 22.78%, studied in the 1980s; and, thirty-seven (37), or 46.84%, studied in the 1990s. These data can be found summarized in Table 3.

Table 3

Time Frame of Professional Study of Early Childhood Practitioners

Decade of Study	Reading Readiness Number/Percent		Emergent Literacy Number/Percent	
1950	0	0.00	1	1.27
1960	7	16.67	9	11.39
1970	10	23.81	14	17.72
1980	7	16.67	18	22.78
1990	18	42.86	37	46.84

The reading readiness respondents provided the following data about their attendance at an early literacy workshop. Thirty (30), or 71.43%, of this group indicated attendance during the past year; five (5), or 11.90%, indicated attendance within the past two years; four (4), or 9.52%, indicated attendance during the past five years; one (1), or 2.38%, indicated attendance at a workshop during the past ten years; and two (2), or 4.76%, indicated that it had been ten or more years since their last attendance at a workshop on early literacy.

The emergent literacy respondents provided the following data about attendance at an early literacy workshop. Fifty-two (52), or 65.82%, of this group

indicated attendance during the past year; sixteen (16), or 20.25%, indicated attendance within the past two years; eight (8), or 10.13%, indicated attendance during the past five years; one (1), or 1.27%, indicated attendance at a workshop during the past ten years; and, one (1), or 1.27%, indicated that it had been ten or more years since their last attendance at a workshop on early literacy. These data can be found summarized in Table 4.

Table 4

Attendance at Early Literacy Workshop by Early Childhood Practitioners

Recency of Attendance	Reading Readiness Number/Percent		Emergent Literacy Number/Percent	
1 year or less	30	71.43	52	65.82
2 years	5	11.90	16	20.25
5 years	4	9.52	8	10.13
10 years	1	2.38	1	1.27
more than 10 years	2	4.76	1	1.27

The reading readiness respondents indicated that their area/s of study were: four (4), or 9.52%, had an Early Childhood Major; four (4), or 9.52%, had an Early Childhood Minor; twenty-one (21), or 50.00%, had a Kindergarten endorsement; thirty-five (35), or 83.33%, were elementary education majors; four (4), or 9.52%, had studied Special Education; two (2), or 4.76%, indicated training or workshops in Reading Recovery; and one (1), or 2.38%,

indicated studies other than those listed on the questionnaire.

The emergent literacy respondents indicated that their area/s of study were: seventeen (17), or 21.52%, had an Early Childhood Major; fourteen (14), or 17.72%, had an Early Childhood Minor; twenty-seven (27), or 34.17%, had a Kindergarten endorsement; fifty-three (53), or 67.09%, were elementary education majors; nine (9), or 11.39%, had studied Special Education; five (5), or 6.33%, indicated training or workshops in Reading Recovery; and nineteen (19), or 24.05%, indicated studies other than the areas listed on the questionnaire. These data can be found summarized in Table 5.

Regarding the present position held by the reading readiness respondents, the following data was collated. Three (3), or 7.14%, of this group indicated that they were Head Start Teachers. Three (3), or 7.14%, indicated that they were Head Start Assistant Teachers. Two (2), or 4.76%, indicated that they were Head Start Aides. Eighteen (18), or 42.86%, indicated that they were Kindergarten Teachers. Two (2), or 4.76%, indicated that they were Kindergarten Aides. Ten (10), or 23.81%, indicated that they were First Grade Teachers. No one (0), or 0.00%, indicated that s/he was a First Grade Classroom Aide. Four (4), or 9.52%, indicated that they held other positions than those identified on the questionnaire.

Table 5

Area/s of Study
by Early Childhood Practitioners

Area/s of Study	Reading Readiness Number/Percent		Emergent Literacy Number/Percent	
Early Childhood Major	4	9.52	17	21.52
Early Childhood Minor	4	9.52	14	17.72
Kindergarten Endorsement	21	50.00	27	34.17
Elementary Education	35	83.33	53	67.09
Special Education	4	9.52	9	11.39
Reading Recovery Training/Workshops	2	4.76	5	6.33
Other	1	2.38	19	24.05

Regarding the present position held by the Emergent Literacy respondents, the following data was collated: twelve (12), or 15.19%, of this group indicated that they were Head Start Teachers. Four (4), or 5.06%, indicated that they were Head Start Assistant Teachers. No one (0), or 0.00%, indicated that s/he was a Head Start Aide. Twenty-four (24), or 30.38%, indicated that they were Kindergarten Teachers. One (1), or 1.27%, indicated that s/he was a Kindergarten Aide. Twenty-one (21), or 26.58%, indicated that they were First Grade Teachers. One (1), or 1.27%, indicated that s/he was a First Grade Classroom Aide. Fifteen (15), or 18.99%, indicated that they held other

positions than those identified on the questionnaire. These data can be found summarized in Table 6.

Table 6

Present Position
of Early Childhood Practitioners

Position	Reading Readiness Number/Percent		Emergent Literacy Number/Percent	
Head Start Teacher	3	7.14	12	15.19
Head Start Assistant	3	7.14	4	5.06
Head Start Aide	2	4.76	0	0.00
Kindergarten Teacher	18	42.86	24	30.38
Kindergarten Aide	2	4.76	1	1.27
First Grade Teacher	10	23.81	21	26.58
First Grade Aide	0	0.00	1	1.27
Other	4	9.52	15	18.99

Regarding the years of experience as an Early Childhood Teacher or Aide, the Reading Readiness respondents indicated the following: nine (9), or 21.43%, of this group indicated that this was their first year in an early childhood teaching or aide position. Ten (10), or 23.81%, indicated that this was their second or third year in an early childhood teaching or aide position. Five (5), or 11.90%, indicated that this was their fourth or fifth year as an early childhood teacher or aide. Three (3), or 7.14%, indicated that this was their sixth through their tenth year

as an early childhood teacher or aide. Four (4), or 9.52%, indicated that this was their eleventh through their fifteenth year as an early childhood teacher or aide. Eleven (11), or 26.19%, indicated that they have spent sixteen or more years as an early childhood teacher or aide.

The emergent literacy respondents indicated the following concerning years of experience as an Early Childhood Teacher or Aide: one (1), or 1.27%, of this group indicated that this was his/her first year in an early childhood teacher or aide position. Fifteen (15), or 18.99%, indicated that this was their second or third year as an early childhood teacher or aide. Twelve (12), or 15.19%, indicated that this was their fourth or fifth year as an early childhood teacher or aide. Twenty-four (24), or 30.38%, indicated that this was their sixth through their tenth year as an early childhood teacher or aide. Ten (10), or 12.66%, indicated that this was their eleventh through their fifteenth year as an early childhood teacher or aide. Seventeen (17), or 21.52%, indicated that they have spent sixteen or more years as an early childhood teacher or aide. These data can be found summarized in Table 7.

The reading readiness respondents provided the following data about the age range of the children in their classrooms: one (1), or 2.38%, of this group indicated that the children in his/her classroom were three and four years of age. Seven (7), or 16.67%, indicated that the children

in their classrooms were four and five years old. Sixteen (16), or 38.10%, indicated that the children in their classrooms were five and six years old. Twelve (12), or 28.57%, indicated that the children in their classrooms were six and seven years old. One (1), or 2.38%, indicated that the children in his/her classroom were a different age range from those presented on the questionnaire.

Table 7

Professional Experience
of Early Childhood Practitioners

Years of Experience	Reading Readiness Number/Percent		Emergent Literacy Number/Percent	
First Year	9	21.43	1	1.27
2-3	10	23.81	15	18.99
4-5	5	11.90	12	15.19
6-10	3	7.14	24	30.38
11-15	4	9.52	10	12.66
16 or more	11	26.19	17	21.52

The emergent literacy respondents provided the following data about the age range of the children in their classrooms: seven (7), or 8.86%, of this group indicated that the children in the classroom were three and four years of age. Twenty-three (23), or 29.11%, indicated that the children in their classrooms were four and five years old. Twenty-three (23), or 29.11%, indicated that the children in their classrooms were five and six years old. Twenty-three

(23), or 29.11%, indicated that the children in their classrooms were six and seven years old. Three (3), or 3.80%, indicated that the children in their classrooms were a different age range from those presented on the questionnaire. These data can be found summarized in Table 8.

Table 8

Age Range
Early Childhood Programs

Age Range	Reading Readiness Number/Percent		Emergent Literacy Number/Percent	
3-4	1	2.38	7	8.86
4-5	7	16.67	23	29.11
5-6	16	38.10	23	29.11
6-7	12	28.57	23	29.11
other	1	2.38	3	3.80

In response to the question regarding the number of children in their early childhood classrooms, the reading readiness respondents indicated the following: three (3), or 7.14%, of this group indicated that there were zero to ten children in their classrooms. Twenty (20), or 47.62%, indicated that there were eleven to twenty children in their classrooms. Seventeen (17), or 40.48%, indicated that there were twenty-one to thirty children in their classrooms. Two (2), or 4.76%, indicated that their classrooms contained a

number of students different from those listed on the questionnaire.

In response to the question regarding the number of children in their early childhood classrooms, the emergent literacy respondents indicated the following: two (2), or 2.53%, of this group indicated that there were zero to ten children in their classrooms. Fifty (50), or 63.29%, indicated that there were eleven to twenty children in their classrooms. Twenty-four (24), or 30.38%, indicated that there were twenty-one to thirty children in their classrooms. Three (3), or 3.80%, indicated that their classrooms contained a number of students different form those listed on the questionnaire. These data can be found summarized in Table 9.

Table 9

Number of Children
in Early Childhood Programs

Number of Students in Classroom	Reading Readiness Number/Percent		Emergent Literacy Number/Percent	
0-10	3	7.14	2	2.53
11-20	20	47.62	50	63.29
21-30	17	40.48	24	30.38
other	2	4.76	3	3.80

In response to the question regarding the ratio of adults to children in their early childhood classrooms, the reading readiness respondents indicated the following: five

(5), or 11.90%, of this group indicated that there was a one to five adult-child ratio in their classrooms. Thirteen (13), or 30.95%, indicated that there was a one to ten adult-child ratio in their classrooms. Nine (9), or 21.43%, indicated that there was a one to fifteen adult-child ratio in their classrooms. Nine (9), or 21.43%, indicated that there was a one to twenty adult-child ratio in their classrooms. Four (4), or 9.92%, indicated that there was a one to twenty-five adult-child ratio in their classrooms. No one (0), or 0.00%, indicated that there was a one to thirty adult-child ratio in his/her classroom. Two (2), or 4.76%, indicated that they had a ratio different from those presented in the questionnaire.

In response to the question regarding the ratio of adults to children in their Early Childhood classrooms, the emergent literacy respondents indicated the following: eight (8), or 10.13%, of this group indicated that there was a one to five adult-child ratio in their classrooms. Twenty-five (25), or 31.65%, indicated that there was a one to ten adult-child ratio in their classrooms. Thirteen (13), or 16.46%, indicated that there was a one to fifteen adult-child ratio in their classrooms. Twenty-three (23), or 29.11%, indicated that there was a one to twenty adult-child ratio in their classrooms. Nine (9), or 11.39%, indicated that there was a one to twenty-five adult-child ratio in their classrooms. No one (0), or 0.00%, indicated

that there was a one to thirty adult to student ratio in his/her classroom. One (1), or 1.27%, indicated that s/he had a ratio different from presented in the questionnaire. These data can be found summarized in Table 10.

Table 10
Ratio of Adults to Children
in Early Childhood Programs

Ratio	Reading Readiness Number/Percent		Emergent Literacy Number/Percent	
1:5	5	11.90	8	10.13
1:10	13	30.95	25	31.65
1:15	9	21.43	13	16.46
1:20	9	21.43	23	29.11
1:25	4	9.92	9	11.39
1:30	0	0.00	0	0.00
other	2	4.76	1	1.27

In reference to the question which asked whether the Early Childhood program in which the practitioner worked was public or private, the reading readiness respondents indicated that only one (1), or 2.38%, was private while forty-one (41), or 97.62%, were public. In response to the same question, the emergent literacy respondents indicated that three (3), or 3.80%, were private while seventy-six (76), or 96.20%, were public. These data can be found summarized in Table 11.

Twenty (20), or 47.62%, of the reading readiness respondents indicated that their curriculum was teacher

developed while twenty-two (22), or 52.38%, indicated that their curriculum was pre-determined. Fifty-two (52), or 65.82%, of the emergent literacy respondents indicated that their curriculum was teacher developed while twenty-seven (27), or 34.18%, indicated that their curriculum was pre-determined. These data can be found summarized in Table 12.

Table 11

Early Childhood Programs
Public & Private

Type of Program	Reading Readiness Number/Percent		Emergent Literacy Number/Percent	
Private	1	2.38	3	3.80
Public	41	97.62	76	96.20

Table 12

Curriculum in
Early Childhood Programs

Type of Curriculum	Reading Readiness Number/Percent		Emergent Literacy Number/Percent	
Teacher Developed	20	47.62	52	65.82
Pre-determined	22	52.38	27	34.18

In regard to the program being half day or full day, the reading readiness respondents indicated the following: twenty (20), or 47.62%, of the practitioners in this group indicated that they had a half day program while twenty-two (22), or 52.38%, indicated a full day program. Thirty-nine (39), or 92.86%, indicated that the children attended daily

while three (3), or 7.14%, indicated that the children attended on an every other day basis.

In response to the same question, the emergent literacy respondents indicated the following: forty-nine (49), or 62.03%, of the practitioners in this group indicated that they had a half day program while thirty (30), or 37.97%, indicated a full day program. Seventy-seven (77), or 97.47%, indicated that the children attended daily while two (2), or 2.53%, indicated that the children attended on an every other day basis. These data can be found summarized in Table 13.

Table 13

Daily Duration of
Early Childhood Programs

Period of Duration	Reading Readiness Number/Percent		Emergent Literacy Number/Percent	
Half Day	20	47.62	49	62.03
Full Day	22	52.38	30	37.97
Daily	39	92.86	77	97.47
Every Other Day	3	7.14	2	2.53

In response to the approximate percentage of daily instructional time spent on literacy events in the classroom, the reading readiness respondents indicated the following: no respondent (0), or 0.00%, indicated that s/he spent only 10 per cent of the instructional time on literacy activities. Two (2), or 4.76%, of this group of respondents

indicated that they spent approximately twenty per cent of the instructional time on literacy activities. Four (4), or 9.52%, of this group of respondents indicated that they spent approximately thirty per cent of the instructional time on literacy activities. Eight (8), or 19.05%, of this group of respondents indicated that they spent approximately forty per cent of the instructional time on literacy activities. Thirteen (13), or 30.95%, of this group of respondents indicated that they spent approximately fifty per cent of the instructional time on literacy activities. Five (5), or 11.90%, of this group of respondents indicated that they spent approximately sixty per cent of the instructional time on literacy activities. Two (2), or 4.76%, of this group of respondents indicated that they spent approximately seventy per cent of the instructional time on literacy activities. Two (2), or 4.76%, of this group of respondents indicated that they spent approximately eighty per cent of the instructional time on literacy activities. Three (3), or 7.14%, of this group of respondents indicated that they spent approximately ninety per cent of the instructional time on literacy activities. Three (3), or 7.14%, of this group of respondents indicated that they spent approximately one hundred per cent of the instructional time on literacy activities.

In response to the approximate percentage of daily instructional time spent on literacy events in the

classroom, the emergent literacy respondents indicated the following: two (2), or 2.53%, respondents from this group indicated that they spent only 10 per cent of the instructional time on literacy activities. Eight (8), or 10.13%, of this group of respondents indicated that they spent approximately twenty per cent of the instructional time on literacy activities. Eleven (11), or 13.92%, of this group of respondents indicated that they spent approximately thirty per cent of the instructional time on literacy activities. Seven (7), or 8.86%, of this group of respondents indicated that they spent approximately forty per cent of the instructional time on literacy activities. Eight (8), or 10.13%, of this group of respondents indicated that they spent approximately fifty per cent of the instructional time on literacy activities. Sixteen (16), or 20.25%, of this group of respondents indicated that they spent approximately sixty per cent of the instructional time on literacy activities. Seven (7), or 8.86%, of this group of respondents indicated that they spent approximately seventy per cent of the instructional time on literacy activities. Nine (9), or 11.39%, of this group of respondents indicated that they spent approximately eighty per cent of the instructional time on literacy activities. Six (6), or 7.59%, of this group of respondents indicated that they spent approximately ninety per cent of the instructional time on literacy activities. Five (5), or

6.32%, of this group of respondents indicated that they spent approximately one hundred per cent of the instructional time on literacy activities. These data can be found summarized in Table 14.

Table 14

Instructional Time on Literacy Events in Early Childhood Programs

Approximate Instructional Time	Reading Readiness Number/Percent		Emergent Literacy Number/Percent	
10 percent	0	0.00	2	2.53
20 percent	2	4.76	8	10.13
30 percent	4	9.52	11	13.92
40 percent	8	19.05	7	8.86
50 percent	13	30.95	8	10.13
60 percent	5	11.90	16	20.25
70 percent	2	4.76	7	8.86
80 percent	2	4.76	9	11.39
90 percent	3	7.14	6	7.59
100 percent	3	7.14	5	6.32

In response to the question on predetermined assessment or screening instruments used in their programs, the reading readiness respondents provided the following data: eighteen (18), or 42.86%, indicated that they used predetermined tests or screening instruments while twenty-four (24), or 57.14%, indicated that they did not use a predetermined test or screening instrument. Of the eighteen reading readiness

respondents using predetermined assessment or screening instruments, seven (7), or 38.89%, indicated that they use the Dial instrument. No one (0), or 0.00%, indicated that s/he used the Caldwell Screening Instrument. One (1), or 5.56%, indicated that s/he used the Santa Clara Developmental Test. One (1), or 5.56%, indicated that s/he used the Gesell PreSchool Inventory. Four (4), or 22.22%, indicated that they used the Brigance. No one (0), or 0.00%, indicated that s/he used the Frostig. Five (5), or 27.78%, indicated that they used other instruments not indicated on the questionnaire.

In response to the question on predetermined assessment or screening instruments used in their programs, the emergent literacy respondents provided the following data: forty-two (42), or 53.16%, indicated that they used predetermined tests or screening instruments while thirty-seven (37), or 46.84%, indicated that they did not use a predetermined or screening instrument. Of the forty-two emergent literacy respondents using predetermined assessment or screening instruments, eight (8), or 19.05%, indicated that they used the Dial instrument. Seven (7), or 16.67%, indicated that they used the Caldwell Screening Instrument. One (1), or 2.38%, indicated that s/he used the Santa Clara Developmental Test. Seven (7), or 16.67%, indicated that they used the Gesell PreSchool Inventory. No one (0), or 0.00%, indicated that s/he used the Brigance. No one (0),

or 0.00%, indicated that s/he used the Frostig. Nineteen (19), or 45.24%, indicated that they used other instruments not indicated on the questionnaire. These data can be found summarized in Tables 15 and 16.

Table 15

Usage of Assessment or Screening Instruments in Early Childhood Programs

Response	Reading Readiness Number/Percent		Emergent Literacy Number/Percent	
Yes	18	42.86	42	53.16
No	24	57.14	37	46.84

Table 16

Assessment or Screening Instruments Used in Early Childhood Programs

Assessment Tool	Reading Readiness Number/Percent		Emergent Literacy Number/Percent	
Dial-R	7	38.89	8	19.05
Caldwell PreSchool	0	0.00	7	16.67
Santa Clara Developmental	1	5.56	1	2.38
Gesell PreSchool	1	5.56	7	16.67
Brigance	4	22.22	0	0.00
Frostig	0	0.00	0	0.00
Other	5	27.78	19	45.24

In response to the location of the program, the reading readiness respondents provided the following data: nineteen (19), or 45.24%, indicated that their program was located in

a rural area, while ten (10), or 23.81%, indicated their program was in an urban area. Five (5) respondents, or 11.90%, from this group indicated that their program was in the inner city, while the remaining eight (8), or 19.05%, indicated that their program was suburban.

In response to the location of the program, the emergent literacy respondents provided the following data: thirty-nine (39), or 49.37%, indicated that their program was located in a rural area, while nineteen (19), or 24.05%, indicated their program was in an urban area. Eleven (11) respondents, or 13.92%, from this group indicated that their program was in the inner city, while the remaining ten (10), or 12.66%, indicated that their program was suburban. These data can be found summarized in Table 17.

Table 17

Location of
Early Childhood Programs

Program Location	Reading Readiness Number/Percent		Emergent Literacy Number/Percent	
Rural Area	19	45.24	39	49.37
Urban Area	10	23.81	19	24.05
Inner City	5	11.90	11	13.92
Suburban	8	19.05	10	12.66

In response to the population of the community where the program was located, the reading readiness respondents indicated the following: Four (4), or 9.52%, indicated the

program was in a community with a population of 1,000 or less. Eleven (11), or 26.19%, indicated that their program was housed in a community with a population between 1,000 and 5,000. Five (5), or 11.90%, indicated that their program was in a community with a population between 5,000 and 10,000. Sixteen (16), or 38.10%, indicated that their program was in a community with a population between 10,000 and 50,000. Four (4), or 9.52%, indicated that their program was in a community with a population between 50,000 and 100.000. The remaining two (2), or 4.76%, of this group indicated that their program was in a community with a population over 100,000.

In response to the population of the community where the program was located, the emergent literacy respondents indicated the following: Six (6), or 7.59%, indicated the program was in a community with a population of 1,000 or less. Thirteen (13), or 16.46%, indicated that their program was housed in a community with a population between 1,000 and 5,000. Fourteen (14), or 17.72%, indicated that their program was in a community with a population between 5,000 and 10,000. Thirty (30), or 37.97%, indicated that their program was in a community with a population between 10,000 and 50,000. Seven (7), or 8.86%, indicated that their program was in a community with a population between 50,000 and 100.000. The remaining nine (9) respondents, or 11.39% of this group, indicated that their program was in a

community with a population over 100,000. These data can be found summarized in Table 18.

Table 18

Population of Community
with Early Childhood Programs

Population	Reading Readiness Number/Percent		Emergent Literacy Number/Percent	
Under 1000	4	9.52	6	7.59
1000 - 5000	11	26.19	13	16.46
5000 - 10,000	5	11.90	14	17.72
10,000 - 50,000	16	38.10	30	37.97
50,000 - 100,000	4	9.52	7	8.86
over 100,000	2	4.76	9	11.39

Beliefs about Early Childhood Literacy

The Likert portion of the questionnaire asked the respondents to rate their beliefs about early childhood literacy. Each probe was rated as strongly agree, agree, no opinion, disagree or strongly disagree. The reading readiness probes were assigned ratings on a continuum from one to five with one, with one signifying strongly agree and five signifying strongly disagree. The emergent literacy probes were assigned ratings on a continuum from one to five with one, with five signifying strongly agree and one signifying strongly disagree. The data was collated and analyzed. This information was then treated with a *t* test to determine significance.

The Emergent Literacy group, in response to assessing a child through verbalizing phonics rules, had a mean of 3.90 while the Reading Readiness group had a mean of 3.02. There was a significant difference between beliefs, as the t was 3.63. The level of significance was .0004. See Table 19-1 for further information.

Probe # 1. An important way to assess literacy is to have the child verbalize phonics rules.

Table 19-1

Means and Analysis of Data for Likert Item 1

	Reading Readiness		Emergent Literacy		t	Significance
Item #	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
1	3.02	1.24	3.90	1.29	3.63	.0004

The Emergent Literacy group, in response to assessing a child through story telling, had a mean of 4.62, while the Reading Readiness group had a mean of 4.51. There was no significant difference between the groups' beliefs, as the t was -0.74. The level of significance was .23. See Table 19-2 for further information.

The Emergent Literacy group, in response to assessing a child through letter knowledge, had a mean of 3.01, while the Reading Readiness group had a mean of 1.98. There was a significant difference between the groups' beliefs, as the t was -4.34. The level of significance was .0001. See Table 19-3 for further information.

Probe # 2. Story retelling is an important method for assessing comprehension.

Table 19-2

Means and Analysis of Data for Likert Item 2

	Reading Readiness		Emergent Literacy		t	Significance
Item #	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
2	4.51	.94	4.62	.67	-0.74	.23

Probe # 3. Initial assessment of beginning readers should focus on letter knowledge.

Table 19-3

Means and Analysis of Data for Likert Item 3

	Reading Readiness		Emergent Literacy		t	Significance
Item #	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
3	1.98	1.98	3.01	1.37	-4.34	.0001

The Emergent Literacy group, in response to assessing a child through oral sequencing, had a mean of 4.14, while the Reading Readiness group had a mean of 4.19. There was no significant difference between the groups' beliefs, as the t was .35. The level of significance was .37. See Table 19-4 for further information.

The Emergent Literacy group, in response to the importance of a child memorizing poems and stories, had a mean of 3.54, while the Reading Readiness group had a mean of 3.50. There was no significant difference between the

groups' beliefs, as the t was -.18. The level of significance was .43. See Table 19-5 for further information.

Probe # 4. Oral sequencing of story events is an essential method of assessing literacy.

Table 19-4

Means and Analysis of Data for Likert Item 4

	Reading Readiness		Emergent Literacy		t	Significance
Item #	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
4	4.19	.59	4.14	.86	.35	.37

Probe # 5. Children's memorization of poems and stories is an important support for reading progress.

Table 19-5

Means and Analysis of Data for Likert Item 5

	Reading Readiness		Emergent Literacy		t	Significance
Item #	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
5	3.50	1.27	3.54	1.29	-0.18	.43

The Emergent Literacy group, in response to the appropriateness of directed listening and reading activities for small group assessment, had a mean of 1.96, while the Reading Readiness group had a mean of 1.76. There was no significant difference between the groups' beliefs, as the t

was -1.23. The level of significance was .110. See Table 19-6 for further information.

Probe # 6. Directed listening/reading activities that involve interpretive thinking are appropriate for small group assessment.

Table 19-6

Means and Analysis of Data for Likert Item 6

	Reading Readiness		Emergent Literacy		t	Significance
Item #	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
6	1.76	.73	1.96	.91	-1.23	.110

The Emergent Literacy group, in response to the assessment of literacy in an integrated curriculum, had a mean of 4.56, while the Reading Readiness group had a mean of 4.14. There was a significant difference between the groups' beliefs, as the t was -2.54. The level of significance was .006. See Table 19-7 for further information.

Probe # 7. In an integrated curriculum, literacy can be assessed through any subject area.

Table 19-7

Means and Analysis of Data for Likert Item 7

	Reading Readiness		Emergent Literacy		t	Significance
Item #	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
7	4.14	1.05	4.56	.73	-2.54	.006

The Emergent Literacy group, in response to children's early drawings and their being an important step toward writing, had a mean of 4.71, while the Reading Readiness group had a mean of 4.52. There was no significant difference between the groups' beliefs, as the t was -1.16. The level of significance was .123. See Table 19-8 for further information.

Probe # 8. Children's early drawings are an important step toward writing.

Table 19-8

Means and Analysis of Data for Likert Item 8

	Reading Readiness		Emergent Literacy		t	Significance
Item #	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
8	4.52	.92	4.71	.79	-1.16	.123

The Emergent Literacy group, in response to children learning best when ability grouped, had a mean of 3.53, while the Reading Readiness group had a mean of 2.69. There was a significant difference between the groups' beliefs, as the t was -3.77. The level of significance was .0003. See Table 19-9 for further information.

The Emergent Literacy group, in response to the correct recitation of the alphabet being essential to learning to read, had a mean of 3.80, while the Reading Readiness group had a mean of 2.76. There was a significant difference between the groups' beliefs, as the t was -4.08. The level

of significance was .0001. See Table 19-10 for further information.

Probe # 9. Children learn to read best when ability grouped.

Table 19-9

Means and Analysis of Data for Likert Item 9

	Reading Readiness		Emergent Literacy		t	Significance
Item #	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
9	2.69	1.28	3.53	1.11	-3.77	.0003

Probe #10. Correct recitation of the alphabet is essential to learning to read.

Table 19-10

Means and Analysis of Data for Likert Item 10

	Reading Readiness		Emergent Literacy		t	Significance
Item #	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
10	2.76	1.39	3.80	1.29	-4.08	.0001

The Emergent Literacy group, in response to the appropriateness of ongoing assessment of reading progress by the child's attempted reading of self-selected books, had a mean of 4.10, while the Reading Readiness group had a mean of 3.79. There was a significant difference between the groups' beliefs, as the t was -1.66. The level of significance was .048. See Table 19-11 for further information.

Probe #11. The child's attempted reading of self-selected books is appropriate for ongoing assessment of reading progress.

Table 19-11

Means and Analysis of Data for Likert Item 11

	Reading Readiness		Emergent Literacy		t	Significance
Item #	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
11	3.79	1.02	4.10	.98	-1.66	.048

The Emergent Literacy group, in response to a teacher always correcting a child's spelling, had a mean of 4.43, while the Reading Readiness group had a mean of 3.48. There was a significant difference between the groups' beliefs, as the t was -4.48. The level of significance was .0001. See Table 19-12 for further information.

Probe #12. Until a child can spell accurately, the teacher should always correct the student's spelling.

Table 19-12

Means and Analysis of Data for Likert Item 12

	Reading Readiness		Emergent Literacy		t	Significance
Item #	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
12	3.48	1.38	4.43	.94	-4.48	.0001

The Emergent Literacy group, in response to the use of reader's theater and author's circles as effective ways to assess a child's literacy growth, had a mean of 3.62, while

the Reading Readiness group had a mean of 3.50. There was no significant difference between beliefs, as the t was -.63. The level of significance was .27. See Table 19-13 for further information.

Probe #13. Reader's theater and author's circles are effective ways to assess a child's literacy growth.

Table 19-13

Means and Analysis of Data for Likert Item 13

	Reading Readiness		Emergent Literacy		t	Significance
Item #	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
13	3.50	.89	3.62	1.05	-0.63	.27

The Emergent Literacy group, in response to standardized testing as an extremely appropriate way to determine early literacy development, had a mean of 3.62, while the Reading Readiness group had a mean of 3.74. There was a significant difference between the groups' beliefs, as the t was -1.87. The level of significance was .03. See Table 19-14 for further information.

The Emergent Literacy group, in response to children's first lessons with reading focusing on letters and sounds, had a mean of 3.78, while the Reading Readiness group had a mean of 2.43. There was a significant difference between the groups' beliefs, as the t was -5.48. The level of

significance was .0001. See Table 19-15 for further information.

Probe #14. Standardized testing is an extremely appropriate way to determine early literacy development.

Table 19-14

Means and Analysis of Data for Likert Item 14

	Reading Readiness		Emergent Literacy		t	Significance
Item #	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
14	3.74	1.29	4.15	1.09	-1.87	.03

Probe #15. Children's first lessons with reading should focus on letters and sounds.

Table 19-15

Means and Analysis of Data for Likert Item 15

	Reading Readiness		Emergent Literacy		t	Significance
Item #	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
15	2.43	1.40	3.78	1.24	-5.48	.0001

The Emergent Literacy group, in response to invented spelling being an important stage in children's writing, had a mean of 4.51, while the Reading Readiness group had a mean of 4.40. There was no significant difference between the groups' beliefs, as the t was -0.63. The level of significance was .27. See Table 19-16 for further information.

Probe #16. Invented spelling is an important stage in children's writing progress.

Table 19-16

Means and Analysis of Data for Likert Item 16

	Reading Readiness		Emergent Literacy		t	Significance
Item #	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
16	4.40	.80	4.51	.88	-0.63	.27

The Emergent Literacy group, in response to correct oral reading being a necessary component of a young child's literacy assessment, had a mean of 3.06, while the Reading Readiness group had a mean of 2.36. There was a significant difference between the groups' beliefs, as the t was -2.81. The level of significance was .003. See Table 19-17 for further information.

Probe #17. Correct oral reading is a necessary component of a young child's literacy that needs to be assessed.

Table 19-17

Means and Analysis of Data for Likert Item 17

	Reading Readiness		Emergent Literacy		t	Significance
Item #	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
17	2.36	1.14	3.06	1.40	-2.81	.003

The Emergent Literacy group, in response to young readers' knowledge of new vocabulary words being assessed prior to reading, had a mean of 3.32, while the Reading

Readiness group had a mean of 2.64. There was a significant difference between the groups' beliefs, as the t was -2.77. The level of significance was .003. See Table 19-18 for further information.

Probe #18. Young readers' knowledge of new vocabulary words does not need to be assessed before they read a story.

Table 19-18

Means and Analysis of Data for Likert Item 18

	Reading Readiness		Emergent Literacy		t	Significance
Item #	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
18	2.64	1.27	3.32	1.28	-2.77	.003

The Emergent Literacy group, in response to a child's recognition of alphabet letters being essential in determining literacy development, had a mean of 2.96, while the Reading Readiness group had a mean of 2.21. There was a significant difference between the groups' beliefs, as the t was -3.17. The level of significance was .001. See Table 19-19 for further information.

The Emergent Literacy group, in response to keeping subject areas distinct and separate for purposes of instruction and assessment, had a mean of 4.52, while the Reading Readiness group had a mean of 3.95. There was a significant difference between the groups' beliefs, as the t

was -3.21. The level of significance was .001. See Table 19-20 for further information.

Probe #19. The child's recognition of alphabet letters is essential in determining literacy development.

Table 19-19

Means and Analysis of Data for Likert Item 19

	Reading Readiness		Emergent Literacy		t	Significance
Item #	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
19	2.21	1.14	2.96	1.29	-3.17	.001

Probe #20. It is important to keep subject areas distinct and separate for purposes of instruction and assessment.

Table 19-20

Means and Analysis of Data for Likert Item 20

	Reading Readiness		Emergent Literacy		t	Significance
Item #	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
20	3.95	1.13	4.52	.80	-3.21	.001

The Emergent Literacy group had a mean of 3.81 for all the likert probes, while the Reading Readiness group had a mean of 3.38 for the same probes. There was a significant difference between beliefs expressed by the two philosophies, as the t was -2.11. The level of significance registered was .02. See Table 19-21 for further information.

Table 20

Means and Analysis of Data for All Likert Items

	Reading Readiness		Emergent Literacy		t	Significance
Item #	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
1	3.02	1.24	3.90	1.29	3.63	.0004
2	4.51	.94	4.62	.67	-0.74	.23
3	1.98	.98	3.10	1.37	-4.34	.0001
4	4.19	.59	4.14	.86	.35	.37
5	3.50	1.27	3.54	1.29	-0.18	.43
6	1.76	.73	1.96	.91	-1.23	.11
7	4.14	1.05	4.56	.73	-2.54	.006
8	4.52	.92	4.71	.79	-1.16	.12
9	2.69	1.28	3.53	1.11	-3.77	.0003
10	2.76	1.39	3.80	1.29	-4.08	.0001
11	3.79	1.02	4.10	.98	-1.66	.05
12	3.48	1.38	4.43	.94	-4.48	.0001
13	3.50	.89	3.62	1.05	-0.62	.27
14	3.74	1.29	4.15	1.09	-1.87	.03
15	2.43	1.40	3.78	1.24	-5.48	.0001
16	4.40	.80	4.51	.88	-0.63	.27
17	2.36	1.14	3.06	1.40	-2.81	.003
18	2.64	1.27	3.32	1.28	-2.77	.003
19	2.21	1.14	2.96	1.29	-3.17	.001
20	3.95	1.13	4.52	.80	-3.21	.001
Total	3.38	.89	3.81	.71	-2.11	.02

Knowledge Base -- Early Childhood Terms

On the knowledge base portion of the questionnaire, the respondents were asked to identify the early childhood terms with which they are familiar. Each term was identified as either emergent literacy or reading readiness by the researcher and assigned a numerical rating. The data were collated and analyzed. This information was treated with Chi Square to ascertain significance.

The Emergent Literacy group, in response to the knowledge base terms, indicated a forty-three percent (43%) knowledge of emergent literacy terms and a fifty-seven percent (57%) knowledge of reading readiness terms. The Reading Readiness group indicated a forty-eight percent (48%) knowledge of emergent literacy terms and a fifty-seven percent (57%) knowledge of reading readiness terms. There were two degrees of freedom with a Chi Square of zero (0.00).

The purpose of this set of probes was to determine if a significant difference in the knowledge of terms between the whole groups of reading readiness respondents and the emergent literacy respondents existed. The data were compared through the percentages of respondents who declared familiarity with the given terms. These results, reported with the results grouped into clusters of ten percentage points, follow.

Of the emergent literacy respondents, 90-100% reported

being familiar with the following knowledge base terms: reading readiness, phonics, whole language, big books, sight words, and prefixes/suffixes.

Of the reading readiness respondents, 90-100% reported being familiar with the following knowledge base terms: reading readiness, phonics, big books, sight words, and prefixes/suffixes.

Of the emergent literacy respondents, 80-89% reported being familiar with the following knowledge base terms: emergent literacy, portfolio assessment, predictable books, invented spelling, visual discrimination, auditory discrimination, integrated curriculum, and basal text.

Of the reading readiness respondents, 80-89% reported being familiar with the following knowledge base terms: whole language, diphthong, syntax, invented spelling, and basal text.

Of the emergent literacy respondents, 70-79% reported being familiar with the following knowledge base term: diphthong.

Of the reading readiness respondents, 70-79% reported being familiar with the following knowledge base terms: predictable books, digraph, visual discrimination, auditory discrimination, syllabication, and round robin reading.

Of the emergent literacy respondents, 60-69% reported being familiar with the following knowledge base terms: writing conferences, holistic reading instruction, syntax,

semantic map/web, word configuration, print-rich environment, digraph, syllabication, and round robin reading.

Of the reading readiness respondents, 60-69% reported being familiar with the following knowledge base terms: emergent literacy, portfolio assessment, structural analysis, semantic map/web, word configuration, and integrated curriculum.

Of the emergent literacy respondents, 50-59% reported being familiar with the following knowledge base terms: structural analysis, environmental print, and print awareness.

Of the reading readiness respondents, 50-59% reported being familiar with the following knowledge base terms: holistic reading instruction, subskills, and print awareness.

Of the emergent literacy respondents, 40-49% reported being familiar with the following knowledge base term: subskills.

Of the reading readiness respondents, 40-49% reported being familiar with the following knowledge base terms: reading recovery, writing conferences, and print-rich environment.

Of the emergent literacy respondents, 30-39% reported being familiar with the following knowledge base term: reading recovery.

Of the reading readiness respondents, 30-39% reported being familiar with the following knowledge base term: environmental print.

Of the emergent literacy respondents, 20-29% reported being familiar with the following knowledge base term: authentic literacy assessment.

There were no reading readiness respondents who reported being familiar with knowledge base terms at the 20-29% level.

There were no emergent literacy respondents who reported being familiar with knowledge base terms at the 20-29% level.

Of the reading readiness respondents, 0-19% reported being familiar with the following knowledge base term: authentic literacy assessment.

There was no significant difference between the groups in their familiarity with early childhood terms. The level of significance was .97. See Table 19-22 for further information.

Knowledge Base -- Early Childhood Theorists

On the second section of the knowledge base portion of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to identify the early childhood literacy theorists with whom they were familiar. Each theorist was identified as either emergent literacy or reading readiness by the researcher and assigned a numerical rating. The data were collated and analyzed.

Table 21

Familiarity of Early Childhood Terminology

Term	Reading Readiness Percentage of Familiarity	Emergent Literacy Percentage of Familiarity
1. Reading Recovery	48	35
2. emergent literacy	64	80
3. reading readiness	100	94
4. phonics	98	99
5. whole language	83	94
6. diphthong	81	71
7. portfolio assessment	69	87
8. structural analysis	69	58
9. writing conferences	48	62
10. holistic reading instruction	57	66
11. syntax	81	67
12. semantic map/web	69	66
13. word configuration	69	67
14. predictable books	79	89
15. subskills	55	48

Table 21

Familiarity of Early Childhood Terminology
(Continued)

Term	Reading Readiness Percentage of Familiarity	Emergent Literacy Percentage of Familiarity
16. authentic literacy instruction	19	89
17. print-rich environment	40	89
18. digraph	76	67
19. invented spelling	86	89
20. visual discrimination	79	89
21. Big Books	93	99
22. auditory discrimination	79	89
23. sight words	95	95
24. integrated curriculum	64	89
25. prefixes/ suffixes	93	94
26. environmental print	36	53
27. syllabication	79	67
28. print awareness	52	52
29. Round Robin Reading	79	66
30. Basal text	83	80

Table 22

Analysis of Data for
Knowledge Base -- Terms

	Frequency by Groups	
Items Identified	Reading Readiness	Emergent Literacy
Reading Readiness	908 (57%)	510 (57%)
Emergent Literacy	835 (48%)	381 (43%)
Chi Square Analysis		
Degrees of Freedom	2	
Chi Square	.00	
Significance	.97	

This information was treated with Chi Square to ascertain significance.

The Emergent Literacy group, in response to the knowledge base theorists, indicated a fifty-two percent (52%) knowledge of emergent literacy theorists and forty-seven percent (47%) knowledge of reading readiness theorists. The Reading Readiness group indicated a fifty-six percent (56%) knowledge of emergent literacy theorists and a forty-five percent (45%) knowledge of reading readiness theorists. There were two degrees of freedom with a Chi Square of 0.00.

The purpose was to determine if a significant difference in knowledge of theorists between the whole group of reading readiness respondents and the emergent literacy respondents existed. This data were compared through the

percentages of respondents who declared familiarity with the given early childhood literacy theorists. These results, reported with the results grouped into clusters of ten percentage points, follow.

Of the emergent literacy respondents, 90-100% reported being familiar with the following early childhood literacy theorists: Jean Piaget and Maria Montessori.

Of the reading readiness respondents, 90-100% reported being familiar with the following early childhood literacy theorist: Maria Montessori.

Of the emergent literacy respondents, 80-89% reported being familiar with the following early childhood literacy theorist: John Dewey.

Of the reading readiness respondents, 80-89% reported being familiar with the following early childhood literacy theorist: Jean Piaget.

None of the early childhood literacy theorists was recognized by emergent literacy respondents at the 70-79% level.

Of the reading readiness respondents, 70-79% reported being familiar with the following early childhood literacy theorist: John Dewey.

Of the emergent literacy respondents, 60-69% reported being familiar with the following early childhood literacy theorist: Edward Dolch.

Of the reading readiness respondents, 60-69% reported

being familiar with the following early childhood literacy theorist: Edward Dolch.

None of the early childhood literacy theorists was recognized by emergent literacy respondents at the 50-59% level.

None of the early childhood literacy theorists was recognized by reading readiness respondents at the 50-59% level.

None of the early childhood literacy theorists was recognized by emergent literacy respondents at the 40-49% level.

None of the early childhood literacy theorists was recognized by reading readiness respondents at the 40-49% level.

Of the emergent literacy respondents, 30-39% reported being familiar with the following early childhood literacy theorist: Dorothy Strickland.

None of the early childhood literacy theorists was recognized by reading readiness respondents at the 30-39% level.

Of the emergent literacy respondents, 20-29% reported being familiar with the following early childhood literacy theorists: Ken Goodman and Mariane Frostig.

Of the reading readiness respondents, 20-29% reported being familiar with the following early childhood literacy theorists: Mariane Frostig and Dorothy Strickland.

Of the emergent literacy respondents, 10-19% reported being familiar with the following early childhood literacy theorists: Lev Vygotsky, Marie Clay, Delores Durkin, Jerome Harste, Jean Chall, and Arthur Heilman.

Of the reading readiness respondents, 10-19% reported being familiar with the following early childhood literacy theorists: Lev Vygotsky, Delores Durkin, Jean Chall, and Ken Goodman.

Of the emergent literacy respondents, 0-10% reported being familiar with the following early childhood literacy theorists: Leslie Morrow and Edward Sipay.

Of the reading readiness respondents, 0-10% reported being familiar with the following early childhood literacy theorists: Marie Clay, Jerome Harste, Leslie Morrow, Edward Sipay, and Arthur Heilman. These data can be found summarized in Table 23.

There was no significant difference between the groups and their familiarity with early childhood theorists. The level of significance was .97. See Table 24 for further information.

Early Childhood Literacy -- World of Practice

The world of practice portion of the questionnaire asked the respondents to respond positively or negatively according to whether they do or do not implement the early childhood teaching practices listed. Each statement was identified as either emergent literacy or reading readiness

by the researcher. The data were collated and analyzed using both percentages and Chi Square.

Table 23

Familiarity of Early Childhood Theorists

Theorist	Reading Readiness Percentage of Familiarity	Emergent Literacy Percentage of Familiarity
1. Jean Piaget	83	96
2. Lev Vygotsky	10	11
3. Marie Clay	7	19
4. Edward Dolch	64	65
5. John Dewey	79	84
6. Delores Durkin	17	15
7. Jerome Harste	5	11
8. Jean Chall	14	18
9. Ken Goodman	17	20
10. Mariane Frostig	29	27
11. Dorothy Strickland	24	33
12. Maria Montessori	90	90
13. Leslie Morrow	7	8
14. Edward Sipay	5	8
15. Arthur Heilman	7	16

The responses from the early childhood educators of both philosophies reported utilization of the practices identified in the probes. These data were converted into percentage form to facilitate comparison of the utilization of practices. A Chi Square analysis was also completed to determine whether or not each probe was statistically

significant at the .05 level.

Table 24

Analysis of Data for
Knowledge Base -- Theorists

	Frequency by Groups	
Items Identified	Reading Readiness	Emergent Literacy
Reading Readiness	183 (45%)	90 (47%)
Emergent Literacy	228 (56%)	102 (52%)
Chi Square Analysis		
Degrees of Freedom	2	
Chi Square	.00	
Significance	.97	

Probe # 1. I conduct literature circles.

Table 25-1

Analysis of Data for Probe 1
World of Practice Items

	Frequency by Groups	
Probe 1	Reading Readiness	Emergent Literacy
Reading Readiness	20 (48%)	22 (52%)
Emergent Literacy	42 (53%)	37 (47%)
Chi Square Analysis		
Degrees of Freedom	2	
Chi Square	.34	
Significance	.56	

On probe # 1, designated as an emergent literacy practice, the reading readiness group reported that forty-

eight percent (48%) used this practice, while fifty-three percent (53%) of the emergent literacy respondents reported using it. Five percent (5%) more of the emergent literacy group reported usage of this practice.

There was not a statistically significant difference on probe # 1 between the practices of the two groups. There were 2 degrees of freedom and the Chi Square was .34. The level of significance was .56. See Table 25-1 for further information.

Probe # 2. I teach reading through phonics lessons.

Table 25-2

Analysis of Data for Probe 2
World of Practice Items

	Frequency by Groups	
Probe 2	Reading Readiness	Emergent Literacy
Reading Readiness	32 (76%)	10 (24%)
Emergent Literacy	34 (43%)	45 (57%)
Chi Square Analysis		
Degrees of Freedom	2	
Chi Square	12.15	
Significance	.0005	

On probe # 2, designated as a reading readiness practice, the emergent literacy group reported that forty-three percent (43%) used this practice, while seventy-six percent (76%) of the reading readiness respondents reported using it. Thirty-three percent (33%) more of the reading

readiness group reported usage of this practice.

There was a statistically significant difference on probe # 2 between the practices of the two groups. There were 2 degrees of freedom and the Chi Square was 12.15. The level of significance was .0005. See Table 25-2 for further information.

Probe # 3. I teach process writing (drafting, editing, publishing, conferencing).

Table 25-3

Analysis of Data for Probe 3
World of Practice Items

	Frequency by Groups	
Probe 3	Reading Readiness	Emergent Literacy
Reading Readiness	13 (31%)	29 (69%)
Emergent Literacy	35 (44%)	44 (56%)
Chi Square Analysis		
Degrees of Freedom	2	
Chi Square	2.04	
Significance	.15	

On probe # 3, designated as an emergent literacy practice, the reading readiness group reported that thirty-one percent (31%) used this practice, while forty-four percent (44%) of the emergent literacy respondents reported using it. Thirteen percent (13%) more of the emergent literacy group reported usage of this practice.

There was not a statistically significant difference on probe # 3 between the practices of the two groups. There

were 2 degrees of freedom and the Chi Square was 2.04. The level of significance was .15. See Table 25-3 for further information.

Probe # 4. I use workbooks to reinforce reading skills.

Table 25-4

Analysis of Data for Probe 4
World of Practice Items

	Frequency by Groups	
Probe 4	Reading Readiness	Emergent Literacy
Reading Readiness	26 (62%)	16 (38%)
Emergent Literacy	21 (27%)	58 (73%)
Chi Square Analysis		
Degrees of Freedom	2	
Chi Square	14.40	
Significance	.0001	

On probe # 4, designated as a reading readiness practice, the emergent literacy group reported that twenty-seven percent (27%) used this practice, while sixty-two percent (62%) of the reading readiness respondents reported using it. Thirty-five percent (35%) more of the reading readiness group reported usage of this practice.

There was a statistically significant difference on probe # 4 between the practices of the two groups. There were 2 degrees of freedom and the Chi Square was 14.40. The level of significance was .0001. See Table 25-4 for further information.

On probe # 5, designated as a reading readiness practice, the emergent literacy group reported that thirty-seven percent (37%) used this practice, while fifty-two percent (52%) of the reading readiness respondents reported using it. Fifteen percent (15%) more of the reading readiness group reported usage of this practice.

Probe # 5. I assess reading by assessing isolated skills.

Table 25-5

Analysis of Data for Probe 5
World of Practice Items

	Frequency by Groups	
Probe 5	Reading Readiness	Emergent Literacy
Reading Readiness	22 (52%)	20 (48%)
Emergent Literacy	29 (37%)	50 (63%)
Chi Square Analysis		
Degrees of Freedom	2	
Chi Square	2.76	
Significance	.09	

There was not a statistically significant difference on probe # 5 between the practices of the two groups. There were 2 degrees of freedom and the Chi Square was 2.76. The level of significance was .09. See Table 25-5 for further information.

On probe # 6, designated as an emergent literacy practice, the reading readiness group reported that sixty-

four percent (64%) used this practice, while eighty percent (80%) of the emergent literacy respondents reported using it. Sixteen percent (16%) more of the emergent literacy group reported usage of this practice.

Probe # 6. I plan reading lessons using literature, not a basal text.

Table 25-6

Analysis of Data for Probe 6
World of Practice Items

	Frequency by Groups	
Probe 6	Reading Readiness	Emergent Literacy
Reading Readiness	27 (64%)	15 (36%)
Emergent Literacy	63 (80%)	16 (20%)
Chi Square Analysis		
Degrees of Freedom	2	
Chi Square	3.44	
Significance	.06	

There was not a statistically significant difference on probe # 6 between the practices of the two groups. There were 2 degrees of freedom and the Chi Square was 3.44. The level of significance was .06. See Table 25-6 for further information.

On probe # 7, designated as a reading readiness practice, the emergent literacy group reported that sixty percent (60%) used this practice, while seventy-six percent (76%) of the reading readiness respondents reported using

it. Sixteen percent (16%) more of the reading readiness group reported usage of this practice.

Probe # 7. I teach handwriting.

Table 25-7

Analysis of Data for Probe 7
World of Practice Items

	Frequency by Groups	
Probe 7	Reading Readiness	Emergent Literacy
Reading Readiness	32 (76%)	10 (24%)
Emergent Literacy	47 (60%)	32 (40%)
Chi Square Analysis		
Degrees of Freedom	2	
Chi Square	3.37	
Significance	.07	

There was not a statistically significant difference on probe # 7 between the practices of the two groups. There were 2 degrees of freedom and the Chi Square was 3.37. The level of significance was .07. See Table 25-7 for further information.

On probe # 8, designated as a reading readiness practice, the emergent literacy group reported that fifty-one percent (51%) used this practice, while fifty percent (50%) of the reading readiness respondents reported using it. One percent (1%) more of the emergent literacy group reported usage of this practice.

There was not a statistically significant difference on

probe # 8 between the practices of the two groups. There were 2 degrees of freedom and the Chi Square was .00. The level of significance was .95. See Table 25-8 for further information.

Probe # 8. My program practices screening testing.

Table 25-8

Analysis of Data for Probe 8
World of Practice Items

	Frequency by Groups	
Probe 8	Reading Readiness	Emergent Literacy
Reading Readiness	21 (50%)	21 (50%)
Emergent Literacy	40 (51%)	39 (49%)
Chi Square Analysis		
Degrees of Freedom	2	
Chi Square	.00	
Significance	.95	

On probe # 9, designated as an emergent literacy practice, the reading readiness group reported that fifty-seven percent (57%) used this practice, while fifty-nine percent (59%) of the emergent literacy respondents reported using it. Two percent (2%) more of the emergent literacy group reported usage of this practice.Probe # 9. I practice portfolio assessment.

There was not a statistically significant difference on probe # 9 between the practices of the two groups. There were 2 degrees of freedom and the Chi Square was .06. The

Table 25-9

Analysis of Data for Probe 9
World of Practice Items

	Frequency by Groups	
Probe 9	Reading Readiness	Emergent Literacy
Reading Readiness	24 (57%)	18 (43%)
Emergent Literacy	47 (59%)	32 (41%)
Chi Square Analysis		
Degrees of Freedom	2	
Chi Square	.06	
Significance	.80	

Probe # 10. I evaluate literacy during an integrated unit.

Table 25-10

Analysis of Data for Probe 10
World of Practice Items

	Frequency by Groups	
Probe 10	Reading Readiness	Emergent Literacy
Reading Readiness	23 (55%)	19 (45%)
Emergent Literacy	65 (82%)	14 (18%)
Chi Square Analysis		
Degrees of Freedom	2	
Chi Square	10.46	
Significance	.001	

level of significance was .80. See Table 25-9 for further information.

On probe # 10, designated as an emergent literacy practice, the reading readiness group reported that fifty-

five percent (55%) used this practice, while eighty-two percent (82%) of the emergent literacy respondents reported using it. Twenty-seven (27%) more of the emergent literacy group reported usage of this practice.

There was a statistically significant difference on probe # 10 between the practices of the two groups. There were 2 degrees of freedom and the Chi Square was 10.46. The level of significance was .001. See Table 25-10 for further information.

Probe # 11. I teach reading through skills drill.

Table 25-11

Analysis of Data for Probe 11
World of Practice Items

	Frequency by Groups	
Probe 11	Reading Readiness	Emergent Literacy
Reading Readiness	23 (55%)	19 (45%)
Emergent Literacy	16 (20%)	63 (80%)
Chi Square Analysis		
Degrees of Freedom	2	
Chi Square	14.95	
Significance	.0001	

On probe # 11, designated as a reading readiness practice, the emergent literacy group reported that twenty percent (20%) used this practice, while fifty-five percent (55%) of the reading readiness respondents reported using it. Thirty-five percent (35%) more of the reading readiness

group reported usage of this practice.

There was a statistically significant difference on probe # 11 between the practices of the two groups. There were 2 degrees of freedom and the Chi Square was 14.95. The level of significance was .0001. See Table 25-11 for further information.

Probe # 12. I use flashcards to reinforce vocabulary learning.

Table 25-12

Analysis of Data for Probe 12
World of Practice Items

	Frequency by Groups	
Probe 12	Reading Readiness	Emergent Literacy
Reading Readiness	35 (83%)	7 (17%)
Emergent Literacy	27 (34%)	52 (66%)
Chi Square Analysis		
Degrees of Freedom	2	
Chi Square	26.52	
Significance	.0001	

On probe # 12, designated as a reading readiness practice, the emergent literacy group reported that thirty-four percent (34%) used this practice, while eighty-three percent (83%) of the reading readiness respondents reported using it. Forty-nine percent (49%) more of the reading readiness group reported usage of this practice.

There was a statistically significant difference on probe # 12 between the practices of the two groups. There

were 2 degrees of freedom and the Chi Square was 26.52. The level of significance was .0001. See Table 25-12 for further information.

Probe # 13. I normally allow children to use invented spelling.

Table 25-13

Analysis of Data for Probe 13
World of Practice Items

	Frequency by Groups	
Probe 13	Reading Readiness	Emergent Literacy
Reading Readiness	36 (86%)	6 (14%)
Emergent Literacy	70 (87%)	9 (13%)
Chi Square Analysis		
Degrees of Freedom	2	
Chi Square	.21	
Significance	.65	

On probe # 13, designated as an emergent literacy practice, the reading readiness group reported that eighty-seven percent (87%) used this practice, while eighty-six percent (86%) of the emergent literacy respondents reported using it. One percent (1%) more of the emergent literacy group reported usage of this practice.

There was not a statistically significant difference on probe # 13 between the practices of the reading readiness and emergent literacy groups. There were 2 degrees of freedom and the Chi Square was .21. The level of significance was .65. See Table 25-13 for further

information.

Probe # 14. I teach reading using hands-on classroom activities.

Table 25-14

Analysis of Data for Probe 14
World of Practice Items

	Frequency by Groups	
Probe 14	Reading Readiness	Emergent Literacy
Reading Readiness	39 (93%)	3 (7%)
Emergent Literacy	77 (97%)	2 (3%)
Chi Square Analysis		
Degrees of Freedom	2	
Chi Square	1.47	
Significance	.65	

On probe # 14, designated as an emergent literacy practice, the reading readiness group reported that ninety-seven percent (97%) used this practice, while ninety-three percent (93%) of the emergent literacy respondents reported using it. Four percent (4%) more of the emergent literacy group reported usage of this practice.

There was not a statistically significant difference on probe # 14 between the practices of the two groups. There were 2 degrees of freedom and the Chi Square was 1.47. The level of significance was 1.47. See Table 25-14 for further information.

On probe # 15, designated as a reading readiness practice, the emergent literacy group reported that twenty

percent (20%) used this practice, while sixty percent (60%) of the reading readiness respondents reported using it. Forty percent (40%) more of the reading readiness group reported usage of this practice.

Probe # 15. My students practice Round Robin reading.

Table 25-15

Analysis of Data for Probe 15
World of Practice Items

	Frequency by Groups	
Probe 15	Reading Readiness	Emergent Literacy
Reading Readiness	25 (60%)	17 (40%)
Emergent Literacy	16 (20%)	63 (80%)
Chi Square Analysis		
Degrees of Freedom	2	
Chi Square	18.88	
Significance	.0001	

There was a statistically significant difference on probe # 15 between the practices of the two groups. There were 2 degrees of freedom and the Chi Square was 18.88. The level of significance was .0001. See Table 25-15 for further information.

On probe # 16, designated as an emergent literacy practice, the reading readiness group reported that eighty-one percent (81%) used this practice, while ninety percent (90%) of the emergent literacy respondents reported using it. Nine percent (9%) more of the emergent literacy group

reported usage of this practice.

Probe # 16. I use predictable books.

Table 25-16

Analysis of Data for Probe 16
World of Practice Items

	Frequency by Groups	
Probe 16	Reading Readiness	Emergent Literacy
Reading Readiness	34 (81%)	8 (19%)
Emergent Literacy	71 (90%)	8 (10%)
Chi Square Analysis		
Degrees of Freedom	2	
Chi Square	1.9	
Significance	.17	

There was not a statistically significant difference on probe # 16 between the practices of the two groups. There were 2 degrees of freedom and the Chi Square was 1.9. The level of significance was .17. See Table 25-16 for further information.

On probe # 17, designated as a reading readiness practice, the emergent literacy group reported that twenty-five percent (25%) used this practice, while sixty percent (60%) of the reading readiness respondents reported using it. Thirty-five percent (35%) more of the reading readiness group reported usage of this practice.

There was a statistically significant difference on probe # 17 between the practices of the two groups. There

were 2 degrees of freedom and the Chi Square was 13.73. The level of significance was .0002. See Table 25-17 for further information.

Probe # 17. I teach with a basal text.

Table 25-17

Analysis of Data for Probe 17
World of Practice Items

	Frequency by Groups	
Probe 17	Reading Readiness	Emergent Literacy
Reading Readiness	25 (60%)	17 (40%)
Emergent Literacy	20 (25%)	59 (75%)
Chi Square Analysis		
Degrees of Freedom	2	
Chi Square	13.73	
Significance	.0002	

On probe # 18, designated as an emergent literacy practice, the reading readiness group reported that seventy-nine percent (79%) used this practice, while eighty-seven percent (87%) of the emergent literacy respondents reported using it. Eight percent (8%) more of the emergent literacy group reported usage of this practice.Probe # 18. I plan and implement integrated units.

There was not a statistically significant difference on probe # 18 between the practices of the two groups. There were 2 degrees of freedom and the Chi Square was 2.18. The level of significance was .14. See Table 25-18 for further

Table 25-18

Analysis of Data for Probe 18
World of Practice Items

	Frequency by Groups	
Probe 18	Reading Readiness	Emergent Literacy
Reading Readiness	33 (79%)	9 (21%)
Emergent Literacy	70 (87%)	9 (13%)
Chi Square Analysis		
Degrees of Freedom	2	
Chi Square	2.18	
Significance	.14	

information.

Although there was no statistically significant difference between the total responses of the groups, seven of the eighteen registered a significant difference as individual items. Probes two, four, ten, eleven, twelve, fifteen, and seventeen all registered a statistically significant difference between the practices of the reading readiness and emergent literacy groups.

Seventeen of the eighteen probes on the practices section of the survey were utilized more often by the group of respondents corresponding to the philosophy identified with the probe. A higher percentage of the emergent literacy respondents than reading readiness respondents reported utilizing the emergent literacy practices on all nine of the emergent literacy probes. A higher percentage of the reading readiness respondents than emergent literacy

respondents reported utilizing the reading readiness practices on eight of the nine of the reading readiness probes.

There was a single reading readiness probe in which the emergent literacy respondents reported one percentage point (1%) higher utility than did the reading readiness group. This was probe number eight, "My program practices screening testing." These data can be found summarized in Table 26.

This information was treated further with Chi Square to ascertain significance.

The Emergent Literacy group indicated a positive response in the world of practice portion of the questionnaire to fifty-one percent (51%) of the emergent literacy practices listed, and forty-nine percent (49%) reading readiness practices listed. The Reading Readiness group indicated a positive response in the world of practice portion of the questionnaire to sixty-eight percent (68%) of the emergent literacy practices listed, and thirty-two percent (32%) of the reading readiness practices listed. There were two degrees of freedom with a Chi Square of .06. There was no significant difference between the emergent literacy and the reading readiness groups in their early childhood practices. There was no statistically significant difference between the practices of the two groups as the level of significance was .80. See Table 27 for further information.

Table 26

Utilization of Practices in Early Childhood Education

Practice	Reading Readiness Percentage Using Practice	Emergent Literacy Percentage Using Practice
1. I conduct literature circles.	48	53
2. I teach reading through phonics lessons.	76	43
3. I teach process writing (drafting, editing, publishing, conferencing).	31	44
4. I use workbooks to reinforce reading skills.	62	27
5. I assess reading by assessing isolated skills.	52	37
6. I plan reading lessons using literature, not a basal text.	64	80
7. I teach handwriting.	76	60
8. My program practices screening testing.	50	51
9. I practice portfolio assessment.	57	59

Table 26

Utilization of Practices in Early Childhood Education (Continued)

Practice	Reading Readiness Percentage Using Practice	Emergent Literacy Percentage Using Practice
10. I evaluate literacy during an integrated unit.	55	82
11. I teach reading through skills drill.	55	20
12. I use flashcards to reinforce vocabulary learning.	83	34
13. I normally allow children to use invented spelling.	86	87
14. I teach reading using hands-on classroom activities.	93	97
15. My students practice Round Robin reading.	60	20
16. I use predictable books.	81	90
17. I teach with a basal text.	60	25
18. I plan and implement integrated units.	79	87

Table 27

Analysis of Data for Positive Responses
World of Practice Items

	Frequency by Groups	
Items Identified	Reading Readiness	Emergent Literacy
Reading Readiness	250 (32%)	241 (49%)
Emergent Literacy	540 (68%)	249 (51%)
Chi Square Analysis		
Degrees of Freedom	2	
Chi Square	.06	
Significance	.80	

The Emergent Literacy group indicated a negative response in the world of practice portion of the questionnaire to forty-nine percent (49%) of the emergent literacy practices listed, and fifty-two percent (52%) of the reading readiness practices listed. The Reading Readiness group indicated a negative response in the world of practice portion of the questionnaire to twenty-seven percent (27%) of the emergent literacy practices listed, and seventy-three percent (73%) of the reading readiness practices listed. There were two degrees of freedom with a Chi Square of .14. There was no significant difference between the emergent literacy and the reading readiness early childhood educators in their early childhood practices, as level of significance registered at .71. See Table 28 for further information.

Table 28

Analysis of Data for Negative Responses
World of Practice Items

	Frequency by Groups	
Items Identified	Reading Readiness	Emergent Literacy
Reading Readiness	461 (73%)	137 (52%)
Emergent Literacy	172 (27%)	129 (49%)
Chi Square Analysis		
Degrees of Freedom	2	
Chi Square	.14	
Significance	.71	

Chapter 5

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Study

This body of research was designed to ascertain the relationships, if any, among beliefs, knowledge bases, and practices in early literacy assessment of early childhood educators. The practitioners were systematically selected from early childhood educators working with children in Head Start, kindergarten, and first grade in the public schools in the state of Indiana. The survey instrument was designed to solicit demographic information and to allow the practitioners an opportunity to rank a series of statements on a Likert Scale concerning their beliefs, knowledge bases, and practices in early literacy assessment.

Discussion of the Demographic Data about Early Childhood Practitioners

The demographic portion of the survey instrument was designed to obtain a wide variety of information about the selected early childhood practitioners. Practitioners were to identify their philosophical base, either reading

readiness or emergent literacy, as well as to respond to seventeen different probes. These data were collated and examined.

Early Childhood Practitioners' Philosophical Base

Of the two hundred and sixteen early childhood practitioners surveyed, one hundred and twenty-one responded, with a return rate of 56.02%. Forty-two respondents, or 34.71%, of the total respondents, indicated that reading readiness was their primary literacy philosophy. The remaining seventy-nine respondents (64.29%) indicated that emergent literacy was their primary literacy philosophy.

Education Levels of Early Childhood Practitioners

Thirty-seven, or 88.09%, of the reading readiness respondents had a college degree. Sixty-seven, or 84.81%, of the emergent literacy respondents hold a college degree. No respondent had a doctorate. The two groups held comparable levels of education. Therefore, differences in beliefs, knowledge bases, and practices were not due to extreme disparity in levels of education.

Time Frame of Professional Study of Early Childhood Practitioners

Twenty-five, or 59.53%, of the reading readiness respondents studied in the 1980s and 1990s, while the remaining twenty-seven, or 40.48%, reading readiness

respondents studied during the 1960s and 1970s. Fifty-five, or 69.32%, of the emergent literacy practitioners studied in the 1980s and 1990s, while the remaining twenty-four, or 30.38%, studied prior to this time. While there was not an extreme difference between the percentage of educators in the two philosophies who were educated in the 1980s and 1990s, the emergent literacy educators were slightly more current in their studies.

Attendance at Early Literacy Workshops by Early Childhood Practitioners

Thirty-five, or 83.33%, of the reading readiness respondents indicated they had attended an early literacy workshop during the past two years while the remaining seven, or 16.66%, of the reading readiness respondents indicated that their last attendance at an early literacy workshop was five or more years ago. Sixty-eight, or 86.07%, of the emergent literacy respondents indicated having attended an early literacy workshop during the past two years, while the remaining ten, or 12.67%, of the emergent literacy respondents indicated that their last attendance at an early literacy workshop was five or more years ago. The emergent literacy and reading readiness educators displayed approximately the same degree of commitment to currency in the field.

Area/s of Study by Early Childhood Practitioners

Thirty-five, or 83.33%, of the reading readiness

respondents indicated that they were elementary education majors, while fifty-three, or 67.09%, of the emergent literacy respondents were elementary education majors. The remaining respondents in both groups indicated training in other areas.

Present Position of Early Childhood Practitioners

Thirty-one, or 73.81%, of the reading readiness respondents indicated that they were teachers, while the remaining eleven, or 26.18%, held positions as teacher's aides or other educational positions. Fifty-seven, or 72.15%, of the emergent literacy respondents indicated they were teachers, while the remaining twenty-one, or 26.59%, held positions as teacher's aides or other educational positions. The emergent literacy and reading readiness educators displayed approximately the same percentage of educators who were teachers, as opposed to support staff.

Professional Experience of Early Childhood Practitioners

Twenty-four, or 57.14%, of the reading readiness respondents had five or less years of experience as an early childhood educator, while the remaining eighteen, or 42.85%, reading readiness respondents had six or more years of experience in early childhood education. Twenty-eight, or 35.45%, of the emergent literacy respondents had five or less years experience as an early childhood educator, while the remaining fifty-one, or 64.56%, had six or more years of

experience in early childhood education. The emergent literacy group, as a whole, indicated much more experience as early childhood educators.

Age Range in Early Childhood Programs

Thirty-five, or 83.34%, of the reading readiness respondents indicated that the age range of the children in their early childhood programs was between ages four and seven, while the remaining two, or 4.76%, respondents indicated teaching children above or below the ages of four and seven. Sixty-nine, or 87.33%, of the emergent literacy respondents indicated that the age range of the children in their early childhood programs was between ages four and seven while the remaining ten, or 12.66%, respondents indicated teaching children above or below the ages of four and seven. The emergent literacy and reading readiness programs served developmentally similar groups of children, indicating that similar teaching and assessment methods would be required.

Number of Children in Early Childhood Programs

Twenty-three, or 54.76%, of the reading readiness respondents indicated that there were twenty or less students in their early childhood classrooms, while the remaining nineteen, or 45.42%, reading readiness respondents indicated twenty-one or more in their early childhood classrooms. Fifty-two, or 65.82%, of the emergent literacy

respondents indicated that there were twenty or less students in their early childhood classrooms, while the remaining twenty-seven, or 34.18%, emergent literacy respondents indicated twenty-one or more in their early childhood classrooms.

Ratio of Adults to Children in Early Childhood Programs

Twenty-seven, or 64%, of the reading readiness respondents indicated that there was a ratio of one or more adults to every fifteen children in their early childhood classrooms, while the remaining fifteen, or 36%, reading readiness respondents indicated a ratio of fewer than one adult for every fifteen children in their early childhood classrooms. Forty-six, or 59%, of the emergent literacy respondents indicated that there was a ratio of one or more adults to every fifteen children in their early childhood classrooms, while the remaining thirty-three, or 41%, emergent literacy respondents indicated a ratio of fewer than one adult for every fifteen children in their early childhood classrooms.

Public & Private Early Childhood Programs

Respondents from both groups indicated that better than ninety-five percent (95%) of their programs were in the public sector.

Curriculum in the Early Childhood Programs

Twenty-two, or 52.38%, of the reading readiness

respondents indicated that their curriculum was pre-determined, while only twenty-seven, or 34.18%, of the emergent literacy group indicated that their curriculum was pre-determined. Approximately 65% of the emergent literacy educators were able to choose their own curriculum. The set of responses which concern practices indicate that both groups strongly tend to utilize practices which reflect their stated philosophy. Therefore, when allowed to choose a curriculum, emergent literacy educators choose an emergent literacy curriculum.

Daily Duration of Early Childhood Programs

Respondents from both groups indicated that better than ninety percent (90%) of their programs were held daily.

Instructional time on Literacy Events in Early Childhood Programs

Twenty-eight, or 67%, of the reading readiness respondents indicated that fifty percent (50%) or better of the instructional time is spent on literacy events during instructional time, while the remaining fourteen, or 33%, indicated that they spent less that fifty per cent of the instructional time on literacy events. Fifty-one, or 65%, of the emergent literacy respondents indicated that fifty percent (50%) or better of the instructional time is spent on literacy events during instructional time, while the remaining twenty-eight, or 35%, indicated that they spent less that fifty per cent (50%) of the instructional time on

literacy events. All of the early childhood educators spent over 65% of their instructional time on literacy events. This indicates that the groups possess a similar sense of commitment to the importance of literacy learning.

Usage of Assessment or Screening Instruments in Early Childhood Programs

Twenty-four, or 57%, of the reading readiness respondents indicated that they did not use assessment or screening instruments in their early childhood programs. Thirty-seven, or 47%, of the emergent literacy respondents indicated that they did not use assessment or screening instruments in their early childhood programs. Forty percent (40%) or more of the respondents in both groups indicated that they did use assessment or screening instruments. Assessment or screening instruments used were varied in both groups which used them.

Location of Early Childhood Programs

Nineteen, or 45%, of the reading readiness respondents indicated that their programs were in rural areas, while the remaining twenty-three, or 55%, indicated that their programs were in urban, inner city, or suburban areas. Thirty-nine, or 49%, of the emergent literacy respondents indicated that their programs were in rural areas while the remaining forty, or 51%, indicated that their programs were in urban, inner city or suburban areas.

Population of Community with Early Childhood Program

Thirty-two, or 76%, of the reading readiness respondents indicated that their programs were established in communities between 1,000 and 50,000, while the remaining ten, or 24%, respondents indicated that their programs were in communities smaller than 1,000 or in communities larger than 50,000. Fifty-seven, or 72%, of the emergent literacy respondents indicated that their programs were established in communities between 1,000 and 50,000 while the remaining twenty-two, or 28%, respondents indicated that their programs were in communities smaller than 1,000 or in communities larger than 50,000.

Beliefs, Knowledge Bases, and Practices in Early Literacy Assessment of Early Childhood Practitioners

The remaining four portions of the survey instrument were designed to determine to what extent, if any, the differences in beliefs, knowledge bases, and practices in early literacy assessment between the reading readiness practitioners and the emergent literacy practitioners existed. Practitioners ranked a series of statements on a Likert Scale concerning their beliefs, identified knowledge base terms and theorists, and responded positively or negatively about practices they did or did not use in early literacy assessment. The results of the study were analyzed and examined. The conclusions drawn from the analysis of these data are divided among the following sections on

beliefs, knowledge bases, and practices.

Discussion of Beliefs about Early Childhood Literacy

The Likert portion of the questionnaire asked the respondents to rate twenty probes concerning their beliefs about early childhood literacy and its assessment. The purpose was to determine if there was a significant difference in beliefs between reading readiness practitioners and emergent literacy practitioners.

It was found by analysis there was not a significant difference of beliefs on all probes; however, there was a significant difference, at the .05 level, on thirteen of the twenty beliefs probes. The twenty beliefs probes have been divided, for purposes of analysis, into four categories: (1) instruction and assessment of literacy through isolated skills; (2) methods of assessing comprehension; (3) methods of assessing literacy development; (4) effective approaches to literacy instruction.

Instruction and Assessment of Literacy through Isolated Skills

Of the twenty beliefs probes, eight concentrated on instruction and assessment of isolated skills. These probes, and the conclusions drawn from them, are as follows:

> Probe # 1. An important way to assess literacy is to have the child verbalize phonics rules.

This probe showed a statistical difference at the .05 level of significance between the reading readiness and

emergent literacy groups. From these data, it may be concluded that reading readiness educators viewed verbalizing phonics rules as necessary, while emergent literacy educators did not hold this belief. Since verbalizing phonics rules is clearly an isolated skill, it is appropriate that proponents of reading readiness, an isolated skills based approach, would utilize this practice. It is equally logical that emergent literacy teachers would avoid this practice, since their philosophy does not promote isolated skills.

Probe # 3. Initial assessment of beginning readers should focus on letter knowledge.

This probe showed a statistical difference at the .05 level of significance between the reading readiness and emergent literacy groups. From these data, it may be concluded that reading readiness educators viewed assessing letter knowledge in beginning readers as necessary, while emergent literacy educators did not hold this belief. Since knowledge of individual alphabet letters is clearly an isolated skill, it is appropriate that proponents of reading readiness, an isolated skills based approach, would utilize this practice. It is equally logical that emergent literacy teachers would avoid this practice, since their philosophy does not promote isolated skills.

Probe # 10. Correct recitation of the alphabet is essential to learning to read.

This probe showed a statistical difference at the .05

level of significance between the reading readiness and emergent literacy groups. From these data, it may be concluded that reading readiness educators viewed correctly reciting the alphabet as necessary to literacy acquisition, while emergent literacy educators did not hold this belief. Since recitation of the alphabet is clearly an isolated skill, it is appropriate that proponents of reading readiness, an isolated skills based approach, would utilize this practice. It is equally logical that emergent literacy teachers would avoid this practice, since their philosophy does not promote isolated skills.

> Probe # 12. Until a child can spell accurately, the teacher should always correct the student's spelling.

This probe showed a statistical difference at the .05 level of significance between the reading readiness and emergent literacy groups. From these data, it may be concluded that reading readiness educators viewed correcting any inaccurate spellings as necessary, while emergent literacy educators did not hold this belief. Since correcting a child's spelling involves teaching spelling as an isolated skill, it is appropriate that proponents of reading readiness, an isolated skills based approach, would utilize this practice. It is equally logical that emergent literacy teachers would avoid this practice, since their philosophy does not promote isolated skills.

> Probe # 15. Children's first lessons with reading should focus on letters and sounds.

This probe showed a statistical difference at the .05 level of significance between the reading readiness and emergent literacy groups. From these data, it may be concluded that reading readiness educators viewed focusing on teaching letters and sounds as necessary, while emergent literacy educators did not hold this belief. Since focusing literacy instruction on individual letters and sounds is an isolated skill, it is appropriate that proponents of reading readiness, an isolated skills based approach, would utilize this practice. It is equally logical that emergent literacy teachers would avoid this practice, since their philosophy does not promote isolated skills.

Probe # 16. Invented spelling is an important stage in children's writing progress.

This probe showed no statistical difference at the .05 level of significance between the reading readiness and emergent literacy groups. From these data, it may be concluded that both emergent literacy educators and reading readiness educators viewed invented spelling as an important stage in children's writing progress. This seems to contradict the findings of probe #12. Invented spelling has been closely tied to the emergent literacy philosophy, yet it was encouraged by both groups. Probe #12, however, indicates how the teacher responds to the invented spelling; in this, the emergent literacy and reading readiness respondents differed.

Probe # 18. Young readers' knowledge of new vocabulary words does not need to be assessed before they read a story.

This probe showed a statistical difference at the .05 level of significance between the reading readiness and emergent literacy groups. From these data, it may be concluded that reading readiness educators viewed assessing readers' knowledge of new vocabulary words as necessary, while emergent literacy educators did not hold this belief. Focusing literacy instruction on introducing and assessing unknown vocabulary words is an isolated skill, it is appropriate that proponents of reading readiness, an isolated skills based approach, would utilize this practice. It is equally logical that emergent literacy teachers would avoid this practice, since their philosophy does not promote isolated skills.

Probe # 19. The child's recognition of alphabet letters is essential in determining literacy development.

This probe showed a statistical difference at the .05 level of significance between the reading readiness and emergent literacy groups. From these data, it may be concluded that reading readiness educators viewed the recognition of alphabet letters as necessary, while emergent literacy educators did not hold this belief. Since focusing literacy instruction on recognition of individual alphabet letters is an isolated skill, it is appropriate that proponents of reading readiness, an isolated skills

based approach, would utilize this practice. It is equally logical that emergent literacy teachers would avoid this practice, since their philosophy does not promote isolated skills.

Of the eight probes concerning isolated skills, seven showed a statistical difference at the .05 level of significance between the reading readiness and emergent literacy groups. Only probe sixteen did not register a significant difference. From these data, it may be concluded that emergent literacy educators and reading readiness educators consistently, almost unilaterally, held different beliefs concerning instruction and assessment of isolated skills. However, it may also be concluded from these results that both reading readiness educators and emergent literacy educators valued invented spelling as an important stage in writing development.

It may be concluded from these results that reading readiness educators value phonics rules, correcting inaccurate spelling, teaching and reciting letter names and sounds, and assessing new vocabulary as it is introduced. It may also be concluded that emergent literacy educators do not value these elements of literacy instruction.

It may be concluded that these probes accurately measured what they were developed to measure. Consequently, These probes should be recommended for use by early childhood educators who wish to identify their own early

literacy orientations, or for use by professors who wish to help students identify and discuss the importance of belief systems as they impact practice.

Methods of Assessing Comprehension

Of the twenty beliefs probes, four concentrated on methods of assessing comprehension. These probes, and the conclusions drawn from them, are as follows:

> Probe # 2. Story retelling is an important method for assessing comprehension.

This probe showed no statistical difference at the .05 level of significance between the reading readiness and emergent literacy groups. From these data, it may be concluded that both emergent literacy educators and reading readiness educators viewed story retelling as an important method of assessing comprehension.

> Probe # 4. Oral sequencing of story events is an essential method of assessing literacy.

This probe showed no statistical difference at the .05 level of significance between the reading readiness and emergent literacy groups. From these data, it may be concluded that both emergent literacy educators and reading readiness educators viewed oral sequencing of story events as an important method of assessing comprehension.

> Probe # 6. Directed listening/reading activities that involve interpretive thinking are appropriate for small group assessment.

This probe showed no statistical difference at the .05 level of significance between the reading readiness and

emergent literacy groups. From these data, it may be concluded that both emergent literacy educators and reading readiness educators viewed directed listening/reading activities that involve interpretive thinking as an important method of assessing comprehension.

Probe # 11. The child's attempted reading of self-selected books is appropriate for ongoing assessment of reading progress.

This probe showed a statistical difference at the .05 level of significance between the reading readiness and emergent literacy groups. From these data, it may be concluded that emergent literacy educators viewed a child's attempted reading of self-selected books as an important method of assessing comprehension, and reading readiness educators did not share this belief.

Of the four probes concerning methods of assessing comprehension, one showed a statistical difference at the .05 level of significance between the reading readiness and emergent literacy groups. From these data, it may be concluded that emergent literacy educators and reading readiness educators held similar beliefs concerning methods of assessing comprehension.

Methods of Assessing Literacy Development

Of the twenty beliefs probes, six concentrated on methods of assessing literacy development. These probes, and the conclusions drawn from them, are as follows:

Probe # 5. Children's memorization of poems and

stories is an important support of reading progress.

This probe showed no statistical difference at the .05 level of significance between the reading readiness and emergent literacy groups. From these data, it may be concluded that both emergent literacy educators and reading readiness educators viewed children's memorization of stories and poems as an important method of assessing literacy development.

Probe # 7. In an integrated curriculum, literacy can be assessed through any subject.

This probe showed a statistical difference at the .05 level of significance between the reading readiness and emergent literacy groups. From these data, it may be concluded that emergent literacy educators viewed assessing literacy development through an integrated curriculum as an important method, while reading readiness educators did not hold this belief. In this practice, the reading readiness educators again showed adherence to the belief system of the readiness approach.

Reading readiness is essentially based on skills which are taught in isolation. Usually, this is accomplished through a non-integrated curriculum. Isolated skills are usually taught in isolated subjects. Therefore, reading readiness teachers are far less likely to assess literacy in an integrated curriculum.

Probe # 8. Children's early drawings are an important step toward writing.

This probe showed no statistical difference at the .05 level of significance between the reading readiness and emergent literacy groups. From these data, it may be concluded that both emergent literacy educators and reading readiness educators view children's early drawings as an important criteria for assessing writing development.

Probe # 13. Reader's theater and author's circles are effective ways to assess a child's literacy growth.

This probe showed no statistical difference at the .05 level of significance between the reading readiness and emergent literacy groups. From these data, it may be concluded that both emergent literacy educators and reading readiness educators viewed reader's theater and author's circles as important methods of assessing literacy development.

Probe # 14. Standardized testing is an extremely appropriate way to determine early literacy development.

This probe showed a statistical difference at the .05 level of significance between the reading readiness and emergent literacy groups. From these data, it may be concluded that reading readiness educators viewed standardized testing as an appropriate way to determine early literacy development, while emergent literacy educators did not hold this belief.

Emergent literacy educators are taught to espouse authentic assessment, rather than standardized testing. Reading readiness educators are more comfortable with

standardized testing of early literacy skills because the instruments are designed to quantify knowledge of isolated skills. Therefore, based on the practitioners' adherence to the belief system, the statistically significant difference was expected.

> Probe # 17. Correct oral reading is a necessary component of a young child's literacy that needs to be assessed.

This probe showed a statistical difference at the .05 level of significance between the reading readiness and emergent literacy groups. From these data, it may be concluded that reading readiness educators viewed correct oral reading as an appropriate way to determine early literacy development, while emergent literacy educators did not hold this belief.

Of the six probes concerning methods of assessing literacy development, only three showed a statistical difference at the .05 level of significance between the reading readiness and emergent literacy groups. Probes five, eight, and thirteen did not register a significant difference, while probes seven, fourteen, and seventeen did. From these data, it may be concluded that the two groups of educators held different beliefs concerning assessing literacy through an integrated curriculum, assessing literacy through standardized testing, and correct oral reading. It may be further concluded that emergent literacy educators and reading readiness educators held similar

beliefs concerning the importance of children memorizing poems and stories, the importance of children's early drawings, the effectiveness of reader's theater and author's circles as ways to assess children's literacy growth, even though each of these beliefs is identified with emergent literacy.

Effective Approaches to Literacy Instruction

Of the twenty beliefs probes, two concentrated on effective approaches to literacy instruction. These probes, and the conclusions drawn from them, are as follows:

> Probe # 9. Children learn to read best when ability grouped.

This probe showed a statistical difference at the .05 level of significance between the reading readiness and emergent literacy groups. From these data, it may be concluded that reading readiness educators believed that children most effectively learn to read when ability grouped, while reading readiness educators did not hold this belief.

Ability grouping is identified with teaching graduated, controlled vocabulary and content from a basal text. These concepts are closely related to the practices of reading readiness teachers, and far removed from the tenets of emergent literacy. Therefore, the statistical difference in the beliefs of the two groups was to be expected.

> Probe # 20. It is important to keep subject areas distinct and separate for purposes of instruction and

assessment.

This probe showed a statistical difference at the .05 level of significance between the reading readiness and emergent literacy groups. From these data, it may be concluded that reading readiness educators believed that children most effectively learn to read when subject areas are distinct and kept separate, while emergent literacy educators did not hold this belief.

From these data, it may be concluded that emergent literacy educators and reading readiness educators consistently held different beliefs concerning effective approaches to literacy instruction. Based on the twenty beliefs probes of this survey, there was found to be a significant difference in total beliefs between the two groups at the .02 level of significance. Therefore, it may be concluded that the two populations did report holding beliefs which matched their declared philosophies.

Discussion of Knowledge Base -- Early Childhood Terms

The knowledge base section of the questionnaire which concerned early literacy terms asked the respondents to identify terms about early childhood literacy with which they were familiar. The purpose was to determine if a significant difference in the knowledge of terms between the whole groups of reading readiness respondents and the emergent literacy respondents existed.

The data were compared through the percentages of

respondents who declared familiarity with the given terms. These results, reported with the results grouped into clusters of ten percentage points, follow.

Of the emergent literacy respondents, 90-100% reported being familiar with the following knowledge base terms: reading readiness, phonics, whole language, big books, sight words, and prefixes/suffixes.

Of the reading readiness respondents, 90-100% reported being familiar with the following knowledge base terms: reading readiness, phonics, big books, sight words, and prefixes/suffixes.

Of the emergent literacy respondents, 80-89% reported being familiar with the following knowledge base terms: emergent literacy, portfolio assessment, predictable books, invented spelling, visual discrimination, auditory discrimination, integrated curriculum, and basal text.

Of the reading readiness respondents, 80-89% reported being familiar with the following knowledge base terms: whole language, diphthong, syntax, invented spelling, and basal text.

Of the emergent literacy respondents, 70-79% reported being familiar with the following knowledge base term: diphthong.

Of the reading readiness respondents, 70-79% reported being familiar with the following knowledge base terms: predictable books, digraph, visual discrimination, auditory

discrimination, syllabication, and round robin reading.

Of the emergent literacy respondents, 60-69% reported being familiar with the following knowledge base terms: writing conferences, holistic reading instruction, syntax, semantic map/web, word configuration, print-rich environment, digraph, syllabication, and round robin reading.

Of the reading readiness respondents, 60-69% reported being familiar with the following knowledge base terms: emergent literacy, portfolio assessment, structural analysis, semantic map/web, word configuration, and integrated curriculum.

Of the emergent literacy respondents, 50-59% reported being familiar with the following knowledge base terms: structural analysis, environmental print, and print awareness.

Of the reading readiness respondents, 50-59% reported being familiar with the following knowledge base terms: holistic reading instruction, subskills, and print awareness.

Of the emergent literacy respondents, 40-49% reported being familiar with the following knowledge base term: subskills.

Of the reading readiness respondents, 40-49% reported being familiar with the following knowledge base terms: reading recovery, writing conferences, and print-rich

environment.

Of the emergent literacy respondents, 30-39% reported being familiar with the following knowledge base term: reading recovery.

Of the reading readiness respondents, 30-39% reported being familiar with the following knowledge base term: environmental print.

Of the emergent literacy respondents, 20-29% reported being familiar with the following knowledge base term: authentic literacy instruction.

No responses from the reading readiness group fell into the 20-29% range.

No responses from the emergent literacy fell into the 1-19% level.

Of the reading readiness respondents, 1-19% reported being familiar with the following knowledge base term: authentic literacy assessment.

On the Knowledge Base Terms section of the survey, it was found through statistical analysis that there was no significant difference between the two groups in their familiarity with early childhood terms. The level of significance was .97. Nevertheless, the degree of consistency in response shown by each group should be noted.

There were fifteen terms identified as reading readiness, and fifteen terms identified as emergent literacy. For ten of the fifteen reading readiness terms,

the reading readiness respondents reported a higher percentage of knowledge than the emergent literacy group. On one term, sight words, the percentage of knowledge registered exactly even for both groups. On the remaining four terms, phonics, visual discrimination, auditory discrimination, and prefixes/suffixes, the emergent literacy respondents registered a greater percentage of knowledge.

For twelve of the fifteen emergent literacy terms, the emergent literacy respondents reported a higher percentage of knowledge than the reading readiness group. On one term, print awareness, the percentage of knowledge registered exactly even for both groups. On the remaining two terms, reading recovery and semantic map/web, the reading readiness respondents registered a greater percentage of knowledge.

From these data, it may be concluded that the portion of the survey concerning knowledge base terms is well constructed and registers what it was designed to register. It may be further concluded that this portion of the survey could be helpful to early childhood educators in attempting to ascertain their literacy philosophy.

Discussion of Knowledge Base -- Early Childhood Theorists

The knowledge base section of the questionnaire which concerned theorists asked the respondents to identify early childhood literacy theorists with whom they were familiar.

The purpose was to determine if a significant difference in knowledge of theorists between the whole group of reading readiness respondents and the emergent literacy respondents existed.

These data were compared through the percentages of respondents who declared familiarity with the given early childhood literacy theorists. These results, reported with the results grouped into clusters of ten percentage points, follow.

Of the emergent literacy respondents, 90-100% reported being familiar with the following early childhood literacy theorists: Jean Piaget and Maria Montessori.

Of the reading readiness respondents, 90-100% reported being familiar with the following early childhood literacy theorist: Maria Montessori.

Of the emergent literacy respondents, 80-89% reported being familiar with the following early childhood literacy theorist: John Dewey.

Of the reading readiness respondents, 80-89% reported being familiar with the following early childhood literacy theorist: Jean Piaget.

No responses from the emergent literacy group fell into the 70-79% range.

Of the reading readiness respondents, 70-79% reported being familiar with the following early childhood literacy theorist: John Dewey.

Of the emergent literacy respondents, 60-69% reported being familiar with the following early childhood literacy theorist: Edward Dolch.

Of the reading readiness respondents, 60-69% reported being familiar with the following early childhood literacy theorist: Edward Dolch.

No responses from the emergent literacy group fell into the 50-59% range.

No responses from the reading readiness group fell into the 50-59% range.

No responses from the emergent literacy group fell into the 40-49% range.

No responses from the reading readiness group fell into the 40-49% range.

Of the emergent literacy respondents, 30-39% reported being familiar with the following early childhood literacy theorist: Dorothy Strickland.

No responses from the reading readiness group fell into the 30-39% range.

Of the emergent literacy respondents, 20-29% reported being familiar with the following early childhood literacy theorists: Ken Goodman and Mariane Frostig.

Of the reading readiness respondents, 20-29% reported being familiar with the following early childhood literacy theorists: Mariane Frostig and Dorothy Strickland.

Of the emergent literacy respondents, 10-19% reported

being familiar with the following early childhood literacy theorists: Lev Vygotsky, Marie Clay, Delores Durkin, Jerome Harste, Jean Chall, and Arthur Heilman.

Of the reading readiness respondents, 10-19% reported being familiar with the following early childhood literacy theorists: Lev Vygotsky, Delores Durkin, Jean Chall, and Ken Goodman.

Of the emergent literacy respondents, 0-10% reported being familiar with the following early childhood literacy theorists: Leslie Morrow and Edward Sipay.

Of the reading readiness respondents, 0-10% reported being familiar with the following early childhood literacy theorists: Marie Clay, Jerome Harste, Leslie Morrow, Edward Sipay, and Arthur Heilman.

It was found through analysis that there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups in their familiarity with early childhood literacy theorists. The level of significance was .97.

There were seven theorists identified as reading readiness, and eight theorists identified as emergent literacy. For two of the seven reading readiness theorists, the reading readiness respondents reported a higher percentage of knowledge than the emergent literacy group. On the remaining five theorists, the emergent literacy respondents registered a greater percentage of knowledge.

For seven of the eight emergent literacy theorists,

the emergent literacy respondents reported a higher percentage of knowledge than the reading readiness group. The percentage of knowledge registered exactly even for both groups on one emergent literacy theorist probe. The reading readiness respondents did not register a greater percentage of knowledge on any probes associated with emergent literacy theorists.

On twelve of the fifteen probes on the knowledge base theorists portion of the survey, the emergent literacy respondents reported a higher percentage of knowledge; the reading readiness group only reported a higher percentage of knowledge of two theorists, and one probe, Maria Montessori, elicited an exactly equal percentage of response from both sets of respondents. These results were unexpected.

Assuming that the self-report was accurate, from these data, it may be concluded that the portion of the survey concerning knowledge base theorists is not as well constructed as it might have been and does not register what it was designed to register. It may be further concluded that this portion of the survey should be revised before being recommended for use by early childhood educators in attempting to ascertain their literacy philosophy.

The percentages of affirmative responses to early childhood literacy theorist probes among both emergent literacy and readiness educators are lower overall than might be expected. It may be concluded that more emphasis

in the field of early childhood needs to be placed on theorists.

Discussion of Early Childhood World of Practice

The world of practice portion of the questionnaire asked respondents to respond positively or negatively as to whether or not they implement selected early childhood teaching practices. The purpose was to determine if there was a significant difference in practices between the reading readiness respondents and the emergent literacy respondents.

It was found through analysis that on the practice portion of the survey there was no statistically significant difference between the positive responses of the two groups. The level of significance was .80. Further, it was found through analysis that on the practice portion of the survey there was no statistically significant difference between the negative responses of the two groups. The level of significance was .71.

When each item in the practices portion of the survey was analyzed, seven of the probes showed statistically significant difference between the reading readiness and emergent literacy groups. These probes were numbers two, four, ten, eleven, twelve, fifteen, and seventeen. These probes concerned using phonics lessons, workbooks, integrated units, skills drill, flashcards, Round Robin reading, and basal texts. Each of these practices, with the

exception of using integrated units, is a reading readiness practice. This indicates that the reading readiness educators adhered to their beliefs in maintaining these practices. It is reasonable to assume that these practitioners also retained readiness beliefs by responding negatively to probe # 10, thereby creating the significant difference between the two groups. By not evaluating literacy during an integrated unit, which they report they implement, they are isolating literacy instruction to basal text use. Since the practitioner is using a basal, it must be assumed that literacy instruction must be included in that area of the curriculum.

The responses were converted into percentages, since the size of the two groups of respondents was not equal. The probes, and the percentages of utilization the respondents reported, follow.

Probe # 1. I conduct literature circles.

On this probe, designated as an emergent literacy practice, the reading readiness group reported that 48% used this practice, while 53% of the emergent literacy respondents reported using it. The emergent literacy group reported 5% greater usage of this practice.

This probe did not show a statistical difference at the .05 level of significance between the reading readiness and emergent literacy respondents. Even though this was identified as an emergent literacy practice, approximately

50% of all early childhood respondents used literature circles. However, it is not possible with this probe to determine the nature or conduct of those literature circles. It is possible that the reading readiness teachers would interpret this term to include group instruction using a story such as is found in basal text reading groups.

Probe # 2. I teach reading through phonics lessons.

On this probe, designated as a reading readiness practice, the emergent literacy group reported that 43% used this practice, while 76% of the reading readiness respondents reported using it. The reading readiness group reported 33% greater usage of this practice.

This probe did show a statistical difference at the .05 level of significance between the reading readiness and emergent literacy respondents, as did the responses to probe # 1 on the beliefs section of the survey. These two probes are closely related in content. It may be concluded that reading readiness educators implement phonics lessons, a reading readiness practice, to teach reading more often than emergent literacy educators. This would be consistent with the stated beliefs of both sets of practitioners.

Probe # 3. I teach process writing (drafting, editing, publishing, conferencing).

On this probe, designated as an emergent literacy practice, the reading readiness group reported that 31% used this practice, while 44% of the emergent literacy respondents reported using it. The emergent literacy group

reported 13% greater usage of this practice. Less than 50% of early childhood educators use process writing, a teaching practice closely associated with emergent literacy.

This probe did not show a statistical difference at the .05 level of significance between the reading readiness and emergent literacy respondents. While it could have been expected that a higher percentage of emergent literacy, the question may have been considered inappropriate, in general, by teachers of children aged four and five.

Probe # 4. I use workbooks to reinforce reading skills.

On this probe, designated as a reading readiness practice, the emergent literacy group reported that 27% used this practice, while 62% of the reading readiness respondents reported using it. The reading readiness group reported 35% greater usage of this practice. More than twice as many reading readiness educators used workbooks to reinforce reading skills than emergent literacy educators.

This probe did show a statistical difference at the .05 level of significance between the reading readiness and emergent literacy respondents. Since workbooks are typically used to reinforce isolated skills instruction, a reading readiness practice, it was expected that reading readiness educators would employ this practice more often than emergent literacy educators.

Probe # 5. I assess reading by assessing isolated skills.

On this probe, designated as a reading readiness practice, the emergent literacy group reported that 37% used this practice, while 52% of the reading readiness respondents reported using it. The reading readiness group reported 15% greater usage of this practice. It may be concluded that reading readiness educators, consistent with their declared beliefs, are more likely to assess reading through isolated skills than emergent literacy educators.

This probe did not show a statistical difference at the .05 level of significance between the reading readiness and emergent literacy respondents. Designated as a reading readiness probe, it was unexpected that only 52% of the reading readiness population reported using this practice. It was equally unexpected that 37% of the emergent literacy population would report that they did use this practice. These inconsistencies suggest that this may have been a poorly constructed probe. One possibility is that the respondents misread the intent of the question, perhaps equating reading solely with reading comprehension. Another possibility is that the respondents viewed assessing isolated skills as a separate task from assessing reading.

Probe # 6. I plan reading lessons using literature, not a basal text.

On this probe, designated as an emergent literacy practice, the reading readiness group reported that 64% used this practice, while 80% of the emergent literacy respondents reported using it. The emergent literacy group

reported 16% greater usage of this practice.

This probe did not show a statistical difference at the .05 level of significance between the reading readiness and emergent literacy respondents. More than 60% of all early childhood educators reported planning reading lessons using literature rather than a basal text. This conclusion is in conflict with, and will be further discussed with, the responses to probe # 17.

Probe # 7. I teach handwriting.

On this probe, designated as a reading readiness practice, the emergent literacy group reported that 60% used this practice, while 76% of the reading readiness respondents reported using it. The reading readiness group reported 16% greater usage of this practice.

This probe did not show a statistical difference at the .05 level of significance between the reading readiness and emergent literacy respondents. It may be concluded that the majority of early childhood educators teach handwriting.

It is obvious that somewhere, in some way, children learn handwriting. This probe might have yielded different responses if it had been worded differently. The probe might have included the concept of isolation, of being taught as a separate and distinct subject, which could have made it more clearly a reading readiness probe.

Probe # 8. My program practices screening testing.

On this probe, designated as a reading readiness

practice, the emergent literacy group reported that 51% used this practice, while 50% of the reading readiness respondents reported using it. The emergent literacy group reported 1% greater usage of this practice. This probe did not show a statistical difference at the .05 level of significance between the reading readiness and emergent literacy respondents. Even though screening testing was identified as a reading readiness practice, it is used by about one half of all early childhood programs.

Probe # 14 of the beliefs section of the survey indicated that there was a significant difference between the two populations' attitudes toward standardized testing. All but one of the respondents who reported using screening testing indicated that they used a published screening test. this suggests that, if given a choice, respondents would not practice screening testing nearly as often.

Probe # 9. I practice portfolio assessment.

On this probe, designated as an emergent literacy practice, the reading readiness group reported that 57% used this practice, while 59% of the emergent literacy respondents reported using it. The emergent literacy group reported 2% greater usage of this practice. This probe did not show a statistical difference at the .05 level of significance between the reading readiness and emergent literacy respondents.

It may be concluded that about 60% of all early

childhood educators use portfolio assessment. It is possible that the unexpected percentage of reading readiness educators who practice portfolio assessment reflects a shift in that direction being made by The Indiana Department of Education and accrediting agencies nationwide.

Probe # 10. I evaluate literacy during an integrated unit.

On this probe, designated as an emergent literacy practice, the reading readiness group reported that 55% used this practice, while 82% of the emergent literacy respondents reported using it. The emergent literacy group reported 27% greater usage of this practice.

This probe did show a statistical difference at the .05 level of significance between the reading readiness and emergent literacy respondents, yet the majority of reading readiness educators also use integrated units. While this practice has been associated with emergent literacy, many educators of the reading readiness philosophy have added the use of integrated units to the traditional basal approach in their classrooms.

Probe # 11. I teach reading through skills drill.

On this probe, designated as a reading readiness practice, the emergent literacy group reported that 20% used this practice, while 55% of the reading readiness respondents reported using it. The reading readiness group reported 35% greater usage of this practice.

This probe did show a statistical difference at the .05

level of significance between the reading readiness and emergent literacy respondents. More than twice as many reading readiness educators teach reading through skills drill than emergent literacy educators. This trend is consistent with the beliefs declared by the respondents of both philosophies, since skills drills are isolated in nature, and therefore reading readiness oriented.

Probe # 12. I use flashcards to reinforce vocabulary learning.

On this probe, designated as a reading readiness practice, the emergent literacy group reported that 34% used this practice, while 83% of the reading readiness respondents reported using it. The reading readiness group reported 49% greater usage of this practice.

This probe did show a statistical difference at the .05 level of significance between the reading readiness and emergent literacy respondents. The majority of reading readiness educators use flashcards to reinforce vocabulary learning, but few of the emergent literacy respondents reported doing so. This is consistent with the beliefs declared by the respondents of both philosophies, since flashcards present words out of context, a concept rejected in an emergent literacy approach.

Probe # 13. I normally allow children to use invented spelling.

On this probe, designated as an emergent literacy practice, the reading readiness group reported that 87% used

this practice, while 86% of the emergent literacy respondents reported using it. The emergent literacy group reported only 1% greater usage of this practice.

This probe did not show a statistical difference at the .05 level of significance between the reading readiness and emergent literacy respondents. It may be concluded that, even though it is identified as an emergent literacy practice, most early childhood educators allow children to use invented spelling.

Probe # 14. I teach reading using hands-on classroom activities.

On this probe, designated as an emergent literacy practice, the emergent literacy group reported that 97% used this practice, while 93% of the reading readiness respondents reported using it. The emergent literacy group reported only 4% greater usage of this practice.

This probe did not show a statistical difference at the .05 level of significance between the reading readiness and emergent literacy respondents. Even though this practice is promoted in the emergent literacy philosophy, the vast majority of early childhood educators from both philosophies use hands-on classroom activities. It is clear that in some areas, such as using hands-on activities, the lines of demarcation between the practices of the two groups are disappearing.

Probe # 15. My students practice Round Robin reading.

On this probe, designated as a reading readiness

practice, the emergent literacy group reported that 20% used this practice, while 60% of the reading readiness respondents reported using it. The reading readiness group reported 40% greater usage of this practice. This probe did show a statistical difference at the .05 level of significance between the reading readiness and emergent literacy respondents. Reading readiness educators reported using round robin reading three times more often than emergent literacy educators. This is consistent with the beliefs expressed by both groups.

Probe # 16. I use predictable books.

On this probe, designated as an emergent literacy practice, the reading readiness group reported that 81% used this practice, while 90% of the emergent literacy respondents reported using it. The emergent literacy group reported 9% greater usage of this practice.

This probe did not show a statistical difference at the .05 level of significance between the reading readiness and emergent literacy respondents. While the use of predictable books has been associated with the emergent literacy philosophy, the majority of early childhood educators have begun to use predictable books as part of their programs. It may be concluded that, in reference to predictable books, the reading readiness and emergent literacy philosophies are much less divergent in practice than was thought.

Probe # 17. I teach with a basal text.

On this probe, designated as a reading readiness practice, the emergent literacy group reported that 25% used this practice. Of the reading readiness educators, 60%, or more than twice as many as emergent literacy educators, reported using use a basal text. On probe # 6, however, 64% of these same reading readiness respondents reported planning reading lessons using literature, not basal texts. The lack of agreement between these two findings may reflect the supplemental implementation of integrated units, as is shown in probe # 18, to classrooms which already use basal reading texts. These results may also reflect the fact that thirty-eight respondents reported that the children with whom they work are under the age of five, the age at which children typically are likely to first be introduced to instruction using a basal reading series.

This probe did show a statistical difference at the .05 level of significance between the reading readiness and emergent literacy respondents. This difference was expected, since teaching with a basal text is so closely associated with reading readiness.

Probe # 18. I plan and implement integrated units.

On this probe, designated as an emergent literacy practice, the reading readiness group reported that 79% used this practice, while 87% of the emergent literacy respondents reported using it. The emergent literacy group reported 8% greater usage of this practice.

This probe did not show a statistical difference at the .05 level of significance between the reading readiness and emergent literacy respondents. The majority of early childhood educators plan and implement integrated units, despite the fact that integrated units are a hallmark of emergent literacy. This suggests a shift in pedagogy of the two philosophies toward more common ground in practice.

The responses to probe # 10 of the practices section of the survey demonstrate a dichotomy of attitude. While most early childhood educators indicated using integrated units, there was a definite difference in how they chose to use them. Emergent literacy respondents reported using integrated units to assess literacy; reading readiness educators did not. Probe # 7 of the beliefs section of the survey supported that finding. The educators of the two philosophies differed significantly when asked if they believed that literacy could be assessed though any subject. Emergent literacy respondents believed this practice to be appropriate, but reading readiness respondents did not. They also disagreed on beliefs probe # 20. Reading readiness educators supported keeping subject areas distinct and separate for purposes of instruction and assessment, but emergent literacy respondents did not.

This suggests that, while the practice of using integrated units is quite commonplace, their purpose and use varies greatly in the classrooms of reading readiness and

emergent literacy educators.

Although there was no statistically significant difference between the total responses of the groups, seventeen of the eighteen practices probes were utilized more often by the corresponding group of respondents. On all nine of the emergent literacy probes, a higher percentage of the emergent literacy respondents reported utilizing the emergent literacy practices. On eight of the nine of the reading readiness probes, a higher percentage of the reading readiness respondents reported utilizing the reading readiness practices.

There was a single reading readiness probe on which the emergent literacy respondents reported one percentage point greater utility than did the reading readiness group. This was probe number eight, "My program practices screening testing."

A conclusion may be drawn from these data that, although there was no statistically significant difference between the total responses of the groups, there was a strong tendency for each group to utilize the practices which corresponded to their stated belief, either reading readiness or emergent literacy.

Seven of the eighteen probes yielded a 10% or smaller difference in implementation between the two groups. These probes concerned literature circles, screening testing, portfolio assessment, invented spelling, hands-on

activities, predictable books, and integrated units. Since these probes reflected the greatest amount of commonality of use, it is important to note that six of these probes are identified as emergent literacy. This strongly suggests that the shift in practice between the philosophies is toward emergent literacy practices.

Conclusions

In summarizing the study, three major conclusions were found.

1. There was a statistically significant difference in beliefs between the total responses of early childhood educators who espouse reading readiness and emergent literacy philosophies.
2. There was no statistically significant difference between the knowledge bases of early childhood educators who espouse reading readiness and emergent literacy.
3. There was no statistically significant difference in practice between the total responses of early childhood educators who espouse reading readiness and emergent literacy.

These statements indicate that the practitioners know what tenets constitute their individual belief systems concerning early literacy instruction and assessment. The results show that both groups uphold the differences in beliefs between reading readiness and emergent literacy.

The findings further suggest that the practitioners of the two philosophies possess similar levels of knowledge of both terms and theorists of the field. This suggests, as the demographics validated, that the respondents from both groups held comparable levels of education, received within comparable time frames.

While retaining their espoused beliefs, the practitioners of both philosophies nevertheless are coming closer together in the practices they employ. The reading readiness educators did not maintain the same level of consistency between their statement of beliefs and their statement of practices. This caused the practices section of the survey to show no significant difference between the two groups, when the beliefs section did show a significant difference between the two groups. This indicates that the movement within early childhood literacy instruction and assessment in Indiana is toward emergent literacy practices.

This study is important because it adds an instrument which both preservice and inservice teachers are able to identify their own literacy orientations. This contributes to the present knowledge base of early childhood education. The comparison between the assessed beliefs and assessed practices of the respondents expands the understanding of current practice in the field of early childhood education. These findings can improve instruction of future early childhood practitioners by relating inconsistencies between

beliefs and practices currently found in the field.

There was a statistically significant difference in beliefs between the total responses of early childhood educators who espouse reading readiness and emergent literacy philosophies, but not in their practices. On the beliefs portion of the survey, when analyzed individually, thirteen of the twenty probes, or sixty-five percent (65%), registered a significant difference. On the practices portion of the survey, when analyzed individually, seven of the eighteen probes, or thirty-nine percent (39%), registered a significant difference. This suggests that there is a shift toward emergent literacy practices, regardless of the literacy philosophy of the educator.

This shift may be due, in part, to the amount of professional literature, including materials from professional textbook publishers, which is emphasizing the emergent literacy practices. Journals and periodicals related to early childhood education also promote emergent literacy almost exclusively. In addition, school districts frequently offer professional development inservices which are designed to promote currency in the field; today, currency equates with emergent literacy. Further, any college or university literacy courses which educators would enroll in would be likely to promote emergent literacy. Accrediting agencies may be encouraging schools to adopt practices which are identified with emergent literacy.

Finally, teachers sharing ideas may have influenced other teachers to employ emergent literacy practices.

Recommendations

1. These data concerning the current beliefs, knowledge bases, and practices of early childhood educators should be added to the present conceptual framework in the field of early childhood education through the documentation in this dissertation.
2. The results of this study could be condensed and published in a refereed journal.
3. The survey should be published as an instrument for early childhood educators to identify their beliefs, knowledge bases, and practices concerning early literacy instruction and assessment.
4. These data were gathered from published forms of this survey should be used by post secondary level educators as current information which demonstrates the inconsistencies among the beliefs, knowledge bases, and practices of early childhood educators.
5. Post secondary curriculum should be revised to include additional study of terms and theorists in the field of early childhood education to add requisite knowledge to future early childhood practitioners. Since teachers' beliefs impact

their decision making, it is important that teachers know why they hold certain beliefs and that they are able to support those beliefs by citing scholarly sources for them.

6. A comparison of methods of literacy instruction and assessment used by both groups should be made to gain further understanding of the similarities and differences of the reading readiness and emergent literacy approaches.
7. Post secondary education needs to continue to meet its responsibility to its students to familiarize them with both approaches, since both are currently practiced in the field.
8. A study of the similarities and differences in early childhood literacy assessment methods used by emergent literacy and reading readiness educators needs to be made in order to advance the knowledge of assessment in the field.
9. Since the literacy instruction and assessment practices of the two groups are moving toward emergent literacy, professional development is needed for all early childhood educators to increase currency of knowledge in the field. It is important for educators to know what trends are prevalent at any given time. Currency of knowledge in the field is mandatory for providing

the best education for children possible.

10. **This study should be considered for replication at a later time.**
11. **This study should be considered for expansion to include geographic areas and practitioners outside the state of Indiana.**

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APPENDIX A

Pilot Survey

Early Childhood Practitioners' Demographic Information

Please check the most appropriate response:

What is your highest education level completed?

_____ High School	_____ Bachelors
_____ Certificate	_____ Masters
_____ Associate	_____ Doctorate

What is the time frame of your professional study in Early Childhood Education?

_____ 1950's _____ 1960's _____ 1970's _____ 1980's _____ 1990's	Attended a workshop related to early literacy in the past _____ 1 year or less _____ 2 years _____ 5 years _____ 10 years _____ more than 10 years

What is your area/s of study?

_____ Early Childhood Major _____ Early Childhood Minor _____ Kindergarten Endorsement _____ Elementary Education	_____ Special Education _____ Training or Workshops in Reading Recovery _____ Other [Please specify.] _____

What is your Early Childhood Position and experience?	
Present Position	Number of Years Experience as an Early Childhood Teacher or Aide
_____ Head Start Teacher _____ Head Start Assistant Teacher _____ Head Start Aide _____ Kindergarten Teacher _____ Kindergarten Aide _____ First Grade Teacher _____ First Grade Classroom Aide _____ Other [Please identify position.] _____	_____ First year _____ 2 - 3 _____ 4 - 5 _____ 6 - 10 _____ 11 - 15 _____ 16 or more

Program Description	
1. What is the age range of the children in your early childhood classroom? _____ 3 - 4 _____ 4 - 5 _____ 5 - 6 _____ 6 - 7 _____ other	2. Approximately how many children do you have in your early childhood classroom? _____ 0 - 10 _____ 11 - 20 _____ 21 - 30 _____ other
3. What is the appropriate ratio of adults to children in your classroom? _____ 1 : 5 _____ 1 : 10 _____ 1 : 15 _____ 1 : 20 _____ 1 : 25 _____ 1 : 30 _____ other	4. Is your early childhood program ? _____ private _____ public

Program Description (continued)	
5. Is your curriculum _____ teacher developed _____ pre-determined	6. Does your program run half day _____ or full day _____ ? If full day, do the children attend _____ every day _____ every other day
7. Approximately, what percentage of time per day does your classroom spend involved in literacy events (reading, writing, literature)? _____ 10 _____ 60 _____ 20 _____ 70 _____ 30 _____ 80 _____ 40 _____ 90 _____ 50 _____ 100	8. Are predetermined assessment or screening instruments used in your program? If yes, please check appropriate instrument. _____ Yes _____ No _____ DIAL-R _____ Brigance _____ Caldwell PreSchool _____ Santa Clara Developmental _____ Gesell PreSchool _____ Frostig _____ other
9. Where is your program located? _____ Rural Area _____ Urban Area _____ Inner City _____ Suburban	10. What is the population of the town/city where your program is located? _____ Under 1000 _____ 1000 - 5000 _____ 5000 - 10,000 _____ 10,000 - 50,000 _____ 50,000 - 100,000 _____ over 100,000

Please feel free to add any comments you would like to make about your program. Thanks.

Survey of Early Childhood Practitioners
Regarding Early Literacy Assessment

For the purpose of this survey, Early Literacy Assessment is any appropriate measure to determine a child's literacy development and needs.

SA = Strongly Agree
MA = Moderately Agree
UN = Undecided/No Opinion
MD = Moderately Disagree
SD = Strongly Disagree

Beliefs	SA	MA	UN	MD	SD
1. The most appropriate way to assess literacy is to have the child verbalize phonics rules.					
2. Story retelling is an inappropriate method for assessing comprehension.					
3. Class discussions are appropriate whole group activities for assessing literacy.					
4. Early assessment of literacy should focus on letter knowledge.					
5. Oral sequencing of story events is the most appropriate means to assess literacy.					
6. Children's first lessons with print should focus on letters and sounds.					
7. Directed listening/reading activities that involve interpretive thinking are appropriate for small group assessment.					
8. Reading and writing skills are best measured through standardized testing.					
9. The child's recognition of alphabet letters is essential in determining literacy development.					

Beliefs (continued)	SA	MA	UN	MD	SD
10. Children's early drawings are an important step toward writing.					
11. Children learn to read best when ability grouped.					
12. Correct recitation of the alphabet is essential to learning to read.					
13. The child's attempted reading of favorite storybooks is appropriate for ongoing assessment of reading progress.					
14. Until a child can spell accurately, the teacher should supply the correct spellings for story writing.					
15. Instruction in rules and skills of reading is necessary for adequate literacy development in the young child.					
16. Standardized testing is the most appropriate way to determine early literacy development.					
17. Children's memorization of poems and stories is an important support for reading progress.					
18. The child's re-reading of a story dictated by the group is a good assessment practice.					
19. Small groups are **in**effective for assessing specific skills.					
20. Invented spelling is an important stage in children's writing progress.					

Beliefs (continued)	SA	MA	UN	MD	SD
21. Sight word flashcards provide an appropriate manner to assess literacy development.					
22. Correct oral reading is a necessary component of early literacy that needs to be assessed.					
23. Young readers need to be assessed as to their knowledge of new vocabulary words before they read.					
24. In an integrated curriculum, literacy can be assessed through another subject area.					
25. It is important to keep subject areas distinct and separate for purposes of instruction and assessment.					

Knowledge Base - Terms	
Check the following terms with which you are familiar.	
_____ 1. Reading Recovery	_____ 17. authentic literacy instruction
_____ 2. emergent literacy	_____ 18. print-rich environment
_____ 3. reading readiness	_____ 19. schema
_____ 4. phonics	_____ 20. digraph
_____ 5. whole language	_____ 21. invented spelling
_____ 6. diphthong	_____ 22. visual discrimination
_____ 7. language experience approach	_____ 23. auditory discrimination
_____ 8. retelling of stories	_____ 24. Big Books
_____ 9. writing conferences	_____ 25. sight words
_____ 10. fluency	_____ 26. integrated curriculum
_____ 11. syntax	_____ 27. affixes
_____ 12. semantic map/web	_____ 28. environmental print
_____ 13. advanced organizer	_____ 29. syllabication
_____ 14. word configuration	_____ 30. print awareness
_____ 15. predictable books	_____ 31. Round Robin Reading
_____ 16. Informal Reading Inventories	_____ 32. Basal text

Knowledge Base - Theorists	
Check the following names with whom you are familiar.	
_____ 1. Jean Piaget	_____ 10. Mariane Frostig
_____ 2. Lev Vygotsky	_____ 11. Yetta Goodman
_____ 3. Marie Clay	_____ 12. Dorothy Strickland
_____ 4. Edward Dolch	_____ 13. Maria Montessori
_____ 5. John Dewey	_____ 14. John Goodlad
_____ 6. Delores Durkin	_____ 15. L. Morrow
_____ 7. Jerome Harste	_____ 16. Edward Sipay
_____ 8. Jean Chall	_____ 17. V. Perrone
_____ 9. Ken Goodman	_____ 18. Aurthur Heilman

Knowledge Base - Children's Literature	
From the following check the pieces of children's literature a visitor would find available to your students.	
_____ 1. Eric Carle's The Very Hungry Caterpillar	_____ 10. Wanda Gag's Millions of Cats
_____ 2. Maurice Sendak's Where the Wild Things Are	_____ 11. Nursery Rhymes
_____ 3. Peter Speir's Noah's Arch	_____ 12. Rosemary Wells' Timothy Goes to School
_____ 4. Don Freeman's Corduroy	_____ 13. Majorie Flack's Angus and the Ducks
_____ 5. Mother Goose	_____ 14. Harry Allard's Miss Nelson is Missing
_____ 6. Dr. Seuss' The Cat in the Hat	_____ 15. Chris Van Allsburg's The Polar Express
_____ 7. David Small's Imogene's Antlers	_____ 16. Margery Williams' The Velveteen Rabbit
_____ 8. Charlotte Zolotow's William's Doll	_____ 17. Judith Viorst's I'll Fix Anthony
_____ 9. Virginia Lee Burton's Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel	_____ 18. Laura Ingalls Wilder's Little House on the Prairie

Knowledge Base - World of Practice		
Check the appropriate response.		
	YES	NO
Whether I actually do this in my classroom or not, I have enough skills to:		
1. conduct a literature circle.		
2. teach phonics lessons.		
3. do Language Experience Approach.		
4. do "Daily News".		
5. assess reading skills..		
6. plan literacy lessons.		
7. organize classroom activities.		
8. develop learning centers.		
9. plan an integrated unit.		
10. use an integrated unit.		
11. evaluate literacy during an integrated unit.		
12. effectively read literature aloud.		
13. incorporate games, toys, puppets in to literacy activities.		
14. have children use invented spelling.		
15. teach handwriting.		
16. teach process writing (drafting, editing, publishing).		
17. conduct a writing conference.		
18. use predictable books.		

Knowledge Base - World of Practice		
Check the appropriate response.		
	YES	NO
1. I conduct literature circles.		
2. I teach phonics lessons.		
3. I use the Language Experience Approach.		
4. I do "Daily News".		
5. I assess reading skills.		
6. I plan lessons using literature.		
7. I organize hands-on classroom activities.		
8. I develop learning centers.		
9. I plan integrated units.		
10. I use workbooks to teach reading skills.		
11. I evaluate literacy during an integrated unit.		
12. I effectively read literature aloud.		
13. I incorporate games, toys, puppets into literacy activities.		
14. I allow children to use invented spelling.		
15. I teach handwriting.		
16. I teach process writing (drafting, editing, publishing).		
17. I conduct writing conferences.		
18. I use predictable books.		
19. I teach with a basal text.		
20. I implement integrated units.		

APPENDIX B

Pilot Survey Responses

Pilot Survey Responses

Page/ Question#	Response
1.1	Three of the Reading Readiness respondents did not know what emergent literacy was, and only two of these three had heard of whole language.
2.12	Child-initiated was written in by one respondent. Another respondent - "Would most people understand this question? I'm not sure I do." Another respondent - "There was a committee of teachers who chose the basal text we all used. So, the curriculum was more teacher developed than pre-determined."
2.14	Add the word "instructional" to time.
3.1	A Reading Readiness respondent - "This reflects one way to do this, but not the 'best' way. Wrote Strongly Disagree, would have written Strongly Agree if reworded to say 'one way', or 'an acceptable way'." Another respondent - "I disagree with this in general, but we do sing many rules."
3.4	Here a R.R. teacher differentiated between a whole word or sight word teacher (her definition of a basal text teacher) and a phonics teacher. She sees them as opposite in approach. A phonics teacher would Strongly Agree; a whole word teacher would Strongly Disagree. Another respondent - "How early?"
3.5	A Reading Readiness teacher agreed with this but marked Undecided because of the word "most." She would have marked Strongly Agree if "the most" were converted to "an appropriate." Another respondent - "Only with very young children." Another respondent - "One acceptable way . . . "
3.6	Phonics teachers Strongly Agree, whole word

teacher Strongly Disagree.

Another respondent - "Print?"

3.7 This question is restated in question 4.19

This is a neutral question.

3.8 Eliminate "and writing" because writing skills are not tested on standardized tests in Pre-k, k, and 1st grade. "Well measured", not "best measured."

Another respondent - "This question and question 4.16 repeat."

Another respondent - "Many bright children who are good readers are not good test takers."

3.9 "A phonics teacher would Strongly Agree, but a whole word teacher would Strongly Disagree."

Another respondent - "At what age? Any age? 2-8?"

3.10 A Reading Readiness teacher did not feel it important because children who do not like to draw can be taught to read very successfully.

3.11 A Reading Readiness teacher - "I firmly believe this!"

3.12 A Reading Readiness teacher felt learning letter names and sounds was essential, but not reciting the alphabet.

3.13 A Reading Readiness respondent took issue with "favorite storybooks" because to assess a child's reading, a book should not be even partially memorized. Change "favorite storybooks" to "self-selected" books.

3.14 A devout RR teacher did not believe in correcting spelling in story writing, except when correct spellings were requested by the child.

EL teacher - "If requested." She recommended we change "supply the correct spellings for story writing" to "correct the spelling on everything." She felt that both camps might allow invented spelling in creative writing.

This question and 4.20 are too close in content.

4.15 A Reading Readiness respondent felt rules and skills were the same.

Another respondent - "Rules are needed for successful teaching of both styles. Skills are not totally absorbed through osmosis in whole language."

4.16 A Reading Readiness respondent felt standardized testing was a good way to determine early literacy development, but not the best way. She felt it "has its place, is a catch-all for the teacher to see has taught those skills."

4.17 This is a neutral question.

4.21 A Reading Readiness teacher thought flashcards were OK to drill with, but not to assess with.

Another respondent requested that the survey add "as a repetitious drill" to the flashcard question.

4.23 A Reading Readiness teacher assumed the child would have no prior knowledge, and so the vocabulary needed to be introduced.

4.24 The respondent did not understand what the question asked.
This question was reversed in 4.25.

4.25 A Reading Readiness teacher felt this would be true in the beginning of the academic year, but not necessarily true later.

5.24 A Reading Readiness teacher said that in the 50's, 60's and 70's, basal series came with the stories printed in Big Book form. They may still do so.

6.1 - 6.18
(Editor's note)
Each year 5,000 new children's literature books are published; 70,000 repeated titles are also published. (Gilbert 1994 - This lady is finishing a doctorate in children's literature.)

Another respondent - "Many of these books were familiar, but other would be just as OK."

Another respondent - "This does not really indicate anything. It is not the books you have in your classroom that makes it a Whole Language

based method over a basal approach. It is how you use the books. Another factor is funding; how much money does the teacher have available to purchase literature? There are many new and wonderful books to supplement either program. Good Basal teachers use supplemental books also."

7. "Having trained both ways, I know how to do all of these things, but since I became an Emergent Literacy teacher, I no longer do all of these things! I think you could eliminate this page, since the important thing is what I do, which is on the next page."

Another respondent - "Some people may not appreciate the way these questions are asked. They may feel defensive."

Another respondent - "Convert the last two pages into one page."

Another respondent - "This page is not necessary. This information should be available in other areas. You may consider adding a column to the next page, if you feel you must ask for this information, but it is insulting to ask a teacher if they have the skills."

8.5 Neutral statement.

8.10 Remove the word "teach" and replace it with "reinforce."

8.15 Definitely! (RR respondent)

8.18 A Reading Readiness respondent said she used these for self-selected reading by students, not as a teaching tool.

General Responses

Title - "early literacy assessment" was interpreted to mean that the technique in question would be restricted to use early in the academic year. Suggested "assessing the literacy of early (or young) learners"

Survey too long - will take too long to fill out. People will give up and toss it.

Not overly long.

"I feel that to 'assess literacy development', its several components need to be assessed and a composite profile then highlights areas of strengths and weaknesses throughout the child's development. Having this philosophy, I found it difficult to answer questions that single out one component and state it as the best way to assess overall literacy development. e.g. 3.1, 3.5, 4.21."

"Also, all the stages/ages were lumped together, so 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.9, 3.10, 5.15, and 4.21 became difficult to answer since some components will be more prominent than others at different stages. (All were synonymously called 'early.')"

In discussing the results with respondents, their use of some of the terms differed from mine.

The respondent did not know what the "activity entailed" and therefore did not know if she had the skills or implemented the activity. Areas marked: literature circle, Language Experience Approach, "Daily News", invented spelling, writing conference, predictable books.

"I find myself getting hung up on the comparative adjectives making me want to justify or explain why I would mark an answer in that column. I realize you are trying to ascertain priorities, but sometimes it is difficult to name the most important method or means, when actually a combination is used.

"You are assuming that if you teach Whole Language, you don't teach skills. A good teacher does. I want to make sure I reach all types of learners so I feel it is necessary to take the best methods from both Whole Language and the basal approach and implement them into the Whole Language program."

Terms p. 5 - This only proves recent education through workshops, reading, or classes. It is no indication of which method you use to teach.

Theorists p. 5 - What is being asked here? Do we know the name, or know their work in depth?
Another respondent - "I don't think this is much of an indication as to whether a teacher used Whole Language or not. Avid readers may be familiar with all of these theorists, yet only teach Basal. Also, some of us may teach Whole Language, but not remember the theory or the theorist.

APPENDIX C

Survey Instrument

Early Childhood Practitioners' Demographic Information	
Please check the most appropriate response:	
1. What do you consider your primary literacy philosophy to be? _____ reading readiness _____ emergent literacy/ whole language	2. What is your highest education level completed? _____ High School _____ Certificate _____ Associate _____ Bachelors _____ Masters _____ Doctorate
3. What is the time frame of your professional study in Early Childhood Education? _____ 1950's _____ 1980's _____ 1960's _____ 1990's _____ 1970's	4. I attended a workshop related to early literacy in the past _____ 1 year or less _____ 2 years _____ 5 years _____ 10 years _____ more than 10 years
5. What is your area/s of study? ____ Early Childhood Major ____ Early Childhood Minor ____ Kindergarten Endorsement ____ Elementary Education ____ Special Education ____ Training or Workshops in Reading Recovery ____ Other [Please specify.] _____	6. What is your present position in Early Childhood Education? _____ Head Start Teacher _____ Head Start Assistant Teacher _____ Head Start Aide _____ Kindergarten Teacher _____ Kindergarten Aide _____ First Grade Teacher _____ First Grade Classroom Aide _____ Other [Please identify position.] _____

Early Childhood Practitioners' Demographic Information (continued)	
7. How many years experience do you have as an Early Childhood Teacher or Aide? ____ First year ____ 6 - 10 ____ 2 - 3 ____ 11 - 15 ____ 4 - 5 ____ 16 or more	8. What is the age range of the children in your early childhood classroom? _____ 3 - 4 _____ 6 - 7 _____ 4 - 5 _____ other _____ 5 - 6
9. Approximately how many children do you have in your early childhood classroom? _____ 0 - 10 _____ 21 - 30 _____ 11 - 20 _____ other	10. What is the approximate ratio of adults to children in your classroom? _____ 1 : 5 _____ 1 : 25 _____ 1 : 10 _____ 1 : 30 _____ 1 : 15 _____ other _____ 1 : 20
11. Is your Early Childhood program public or private? _____ private _____ public	12. Is your curriculum teacher- developed or pre-determined? _____ teacher developed _____ pre-determined
13. Does your program run half day or full day? ____ half day ____ full day If full day, do the children attend every day or every other day? _____ every day _____ every other day	14. Approximately, what percentage of instructional time per day does your classroom spend involved in literacy events (reading, writing, literature)? _____ 10 _____ 60 _____ 20 _____ 70 _____ 30 _____ 80 _____ 40 _____ 90 _____ 50 _____ 100

Early Childhood Practitioners' Demographic Information (continued)	
15. Are predetermined assessment or screening instruments used in your program? If yes, please check appropriate instrument. _____ Yes _____ No _____ DIAL-R _____ Brigance _____ Caldwell PreSchool _____ Frostig _____ Santa Clara Developmental _____ Gesell PreSchool _____ Other (Please specify.) _____	16. Where is your program located? _____ Rural Area _____ Urban Area _____ Inner City _____ Suburban
17. What is the population of the town or city where your program is located? _____ Under 1000 _____ 1000 - 5000 _____ 5000 - 10,000 _____ 10,000 - 50,000 _____ 50,000 - 100,000 _____ over 100,000	

Please feel free to add any comments you would like to make about your program. Thank you.

Survey of Early Childhood Practitioners Regarding Early Literacy Assessment

For the purpose of this survey, Early Literacy Assessment is any appropriate measure to determine a young child's literacy development and needs.

SA = Strongly Agree
MA = Moderately Agree
UN = Undecided/No Opinion
MD = Moderately Disagree
SD = Strongly Disagree

Beliefs	SA	MA	UN	MD	SD
1. An important way to assess literacy is to have the child verbalize phonics rules.					
2. Story retelling is an important method for assessing comprehension.					
3. Initial assessment of beginning readers should focus on letter knowledge.					
4. Oral sequencing of story events is an essential method of assessing literacy.					
5. Children's memorization of poems and stories is an important support for reading progress.					
6. Directed listening/reading activities that involve interpretive thinking are appropriate for small group assessment.					
7. In an integrated curriculum, literacy can be assessed through any subject area.					
8. Children's early drawings are an important step toward writing.					
9. Children learn to read best when ability grouped.					
10. Correct recitation of the alphabet is essential to learning to read.					

Beliefs (continued)	SA	MA	UN	MD	SD
11. The child's attempted reading of self-selected books is appropriate for ongoing assessment of reading progress.					
12. Until a child can spell accurately, the teacher should always correct the student's spelling.					
13. Reader's theater and author's circles are effective ways to assess a child's literacy growth.					
14. Standardized testing is an extremely appropriate way to determine early literacy development.					
15. Children's first lessons with reading should focus on letters and sounds.					
16. Invented spelling is an important stage in children's writing progress.					
17. Correct oral reading is a necessary component of a young child's literacy that needs to be assessed.					
18. Young readers' knowledge of new vocabulary words does not need to be assessed before they read a story.					
19. The child's recognition of alphabet letters is essential in determining literacy development.					
20. It is important to keep subject areas distinct and separate for purposes of instruction and assessment.					

Knowledge Base - Terms	
Check the following terms with which you are familiar.	
_____ 1. Reading Recovery	_____ 16. authentic literacy instruction
_____ 2. emergent literacy	_____ 17. print-rich environment
_____ 3. reading readiness	_____ 18. digraph
_____ 4. phonics	_____ 19. invented spelling
_____ 5. whole language	_____ 20. visual discrimination
_____ 6. diphthong	_____ 21. Big Books
_____ 7. portfolio assessment	_____ 22. auditory discrimination
_____ 8. structural analysis	_____ 23. sight words
_____ 9. writing conferences	_____ 24. integrated curriculum
_____ 10. holistic reading instruction	_____ 25. prefixes/suffixes
_____ 11. syntax	_____ 26. environmental print
_____ 12. semantic map/web	_____ 27. syllabication
_____ 13. word configuration	_____ 28. print awareness
_____ 14. predictable books	_____ 29. Round Robin Reading
_____ 15. subskills	_____ 30. Basal text

Knowledge Base - Theorists	
Check the following names with whom you are familiar.	
_____ 1. Jean Piaget	_____ 9. Ken Goodman
_____ 2. Lev Vygotsky	_____ 10. Mariane Frostig
_____ 3. Marie Clay	_____ 11. Dorothy Strickland
_____ 4. Edward Dolch	_____ 12. Maria Montessori
_____ 5. John Dewey	_____ 14. Leslie Morrow
_____ 6. Delores Durkin	_____ 14. Edward Sipay
_____ 7. Jerome Harste	_____ 15. Arthur Heilman
_____ 8. Jean Chall	