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# Orientations of literacy leadership among elementary school principals: demographic and background trends

Bonnie L. Hoewing  
*University of Iowa*

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ORIENTATIONS OF LITERACY LEADERSHIP AMONG ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
PRINCIPALS: DEMOGRAPHIC AND BACKGROUND TRENDS

by

Bonnie L. Hoewing

An Abstract

Of a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the Doctor of  
Philosophy degree in Teaching and Learning  
in the Graduate College of  
The University of Iowa

May 2011

Thesis Supervisor: Professor Peter Hlebowitsh

## ABSTRACT

Research on administration from the past forty years emphasizes the principal as instructional leader. However, the research community has done little to specifically examine what literacy knowledge principals of elementary buildings need to possess regarding literacy teaching and learning or how districts build literacy leadership capacity. Because federal legislation has focused increased scrutiny on literacy, the role of the elementary school principal as the instructional leader has intensified. In an era of increased accountability, effective literacy leadership is essential to the development and continued improvement of an elementary school. Yet there is a dearth of research regarding what constitutes necessary literacy knowledge for elementary principals, what skills are needed to assume the role of literacy leader, and how districts can provide school literacy knowledge and leadership skill sets to principals. This study focused on the theoretical orientation Iowa elementary principals hold regarding the teaching and learning of reading in the elementary classroom. Survey data were collected and analyzed to determine the instructional preference principals hone for reading instruction, including preferences for phonic, skill, and whole language instruction. Such preferences

impact the manner in which teachers are supervised and the general quality of literacy instruction offered in the elementary classroom.

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Graduate College  
The University of Iowa  
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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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PH.D. THESIS

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This is to certify that the PH.D Thesis of  
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has been approved by the Examining Committee for the  
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To Conor and Payton



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES.....	ix
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xi
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Instructional Leadership.....	4
Literate Society.....	8
Learning to Read.....	9
Effective Reading Instruction.....	11
The Study.....	14
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	18
Leadership and the Role of the Elementary Principal.....	19
Literacy Leadership.....	20
Effective Leadership.....	23
Literate Member of Society.....	28
Learning to Read.....	33
Knowledge and Language Learning as Construction.....	33
Knowledge and Language Learning as Conditioning.....	36
Phonic-Skill Instruction.....	38
Knowledge Building and Language Learning as Processing.....	41
Language as Social Activity.....	43
Whole Language Instruction.....	45
Components of Language.....	48
Transactional Learning Theory.....	49
Social and Cultural Contexts.....	51
Models of Literacy Learning.....	55
Engagement.....	55
Impact of Culture.....	57
Inquiry Learning.....	60
Integrated Curriculum.....	61
Strategic Readers.....	62
Conclusions.....	63
Phonic Theoretical Orientation.....	64
Skill Theoretical Orientation.....	65
Whole Language Theoretical Orientation.....	66
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY.....	68

Iowa Public Schools' Background Data.....	69
Schools' Enrollment Trends.....	71
Principal Characteristics.....	72
Study Participants.....	72
Target Population.....	74
Sampling Frame.....	74
Researcher Stance.....	75
Research Design.....	76
Survey Instrument.....	76
Survey.....	78
Survey Mode.....	79
Evaluation of Survey Instrument.....	81
Ethical Issues.....	81
Limitations.....	82
Analysis.....	85
Internal Correlations for Construct Validity.....	86
 CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS.....	 89
Gender, Ethnicity, and Race.....	91
Years of Teaching Experience.....	91
Years as Principal.....	92
Literacy Education.....	92
Title 1 Eligibility.....	93
Minority Status.....	93
School Size.....	94
Theoretical Orientation Toward Reading Instruction Among Iowa Elementary School Principals.....	94
Phonic Theoretical Orientation.....	97
Skill Theoretical Orientation.....	99
Whole Language Theoretical Orientation.....	101
Levels of Experience.....	103
Theoretical Orientation in Relation to Teaching Experience.....	104
Theoretical Orientation in Relation to Principals' Experience.....	112
Theoretical Orientation in Relation to Degrees Held in Literacy.....	118
Theoretical Orientation in Relation to Title 1 Funding.....	126
Theoretical Orientation in Relation to School Minority Population.....	133
Theoretical Orientation in Relation to School Size.....	140
 CHAPTER 5: IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	 146

Implications.....	146
Summary.....	159
Role of Elementary Principal as Literacy Leader....	162
Recommendations.....	167
Future Research.....	169
APPENDIX A: THEORETICAL ORIENTATION TO READING PROFILE SURVEY (TORP).....	173
APPENDIX B: INITIAL EMAIL LETTER.....	177
APPENDIX C: FOLLOW-UP EMAIL LETTER.....	179
APPENDIX D: RAW DATA.....	181
APPENDIX E: MEANINGS OF THE VARIOUS VALUES OF CORRELATION DATA.....	186
APPENDIX F: DESCRIPTIVE DATA – IOWA ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS’ THEORETICAL ORIENTATION.....	187
APPENDIX G: DESCRIPTIVE DATA – YEARS AS TEACHER PHONIC THEORETICAL ORIENTATION.....	188
APPENDIX H: DESCRIPTIVE DATA – YEARS AS TEACHER SKILL THEORETICAL ORIENTATION.....	189
APPENDIX I: DESCRIPTIVE DATA – YEARS AS TEACHER WHOLE LANGUAGE THEORETICAL ORIENTATION.....	190
APPENDIX J: DESCRIPTIVE DATA – YEARS AS PRINCIPAL PHONIC THEORETICAL ORIENTATION.....	191
APPENDIX K: DESCRIPTIVE DATA – YEARS AS PRINCIPAL SKILL THEORETICAL ORIENTATION.....	192
APPENDIX L: DESCRIPTIVE DATA – YEARS AS PRINCIPAL WHOLE LANGUAGE THEORETICAL ORIENTATION.....	193
APPENDIX M: DESCRIPTIVE DATA – LITERACY EDUCATION PHONIC THEORETICAL ORIENTATION.....	194
APPENDIX N: DESCRIPTIVE DATA – LITERACY EDUCATION SKILL THEORETICAL ORIENTATION.....	195
APPENDIX O: DESCRIPTIVE DATA – LITERACY EDUCATION WHOLE LANGUAGE THEORETICAL ORIENTATION.....	196

APPENDIX P: DESCRIPTIVE DATA — TITLE 1 PHONIC THEORETICAL ORIENTATION.....	197
APPENDIX Q: DESCRIPTIVE DATA — TITLE 1 SKILL THEORETICAL ORIENTATION.....	198
APPENDIX R: DESCRIPTIVE DATA — TITLE 1 WHOLE LANGUAGE THEORETICAL ORIENTATION.....	199
APPENDIX S: DESCRIPTIVE DATA — MINORITY POPULATION PHONIC THEORETICAL ORIENTATION.....	200
APPENDIX T: DESCRIPTIVE DATA — MINORITY POPULATION SKILL THEORETICAL ORIENTATION.....	201
APPENDIX U: DESCRIPTIVE DATA — MINORITY POPULATION WHOLE LANGUAGE THEORETICAL ORIENTATION.....	202
APPENDIX V: DESCRIPTIVE DATA — SCHOOL SIZE PHONIC THEORETICAL ORIENTATION.....	203
APPENDIX W: DESCRIPTIVE DATA — SCHOOL SIZE SKILL THEORETICAL ORIENTATION.....	204
APPENDIX X: DESCRIPTIVE DATA — SCHOOL SIZE WHOLE LANGUAGE THEORETICAL ORIENTATION.....	205
REFERENCES.....	206

## LIST OF TABLES

### Table

4.1	Description of Study Sample and Population Demographics of Iowa Elementary School Principals...	90
4.2	Frequency Distribution by Years of Teaching Experience.....	105
4.3	Difference in Average Scale Scores on Phonic Theoretical Orientation by Years of Teaching Experience.....	107
4.4	Difference in Average Scale Scores on Skill Theoretical Orientation by Years of Teaching Experience.....	109
4.5	Difference in Average Scale Scores on Whole Language Theoretical Orientation by Years of Teaching Experience.....	111
4.6	Frequency Distribution by Years of Principal Experience.....	112
4.7	Difference in Average Scale Scores on Phonic Theoretical Orientation by Years of Principal Experience.....	114
4.8	Difference in Average Scale Scores on Skill Theoretical Orientation by Years of Principal Experience.....	115
4.9	Difference in Average Scale Scores on Whole Language Theoretical Orientation by Years of Principal Experience.....	118
4.10	Frequency Distribution by Literacy Degrees.....	119
4.11	Difference in Average Scale Scores on Phonic Theoretical Orientation by Level of Literacy Education.....	121
4.12	Difference in Average Scale Scores on Skill Theoretical Orientation by Level of Literacy Education.....	123

4.13	Difference in Average Scale Scores on Whole Language Theoretical Orientation by Level of Literacy Education.....	125
4.14	Frequency Distribution by Title 1 Classification...	126
4.15	Difference in Average Scale Scores on Phonic Theoretical Orientation by Title 1 Status.....	128
4.16	Difference in Average Scale Scores on Skill Theoretical Orientation by Title 1 Status.....	130
4.17	Difference in Average Scale Scores on Whole Language Theoretical Orientation by Title 1 Status.	132
4.18	Frequency Distribution by Schools' Minority Population.....	133
4.19	Difference in Average Scale Scores on Phonic Theoretical Orientation by Schools' Minority Population.....	135
4.20	Difference in Average Scale Scores on Skill Theoretical Orientation by Schools' Minority Population.....	137
4.21	Difference in Average Scale Scores on Whole Language Theoretical Orientation by Schools' Minority Population.....	139
4.22	Frequency Distribution by School Size.....	141
4.23	Difference in Average Scale Scores on Phonic Theoretical Orientation by School Size.....	142
4.24	Difference in Average Scale Scores on Skill Theoretical Orientation by School Size.....	143
4.25	Difference in Average Scale Scores on Whole Language Theoretical Orientation by School Size....	145



## LIST OF FIGURES

### Figure

4.1	Iowa Elementary Principals' Theoretical Orientation.....	96
4.2	Years as Teacher Phonic Theoretical Orientation....	106
4.3	Years as Teacher Skill Theoretical Orientation.....	108
4.4	Years as Teacher Whole Language Theoretical Orientation.....	110
4.5	Years as Principal Phonic Theoretical Orientation..	113
4.6	Years as Principal Skill Theoretical Orientation...	115
4.7	Years as Principal Whole Language Theoretical Orientation.....	117
4.8	Literacy Education Phonic Theoretical Orientation..	120
4.9	Literacy Education Skill Theoretical Orientation...	122
4.10	Literacy Education Whole Language Theoretical Orientation.....	124
4.11	Title 1 Funding Phonic Theoretical Orientation.....	127
4.12	Title 1 Funding Skill Theoretical Orientation.....	129
4.13	Title 1 Funding Whole Language Theoretical Orientation.....	131
4.14	Schools' Minority Population Phonic Theoretical Orientation.....	134
4.15	Schools' Minority Population Skill Theoretical Orientation.....	136
4.16	Schools' Minority Population Whole Language Theoretical Orientation.....	138
4.17	School Size Phonic Theoretical Orientation.....	141
4.18	School Size Skill Theoretical Orientation.....	143

4.19 School Size Whole Language Theoretical Orientation.....	144
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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Schools that have successful literacy programs show evidence of strong principal leadership, with focused attention on setting a literacy agenda, supporting teachers, accessing resources, and building a capacity for further growth.

Booth & Rowsell, *The Literacy Principal*

Concerns regarding the quality of our nation's teaching force can be traced back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, with increased research and evidence during the past 25 years recognizing the impact teacher quality has on student achievement. Evidence suggested that teacher quality matters for student achievement (Harris & Sass, 2008; Croninger, Rice, Rathbun, & Nishio, 2007; Gitomer, 2007; Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2006; Darling-Hammond, 2000). Research also indicates that principals might not hire the best teachers (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr, & Cohen, 2007; Baker & Cooper, 2005; Ballou & Podgursky, 1997, 1995; Ballou, 1996). However, little is known about what knowledge principals actually possess and value, regarding literacy, specifically reading. There is a dearth of research exploring the level of expertise principals hold in the area of teaching young children to read, expertise that in turn, may influence hiring decisions, staff evaluations, and ultimately, student achievement.

From *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), through to the Federal *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) Act of 2001 (2002), teacher quality has remained a key component of national and state agendas in relation to student achievement. NCLB (2002) stated that all students should be reading at grade level or above by fourth grade and many states across our nation have mandated standards regarding literacy requirements. Yet, administrators in elementary schools often lack the experience or expertise needed to lead and support reading and literacy learning in elementary classrooms.

Learning to read is a basic life skill (Taylor, Short, Frye, & Shearer, 1992; Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985); the skill of reading determines a child's success in school, society, and throughout life (Hall & Moats, 1999). Because reading instruction is generally conceded to be the most important part of the elementary school curriculum, (Criscuolo, 1984, 1974; McCormick, 1979) evaluation of that component of the school program is crucial to overall student achievement. Many elementary administrators, as former elementary teachers, are generalists in curriculum areas (McCormick, 1979). Thus, they may lack in-depth knowledge in the area of reading

instruction that is needed to judge teachers accurately. This lack of knowledge may play a role in what characteristics principals value in the act of reading instruction.

If learning to read well is at the core of elementary school achievement, then early success is essential. It's clear that early initiatives in learning to read result in higher levels of achievement in all areas of the curriculum (Booth & Rowsell, 2007). A successful start in learning to read is paramount as it "opens windows of opportunity" (Sherman, 2001. p. 3) for learners. "Those who are not on track by third grade have little chance of ever catching up" (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998, p. 212).

Baker and Cooper (2005) found that many principals tend to look for teachers who reflect the principal's academic background when hiring. Recruitment efforts also appeared to be highly localized by district administrators, and principals appear to have substantial autonomy when hiring teachers for their individual buildings (Balter & Duncombe, 2006; Strauss, Bowes, Marks, & Plesko, 2000). With principals having considerable input into the hiring process and with learning to read deemed as arguably the most important feature of the elementary school curriculum,

one would expect principals to show considerable knowledge regarding literacy learning and literacy teaching.

### Instructional Leadership

The concept of supervision of instruction can be traced back to the onset of the American public school and the role of instructional leadership has evolved with the role of principal. Literature on administration from the 1970's and 1980's emphasized the instructional role of the principal and the impact this role has on school effectiveness and student achievement. "Since the mid-1980's the pendulum has swung from equality to excellence. National attention has turned to higher academic standards" (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2000, p. 253). Selecting and developing a quality faculty, focused on improving instruction, increases student learning. School principals play an essential role in this process; they must have the knowledge and resources available to support their efforts to provide learning environments where all children learn to read well (Smith, 2008).

Instructional leadership definitions typically include dealing with identifying, supporting, and developing teachers' skills. Principals' perceptions of what their role is as the instructional leader are often colored by their own varied educational experiences and the

expectations of how individual school districts view the role of the principal.

To be an effective literacy leader, the principal needs to know as much as possible about reading and about how to support teachers of reading (Prince & Conaway, 1985). If learning to read is deemed a top priority for all students, principals must define their roles and duties as administrators of the school, particularly in regard to the reading program. The elementary principal, as academic leader, must promote reading as paramount and as the top priority to improve student achievement. The principal should possess a strong background in the area of reading development and reading instruction.

Fink and Resnick (2001) found that those who enter the administrative track typically grow more and more distant from issues of instruction and learning. A principal's time is often devoted to the demands of administrative functions removed from the classroom, leaving little time for him or her to exercise instructional leadership. This concern is compounded by the lack of knowledge some principals have regarding what constitutes quality instruction in literacy learning for young children. In an era of increased demands for accountability in student learning, particularly reading, effective leadership is essential to the

development and continued improvement in literacy learning for children. Effective instructional leaders engage in work that supports teachers in improving their instructional practices in classrooms (Zepeda, 2007).

A well articulated educational philosophy and strong leadership qualities of administrators are necessary to developing a strong school staff (Smith, 2008) and successful schools are a product of instructional leadership and supervision that shape the school to function productively (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2005). Drake and Roe (1994) suggested "Perhaps the most effective way to make long-range improvement in organizations is to have a sound recruitment program" (p. 218) that will build and sustain quality instruction for all students.

Sulentic Dowell (2010) examined the intricacies of literacy leadership at the elementary building level. Leadership within elementary school settings is complicated and demanding (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2006). Elementary administrators are often individually responsible for leading faculty, students, and the surrounding community in educational learning. Literacy leadership (Sulentic Dowell, 2010) requires specific literacy knowledge, including identified skill sets that



enhance literacy learning, as well as the ability to inspire, supervise, and manage all individuals within the learning community. To positively impact student achievement in the area of literacy learning, this knowledge must include content knowledge (Booth & Rowsell, 2007, 2002; Cummins, 2006), knowledge of appropriate practices and pedagogy (Goodman & Goodman, 2009, 2004; Cunningham & Allington, 2007; Rasinski, 2003; Finn, 1999; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998, Goodman, 1976, 1986, 1996), as well as managing, supervisory, and overall leadership qualities (Hoerr, 2005; National Association of Elementary School Principals [NAESP], 2002; Sergiovanni, 1992). "An educational leader promotes the success of every student by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth" (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008, p. 14).

Teachers need knowledge and expertise that provides them the tools to help others learn content (Stein & Nelson, 2003). Similarly, principals need an understanding of content, teaching, and learning in their role as instructional leaders. Leadership content knowledge, in the area of learning to read, needs to be clearly defined,

along with how this knowledge impacts decision-making in efforts to hire high-quality teachers for all children.

### Literate Society

What defines a literate member of society varies greatly, but strong sentiment persists that everyone needs a far higher level of literacy than in the past and that this requirement will continue to increase. Early literacy experiences and learning should provide a foundation for dealing with the increasingly complex materials individuals will encounter throughout their lives. How well an individual learns to read and write is jointly determined by both his or her reading ability and the readability of the materials they are required to read.

Bormuth (1975) regarded a person as literate "when he or she could perform well enough to obtain the maximum value from the materials being read" (p. 98). Defining specific reading levels for materials individuals encounter in their daily lives is often arbitrary and difficult to determine. The term *functional literacy* is often used to distinguish competencies to "perform tasks thought requisite to adequate adult functioning" (Kirsch & Guthrie, 1977, p. 488). This would include ensuring individuals are able to read and understand a wide spectrum of materials they encounter in their daily lives.

With the increasing complexity of society today, literacy may be more appropriately defined "as the ability of individuals to *find, read, and evaluate* the information needed to function as a productive member of society" (Breivik, 1991, p. 87). This includes placing less emphasis on traditional sources of information taken from lectures, textbooks, or workbooks and more emphasis on instructing students in ways to utilize a variety of information sources, including on-line databases, journals, and government documents. "In efforts to combat illiteracy, information literacy, not just teaching people to read, should be our goal" (p. 87). Students need to be able to strategically read increasingly challenging material, analyze what is read, learn from the material, and problem solve to meet the demands of our ever changing complex world.

#### Learning to Read

The No Child Left Behind Act (2002) has led to an increased level of supervision and control by the federal government over American public schools. With the implementation of the Reading First Initiative included in NCLB, literacy instruction and assessment has been greatly impacted (Cummins, 2006). Unfortunately, NCLB has legislated a narrow view of the reading process that

contradicts much of the research done on the reading process (Goodman & Goodman, 2004, 2009, 1980; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998; Clay, 1995; Goodman, 1986, 1996), making it ever more essential for elementary principals to understand the issues involved in reading instruction.

Reading is a complex process that encompasses linguistic knowledge, cognition, and personal sociocultural components, along with a variety of strategic skills (IRA, 2007; Kucer, 2001). Children's literacy experiences vary greatly. Issues of cultural differences, oral and written language use, access to printed materials, and background knowledge can affect continued literacy learning. Teachers that follow a process approach to learning that builds on individual student's cultural and personal experiences (Dyson, 2003; Delpit, 1995; Au, 1993; Heath, 1983) support students continued literacy learning. The role of the classroom teacher is to support and extend each individual student's literacy knowledge by providing age-appropriate reading materials and activities that are compatible with the best available evidence on how to teach individual students.

The role of teachers is to embrace and extend literacy knowledge based on familiar experiential contexts. Instructional programs in schools should build on the

development in literacy learning already taking place when children enter school. Instruction should expand upon an individual's existing knowledge, strategies, and expertise. (Smith, 1998; Rosenblatt, 1995; Goodman, 1986). Readers bring personal experiences, including their knowledge of language and the world around them, to each reading situation. This knowledge impacts what is taken away from the reading of a text.

#### Effective Reading Instruction

The content of school literacy is usually organized across three curricular areas: language, reading literature, and composition. With multiple and diverse perspectives on what should be taught as school literacy, ideas regarding what constitutes literate practices varies greatly. What "counts" as being literate and literacy-based practices is multi-dimensional and not easily pinned down (Stein & Nelson, 2003).

Questions persist regarding what constitutes quality teaching. Identifying specific teacher characteristics that predict effectiveness, especially pertaining to student achievement in the area of learning to read, is crucial for principals enlisted with the job of recruiting, hiring, and sustaining quality staff. Darling-Hammond (2000) asserted that the impact of well-prepared teachers influences

student achievement, even when considering differences in student background language, culture, poverty level, or minority status. Sanders (1998) and Sanders and Rivers (1996) achieved similar findings and contend that lower achieving students are the most likely to benefit from highly effective teachers. Overall, positive effects on student achievement in the area of reading were noted and correlated with teachers' degree type and coursework emphasis (Croninger, Rice, Rathbun, & Nishio, 2007).

A study conducted by Rivkin, Hanushek, and Kain (1998) across 3000 schools supported the quality of the school as an important factor in determining student achievement. However, they also noted the best predictor of overall student achievement was teacher quality. Allington (1997) further supports quality staffing. "Teacher quality is more crucial to early literacy success than curriculum" (p. 32). Therefore, high-quality literacy instruction "offered by teachers who have expertise in how literacy develops" (Walmsley & Allington, 1995, p. 33) is closely linked to enhanced student achievement performance.

Effective reading instruction is a crucial mission of schools and classrooms to ensure all children successfully learn how to read and write. Darling-Hammond (2000) concluded that the most consistent predictor of student

achievement in reading and mathematics in each year tested was the proportion of well-qualified teachers in a state, specifically those with a full certification and a major in the field they taught. The principal who views reading and reading improvement as a major goal needs to learn as much as possible about reading instruction so he or she can support and work with classroom teachers to ensure all students learn to read and write. Educational leaders who are not proficient in their knowledge of literacy instruction, simply have a difficult time determining the key qualifications that excellent reading teachers possess (Stein & Nelson, 2003).

As the role of teachers continues to become more demanding with increasingly complex literacy and teaching demands, the role of literacy leadership has been intensified. In a time period when public education has taken on increased public scrutiny, mutual cooperation and respect between teachers and principals is essential to support continued literacy learning for all children. Only effective instructional leaders, who are knowledgeable in literacy learning, methods, and teaching can evaluate teacher expertise and ensure quality literacy instruction for all students. Thus, the issue of literacy leadership emerges as a fundamental research concern.

Effective instructional leaders support teachers in improving their instructional practices in the classroom. Successful schools are a product of instructional leadership that guides and supports teachers (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2005). Administrators often utilize the *walk-through* (Cervone & Martinez-Miller, 2007) method of observation to supervise teachers' instructional practices. If a principal does not have a clear concept and understanding of what effective literacy instruction *looks like*, this method of evaluation often accomplishes very little in the area of providing consistent, effective literacy instruction for all children (2007).

### The Study

This exploratory research study examined the theoretical orientation of Iowa principals in the teaching and learning of reading in elementary classrooms. The study focused solely on elementary principals as the instructional leader within their individual buildings. The terms "reading" and "literacy" were used interchangeably, acknowledging the fact that literacy learning involves close connections between reading, writing, speaking, and listening. This study focused solely on the theoretical orientation of principals in relation to learning how to read (Burch & Spillane, 2003; Stein & Nelson, 2003).



I used quantitative survey data sets to specifically determine whether principals exercised a preference toward a phonic, skill, or whole language approach to teaching reading. The working premise was that any strong identification with a particular theoretical orientation might speak to differences in reading practices at the respective schools lead by the principals.

For this study, the phonic approach to reading included practices that isolated phonemes and emphasized decoding smaller than word level language units. The instructional vision of the skill approach focused on isolated skills taught with an emphasis on word or sight word recognition, and the whole language approach resisted isolated skill development and emphasized instead the use of literature and the sense of story or text (DeFord, 1985).

The purpose of this study was to see if the theoretical orientations of Iowa elementary principals toward reading instruction displayed any patterns against various demographic factors and against various experiences and qualifications. Specifically, the research questions asked:

1. What are the theoretical orientations of Iowa elementary principals regarding reading instruction?

2. Do these perspectives differ across the experience and qualifications of principals by:
  - a. time spent as a classroom teacher?
  - b. time spent as principal?
  - c. degrees or endorsements achieved in the area of literacy learning?
  - d. Do these perspectives differ by the demographic characteristics of the schools in which these principals work including:
    - by classification of Title 1 status,
    - by minority representation of school populations, and
    - by school size?

This study generated data that revealed the theoretical orientations of Iowa elementary principals toward the teaching of reading across important school demographic conditions and principal experience and qualifications.

Such differences likely point to differences in prevailing practices in the classrooms, and to the extent that any one perspective is especially dominant, but they also speak to a less than professional position on reading instruction, in that, good reading instruction relies on responsive judgments that often pull from each of the

perspectives identified. Differences in perspective on reading instruction also raises interesting questions about principals' training and about why differences might exist at different school sites by demographic characteristics.

## CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

An effective principal is both a good manager and educational leader who can focus on the process of teaching and student learning (Riggins, 2002). The instructional leader, the principal, affects the quality of teacher instruction, overall student achievement, and the efficiency of the school. With learning to read deemed the most basic and critical skill taught in the elementary classroom setting, the knowledge and expertise a principal possesses as the academic leader in the area of teaching children to read is crucial to overall student achievement.

Limited educational research has examined the importance of principals being knowledgeable and experienced across content areas and the impact this knowledge may have on instructional practices and student learning (Stein & Nelson, 2003). Leadership content knowledge in regard to teaching young children to read must focus both on how students learn literacy and how teachers support that learning (Burch & Spillane, 2003; Stein & Nelson, 2003). It is this focus - principals as instructional leaders and knowledgeable in the area of teaching young children to read - that guides my review of literature.

Leadership and the role of  
the Elementary Principal

The oldest form of public school administration was based in the classroom. The first principals carried out the duties of both the principal and teacher. During the colonial period of America's development, schools formed after Massachusetts' educational laws were established during the mid 1600's. Predominately, these early schools were staffed by one teacher who assumed both instructional and administrative duties. Snyder and Peterson (1970) summarized the development of supervision in the public school:

Parents first carried out the dimension of administration. Later, the superintendent assumed the responsibility. Much of the early supervision was cursory, mere inspection by laymen... with the growth of school districts elementary principals were assigned supervisory responsibility for attendance centers. At first the principal was expected to direct the instructional program and judge its outcome. Principals of the 1910s and 1920s were expected to tell teachers what they should do and follow up to see if they were functioning as directed. In the 1930s, desirable supervision was frequently described as "democratic," but few principals functioned in a truly democratic manner. By the 1950s, supervision in elementary school attendance centers was perceived as a process by which administrators provided "assistance in the development of better teaching-learning situations." (p.11)

By the 1960's, the role of the elementary principal was seen as one that included additional expertise across

content areas to adequately supervise teaching staff and affect student achievement. Literature on administration from the 1970's and 1980's continued to emphasize the principal as the instructional leader:

The principal is the instructional leader for his building. School districts have legislated that principals must spend a certain portion of their time observing in classrooms. The administrator must firmly have in mind the "kinds of things to look for" as this is one of the most effective ways to improve instruction. (Criscuolo, 1974, p.59)

#### Literacy Leadership

Many principals are considered generalists in curriculum areas and lack in-depth knowledge in the area of reading instruction that is needed to be the instructional leader and to judge teachers fairly. As McCormick (1979) put it, "since reading instruction is generally conceded to be the most important part of the elementary school curriculum, there is frequently concern for evaluation of that component of the school program. Many principals have stated that they do not always know what constitutes a good reading program" (p. 131).

Trubowitz (1977) asserted that the improvement of a reading program within the school setting resides at the hands of the principal. The principal who views reading and reading improvement as a major goal, needs to learn as much as possible about reading instruction so he or she can

support and work with classroom teachers. In an interview in *Education Week*, Darling-Hammond offered the following, "the quality of school-level leaders, the practices they engage in, are second only to teacher quality in predicting student achievement. It is the leader who both recruits and retains high-quality staff" (Olson, 2008).

Although teachers and principals both recognize the need for cooperation in the development of quality reading programs, teachers tend to view reading in terms of instructional process while principals usually regard reading from the standpoint of pupil achievement (Harker, 1978). Process concerns, of course, speak to the nature of instruction while product concerns speak to outcomes.

Prince and Conaway (1985) noted that to be an effective literacy leader, the principal needs to learn as much as possible about reading, its development and appropriate instructional processes, and to also work with and support teachers in their classrooms. For example, lack of expertise or knowledge in the area of reading development is often reflected in the decisions made by administrators when purchasing materials for reading instruction. This also can carry over to the manner in which teacher observations are conducted by principals. When required to evaluate reading instruction, many

principals acknowledge their lack of expertise in this area and are unable to identify weaknesses in programs (McCormick, 1979).

Prince and Conaway (1985) concluded that principals must define their role and duties as the instructional leaders to the school's reading program. The principal should focus on improving teacher instructional techniques and on bettering the quality of the curriculum to help support teachers and student achievement. This means that the principal should possess expertise in appropriate instructional methods and an understanding and use of appropriate literacy materials. Collaboration between administrators and teachers is another key consideration. Collaboration depends on mutual cooperation and respect, which can only occur if administrators can speak the teacher's language and understand the teacher's problems.

Fink and Resnick (2001) found those who enter the administrative track typically grow more and more distant from issues of instruction and learning. A principal's time is often filled with the demands of administrative and organizational function. Compounded by lack of knowledge of what constitutes good instruction in various curricular areas, principals tend to rarely visit classrooms except for evaluations or mandated 'walk-throughs.' Fink notes,



“when you work on instructional leadership with a principal, you have to remember that you are focusing on *leadership*, not just on the specifics of instruction. Principals have to have content knowledge – enough to enable them to judge the teaching they see” (p. 600).

### Effective Leadership

Zepeda (2007) notes that, “strong leadership promotes excellence and equity in education and entails projecting, promoting and holding steadfast to the vision; garnering and allocating resources, communicating progress and supporting the people, programs, services, and activities implemented to achieve the school’s vision” (p. 4). Effective instructional leaders engage in work that supports teachers in improving their instructional practices in classrooms.

Smith (2008) studied how a strong educational philosophy and leadership qualities of administrators are keys to developing a strong school staff. Smith notes how crucial the role of the administrator is when recruiting and developing a quality staff. A school’s philosophy of education is an important consideration when developing a professional staff. A school’s philosophy is the base or foundation for a plan of improvement. “Whether we conclude that the central purpose of American education is to create

a thinking individual, we believe in effective schools research, or we believe education is tapping what is within or developing what people are born with, an effective plan for selection of staff and development must be founded on our beliefs" (Smith, 2008, p. 46).

Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon (2005) claimed that successful schools are a product of instructional leadership and supervision that shape the school or organization to function productively. Leadership can be defined in many ways. Burns (1978) defined leadership as influencing followers to collaborate on goals that represent the overall values of both the leader and followers. Hersey and Blanchard (1988) described leadership as having an influence on the activities of individuals or a group in achieving a goal. Glickman's et al., (2005) definition included, "For successful schools, education is a collective rather than an individual enterprise. The first order of business for a leader is to build the staff into a team, creating "professional togetherness" (p.36). Thus, effective leadership requires the ability to influence and inspire others.

Drake and Roe (1994) contended "perhaps the most effective way to make long-range improvement in organizations is to have a sound recruitment program" (p.

218). In a quest for academic excellence, the recruitment and selection processes when hiring teaching staff are important, especially regarding reading. Drake and Roe believe that building principals and other school personnel at the building level should have input in the hiring process.

Principals are responsible for the overall quality of education at their individual buildings. To assure the intended curriculum is the taught curriculum, leaders must frequently observe teachers at work in individual classrooms. "Effective principals spend considerable time observing and coaching teachers in the classroom, which enables teachers to more effectively practice the art and science of teaching" (Lunenberg & Irby, 2006, p. 116). Many principals spend an inordinate amount of time on administrative duties outside the classroom walls. Lunenberg and Ornstein (2000) noted that school principals report they do not have enough time to do everything that is needed within their job classification. They are school managers and instructional leaders. Time must be allotted for school principals to get into classrooms to observe and talk with teachers.

Reeves (2008) found that part of the concern with providing consistent, high-quality literacy programs was

that principals and classroom teachers do not have common understandings of the essential elements of effective literacy instruction. School principals need to take the lead to provide consistent, quality literacy instruction for all children. "If school leaders really believe that literacy is a priority, then they have a personal responsibility to understand literacy instruction, define it for their colleagues, and observe it daily" (p.91). Reeves conducted a survey that included over 130 schools in three school systems in various locations – West Coast, Midwest, and East Coast to verify what all three systems claimed as "nonnegotiable" standards in the area of literacy instruction. Responses revealed a significant gap between a principal's understandings of consistent delivery of literacy instruction and a teacher's actual practices. All three school systems evaluated mandated 90-minute blocks daily for literacy, with teachers allocating between 45 minutes and three hours daily within their classrooms. Discussions among teachers and principals and the methods deemed essential for effective reading instruction varied widely.

To fulfill their instructional leadership role, principals often utilize the 'walk-through' (Cervone & Martinez-Miller, 2007) or 'drop-in' visits (Hoerr, 2005)

method of observation to supervise teachers' instructional practices. But, without a clear concept and understanding of what effective literacy instruction *looks like*, this method of evaluation accomplishes little in the area of providing consistent, effective literacy instruction for children. Allington (2005) reminds us:

Good teaching, effective teaching, is not just about using whatever science says "usually" works best. It is all about finding out what works best for the individual child and the group of children in front of you. (p.462)

Reeves (2008) noted three challenges principals must address when evaluating teacher literacy instruction. These challenges include monitoring consistency in reading instruction, allowing opportunities for teachers to observe reading instruction and defining what good reading instruction means. Although a variety of definitions of effective reading instruction exists, 98% of the respondents indicated that consistency in reading instruction is essential to meet student literacy needs (2008). This is a challenge for principals to monitor. Staff development for improving reading should include teachers and principals observing others teaching reading.

Instructional leadership definitions typically deal with identifying, supporting, and developing teachers' skills. Principals' perceptions of what their role is as

instructional leader are often influenced by their own educational experiences and distinct expectations of their performance.

#### Literate Member of Society

During the early years of the school's development, an individual was considered literate if he or she could write or sign their own name. This was known as signature literacy. Later, literacy was defined as the ability to read a simple text aloud. Although no consensus definition of literacy exists today, the bar set for what it means to be literate is obviously greater than in the past.

The Bureau of the Census relies on tabulating the number of people (fourteen years or older) who had completed six years of schooling as the main criterion for functional literacy (Bormuth, 1974). Studies by Bormuth (1969, 1974) determined there was little basis to make such a claim. He noted that the number of years a person had attended school or even graduating from high school was a poor index of an individual's reading ability.

Further studies by Bormuth (1975) referred to the term literate as the "ability to respond competently to real-world reading." He expanded on this definition by noting that, "the main task of the definition is to design a

product that must thereafter be adopted as a social goal” (p. 65).

How well a person should learn to read and write is jointly determined by both his or her reading ability and the readability of the materials that he or she is required to read. Bormuth (1975) regards a person as literate “when he or she could perform well enough to obtain the maximum value from the materials being read” (p. 98). Defining the reading levels of materials that individuals will encounter in their daily lives is often arbitrary and difficult to determine.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP, 1975), in its summary of functional literacy, stated that it is “concerned only with those reading skills usually taught in schools that are essential for adequate functioning in every day life” (p. 1). This review noted that the term functional literacy lacks identification of specific skills needed by an individual or group to function in different specified situations along with the wide range of “estimates of functional literacy” among the population. “As such, functional literacy is not determined solely by the skills an individual or group acquires. It is a continuous process of applying specified skills to specified tasks” (p. 492).

Since World War II, the term functional literacy has been used to distinguish competencies to “perform tasks thought requisite to adequate adult functioning” (Kirsch & Guthrie, 1977, p. 488). This includes being able to “adequately” perform reading tasks that relate to real world experiences. According to Carroll and Chall (1975), in the Report of the Committee on Reading, the problem of literacy in the United States is “one of ensuring that every person arriving at adulthood will be able to read and understand the whole spectrum of printed material that one is likely to encounter in daily life” (p. 8).

Resnick (1987) viewed present day literacy as a “higher-order skill” that requires complex thinking.

The process of understanding a written text, as it emerges in current psychological and artificial intelligence accounts, is one in which a reader uses a combination of what is written, what he or she knows and various general processes (e.g. making inferences, noting connections, checking and organizing) to construct a plausible representation of what the author presumably had in mind (p.8).

A reading task is simultaneously a thinking task in that meanings are comprehended, interpreted, analyzed and evaluated.

Breivik (1991) discussed how literacy is more appropriately defined “as the ability of individuals to *find, read, and evaluate* the information needed to function as a productive member of society” (p. 87). This expanded



concept encompasses all the various types of literacies essential in the information age. This includes placing less emphasis on traditional sources such as lectures, predetermined textbooks and workbooks, and instructing students in ways to utilize a variety of disciplines including on-line databases, journals, government documents, etc. Such "resource-based learning" helps students utilize resources from a variety of sources (1991). It gives students the opportunity to explore the many varieties or forms of information available today and allows a variety of learning styles to be exercised in the classroom. Breivik (1991) observed that, "In efforts to combat illiteracy, information literacy, not just teaching people to read, should be our goal" (p. 87).

RAND Reading Study Group (2002) noted that public schools, "demand a universally higher level of literacy achievement than at any time in history" (p. 16) and that this demand will continue to grow in the future. Learning to read is a long-term developmental process that aims to produce a proficient adult reader who can read a variety of materials for varying purposes. To be literate today requires students to "do something" with a variety of different texts (2002).

What it means to be a literate member of society today has additionally been influenced by the encroachment of technology. The majority of students in current K-12 classrooms regularly have access to computer-based technologies. They regularly surf the Web, send and receive emails, and negotiate iPods and iPhones. These new technologies have changed the way we communicate with others. Perceptions of what constitutes a literate individual in society, has to account for these new technologies (Gillingham, Young, & Julikowich, 1994).

Although various authorities have described the specifics of present day literacy differently, the general consensus is that present day literacy requires much more than passively absorbing what is on the printed page. Individuals must attain a deep understanding of what is read, linking new information to existing schemata and utilizing this information appropriately for a variety of purposes. Being literate in today's world requires students to be competent, flexible, and much more sophisticated readers than in the past. Students need to be able to comprehend and interpret challenging material, analyze it, and ultimately negotiate it in a way that advances understanding and insight.

### Learning to Read

Understandings that are central to the idea of developmentally appropriate practices in language and literacy have roots in progressive education movement. John Dewey believed in both the sociological and psychological aspects of education. Dewey (1916) observed that language was a social instrument to communicate ideas to others, making language development fundamental to learning and social interaction. Dewey supported the importance of play curriculum and social interactions in the curriculum. "When children have a chance at physical activities which bring their natural impulses into play, going to school is a joy, management is less of a burden, and learning is easier" (p.228). Dewey proposed that school life should evolve naturally from home life and from activities with which children are familiar. Accordingly he stressed the importance of social relationships on cognitive development (1916).

### Knowledge and Language Learning as Construction

Jean Piaget (1952, 1962) contributed greatly to our understanding of how children learn and construct knowledge. Piaget (1952) viewed learning as a process, dependent on conceptual change. Change was the result of

children learning to assimilate or accommodate new information and to recreate or expand their knowledge. According to Piaget, this recreation was actually the child making sense of or accommodating new information. Piaget perceived language acquisition in children as being learned in association with their activities. Although Piaget did not study literacy development, his study of play and its impact on learning can be applied to the context of literacy learning. Piaget utilized the term *symbolic play* (1952) as a part of the progression a child experiences from the stage of egocentrism to being aware of others. Accordingly, children take on characteristics, usually during the second year of life, through symbolic play, that helps them facilitate and understand themselves and others.

The relationship between the development of thought and language is central to the theories of Piaget (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969). Piaget put forth the idea that all activities involving thought, including language, are learned as a result of activity and interactions. Children's use and interaction with objects and events in their sensory world (through seeing, touching, hearing, tasting, smelling) enables them to learn conceptually about language (1969). Piaget believed that language acquisition in children was learned in association with sensory

activities. Piaget's work provided insights into how children make sense of their world, long before entering the school setting.

Vygotsky (1978) suggested children construct knowledge about the world around them through transactions in their social community. He described communication via "zones of proximal development" (1978). These zones encompassed all of a child's learning potential at a given time. When children engage in activities and problem solving on their own, they are functioning at what he refers to as their "actual" level of development. With guidance of an adult, or more knowledgeable other, children have the potential to function at a higher level. The difference between these two levels, defines the zone of proximal development. His theory supports the idea that children construct new learning or knowledge when they engage socially in talk, activity, or problem solving situations. "In his use of this notion, which attempts to capture the process by which the social world guides and stimulates the child's development, Vygotsky in effect justifies theoretically the special role that society assigns to teachers" (Nicolopoulou, 1991, pp. 134-135).

Both Piaget and Vygotsky saw children as active constructors of knowledge. Much of Piaget's research

focused on the kinds of behaviors children exhibit when they independently engage in activities; Vygotsky (1978) asserted that it is adult guidance or the guidance of a knowledgeable or more capable other that helps facilitate new learning for children. Much of Vygotsky's work centered on the influence language and instruction has on learning for young children and the role teachers have in facilitating such learning.

Constructivist learning theory (Phillips, 2000; Resnick, 1989; Piaget & Inhelder, 1969; Kant, 1963; Piaget, 1952) focuses on the process of how knowledge is built. An individual's prior experiences, cognition and personal beliefs, along with culture, all play a role in how one "constructs" or makes meaning.

#### Knowledge and Language Learning as Conditioning

Conversely, behaviorism theory (Skinner, 1974) strongly influenced educational research and practice during the 1950's through mid 1960's time period and remains evident in educational practices today. This perspective maintains that the processes and skills needed for learning to read could be easily and clearly defined and broken down into individual parts. The continued practice of these skills in a systematic, sequenced manner

within the classroom setting is the focus. Behaviorist theory supports learning that is a result of repeated and controlled conditioning. "A teacher arranges contingencies under which the student acquires behavior which will be useful to him under other contingencies later on" (p. 202). This theory is often linked to a system of rewards and punishment regarding performance, sometimes with negative connotations.

This interpretation of learning and knowledge focused on first identifying the desired behaviors and then establishing a conditioned environment (classroom setting) that ensures desired results (Strike, 1974). "Teachers who have been trained in a set of behavioral skills and who have little comprehension of some basic principles of the educational process are not apt to cope with situations for which they have not acquired a specified behavioral repertoire. Teachers with a more general understanding of learning may be better able to adapt" (p. 112).

An increasing body of literature of this time period of the 1950's concentrated on the multitude of sub-skills needed to learn how to read. Intensive phonics instruction was seen as a vital component for beginning readers (Chall, 1983, 1967). In Chall's well-known work, *Learning to Read: The Great Debate* (1967), she claimed that beginning readers

learn better when instruction emphasizes learning the alphabetic code, with a focus on the relationship between letters and their sounds. Her analysis of the most widely used reading textbooks (basal readers), teachers manuals, and interviews with authors and editors at that time revealed that children learn less well when taught by a meaning-emphasis, at the beginning stages of learning to read. The behaviorist code emphasis was found to benefit children in their early stages of learning to read. She continued to advocate code-emphasis over a meaning-emphasis in her updated version, *Stages of Reading Development* (Chall, 1983).

Chall (1996) acknowledges that, "A beginning code-emphasis program will *not* cure all reading ills" (p. 309). Code-emphasis programs do not guarantee that all children will learn to read easily and most children in the United States today are currently learning to read by meaning-emphasis method (1996).

#### Phonic-Skill Instruction

According to Anderson, Heibert, Scott, and Wilkinson (1985) phonics is letter-to-letter sound relationships and letter-sound correspondence. Similarly, Adams (1990) used the phrase letter-sound correspondence to define phonics. Stahl, Duffy-Hester, and Stahl (1998) defined phonics as



the relationship between spelling patterns and their pronunciations.

Routman and Butler (1995) describe phonics as sound-letter relationships used in reading and writing, so that each letter, also called a grapheme of the English alphabet, corresponds to one or more sounds, called phonemes. According to Rasinski and Padak (1996) phonics can be described as the relationship between letter sounds and spelling patterns in written language as well as how a reader uses such knowledge to figure out (decode) unknown words. Cunningham (2000) simply states that phonics is letter-sound relationships, while Rycik and Rycik (2007) offers a more comprehensive definition of phonics, claiming that it is, "knowledge about letters, sounds, and words that people use to create meaning when reading and writing and the ways in which they are guided to acquire that knowledge" (p. 3).

A review of the literature going back twenty years yields a simplified yet fairly consistent definition of phonics. However, disagreement about *how* to teach phonics and about its place within the broader frame of reading and writing instruction have existed for over fifty years.

The 1970's produced a profound paradigm shift in the thinking about the teaching of phonics that persists today.

It was during this decade that researchers such as Barr (1972) began to question whether an overemphasis on teaching phonics was de-emphasizing comprehension instruction, perceived by many researchers as the ultimate goal of reading instruction.

Approximately 10% of students are good word decoders but poor comprehenders (Nation & Snowling, 1997; Yuill & Oakhill, 1991). According to Oakhill, Cain, and Bryant (2003) readers who were considered good decoders struggled with comprehension both when reading and when listening to stories being read. They concluded that these students had limited vocabularies and background knowledge. These students had often been overlooked during early grades in elementary classrooms, because the emphasis was on decoding words and not comprehension. It was noted, that if more emphasis were placed on comprehension in the early grades, students who were having difficulty learning to read could be identified earlier. Decoding skills are relatively easy to teach and most children learn them quickly. Oakhill et al., found that most students had adequate decoding skills, but poorly developed language skills and thinking skills. They emphasized the need for all grade level teachers, starting in the lower elementary grades, to focus on reading comprehension, not word decoding alone.

For many teachers, scholars and researchers, phonics instruction has remained a component of overall reading instruction. Reutzel and Cooter (1999) claimed phonics instruction is essential when learning to read because children use their knowledge of phonics when approximating pronunciations, which leads to meaning-making.

Embedded phonics instruction involves phonics instruction occurring while children are reading and writing for authentic purposes (Moustafa, 1997; Rasinski & Padak, 1996; Goodman, 1993). Teaching useful phonics, within the context of real reading and writing (with the ultimate goal of constructing meaning), has shown to benefit continued literacy learning for children. As Stahl (1992) asserts, "Quality phonics instruction should be a part of a reading program, integrated and relevant to the reading and writing of actual texts, based on and building upon children's experiences with text" (p. 625).

### Knowledge Building and Language

#### Learning as Processing

By the mid 1960's, Skinner's behaviorism theory and the idea that reading is a set of discrete skills needing to be learned in sequence began to be challenged. Research started to focus more on the learner and the learning

process with more attention being paid to the human mind and learning to read as a process.

Linguists and psycholinguists represented two communities of theorists and researchers who were influential during this time period. Linguists study the structure of language. They focus on the various physical properties of language. Linguistics, as an area of language, is concerned with the analysis or study of the nature and structure of language and also the knowledge about how sentences are formed and rules that govern language. Psycholinguists study the interdisciplinary field of psychology and linguistics that focus on language behavior.

Linguist Noam Chomsky (1964, 1965) asserted that from birth, human beings have a pre-existing disposition to learn and use language. He perceived language learning as a natural acquisition, influenced not only by the environment, but also by an individual's innate capacity. Under favorable conditions, human beings are biologically programmed to acquire language. His theory marked a significant change in thinking about language acquisition, and represented a clear departure from the behaviorists' view of learning as conditioning. This shift to seeing language acquisition as a natural process, affected the way

reading research would be conducted in the future, especially among psycholinguistics.

Unlike other researchers who believed that language acquisition is innate (Mattingly, 1972; Chomsky, 1964), Goodman and Goodman (1980) view language as a “personal-social” invention, with oral and written language learned in a similar manner. Children learn to read and write much the same way that they learn to speak and listen. Reading, like listening, consists of processing language and constructing meaning. The use of the term *natural learning* (Goodman & Goodman, 1980) does not mean that immersion itself in an environment of print will result in children learning to read. Rather, provisioning and providing conditions within the learning environment that align with the child’s natural language, along with an individual’s need to communicate is what is needed for learning to take place. According to the Goodman’s, “What reading instruction does is help children to learn” (p. 140).

#### Language as Social Activity

Human beings are social animals who need to interact and communicate in order to participate and survive. Language is both a personal and a social invention. Language function precedes form in language development (Goodman & Goodman, 1980; Halliday 1975). The need to

communicate with others motivates language development in children.

Our contention is that acquisition of literacy is an extension of natural language learning for all children. Instruction consistent with this process will facilitate learning. Instruction that does not build on the process of natural language learning, will neutralize or blunt the force of their language learning strengths and may become counterproductive. To become literate, learners may then have to overcome barriers placed in their way. (Goodman, 1980, p. 138)

Children develop print awareness at an early age and often without formal instruction. As children become more aware of the print in their environment, they seek out and begin to assign meaning (Goodman, 1980).

The Goodman's maintain that the functions of written language often taught in school, which include the mechanics of reading and writing, are of no use to children outside the school setting for their own purposes of communication. The social-personal functions of the written language no longer are present for the students once they leave the school setting (Goodman, 1980). This is an example of how function precedes form and children have acquired all functions prior to entering the school setting. "Similarly, the language of children expands to serve their needs as they become fully interactive with their communities" (p. 144). In other words, children learn

language through the relevant use of language in the context of personal meaning and purpose.

### Whole Language Instruction

Goodman's (2004, 1980, 1976) research on reading miscues supports the view that "proficient reading is a process in which readers integrate graphophonic, syntactic, and semantic information as they strive to construct meaning" (1980, p. 149). It is the ability to process language and construct meaning that readers depend on to develop reading competence. "Within meaningful, functional use of written language, children naturally, quickly, and easily learn to use these same strategies with the new graphic inputs in the new contexts" (1980, p. 150).

Written language development and oral language development are mutually dependent. "As children become literate, the two systems become interactive and children use each to support the other when they need to" (Goodman, 1980, p. 150). Educators need to continue to observe and study proficient readers and develop curricula based on what literacy learners already know. "Learning to read, like learning to listen, is a natural process for children in a literate society" (Goodman, 1980, p. 153).

Similar to Goodman, Smith (1973) maintained that all human languages follow similar rules both in oral language

and print or reading. Although grammatical patterns and rules in languages operate differently, readers need to use their grammatical competence similarly when reading. Smith studied how readers utilize the three cueing systems (graphophonic, syntactic, semantic) simultaneously and interdependently when reading. In his research, he encountered many children who focused on matching letters to sounds and often had little if any sense of reading for meaning. Reading requires effective use of strategies that make it possible for a reader to select the most productive cues when reading.

Smith (1977, 1973) recommends that teachers need to respond to what students are trying to do when reading. "Making learning to read easy means ensuring cues at the time a child needs them, ensuring feedback of the kind he requires at the time he requires it, providing encouragement when it is sought" (1973, p. 195). From this perspective teachers must have an understanding of the reading process and what the child is trying to do. Learning to read comes from the child, in the context of reading for meaning and understanding.

According to Smith (1998), "Reading and writing should come as effortlessly as the understanding and mastery of speech. Everything else – all the more prominent exercises,



drills, corrections, and tests – are distractions and sometimes insuperable obstacles on the way to literacy” (p.25). Smith proposes that all children need to see themselves as members of the *literacy club* (1998) to develop as literate individuals. Long before children enter school, they are members of some kind of literacy club. The role of teachers is to welcome and extend literacy knowledge based on contexts familiar to individual children. Too often, many children encounter reading and writing situations in school that don’t make sense to them and hinder their participation as literacy club members. “Students who do well are inclined to think that all of their educational experience was good for them. Students who do poorly are inclined and encouraged to believe that ‘failure’ reflects their own inadequacies” (p.93). In this way, instructional programs in school must build on the development of the literacy already taking place when children enter school. Instruction should expand on existing knowledge, strategies, and expertise in the language children bring with them to school. Children need to continue to develop strategies and improve their strategies to make meaning while reading.

## Components of Language

Language is a meaning based system of communication that operates on two levels - surface and deep, regardless if spoken or written (Kucer, 2001; Smith, 1994). The surface structure includes the physical aspect or characteristics that can be measured by visual information, such as the printed marks for writing and loudness of sounds for speech (Smith, 1994). These are the parts of language that you access through the use of your eyes or ears. The deep structure is the meaning of language, either written or spoken. "Meanings do not lie at the surface of language but far more profoundly in the users of language: in the *intentions* of the speaker or writer and in the *interpretations* of the listener or reader" (Smith, 1994, p.26).

Halliday (1973) has also influenced this area of study. Halliday believed children acquire language as they need it in order to function in their world. Children acquire language to communicate with others, to socialize and to help them find out about their environment. Language is learned because of what children do with it. Halliday's list of functions language can serve include:

1. Instrumental: (I want) Language used for the satisfaction of material needs, a means of getting things.

2. Regulatory: (Do as I tell you) Language used to control behaviors, feelings, or attitudes of others.
3. Interactional: (Me and you) Language used to interact with others, forms and maintains personal relationships.
4. Personal: (Here I come) Language used to express individuality, self; developed largely through linguistic interaction.
5. Heuristic: (Tell me why) Use of language to learn, explore reality.
6. Imaginative: (Let's pretend) Language used to create, making up stories, poems, etc.
7. Representational: (I've got something to tell you) Language used to communicate information to someone else. (Halliday, 1973)

Language then, is defined or utilized based on the child's intentions. Halliday proposed that it was the language user who must link the surface structure with the deep structure (1973).

Psycholinguists continued to influence our knowledge about learning to read and the reading processes well into the 1970's and 1980's. Research studies during this time period supported individualistic interpretations (comprehension) of written text, based on what the individual reader brought to the learning situation.

### Transactional Learning Theory

Building on the previously discussed work of Dewey (Dewey & Bentley, 1949; Dewey, 1938) Louise Rosenblatt's *transactional learning theory* (1978) greatly influenced how teachers viewed learning and teaching and how they extended

literacy learning opportunities in classrooms. The various functions texts serve were explored by Rosenblatt (1978) in her study. In *Literature as Exploration* (1995) Rosenblatt detailed the foundational components of her theory. Her use of the terms *efferent* (what is to be carried away from the reading) and *aesthetic* (the meaning and understanding created by the individual reader) are important to her idea of reading (Rosenblatt, 1978). Rosenblatt asserted that meaning does not reside in the written word, but is constructed by the individual as the text is read. "The two-way reciprocal relation explains why the meaning is not "in" the text or "in" the reader. The poem or the novel or the play exists in the transaction that goes on between reader and text" (1995, p.27).

Like Smith and Goodman, Rosenblatt felt that readers bring personal experiences, including their knowledge of language and the world around them, to each reading situation and that this is mainly what affects what is taken away from the reading event. Teachers who recognize and value the literacy knowledge that individuals bring to the reading of a text, are poised to support and extend children in the classroom. When teachers have this understanding, they view learning and teaching of literature through a different lens, in that they allow for

individual interpretations of text and for the creation and extension of personal meaning. The result of any transaction (between reader and text) is all about deriving meaning (Rosenblatt, 1978).

Such a stance (efferent or aesthetic) also helps us to understand the act of writing (Rosenblatt, 1978). Both readers and writers develop a framework or purpose that guides and helps construct meaning. Every reading and writing act falls somewhere on the efferent or aesthetic continuum (1978). Through discussion in classroom settings, teachers can facilitate continued growth in both reading and writing. Teachers who support interaction and conversations among group members in the classroom community help foster growth and "cross-fertilization" in both the reading and writing processes (1978). Here the teacher assumes the role of facilitator in the classroom setting, with students actively engaging in meaning-making situations in both reading and writing.

### Social and Cultural Contexts

The social dimensions of written language are also key to understanding literacy (Kucer, 2001). Social aspects, "situates literacy in the individual person, rather than in the society of which that person is a member. As such, it obscures the multiple ways in which reading, writing, and

language inter-relate with the workings of power and desire in social life" (Gee, 1990, p. 27). Social and cultural contexts influence how children learn and how they extend their literacy knowledge. According to Villegas and Lucas (2002) classroom teachers need to have sociocultural consciousness when working with children in the classroom. They believe that teachers need to recognize, appreciate, and value the different ways children perceive the world and make meaning.

One of the difficulties that many young children encounter as they enter the school setting is bridging the gap between their personal home culture and the culture of public schooling. For many students, home life and culture differ greatly from the school culture they encounter in the classroom, often limiting school success (Irvine 2003; Delpit, 1995; Heath, 1983).

Gee's (1990) concept of *Discourse Community* helped educators to understand the challenges such students face as they enter school. Gee uses the term 'discourse' to mean a socially accepted way of using language and identifying oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group (p. 143). We all are members of various discourse communities (e.g. families, religion, sports, ethnicity). Individual discourse communities have rules and cultures that identify

with the members of a given group. Children from White and middle class homes more easily filter into a school discourse community that aligns and matches with their home (the majority of the teachers in public schools are White and from middle-income backgrounds) discourse community. Students who arrive at school from home cultures that do not match the school are naturally at a disadvantage. In the classroom environment, students unfamiliar with school discourse may not understand the instructional language used by the teacher for lessons. Meaning rests, in this case, not in the words themselves but in the shared understanding of word meanings within the social contexts used (Gee, 1990; Heath, 1983). The sociocultural context of the learning environment must be considered to equalize learning opportunities for all children. Au (1993) referred to this mismatch between the school and home as *cultural discontinuity* and claimed it can be seen in how teachers interact with students within the classroom setting. Classroom activities, for instance, that do not match with the cultural perspective(s) of all students often leave minority group students at a higher risk for school failure. Several studies (Purcell-Gates, 1995; Taylor, 1983; Teale & Sulzby, 1986) confirmed that children who do well in school usually share a frame of reference or

cultural match with teachers, the classroom setting, the curriculum taught, and the language used. Discourses that children learn at home and within their communities that did not match with schools (Gee, 1999) often lead to learning barriers. "Cognitive development occurs in socioculturally organized activities in which children are active in learning and in managing their social partners and their partners are active in structuring situations that provide children with access to observe and participate in culturally valued skills and perspectives" (Rogoff, 1990, p. 114).

Previous to entering the formal school setting, children encounter varying levels of support for early reading and writing (McGill-Franzen & Lanford, 1994). Some children have access to a wide range of reading and writing materials prior to entering school. For the classroom teacher, this means a variety of levels of literacy knowledge exists within any given classroom group and this places the challenges on the teacher to meet these diverse needs. In this same way, this also means that no one teaching method or approach will be effective for all children (Cunningham & Allington, 2007; Taylor, Pearson, Clark, & Walpole, 2000; Strickland, 1994). Teachers must



employ a variety of teaching strategies to support the continued literacy learning of all children.

### Models of Literacy Learning

Literacy instruction in schools can range from a phonic-skills based approach to a wholistic approach. Phonic and skills-based approaches are likely to specify a sequence of skills the child should learn. A wholistic approach, also referred to as whole language, assumes that reading and writing are learned from whole to part (Goodman, 1986). Whole language theory supporters believe that learners should experience language in authentic ways. Within the whole language model, written and oral language are viewed as complementary processes, not separate ones. Student choice regarding reading material and topics for writing are key components of whole language practices.

### Engagement

Engagement is recognized as a key component of literacy learning (Scharer, Pinnell, Lyons, & Fountas, 2005; Taylor, Pearson, Peterson, & Rodriguez, 2003; Cambourne, 1995). Cambourne identified four principles of engagement necessary for literacy learning to occur:

1. Learners are more likely to engage deeply with demonstrations if they believe that they are capable of ultimately learning or doing whatever is being demonstrated.

2. Learners are more likely to engage deeply with demonstrations if they believe that learning whatever is being demonstrated has some potential value, purpose, and use for them.
3. Learners are more likely to engage with demonstrations if they're free from anxiety.
4. Learners are more likely to engage with demonstrations given by someone they like, respect, admire, trust, and would like to emulate. (1995, p. 188).

In his efforts to solidify a theory about literacy learning, Cambourne established four processes (transformation, discussion/reflection, application, and evaluation) that work together with his conditions of learning (1995). The role of the teacher, in his or her efforts to promote and extend literacy learning for children, is to provide a classroom environment supporting student engagement and collaboration among group members. "We discovered that when these principles are consciously applied, teachers begin to employ a pro-learning, pro-reading, pro-writing discourse, which in turn set in motion certain processes and personal relationships that are conducive to learning literacy" (Cambourne, 1995, p.188).

At the Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement (CIERA), Taylor, Pearson, Clark, and Walpole (2000) investigated classroom and school practices in schools where children were experiencing high achievement and compared them to similar schools where children were not (2000). This study included 70 first-, second-, and

third-grade teachers from 14 schools in four states. They identified two low and two average readers from each classroom and gathered data from both fall and spring semesters. The research team found that the most effective teachers shared the following qualities: (a) higher pupil engagement, (b) more small-group instruction time, (c) more teacher coaching in word recognition, (d) teachers asked higher-level comprehension questions, (e) engaged in more communication with parents, and (f) children were allowed to engage in independent reading in class (2000).

#### Impact of Culture

More recently, research (Gee, 2000) has focused on individual culture and how this factor influenced how an individual responds to and makes meaning of material being read. This sociocultural frame encompasses the complexity of literacy learning and the individual's role in comprehending material read. Galda and Beach (2001) ascertained that student led discussions increased individual participation and were valuable venues for promoting comprehension. This format, combined with teacher modeling and facilitation of discussions, used talk as a tool for thinking about and responding to text. In addition, students extended their responses and

comprehension through the use of writing, images, and other graphics (2001).

Galda, Ash, and Cullinan (2000) confirmed that teacher-led discussions increased students' ability to make connections between personal behaviors and language. The teacher's facilitative role in helping students develop discussion strategies, through authentic talk about text, engaged readers for personal purposes. Although research has supported the importance of authentic talk and discussion to enhance engagement and comprehension, many classrooms still rely on teacher question and student response format (Mehan, 1979). Utilizing a format where the teacher and students are co-inquirers (Rabinowitz & Smith, 1998) provides opportunities for students and teachers to develop literacy competence across a variety of texts and tasks.

Dyson's (2003) ethnographic study of young minority children emphasized the important role teachers play in recognizing the varied literacy knowledge that minority children bring to the classroom. Too often, teachers working with students of color do not recognize or value the literacy knowledge these children possess and instead assume that they lack literacy knowledge. "The nothing assumption rests on a concern that "diverse" children are

more apt to come to school without literacy skills" (p. 101).

Dyson (2003) investigated how children of color had many communication practices – written language, drawing, music, video, and TV for example – that educators neglected to appreciate. "Their landscape is filled with interrelated communication practices, involving different kinds of symbol systems, different technologies and different ideologies or ideas about how the world works" (p. 103). Drawing on the work of Marie Clay (1995) and her constructivist view of written language, Dyson recognized the flexibility that these children had with different sign symbols and how they used their known resources (different symbols to represent what they wanted to communicate) in the school setting. According to Dyson (2003), "their pathways into school literacy are found in the converging and diverging trajectories of practices. The ideal developmental outcome of these processes is not only flexibility and adaptability with written conventions but also with symbol systems and with social conventions" (p.105). Dyson's point is that teachers must be able to recognize the various communication resources that children bring with them to the classroom. Teachers are expected to

mediate the transition from home to school by making the curriculum "more responsive to children's worlds" (p. 108).

### Inquiry Learning

Short and Burke (1996) recommended an "inquiry" approach to teaching that represents a theoretical shift in how teachers view curriculum, students, learning, and teaching. At the heart of this approach is the personal and social knowledge individual students bring from their home environments. The idea is to build a curriculum *from* the interests and knowledge of the individuals and to negotiate *with* students on curriculum decisions (1996). Short & Burke (1996) note how, "Inquiry changes how we view knowledge and the role of content and process in thinking and schools" (p. 103). Extending what she learned through personal experience, Short (1999) believes that an inquiry curricula framework will provide children with rich literature opportunities that connect to their lives (1999). Her curricular model for language learning highlight the "interdependence and interconnections between literacy and literature engagements within a curriculum based in inquiry" (p. 134). Instead of separating instruction by content areas, Short (1999) asserts that teachers need to start with a question or topic of interest based on the student's life and collaboratively determine and

investigate questions relevant to it. The role of the teacher is to facilitate personal "inquiry" and learning as students develop questions and problem solve together.

### Integrated Curriculum

A study by Cantrell (1999) focused on examining the impact specific teaching practices have on students' literacy learning. Cantrell placed her focus on developmentally appropriate practices used within an integrated curriculum that highlighted a meaning-centered approach to teaching reading and writing. Through classroom observations and interviews, data were collected to make judgments about teacher effectiveness and overall reading and writing achievement. Four out of the eight teachers in the study were deemed to have successfully implemented the meaning-focused literacy program (Cantrell, 1999).

Successful practices noted included:

1. Reading aloud to students and utilizing a wide variety of literature. Teachers also encouraged independent reading of books chosen by students.
2. Effective teachers utilized flexible grouping of students for reading instruction daily. These groups were based on the needs of the students and group members were changed on a regular basis.
3. Effective teachers engaged students in open-ended writing activities for a variety of purposes and utilized student self-evaluation practices.
4. Most skill instruction was connected to meaning-centered activities. (Cantrell, 1999)

Cantrell claims that, "it appeared that these effective teachers achieved a balance between wholistic teaching and instruction that systematically exposed students to specific reading and writing skills" (Cantrell, 1999, p. 377). The results of her study have been used to support a balanced approach toward the teaching of reading and a whole language philosophy toward literacy learning (Cowen, 2003; Blair-Larsen & Williams, 1999; Metsala, Wharton-McDonald, Rankin, Mistretta, Yokoi, & Ettenberger 1997; Goodman, 1986).

### Strategic Readers

Scharer, Pinnell, Lyons, and Fountas (2005) discussed the importance of teaching in a manner that allows students to understand how effective readers use strategies that support their continued literacy learning. They emphasized the importance of teachers applying a variety of instructional approaches to enhance comprehension. Specifically, they identified interactive read aloud strategies to actively engage students in literacy learning and small group guided reading sessions to focus teaching on individual student literacy needs (2005) as means to enhance comprehension. Their claim is that engaging students in purposeful discussions through the use of



teacher modeling builds vocabulary knowledge and increases comprehension.

### Conclusions

Success in school and life depends greatly on one's ability to adequately read and write in a variety of genres and contexts. Providing appropriate literacy instruction for all children to ensure competency in the area of reading and writing is a top priority for elementary teachers and principals alike. Therefore, elementary principals need to possess knowledge about literacy learning, specifically learning to read.

The role of teachers in promoting literacy is obvious and undeniable. But literacy leadership on the part of principals is not yet fully recognized. Because principals are instructional leaders who are expected to support classroom teachers, they should have an adequate knowledge of reading development and the appropriate use of methods and materials for reading instruction.

Effective teachers make instructional decisions and adaptations based on their knowledge of the reading and writing processes, as it might apply to the diverse needs of the children in their classrooms. Literacy instruction should be responsive to individual differences and should

extend and build relationships between home and school cultures.

But theoretical differences exist in the way reading instruction is implemented in the classroom. Specifically, three primary orientations toward literacy learning include a phonic, skill, or whole language approach, which is the focus of this study. However, while research has examined the role of teachers' theoretical orientation and resultant practices (DeFord, 1985; Shavelson, 1983; Smith, 1994), little work has been done on the theoretical orientation of elementary principals as it pertains to reading.

#### Phonic Theoretical Orientation

A phonic approach toward the teaching of reading has been examined by many literacy scholars (Rycik & Rycik, 2007; Cunningham, 2000; Stahl, Duffy-Hester, & Stahl, 1998; Stahl, 1992; Adams, 1990; Bond & Dykstra, 1967; Clymer, 1963). However, it is important to note that within the body of phonics research, there are five distinct phonic approaches, including: synthetic, analytic, analogic, spelling-based, and embedded phonics instruction. (see Appendix D). Support for each individual approach can be found. Phonics instruction typically requires the use of predictable text, text that is created to strengthen a

specific phonic skill. The phonics approach can be viewed as part of a skills-based approach to reading instruction.

### Skill Theoretical Orientation

Skills-based approaches reflect an orientation that assumes there is a set of skills that must be taught, along with a sequence for the teaching of skills in order for children to learn to read. For example, within a skills-based orientation children must first learn letters and sounds, individual words, and then sentences in order to read (Foorman & Torgeson, 2001; Ehri, 1998; Adams, 1990; Evans & Carr, 1985). Currently, there is little disagreement about the important role of alphabetic principle, the skills needed to learn to read, but there continues to be disagreement on how mastery of such skills should be accomplished instructionally (Foorman & Torgeson, 2001).

Events of the last decade, specifically the release of the Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching Children to Read (NRP) (2000) and the reauthorization of the former Elementary Secondary Educational Act (ESEA) as NCLB (2002) have increased scrutiny on elementary classroom literacy learning and supported a more phonic and skill-based approach to the teaching of reading.

### Whole Language Theoretical Orientation

Proponents of a whole language orientation to teaching reading believe that students can learn to read as naturally as they learn to speak (Smith, 1998, 1973; Stahl, 1992; Goodman, 1984; Goodman & Goodman, 1980). Within a whole language orientation, children learn and understand that the focus of reading is meaning, not phoneme recognition. Whole language is child-centered. Language instruction occurs in a print-rich environment wherein the teacher coaches and supports children through the use of meaningful texts. Whole language reading instruction is a meaning-based approach. Instruction that considers each child's background, strengths, and needs is what determines the focus of teaching. Children are expected to read quality literature, integrate writing instruction with reading, and learn sight words in the context of meaning-focused activities.

Evidence for the effectiveness of a whole language orientation is drawn from the work of Smith (1998, 1973), Stahl (1992), Goodman (1984), Goodman and Goodman (1980). Approaches based in whole language have generally yielded successful results in the teaching of reading.

With an array of approaches that result from different theoretical orientations, and the existence of research

that can support each orientation, an investigation that explored the existing theoretical orientation of a group of Iowa elementary principals can be telling. The purpose of the study was not to embrace one orientation and resultant set of practices over another, or to say that one perspective is better than another. Rather, the purpose of the study was to examine what orientations prevailed within the principal population. Literacy leadership is in its beginning stages, as evidenced by the lack of research surrounding the topic. The overall purpose of my study was to explore if background experience as a teacher, level of education, and key demographic factors result in a particular theoretical orientation.

### CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This study aims to determine the theoretical orientation that Iowa elementary principals hold toward the teaching of reading in the elementary school classroom. The idea is to see if any one of three orientations seem to prevail against numerous demographic considerations and principal background factors. The three orientations include a phonic based approach which values the isolation of phonemes and the decoding of smaller than word level language units also known as (individual phonemes). The second orientation is classified as skill based. It focuses on isolation of skills being taught with an emphasis on word or sight word recognition. And the third perspective is classified as whole language, in which no isolation of skills are taught and reading instruction is seen as anchored fundamentally in developing a sense of story or text (DeFord, 1985).

By determining an individual principal's personal perspective or theoretical orientation toward the teaching and learning of reading within the elementary classroom, this study can speak to differences in the way that reading instruction is supported across school landscapes. It can also identify trends in the orientations against principals' background factors.

Specifically, the research questions asked:

1. What are the theoretical orientations of Iowa elementary principals regarding reading instruction?
2. Do these perspectives differ across the experience and qualifications of principals by:
  - a. time spent as a classroom teacher?
  - b. time spent as a principal?
  - c. degrees or endorsements achieved in the area of literacy learning?
  - d. Do these perspectives differ by the demographic characteristics of the schools in which these principals work including:
    - by classification of Title 1 status,
    - by minority representation of school populations, and
    - by school size?

Iowa Public Schools'

Background Data

The state of Iowa experienced a 2.1% population growth from 1999 to 2009 (Iowa Department of Education, 2009) in comparison to the national growth average of 7.2%. Seventy-

five of Iowa's ninety-nine counties experienced a population decline during this time period, with only four counties experiencing a 10% or more increase in their population.

Minorities are counted as any person except White, non-Hispanic (Iowa Department of Education, 2009; U.S. Census Bureau). In 2008, 34% of the national population was classified as minority, with Iowa's minority rate at 9.4%. Sixty-two counties in Iowa had populations with less than 5% of the people classified as minority, twenty-nine counties had a 5% to 14.9% minority population and eight counties had a 15% or higher minority population.

During this same time period, an estimate of the national average of people living below the poverty level was 13.3%, with Iowa estimated to have 10.8% of its population living in poverty. Thirty-seven counties in Iowa had less than 10% of the population living below the poverty level, with the counties in the southern-most section of Iowa having a larger percentage of people living below the poverty level.

In 2008, 13.9% of children (under the age of 18) living in the state of Iowa were considered living below the poverty level, in comparison to the national average of 18.3%. The national average per capita income was \$36,714



(Iowa Department of Education, 2009) with Iowa's average income reported as \$33,038. Nationally, Iowa had the twenty-second lowest per capita income.

### Schools' Enrollment Trends

Iowa public schools' enrollment trends showed a decade long year decline through to 2007-2008. This time period witnessed an overall 5% decrease in the enrollment of students K-12 in Iowa's public schools (Iowa Department of Education, 2009). However, during this same time period, enrollment of Iowa schools' minority students increased. During the 2007-2008 school year, more than 72,000 minority students were enrolled in Iowa's schools. The state's public schools have experienced an 81% increase in minority students over the last 10 years and now account for approximately 15% of the total student body.

Also during this time period, with the increase of minority students enrolled in Iowa schools, the number of students classified as English Language Learners (ELL) has risen. The number of Hispanic students in Iowa's public schools increased by nearly 150% over the past 10 years. Increases in other minority groups included: African Americans 64%, Native Americans 26%, and Asians 26%. In 2007-2008, nearly 20,000 ELL students were enrolled in Iowa schools. This number was more than double the ELL students

enrolled in the previous ten years. 14,600 of the ELL students identified their primary language as Spanish, with Bosnian and Vietnamese representing the other two primary languages identified (Iowa Department of Education, 2009).

### Principal Characteristics

During 2007–2008, 364 public school districts in the state of Iowa employed 664 elementary school principals. Over the past decade the average age of all Iowa public school principals increased to 48.4 years old. Female principals in the public schools increased from 27.1% in 1997–1998 to 37% in 2007–2008 and minority principals decreased from 3.3% to 2.5% (Iowa Department of Education, 2009).

Principals with an advanced degree decreased from 98.1% in 1997–1998 to 88% in 2007–2008. Overall, in the largest school districts, 57.6% of principals were female, 9.7% were minority, and 92% of the principals in the ten largest districts held advanced degrees in 2007–2008 (Iowa Department of Education, 2009).

### Study Participants

Elementary school principals are the chief curriculum leaders of their schools. Part of these responsibilities include engaging in literacy leadership. Literacy

leadership, which not only requires specific literacy knowledge, but also, the skill sets, dispositions, and ability to inspire, manage, and supervise a wide range of educators and students. Elementary literacy leadership also involves having content knowledge (Booth & Rowsell, 2007, 2002; Cummins, 2006), knowledge of best practices (Cunningham & Allington, 2007; Rasinski, 2003; Finn, 1999; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998), and expertise in management and supervisory practices (Hoerr, 2005; National Association of Elementary School Principals [NAESP], 2002; Pellicer, 1999; Sergiovanni, 1992). Not surprisingly, it is the principal who typically guides the professional development process in his or her school. As standard #2 of the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) states, "An educational leader promotes the success of every student by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth" (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008, p. 14).

Identifying specific teacher characteristics that are tied to teacher effectiveness, especially in the area of reading instruction, is a key skill for elementary school principals. Enlisted with the job of recruiting, hiring, and sustaining quality staff that positively impacts the

overall literacy learning of children in elementary classrooms, an elementary principal's theoretical orientation toward literacy learning and knowledge of practices are important features of understanding their outlook on reading instruction.

At the elementary school level, hiring qualified literacy instructors has an influence on the success and achievement of students (Olsen, 2008; Darling-Hammond & Berry, 2006; Stein & Nelson, 2003; Darling-Hammond, 2000). Evaluating the theoretical orientation of principals and the characteristics they value in prospective teachers plays a significant role in helping us to understand the kind of reading practices that might be most valued in the classroom.

#### Target Population

The target population (Groves, Fowler, Couper, (Lepkowski, Singer, & Tourangeau, 2004) for this study included all 2009-2010 elementary public school principals within the state of Iowa. At the time of this writing, there were 654 public school elementary principals (Iowa Educational Directory, 2009) in the state of Iowa.

#### Sampling Frame

The sampling frame (Groves et al., 2004) included the entire target population, or, all public elementary school

principals in the state of Iowa for the 2009–2010 school year. The *Iowa Educational Directory* (2009) was accessed to identify the sampling frame. This directory is an annual publication of all administrative personnel for the 361 school districts in the state of Iowa. Each individual school district annually provides the Iowa Department of Education with current administrative data. All public school districts provide names of administrators, phone numbers, and school district email addresses for the directory. All public school elementary principals listed in this document were included in the sampling frame. All members of the sampling frame were contacted through their designated email accounts included in this directory.

#### Researcher Stance

After 18 years of teaching, all within the state of Iowa, at both the elementary K-5 and middle level 6-8, along with post-secondary levels teaching in the area of literacy learning, I remain vitally interested in the attitudes and knowledge base of Iowa's elementary administrators in the area of teaching children to read. As a career literacy educator, I am enormously concerned about what knowledge elementary principals in the state possess, given an elementary principal is responsible for

recruitment and retention of staff, especially those charged with teaching children to read.

### Research Design

Quantitative survey data was generated for this study. This format was chosen because of the large population of subjects to be included. Data were gathered for the study through the use of an email survey questionnaire.

### Survey Instrument

I elected to use the Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP) survey instrument developed by DeFord (1985). TORP, as a survey instrument, has shown valid results when used with classroom teachers. The Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile survey has shown to be a reliable instrument for predicting teachers' practices in the teaching of reading, based on their personal theoretical orientation to the teaching of reading. I deduced the TORP instrument therefore, was a reliable measure of a principal's theoretical orientation to reading instruction. These orientations then are likely to influence the evaluation of teachers supervised by the principals, the kind of teachers hired by the principals and the kind of reading practices most likely to be valued and applied in the classroom.

Few studies have tried to identify what teacher characteristics principals prefer (Balter & Duncombe 2006; Harris, Rutledge, Ingle, & Thompson, 2006; Liu & Johnson, 2006) when making hiring decisions. Balter & Duncombe (2006) and Strauss, Bowes, Marks, and Plesko (2000) found that teacher recruitment efforts are highly localized and individualized, and that principals carry substantial autonomy when hiring teachers. However, there was a paucity of research examining elementary principals' literacy knowledge and the potential impact such knowledge might have on various features of the school setting. If learning to read is deemed the top priority for elementary children (Criscuolo, 1984, 1974; McCormick, 1979), the theoretical orientations the elementary principal possesses toward reading instruction is an obviously important consideration.

In their comprehensive review of literature on principals' preferences, Harris, Rutledge, Ingle & Thompson (2006) noted that there was no good link between preferred characteristics in the hiring of teachers and actual teacher effectiveness. They noted that previous research suggested that principals prefer teachers who are enthusiastic and have strong communication skills. But in their own study, Harris, Rutledge, Ingle, and Thompson

(2006) identified strong teaching skills (not well defined), as caring, knowledge of subject, ability to work with others, enthusiasm, and communication skills.

Baker and Cooper (2005) found evidence that many principals put little emphasis on a candidate's academic background, and often project their own academic background as most desirable in candidates. Based on this premise, principals' orientation regarding what constitutes quality reading instruction could be an essential factor.

### Survey

The survey begins with twenty-eight statements that depict practices associated with one of three theoretical orientations, a phonic, skill, or whole language approach to the teaching of reading. A five point Likert (DeVellis, 2003) scale was used to gauge variance, using a strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree or disagree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree continuum as choices. The use of total group score comparisons offered descriptive data to support tentative hypothesis regarding the preferences of these principals toward the three orientations. Although more items could be addressed, the statement items included in the TORP instrument are consistent with findings in the research literature and items included in several literacy surveys (Ogle, 2007; Leu



& Kinzer, 2003; Flippo, 2001, 1999; Kucer, 2001) on teaching children to read.

The survey also collected key demographic data on the respondents and their respective schools. Demographic information gathered included: gender, age, ethnicity of principal, years of classroom teaching experience, years as a principal, degrees held by individual principals, the socioeconomic status of the schools these principals presided over, minority population of the student body of the schools these principals work in, and the total school population (see Appendix A).

#### Survey Mode

Initially an electronic letter, disseminated by email, was distributed to all public school district elementary principals across the state of Iowa. This letter notified each individual subject of the purpose of the study and my current affiliation with the University of Iowa as a doctoral candidate. As per human subjects research requirements, this initial electronic letter included information regarding voluntary participation in the study, as well as notifying all individuals of confidentiality guidelines. This initial email letter also conveyed the importance of the study, subject's role as a participant, and possible publication of study findings at a later date.

In addition, I informed all potential research subjects that the survey could be accessed through a link at the bottom of the email; and that if they agreed to participate in the research study, their consent was implied when they clicked the link to access the survey (see Appendix B).

Twenty-four hours after the initial email letter was disseminated to all potential subjects, all 'delivery failure' emails that had been returned to my email inbox as 'undeliverable' were noted. These addresses were then double-checked for accuracy.

The first step verifying correctness of undeliverable emails included cross-checking information by accessing the school Web site to see if the individual was listed as a principal within the district. Next, I verified the correct email for the individual. If email verification was not confirmed, I called the school district to verify employment of the individual principal and his or her correct school district email address. A duplicate email letter was sent to all individuals whose email was deemed 'delivery failure' from the initial email (see Appendix B). Five days after the original email letter was distributed, a second email letter was sent to all Iowa elementary principals who had not responded to the initial email

letter asking them to participate in this study (see Appendix C).

### Evaluation of Survey Instrument

Prior to administering the survey to the target population for data collection, the survey was pretested against survey guidelines advocated by Dillman (2007). First, an informal review of the cognitive quality of the questions included in the survey and motivational qualities of the survey were addressed. For this process, I elicited the input of graduate students attending an Iowa state university. This process was conducted to test the survey instrument for clarity of questions and interpretation of individual questions by respondents completing the survey.

Next, I solicited the input of several individuals who had no contact throughout the preliminary stages of developing the survey, to take the survey individually and relate any feedback that they had regarding any portion of the survey. This included individuals who may or may not have had much knowledge of literacy learning development.

### Ethical Issues

Individuals included in the target population were not required to read or sign any written informed consent document before allowing participation in this research

study. The University of Iowa (UI) Institutional Review Board (IRB) determined this study qualified for exempt status, so no documentation from individual subjects was required.

All correspondence with the subjects clearly stated that his or her participation was completely voluntary. If after reading the initial email letter, subjects chose to click the link and take the survey, consent was implied.

In order to ensure subject confidentiality, care was taken to keep all response data secure and access to data limited. Responses were recorded and stored electronically. I stored and maintained all data files on two computers that were password protected and located in offices that were locked and secured at all times. Any subject identification information was removed or coded before any results, either preliminary or final, were released. All correspondence with subjects included a confidentiality statement assuring subjects that any release of information would only report group aggregated statistics, assuring individuals that neither they nor their institutions would be identified in the study.

#### Limitations

The *Iowa Educational Directory* (2009) utilized for the sampling frame is a reliable document compiled from

information submitted directly to the Iowa Department of Education. The directory includes the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of all Iowa schools and email addresses of school administrators. The information collected is verified annually in August. One limitation of this study could be associated with coverage error (Dillman, 2007), which can happen when using a contact list that is only updated and published once per year. Given the stability of the target population and the average age of public school principals as 48.4, within ten years of possible retirement age, I anticipated that this error was small. The fact that principals and individual school districts are required to submit information directly to the State of Iowa helped to ensure the directory's (and thus, sample's) accuracy. Nevertheless, there was some coverage error (Dillman, 2007) due to principals leaving their positions or new principals filling vacancies. After distributing the initial email letter, following up on all 'delivery failure' notices received, and distributing a second email soliciting participation of all elementary principals I felt I minimized coverage error.

Generally speaking, sampling error (Dillman, 2007) was not a concern with the study because the entire target population received the survey instrument. Unit

nonresponse, however, was noted as a potential limitation because all potential subjects were given only two opportunities to participate in the research study.

The potential for measurement error (Dillman, 2007) was also present in the study. Many of the survey questions were written with the assumption that all elementary school principals are familiar with the language and concepts associated with literacy education. It is likely there were some subjects who were not familiar with the language or concepts addressed on the survey.

Additionally, other limitations are noted in regard to the low sample size (16%), and lack of demographic similarity of sample with total Iowa principal population. With a sample size of 16% no generalization of findings are noted. The purpose of this study was to learn the theoretical perspectives of study participants toward the teaching of reading in elementary classrooms. Because the sample size was small, no generalizations of data existed. Demographics of study participants did not mirror the total principal population across the state of Iowa. This study did produce some interesting trends and findings, but lacked sufficient data to generalize findings.

## Analysis

Completed survey data were analyzed utilizing two software programs. Both Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) (Yockey, 2008; Sarantabko, 2007; Antonius, 2003) software and SurveyMonkey software (SurveyMonkey, 2010) were used when analyzing the data. A chart representing overall raw data results is included in Appendix D.

Data analysis first included preparing an electronic data file with SPSS software. Because this was an exploratory study, I utilized percentages to compare the frequency of different categories, how individual respondents answered specific questions, searching for an overall totality of the sample. Because the number of subjects that participated in the study was 104, percentages worked well to aggregate the data across individual items answered within the survey. In other words, I determined what Iowa elementary principals' theoretical orientations were toward a phonic, skill, or whole language approach to teaching reading by comparing frequency of individual item responses across the group. This allowed me to see patterns and trends across responses. Throughout this process, I was also able to analyze individual items, interpret, and compile a

descriptive summary report revealing the theoretical orientations held by these principals along the variables detailed in my research questions. I used the SPSS software to run one-way ANOVA (Yockey, 2008) between the independent variables (phonic, skill, and whole language) to determine significance. Because I was looking for significant differences between the three orientations across various subgroups, I found the one-way ANOVA to be an appropriate tool.

SurveyMonkey (2010) was used to design and disseminate the survey and analyze the data. Completed survey data were automatically filtered into a prepared database. I was also able to apply filters to study the data in relation to my research questions. Crosstab (SurveyMonkey, 2010) analysis of data was used to look for trends across the data and how individual principals answered particular items. SurveyMonkey was also a useful tool to analyze individual responses because it allowed me to view details of a particular respondent in relation to all the research questions.

#### Internal Correlations for Construct Validity

Correlation tests were also utilized. When using quantitative variables measured by a numerical scale, such as with this study, correlation tests can determine



statistical association (Sarantakos, 2007; Antonius, 2003). This process is used to help describe the *logical link* (Antonius, 2003) between variables.

Correlation can be positive or negative. In a positive correlation an increase in one variable is associated with an increase in the other (see Appendix E). It should be noted that correlation tests are subject to interpretation, and it depends on the theoretical framework used in the research, research questions, and interpretation when determining a causal link (Antonius, 2003).

When correlation tests were conducted on survey instrument questions classified as phonic, skill, or whole language to determine internal correlation and construct validity, the following data was revealed. Correlation tests revealed phonic questions within this survey had a correlation ( $r=0.00879457$ ) determined to be very weak positive indicating poor prediction. Correlation for skill questions determined ( $r=0.23338799$ ) low correlation, but predictions would tend to be good and with whole language ( $r=0.05489607$ ) it was determined to be negative and strong correlation and prediction would tend to be good.

Chapter four follows with detailed data results. Trends and significant differences were noted regarding

study participants theoretical orientation toward the teaching of reading across various demographic variables.

## CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

One hundred and four principals voluntarily agreed to participate in this study. This was approximately 16% of all principals invited to participate in the study. In order to determine if the participants in the study were representational of the population of principals across the state of Iowa, demographic data for the sample and state-wide school districts were compared (see Table 4.1). Table 4.1 data compares study principals to the state of Iowa principal population. The description of the sample is presented in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1**

Description of Study Sample and Population Demographics of  
Iowa Elementary School Principals

Variables	N	Sample	Population
<b>Gender</b>			
Females	52	52.5%	37.0%
Males	47	47.5%	63.0%
Skipped	5		
<b>Years of Teaching Experience</b>			
			<b>NA</b>
Less than five	5	5.0%	
Five to nine	42	41.6%	
Ten to fourteen	26	25.7%	
Fifteen to nineteen	14	13.9%	
Twenty or more	14	13.9%	
Skipped	3		
<b>Years as Principal</b>			
			<b>Average for state</b>
			10 to 15 years
Less than five	27	26.7%	
Five to nine	28	27.7%	
Ten to fourteen	14	13.9%	
Fifteen to nineteen	20	19.8%	
Twenty or more	12	11.9%	
Skipped	3		
<b>Education – Literacy</b>			
Endorsement	19	20.7%	13.3%
Bachelor's Degree	12	13.1%	-
Master's Degree	9	9.8%	1.9%
Doctorate Degree	1	1.1%	-
NA	51	55.4%	-
Skipped	12		
<b>School Eligible for Title 1 Funds</b>			
Yes	52	53.1%	49.0%
No	46	46.9%	51.0%
Skipped	6		
<b>Students Classified as Minority</b>			
Less than 5%	49	48.5%	23.4%
5% to 20%	30	29.7%	49.5%
21% or more	22	21.9%	27.1%
Skipped	3		
<b>Total School Population</b>			
Less 250	21	20.8%	39.0%
250 to 450	54	54.5%	44.3%
451 or more	26	24.8%	16.8%
Skipped	3		

### Gender, Ethnicity & Race

When asked about what designation best described participants' ethnic background, 98% of respondents indicated White as their ethnic background and 2% checked Latino/Hispanic or African-American/Black. Interesting to note, among all public school principals between 1998-1999 and 2008-2009 in the state of Iowa, minority principals decreased from 3% in 1998-1999 to 2% in 2008-2009, highlighting the representative nature of this study sample to the overall population of Iowa principals. In terms of gender, 52% of study participants were female and 47% male. This compares to Iowa state-wide data for public elementary school principals' demographics showing that 37% are females and 63% are males. Female principals who participated in this study were over represented when compared to the state of Iowa elementary principal population.

### Years of Teaching Experience

Of the principals who participated in this study, 5% had less than five years of teaching experience prior to becoming a principal. Forty-one percent of the study participants claimed between five and nine years of classroom teaching experience. Twenty-five percent of study participants taught between 10 and 14 years, 13% of

participants had 15 to 19 years of teaching experience and 13% of the participants claimed twenty or more years of classroom teaching experience. There were no available data to check the sample against actual state level data regarding the amount of teaching experience principals had prior to becoming an elementary principal.

#### Years as Principal

Of the principals who participated in this study, 26% had less than five years experience as an elementary principal. Twenty-seven percent had five to nine years experience as a principal, 13% checked the 10 to 14 years experience box, 19% had 15 to 19 years experience, and 11% claimed 20 or more years as a principal. All categories pertaining to the experience of the principal were well represented. The average age of principals across the state of Iowa was 48 in 2009, with between 10 and 15 years experience as an elementary principal.

#### Literacy Education

Twenty percent of the study participants had an endorsement in the area of literacy teaching, 13% reported they had a bachelor's degree in literacy, 9% reported that they had a master's degree in literacy teaching, with just 1% reporting having earned a doctorate degree in the area

of literacy. In retrospect, I would have not chosen to include the area of bachelor's degree in literacy on the survey because, to my knowledge, there is no program degree available at the bachelor's level specific to literacy. Compared to demographics of elementary principals in the state of Iowa, 13% of Iowa elementary principals had an endorsement in literacy in 2009 and 1% held a master's degree in literacy. Fifty-five percent of study participants indicated NA (not applicable) and 12 participants declined to answer this question requesting level of education as it pertained to literacy.

#### Title 1 Eligibility

Fifty-three percent of total study participants stated they were employed by an Iowa elementary school that was eligible for Title 1 funds. This compared well to the overall state demographics of Iowa public schools eligible for Title 1 funds which is 49%. Principals who chose to participate in this study represented schools that were eligible for Title 1 funds at a slightly higher percentage than the state average.

#### Minority Status

Forty-eight percent of study participants reported that they presided over a school with an enrollment of less

than 5% minority students. Twenty-nine percent reported a student minority population of between 5% and 20%, while 21% indicated their school's student minority population was 21% or greater. With 49% of Iowa public school districts reporting a student minority rate of 5% to 20%, the study sample over represented schools with less than 5% minority students.

#### School Size

Twenty percent of survey respondents indicated they were assigned to schools with 250 or fewer students. Fifty-four percent of respondents reported between 250 and 450 students in their schools and 24% stated they had 451 or more students in their buildings. All categories of total school population were well represented in this study. The study sample, with 54% of survey respondents representing schools with enrollments between 250 to 450 students, was slightly higher than the state-wide range of 44% of schools with a total population of 250 to 450.

#### Theoretical Orientation Toward Reading Instruction

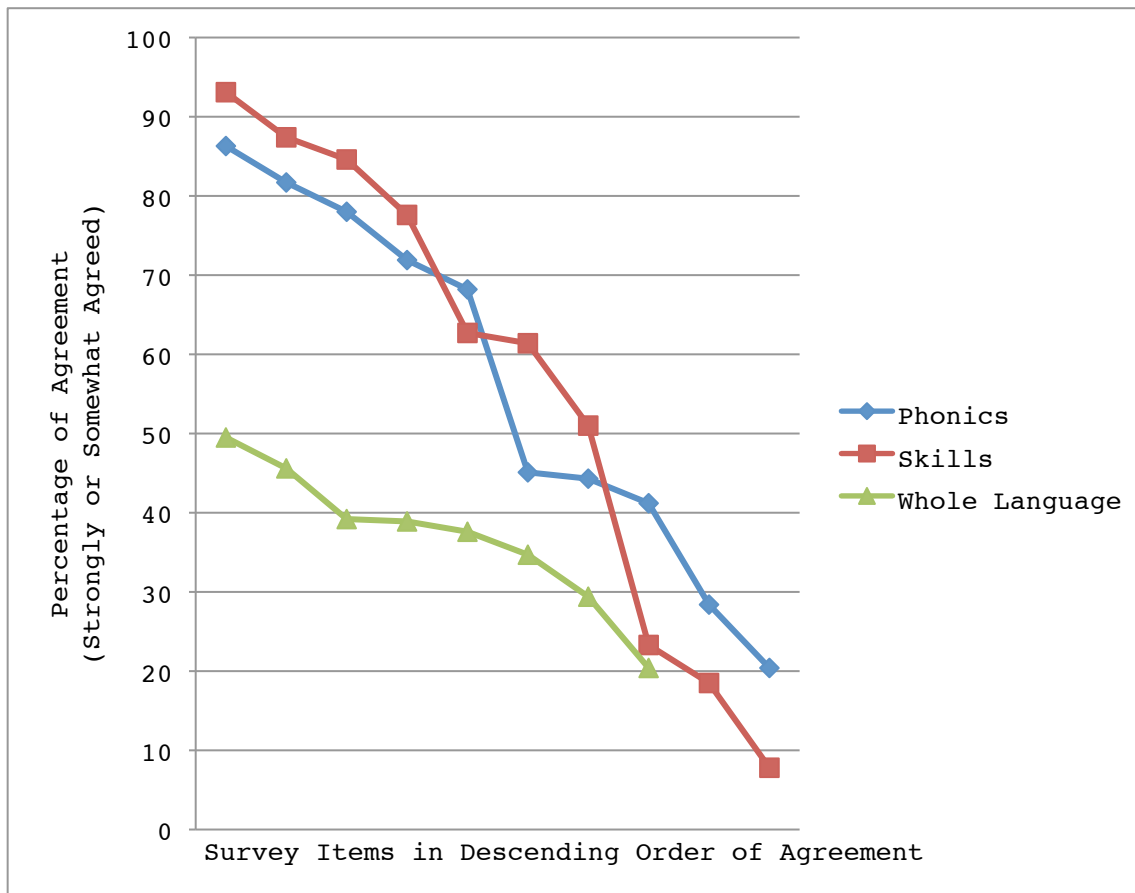
##### Among Iowa Elementary School Principals

Because the survey instrument had been validated as an instrument that measured teachers' theoretical orientation toward the teaching of reading (DeFord, 1985) and was reflective of teacher practice regarding a phonic, skill,



and whole language theoretical perspective, it was reasonable to ask the same types of questions of Iowa elementary principals, all of whom were former school teachers.

Figure 4.1 presents overall descriptive data, represented by percentages, for items categorized by theoretical orientation and identified by survey question item numbers (see Appendix F for complete data set). Figure 4.1 is simply a visual representation of the strength of agreement to item responses grouped by theoretical orientation for all respondents. Responses to phonic items, skill items, and whole language items are presented in descending order of agreement, meaning that the range of agreement for phonic-based items was from 86% to 20%, skill-based items agreement ranged from 93% to 7%, and whole language agreement ranged from 49% to 20%.



**Figure 4.1** Iowa Elementary Principals' Theoretical Orientation

As conveyed in Figure 4.1, survey data revealed that most of the principals who participated in this study embraced a theoretical orientation that favored a skill-based instructional perspective, closely followed by a phonic-based theoretical perspective toward the teaching of reading. Principals' whose responses favored some instructional perspectives identified as whole language, were a distant third.

### Phonic Theoretical Orientation

More than 86% of all study respondents either strongly or somewhat agreed that formal instruction in reading is necessary to ensure adequate development of all the skills used in reading. Eighty-one percent of all study participants agreed that dividing words into syllables, or what is commonly referred to as chunking, according to phonic rules, is an important and helpful instructional practice for the teaching or reading of new words. Seventy-eight percent of respondents believed that an increase in reading errors is related to a resulting decrease in comprehension of text. It was also interesting to note that Iowa elementary principals who participated in this study viewed punctuation as symbols, meaning that they believed that children needed to pay close attention to punctuation when reading in order to comprehend the text. Seventy-one percent of those surveyed claimed that reading punctuation was necessary to comprehending what had been read.

These responses clearly support an instructional emphasis on decoding, isolation of phonemes, and breaking words apart into smaller units or individual phonemes, all hallmarks of a phonic perspective. Similarly, 68% of the respondents believed that when children do not know a word, they should be instructed to sound out or decode its parts.

Nearly half the respondents (45%) also agreed that the use of decodable text, controlling text through consistent spelling patterns, was an instructional method by which children best learn how to read.

Nearly half, (44%) of those surveyed agreed that a child should be able to verbalize phonic rules in order to proficiently process new or unfamiliar words. Additionally, 41% of respondents stated that they agreed that phonic analysis was the most important form of any type of word analysis used when encountering a new or unknown word.

Oral reading miscues involve complex processing issues such as prior knowledge and familiarity with text, and do not necessarily result in a decrease in comprehension. Twenty-eight percent of respondents agreed that reversals (such as saying "saw" for "was") are significant problems in the teaching of reading. But, when these same respondents were asked if it is good practice to immediately correct a child when an oral mistake is made, 20% agreed.

The knowledge one possesses can influence one's practice (Magoon, 1977). Like Magoon, Britzman (2003) claims that an individual's learning modality influences practice. Lortie (2009, 1975), adds to this point by suggesting a teacher's practice is more strongly influenced

by past learning experiences than by preservice education. Therefore, knowledge and belief systems held toward reading lead to a theoretical orientation and a preference for instructional perspectives toward reading. As we shall see, the line between a phonic perspective and a skill-based theoretical orientation is gray and overlapping.

#### Skill Theoretical Orientation

Responses to questions that represented a skill-based theoretical orientation revealed great variability among respondents. For example, 93% of all respondents agreed that it is important to teach skills in relation to other skills. When respondents were asked whether it is important for a word to be repeated numerous times after being introduced to ensure the word's automaticity (and thus to put it into one's sight vocabulary), 87% of those surveyed answered affirmatively. Eighty-four percent of the Iowa elementary principals that completed this survey also agreed that the skills of fluency and expression (prosody) are necessary components of reading comprehension. Conversely, only 7% agreed that an ineffective reader was marked by repeating words and phrases. A simple interpretation of these two responses is that the Iowa principals who participated in this study recognized that developing readers frequently do repeat words and such

repetition is not perceived as negative. However, those same principals also believe that it is important to have isolated sight vocabulary repeated frequently in order for words to become automatically recognized.

Responses to skill-based items included 77% of respondents believing that some reading problems are caused when readers drop inflectional endings from words. Similarly, 62% of respondents agreed that young readers must first be introduced to the root form of a word before being asked to read the root with an inflection. Clearly, the idea of treating isolated skills as good reading practice (such as teaching root words prior to teaching inflectional endings or affixes) had support from many principals. Sixty-one percent of respondents also agreed that word recognition should be taught using word configuration, which is also an isolated skill perspective and 51% of all respondents believed that teaching accent patterns in multi-syllabic words should be part of reading instruction.

Twenty-three percent of respondents agreed that teaching the ability to label words according to grammatical function (i.e. nouns, verbs, etc.) was useful in proficient reading. When asked if the use of a glossary or dictionary was necessary in determining the meaning and

pronunciation of new words, only 18% of principals agreed. Labeling words according to grammatical function and dictionary use are isolated skill approaches to the instruction of reading.

#### Whole Language Theoretical Orientation

Generally speaking, principals' responses never displayed strong support for a pro-whole language orientation. For instance, 49% of all respondents agreed that children's initial encounters with print should focus on meaning as opposed to exact graphic representation, and 45% agreed that it was not necessary for children to know the names of alphabet letters in order to learn to read. Both questions are highly reflective of a belief in the theoretical orientation of whole language, but this instructional perspective toward reading was favored by less than 50% of the Iowa elementary principals surveyed and was significantly smaller than the support exhibited for the phonic- and skill-based theoretical orientations.

Semantics is an important component of whole language. In fact, semantics is one of Goodmans' four cueing systems used when reading (Goodman & Goodman, 2004). Thirty-nine percent of respondents indicated they agreed that if a child reads "house" for the text word "home," such a

response should go uncorrected. House for home is an example of a semantic match.

Putting a focus of meaning making, guessing or predicting in the act of reading is an instructional hallmark of the theory of whole language. In keeping with this theoretical orientation, 38% of respondents agreed that when readers encounter an unknown word, teachers should encourage readers to guess or predict the meaning of the word and continue reading. Similarly, in keeping with a whole language focus on meaning or comprehension, 37% of principals surveyed agreed that it is good practice to allow children to edit what is written into their home language (dialect) when learning to read. Thirty-four percent also agreed that reading materials created for readers should be written for natural language without concern for short simple words and sentences. Similarly, 29% of respondents agreed it was not necessary to introduce new words prior to children encountering those words in text. Only 20% of Iowa elementary principals either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that flashcard drills of sight vocabulary are an unnecessary form of reading instructional practice. Thus, 57% of respondents felt flashcard drills with sight words (an isolated skill practice) is necessary.



In the aggregate, it was clear that the elementary school principals who completed this survey favored a phonic-based and skill-based theoretical orientation toward the teaching of reading. Figure 4.1 shows that when 50% or more of the principals agreed with a theoretical position, it usually resided in the skill- or phonic-based theoretical orientation. Not a single pro-whole language position was supported by more than 50% of principals.

What happens, however, when the data are disaggregated along various demographic background factors? Will various demographic background factors influence principals' theoretical orientation toward the teaching of reading?

#### Levels of Experience

The variables for principals' previous experiences, both as classroom teachers and as principals, were categorized into three parts. Principals who possessed nine years or less experience were categorized as early professionals. Principals with experience between 10 and 19 years were categorized as experienced professionals, and those principals whose experience exceeded 20 or more years were categorized as veteran professionals.

### Theoretical Orientation in Relation to Teaching Experience

It was important to understand the level of classroom teaching experience of the principals who participated in this study. According to Lortie (2009, 1975) and Britzman (2003), previous learning experiences affect teaching knowledge and decisions. Therefore, the teaching knowledge principals bring with them to the principalship very much influences instructional decision-making. Forty-six percent of the principals who participated in this study had nine years or less teaching experience and 39% reported between 10 and 19 years of classroom teaching experience. The veteran professional category was comprised of 13% of principals who stated they had taught for 20 or more years before assuming the principalship.

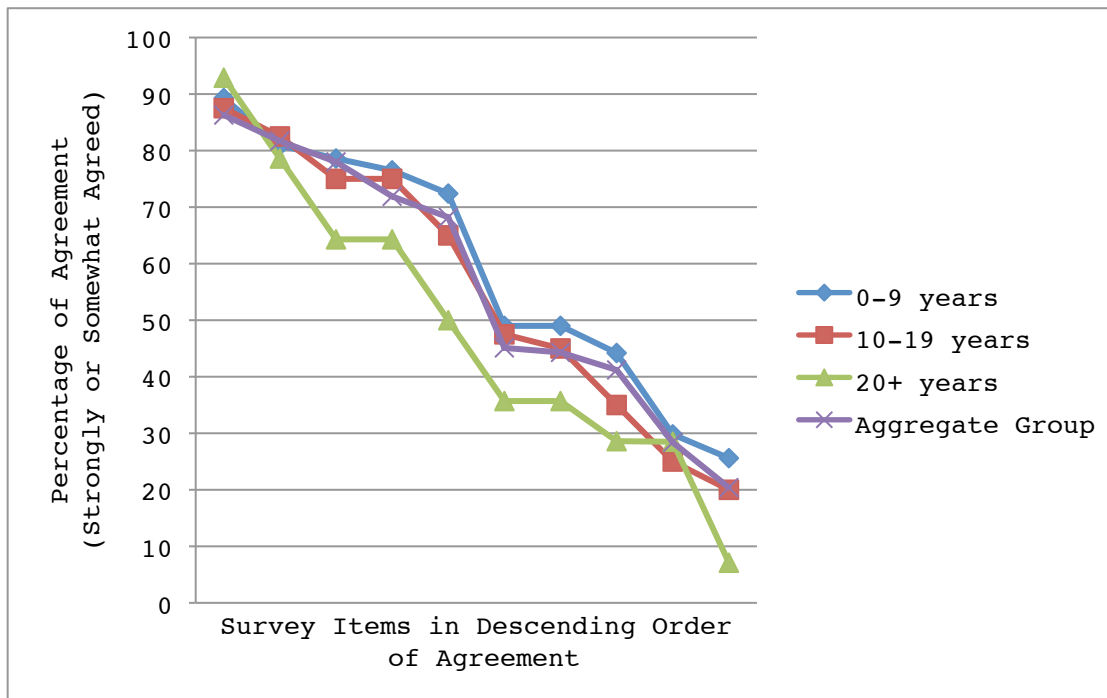
Table 4.2 is a frequency table sharing the count of how many survey respondents represent each identified professional category in regard to years of previous teaching experience these principals possessed prior to becoming an elementary principal. Frequency Table 4.2 also indicates the overall relative frequency for each category.

**Table 4.2**

Frequency Distribution by  
Years of Teaching Experience

Interval	Frequency	Relative Frequency
Early Professional (0-9 yrs.)	47	.452
Experienced Professional (10-19 yrs.)	40	.385
Veteran Professional (20+ yrs.)	14	.135

Figure 4.2 presents overall descriptive data, represented by percentages, for items categorized by a phonic theoretical orientation and identified by survey question item numbers (see Appendix G for complete data set). Figure 4.2 is a visual representation of the item responses grouped according to phonic theoretical orientation, disaggregated across respondents' years of teaching experience. Responses to phonic items are presented in descending order of agreement, meaning that the range of agreement of respondents who either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed with a phonic theoretical perspective was from 92% to 7%.



**Figure 4.2** Years as Teacher Phonic Theoretical Orientation

Tables are also provided that display significance level test results (T-test). The significance of the T-test results was noted by utilizing  $<.05$  level of significance, when comparing P-values (Sarantakos, 2007). Table 4.3 presents results of T-tests comparing years of teaching experience against a phonic theoretical orientation toward the teaching of reading.

**Table 4.3**

Difference in Average Scale Scores on  
Phonic Theoretical Orientation by  
Years of Teaching Experience

	0-9 Years Teaching (n=47)	10-19 Years Teaching (n=40)	20+ Years Teaching (n=14)
0-9 Years of Teaching Experience	–	X Diff-.11 P=.210	Diff-.25 P=.029
10-19 Years of Teaching Experience	X Diff .11 P=.210	–	X Diff-.14 P=.246
20+ Years of Teaching Experience	Diff .25 P=.029	X Diff .14 P=.246	–

Level of Significance  $P < .05$

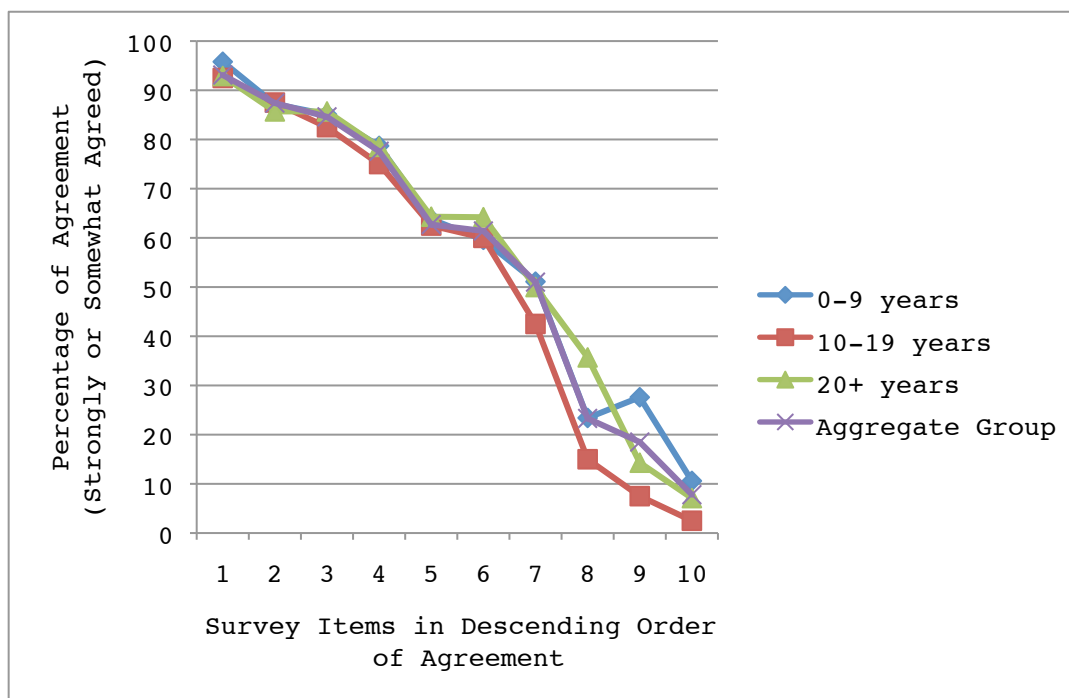
X = No Significant Difference

Shaded Area = Significant Difference

As conveyed in Figure 4.2 and Table 4.3, survey data across levels of teaching experience revealed principals embraced a phonic theoretical orientation to the teaching of reading similar to the total survey population or aggregate group. Principals who had 20 or more years of classroom teaching experience prior to becoming a principal were less in agreement with a phonic theoretical orientation than the total survey population. The range of agreement for the aggregate group toward a phonic theoretical orientation included 86% to 20% either strongly or somewhat agreeing to phonic items. Principals with 20 or

more years of classroom teaching experience either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed to phonic survey items at a range of 92% to 7%. Table 4.3 reveals that there was a significant difference toward a phonic theoretical orientation between principals who had nine years or less of teaching experience and principals who had taught for more than 20 years, in that the principals with less teaching experience were more inclined to embrace a phonic approach.

The same data were collected for the skill theoretical orientation (see Appendix H for complete data set).



**Figure 4.3** Years as Teacher Skill Theoretical Orientation

**Table 4.4**

Difference in Average Scale Scores on  
Skill Theoretical Orientation by  
Years of Teaching Experience

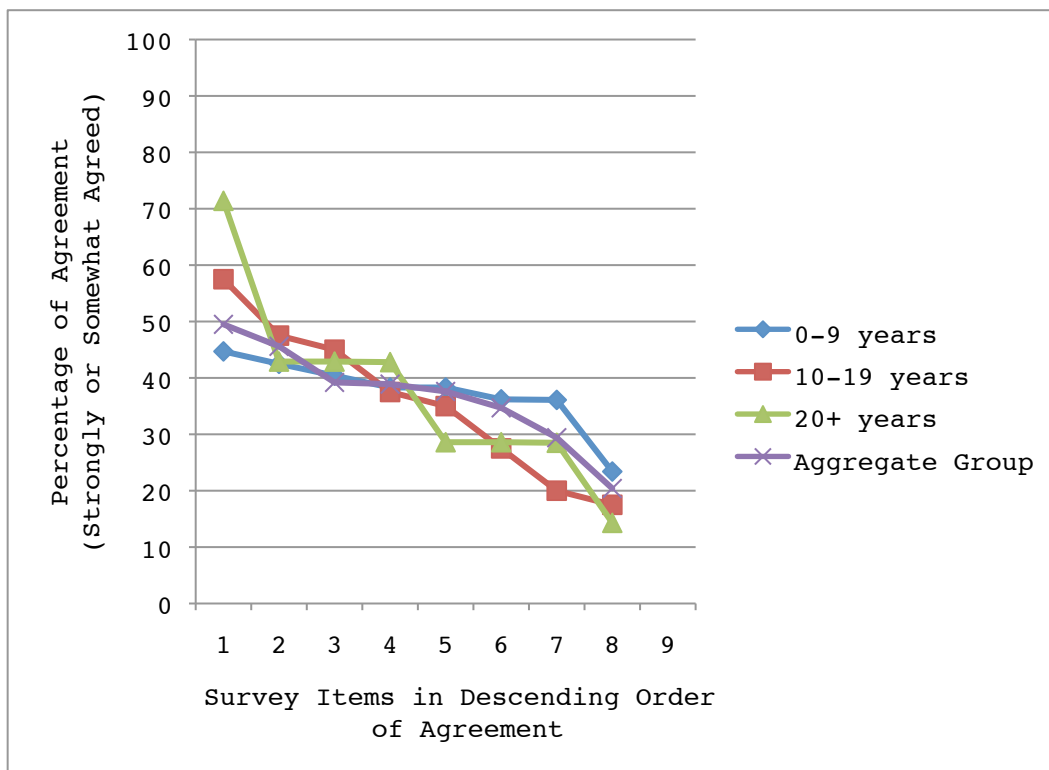
	0-9 Years Teaching (n=47)	10-19 Years Teaching (n=40)	20+ Years Teaching (n=14)
0-9 Years of Teaching Experience	–	X Diff-.14 P=.112	X Diff-.04 P=.761
10-19 Years of Teaching Experience	X Diff .14 P=.112	–	X Diff .10 P=.436
20+ Years of Teaching Experience	X Diff .04 P=.761	X Diff-.10 P=.436	–

Level of Significance  $P < .05$

X = No Significant Difference

Shaded Area = Significant Difference

As displayed in Table 4.4, there was no significant difference noted toward a skill theoretical orientation across the three groups categorized by years of teaching experience.



**Figure 4.4** Years as Teacher Whole Language Theoretical Orientation



**Table 4.5**

Difference in Average Scale Scores on Whole Language Theoretical Orientation by Years of Teaching Experience

	0-9 Years Teaching (n=47)	10-19 Years Teaching (n=40)	20+ Years Teaching (n=14)
0-9 Years of Teaching Experience	–	X Diff-.07 P=.412	X Diff-.14 P=.254
10-19 Years of Teaching Experience	X Diff .07 P=.412	–	X Diff-.07 P=.623
20+ Years of Teaching Experience	X Diff .14 P=.254	X Diff .07 P=.623	–

Level of Significance  $P < .05$

X = No Significant Difference

Shaded Area = Significant Difference

As conveyed in Figure 4.4 and Table 4.5, data across levels of teaching experience revealed principals embraced a whole language theoretical orientation to the teaching of reading at a similar rate of agreement as the aggregate group (see Appendix I for complete data set). A slight non-significant increase in support of a whole language theoretical orientation toward the teaching of reading was noted for principals with more than 20 years of classroom teaching experience.

Theoretical Orientation in Relation  
to Principals' Experience

Another factor that could affect a principal's theoretical orientation could be related to the number of years spent as a principal. The variable of years of experience as a principal was used to determine if it impacted a principal's theoretical orientation toward the teaching of reading.

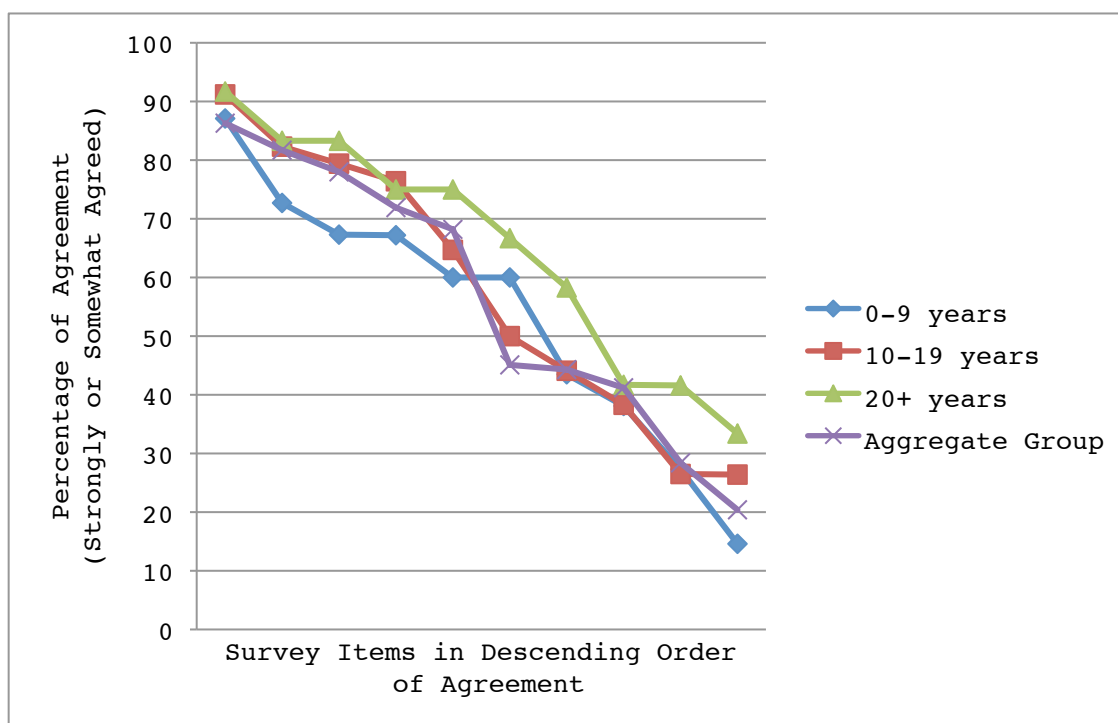
Table 4.6 is a frequency table sharing the count of how many survey respondents represent each identified professional category in regard to years of experience as an elementary principal. Frequency Table 4.6 also indicates the overall relative frequency of data categorized by principals' years of experience.

**Table 4.6**

Frequency Distribution by  
Years of Principal Experience

Interval	Frequency	Relative Frequency
Early Professional (0-9 yrs.)	55	.544
Experienced Professional (10-19 yrs.)	34	.337
Veteran Professional (20+ yrs.)	12	.119

Figure 4.5 organizes the responses to the phonic items in descending order of agreement. The range of agreement of respondents who either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed with a phonic theoretical perspective was from 91% to 14% (see Appendix J for complete data set). Table 4.7 shows the T-tests of the means.



**Figure 4.5** Years as Principal Phonic Theoretical Orientation

**Table 4.7**

Difference in Average Scale Scores on  
Phonic Theoretical Orientation by  
Years of Principal Experience

	0-9 Years as Principal (n=55)	10-19 Years as Principal (n=34)	20+ Years as Principal (n=12)
0-9 Years of Principal Experience	—	X Diff .09 P=.332	Diff .30 P=.016
10-19 Years of Principal Experience	X Diff-.09 P=.332	—	X Diff .21 P=.083
20+ Years of Principal Experience	Diff-.30 P=.016	X Diff-.21 P=.083	—

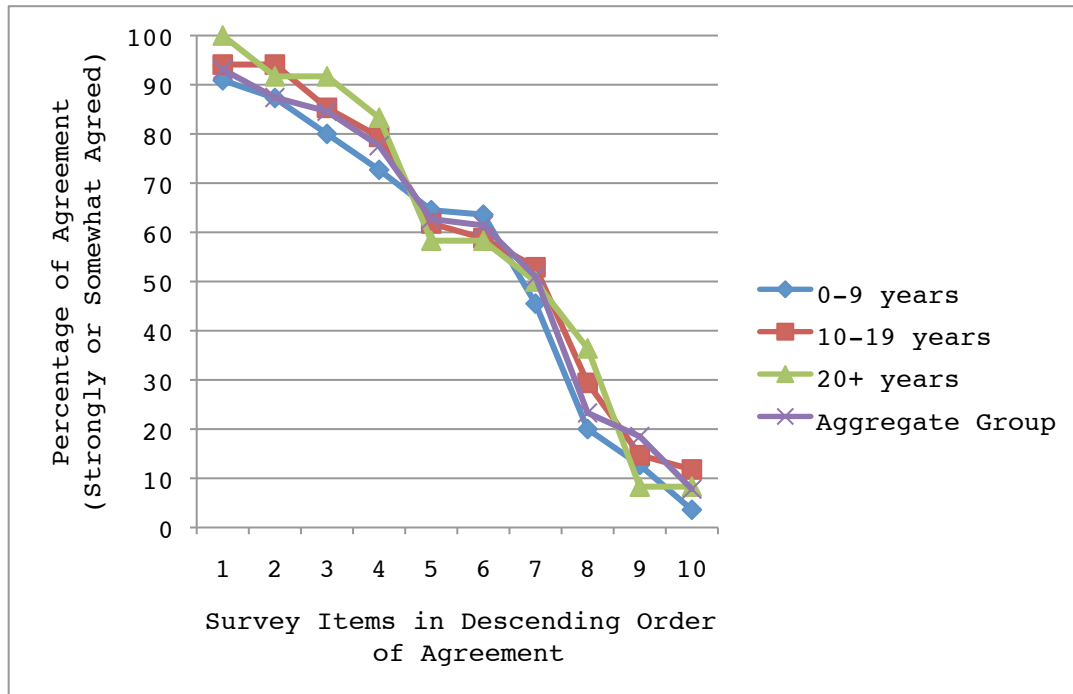
Level of Significance  $P < .05$

X = No Significant Difference

Shaded Area = Significant Difference

As noted in Figure 4.5 and Table 4.7, the more experience a principal has (similar to the variable of veteran teaching experience), the less inclined the principal is to embrace a phonic theoretical orientation toward the teaching of reading.

On the other hand, no significant difference can be found across the variable of principal experience in relation to a skill theoretical orientation toward the teaching of reading (see Appendix K for complete data set) (see Figure 4.6 and Table 4.8).



**Figure 4.6** Years as Principal Skill Theoretical Orientation

**Table 4.8**

Difference in Average Scale Scores on Skill Theoretical Orientation by Years of Principal Experience

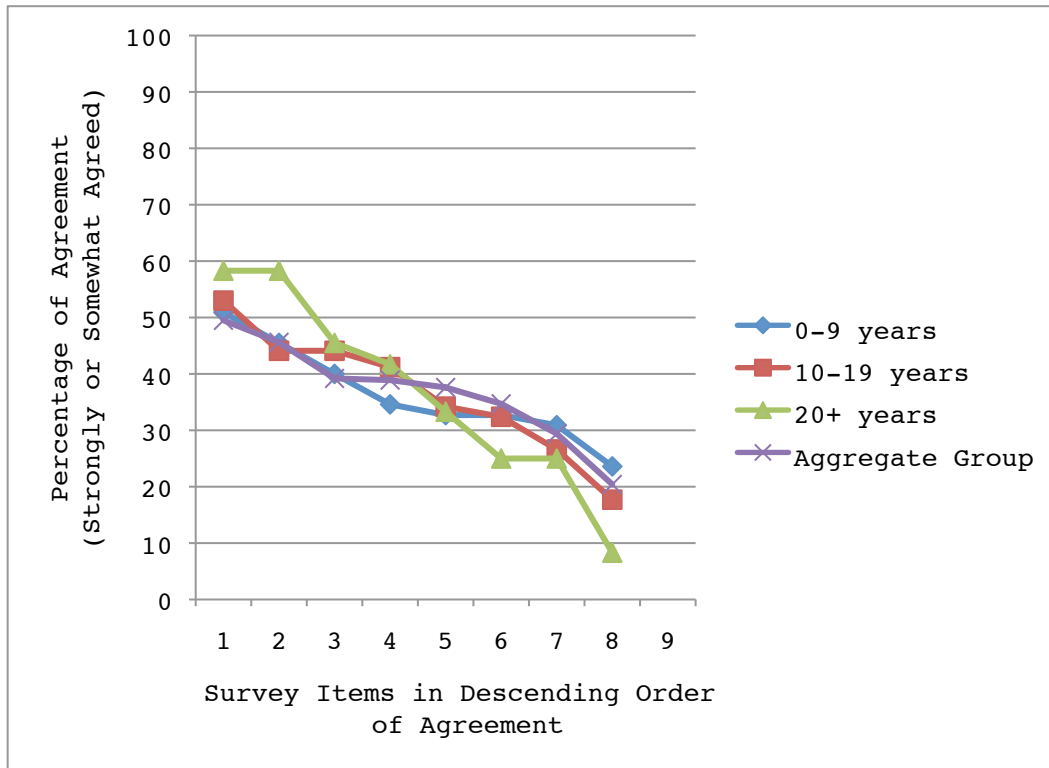
	0-9 Years as Principal (n=55)	10-19 Years as Principal (n=34)	20+ Years as Principal (n=12)
0-9 Years of Principal Experience	—	X Diff .09 P=.291	X Diff .04 P=.751
10-19 Years of Principal Experience	X Diff-.09 P=.291	—	X Diff-.05 P=.682
20+ Years of Principal Experience	X Diff-.04 P=.751	X Diff .05 P=.682	—

Level of Significance  $P < .05$

X = No Significant Difference

Shaded Area = Significant Difference

The same could be said for the whole language theoretical orientation (see Figure 4.7 and Table 4.9). Overall, the trends very much resemble the findings associated with the variable of teaching experience (see Appendix L for complete data set). There was a significant difference between early professionals (0-9 years of teaching or principal experience) and veteran principals (20 years or more teaching or principal experience) in regard to a phonic theoretical orientation toward the teaching of reading. Principals with more classroom teaching experience and more principal experience were less in favor of a phonic theoretical orientation when compared to their youngest counterparts (0-9 years of experience). It is possible that having a lot of experience working with children in the classroom has given these principals an experience to more diverse learning, which would explain their reluctance to embrace any one theoretical position over another.



**Figure 4.7** Years as Principal Whole Language Theoretical Orientation

**Table 4.9**

Difference in Average Scale Scores on  
Whole Language Theoretical Orientation  
by Years of Principal Experience

	0-9 Years as Principal (n=55)	10-19 Years as Principal (n=34)	20+ Years as Principal (n=12)
0-9 Years of Principal Experience	-	X Diff .06 P=.571	X Diff .18 P=.194
10-19 Years of Principal Experience	X Diff-.06 P=.571	-	X Diff .12 P=.359
20+ Years of Principal Experience	X Diff-.18 P=.194	X Diff-.12 P=.359	-

Level of Significance  $P < .05$

X = No Significant Difference

Shaded Area = Significant Difference

#### Theoretical Orientation in Relation to Degrees Held in Literacy

Another factor that could affect a principal's theoretical orientation toward the teaching of reading is associated with the advanced degrees or endorsements held by principals in the area of teaching reading. Iowa state demographics regarding principals with an advanced degree indicated that in 1998, 98% of Iowa elementary principals held advanced degrees. In 2008, this had dropped to 88% (Iowa Department of Education, 2009). The variable of advanced degrees, specific to the area of teaching reading,



was used here to determine if this had any association with any theoretical orientation toward the teaching of reading.

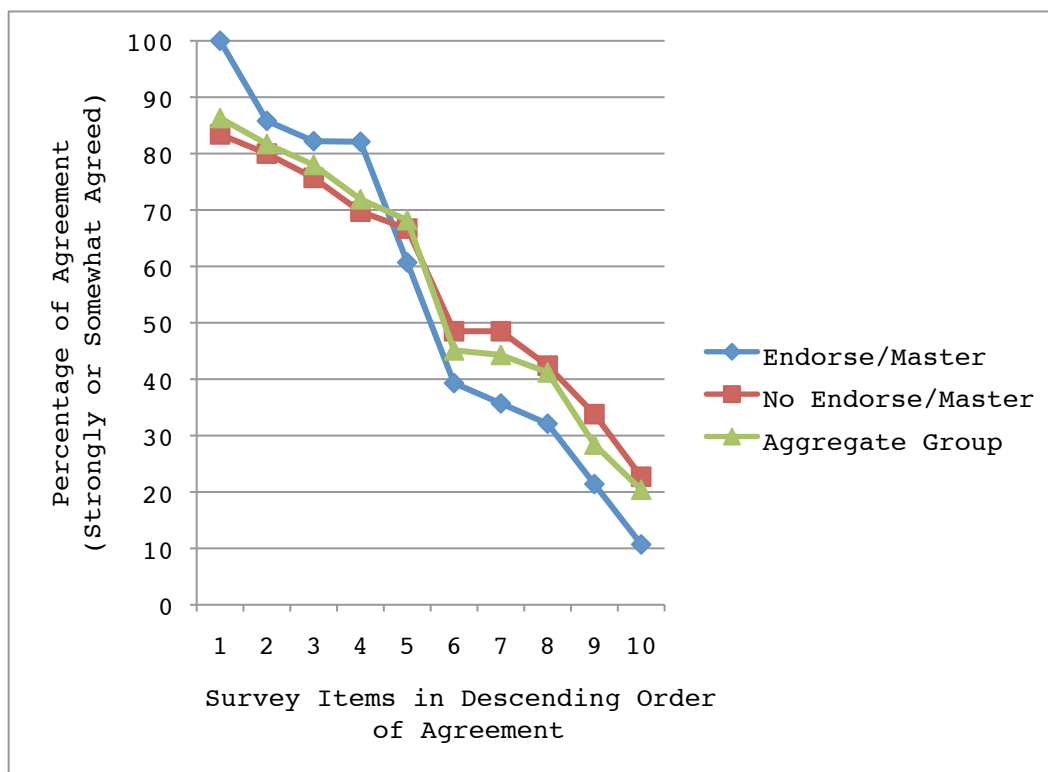
Table 4.10 is a frequency table sharing the count of how many survey respondents held endorsements or master's degrees in the teaching of reading and the number who did not possess education specific to literacy learning. Twenty-eight respondents indicated they held either an endorsement in the area of teaching literacy or a master's degree in the area of teaching literacy. Sixty-four respondents indicated they had no endorsement or master's degree in the area of literacy learning. Relative frequency is also noted for each category. Interesting to note, this was the most frequently skipped question on the survey.

**Table 4.10**

Frequency Distribution by  
Literacy Degrees

Interval	Frequency	Relative Frequency
Literacy Endorsement and/or Master's Degree	28	.269
No Endorsement and/or Master's Degree	64	.615

Figure 4.8 organizes the responses to phonic items in descending order of agreement (see Appendix M for complete data set). The range of agreement of respondents who either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed with a phonic theoretical orientation ranged from 100% to 11%. Table 4.11 shows the T-tests of the means.



**Figure 4.8** Literacy Education Phonic Theoretical Orientation

**Table 4.11**

Difference in Average Scale Scores on  
Phonic Theoretical Orientation by  
Level of Literacy Education

	Literacy Endorsement and/or Master's Degree  (n=28)	No Literacy Endorsement and/or Master's Degree  (n=64)
Literacy Endorsement and/or Master's Degree	—	X  Diff -.104 P=.233
No Literacy Endorsement and/or Master's Degree	X  Diff .104 P=.233	—

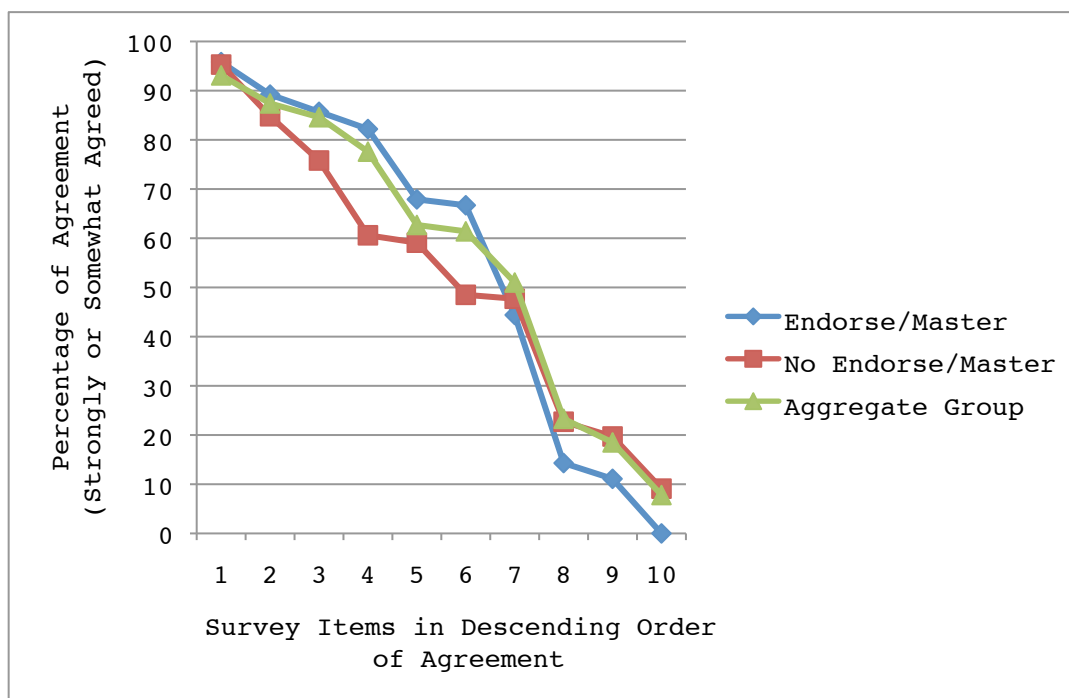
Level of Significance  $P < .05$

X = No Significant Difference

Shaded Area = Significant Difference

As conveyed in Figure 4.8 and Table 4.11, data across the variable of degrees held in the area of literacy learning revealed principals embraced a phonic theoretical orientation toward the teaching of reading similar to the aggregate group. There was no significant difference noted between principals who had education specific to the area of literacy learning and those principals who did not have either an endorsement or master's degree in the area of literacy teaching and learning.

Figure 4.9 and Table 4.12 reveal similar findings. Principals who participated in this study consistently displayed strong support for a skill-based perspective toward the teaching of reading (see Appendix N for complete data set). The level of education these principals possessed specific to teaching reading did not influence their theoretical orientation.



**Figure 4.9** Literacy Education Skill Theoretical Orientation

**Table 4.12**

Difference in Average Scale Scores on  
Skill Theoretical Orientation by  
Level of Literacy Education

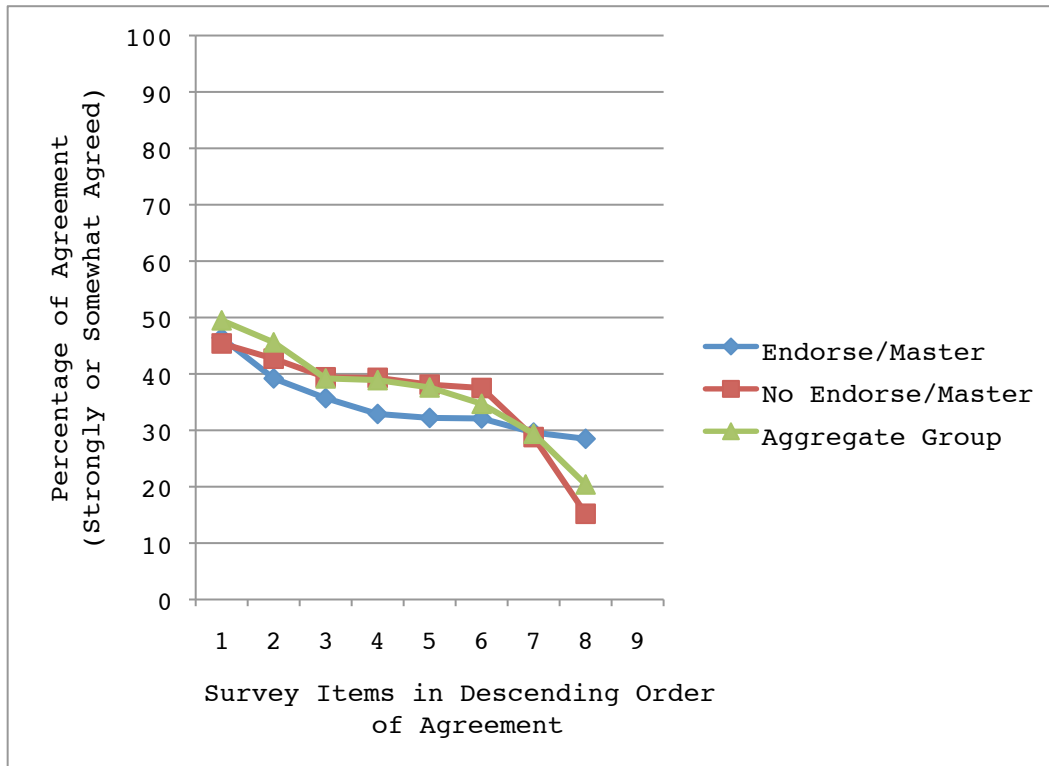
	Literacy Endorsement and/or Master's Degree  (n=28)	No Literacy Endorsement and/or Master's Degree  (n=64)
Literacy Endorsement and/or Master's Degree	—	X  Diff .01 P=.263
No Literacy Endorsement and/or Master's Degree	X  Diff -.01 P=.263	—

Level of Significance  $P < .05$

X = No Significant Difference

Shaded Area = Significant Difference

Figure 4.10 and Table 4.13 present similar results for descriptive data for survey items categorized by a whole language theoretical orientation and identified by survey question item numbers (see Appendix O for complete data set).



**Figure 4.10** Literacy Education Whole Language Theoretical Orientation

**Table 4.13**

Difference in Average Scale Scores on Whole Language Theoretical Orientation by Level of Literacy Education

	Literacy Endorsement and/or Master's Degree (n=28)	No Literacy Endorsement and/or Master's Degree (n=64)
Literacy Endorsement and/or Master's Degree	—	X Diff -.031 P=.737
No Literacy Endorsement and/or Master's Degree	X Diff .031 P=.737	—

Level of Significance  $P < .05$

X = No Significant Difference

Shaded Area = Significant Difference

As conveyed by Figure 4.10 and Table 4.13, it was somewhat surprising that data revealed no significant difference in the theoretical orientations toward the teaching of reading between the group of principals that held an endorsement or master's degree in literacy and the group of principals that did not have any education specific to the teaching of reading.

Theoretical Orientation in Relation  
to Title 1 Funding

Because Title 1 funds, under the NCLB (2002) act, are distributed to schools according to socioeconomic status with consideration for children who are below proficiency, I felt it was important to identify the theoretical orientation of principals who worked in schools that receive Title 1 funds against those who were not working in Title 1 schools. Table 4.14 is a frequency table sharing data of the qualification status for Title 1 funds of the participants in this study and the overall relative frequency for each category.

**Table 4.14**

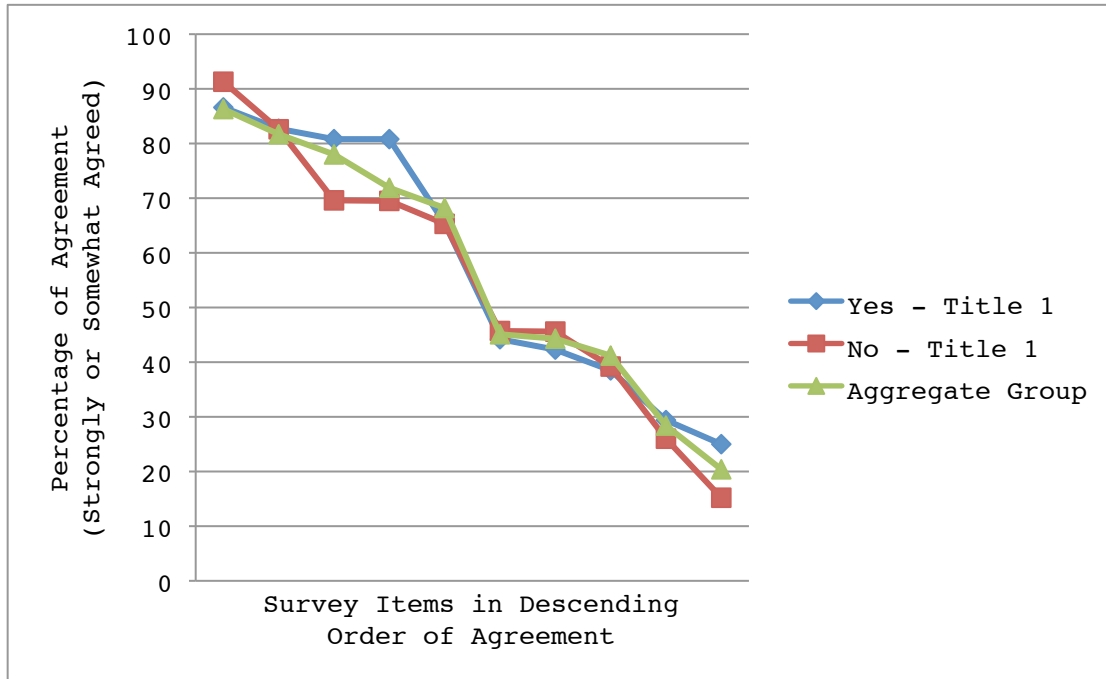
Frequency Distribution by  
Title 1 Classification

	Frequency	Relative Frequency
Yes Title 1 Funding	52	.530
No Title 1 Funding	46	.469

Figure 4.11 presents the percentages of agreement, for items categorized as a phonic theoretical orientation (see Appendix P for complete data set). Figure 4.11 is a visual representation of item responses grouped according to



phonic theoretical orientation disaggregated by the variable of Title 1 status of the schools.



**Figure 4.11** Title 1 Funding Phonic Theoretical Orientation

**Table 4.15**

Difference in Average Scale Scores on  
Phonic Theoretical Orientation by  
Title 1 Status

	School Receives Title 1 Funding (n=52)	School Not Eligible Title 1 (n=46)
School Receives Title 1 Funding	-	X Diff -.07 P=.418
School Not Eligible Title 1 Funding	X Diff .07 P=.418	-

Level of Significance  $P < .05$

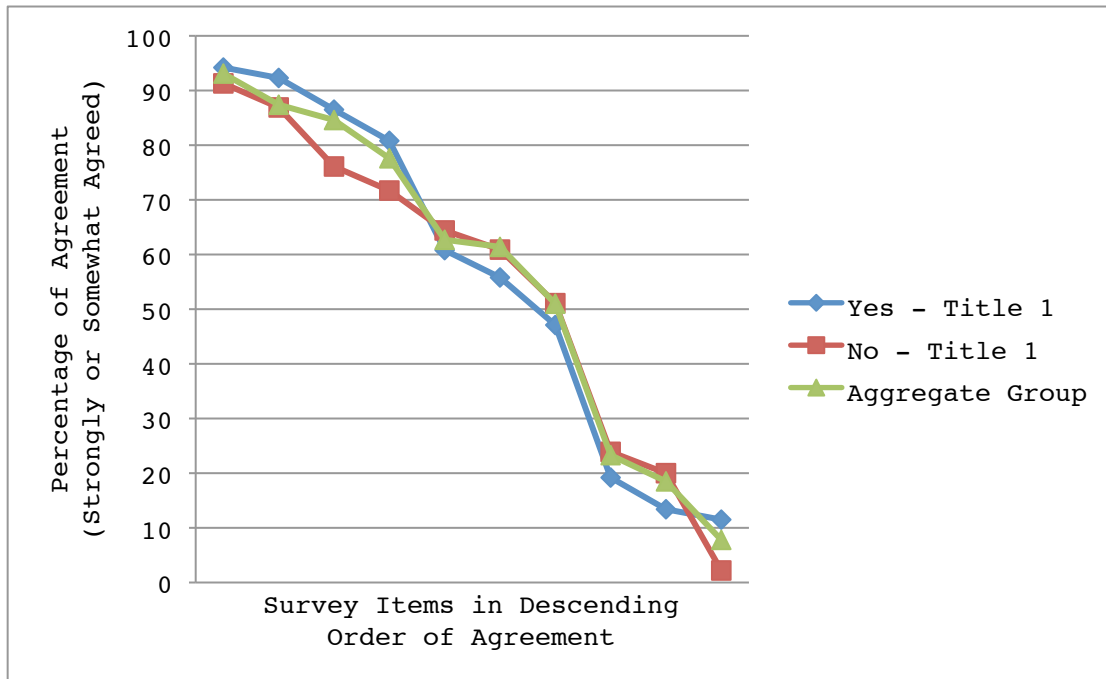
X = No Significant Difference

Shaded Area = Significant Difference

As conveyed in Figure 4.11 and Table 4.15, principals in Title 1 schools embraced a phonic theoretical orientation toward the teaching of reading that is no different from those in non-Title 1 schools. As revealed in Table 4.15, there was no significant difference between the group of principals that preside over schools that receive Title 1 funds and principals who preside over schools that do not receive Title 1 funds.

Figure 4.12 shows the levels of agreement toward items categorized by skill theoretical orientation (see Appendix Q for complete data set). Figure 4.12 is a visual representation of the item responses grouped by skill

theoretical orientation disaggregated by a school's Title 1 eligibility.



**Figure 4.12** Title 1 Funding Skill Theoretical Orientation

**Table 4.16**

Difference in Average Scale Scores on Skill Theoretical Orientation by Title 1 Status

	School Receives Title 1 Funding (n=52)	School Not Eligible Title 1 (n=46)
School Receives Title 1 Funding	–	X Diff -.04 P=.592
School Not Eligible Title 1 Funding	X Diff .04 P=.592	–

Level of Significance  $P < .05$

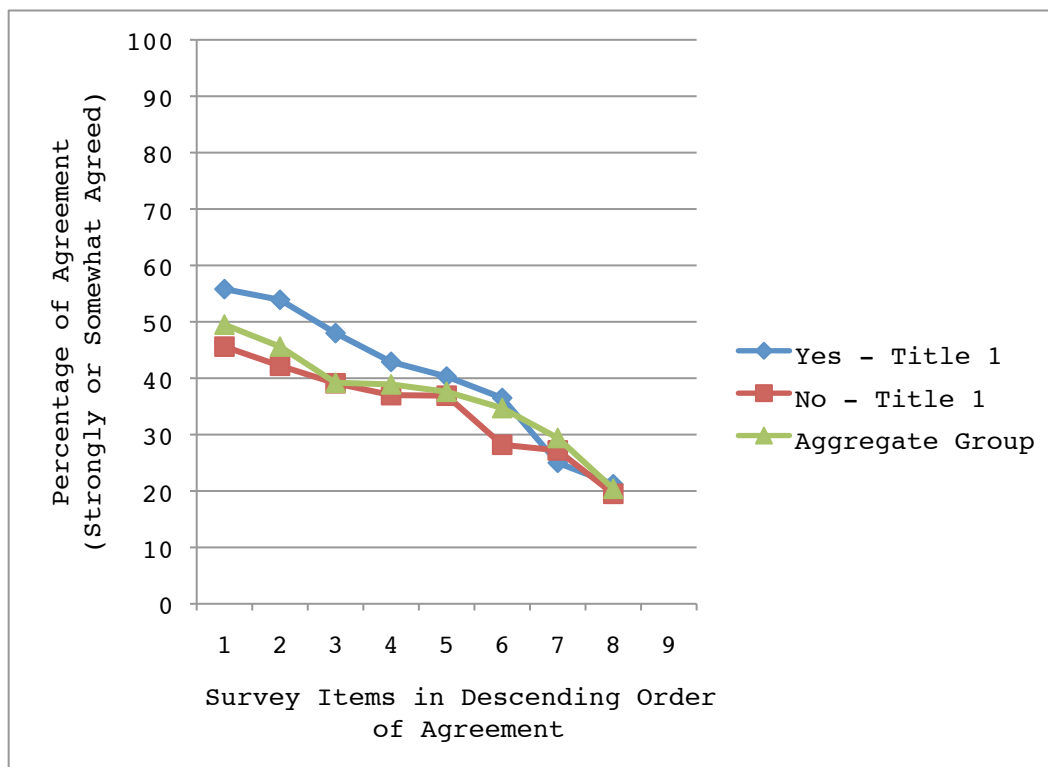
X = No Significant Difference

Shaded Area = Significant Difference

As conveyed in Figure 4.12, study participants working in Title 1 schools embraced a skill theoretical perspective toward the teaching of reading similar to the aggregate group. Regardless of Title 1 eligibility, the majority of principals strongly or somewhat agreed with a skill theoretical perspective. As indicated by Table 4.16, no significant difference was noted toward a skill theoretical orientation in the teaching of reading between principals working in Title 1 schools and principals working in non-Title 1 schools.

Figure 4.13 shows the level of agreement among principals for survey items categorized by whole language

theoretical orientation and identified by survey question item numbers (see Appendix R for complete data set) disaggregated by Title 1 status.



**Figure 4.13** Title 1 Funding Whole Language Theoretical Orientation

**Table 4.17**

Difference in Average Scale Scores on Whole Language Theoretical Orientation by Title 1 Status

	School Receives Title 1 Funding (n=52)	School Not Eligible Title 1 (n=46)
School Receives Title 1 Funding	-	X Diff -.02 P=.791
School Not Eligible Title 1 Funding	X Diff .02 P=.791	-

Level of Significance  $P < .05$

X = No Significant Difference

Shaded Area = Significant Difference

Figure 4.13 shows that a school's Title 1 status differed little from the aggregate group when considering a whole language theoretical perspective toward the teaching of reading. Trend lines show principals who preside over schools eligible for Title 1 funds, are slightly more in agreement with a whole language theoretical perspective toward the teaching of reading than their non-Title 1 counterparts. Table 4.17 reveals there was no significant difference between the group of principals who preside over schools that receive Title 1 funds and the group of principals working in schools that do not receive Title 1 funds and their whole language theoretical orientation.

Theoretical Orientation in Relation  
to School Minority Population

Because the NCLB (2002) act specifically earmarks money for eliminating the achievement gap between sub groups, and focuses on literacy learning, it was important to ask whether the theoretical orientation of principals working in high minority schools differ from those who do not.

Table 4.18 is a frequency table sharing the count of how many survey respondents represent each category based on the percentage of student minority population in the schools in which these principals work. Table 4.18 also indicates the overall relative frequency for each category.

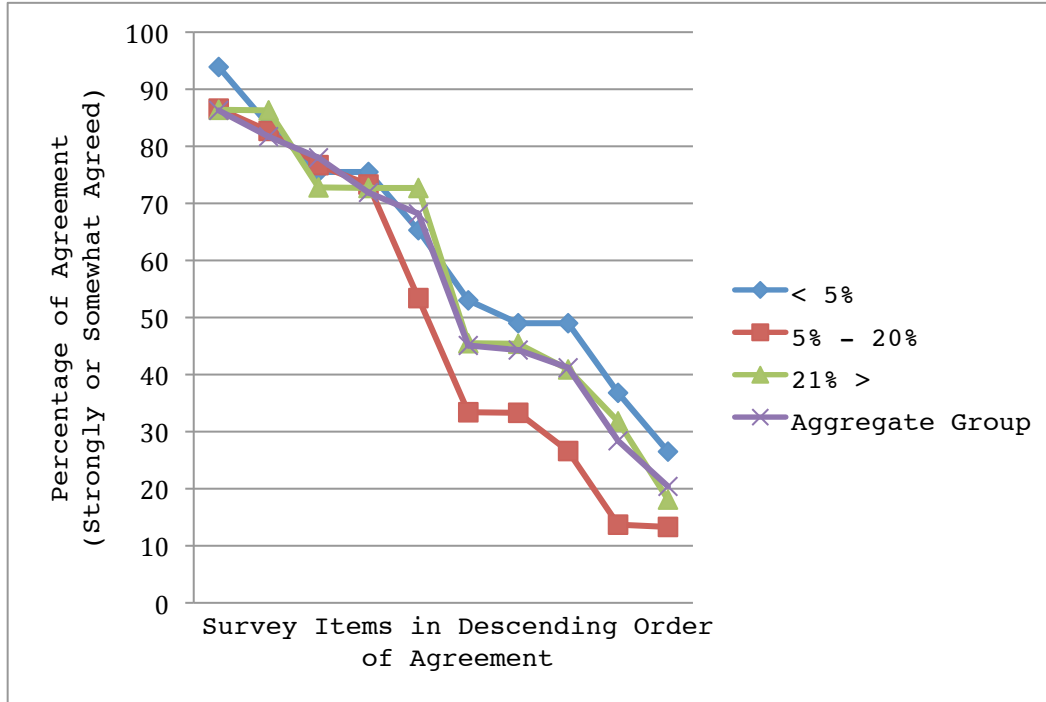
**Table 4.18**

Frequency Distribution by  
Schools' Minority Population

Interval	Frequency	Relative Frequency
Less than 5% Student Minority	49	.485
5% to 20% Student Minority	30	.297
21% or Greater Student Minority	22	.219

Figure 4.14 presents the strength of agreement to a phonic theoretical orientation by item numbers (see

Appendix S for complete data set), disaggregated by minority enrollments in schools.



**Figure 4.14** School Minority Population Phonic Theoretical Orientation



**Table 4.19**

Difference in Average Scale Scores on  
Phonic Theoretical Orientation by  
School's Minority Population

	<5% Minority Population (n=49)	5% - 20% Minority Population (n=30)	21% > Minority Population (n=22)
<5% School Minority Population	—	Diff-.28 P=.001	X Diff-.15 P=.126
5% - 20% School Minority Population	Diff .28 P=.001	—	X Diff .13 P=.244
21% > School Minority Population	X Diff .15 P=.126	X Diff-.13 P=.244	—

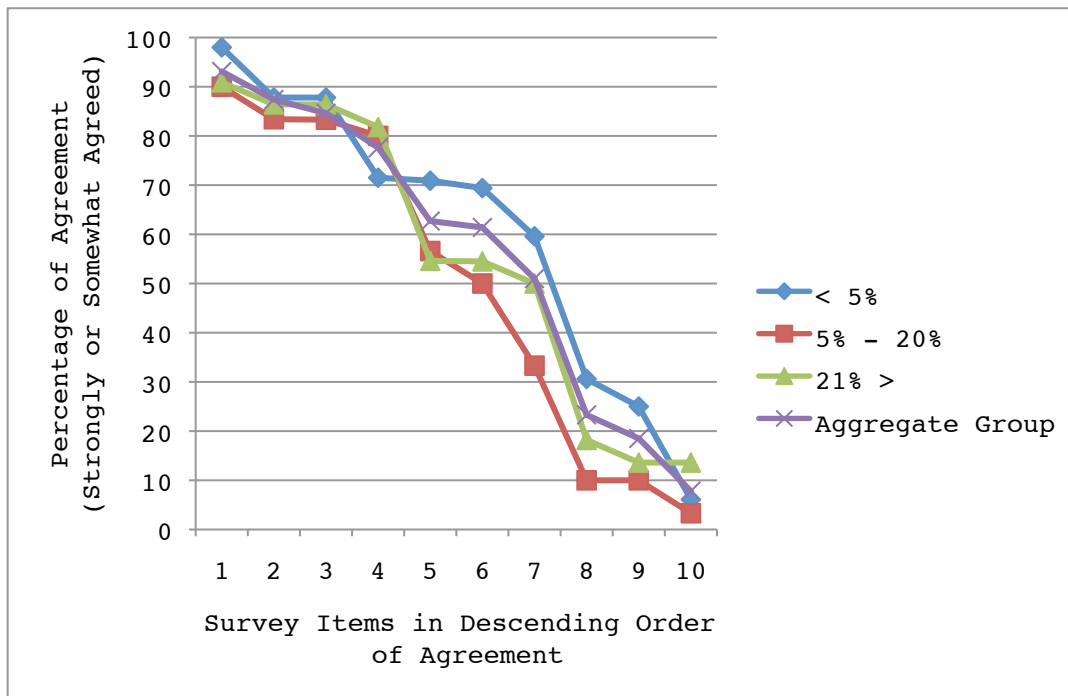
Level of Significance  $P < .05$

X = No Significant Difference

Shaded Area = Significant Difference

T-test results in Table 4.19 indicate some interesting differences. A significant difference between the group of principals who preside over schools with less than 5% minority population and the group of principals who preside over schools with a minority population of 5% to 20% was noted in their theoretical orientation.

Figure 4.15 presents the reported percentages for all the items categorized by skill theoretical orientation (see Appendix T for complete data set), disaggregated by the percentage of minority students within the schools these principals work.



**Figure 4.15** School Minority Population Skill Theoretical Orientation

T-tests presented in Table 4.20 show that the percentage of student minority enrollment in a school had some association with orientation differences among principals.

**Table 4.20**

Difference in Average Scale Scores on  
Skill Theoretical Orientation by  
School's Minority Population

	<5% Minority Population (n=49)	5% - 20% Minority Population (n=30)	21% > Minority Population (n=22)
<5% School Minority Population	—	Diff-.31 P=.004	X Diff-.16 P=.104
5% - 20% School Minority Population	Diff .31 P=.004	—	X Diff .09 P=.411
21% > School Minority Population	X Diff .16 P=.104	X Diff-.09 P=.411	—

Level of Significance  $P < .05$

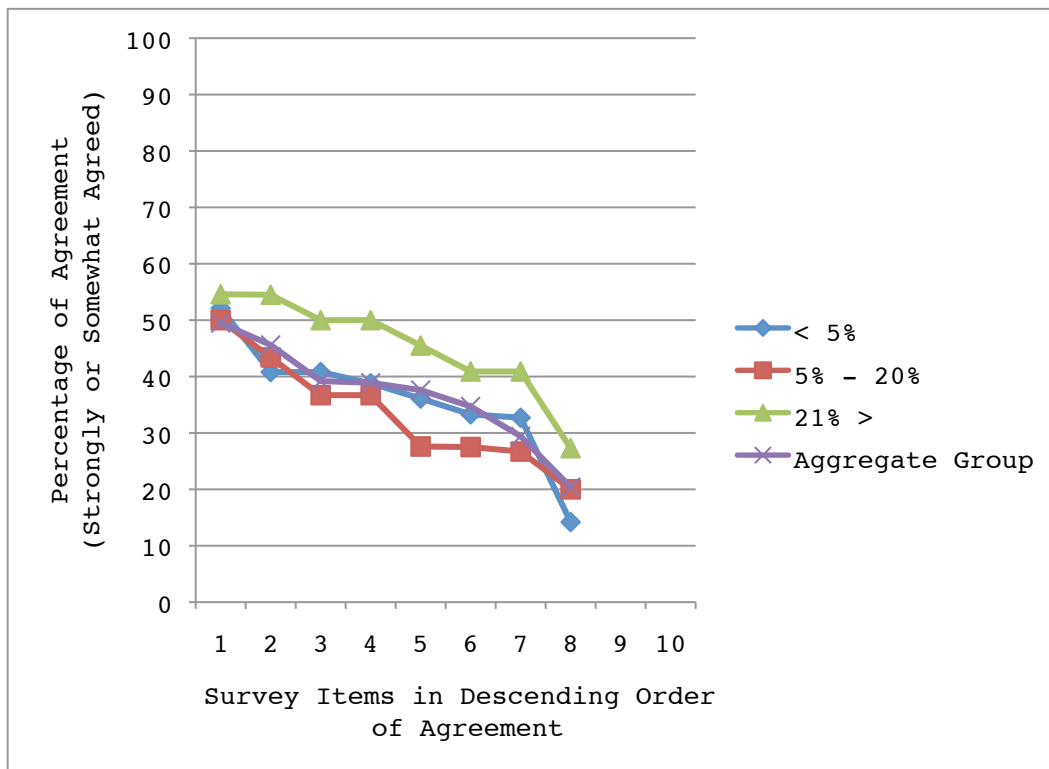
X = No Significant Difference

Shaded Area = Significant Difference

Significant difference in skill theoretical orientation could be found between the principals who presided over schools with less than 5% minority population and principals who worked in schools with a minority population of 5% to 20%. Principals who worked in schools with a student minority population of less than 5% were more in support of a skill-based theoretical orientation toward the teaching of reading.

Figure 4.16 reports the percentages of agreement for items categorized by whole language theoretical orientation (see Appendix U for complete data set), disaggregated by

percentage of minority students in the schools these principals work.



**Figure 4.16** School Minority Population Whole Language Theoretical Orientation

**Table 4.21**

Difference in Average Scale Scores on  
Whole Language Theoretical Orientation  
School's Minority Population

	<5% Minority Population (n=49)	5% - 20% Minority Population (n=30)	21% > Minority Population (n=22)
<5% School Minority Population	—	X Diff-.16 P=.083	X Diff .03 P=.769
5% - 20% School Minority Population	X Diff .16 P=.083	—	X Diff .19 P=.110
21% > School Minority Population	X Diff-.03 P=.769	X Diff-.19 P=.110	—

Level of Significance  $P < .05$

X = No Significant Difference

Shaded Area = Significant Difference

Table 4.21 indicates there was no significant difference in a whole language theoretical orientation toward the teaching of reading between any of the three groups of principals when the data are disaggregated according to a school's minority population.

A significant difference was noted for both phonic and skill theoretical orientations with the variable of minority population within the buildings these principals work. Principals who worked in buildings that had between 5% and 20% minority population were less in favor of both phonic- and skill-based theoretical perspectives toward the

teaching of reading than principals who worked in buildings with less than 5% student minority population.

#### Theoretical Orientation in Relation to School Size

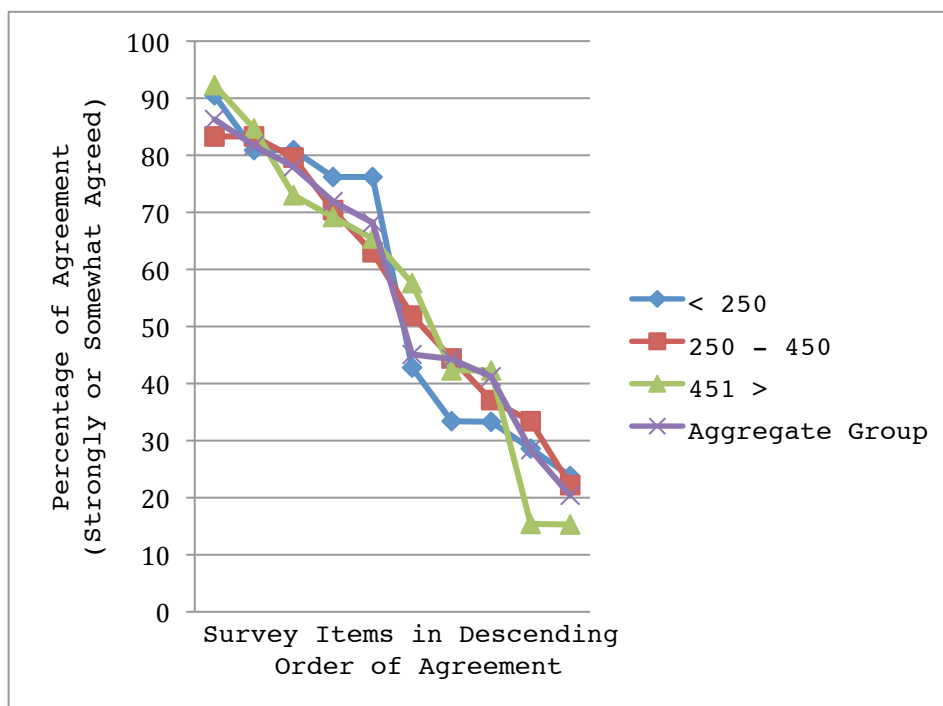
While data revealed a significant difference in theoretical orientation based on student minority population, the variable of school size was also utilized to see how it might associate with a principal's theoretical orientation toward the teaching of reading. Table 4.22 is a frequency chart sharing the count of how many survey respondents represent each identified category according to the total student population of the schools in which these principals work.

**Table 4.22**

Frequency Distribution by  
School Size

Interval	Frequency	Relative Frequency
<250 Student Population	21	.208
250 - 450 Student Population	54	.535
451> Student Population	26	.258

Figure 4.17 presents the percentages of agreement for items categorized by phonic theoretical orientation (see Appendix V for complete data set), disaggregated by total school size.



**Figure 4.17** School Size Phonic Theoretical Orientation

**Table 4.23**

Difference in Average Scale Scores  
on Phonic Theoretical Orientation  
by School Size

	<250 Student Population (n=21)	250 - 450 Student Population (n=54)	451> Student Population (n=26)
<250 Student Population	-	X Diff .04 P=.652	X Diff-.02 P=.929
250 - 450 Student Population	X Diff-.04 P=.652	-	X Diff-.06 P=.549
451> Student Population	X Diff .02 P=.929	X Diff .06 P=.549	-

Level of Significance  $P < .05$

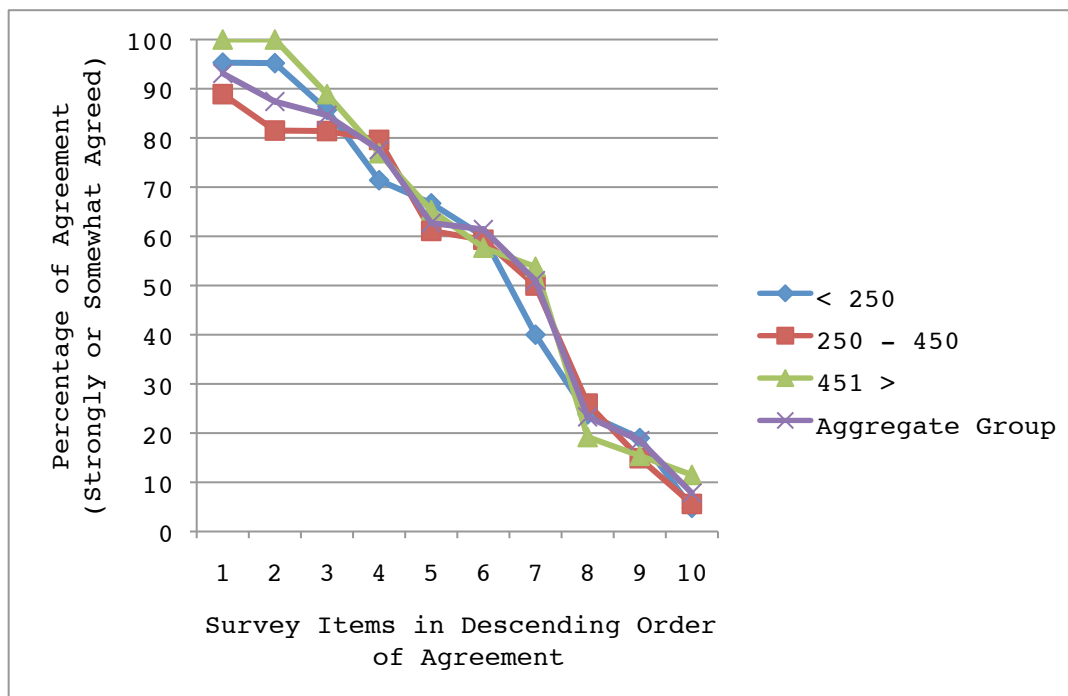
X = No Significant Difference

Shaded Area = Significant Difference

Table 4.23 indicates there was no significant difference between the three groups of principals when data was disaggregated according to total school population and their phonic theoretical perspective toward the teaching of reading.

Figure 4.18 presents the percentages, in descending order of agreement, for items categorized by skill theoretical orientation (see Appendix W for complete data set). Figure 4.18 is a visual representation of descriptive analysis of the item responses grouped according to skill theoretical orientation disaggregated by school size.





**Figure 4.18** School Size Skill Theoretical Orientation

**Table 4.24**

Difference in Average Scale Scores  
on Skill Theoretical Orientation  
by School Size

	<250 Student Population (n=21)	250 - 450 Student Population (n=54)	451> Student Population (n=26)
<250 Student Population	—	X Diff-.08 P=.467	X Diff .04 P=.680
250 - 450 Student Population	X Diff .08 P=.467	—	X Diff .12 P=.196
451> Student Population	X Diff-.04 P=.680	X Diff-.12 P=.196	—

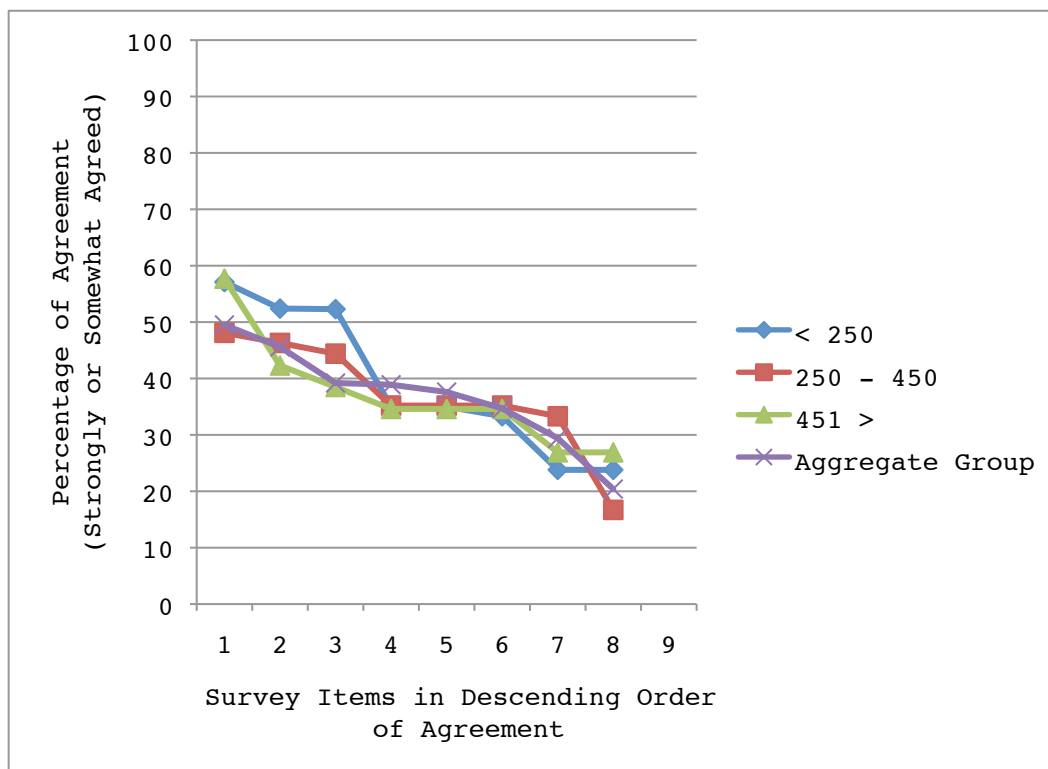
Level of Significance  $P < .05$

X = No Significant Difference

Shaded Area = Significant Difference

Table 4.24 reveals there was no significant difference noted in support of a skill theoretical orientation toward the teaching of reading when data was disaggregated according to total school population.

Figure 4.19 presents the percentages of agreement with item responses associated with the whole language theoretical orientation (see Appendix X for complete data set). Data are disaggregated by school size.



**Figure 4.19** School Size Whole Language Theoretical Orientation

**Table 4.25**

Difference in Average Scale Scores on  
Whole Language Theoretical Orientation  
by School Size

	<250 Student Population (n=21)	250 - 450 Student Population (n=54)	451> Student Population (n=26)
<250 Student Population	—	X Diff-.01 P=.348	X Diff-.19 P=.106
250 - 450 Student Population	X Diff .01 P=.348	—	X Diff-.09 P=.345
451> Student Population	X Diff .19 P=.106	X Diff .09 P=.345	—

Level of Significance  $P < .05$

X = No Significant Difference

Shaded Area = Significant Difference

Table 4.25 reveals that there was no significant difference toward a whole language theoretical perspective of principals when data were disaggregated according to total school population. Overall, data revealed total school population did not associate with a principal's theoretical orientation. There was no significant difference noted in theoretical orientation toward the teaching of reading between principals who worked in buildings with less than 250 students, principals who worked in buildings that served 250-450 students, or principals who worked in buildings with a student population of more than 451 students.

## CHAPTER 5: IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study examined the theoretical orientation of 104 Iowa elementary principals toward the teaching of reading. Variables exploring years of teaching experience, experience as an elementary principal, education specific to the area of literacy learning, eligibility of individual schools for Title 1 funding, schools' minority population, and overall total student population were explored in an effort to find associations with theoretical orientation. The purpose of the study was not to embrace one orientation – phonic, skill, or whole language – or resultant set of practices over another, but rather to ask what orientations prevailed within Iowa's elementary principal population. Comparatively, across aggregate and disaggregated subgroups, data revealed principals in this study embraced a preference for a skill-based theoretical orientation toward the teaching of reading, overlapping with a phonic-based theoretical orientation, with a smaller percentage of principals favoring some elements of a whole language theoretical orientation.

### Implications

All in all, the data on theoretical orientation revealed little difference across years of teaching

experience, except for one notable trend, the tendency for principals with the most teaching experience to be less embracing of the phonic instructional perspective. This might indicate something important, in that it suggests that such principals are simply less likely to put stock into the popular phonic approach, recognizing that perhaps more value can be derived from various instructional approaches, in which teachers are expected to adjust according to prevailing student needs. And these insights, it could be inferred, could be the result of deeper and longer experiences in the classroom.

One can infer that principals who have spent the most time teaching and working with children have a more comprehensive understanding of the learning process and more diverse experiences working with the learning styles and needs of a variety of students in the classroom setting, and are more confident in their ability to make instructional decisions based on individual needs. This is another way of saying that extended time in the classroom exposes teachers to a broader understanding of the complex process involved in learning to read and to the various strategies and pedagogical approaches attendant to this process. When these teachers become principals they continue to draw from this experience.

Experience as a teacher and as a principal also fuels credibility with teachers. More experienced principals are simply better poised to lead and to collaborate with classroom teachers in the area of teaching reading. They have the credibility and their views are colored by actual experience with children. This gives them a people-oriented set of skills toward leadership that can only be obtained if the leader has instructional 'street cred.' Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004) support this when they say that "the ability to engage in practices that help develop people depends, in part, on leaders' knowledge of the 'technical core' of schooling – what is required to improve the quality of teaching and learning" (p. 24).

In summation, experience seems to matter. The amount of time spent teaching and the amount of time spent in the principalship, are two clear factors that influence a principal's theoretical orientation. More time spent teaching and leading a staff as a principal equates to a broader, more expansive and comprehensive view of literacy learning that at least allows for a more dynamic expression of instruction in the school.

When considering the variable of education specific to the area of literacy learning, there was no significant difference noted in theoretical orientation of the

principals who participated in this study. Prior learning experiences and personal beliefs have been supported through research as key factors that influence ones perception and identity as a teacher (Connelly, Clandinin, & He 1997; Fang, 1996; Knowles 1992; Weinstein, 1988, 1989). Beliefs and experiences shape the perception individuals have of what it means to be a teacher, which in turn, influences instructional practices. The various levels of education, specific to the teaching of reading, did not appear to influence these principals' theoretical orientation toward teaching reading. Maybe, personal learning experiences and beliefs, prior to entering college coursework, has a strong hold on how these principals view the teaching of reading. As noted by Alsup (2006), teachers' identity is influenced by existing personal beliefs and knowledge of what it means to be a teacher.

Research supports that teacher identity can be shaped and influenced by personal learning experiences one encounters prior to entering teacher education programs (Britzman, 2003) and these initial preconceptions of teaching and learning are still intact at the end of teacher preparation (Weinstein, 1990). Also, field experiences may be valued more by preservice teachers

(Shulman, 1998) than theory presented in college coursework, impacting theoretical orientation.

Concerns regarding the quality of our nation's teaching force can be traced back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, with an increase in research and subsequent evidence during the past 25 years recognizing the impact teacher quality has on student achievement. Evidence suggests that teacher quality matters for student achievement (Harris & Sass, 2008; Croninger, Rice, Rathbun, & Nishio, 2007; Gitomer, 2007; Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2006; Darling-Hammond, 2000). However, little research has been conducted examining the knowledge principals actually possess and value, in regards to the teaching of reading.

Events of the last decade, specifically the release of the Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching Children to Read (NRP) (2000) and reauthorization of the former Elementary Secondary Educational Act (ESEA) as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) (2002) have revealed an increased scrutiny on the teaching of reading in elementary classrooms. Personal and political forces have impacted reading practice (Goodman, 2009; Allington, 2005, 2004, 2002; Garan, 2002) shaping the literacy instruction public school children receive and dictating how elementary educators teach children to read (Altwerger, 2005). Many



elementary principals, as former school teachers, are generalists in curriculum areas and are sometimes teachers who worked in junior high or secondary school settings, and thus, may lack in-depth knowledge in the area of reading instruction needed to lead and guide teachers in their efforts to teach children to read.

With this in mind, the principals in this study may have been influenced more by experiences, not theory, throughout their coursework specific to literacy learning and do not value the theoretical components for teaching reading. Once individuals enter an existing institution (school setting) they often begin to adapt to or express the views reflected in the institution (Goodman, 1988; Berger & Luckmann, 1966). The influence of colleagues, in the buildings in which these principals have worked, may have impacted how they perceive the teaching of reading and ultimately their theoretical orientation toward the teaching of reading.

There was no significant difference between the group of principals who preside over schools that receive Title 1 funds and the group of principals working in schools that do not receive Title 1 funds and their theoretical orientations toward teaching reading. Given the documented under-achievement of low-income children in the area of

reading, literacy leadership in Title 1 buildings is especially important. The variance of student performance (student achievement) between schools with primarily low-income populations and schools with more affluent families is quite dramatic (Sass, Hannaway, Xu, Figlio, & Feng, 2010). As reported by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) (2009), 14% of fourth-grade students from schools considered high-poverty scored at or above the proficiency level in reading. In comparison, 50% of the fourth-grade students in low-poverty schools either met or exceeded the proficiency level. These differences are even greater for students in bigger cities, where larger numbers of students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (Uzzell, Simon, Horwitz, Hyslop, Lewis, & Csserly, 2010). With teacher quality a key to student achievement (Coltfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2005; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005; Rockoff, 2004; Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003), literacy leadership in high-poverty schools is essential to meet the literacy learning needs of these most at-risk students.

In a study dealing with teacher qualifications in high-poverty and low-poverty schools, Sass (2010) noted that the rate of inexperienced teachers (fewer years of teaching experience) was much greater (nearly double) in

high-poverty schools than in low-poverty schools. This lack of teaching experience reflected lower achievement scores in both reading and math. "Prior federal efforts, primarily Title 1, as well as state efforts target dollars to schools serving the most disadvantaged students, but they provide wide local latitude in determining what happens in these schools, including the assignment of teachers" (p.22). With this in mind, the principal is a key factor in determining teacher quality within the schools they work. In most districts, the principal has much autonomy in hiring, evaluating, and retaining the teaching staff. Principals who do not possess the adequate literacy knowledge required to sustain high-quality instruction for all students could diminish the quality of literacy education offered children in Title 1 schools. Without a level of expertise regarding literacy learning, the principal is not qualified to make hiring and evaluation decisions regarding the quality of literacy instruction offered to children.

Principals in Title 1 buildings are charged with the task of improving student literacy achievement. Without a level of expertise specific to the teaching of reading, principals are not in a position to lead, guide, or support teachers in their effort to increase literacy learning in Title 1 buildings.

Complicating this lack of knowledge for principals are the guidelines in NCLB that emphasizes a "one-size-fits-all" (Goodman & Goodman, 2009, p.11) phonics mandate. This narrow view of reading instruction to benefit all children learning may not be the best way to conduct a reading program, especially with at risk children. Principals, not proficient in their own knowledge regarding what constitutes quality reading instruction, are more inclined to support the strict phonic and skill based reading instruction advocated by NCLB (2002).

The interesting trend in this study indicates that school principals working in Title 1 settings do not embrace phonic or skill-based instruction over whole language. This is, in a way, an unexpected finding but it is also a heartening one, in that one could conclude that no 'one size fits all' approach seems to prevail in either the Title 1 or non-Title 1 setting.

A significant difference was noted for both phonic and skill theoretical orientations with the variable of minority population within the buildings these principals work. Principals who worked in buildings that had between 5% and 20% minority population were less in favor of both phonic- and skill-based theoretical perspectives toward the

teaching of reading than principals who worked in buildings with less than 5% minority population.

These findings might indicate an increased appreciation among principals working with diverse populations of the various factors that influence literacy learning for all students. For instance, principals who have worked in buildings with more ethnically diverse populations witness a variety of cultural backgrounds that children bring with them to the learning situation and may value these varied "funds of knowledge" (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992; Moll & Greenberg, 1990). This could give rise to a more flexible attitude toward literacy teaching and learning. Developmentally appropriate practices (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997) in reading include ways of teaching with respect to the social and cultural contexts individual children have experienced prior to entering the school setting and incorporating this into instruction to help children make sense of learning experiences within the classroom setting. The more these principals have been exposed to the greater range of diverse learning experiences that children bring with them to the classroom setting, the more they might be able to recognize and value individual children's cultural differences and the benefits of using a variety of

approaches to teach reading. These principals may have developed a "sociocultural consciousness" (Villegas & Lucas, 2002) and recognize, appreciate, and value the different ways children perceive the world and make meaning as they learn to read. This is certainly something that might be worth exploring in a follow-up study.

The group of principals that work in buildings with student minority populations between 5% and 20% appear to be more flexible in their theoretical orientation regarding the teaching of reading. They are less committed to any one point of view on the teaching of reading. I suspect these principals value teacher autonomy and support a variety of teaching methodologies because of the diversity of achievement that is existent in more integrated school settings. This greater understanding of the impact the role culture plays in learning to read (Irvine, 2003; Delpit, 1995; Heath, 1983) supports continued learning and school success for all students in the elementary classroom.

There was no significant difference noted in theoretical orientations toward the teaching of reading when data were disaggregated according to school size. Data revealed total school population did not associate with a principal's theoretical orientation.

Much research exists regarding the effect of school size (Wainer & Zwerling, 2006; Borland & Howsen, 2003; Deutsch, 2003; Irmsher, 1997) on student achievement, along with additional studies focused on class size (Cotton, 2002; Howley & Bickel, 2002; Ginsberg & Wlodkowski, 2000; Gladwell, 2000) and the impact these variables have on student achievement. Class size, in some studies, appears to influence student achievement, but as noted in Hanushek's (2001) review of 277 studies, 72% of the studies showed that the relationship between class size and student achievement is insignificant. There was no significant difference noted in theoretical orientation toward the teaching of reading between principals who worked in buildings with less than 250 students, principals who worked in buildings that served 250-450 students, or principals who worked in buildings with a student population of more than 451 students.

I did not anticipate finding a significant difference in theoretical orientation based solely on the size of the schools in which these principals work. I suspect results reflect personal beliefs, developed over time from a combination of experiences and coursework regarding the teaching of reading is what is revealed. Accordingly, these principals overall have been influenced by their own

learning experiences, coursework throughout their teacher and administrative preparation programs, teaching experiences, and possibly the observation of others teaching reading.

Munby, Russell, and Martin (2001) found in their review of research regarding beliefs and teaching, that it is difficult to change established beliefs. Beliefs regarding what it means to be a teacher are established well before preservice teacher candidates enter college coursework (Britzman, 2003) and impact practices. The many hours of observation while sitting in K-12 classrooms (as students) has shown to strongly influence how one perceives the role of teacher and ultimately influences how one teaches. These well-established beliefs of what it means to be a teacher are difficult to change, even with concentrated coursework and field experiences throughout teacher preparation programs. These principals, all of whom have been former teachers, have deep-seated beliefs regarding the role of teaching reading that continue to influence their perspective of teaching reading. Experiences, as a student, as a teacher, and as a principal have defined how these principals perceive the teaching of reading and influence their theoretical orientation. But the variable of size still proved to be interesting.



Because much has been made of the case that smaller schools have in providing more personal and intimate and differentiated experiences in school, one could say that whole language approaches might prove to be better attained in smaller school settings. What we don't know is if the size of the school had any association with the size of the classroom, which would have likely proven to be a more revealing question.

#### Summary

There is an absence of research examining the theoretical orientation of elementary principals regarding instructional perspectives toward the teaching of reading. In this study, principals' theoretical orientation toward the teaching of reading was examined based on experience as a classroom teacher, experience as an elementary principal, formal education in the area of literacy learning, eligibility of individual schools for Title 1 funding, the school minority population, and overall school size. Principals' theoretical orientation toward a phonic, skill, or whole language perspective toward the teaching of reading was explored.

As a group, the 104 principals who participated in this study favored a skill theoretical orientation toward the teaching of reading, overlapping with a phonic

theoretical orientation based on responses to survey items contained in the TORP (DeFord, 1985) instrument. Arguably, there is a push at the federal level to accept the findings of the National Reading Panel's report (2000) regarding phonics as a "pillar" of reading instruction and this may influence theoretical orientations held by principals. A skill theoretical orientation was consistently found among school principals.

But while phonic and skill orientations did generally prevail, various differences could also be found between principals. The more years of teaching experience and principal experience, for instance, the less likely these principals were to embrace a phonic approach although it didn't mean that a whole language approach was favored. Principals whose background experiences included working with a more diverse population of students seemed to influence how they viewed the teaching of reading. It appeared the principals who had opportunities to work with diverse student populations possessed a greater embrace of the complex process involved in learning to read and this widened their perspective regarding what constituted appropriate instruction in the teaching of reading. However, this did not mean that a whole language approach was favored. There was no significant difference noted in

the amount of support for a whole language theoretical orientation toward the teaching of reading across years of experience as a teacher or years of principal experience variables. A skill theoretical perspective toward the teaching of reading still emerged as the predominant approach favored by principals.

Two other variables revealed significant differences regarding theoretical orientation toward the teaching of reading. The percentage of minority students within a school had some association with theoretical differences too. Principals' who worked more extensively with diverse groups of children, seemed to recognize or value a wider range and less single approach to the teaching of reading, but only up to a point. One could ask whether limited exposure to student diversity in the teaching and learning of reading, affects a principal's perspective on reading and limits the variety of approaches supported in the school. Again, there was no increase in support for a whole language approach to the teaching of reading from this group of principals.

The variable of additional education specific to the teaching of reading did not produce any significant difference in theoretical orientation. Principals who possessed an endorsement or master's degree in the area of

teaching literacy did not reveal any significant differences regarding theoretical orientation and teaching reading. Trend lines for this group of principals mirrored the aggregate group, supporting a skill-based and phonic-based theoretical approach to the teaching of reading.

Similarly, principals who worked in Title 1 buildings compared to those who did not work in Title 1 buildings did not reveal any significant difference in their perspective toward teaching reading. This also held true when the variable of school size was utilized. No significant differences were noted between the variable of Title 1 or school size in regards to a principal's theoretical orientation toward the teaching of reading.

Overall, Iowa principals who participated in this study favored a skill-based theoretical orientation toward the teaching of reading, overlapped with a phonic theoretical perspective toward the teaching of reading. A whole language theoretical perspective was not strongly supported, although its embrace strengthened and weakened along various subgroup variables.

#### Role of Elementary Principal as Literacy Leader

Instructional leadership definitions typically include identifying, supporting, and developing teachers' skills.

Principals' perceptions of what their role is as the instructional leader are often colored by their own varied educational experiences and the expectations of how individual school districts view the role of the principal. The elementary principal, as the academic, instructional leader, must promote reading as the top priority to improve student achievement. Effective instructional leaders engage in work that supports teachers in improving their instructional practices in classrooms (Zepeda, 2007). Successful schools are a product of instructional leadership and supervision that shape the school to function productively (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2005).

There is a lack of research regarding the knowledge base and theoretical orientation elementary principals hold regarding literacy instruction. While coursework in preparation for a bachelor's degree in elementary education includes some courses specific to literacy learning, this coursework provides a generalist perspective. Teaching experience and experience as a principal revealed some degree of significant difference in theoretical perspective and it was surprising to note that levels of literacy education appeared to have little impact on the theoretical orientation of the principals included in this study.

Effective reading instruction is a crucial mission of schools and classrooms to ensure all children successfully learn to read and write. The most consistent predictor of student achievement in reading and mathematics is the proportion of well-qualified teachers in a state (Darling-Hammond, 2000), specifically those with a full certification and a major in the field they teach. In addition, an interview in *Education Week*, with Darling-Hammond offered the following, "the practices school-level leaders (principals) engage in are second only to teacher quality in predicting student achievement. It is the leader who both recruits and retains high-quality staff" (Olson, 2008, p.8). If learning to read well is at the core of elementary school achievement, then early success is essential. A successful start in learning to read is paramount as it "opens windows of opportunity" (Sherman, 2001, p.3) for learners. Educational leaders, not proficient in their knowledge of literacy instruction, trying to determine what qualifications excellent reading teachers have may be difficult (Burch & Spillane, 2003; Stein & Nelson, 2003). Clearly, much work remains in demonstrating how theoretical orientations toward reading are actually tied to principal leadership qualities, and to measures on teaching performance.

For decades, professional development has been aimed at the classroom teacher, and rightly so, as teachers are the closest to the point of service delivery. In the past decade, the growth of professional learning communities, teacher study groups, and whole faculty study groups in elementary schools have become the norm in some systems as means to improve instruction, and in turn, increase student achievement (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Karhanek, 2004; Murphy & Lick, 2001; Thiessen & Anderson, 1999; Birchak, Connor, Crawford, Kahn, Kaser, Turner, & Short, 1998;). However, little attention has been paid to supplying professional literacy learning for elementary principals, and there is an absence of research on the literacy leadership role of elementary principals.

Increased focus on reading instruction has magnified the role of the elementary principal, as the instructional leader, for his or her individual building. Today's elementary principals need to be knowledgeable regarding literacy teaching and learning to support classroom teachers in their efforts to ensure all children learn to read and write. Considering the current political climate and intense scrutiny of literacy learning and teaching, especially reading, it is imperative that elementary

principals become more knowledgeable regarding the teaching and learning of reading in the elementary classroom.

In order to truly understand the complexity of teaching children to read, principals need experience working with children and with teachers to ensure they are the literacy leaders of their elementary buildings. One particular item, located in section B of the survey, specifically asked the principals to share their level of formal literacy education (i.e. endorsement, master's, doctorate) degrees held. Of the total participants in this study, 51 responded as NA (not applicable) and an additional 12 survey respondents skipped the question. Over half of the respondents (61.5%) of the entire sample for this study either skipped the question entirely or indicated the item was not applicable to their background experience. While there is little dispute that the elementary principal is viewed as the instructional leader of his or her site (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2005; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Criscuolo, 1985, 1974; Fullan, 1985) a crucial part of this leadership role in elementary buildings is literacy leadership, which remains elusive. It was interesting to note that over half of all respondents did not claim a background in literacy teaching and learning, yet all respondents were ultimately



responsible for the literacy learning and teaching at their individual site. Elementary principals need to be knowledgeable in both how to supervise and evaluate literacy learning to be the academic leader of their buildings.

In order for elementary principals to function effectively as the literacy leader of their sites, they must possess an understanding of the complexity of literacy processes, be mindful of the myriad of instructional strategies that assist young children when learning to read, and balance the demands of leadership and supervision to promote high quality literacy instruction for all children. The improvement of a reading program within an elementary school building should be a top priority for the elementary principal.

#### Recommendations

One possible recommendation to assist elementary principals in acquiring crucial literacy knowledge would be the inclusion of literacy-specific coursework in educational administration programs. Such coursework could be combined with existing coursework, or perhaps, a literacy leadership course could be included within the framework of educational leadership programs. As it is, the principal guides the professional development process.

Standard #2 of the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) addresses this role by expanding existing coursework to include a literacy component that provides aspiring principals with literacy knowledge (NAESP, 2002). The growing prevalence of literacy or reading coaches exacerbates the need for elementary principals to be knowledgeable about reading and literacy practices. The added support of such instructional coaches intensifies the need for elementary principals to know about reading development, the teaching of reading and how to supervise and evaluate both teachers and coaches.

The burden of responsibility to rectify this concern should not rest solely on the shoulders of higher education. School districts also share the responsibility to provide intentional, systematic professional development in the area of literacy teaching and learning for their elementary principals. Such professional development should be focused on providing principals with high quality professional learning as part of their daily work. In addition, principals within a district should be afforded opportunities to study literacy together with teachers. This would be a powerful professional practice that could positively impact overall student achievement. Building such professional literacy communities, within the

elementary school setting, could be an influential and realistic professional development option.

#### Future Research

A review of literature on educational leadership from the past forty years clearly reveals an emphasis on the elementary principal as the instructional leader. Given the increasing scrutiny on literacy, including political measures that mandate literacy practices, additional research in the area of literacy leadership is needed and warranted.

Subsequently, definitions of instructional leadership have been operationalized through professional leadership standards, while at the same time, professional leadership organizations have highlighted the need for principals to assume instructional leadership roles. In an era characterized by increasing accountability demands, federal policy, legislation, and resultant mandates, a need for instructional leadership roles for principals have been accentuated. However, despite over a decade of intense inquiry into literacy practices, little research has been conducted identifying effective leadership knowledge and skill as a subset of instructional leadership.

Several prospective research avenues are viable in terms of literacy leadership. Given the growing body of

research in both the fields of reading and educational administration, further study into how districts provide professional development in the area of literacy learning for their elementary principals would be a possibility.

Perhaps a first step would be to create a literacy leadership framework that is transdisciplinary in nature. An initial move would be to identify the knowledge and skill sets necessary for exemplary literacy leadership at the elementary level. Scholars in both the fields of literacy and educational leadership should be consulted as to what skills and knowledge are essential in order to provide effective literacy leadership for elementary principals.

Another possibility would be to approach a major literacy organization such as the International Reading Association (IRA) and seek to establish a special interest group (SIG). On the same note, the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP, 2002) should also develop special interest or study groups on this topic. In a time period when public education, specifically reading, incurs increasing public scrutiny, mutual cooperation between national organizations that involves elementary principals is essential to support continued literacy learning for all children.

In addition, studies that explore when principals received degrees and resultant theoretical perspectives would also be of interest. It would be intriguing to examine if degrees specific to literacy teaching earned during particular time frames yield specific theoretical orientations as compared to the results of this study. It appeared the more teaching experience and principal experience survey respondents possessed, the less they embraced a phonic theoretical orientation. Was this perspective possibly influenced by the time period in which these principals completed their administrative degrees? And, what has been the possible impact of NCLB (2002) legislation and resultant mandates?

Finally, case studies of certain individuals in this study would be of interest and may add to the body of research. In particular, considering the increase over the last decade in the number of minority children within Iowa public school districts and the decrease in the number of minority principals, the theoretical orientation, supervisory practices, and instructional perspectives toward reading held by the lone African American principal and the lone Hispanic principal within this study of the 104 principals may yield a fascinating case study. To end, studies that examine professional membership of Iowa

elementary principals in professional organizations may also yield interesting research data.

Essential to the development and continued improvement of an elementary school principal in regard to theoretical orientation that results in optimal literacy learning and teaching, such research is absent from two major educational fields – literacy research and educational leadership research. All-in-all, there is an absence of research examining elementary principals' knowledge of literacy teaching and learning, the theoretical orientation of groups of elementary principals, and the teaching and learning perspectives held by elementary principals.

Only effective instructional leaders, true literacy leaders, who have knowledge in literacy learning, methods, and teaching, can adequately evaluate teacher expertise and ensure quality literacy instruction. Thus, the issue of literacy leadership emerges as a fundamental concern that warrants further investigation.

APPENDIX A: THEORETICAL ORIENTATION TO READING PROFILE  
SURVEY (TORP)

Survey Instrument

Section A: Reading Instruction

Directions: Read the following statements and mark the response that BEST indicates the relationship of the statement to your feelings about reading and reading instruction.

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

Strongly Agree      Somewhat Agree      Neither Agree or Disagree      Somewhat Disagree      Strongly Disagree

\*Select one best answer.

2. An increase in reading errors is usually related to a decrease in comprehension.
3. Dividing words into syllables according to rules is a helpful instructional practice for reading new words.
4. Fluency and expression are necessary components of reading that indicate good comprehension.
5. Materials for early reading should be written in natural language without concern for short, simple words and sentences.
6. When children do not know a word, they should be instructed to sound out its parts.
7. It is a good practice to allow children to edit what is written into their own dialect when learning to read.
8. The use of a glossary or dictionary is necessary in determining the meaning and pronunciation of new words.
9. Reversals (e.g., saying "saw" for "was") are significant problems in the teaching of reading.
10. It is a good practice to correct a child as soon as an oral reading mistake is made.
11. It is important for a word to be repeated a number of times after it has been introduced to ensure that it will become a part of sight vocabulary.
12. Paying close attention to punctuation marks is necessary to understanding story content.
13. It is a sign of an ineffective reader when words and phrases are repeated.
14. Being able to label words according to grammatical function (nouns, etc.) is useful in proficient reading.

15. When coming to a word that's unknown, the reader should be encouraged to guess upon meaning and go on.
16. Young readers need to be introduced to the root form of words (run, long) before they are asked to read inflected forms (running, longest).
17. It is not necessary for a child to know the letters of the alphabet in order to learn to read.
18. Flashcard drills with sight words is an unnecessary form of practice in reading instruction.
19. Ability to use accent patterns in multisyllable words (pho 'to graph, pho to'gra phy, and pho to gra'phic) should be developed as part of reading instruction.
20. Controlling text through consistent spelling patterns (The fat cat ran back. The fat cat sat on a hat.) is a means by which children can best learn to read.
21. Formal instruction in reading is necessary to ensure the adequate development of all the skills used in reading.
22. Phonic analysis is the most important form of analysis used when meeting new words.
23. Children's initial encounters with print should focus on meaning, not upon exact graphic representation.
24. Word shapes (word configuration) should be taught in reading to aid in word recognition.
25. It is important to teach skills in relation to other skills.
26. If a child says "house" for the written word "home" the response should be left uncorrected.
27. It is not necessary to introduce new words before they appear in the reading text.
28. Some problems in reading are caused by readers dropping the inflectional endings from words (e.g., jump(s), jump(ed)).

\*All statements offered the same five response options.

[This survey Section A, was developed by DeFord, D.E. (1985). Validating the construct of theoretical orientation in reading instruction. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 20(3).



Section B: Background Information

Directions: Indicate your response to the following items by selecting the appropriate circle(s).

1. How long have you been an elementary school principal?
  - Less than 5 years
  - 5 – 9 years
  - 10 – 14 years
  - 15 – 19 years
  - 20 or more years
2. How long were you a teacher before becoming a principal?
  - I did not teach.
  - Less than 5 years
  - 5 – 9 years
  - 10 – 14 years
  - 15 – 19 years
  - 20 or more years
3. Which of the following grades have you taught as your primary year-long assignment? (Mark all that apply.)
  - Kindergarten
  - 1<sup>st</sup>
  - 2<sup>nd</sup>
  - 3<sup>rd</sup>
  - 4<sup>th</sup>
  - 5<sup>th</sup>
  - 6<sup>th</sup>
4. Which of the following degrees or endorsements do you hold in Elementary Education? (Mark all that apply.)
  - An Endorsement
  - A bachelor's degree
  - A master's degree
  - A doctorate
  - Not Applicable
5. Which of the following degrees or endorsements do you hold in School Administration? (Mark all that apply.)
  - An Endorsement
  - A bachelor's degree
  - A master's degree
  - A doctorate
  - Not Applicable
6. Which of the following degrees or endorsements do you hold in Literacy? (Mark all that apply.)
  - An endorsement
  - A bachelor's degree
  - A master's degree
  - A doctorate
  - Not Applicable

7. What is your gender?
  - Male
  - Female
8. Which of the following categories best describes your ethnic background? (Mark all that apply.)
  - American Indian
  - African-American and Black, not of Hispanic Origin
  - Asian Pacific Islander
  - Latino or Hispanic
  - White, not Hispanic Origin
  - Other
9. Is the district you are employed with eligible for Title 1 funds?
  - Yes
  - No
10. Is the school you reside over classified as a Title 1 school?
  - Yes
  - No
11. What is the percentage of students classified as minority in your school?
  - Less than 5%
  - 5% to 20%
  - 21% to 40%
  - 41% to 60%
  - 61% to 80%
  - 80% or higher
12. What is the overall total population of your school?
  - Less than 250 students
  - 250 to 350 students
  - 351 to 450 students
  - 451 to 550 students
  - More than 550 students

## APPENDIX B: INITIAL EMAIL LETTER

April 14, 2010

Dear Elementary Principal:

My name is Bonnie Hoewing and I am a doctoral candidate in the Teaching and Learning PhD program at the University of Iowa. I would like to invite you to participate in a research study I am conducting for my dissertation.

The purpose of this study is to learn the knowledge and opinions of elementary school principals across the state of Iowa in the area of teaching young children to read. You are being invited to participate because you are a current elementary school principal in the state of Iowa. I obtained your name and contact information from the Iowa Educational Directory.

If you agree to participate, I would like you to complete an online Web survey questionnaire. You will be asked to give your opinion about a number of statements about reading and reading instruction for elementary school students. You will be asked to provide information about yourself including your employment history, degrees or endorsements, gender, and ethnicity. You will also be asked information about your district and school. You are free to skip any questions that you prefer not to answer. It will take you approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete the survey.

You will be asked to provide information over the Internet. It is possible that information provided over the Internet will be viewed by unauthorized persons who gain access to the Web site or the computers where the data are collected and saved. I will use a secure Web site (https) to collect your name or any identifying information about you or your institution. It will not be possible to link you or your institution to your responses on the survey.

Taking part in this research study is completely voluntary. If you do not wish to participate in this study, please discard this email. I may be contacting you by phone to answer any questions you have about the survey. If you do not wish to be contacted about this study, please reply to this email with a Do Not Call statement.

If you have any questions, concerns, or problems please call me at (319)961-1208 or email me at [bonnie.hoewing@uiowa.edu](mailto:bonnie.hoewing@uiowa.edu). You may also contact my advisor, Dr. Peter Hlebowitsh at the University of Iowa at (319)335-5504 or email [peter.hlebowitsh@uiowa.edu](mailto:peter.hlebowitsh@uiowa.edu).

If you have questions about the rights of research subjects, please contact the Human Subjects Office, 300 College of Medicine Administration Building, the University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA 52242.

Thank you very much for your consideration to participate in this research study. I look forward to receiving your input. Click the link below to take the survey. You may end your participation at any time by closing your Web browser window without submitting the survey. Return of your survey will indicate your consent to use your responses in the study.

When you are ready to take the survey, please click the link:

**<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/PFPR6ZP>**

**Thank you for your time and effort in completing this survey.**

## APPENDIX C: FOLLOW-UP EMAIL LETTER

April 19, 2010

Dear Elementary Principal:

My name is Bonnie Hoewing and I am a doctoral candidate in the Teaching and Learning PhD program at the University of Iowa. I would like to invite you to participate in a research study I am conducting for my dissertation.

The purpose of this study is to learn the knowledge and opinions of elementary school principals across the state of Iowa in the area of teaching young children to read. You are being invited to participate because you are a current elementary school principal in the state of Iowa. I obtained your name and contact information from the Iowa Educational Directory.

If you agree to participate, I would like you to complete an online Web survey questionnaire. You will be asked to give your opinion about a number of statements about reading and reading instruction for elementary school students. You will be asked to provide information about yourself including your employment history, degrees or endorsements, gender, and ethnicity. You will also be asked information about your district and school. You are free to skip any questions that you prefer not to answer. It will take you approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete the survey.

You will be asked to provide information over the Internet. It is possible that information provided over the Internet will be viewed by unauthorized persons who gain access to the Web site or the computers where the data are collected and saved. I will use a secure Web site (https) to collect your name or any identifying information about you or your institution. It will not be possible to link you or your institution to your responses on the survey.

Taking part in this research study is completely voluntary. If you do not wish to participate in this study, please discard this email. I may be contacting you by phone to answer any questions you have about the survey. If you do not wish to be contacted about this study, please reply to this email with a Do Not Call statement.

If you have any questions, concerns, or problems please call me at (319)961-1208 or email me at [bonnie.hoewing@uiowa.edu](mailto:bonnie.hoewing@uiowa.edu). You may also contact my advisor, Dr. Peter Hlebowitsh at the University of Iowa at (319)335-5504 or email [peter.hlebowitsh@uiowa.edu](mailto:peter.hlebowitsh@uiowa.edu).

If you have questions about the rights of research subjects, please contact the Human Subjects Office, 300 College of Medicine Administration Building, the University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA 52242.

Thank you very much for your consideration to participate in this research study. I look forward to receiving your input. Click the link below to take the survey. You may end your participation at any time by closing your Web browser window without submitting the survey. Return of your survey will indicate your consent to use your responses in the study.

When you are ready to take the survey, please click the link:

**<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/PFPR6ZP>**

**Thank you for your time and effort in completing this survey.**

## APPENDIX D: RAW DATA

## Survey Instrument

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1. A child needs to be able to verbalize the rules of phonics in order to assure proficiency in processing new words.		
Strongly Agree	9	8.7%
Somewhat Agree	37	35.6%
Neither Agree or Disagree	13	12.5%
Somewhat Disagree	28	26.9%
Strongly Disagree	17	16.3%
2. An increase in reading errors is usually related to a decrease in comprehension.		
Strongly Agree	36	34.6%
Somewhat Agree	45	43.3%
Neither Agree or Disagree	6	5.8%
Somewhat Disagree	14	13.5%
Strongly Disagree	3	2.9%
3. Dividing words into syllables according to rules is a helpful instructional practice for reading new words.		
Strongly Agree	26	25.0%
Somewhat Agree	59	56.7%
Neither Agree or Disagree	11	10.6%
Somewhat Disagree	7	6.7%
Strongly Disagree	1	1.0%
4. Fluency and expression are necessary components of reading that indicate good comprehension.		
Strongly Agree	46	44.2%
Somewhat Agree	42	40.4%
Neither Agree or Disagree	4	3.8%
Somewhat Disagree	10	9.6%
Strongly Disagree	2	1.9%
5. Materials for early reading should be written in natural language without concern for short, simple words and sentences.		
Strongly Agree	10	9.9%
Somewhat Agree	25	24.8%
Neither Agree or Disagree	20	19.8%
Somewhat Disagree	41	40.6%
Strongly Disagree	5	5.0%
Skipped Question	3	
6. When children do not know a word, they should be instructed to sound out its parts.		
Strongly Agree	15	14.4%
Somewhat Agree	56	53.8%

Neither Agree or Disagree	16	15.4%
Somewhat Disagree	15	14.4%
Strongly Disagree	3	2.9%
7. It is a good practice to allow children to edit what is written into their own dialect when learning to read.		
Strongly Agree	10	9.9%
Somewhat Agree	28	27.7%
Neither Agree or Disagree	35	34.7%
Somewhat Disagree	22	21.8%
Strongly Disagree	6	5.9%
Skipped Question	3	
8. The use of a glossary or dictionary is necessary in determining the meaning and pronunciation of new words.		
Strongly Agree	1	1.0%
Somewhat Agree	18	17.5%
Neither Agree or Disagree	24	23.3%
Somewhat Disagree	41	39.8%
Strongly Disagree	19	18.4%
Skipped Question	1	
9. Reversals (e.g., saying "saw" for "was") are significant problems in the teaching of reading.		
Strongly Agree	5	4.9%
Somewhat Agree	24	23.5%
Neither Agree or Disagree	31	30.4%
Somewhat Disagree	31	30.4%
Strongly Disagree	11	10.8%
Skipped Question	2	
10. It is a good practice to correct a child as soon as an oral reading mistake is made.		
Strongly Agree	10	9.7%
Somewhat Agree	11	10.7%
Neither Agree or Disagree	11	10.7%
Somewhat Disagree	45	43.7%
Strongly Disagree	26	25.2%
Skipped Question	1	
11. It is important for a word to be repeated a number of times after it has been introduced to insure that it will become a part of sight vocabulary.		
Strongly Agree	56	54.4%
Somewhat Agree	34	33.0%
Neither Agree or Disagree	7	6.8%
Somewhat Disagree	4	3.9%
Strongly Disagree	2	1.9%
Skipped Question	1	
12. Paying close attention to punctuation marks is necessary to understanding story content.		
Strongly Agree	29	28.2%
Somewhat Agree	45	43.7%



Neither Agree or Disagree	8	7.8%
Somewhat Disagree	19	18.4%
Strongly Disagree	2	1.9%
Skipped Question	1	
13. It is a sign of an ineffective reader when words and phrases are repeated.		
Strongly Agree	0	0.0%
Somewhat Agree	8	7.8%
Neither Agree or Disagree	26	25.2%
Somewhat Disagree	59	57.3%
Strongly Disagree	10	9.7%
Skipped Question	1	
14. Being able to label words according to grammatical function (nouns, etc.) is useful in proficient reading.		
Strongly Agree	1	1.0%
Somewhat Agree	23	22.3%
Neither Agree or Disagree	17	16.5%
Somewhat Disagree	41	39.8%
Strongly Disagree	21	20.4%
Skipped Question	1	
15. When coming to a word that's unknown, the reader should be encouraged to guess upon meaning and go on.		
Strongly Agree	4	3.9%
Somewhat Agree	36	35.0%
Neither Agree or Disagree	22	21.4%
Somewhat Disagree	28	27.2%
Strongly Disagree	13	12.6%
Skipped Question	1	
16. Young readers need to be introduced to the root form of words (run, long) before they are asked to read inflected forms (running, longest).		
Strongly Agree	19	18.6%
Somewhat Agree	45	44.1%
Neither Agree or Disagree	9	8.8%
Somewhat Disagree	24	23.5%
Strongly Disagree	5	4.9%
Skipped Question	2	
17. It is not necessary for a child to know the letters of the alphabet in order to learn to read.		
Strongly Agree	13	12.6%
Somewhat Agree	34	33.0%
Neither Agree or Disagree	14	13.6%
Somewhat Disagree	26	25.2%
Strongly Disagree	20	19.4%
Skipped Question	1	
18. Flashcard drills with sight words is an unnecessary form of practice in reading instruction.		
Strongly Agree	7	6.8%

Somewhat Agree	14	13.6%
Neither Agree or Disagree	23	22.3%
Somewhat Disagree	53	51.5%
Strongly Disagree	6	5.8%
Skipped Question	1	
19. Ability to use accent patterns in multisyllable words (pho 'to graph, pho to'gra phy, and pho to gra'phic) should be developed as part of reading instruction.		
Strongly Agree	8	8.0%
Somewhat Agree	43	43.0%
Neither Agree or Disagree	15	15.0%
Somewhat Disagree	27	27.0%
Strongly Disagree	7	7.0%
Skipped Question	4	
20. Controlling text through consistent spelling patterns (The fat cat ran back. The fat cat sat on a hat.) is a means by which children can best learn to read.		
Strongly Agree	5	4.9%
Somewhat Agree	41	40.2%
Neither Agree or Disagree	21	20.6%
Somewhat Disagree	26	25.5%
Strongly Disagree	9	8.8%
Skipped Question	2	
21. Formal instruction in reading is necessary to insure the adequate development of all the skills used in reading.		
Strongly Agree	53	52.5%
Somewhat Agree	34	33.7%
Neither Agree or Disagree	7	6.9%
Somewhat Disagree	7	6.9%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%
Skipped Question	3	
22. Phonic analysis is the most important form of analysis used when meeting new words.		
Strongly Agree	5	4.9%
Somewhat Agree	37	36.3%
Neither Agree or Disagree	23	22.5%
Somewhat Disagree	27	26.5%
Strongly Disagree	10	9.8%
Skipped Question	2	
23. Children's initial encounters with print should focus on meaning, not upon exact graphic representation.		
Strongly Agree	18	17.8%
Somewhat Agree	32	31.7%
Neither Agree or Disagree	29	28.7%
Somewhat Disagree	20	19.8%
Strongly Disagree	3	3.0%
Skipped Question	3	

24. Word shapes (word configuration) should be taught in reading to aid in word recognition.
- |                           |    |       |
|---------------------------|----|-------|
| Strongly Agree            | 11 | 10.9% |
| Somewhat Agree            | 51 | 50.5% |
| Neither Agree or Disagree | 28 | 27.7% |
| Somewhat Disagree         | 9  | 8.9%  |
| Strongly Disagree         | 2  | 2.0%  |
| Skipped Question          | 3  |       |
25. It is important to teach skills in relation to other skills.
- |                           |    |       |
|---------------------------|----|-------|
| Strongly Agree            | 55 | 53.9% |
| Somewhat Agree            | 40 | 39.2% |
| Neither Agree or Disagree | 7  | 6.9%  |
| Somewhat Disagree         | 0  | 0.0%  |
| Strongly Disagree         | 0  | 0.0%  |
| Skipped Question          | 2  |       |
26. If a child says "house" for the written word "home" the response should be left uncorrected.
- |                           |    |       |
|---------------------------|----|-------|
| Strongly Agree            | 5  | 4.9%  |
| Somewhat Agree            | 35 | 34.3% |
| Neither Agree or Disagree | 18 | 17.6% |
| Somewhat Disagree         | 32 | 31.4% |
| Strongly Disagree         | 12 | 11.8% |
| Skipped Question          | 2  |       |
27. It is not necessary to introduce new words before they appear in the reading text.
- |                           |    |       |
|---------------------------|----|-------|
| Strongly Agree            | 3  | 2.9%  |
| Somewhat Agree            | 27 | 26.5% |
| Neither Agree or Disagree | 12 | 11.8% |
| Somewhat Disagree         | 42 | 41.2% |
| Strongly Disagree         | 19 | 18.6% |
| Skipped Question          | 2  |       |
28. Some problems in reading are caused by readers dropping the inflectional endings from words (e.g., jump(s), jump(ed)).
- |                           |    |       |
|---------------------------|----|-------|
| Strongly Agree            | 9  | 8.8%  |
| Somewhat Agree            | 70 | 68.6% |
| Neither Agree or Disagree | 17 | 16.7% |
| Somewhat Disagree         | 6  | 5.9%  |
| Strongly Disagree         | 0  | 0.0%  |
| Skipped Question          | 2  |       |

APPENDIX E: MEANINGS OF THE VARIOUS VALUES OF  
CORRELATION DATA

<u>Correlation</u>	<u>Strength of Relationship</u>
<u>r value</u>	
< .01	No correlation
.01 - .20	Very low; almost negligible
.21 - .40	Low; definite but small
.41 - .70	Moderate; substantial
.71 - .90	High; marked
.91 - 1.00	Very high and dependable

(Sarantakos, 2007)

APPENDIX F: DESCRIPTIVE DATA – IOWA ELEMENTARY  
PRINCIPALS' THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

Item Number	STA	SA	NAD	SD	STD
← ← ← ← ← Pro-Phonic Approach					
Phonic					
21	52.6%	33.7%	6.9%	6.9%	0.0%
3	25.0%	56.7%	10.6%	6.7%	1.0%
2	34.6%	43.4%	5.8%	13.4%	2.8%
12	28.2%	43.7%	7.8%	18.4%	1.9%
6	14.4%	53.8%	15.3%	14.3%	2.8%
20	4.9%	40.2%	20.6%	25.5%	8.8%
1	8.7%	35.6%	12.5%	26.9%	16.3%
22	4.9%	36.3%	22.5%	26.5%	9.8%
9	4.9%	23.5%	30.4%	30.4%	10.8%
10	9.7%	10.7%	10.7%	43.7%	25.2%
← ← ← ← ← Pro-Skill Approach					
Skill					
25	53.9%	39.2%	6.9%	0.0%	0.0%
11	54.4%	33.0%	6.8%	3.9%	1.9%
4	44.2%	40.4%	3.9%	9.6%	1.9%
28	8.8%	68.8%	16.6%	5.8%	0.0%
16	18.6%	44.1%	8.8%	23.5%	4.9%
24	10.9%	50.5%	27.7%	8.9%	2.0%
19	8.0%	43.0%	15.0%	27.0%	7.0%
14	1.0%	22.3%	16.5%	39.8%	20.4%
8	1.0%	17.5%	23.3%	39.8%	18.4%
13	0.0%	7.8%	25.2%	57.3%	9.7%
← ← ← ← ← Pro-Whole Language Approach					
Whole Language					
23	17.8%	31.7%	28.7%	19.8%	3.0%
17	12.6%	33.0%	13.6%	25.2%	19.4%
26	4.9%	34.3%	17.6%	31.4%	11.8%
15	3.9%	35.0%	21.4%	27.2%	12.6%
7	9.9%	27.7%	34.7%	21.8%	5.9%
5	9.9%	24.8%	19.8%	40.6%	5.0%
27	2.9%	26.5%	11.8%	41.2%	18.6%
18	6.8%	13.6%	22.3%	51.5%	5.8%

STA – Strongly Agree

SA – Somewhat Agree

NAD – Neither Agree or Disagree

SD – Somewhat Disagree

STD – Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX G: DESCRIPTIVE DATA – YEARS AS TEACHER  
PHONIC THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

Item Number	STA	SA	NAD	SD	STD
← ← ← ← ← Pro-Phonic Approach					
Phonic					
21 0-9 yrs.	49.0%	31.9%	8.5%	8.5%	0.0%
10-19 yrs.	55.0%	32.5%	7.5%	5.0%	0.0%
20+ yrs.	50.0%	42.9%	0.0%	7.1%	0.0%
3 0-9 yrs.	25.5%	63.8%	10.6%	0.0%	0.0%
10-19 yrs.	20.0%	55.0%	15.0%	7.5%	2.5%
20+ yrs.	28.6%	50.0%	0.0%	21.4%	0.0%
2 0-9 yrs.	38.2%	40.4%	6.3%	12.7%	2.1%
10-19 yrs.	27.5%	55.0%	0.0%	15.0%	2.5%
20+ yrs.	42.9%	21.4%	21.4%	14.3%	0.0%
12 0-9 yrs.	23.4%	49.0%	6.4%	19.1%	2.1%
10-19 yrs.	40.0%	35.0%	7.5%	15.0%	2.5%
20+ yrs.	14.3%	50.0%	7.1%	28.6%	0.0%
6 0-9 yrs.	14.8%	61.7%	6.3%	12.7%	4.2%
10-19 yrs.	15.0%	50.0%	22.5%	10.0%	2.5%
20+ yrs.	14.3%	35.7%	21.4%	35.7%	0.0%
20 0-9 yrs.	6.4%	42.6%	21.3%	21.3%	8.5%
10-19 yrs.	5.0%	42.5%	20.0%	25.0%	7.5%
20+ yrs.	0.0%	28.6%	21.4%	42.9%	7.1%
1 0-9 yrs.	6.0%	38.2%	12.7%	31.9%	10.6%
10-19 yrs.	10.0%	35.0%	12.5%	20.0%	22.5%
20+ yrs.	7.1%	28.6%	14.3%	28.6%	21.4%
22 0-9 yrs.	4.3%	44.7%	29.8%	14.9%	6.4%
10-19 yrs.	5.0%	30.0%	15.0%	32.5%	17.5%
20+ yrs.	7.1%	21.4%	21.4%	50.0%	0.0%
9 0-9 yrs.	4.3%	25.5%	27.7%	36.2%	6.4%
10-19 yrs.	7.5%	17.5%	27.5%	30.0%	15.0%
20+ yrs.	0.0%	35.7%	35.7%	14.3%	14.3%
10 0-9 yrs.	12.8%	12.8%	14.9%	38.3%	21.3%
10-19 yrs.	10.0%	10.0%	7.5%	42.5%	30.0%
20+ yrs.	0.0%	7.1%	7.1%	57.1%	28.6%

STA – Strongly Agree

SA – Somewhat Agree

NAD – Neither Agree or Disagree

SD – Somewhat Disagree

STD – Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX H: DESCRIPTIVE DATA – YEARS AS TEACHER  
SKILL THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

Item Number	STA	SA	NAD	SD	STD
← ← ← ← ← Pro-Skill Approach					
Skill					
25 0-9 yrs.	51.1%	44.7%	4.3%	0.0%	0.0%
10-19 yrs.	57.5%	35.0%	7.5%	0.0%	0.0%
20+ yrs.	50.0%	35.7%	14.3%	0.0%	0.0%
11 0-9 yrs.	44.7%	40.4%	8.5%	4.3%	2.1%
10-19 yrs.	67.5%	20.0%	5.0%	5.0%	2.5%
20+ yrs.	50.0%	42.9%	7.1%	0.0%	0.0%
4 0-9 yrs.	42.5%	44.7%	6.4%	4.3%	2.1%
10-19 yrs.	47.5%	35.0%	2.5%	12.5%	2.5%
20+ yrs.	50.0%	35.7%	0.0%	14.3%	0.0%
28 0-9 yrs.	10.6%	68.1%	14.9%	6.4%	0.0%
10-19 yrs.	7.5%	67.5%	17.5%	7.5%	0.0%
20+ yrs.	7.1%	71.4%	21.4%	0.0%	0.0%
16 0-9 yrs.	14.9%	44.7%	12.8%	21.3%	6.4%
10-19 yrs.	20.0%	42.5%	5.0%	25.0%	5.0%
20+ yrs.	28.6%	35.7%	7.1%	28.6%	0.0%
24 0-9 yrs.	10.6%	53.2%	29.8%	4.3%	2.1%
10-19 yrs.	7.5%	52.5%	27.5%	7.5%	2.5%
20+ yrs.	21.4%	28.6%	21.4%	28.6%	0.0%
19 0-9 yrs.	12.8%	38.3%	21.3%	21.3%	4.3%
10-19 yrs.	2.5%	40.0%	12.5%	35.0%	7.5%
20+ yrs.	7.1%	57.1%	0.0%	21.4%	14.3%
14 0-9 yrs.	0.0%	23.4%	19.1%	46.8%	10.6%
10-19 yrs.	2.5%	12.5%	15.0%	42.5%	27.5%
20+ yrs.	0.0%	35.7%	14.3%	14.3%	35.7%
8 0-9 yrs.	2.1%	25.5%	23.4%	31.9%	17.0%
10-19 yrs.	0.0%	7.5%	22.5%	47.5%	20.0%
20+ yrs.	0.0%	14.3%	21.4%	50.0%	14.3%
13 0-9 yrs.	0.0%	10.6%	27.7%	53.2%	8.5%
10-19 yrs.	0.0%	2.5%	22.5%	62.5%	12.5%
20+ yrs.	0.0%	7.1%	28.6%	57.1%	7.1%

STA – Strongly Agree

SA – Somewhat Agree

NAD – Neither Agree or Disagree

SD – Somewhat Disagree

STD – Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX I: DESCRIPTIVE DATA – YEARS AS TEACHER  
WHOLE LANGUAGE THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

Item Number	STA	SA	NAD	SD	STD
← ← ← ← ← Pro-Whole Language Approach					
Whole Language					
23 0-9 yrs.	12.8%	31.9%	31.9%	21.3%	2.1%
10-19 yrs.	30.0%	27.5%	22.5%	15.0%	2.5%
20+ yrs.	0.0%	42.9%	28.6%	28.6%	7.1%
17 0-9 yrs.	8.5%	29.8%	17.0%	29.8%	14.9%
10-19 yrs.	17.5%	27.5%	10.0%	20.0%	25.0%
20+ yrs.	14.3%	57.1%	7.1%	28.6%	21.4%
26 0-9 yrs.	2.1%	34.0%	14.9%	40.4%	8.5%
10-19 yrs.	7.5%	40.0%	15.0%	25.0%	12.5%
20+ yrs.	7.1%	21.4%	28.6%	21.4%	21.4%
15 0-9 yrs.	6.4%	34.0%	21.3%	25.5%	12.8%
10-19 yrs.	2.5%	35.0%	22.5%	27.5%	12.5%
20+ yrs.	0.0%	42.9%	7.1%	35.7%	14.3%
7 0-9 yrs.	12.8%	23.4%	34.0%	21.3%	4.3%
10-19 yrs.	7.5%	27.5%	32.5%	25.0%	5.0%
20+ yrs.	7.1%	35.7%	35.7%	7.1%	14.3%
5 0-9 yrs.	10.6%	31.9%	14.9%	38.3%	2.1%
10-19 yrs.	12.5%	15.0%	20.0%	40.0%	7.5%
20+ yrs.	0.0%	28.6%	28.6%	35.7%	7.1%
27 0-9 yrs.	6.4%	31.9%	12.8%	29.8%	19.1%
10-19 yrs.	0.0%	20.0%	7.5%	47.5%	25.0%
20+ yrs.	0.0%	28.6%	21.4%	57.1%	0.0%
18 0-9 yrs.	10.6%	12.8%	27.7%	42.6%	6.4%
10-19 yrs.	5.0%	12.5%	20.0%	57.5%	5.0%
20+ yrs.	0.0%	14.3%	14.3%	64.3%	7.1%

STA – Strongly Agree

SA – Somewhat Agree

NAD – Neither Agree or Disagree

SD- Somewhat Disagree

STD – Strongly Disagree



APPENDIX J: DESCRIPTIVE DATA – YEARS AS PRINCIPAL  
PHONIC THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

Item Number	STA	SA	NAD	SD	STD
← ← ← ← ← Pro-Phonic Approach					
Phonic					
21 0-9 yrs.	32.7%	27.3%	16.4%	18.2%	5.5%
10-19 yrs.	50.0%	41.2%	2.9%	0.0%	0.0%
20+ yrs.	33.3%	50.0%	16.7%	0.0%	0.0%
3 0-9 yrs.	29.0%	58.1%	9.1%	3.6%	0.0%
10-19 yrs.	17.6%	58.8%	8.8%	11.8%	2.9%
20+ yrs.	16.7%	58.3%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%
2 0-9 yrs.	30.9%	41.8%	7.3%	16.4%	3.6%
10-19 yrs.	38.2%	44.1%	2.9%	14.7%	0.0%
20+ yrs.	41.7%	50.0%	8.3%	0.0%	0.0%
12 0-9 yrs.	25.5%	41.8%	5.5%	23.6%	3.6%
10-19 yrs.	35.3%	44.1%	5.9%	14.7%	0.0%
20+ yrs.	25.0%	50.0%	16.7%	8.3%	0.0%
6 0-9 yrs.	14.5%	52.7%	18.2%	14.5%	1.8%
10-19 yrs.	11.8%	52.9%	14.7%	17.6%	2.9%
20+ yrs.	25.0%	58.3%	0.0%	8.3%	8.3%
20 0-9 yrs.	3.6%	34.5%	25.5%	25.5%	10.9%
10-19 yrs.	8.8%	41.2%	11.8%	32.4%	5.9%
20+ yrs.	0.0%	66.7%	25.0%	8.3%	0.0%
1 0-9 yrs.	9.0%	34.5%	10.9%	21.8%	23.6%
10-19 yrs.	8.8%	35.3%	17.6%	26.5%	11.8%
20+ yrs.	0.0%	41.7%	8.3%	50.0%	0.0%
22 0-9 yrs.	29.1%	30.9%	10.9%	21.8%	5.5%
10-19 yrs.	5.9%	32.4%	17.6%	32.4%	11.8%
20+ yrs.	0.0%	58.3%	25.0%	8.3%	8.3%
9 0-9 yrs.	7.3%	20.0%	25.5%	32.7%	12.7%
10-19 yrs.	0.0%	26.5%	35.3%	29.4%	8.8%
20+ yrs.	8.3%	33.3%	25.0%	25.0%	8.3%
10 0-9 yrs.	9.1%	5.5%	10.9%	41.8%	32.7%
10-19 yrs.	8.8%	17.6%	2.9%	50.0%	20.6%
20+ yrs.	16.7%	16.7%	33.3%	25.0%	8.3%

STA – Strongly Agree

SA – Somewhat Agree

NAD – Neither Agree or Disagree

SD – Somewhat Disagree

STD – Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX K: DESCRIPTIVE DATA – YEARS AS PRINCIPAL  
SKILL THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

Item Number	STA	SA	NAD	SD	STD
← ← ← ← ← Pro-Skill Approach					
Skill					
25 0-9 yrs.	58.2%	32.7%	9.1%	0.0%	0.0%
10-19 yrs.	52.9%	41.2%	5.9%	0.0%	0.0%
20+ yrs.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
11 0-9 yrs.	58.2%	29.1%	7.3%	3.6%	1.8%
10-19 yrs.	52.9%	32.4%	5.9%	5.9%	2.9%
20+ yrs.	41.7%	50.0%	8.3%	0.0%	0.0%
4 0-9 yrs.	41.8%	38.2%	7.3%	12.7%	0.0%
10-19 yrs.	58.8%	35.3%	0.0%	2.9%	2.9%
20+ yrs.	25.0%	58.3%	0.0%	8.3%	8.3%
28 0-9 yrs.	9.1%	63.6%	18.1%	9.1%	0.0%
10-19 yrs.	11.8%	67.6%	17.6%	2.9%	0.0%
20+ yrs.	0.0%	91.7%	8.3%	0.0%	0.0%
16 0-9 yrs.	20.0%	43.6%	9.1%	20.0%	7.3%
10-19 yrs.	20.6%	38.2%	5.9%	29.4%	2.9%
20+ yrs.	8.3%	50.0%	16.7%	25.0%	0.0%
24 0-9 yrs.	10.9%	54.5%	25.5%	3.6%	3.6%
10-19 yrs.	14.7%	38.2%	32.4%	14.7%	0.0%
20+ yrs.	0.0%	58.3%	25.0%	16.7%	0.0%
19 0-9 yrs.	5.5%	40.0%	16.4%	27.3%	9.1%
10-19 yrs.	14.7%	47.1%	11.8%	20.6%	5.9%
20+ yrs.	0.0%	36.4%	18.2%	45.5%	0.0%
14 0-9 yrs.	1.8%	18.2%	14.5%	40.0%	25.5%
10-19 yrs.	0.0%	29.4%	20.6%	32.4%	17.6%
20+ yrs.	0.0%	8.3%	16.7%	66.7%	8.3%
8 0-9 yrs.	0.0%	12.7%	27.3%	38.2%	20.0%
10-19 yrs.	2.9%	11.8%	17.6%	50.0%	17.6%
20+ yrs.	0.0%	50.0%	16.7%	25.0%	8.3%
13 0-9 yrs.	0.0%	3.6%	25.5%	60.0%	10.9%
10-19 yrs.	0.0%	11.8%	17.6%	58.8%	11.8%
20+ yrs.	0.0%	8.3%	50.0%	41.7%	0.0%

STA – Strongly Agree

SA – Somewhat Agree

NAD – Neither Agree or Disagree

SD – Somewhat Disagree

STD – Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX L: DESCRIPTIVE DATA – YEARS AS PRINCIPAL  
WHOLE LANGUAGE THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

Item Number	STA	SA	NAD	SD	STD
← ← ← ← ← Pro-Whole Language					
Whole Language					
23 0-9 yrs.	18.2%	27.3%	30.9%	21.8%	3.6%
10-19 yrs.	20.6%	32.4%	20.6%	20.6%	2.9%
20+ yrs.	8.3%	50.0%	33.3%	8.3%	0.0%
17 0-9 yrs.	14.5%	36.4%	12.7%	23.6%	20.0%
10-19 yrs.	11.8%	32.4%	8.8%	26.5%	20.6%
20+ yrs.	8.3%	16.7%	25.0%	33.3%	16.7%
26 0-9 yrs.	7.3%	32.7%	18.2%	27.3%	14.5%
10-19 yrs.	2.9%	41.2%	14.7%	32.4%	8.8%
20+ yrs.	0.0%	25.0%	16.7%	50.0%	8.3%
15 0-9 yrs.	3.6%	29.1%	18.2%	30.9%	18.2%
10-19 yrs.	2.9%	41.2%	17.6%	32.4%	5.9%
20+ yrs.	8.3%	50.0%	33.3%	0.0%	8.3%
7 0-9 yrs.	10.9%	21.8%	34.5%	21.8%	7.3%
10-19 yrs.	5.9%	35.3%	26.5%	26.5%	2.9%
20+ yrs.	16.7%	25.0%	50.0%	0.0%	8.3%
5 0-9 yrs.	7.3%	27.3%	16.4%	38.2%	7.3%
10-19 yrs.	11.8%	20.6%	20.6%	44.1%	2.9%
20+ yrs.	18.2%	27.3%	27.3%	27.3%	0.0%
27 0-9 yrs.	3.6%	27.3%	14.5%	32.7%	23.6%
10-19 yrs.	0.0%	26.6%	2.9%	55.9%	14.7%
20+ yrs.	8.3%	25.0%	25.0%	33.3%	8.3%
18 0-9 yrs.	9.1%	14.5%	16.4%	50.9%	9.1%
10-19 yrs.	5.9%	11.8%	26.5%	55.9%	0.0%
20+ yrs.	0.0%	8.3%	41.7%	41.7%	8.3%

STA – Strongly Agree

SA – Somewhat Agree

NAD – Neither Agree or Disagree

SD – Somewhat Disagree

STD – Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX M: DESCRIPTIVE DATA – LITERACY EDUCATION  
PHONIC THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

Item Number	STA	SA	NAD	SD	STD
← ← ← ← ← Pro-Phonic Approach					
Phonic					
21 End/Mas	67.9%	32.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
No End/Mas	47.7%	32.3%	10.8%	9.2%	0.0%
3 End/Mas	14.3%	67.9%	10.7%	7.1%	0.0%
No End/Mas	27.3%	56.1%	12.1%	3.0%	1.5%
2 End/Mas	42.9%	42.9%	3.6%	10.7%	0.0%
No End/Mas	31.8%	43.9%	7.6%	13.6%	3.0%
12 End/Mas	32.1%	50.0%	7.1%	7.1%	3.6%
No End/Mas	25.8%	40.9%	6.1%	25.8%	1.5%
6 End/Mas	10.7%	50.0%	17.9%	17.9%	3.6%
No End/Mas	16.7%	53.0%	15.2%	13.6%	3.0%
20 End/Mas	0.0%	39.3%	21.4%	25.0%	14.3%
No End/Mas	7.6%	40.9%	18.2%	28.8%	4.5%
1 End/Mas	7.1%	28.6%	3.6%	32.1%	28.6%
No End/Mas	7.6%	40.9%	15.2%	25.8%	10.6%
22 End/Mas	0.0%	32.1%	14.3%	35.7%	17.9%
No End/Mas	3.0%	39.4%	27.3%	25.8%	4.5%
9 End/Mas	7.1%	14.3%	25.0%	42.9%	10.7%
No End/Mas	4.6%	29.2%	30.8%	26.2%	9.2%
10 End/Mas	10.7%	0.0%	14.3%	46.4%	28.6%
No End/Mas	10.6%	12.1%	10.6%	40.9%	25.8%

Education specific to Literacy:

End/Mas – Endorsement or Master's Degree

No End/Mas – No Endorsement or Master's Degree

STA – Strongly Agree

SA – Somewhat Agree

NAD – Neither Agree or Disagree

SD – Somewhat Disagree

STD – Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX N: DESCRIPTIVE DATA – LITERACY EDUCATION  
SKILL THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

Item Number	STA	SA	NAD	SD	STD
← ← ← ← ← Pro-Skill Approach					
Skill					
25 End/Mas	46.4%	46.4%	7.1%	0.0%	0.0%
No End/Mas	54.4%	40.9%	4.5%	0.0%	0.0%
11 End/Mas	57.1%	32.1%	0.0%	3.6%	7.1%
No End/Mas	51.5%	33.3%	10.6%	4.5%	0.0%
4 End/Mas	50.0%	35.7%	0.0%	10.7%	3.6%
No End/Mas	42.4%	6.1%	6.1%	7.6%	1.5%
28 End/Mas	14.3%	67.9%	10.7%	7.1%	0.0%
No End/Mas	6.1%	69.7%	18.2%	6.1%	0.0%
16 End/Mas	17.9%	50.0%	3.6%	21.4%	7.1%
No End/Mas	16.7%	42.4%	12.1%	25.8%	3.0%
24 End/Mas	7.4%	59.3%	18.5%	14.8%	0.0%
No End/Mas	9.1%	51.5%	30.3%	6.1%	3.0%
19 End/Mas	11.1%	33.3%	14.8%	22.2%	18.5%
No End/Mas	4.6%	43.1%	16.9%	32.3%	3.1%
14 End/Mas	3.6%	10.7%	7.1%	53.6%	25.0%
No End/Mas	0.0%	22.7%	19.7%	40.9%	16.7%
8 End/Mas	0.0%	11.1%	18.5%	48.1%	22.2%
No End/Mas	1.5%	18.2%	27.3%	39.4%	13.6%
13 End/Mas	0.0%	0.0%	28.6%	53.6%	17.9%
No End/Mas	0.0%	9.1%	24.2%	65.2%	1.5%

Education specific to Literacy:

End/Mas – Endorsement or Master's Degree

No End/Mas – No endorsement or Master's Degree

STA – Strongly Agree

SA – Somewhat Agree

NAD – Neither Agree or Disagree

SD – Somewhat Disagree

STD – Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX O: DESCRIPTIVE DATA – LITERACY EDUCATION  
WHOLE LANGUAGE THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

Item Number	STA	SA	NAD	SD	STD
← ← ← ← ← Pro-Whole Language Approach					
Whole Language					
23 End/Mas	29.6%	33.3%	22.2%	14.8%	0.0%
No End/Mas	10.6%	34.8%	28.8%	22.7%	4.5%
17 End/Mas	14.3%	32.1%	10.7%	17.9%	25.0%
No End/Mas	12.1%	30.6%	13.6%	30.3%	19.7%
26 End/Mas	7.1%	32.1%	17.9%	28.6%	14.3%
No End/Mas	4.5%	34.8%	19.7%	33.3%	7.6%
15 End/Mas	7.1%	25.0%	14.3%	32.1%	21.4%
No End/Mas	3.0%	36.4%	19.7%	30.3%	10.6%
7 End/Mas	11.1%	18.5%	48.1%	14.8%	7.4%
No End/Mas	10.9%	26.6%	29.7%	28.1%	4.7%
5 End/Mas	10.7%	25.0%	17.9%	42.9%	3.6%
No End/Mas	11.1%	27.0%	20.6%	35.6%	4.8%
27 End/Mas	3.6%	28.6%	7.1%	46.4%	14.3%
No End/Mas	3.0%	25.8%	15.2%	34.8%	22.7%
18 End/Mas	7.1%	21.4%	7.1%	50.0%	14.3%
No End/Mas	6.1%	9.1%	27.3%	54.5%	3.0%

Education specific to Literacy:

End/Mas – Endorsement or Master's Degree

No End/Mas – No Endorsement or Master's Degree

STA – Strongly Agree

SA – Somewhat Agree

NAD – Neither Agree or Disagree

SD – Somewhat Disagree

STD – Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX P: DESCRIPTIVE DATA – TITLE 1  
PHONIC THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

Item Number	STA	SA	NAD	SD	STD	
← ← ← ← ← Pro-Phonic Approach						
Phonic						
21	Yes/Funding	51.9%	30.8%	9.6%	7.7%	0.0%
	No/Funding	52.2%	39.1%	2.2%	6.5%	0.0%
3	Yes/Funding	21.2%	59.6%	11.5%	7.7%	0.0%
	No/Funding	26.1%	56.5%	10.9%	4.3%	2.2%
2	Yes/Funding	38.5%	48.1%	5.8%	7.7%	0.0%
	No/Funding	30.4%	39.1%	6.5%	21.7%	2.2%
12	Yes/Funding	30.8%	50.0%	3.8%	13.5%	1.9%
	No/Funding	28.3%	37.0%	10.9%	21.7%	2.2%
6	Yes/Funding	19.2%	46.2%	19.2%	17.3%	0.0%
	No/Funding	8.7%	60.9%	10.9%	13.0%	6.5%
20	Yes/Funding	7.7%	36.5%	19.2%	28.8%	7.7%
	No/Funding	2.2%	43.5%	23.9%	21.7%	8.7%
1	Yes/Funding	9.6%	32.7%	11.5%	26.9%	19.2%
	No/Funding	6.5%	39.1%	13.0%	26.1%	15.2%
22	Yes/Funding	7.7%	30.8%	21.2%	32.7%	7.7%
	No/Funding	2.2%	37.0%	26.1%	21.7%	13.0%
9	Yes/Funding	3.9%	25.5%	33.3%	23.5%	13.7%
	No/Funding	4.3%	21.7%	26.1%	39.1%	8.7%
10	Yes/Funding	9.6%	15.4%	5.8%	36.5%	32.7%
	No/Funding	10.9%	4.3%	17.4%	50.0%	17.4%

School Receives Title 1 Funds:

Yes – Yes/Funding

No – No/Funding

STA – Strongly Agree

SA – Somewhat Agree

NAD – Neither Agree or Disagree

SD – Somewhat Disagree

STD – Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX Q: DESCRIPTIVE DATA – TITLE 1  
SKILL THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

Item Number	STA	SA	NAD	SD	STD	
← ← ← ← ← Pro-Skill Approach						
Skill						
25	Yes/Funding	65.4%	28.8%	5.8%	0.0%	0.0%
	No/Funding	39.1%	52.2%	8.7%	0.0%	0.0%
11	Yes/Funding	51.9%	34.6%	5.8%	3.8%	3.8%
	No/Funding	56.5%	30.4%	8.7%	4.3%	0.0%
4	Yes/Funding	51.9%	40.4%	1.9%	5.8%	0.0%
	No/Funding	41.3%	34.8%	6.5%	13.0%	4.3%
28	Yes/Funding	9.6%	71.2%	11.5%	7.7%	0.0%
	No/Funding	8.7%	63.0%	23.9%	4.3%	0.0%
16	Yes/Funding	19.6%	41.2%	5.9%	27.5%	5.9%
	No/Funding	19.6%	41.3%	13.0%	21.7%	4.3%
24	Yes/Funding	9.6%	46.2%	28.8%	13.5%	1.9%
	No/Funding	13.3%	51.1%	28.9%	4.4%	2.2%
19	Yes/Funding	5.9%	41.2%	13.7%	29.4%	9.8%
	No/Funding	8.9%	42.2%	17.8%	26.7%	4.4%
14	Yes/Funding	0.0%	19.2%	21.2%	32.7%	26.9%
	No/Funding	2.2%	21.7%	10.9%	50.0%	15.2%
8	Yes/Funding	1.9%	11.5%	26.9%	48.1%	11.5%
	No/Funding	0.0%	20.0%	20.0%	35.6%	24.4%
13	Yes/Funding	0.0%	11.5%	30.8%	48.1%	9.6%
	No/Funding	0.0%	2.2%	19.6%	67.4%	10.9%

School Receives Title 1 Funds:

Yes – Yes/Funding

No – No/Funding

STA – Strongly Agree

SA – Somewhat Agree

NAD – Neither Agree or Disagree

SD – Somewhat Disagree

STD – Strongly Disagree



APPENDIX R: DESCRIPTIVE DATA – TITLE 1  
WHOLE LANGUAGE THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

Item Number	STA	SA	NAD	SD	STD
← ← ← ← ← Pro-Whole Language Approach					
Whole Language					
23 Yes/Funding	23.1%	32.7%	23.1%	17.3%	5.8%
No/Funding	13.3%	28.9%	33.3%	24.4%	0.0%
17 Yes/Funding	15.4%	38.5%	5.8%	25.0%	23.1%
No/Funding	8.7%	28.3%	19.6%	28.3%	15.2%
26 Yes/Funding	3.8%	36.5%	25.0%	25.0%	9.6%
No/Funding	6.5%	32.6%	8.7%	39.1%	13.0%
15 Yes/Funding	3.8%	32.7%	25.0%	19.2%	19.2%
No/Funding	4.3%	41.3%	10.9%	37.0%	6.5%
7 Yes/Funding	9.6%	28.8%	30.8%	25.0%	5.8%
No/Funding	11.6%	25.6%	39.5%	16.3%	7.0%
5 Yes/Funding	14.3%	28.6%	20.4%	28.6%	8.2%
No/Funding	6.5%	21.7%	19.6%	50.0%	2.2%
27 Yes/Funding	0.0%	25.0%	11.5%	34.6%	30.8%
No/Funding	6.5%	30.4%	10.9%	47.8%	4.3%
18 Yes/Funding	7.7%	13.5%	28.8%	42.2%	5.8%
No/Funding	6.5%	13.0%	17.4%	56.5%	6.5%

School Receives Title 1 Funds:

Yes – Yes/Funding

No – No/Funding

STA – Strongly Agree

SA – Somewhat Agree

NAD – Neither Agree or Disagree

SD – Somewhat Disagree

STD – Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX S: DESCRIPTIVE DATA – MINORITY POPULATION  
PHONIC THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

Item Number	STA	SA	NAD	SD	STD
← ← ← ← ← Pro-Phonic Approach					
Phonic					
21 < 5%	59.2%	34.7%	2.0%	4.1%	0.0%
5% - 20%	51.7%	31.0%	6.9%	10.3%	0.0%
21% >	36.4%	36.4%	18.2%	9.1%	0.0%
3 < 5%	28.6%	55.1%	12.2%	2.0%	2.0%
5% - 20%	23.3%	63.3%	10.0%	3.3%	0.0%
21% >	13.6%	59.1%	9.1%	18.2%	0.0%
2 < 5%	26.5%	49.0%	4.1%	18.4%	2.0%
5% - 20%	46.7%	30.0%	10.0%	10.0%	3.3%
21% >	36.4%	50.0%	4.5%	9.1%	0.0%
12 < 5%	36.7%	28.6%	10.2%	20.4%	4.1%
5% - 20%	20.0%	53.3%	6.7%	20.0%	0.0%
21% >	22.7%	63.6%	0.0%	13.6%	0.0%
6 < 5%	18.4%	57.1%	10.2%	12.2%	2.0%
5% - 20%	6.7%	46.7%	26.7%	16.7%	6.7%
21% >	18.2%	54.5%	9.1%	18.2%	0.0%
20 < 5%	2.0%	51.0%	20.4%	20.4%	6.1%
5% - 20%	6.7%	26.7%	26.7%	30.0%	10.0%
21% >	9.1%	36.4%	13.6%	31.8%	9.1%
1 < 5%	14.3%	34.7%	18.4%	20.4%	12.2%
5% - 20%	0.0%	33.3%	6.7%	36.7%	23.3%
21% >	4.5%	40.9%	9.1%	27.3%	18.2%
22 < 5%	4.1%	44.9%	22.4%	20.4%	8.2%
5% - 20%	3.3%	23.3%	30.0%	33.3%	10.0%
21% >	9.1%	31.8%	13.6%	31.8%	13.6%
9 < 5%	8.2%	28.6%	24.5%	28.6%	10.2%
5% - 20%	3.4%	10.3%	31.0%	41.4%	13.8%
21% >	0.0%	31.8%	36.4%	22.7%	9.1%
10 < 5%	12.2%	14.3%	10.2%	46.9%	16.3%
5% - 20%	10.0%	3.3%	10.0%	43.3%	33.3%
21% >	4.5%	13.6%	13.6%	31.8%	36.4%

School Population Classified Minority:

Less than 5% - <5%

Between 5% & 20% - 5%-20%

21% or Greater - 21%>

STA - Strongly Agree

SA - Somewhat Agree

NAD - Neither Agree or Disagree

SD - Somewhat Disagree

STD - Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX T: DESCRIPTIVE DATA – MINORITY POPULATION  
SKILL THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

Item Number	STA	SA	NAD	SD	STD
← ← ← ← ← Pro-Skill Approach					
Skill					
25 < 5%	49.0%	49.0%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%
5% - 20%	50.0%	40.0%	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%
21% >	68.2%	18.2%	13.6%	0.0%	0.0%
11 < 5%	53.1%	34.7%	8.2%	2.0%	2.0%
5% - 20%	56.7%	26.7%	10.0%	6.7%	0.0%
21% >	54.5%	36.4%	0.0%	4.5%	4.5%
4 < 5%	42.9%	44.9%	4.1%	6.1%	2.0%
5% - 20%	46.7%	33.3%	3.3%	13.3%	3.3%
21% >	50.0%	36.4%	4.5%	9.1%	0.0%
28 < 5%	8.2%	63.3%	24.5%	4.1%	0.0%
5% - 20%	3.3%	80.0%	10.0%	6.7%	0.0%
21% >	18.2%	63.6%	9.1%	9.1%	0.0%
16 < 5%	24.5%	44.9%	10.2%	16.3%	4.1%
5% - 20%	23.3%	33.3%	10.0%	30.0%	3.3%
21% >	0.0%	50.0%	4.5%	31.8%	9.1%
24 < 5%	16.7%	54.2%	29.2%	0.0%	0.0%
5% - 20%	3.3%	46.7%	23.3%	23.3%	3.3%
21% >	9.1%	45.5%	31.8%	9.1%	4.5%
19 < 5%	8.5%	51.1%	17.0%	17.0%	6.4%
5% - 20%	3.3%	30.0%	16.7%	43.3%	6.7%
21% >	13.6%	40.9%	9.1%	27.3%	9.1%
14 < 5%	2.0%	28.6%	14.3%	40.8%	14.3%
5% - 20%	0.0%	10.0%	16.7%	50.0%	23.3%
21% >	0.0%	18.2%	22.7%	27.3%	31.8%
8 < 5%	2.1%	22.9%	20.8%	33.3%	20.8%
5% - 20%	0.0%	10.0%	26.7%	46.7%	16.7%
21% >	0.0%	13.6%	22.7%	50.0%	13.6%
13 < 5%	0.0%	6.1%	28.6%	59.2%	6.1%
5% - 20%	0.0%	3.3%	26.7%	60.0%	10.0%
21% >	0.0%	13.6%	18.2%	50.0%	18.2%

School Population Classified Minority:

Less than 5% - <5%

Between 5% & 20% - 5%-20%

21% or Greater - 21%>

STA – Strongly Agree

SA – Somewhat Agree

NAD – Neither Agree or Disagree

SD – Somewhat Disagree

STD – Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX U: DESCRIPTIVE DATA – MINORITY POPULATION  
WHOLE LANGUAGE THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

Item Number	STA	SA	NAD	SD	STD
← ← ← ← ← Pro-Whole Language Approach					
Whole Language					
23 < 5%	16.7%	35.4%	31.3%	16.7%	0.0%
5% - 20%	16.7%	26.7%	33.3%	20.0%	6.7%
21% >	22.7%	31.8%	13.6%	27.3%	4.5%
17 < 5%	12.2%	28.6%	16.3%	30.6%	12.2%
5% - 20%	13.3%	36.7%	16.7%	16.7%	30.0%
21% >	13.6%	36.4%	0.0%	27.3%	22.7%
26 < 5%	4.1%	36.7%	16.3%	32.7%	10.2%
5% - 20%	6.7%	30.0%	16.7%	33.3%	13.3%
21% >	4.5%	36.4%	18.2%	27.3%	13.6%
15 < 5%	4.1%	34.7%	22.4%	30.6%	8.2%
5% - 20%	6.7%	30.0%	16.7%	30.0%	16.7%
21% >	0.0%	45.5%	18.2%	18.2%	18.2%
7 < 5%	17.0%	19.1%	48.9%	12.8%	2.1%
5% - 20%	0.0%	27.6%	27.6%	34.5%	10.3%
21% >	9.1%	45.5%	13.6%	22.7%	9.1%
5 < 5%	10.4%	22.9%	22.9%	37.5%	6.3%
5% - 20%	3.4%	24.1%	20.7%	44.8%	6.9%
21% >	18.2%	31.8%	9.1%	36.4%	0.0%
27 < 5%	0.0%	32.7%	14.3%	38.8%	14.3%
5% - 20%	10.0%	16.7%	10.0%	50.0%	16.7%
21% >	0.0%	27.3%	9.1%	31.8%	31.8%
18 < 5%	2.0%	12.2%	20.4%	59.2%	6.1%
5% - 20%	10.0%	10.0%	23.3%	50.0%	6.7%
21% >	13.6%	27.3%	27.3%	31.8%	0.0%

School Population Classified Minority:

Less than 5% - <5%

Between 5% & 20% - 5%-20%

21% or Greater - 21%>

STA – Strongly Agree

SA – Somewhat Agree

NAD – Neither Agree or Disagree

SD – Somewhat Disagree

STD – Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX V: DESCRIPTIVE DATA – SCHOOL SIZE  
PHONIC THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

Item Number	STA	SA	NAD	SD	STD
← ← ← ← ← Pro-Phonic Approach					
Phonic					
21 <250	52.4%	38.1%	0.0%	9.5%	0.0%
250-450	53.7%	29.6%	9.3%	7.4%	0.0%
451>	46.2%	38.5%	7.7%	3.8%	0.0%
3 <250	28.6%	47.6%	19.0%	4.8%	0.0%
250-450	14.8%	64.8%	11.1%	7.4%	1.9%
451>	38.5%	53.8%	3.8%	3.8%	0.0%
2 <250	23.8%	57.1%	4.8%	9.5%	4.8%
250-450	40.7%	42.6%	3.7%	13.0%	0.0%
451>	30.8%	34.6%	11.5%	19.2%	3.8%
12 <250	33.3%	47.6%	4.8%	14.3%	0.0%
250-450	24.1%	46.3%	7.4%	18.5%	3.7%
451>	34.6%	34.6%	7.7%	23.1%	0.0%
6 <250	14.3%	61.9%	4.8%	23.8%	0.0%
250-450	16.7%	46.3%	22.2%	11.1%	3.7%
451>	11.5%	61.5%	7.7%	15.4%	3.8%
20 <250	4.8%	28.6%	19.0%	33.3%	14.3%
250-450	5.6%	46.3%	16.7%	22.2%	9.3%
451>	3.8%	38.5%	30.8%	26.9%	0.0%
1 <250	9.5%	33.3%	19.0%	23.8%	14.3%
250-450	9.3%	27.8%	14.8%	27.8%	20.4%
451>	3.8%	53.8%	3.8%	26.9%	11.5%
22 <250	0.0%	28.6%	33.3%	<b>33.3%</b>	4.8%
250-450	7.4%	37.0%	20.4%	24.1%	11.1%
451>	3.8%	38.5%	19.2%	26.9%	11.5%
9 <250	9.5%	23.8%	28.6%	19.0%	19.0%
250-450	5.6%	27.8%	29.6%	29.6%	5.6%
451>	0.0%	15.4%	26.9%	42.3%	15.4%
10 0-9 yrs.	14.3%	9.5%	9.5%	23.8%	42.9%
10-19 yrs.	11.1%	11.1%	14.8%	46.3%	16.7%
20+ yrs.	3.8%	11.5%	3.8%	50.0%	30.8%

STA – Strongly Agree

SA – Somewhat Agree

NAD – Neither Agree or Disagree

SD – Somewhat Disagree

STD – Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX W: DESCRIPTIVE DATA – SCHOOL SIZE  
SKILL THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

Item Number	STA	SA	NAD	SD	STD
← ← ← ← ← Pro-Skill Approach					
Skill					
25 <250	47.6%	47.6%	4.8%	0.0%	0.0%
250-450	57.4%	31.5%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%
451>	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
11 <250	57.1%	28.6%	9.5%	0.0%	4.8%
250-450	50.0%	31.5%	9.3%	7.4%	1.9%
451>	65.1%	38.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
4 <250	42.9%	52.4%	0.0%	4.8%	0.0%
250-450	42.6%	37.0%	7.4%	9.3%	7.4%
451>	53.9%	34.6%	0.0%	11.5%	0.0%
28 <250	4.8%	61.9%	26.6%	4.8%	0.0%
250-450	9.2%	72.2%	14.8%	3.7%	0.0%
451>	11.5%	65.4%	11.5%	11.5%	0.0%
16 <250	38.1%	33.3%	14.3%	4.8%	9.5%
250-450	14.8%	46.3%	5.6%	27.8%	3.7%
451>	11.5%	42.3%	11.5%	30.7%	3.8%
24 <250	20.0%	40.0%	25.0%	10.0%	5.0%
250-450	7.4%	51.9%	31.5%	7.4%	1.9%
451>	11.5%	53.8%	23.1%	11.5%	0.0%
19 <250	5.0%	35.0%	30.0%	25.0%	5.0%
250-450	9.3%	40.7%	13.0%	27.8%	9.3%
451>	7.7%	50.0%	7.7%	26.9%	3.8%
14 <250	0.0%	19.0%	14.3%	47.6%	19.0%
250-450	1.9%	24.1%	11.1%	42.6%	20.4%
451>	0.0%	15.4%	30.8%	30.8%	23.1%
8 <250	0.0%	23.8%	23.8%	38.1%	14.3%
250-450	1.9%	13.0%	24.1%	38.9%	22.2%
451>	0.0%	19.2%	19.2%	46.2%	11.5%
13 <250	0.0%	4.8%	19.0%	66.7%	9.5%
250-450	0.0%	5.6%	22.2%	61.1%	11.1%
451>	0.0%	11.5%	38.5%	42.3%	7.7%

STA – Strongly Agree

SA – Somewhat Agree

NAD – Neither Agree or Disagree

SD – Somewhat Disagree

STD – Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX X: DESCRIPTIVE DATA – SCHOOL SIZE  
WHOLE LANGUAGE THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

Item Number	STA	SA	NAD	SD	STD
← ← ← ← ← Pro-Whole Language Approach					
Whole Language					
23 <250	28.6%	23.8%	28.6%	19.0%	4.8%
250-450	14.8%	29.6%	31.5%	20.4%	1.9%
451>	15.4%	42.3%	19.2%	19.2%	3.8%
17 <250	19.0%	38.1%	14.3%	23.8%	23.8%
250-450	13.0%	33.3%	11.1%	22.2%	20.4%
451>	7.7%	26.9%	15.4%	34.6%	15.4%
26 <250	19.0%	33.3%	14.3%	28.6%	4.8%
250-450	1.9%	33.3%	18.5%	35.2%	11.1%
451>	0.0%	38.5%	15.4%	26.9%	19.2%
15 <250	0.0%	33.3%	28.6%	33.3%	4.8%
250-450	3.7%	44.4%	14.8%	24.1%	13.0%
451>	7.7%	19.2%	23.1%	26.9%	19.2%
7 <250	15.0%	20.0%	50.0%	15.0%	0.0%
250-450	11.1%	24.1%	31.5%	20.4%	9.3%
451>	3.8%	38.5%	26.9%	26.9%	3.8%
5 <250	10.0%	25.0%	15.0%	45.0%	5.0%
250-450	11.1%	24.1%	15.4%	50.0%	0.0%
451>	7.7%	26.9%	15.4%	50.0%	0.0%
27 <250	0.0%	23.8%	23.8%	38.1%	19.0%
250-450	3.7%	29.6%	13.0%	33.3%	20.4%
451>	3.8%	23.1%	0.0%	57.7%	15.4%
18 <250	4.8%	19.0%	19.0%	57.1%	0.0%
250-450	7.4%	9.3%	29.6%	44.4%	9.3%
451>	7.7%	26.9%	15.4%	34.6%	15.4%

STA – Strongly Agree

SA – Somewhat Agree

NAD – Neither Agree or Disagree

SD – Somewhat Disagree

STD – Strongly Disagree

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