

Rowan University

Rowan Digital Works

Theses and Dissertations

5-5-2008

A study of the predictive validity of the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test and the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge at the 4th, 5th and 6th grade levels

Stephanie L. DiAntonio
Rowan University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://rdw.rowan.edu/etd>



Part of the [Disability and Equity in Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

DiAntonio, Stephanie L., "A study of the predictive validity of the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test and the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge at the 4th, 5th and 6th grade levels" (2008). *Theses and Dissertations*. 715.

<https://rdw.rowan.edu/etd/715>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by Rowan Digital Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Rowan Digital Works. For more information, please contact graduateresearch@rowan.edu.

A STUDY OF THE PREDICTIVE VALIDITY OF THE GATES--MACGINITIE
READING TEST AND THE NEW JERSEY ASSESSMENT OF SKILLS AND
KNOWLEDGE AT THE 4th, 5th
AND 6th GRADE LEVELS

By
Stephanie L. DiAntonio

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree
of
The Graduate School
at
Rowan University
May 5, 2008

Approved by:

Dr. Stanley Urban, Advisor

Date Approved: _____

May 5, 2008

ABSTRACT

Stephanie L. DiAntonio

A STUDY OF THE PREDICTIVE VALIDITY OF THE GATES-MACGINITIE
READING TEST AND THE NEW JERSEY ASSESSMENT OF SKILLS AND
KNOWLEDGE AT THE 4TH, 5TH, AND 6TH GRADE LEVELS

2007/08

Dr. Stanley Urban

Master of Arts in Learning Disabilities

The purpose of this study was to determine the predictive validity of reading achievement scores obtained using the *Gates- MacGinitie Reading Test* and student performance on the Language Arts Literacy section on the *New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge* using a sample of students from the Gloucester City School District. Success For All has been implemented in the Gloucester City School District for over eight years as a Whole School Reform Model to raise student achievement in reading and language arts literacy. The effectiveness of this program was measured by using data collected from the *Gates- MacGinitie Reading Test* and the *New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge Language Arts Literacy* over a sequential three- year span. The sample used for this study included a total of thirty students in a variety of classroom settings; however, all of the students in the sample were instructed using the *Success for All* Reading Program. The results of the data showed that prediction of the level of student performance on the *New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge Language Arts Literacy* can be ascertained with a high degree of reliability by the scores obtained on the *Gates- MacGinitie Reading Test*.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to express her appreciation and gratitude to the following people for their contribution in the completion of this master's thesis.

- My husband, Bill, for his continued encouragement, financial and loving support, and his understanding throughout this course of study.
- My parents, for their continued guidance throughout my educational career, for their values and dedication in which were instilled upon me, and their financial and loving support.
- My sisters, who were able to empathasize with me throughout this course of study and knew when I needed a “shopping” break.
- Dr. Stanley Urban, for his academic guidance, devotion, time, and assistance so willingly given throughout the entire completion of the project.
- Mrs. Kate Kearney, for her help in collecting data needed for this study.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	ii
List of Tables	v
CHAPTER	PAGE
I. Introduction	1
Background	1
Purpose of the Study	4
Research Questions	5
Need for the Study	5
Value of the Study	6
Definitions	6
Limitations	8
II. Review of Literature	9
History of Success For All	11
Components of the Success For All Program	13
Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test	19
New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge	20
III. Design of the Study	23
Population	23
Participants	23
Method of Sample Selection	24
Instrumentation	24

Measures	25
Procedures	26
Research Design and Analysis of Data	26
IV. Analysis and Interpretation of the Data	28
Introduction	28
V. Summary, Conclusion, and Discussion	35
Summary	35
Conclusion	36
Discussion	36
References	38

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
Table 1.1 Correlations Between the <i>Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test</i> and the <i>New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge</i>	29
Table 1.2 <i>Gates- MacGinitie Reading Test</i> Scores and Achievement Gains Across Three Grade Levels	31
Table 1.3 Expectancy Table Showing Relationship Between the <i>Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test</i> and Pass Rates in Literacy on the New Jersey ASK for grades 4, 5, & 6 (n=30)	33

Chapter 1

Introduction

Background

“You teach a child to read, and he or her will be able to pass a literacy test.”—

President George W. Bush

Many teachers and school administrators would not agree with President Bush’s statement. Especially, if their school was not able to pass the standards enacted by the No Child Left Behind Act. With the enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 (Public Law 107-110), which reauthorized a number of federal programs and increased the standards of accountability for states and school districts, many districts statewide have to prepare their students more rigorously for testing, specifically in the areas of reading and mathematics. A requirement of NCLB, is that each state test students beginning in the third grade each year continuing through the eighth grade, and test at least once in grades 9-12.

Each state must design or purchase a test that is “consistent with nationally recognized professional and technical standards, and use multiple measures that include higher-order thinking skills. Tests must also objectively measure academic achievement, knowledge and skills without evaluating or assessing family beliefs and attitudes. These state assessments will be the primary source of information used to determine whether schools, districts, and states make "adequate yearly progress" toward the goal of having all students performing at the "proficient" level or above by the 2013-2014 school year (New Jersey Education Association, 2006).”

A battle continues on how to best appropriately measure student learning. According to the American Psychological Association, “measuring what and how well students learn is an important building block in the process of strengthening and improving our nation’s schools.” Tests, student grades, and teacher evaluations can offer a measure of students’ skills, knowledge, and abilities. In addition, “tests, when used properly, are among the most sound and objective ways to measure student performance” (American Psychological Association, 2001).

In contrast, many reports state that “high stakes testing” is undermining curriculum, instruction, and student learning. Because there is a tremendous amount of pressure placed on school districts across the nation to make adequate strides in progressing each year on mandated assessments, specifically in the areas of Language Arts Literacy and Mathematics, teachers have reported spending enormous amounts of time on test preparation instead of classroom instruction. The Center on Education Policy (CEP) studied the impact NCLB had on curriculum in districts nationwide. They found evidence of “narrowing to the tested subjects of English and Math.” In addition, they found that nationally since NCLB took effect in 2002, 62% of districts included in the study increased time in reading and math instruction at the elementary level. The middle school level increased their time in these subject areas more than 20%. CEP found that time was reduced in other areas such as social studies, science, art and music, and physical education at the elementary level. This impact was found to be the greatest in districts with schools identified for improvement by NCLB. The results of the study “lend support to the argument that Congress must overhaul the federal No Child Left Behind law to include

both multiple indicators of school quality and multiple forms of assessment (*Fair Test Examiner*, 2007).

On standardized assessments, one area that has been a struggle for students to reach proficiency level is in the area of Language Arts Literacy. An important aspect of this section of the test is reading. Because reading includes several components, it is an important and complex skill for students to master. According to the *National Institute for Literacy*, reading is a “complex system of deriving meaning from print that requires all of the following: the skills and knowledge to understand how phonemes, or speech sounds, are connected to print; the ability to decode unfamiliar words; the ability to read fluently; sufficient background information and vocabulary to foster reading comprehension; the development of appropriate active strategies to construct meaning from print; and the development and maintenance of a motivation to read.”

One reading program, Success For All, “organizes instruction and resources to attempt to ensure that every child will reach the third grade on time and read on grade level, and will continue to build on those skills.” The program developers boast that its’ comprehensive-reading program offers every aspect of a skill that a child requires to be successful in reading. “Success for All emphasizes prevention and early, intensive intervention designed to detect and resolve reading problems as early as possible, before they become serious.” The Success For All reading program professes that it helps students “achieve at their highest levels and uses research to design programs and services to help schools meet the needs of all their students (successforall.org, 2005) .”

The program developers have conducted extensive research to support their theories. Success For All encompasses many supporters throughout the United States. “As of the 2003-2004 school year, Success for All Foundation (SFAF) programs are being implemented in more than 1300 schools in over 500 districts in 48 states in all parts of the United States, Guam, and the Virgin Islands. Versions of the model are also used in other countries, including England, Israel, Canada, Mexico, and Australia.” (successforall.org.,2005)

In New Jersey alone, 69 schools out of 434, chose to implement Success For All as their whole school reform model within their district. Of those 69 schools in New Jersey, Gloucester City is a district that uses Success For All as their primary method of reading instruction. With Success For All as their model, the district has not been able to attain proficiency in the area of academic achievement in Language Arts Literacy according to New Jersey’s standardized testing standards (www.state.nj.us/education/abbotts, 2006).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to determine the predictive validity of reading achievement scores obtained using the Gates- MacGinitie Reading Test and student performance in a south jersey school district on the Language Arts Literacy section on the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge.

Research Questions

In order to carry out the purpose of this study the following research questions will be answered:

Research Question 1:

What is the correlation between scores obtained on the *Gates- MacGinitie Reading Test* and the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge Language Arts Literacy?

Research Question 2:

Do students make significant gains in the area of Reading measured by the *Gates- MacGinitie Reading Test* given every year?

Research Question 3:

Is there a differential relationship between the predictive validity of the *Gates- MacGinitie Reading Test* and the New Jersey ASK Language Arts Literacy across each grade level?

Research Question 4:

What are the cutoff scores on the *Gates- MacGinitie Reading Test* that will predict the level of performance on the New Jersey ASK Language Arts Literacy?

Need for the Study

Many districts across the state of New Jersey are not making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), according to the state-wide assessment scores and New Jersey Department of

Education standards. Pressure to be considered a “passing school district” and “a school not in need of improvement” from the federal and state government has increased throughout the years. Much persistent effort by administrators and educators is put forth in the classroom to ensure “proficient” results. With the increased pressure perceived by educators to achieve “passable scores”, a last resort teaching strategy employed by teachers is “teaching to the test.” Some have argued that standardized-testing “as a means of assessment encourages teachers to teach a narrow subset of skills that will increase test performance. Hundreds of thousands of dollars have been spent on the Success for All Reading program implementation in the Gloucester City School District, and the school district has been struggling to make AYP. It is important to consider the effectiveness of this reading program in measuring student’s reading skills according to the standards of the NJASK.

Value of the Study

The value of the study is to confirm that progress in reading achievement demonstrated on the Gates-MacGinitie are predictive of achievement on the NJASK. If this reading program proves to be effective in correlation with the NJASK standards, all students’ scores should correspond with one another .

Definitions of Terms

Gates- MacGinitie Reading Test – A group administered paper and pencil test to measure reading achievement (Riverside Publishing, 2006).

Success For All (SFA)- A research-based component of a whole school reform model focusing on reading (successforall.org, 2005).

Predictive Validity- The extent to which scores on a test are predictive of performance on some criterion measured at a later time; usually expressed as a correlation between the test (predictor variable) and the criterion variable (Aiken & Groth-Marnat, 2006).

Concurrent Validity- The extent to which scores obtained by a group of people on a particular psychometric instrument are related to their simultaneously determined scores on another measure (criterion) of the same characteristic that the instrument is supposed to measure (Aiken & Groth-Marnat, 2006).

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)- meeting the state's proficient and advanced proficient levels of achievement
(<http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/content/cntareas/science/sc7ayp.htm>.)

New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJASK)- A state assessment of student achievement in language arts, math, and science that was implemented in 2003 to meet the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act (<http://www.ets.org>, 2008).

Criterion-Referenced Test- A test that has been designed with very restricted content specifications to serve a limited range of highly specific purposes. The aim of the test is to determine where the examinee stands with respect to certain educational objectives (Aiken & Groth-Marnat, 2006).

Norm-referenced test-A test whose scores are interpreted with respect to norms obtained from a representative sample of examinees (Aiken & Groth-Marnat, 2006).

Mean—A set of numbers is obtained by adding all measures and dividing the sum by the number of measures (Ebel, 1972).

Standard Deviation—The square root of the variance (Ebel, 1972).

Correlation Coefficient (r)- Expresses the degree of correspondence or relationship between two sets of scores; thus, the highest scoring student on variable 1 will also be the highest scoring on variable 2 and so on. Generally correlation coefficients that fall in the .80's or .90's are considered adequate for reliable prediction (Sottler, 2001) .

Limitations

When interpreting the results of this study several limitations need to be taken into consideration. One limitation is the fact that although each student participated in the Success for All, the implementation of the program may have differed across classroom teachers. Another limitation is that each reading teacher produces his or her subjective and objective criteria to represent a grade in the subject of reading. Thus grades may not reflect achievement and an external criterion such as an achievement test may be useful. In addition, some students from the sample may have received accommodations and modifications, according to their Individualized Education Program, that was not part of the standardization of the NJASK.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

Numerous crucial issues are confronting the educational system in New Jersey and have proven resistant to solutions. These issues include students not learning at the pace or at the level expected and children living in poor urban districts that do not receive an education comparable to children living in more affluent suburban districts that contain an abundance of resources. In response to the crisis in the education of the poor urban population, attorneys from the “Education Law Center” represented over 300,000 school-age children and 60,000 preschoolers in 31 poor urban areas across New Jersey to “equalize funding between suburban and urban districts.” In the landmark case *Abbott vs. Burke*, in May of 1997, the New Jersey Supreme Court ruled in favor of the 31 districts and ordered state officials to increase funding for urban schools to be comparable with that of suburban schools. Under the ruling, “Abbott” districts are to receive state aid that is calculated to provide them with the same per-pupil spending as would be found in New Jersey’s wealthiest school districts.

In 1998, the New Jersey Supreme Court created a single criterion for distinguishing whether a “constitutionally guaranteed education is being provided to students in the poorest schools in the state.” The criterion to be met was whether or not students in the poorest districts master the State accepted New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards, covering seven academic areas, with the same proficiency as students in more affluent areas. To help meet their “educational proficiency,” the justices strongly endorsed “whole-school reform” as an approach that can enable students in the Abbott districts reach their

goals. According to Leo Klagholz, Commissioner of Education at that time, a “whole-school reform combines into a single program all of the individual educational practices and strategies in enabling disadvantaged students to achieve.” Choosing a whole school model reform that will fulfill the students’ needs required stakeholders to agree to implementation.

The Department of Education researched various approaches to “improving academic achievement of students from low-income families” and valued “whole-school reform” as being the most effective approach based on extensive review of programs. After several hearings on the department’s findings, in which the experts’ opinions were scrutinized, the Supreme Court accepted the department’s recommendations and “ordered implementation of whole-school reform in all elementary schools in Abbott districts.” Abbott districts were able to choose from a variety of whole-school reform models, which included Success for All (SFA), Accelerated Schools, Adapted Learning Environments Model (ALEM), Comer School Development Program, and Modern Red Schoolhouse.

According to the State of New Jersey’s Department of Education, the most thoroughly documented whole-school reform program is the Success for All/Roots and Wings (SFA/R&W) developed by Johns Hopkins University. The Success for All program “showed the most progress of enabling students in the Abbott districts to achieve the Core Curriculum Content Standards.” Currently, 69 out of 434 Abbott schools in New Jersey utilize SFA as their whole- school reform model in the state of New Jersey.

History of Success For All

Success for All (SFA) was developed in 1987 for at-risk students in high poverty, inner-city areas by Robert Slavin, Nancy Madden and Nancy Karweit all of Johns Hopkins' Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk. The program's goals are to: "ensure that every student will perform at grade level in reading by the end of the third grade; reduce the number of students referred to special education classes; reduce the number of students who are held back to repeat a grade; increase attendance; address family needs for food, housing, and medical care to enable the family to support its children's education (Balkcom & Himmelfarb, 1993)."

Robert Slavin and Nancy Madden were college students in the 1970's at Reed College in Oregon. They shared common ideas and beliefs regarding the improvement of education. With their passion of experimental research, they decided to move to Maryland and put their ideas into action. Working at Johns Hopkins University, Slavin and Madden initiated a research agenda involving cooperative learning strategies. Success for All stemmed from their group at Johns Hopkins University successfully working with children whom worked together by "structuring methods in which groups could succeed only if all of their members had mastered the academic material they were studying (successforall.org, 2005)."

In 1985, Slavin and Madden began working on the "cooperative elementary school", a model that incorporated cooperative learning with individualized instruction, school organization changes, integration of special education students, and family support programs. Their project resulted in positive effects on achievement and gained experience

in working with schools. The following year, a former Maryland Secretary of Human Resources engaged Slavin in a conversation regarding having “total freedom to restructure an inner-city elementary school.” That following year, their conversation turned into a reality and work began designing the first version of what is known as Reading Roots, along with the tutoring components. A preschool and kindergarten program was created and by September of 1987, with Abbottson Elementary School selected as the pilot project. They found a “surge” in the students’ reading and writing skills, and in 1988 they added four more schools in Baltimore and one in Philadelphia.

By the early 1990’s, Slavin was developing his research base and roughly doubling the number of schools they served each year.” Funding from a large corporation in 1992 gave Slavin the initiative to develop a branch of the reading program called Roots & Wings. Throughout the 1990’s, Success for All grew adding 60% more schools each year. Research at Johns Hopkins University continued to “show strong positive effects of SFA on reading and writing achievement.” Also in the 1990’s, the foundation began to spread its work to other countries, first in Canada, then in England and Mexico, and in adapted forms in Israel and Australia (successforall.org, 2005).

According to the foundation, their focus is to continue developing and “disseminating high-quality programs” for children from pre-kindergarten to 9th grade, and deal with issues concerning the quality and “effectiveness in a rapidly growing organization.” The Success for All foundation continues researching and developing new ideas to increase the success of children.

Components of the *Success for All* Program

The *Success for All* Program believes that reading is fundamental to other skill areas and that all students can and must succeed in early grades. The program focuses on students in the lower elementary school grades and provides students with “intensive instruction in language arts, extensive professional development to help teachers succeed with every student, and an active family support program.” Success for All is designed to prevent the occurrence of early learning problems with immediate intervention. The program has many components to aid in its effectiveness.

One of these components is a half-day preschool program provided for all children to enhance their language development, school readiness, and create a positive self-concept. In continuation, a full-day kindergarten program maintains the emphasis on language using a variety of children’s literature and thematically related activities. The students then progress into a 90-minute reading program and are regrouped by reading level across “age lines.” According to the *Success For All* Foundation, the students are grouped into classes with 15-20 students in each class “who are all performing at the same reading level, regardless of age or grade level. This regrouping allows teachers to teach the class without having to break up the class into smaller groups. The program is divided into the following two categories: (1) Roots and (2) Wings:

(1) *Roots* (K through grade one) classes begin the 90-minute reading class with the teacher reading children’s literature to the students for the first twenty-minutes. Teachers discuss the story with the students to enhance the students’ comprehension of the story and the story structure and to increase their listening and expressive vocabulary skills. In

Roots, teachers focus on “language skills development, auditory discrimination, and sound blending,” using activities that engage students with a variety of media. The students read stories, using SFA-produced mini-books that they can take home, that focus on “phonetic vocabulary, letter activities, story activities,” and partner reading.

(2) *Wings*, students in grades two through five, also begins the class period with 20 minutes of listening comprehension. During the listening comprehension, the teacher shares literature and engages them in discussion about the story. After the listening comprehension segment, students work in their teams made up of four to five members. They use school selected reading materials such as basals and trade books in a structured set of activities in which the students read, discuss and write about the books. At this level, the teachers “emphasize cooperative learning activities built around partner reading. There is a five- day cycle. Depending on the day of the cycle teachers will introduce new vocabulary, involve students in making predictions, model how to write a meaningful sentence using vocabulary words, or conduct guided practice or review reading comprehension exercises. Students work on skills such as, identifying characters, settings, problem/ solutions, summarizing stories, and writing. On certain days of the cycle, students read portions of the story silently and then aloud with their partners, and then discuss assigned comprehension questions with their partners, write individual answers, and write or edit meaningful sentences using vocabulary skills. On another day, students will discuss with their partners regarding an assigned writing prompt and then individually complete the writing activity (“Adventures in Writing”). Other components include, practice of targeted skills (setting, problem/solution etc..), individual comprehension tests (“Story Test”), and team points that teams are granted for completing various activities using a set of

cooperating strategies standards. On a certain day of the cycle, the direct instruction approach is utilized for a specific number of minutes, when teaching a reading comprehension skill. After the instruction of the skill, students work in teams to practice the skill. At the end of every reading class, the teacher writes a sentence, with many errors, on the board and students write it correctly. Then the teacher calls on teams or students to make the corrections to the sentence. This is known as “Two Minute Edit”(Datrow & Castellano,2000).

The program requires schools to hire tutors to work one-on-one with students who are not reading at grade level. These tutors are required to be trained certified teachers who work individually with students to provide remedial reading instruction. Trained paraprofessionals may also be used for students with less severe reading difficulties, under the direction of a certified tutor. Children are tutored during a 20-minute period of their day when neither reading, nor math is being taught in their classroom. Certified tutors can also be regular reading teachers during the 90-minute reading period.

Every eight-weeks students are assessed to determine the “adequacy of their progress” using a testing instrument called *The Gates- MacGinitie Reading Test*. This information is used to assign students to tutoring, suggest alternative teaching strategies in the regular classroom, and to make changes in reading group placement, family support interventions, or other means of meeting students’ needs. The school facilitator carries through with the process, relying on teachers’ input and involvement (Balkcom & Himmelfarb,1993).

A full-time facilitator collaborates with teachers to support them in implementing the reading program. The facilitator is a member of the school staff who is released from regular classroom responsibilities. The facilitator coordinates the 8-week assessments, assists the family support team, plans and implements staff development, and helps all teachers and tutors ensure that the students are making adequate progress in reading.

The Family Support Team is designed to work with parents to ensure their children's success. The members of the team may include the principal or vice-principal, facilitator, social worker, and other personnel as needed. The team promotes parent involvement, develops plans to meet the needs of individual students who are experiencing difficulty, and integrates community and school resources. Some family support teams provide community and mental health services at schools. Examples include, food pantries, family counseling, childcare, family literacy and job training programs. In addition to the family support team, an additional committee called the advisory committee, which includes the principal, facilitator, teachers, and parent representatives, meet regularly to discuss and review the program's progress.

Before implementation, teachers, tutors, and classroom paraprofessionals receive a three-day training. Principals and facilitators receive five days of initial training in "leadership, data collection and progress monitoring, classroom instructional practices, school climate, and intervention using SFA strategies." Twice a year trainers provided by the developer, visit and observe teachers, meet with staff, and conduct in-service training (American Federation of Teachers, 1998).

According to the developers, Success for All “is the most extensively and successfully evaluated of all reading reform models.” Many studies were conducted across various locations by researchers and it was founded that Success for All “increases students’ reading performance, and reduces special education placements.” An independent U.S. Department of Education-sponsored review of twenty-two comprehensive reform models by the Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center at the American Institutes for Research awarded *Success for All* the highest rating for research quality and outcomes. According to the *Success for All* Foundation, a evaluation of the reading outcomes of *Success for All* was funded through the United States Department of Education involving forty-one Title I schools throughout the U.S. These schools were randomly assigned to utilize the *Success for All* program or continue with existing programs in grades kindergarten through second. The study showed at the end of three years, children in the Success for All schools were achieving at “significantly higher levels on all three reading measures used.” Grover Whitehurst, director of the Institute of Education Sciences at the United States Department of Education described the study as “a sophisticated study that uses everything the evaluation field has come to recognize as high-quality” (successforall.org).

The *Success for All* Program reports many studies have been conducted comparing schools using the *Success for All* model and “matched control schools” on standardized tests given to students individually. These studies “tracked” students in *Success for All* and control schools starting in kindergarten or first grade into later grades. Eleven school districts were involved, those included Baltimore, Philadelphia, Memphis, Tucson, Ft. Wayne (IN), and Modesto (CA). Approximately 6,000 SFA and 6,000 control students

were tested. The results of the studies showed that reading grade equivalents for *Success for All* first graders were almost three months higher than for control first graders. The difference increased to slightly more than a full grade equivalent by fifth grade. A follow-up study in Baltimore found that this difference continued into sixth and seventh grades, with continuing “significant effects” in the eighth grade (successforall.org, 2005).

Because bias can sometimes have an impact on research, many researchers have conducted their own studies on the *Success for All* program and their results seemed to differ from the *Success for All* developers. Richard Venezky was a professor of education at the University of Delaware, who conducted a three-year study of *Success For All* schools in the city of Baltimore. He found that though the lessons were “developmentally sound and students made some improvement, they still lagged 2.4 years behind the national average and 25% couldn’t read at all (Morse, 2000).” Venezky also found that in Slavin’s research of the vast majority of special education students disappeared from the SFA schools during the course of his study, but far more special education students remained in the schools he compared SFA to (Pogrow, 2000).

Professor of Educational Leadership at San Francisco State University, Dr. Stanley Pogrow is well known for his highly critical remarks against regarding the SFA program. In his Phi Delta Kappan article, “Success for All is a Failure,” he writes, “The developers and associates have controlled the research about the effectiveness of SFA as well as government policy studies on how to help the disadvantaged.” After reviewing Slavin’s research, Pogrow has concluded the research has many flaws. Therefore, Pogrow has determined that there is “no credible research evidence supporting the effectiveness of SFA

in either the published independent evaluations or in Slavin's own research (Pogrow, 2000).

Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests (GMRT)

The GMRT, a norm referenced test, is designed to provide a general assessment of reading achievement. The GMRT can assess on mean levels ranging from Pre-Reading to Adult Reading. This report will focus on Levels 4, 5, and 6. Each of these levels consists of a Vocabulary test and a Comprehension test. The Vocabulary test assesses a student's reading vocabulary. This test contains 45 questions, each consisting of a test word in a brief context followed by five other words or phrases. The student is to choose the one word or phrase that means most nearly the same as the test word. The level of difficulty increases from beginning to end. The test is a measure of word knowledge, not being able to derive meaning from context. The brief context is not intended to provide clues to the meaning of the test word. The Vocabulary test is a timed 20-minute test in which students mark their answers on a test sheet. The Comprehension test measures a student's ability to read and understand different types of prose. This section of the test consists of 11 passages of various lengths and about diverse subjects selected from published books or periodicals. The student's task is to read the passage and answer a number of multiple-choice questions. A total of 48 questions prod the student's understanding of the passages. The Comprehension test is a timed 35-minute test. Both the Vocabulary test and Comprehension test can be machine or hand scored. After scored, each section of the test and a total score will receive a Normal Curve Equivalent, Percentile Rank, Grade

Equivalent, and Extended Scale Score. The reading facilitator uses the total grade equivalent score to group students according to their reading levels (MacGinitie et al.).

New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJASK)

After the NCLB was enacted in 2001, federal legislation requires every state to administer annual standards-based assessment of all children in grades 3 through 8. “Federal expectation is that each state will provide tests that are grounded in that state’s content standards and that assess students’ critical thinking skills in three content areas: language arts literacy, mathematics, and science (www.state.nj.us/education/assessment).”

The NJASK, a criterion-referenced test, is administered over a three- day period for grades 3, 5, and 6, and a five- day period for grade 4. The tests last between 60-100 minutes per day with time to distribute and collect materials, reading directions, and taking breaks. The subjects that are tested are Language Arts Literacy: Reading and Writing; Math: Numbers, Numerical Operations, Geometry & Measurement, Patterns and Algebra, Data Analysis, Probability, and Discrete Mathematics; Science: Life Science, Physical Science, and Earth Science. The two major types of questions are in the format of multiple- choice and open-ended, in which students must give a short or long written response to a question. The open-ended responses and writing tasks are hand scored using a scoring rubric (www.state.nj.us/education/assessment).

The purpose of New Jersey’s statewide assessments is to “measure what students at specific grade levels are able to do. The assessments are not designed to be diagnostic nor do students’ scores on these assessments equate with classroom grades”

(www.state.nj.us/education/assessment). The assessments determine whether students are acquiring and are successful with the knowledge and skills provided in the New Jersey Core Curriculum Standards (NJCCS).

The Language Arts Literacy section of the NJASK draws upon the student's ability to read, write, speak, and listen. The language arts component provides a variety of texts, illustrations, and activities that are "intended to engage and sustain interest in the content and sequence of assessment topics and tasks" (www.state.nj.us/education/assessments). The language arts component of the NJASK is divided into clusters. In the first cluster, the student is given a picture and directed to write a story within twenty-five minutes. After twenty-five minutes, the student is directed to read a narrative text. The student is given fifty minutes to read a narrative text and answer 5 multiple-choice questions and two open-ended questions. The second cluster involves the student listening to a poem being read by the examiner and within twenty-five minutes, the student responds to a given task by writing a composition. The student is then given twenty-five minutes to read "everyday text" and answer six multiple-choice questions and one open-ended question. A "modified version of the Registered Holistic Scoring Rubric is used to score the sustained writing tasks and is scored by two separate raters. The rubric is based on a 1- to- 5 point scale and emphasizes content/organization, sentence structure, usage, and mechanics. The Open-Ended Scoring Rubric is based on a 0-to 4-point scale and used to score student responses to the open-ended items for reading. Both writing tasks can earn up to ten points with twenty points being the most amount of points one can earn for the writing tasks. Each multiple-choice question answered correctly, earns one point and each open-ended

response can earn up to four points each. The scores from the Language Arts Literacy of the NJASK are converted into “scaled scores.”

The scaled scores are categorized into the following ranges:

Score of 250-300 = Advanced Proficient

Score of 200-249 = Proficient

Score of 100-199 = Partially Proficient

Chapter 3

Design of the Study

Population

Of the 69 schools statewide participating in the SFA program, two are in the Gloucester City School District. According to the United States Census Bureau, Gloucester City, located in Camden County, has a total area of 2.8 miles and borders along the Delaware River. As of the census of 2000, there are 11,484 people living in Gloucester City with 5,213.7 persons per square mile. This small urban community is one of 31 poorest districts in New Jersey with 97.1% Caucasian, 1.9% Hispanic or Latino, .7% African American, and .7% Asian. There are approximately 2,220 total students attending one of the four schools in the district and 415 of those students receive special education services. The district is made up of a total of four schools: one Pre-K through 3rd grade school, one 4th through 6th grade school, one Junior/Senior High School (7th through 12th grades), and one alternative educational school (7th through 12th grades).

Participants

The participants in this study are currently seventh graders attending the Junior/Senior High School in Gloucester City. The data collected is from the sample of students when they were in grades four, five and six. All of the participants in this study were instructed using the *Success For All* program in grades four, five, and six and took part in the state assessments. The sample in the present study consisted of thirty students and five of the thirty are identified as being eligible for Special Education services. The Special Education students who were subjects of this study are identified as either Specific

Learning Disability or Other Health Impaired. Three of the subjects have participated in the district's English as a Second Language (ESL) program.

Method of Sample Selection

The method of selecting the sample of students was by gathering a compiled list of all 140 seventh graders and selecting every fifth student on the list, then randomly selecting two more students. Test scores from the sample group of 30 were obtained from their fourth, fifth and sixth grade years in the school district where the researcher is currently employed as a Learning Disabilities Teacher Consultant on the Child Study Team. Of the 30 students randomly selected, seventeen are boys and thirteen are girls, 16 were Caucasian, 2 Hispanic, one was African American, and one subject was Asian.

Instrumentation

The Success For All program was implemented in the Gloucester City School District during the 2000-2001 school year, and currently teachers utilize 90 minutes of the day in grades first through sixth instructing reading utilizing the program. Over the past years, Success For All facilitators provided teachers with training to learn the structure of the program and the implementation process throughout the district. Today, teachers receive training to refine and collaborate different strategies and techniques they can utilize in the classroom. Each year our district receives an implementation visit from *Success For All* facilitators to monitor the progress of teachers and students. Depending on the district's budget, one or two, three-day visits can be scheduled in one school year. After each visit, teachers meet with the building's reading facilitator and the *Success For All* facilitators to

discuss strengths and areas of weaknesses that were found during the implementation visit. The facilitators from *Success For All* also meet with building administrators and the building facilitator to also discuss the progress of the students and the preparation for state assessments.

Measures

At the end of each school year beginning in the first grade, students are administered the *Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test*. This test provides a reading grade level for each student. The building facilitator groups each student into homogenous reading levels for the following school year based on the score of each student. After the first eight weeks have passed in a new school year, the students take the *Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test* again to note each individual's progress. For students who have made significant gains, the facilitator will move them up to a higher reading level, and for students who did not make significant gains or decreased in score, the facilitator will keep them at the same reading level. This routine continues throughout the entire school year.

The NJASK4 is administered in the spring, over a five- day period and NJASK 5 & 6 is administered over a four-day period. The test lasts 60-100 minutes each day, plus time for distributing and collecting materials, reading directions, and taking breaks. The NJASK scores are collected and reported to the state department of education. The state department monitors the progress of all schools in the state of New Jersey, keeping track of the schools that are making AYP and that are in "need of improvement." A student must earn a total of 200 points or more in each section of the NJASK assessment in order to be considered "proficient." To meet AYP status, each school district needs to meet an established criteria

of proficiency. In 2014, according to the United States government, all students in the United States will reach proficiency.

Procedures

The researcher will analyze data from the sample group of 30 students. The final scores from the *Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test* for three consecutive years will be correlated with the scores of the NJASK 4, 5, & 6 Language Arts Literacy assessments. The researcher will chart the growth of each student in the sample group according to the *Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test* and compare the students achievement in relation to the NJASK 4, 5, & 6 scores. The researcher will establish cutoff scores as follows: if a student is reading at grade level or four tenths of a point higher, the student will be predicted to score “proficient” in the area of Language Arts Literacy on the NJASK 4, 5, & 6 assessment; students scoring five tenths of a point or more above grade level, will be predicted to score “advanced proficient” in the area of Language Arts Literacy on the NJASK 4, 5, & 6; and, if a student scores below grade level, the student will be predicted to score “partially proficient” in the area of Language Arts Literacy on the NJASK 4, 5, & 6.

Research Design and Analysis of Data

Final scores from the *Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test* from three consecutive years and NJASK scores from three consecutive years from the sample group will be presented in this study. Through the use of charts and tables, the data will be inspected to determine if the *Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test* yields a positive correlation with the results obtained on the New Jersey ASK Language Arts Literacy.

A Pearson correlation coefficient symbolized by r will be computed at each grade level and regarded as a predictor of performance on the criterion variable on the New Jersey ASK Language Arts Literacy. Computations will be completed using the SPSS 14.0 for Windows Student Version (SPSS, 2005). It should be kept in mind that the correlation coefficient may meet a “significance test” but still leave open questions for practical application. Therefore, an expectancy table will be constructed showing cutoff scores that predict failure on the New Jersey ASK Language Arts Literacy.

Chapter Four

Analysis and Interpretation of the Data

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to determine the concurrent validity of reading achievement scores obtained on using the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test and student performance on the Language Arts Literacy section of the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge. The researcher collected data from a random selection of 30 students. The collected data consisted of final scores the students received on the *Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test* and scores received on the New Jersey Assessment Skills and Knowledge. The data gathered began when the students were in the fourth grade and continued until the end of their sixth grade year.

The results of this study are recorded on three separate tables. As shown in Table 1.1, the scores from the GMRT in grades 4, 5, and 6 were correlated with NJASK scores in grades 4, 5, and 6. Table 1.2 displays scores obtained from the *Gates- MacGinitie Reading Test* in grades 4, 5, and 6. The results shown on Table 1.2 are recorded as grade equivalent scores. For instance, a score of a 2.0 would correlate to a second grade level and a score of 2.50 would represent the middle of second grade.

Research Question 1:

What is the correlation between scores obtained on the *Gates- MacGinitie Reading Test* and the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge Language Arts Literacy?

An inspection of Table 1.1 shows a statistically significant relation between the *Gates- MacGinitie Reading Test* and the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge Language Arts Literacy of all three grade levels. The results show that the correlation between the GMRT and the NJASK in grade four have a low correlation; however, the correlation between these two assessments increase as the grade level increases.

Table 1.1 Correlations Between the *Gates- MacGinitie Reading Test* and the
New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge

	GATES 4	GATES 5	GATES 6	NJASK 4	NJASK 5	NJASK 6
GATES 4	1.000	.887**	.839**	.568**	.716**	.747**
Pearson Correlation		.000	.000	.001	.000	.000
Sig. (2-tailed)						
N	30	30	30	30	30	30
GATES 5	.887**	1.000	.928**	.532**	.718**	.820**
Pearson Correlation	.000		.000	.002	.000	.000
Sig. (2-tailed)						
N	30	30	30	30	30	30
GATES 6	.839**	.928**	1.00	.561**	.722**	.816**
Pearson Correlation	.000	.000		.001	.000	.000
Sig. (2-tailed)						
N	30	30	30	30	30	30

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Research Question 2:

Do students make significant gains in the area of Reading measured by the Gates-MacGinitie assessment given every year?

As viewed in Table 1.2, students make an average gain of 1.23 from the end of fourth grade until the end of fifth grade. The students make an average gain of 1.69 from the end of their fifth grade year until the end of the sixth grade year. When results were totaled to find a total average gain from fourth to sixth grade, the findings were a significant gain of 2.90. One can conclude, on an average, the students do make significant gains every year in reading measured by the *Gates- MacGinitie Reading Test*.

Table 1.2 *Gates- MacGinitie Reading Test Scores and Achievement Gains*

Across Three Grade Levels

STUDENT	GATES 4	GATES 5	GATES 6
1	5.60	6.90	7.60
2	4.70	4.50	6.40
3	3.40	4.60	4.40
4	7.50	6.80	10.50
5	3.40	5.70	7.10
6	3.70	5.40	7.10
7	8.20	9.90	12.00
8	1.60	2.20	2.40
9	3.10	4.00	5.50
10	7.30	10.20	12.00
11	3.80	5.60	6.70
12	2.70	4.10	6.10
13	5.10	8.20	12.00
14	2.60	4.80	5.50
15	7.30	8.10	12.00
16	3.60	4.00	6.70
17	5.10	8.20	12.00
18	2.00	3.40	4.60
19	2.70	3.90	5.40
20	2.20	2.70	4.10
21	3.30	4.10	6.80
22	2.10	2.30	2.60
23	2.00	2.70	4.30
24	3.20	5.10	6.10
25	3.30	5.40	7.10
26	4.50	5.60	6.40
27	5.30	6.20	9.10
28	3.40	4.70	7.10
29	5.10	6.70	6.80
30	8.40	7.60	8.60
	4 th –5 th Gain	5 th –6 th Gain	4 th –6 th Gain
Average	+1.23	+1.69	+2.90

Research Question 3:

Is there a differential relationship between the predictive validity of the *Gates- MacGinitie Reading Test* and the New Jersey ASK Language Arts Literacy across each grade level?

As viewed in Table 1.1, in the fourth grade the correlation between the *Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test* and the New Jersey ASK Language Arts Literacy is .568, in the fifth grade it is .718, and in the sixth grade it is .816. The information shows that the fourth grade has the poorest correlation between these two assessments. The strongest correlation and short range predictability is at the sixth grade level (.816). Therefore, data presented shows a stronger relationship between the *Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test* and the New Jersey ASK Language Arts Literacy as students progress through grades each year.

Table 1.3 Expectancy Table Showing Relationship Between the *Gates- MacGinitie Reading Test* and Pass Rates in Literacy on the New Jersey ASK for grades 4, 5, & 6 (n=30)

New Jersey ASK Percentages at Each Grade Level

Grade	Gates Score	n	Advanced Proficient	Proficient	Partially Proficient
4	1.6-3.0	8	0%	12%	88%
	3.1-4.9	12	9%	58%	33%
	5.0-8.4	10	0%	100%	0%
5	2.2-4.0	8	0%	25%	75%
	4.1-5.9	12	0%	67%	33%
	6.0-10.2	10	10%	80%	10%
6	2.4-5.0	6	0%	17%	83%
	5.1-6.9	12	0%	58%	42%
	7.0-12.0	12	0%	92%	8%

Research Question 4:

What are the cutoff scores on the *Gates- MacGinitie Reading Test* that will predict the level of performance on the New Jersey ASK Language Arts Literacy?

An inspection of Table 1.3 shows that at the each grade level if a student scores a grade level above or higher on the *Gates- MacGinitie Reading Test*, there is a greater probability that the student will score proficient on the New Jersey ASK Language Arts

Literacy. However, if the student scores below an entire grade level or less on the *Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test*, there is a greater probability the student will score partially proficient on the New Jersey ASK Language Arts Literacy.

Chapter 5

Summary, Conclusion, and Discussion

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine the predictive validity of reading achievement scores obtained using the *Gates- MacGinitie Reading Test* and student performance on the Language Arts Literacy section on the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge. The predictive validity was measured by examining the relationship between the *Gates- MacGinitie Reading Test* and *New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge Language Arts Literacy* over a three- year period of time.

The sample used for this study included a total of thirty students in a variety of classroom settings; however, all of the students in the sample were instructed using the *Success for All* Reading Program. The *Success for All* Reading Program has been implemented in this school district for over eight years. All of the students in the sample have been instructed using this program for their entire schooling.

The results showed that if a student scored a whole grade level below or lower on the *Gates- MacGinitie Reading Test*, the student had a greater probability of not passing and scoring partially proficient on the New Jersey ASK in grades 4, 5, and 6. However, the results also predicted that if a student obtains a score of one grade level above or higher on the *Gates- MacGinitie Reading Test*, the student will obtain a passing score or proficient on the New Jersey ASK 4, 5, and 6.

Conclusion

The gathered data showed that one can predict the level of performance on the New Jersey ASK to some degree using scores obtained on the *Gates- MacGinitie Reading Test*. The results showed that overall, a student who scored below an entire grade level or less, the probability of that student failing the *New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge Language Literacy*. However, the results suggested that a student who scored an entire grade level above or higher on the *Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test*, was likely to obtain a passing score on the *New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge Language Literacy*.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to determine the predictive validity of reading achievement scores obtained using the *Gates- MacGinitie Reading Test* and student performance on the Language Arts Literacy section on the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge. The information gathered in this study suggested using the cutoff scores on the *Gates- MacGinitie Reading Test* for each grade level one could determine the level of proficiency on the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge. The correlation between these two assessments was adequate at the sixth grade level, but not at the fourth and fifth grade levels. In order to increase the correlation, another assessment may have to be given in order to measure the variance not accounted for in the *Gates-MacGinitie Reading* scores. In addition, to increase the validity of these findings, the researcher can use the entire student population in the school district to increase the sample size. Another recommendation in which the present study can be improved is to expand the prediction using two variables at one grade level to identify those students that are highly

likely to obtain failing scores on the New Jersey ASK. Those students who are identified can then be provided with intensive support.

REFERENCES

- Aiken, L., Groth-Marnat, G. (2006). Psychological Testing and Assessment. Boston, MA: Pearson Education Group, Inc.
- American Federation of Teachers. (1998). Building on the Best, Learning from What Works: Six Promising Schoolwide Reform Programs. Washington, D.C.
- American Psychological Association. (2001). Appropriate Use of High-Stakes Testing in Our Nation's Schools. Washington, D.C: <http://www.apa.org/pubinfo/testing.html>
- Balkcom, S., Himmelfarb, H. (1993). Success for All. Education Consumer Guide, No.5: Office of Research, Office of Educational Research and Improvement of the U.S. Department of Education.
- Datrow, A., Castellano, M. (2000). An Inside Look at Success for All: A Qualitative Study of Implementation and Teaching and Learning. Report No. 45, pgs.61
- Ebel, Robert. (1972). Essentials of Educational Measurement. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Education Law Center: Standing Up for Public School Children. (2006). History of Abbott: Progress toward Equal Educational Opportunity for Urban Students in New Jersey. Newark, NJ.
<http://www.edlawcenter.org/ELCPublic/AbbottvBurke/AbbottHistory.htm>
- Educational Testing Service. (2008). www.ets.org

- Fair Test Examiner. (2007). *New Evidence Strengthens Claim that Testing Narrows Curriculum*. <http://www.fairtest.org>.
- Klagholz, L. (1997). Whole School Reform in Abbott Districts. NJ Department of Education, Trenton, NJ. <http://www.state.nj.us>
- MacGinitie, W., MacGinitie, R., Maria, K., Dreyer, L. (2000). *Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests-Manual, Levels 4-6*. Itasca, IL: The Riverside Publishing Company.
- Morse, Jodie. (2000). Sticking to the Script. Time Magazine.
<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,996267,00.html>
- New Jersey Education Association. (2006). *Testing and Assessment*, Trenton, NJ:
<http://www.njea.org/page.aspx?a=1902>
- North Central Regional Educational Laboratory. (2005). Learning Point Associates,
<http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/content/cntareas/science/sc7ayp.htm>
- Pogrow, S. (2000). The Unsubstantiated “Success” of Success for All. Phi Delta Kappan, Vol.81, No.8, 596-600.
- Riverside Publishing. (2006). Rolling Meadows, IL: <http://www.riverpub.com>
- Sottler, Jerome. (2001). *Assessment of Children, Cognitive Applications*, Fourth Edition. San Diego, CA: Jerome M. Sottler Publisher, Inc.
- SPSS 14.0 Brief Guide. (2005). Chicago, Illinois: SPSS, Inc. www.SPSS.com

State of New Jersey Department of Education. (2006). *Elementary School Statewide Assessments*. Trenton, NJ: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/assessments/es/>

State of New Jersey Department of Education. (2006). *Introduction to “Abbott” in New Jersey*. Trenton, NJ: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/abbotts/about>

State of New Jersey Department of Education. (2006). *Improving Learning and Literacy in Abbott Classrooms*. Trenton, NJ: www.state.nj.us/education/abbotts

Success for All Foundation. (2005). *About SFAF*. <http://www.successforall.org>.

Summary of Research on the Success for All Reading Programs. (2006). Success for All Foundation. Baltimore, MD. <http://www.successforall.org>.