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A STUDY TO DETERMINE WHETHER AN INTEGRATED READING AND
LANGUAGE ARTS PROGRAM WILL IMPROVE THE ATTITUDES
AND PERFORMANCE ON WRITING OF SECOND, THIRD,
AND FOURTH GRADE STUDENTS WITH LEARNING
DISABILITIES

By
Cheryl McCauley

A THESIS
Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree in the Graduate Division
of Rowan University
1999

Approved by

Date Approved 4/29/99

ABSTRACT

Cheryl McCauley

“A study to determine whether an integrated reading and language arts program will improve the attitudes and performance on writing of second, third, and fourth grade students with learning disabilities”

1999

Dr. Jay Kuder

Master of Arts Degree

A large majority of classified students have difficulties with reading and writing. There has been much debate among professionals regarding the best practices in teaching reading and writing to these students. One such practice, integrated instruction, has received increased attention over the past decade. This study was an attempt to find out whether an integrated reading and language arts program would improve the attitudes and performance on writing of second, third, and fourth grade learning disabled students. Sixteen

subjects who attended either a resource room or a self-contained classroom for reading and language arts instruction served as subjects. The study used teacher and student questionnaires and pretest-posttest data.

The results of this study did not conclusively support the hypotheses that there would be an improvement in students' attitudes and performance.

MINI-ABSTRACT

Cheryl McCauley

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1999

Dr. Jay Kuder

Master of Arts Degree

The purpose of this study was to determine whether an integrated reading and language arts program would improve the attitudes and performance on writing of second, third, and fourth grade learning disabled students. Results did not support the hypotheses that there would be an improvement in students' attitudes and performance.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I gratefully acknowledge my family in the preparation of this thesis. My mother and father for all of their love and support and my sister Michele for all of the love and encouragement she has always provided me.

I would like to extend a special thanks to my fiancée' Steven for his love and patience throughout this project. Your support has meant the world to me.

A special thanks to my friends for always being there for me and to my colleagues at Dennis Township School for their support.

Finally I would like to thank Dr. Jay Kuder for his guidance throughout this thesis.

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CHAPTER ONE

STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION

The integration of reading, language arts, and writing has received increased attention over the past decade. Recent studies in the area of literacy have criticized the traditional approaches, which fragment the language arts, and have shown the positive aspects of connecting both reading and writing. Other findings support the idea that certain reading experiences enhance writing and in turn certain types of writing promotes meaning in reading for children as well.

What is integrated instruction? Integrated instruction involves the simultaneous implementation of reading, writing, expressive and receptive language, and the use of content strategies in the classroom. (Collins & Clark, 1993) Usage of personal experiences, prior knowledge, and development of their interests are also integral parts of the integrated approach. The importance here lies with making learning a more natural and real experience for the student. Students are encouraged to write, respond, discuss, and become completely involved with the literature provided to them.

How does an integrated approach pertain to students with learning disabilities? Today it has become common practice for special education classrooms to employ an integrated reading and language arts curriculum into their daily practices. Studies have demonstrated that special educators feel that this type of curricular approach expands and enriches the curriculum for special needs students whose language, reading, and writing deficits contribute indirectly to other academic areas. Through an integrated approach, special needs students are immersed in authentic literature repeatedly. The teacher provides all of the components of language arts together, never isolating any one component. Reading and writing are incorporated into meaningful experiences for the students, keeping their interest and building the motivation for written language activities that will follow.

Most young children experiment with writing, just as they experiment with reading, using lines and marks to communicate a message. For their counterparts with learning disabilities, this is not a simple task. Written expression is the most common area of language arts that these students struggle with. Research tells us that their papers are shorter, less cohesive, and more confusing than those generated by their peers in regular education programs. (Graham, Schwartz, & MacArthur, 1993) Special needs students' writing is often impulsive, lacking any careful thought or planning process prior to writing it down on paper. These students also lack the motivation to write, and are unable to understand the importance of writing to them.

The question to be examined in this study is whether an integrated reading and language arts program will improve the attitudes and performance on writing of second, third, and fourth grade students with learning disabilities. In the investigation of the problem it is hypothesized that, a.) students' attitudes towards written language will improve as a result of an integrated reading and language arts program, and b.) students will demonstrate a significant improvement in their written language abilities due to their performance on an integrated reading and language arts program. Attitudes are defined for this study as the feelings the student has towards written language. Performance is defined for this study as the ability for the student to engage in the actual writing process throughout the implementation of the integrated program.

The purpose for conducting this research is to examine whether an integrated reading and language arts model will help facilitate effective writing strategies in learning disabled students. Past practice in the school where I teach involved isolated approaches to all areas of language arts (reading, phonics, language arts, written and expressive language) in both the resource "pull-out" classrooms and the self-contained classrooms. The methods incorporated into the daily planning of this language arts instruction lacked the ingredients necessary for successful student reading and writing. Recently after conducting a careful examination of this ineffective program, our school purchased a new integrated reading and language arts program. This new program is being implemented into seven resource "pull-out"

classrooms and five self-contained classrooms. This is the first time in the school's history that they have implemented an integrated program such as this one into their special education classrooms. It is anticipated that the written language abilities of our classified students will improve significantly because of this new program.

An examination of this adaptation to our special education curriculum, along with the results of this research will benefit not only myself and my colleagues, but special education teachers everywhere who also incorporate an integrated reading and language arts model into their classrooms. As special educators, we deal day-to-day with children who experience reading and writing difficulties. These children require models of good writing and need to be exposed to well-written texts. Typically, these students have not had sufficient successful experiences understanding stories to draw upon when engaging in the writing process. They also have difficulty reworking the text to make it more meaningful for them. A careful examination of an integrated approach could provide insight into specific modifications that special education teachers can make in their reading and language arts curriculums. These modifications could help to produce better models for furthering reading skills and for exposing special needs students to the writing process model. Use of this approach would enable students to receive effective instruction in text structure and comprehension, as well as opportunities to learn, engage in, and appreciate the writing process.

Chapter two consists of pertinent literature to this study. Specific and related research will be reviewed pertaining to such topics as whole language, how it relates to special education, and reading and writing difficulties of learning disabled students. Chapter three will consist of the design and execution of the research. Chapter four will consist of the results of the study and chapter five will include the discussion and conclusions of the research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Whole language and integrated instruction are both widely used terms to describe instruction, which connects reading and writing with the use of literature. In the 1990's, school districts nationwide have lost interest in commercially published basal reading programs and have adopted literature-based approaches to teaching reading and writing. In an integrated reading and language arts classroom, children learn to read by reading and to write by writing. It is also true that these same children learn to read by writing and to write by reading (Pike, Compain, & Mumper, 1994).

Integrated approaches are essential tools for exposing students to a variety of genres which serve as models for the various types and styles of writing. Also essential are the stories incorporated into this reading approach because throughout the reading process the students are preparing themselves for the writing process that coexists within this program.

According to Pike, Compain, and Mumper (1994), reading and writing are closely related, and both can be enhanced by combining the two through

an integrated approach rather than isolating them. There is a need for an integrated approach to literacy, for experience with one process will foster development in the other.

The research literature contained in this chapter provides a review of studies that examine several aspects of integrated reading and writing instruction. Included are evaluations of studies pertaining to whole language in the regular education classroom, the use of whole language with learning disabled students, and reading and writing difficulties of learning disabled students. The final study examined for this section includes research, which addresses the area of writing assessment in the special education classroom.

WHOLE LANGUAGE

The Whole Language approach originated in New Zealand where statistics have shown there to be the highest literacy rate in the world. Marie Clay was an important figure in the growth of this approach. She focused her research on learning to read and write and the importance of teachers' monitoring and responding to children's attempts to learn. Sylvia Ashton-Warner, a teacher in New Zealand, was also influential in the whole language movement. She focused her students on words that had meaning to them and utilized an integrated curriculum to reinforce the reading and writing process.

The success of the whole language approach in New Zealand resulted in its spreading to other parts of the world such as Australia, England, Canada, and the United States. It was Kenneth Goodman and his wife Yetta that were particularly influential in the whole language movement to America. They initiated the resistance to standardized curriculum tests and prescribed instructional programs in the classroom. They followed the philosophy that all children could become literate if they were treated with support and respect, and if the classroom environment promoted the sharing of written language in a meaningful way (Buros, 1991). They also believed that the whole language classroom was a democratic community of learners, and its curriculum focused on the cultures and social experiences of the entire community.

Whole language provides an activity-oriented learning approach, which emphasizes reading and writing. Teachers model reading and writing for their students on a daily basis. There is an emphasis on observations and teachers are often taking into account the interests of the students. Child-initiated activities are also a focal point of a whole language classroom. When the teacher welcomes new ideas and ways to learn in the classroom, they are providing a positive example for their students.

Since its conception in the early 1970's, the research on whole language has become extensive. Smith-Burke, Trika, Deegan, and Jaggard (1991) conducted research involving a regular education whole language classroom. Their study included fifty-two first grade nondisabled students who were separated into a whole language group and a traditional approach

group. Results of their study indicated that the whole language students used eighteen times as many words in their writing exercises as their traditional approach classmates.

Another study by Speigel (1992) involved two kindergarten classrooms. One class incorporated a whole language model and the other used a traditional method to teaching. Speigel's results indicated that the whole language kindergarten students performed significantly higher than their counterparts on tasks such as word recognition, spelling generalizations, and on grammatical tasks as well.

A study conducted by Hopkin, Hopkin, Gunyuz, Fowler, Edmison, Rivera, and Ruberto (1997) found that by designing a user-friendly curriculum guide for practical application in an integrated language arts classroom, both students and teachers would be provided better opportunities to observe student progress, achievement, and developing competencies in the area of written language.

Researchers here concerned themselves not only with students and teachers but also found it necessary to develop a curriculum tool that could easily inform parents of their child's progress. Hopkin et al. (1997) found that by doing this parents, students, and teachers shared an opportunity to become collaborators in designing strategies for success. One way the researchers felt this could be accomplished was through the use of portfolios. Portfolios were viewed as transfer documents between the home and school and as students demonstrated achievement in written language, samples, as

well as the matched curricular objective, were both included in the portfolio. It was concluded that successful implementation of integrated strategies does increase the writing abilities of learning disabled students when collaboration occurs between parents, students, and teachers.

Whole language often involves a concept called writer's workshop. It is a period of time allotted during each school day for reading and writing. Children work in small groups, pairs, or as an entire class. Cooperative learning strategies play a strong role in this process. Baker (1994) examined how writer's workshop improved the writing abilities of learning disabled first graders in an integrated reading and language arts classroom. She found a strong link between reading and writing. Those students, who normally struggled with writing assignments, were observed enjoying not only the writing process but also the ability to share what they had written with their peers. Students were able to write more of their ideas down and had the ability to concentrate on the mechanics of their writing. Baker (1994) concluded from her research that integrated instruction reflected the close relationship between reading and writing and that this approach allowed for successful writing no matter what difficulties the student encountered.

Most often in education, particularly with the whole language approach, there are criticisms on its' effectiveness and its' success rate in the classroom. In her book entitled Literacy at the Crossroads, Regie Routman (1996) outlines several misconceptions about whole language. She begins by stating that many teachers say they are "whole language teachers" but in

reality only about 20% of teachers across the country are truly knowledgeable in the whole language paradigm. California was provided as an example here. When faced with specific problems in their programs, several teachers blamed these problems on whole language as a program instead of their inability to teach the program effectively.

Another criticism described in Routman's (1996) book pertains to the classroom environment. She found that certain teachers believed they were a whole language classroom by simply having the physical structure of the room adhere to the guidelines of a whole language classroom. Learning centers and cooperative groups were established but "natural learning" was not occurring. She attributed this to improper training and the absence of positive whole language influences.

The last criticism described involved the quick reform to whole language in our society. Routman (1996) explained that because we live in an impatient society, when something new comes along we want it implemented instantly. Moving from a skills-based model to whole language is a profound shift in learning. One of the problems educators endure is that proper training and professional development are often ignored.

Administrators force a new program upon teachers and instruct them to implement it with limited time and resources provided to them. Professional development must be a necessity in order for whole language to succeed with all students. As Routman (1996) concluded, just like students, teachers need excellent and repeated modeling by experts; time to practice what has

been learned; and time for collegial collaboration and sharing. Most often this is not the case.

Heath (1991) provided the final critical view of the whole language model. In her article she discussed several flaws in the whole language concept. She believed the most critical challenge whole language has faced was that of teacher preparation. Teachers preparing to enter classrooms should be provided with unbiased information about whole language. Also more long-term studies on the effects of such teaching need to be provided in order to assist teachers with this approach. She concluded her article by stating that teachers need prescribed lessons for teaching in order for them to be successful and whole language only offers a natural learning experience which is too often difficult to evaluate and assess.

WHOLE LANGUAGE AND LEARNING

DISABLED STUDENTS

The implementation of a whole language program in the special education classroom has received increased attention over the past ten years. Special educators have found that there are both benefits and deficits when incorporating this component of reading and writing instruction into a classroom. Some of the benefits of this type of instruction include exposing students to both unabridged literature and trade books, engaging students in

meaningful discussions with teachers and classmates, and providing a language arts framework that can easily be modified to accommodate the needs of the students. The fact that the teacher controls the program is beneficial to the timeframe that usually hinders special education students. Here the teacher can adapt the program and instruct students at a pace more conducive to their learning ability.

As with any educational program, some of the research indicates that there are negative aspects as well. First, certain educators of learning disabled students believe that whole language programs lack the structured approach required when teaching these types of children. Educators still see the need for worksheets and workbooks from published programs in special education classrooms. They feel that direct instruction remains the only strategy in keeping these students on task.

Several studies have been conducted in this area, which address both the pros and cons of using whole language strategies with learning disabled students. Sawyer (1991) noted in her research that learning disabled students were primarily being instructed with traditional methods in their special education classrooms. Whole language strategies were not incorporated; therefore these students were not provided opportunities that might otherwise encourage them to become better readers. Research here also indicated that by changing the classroom environment, students would become more active learners and would develop the confidence needed to succeed in other academic areas. Also, interaction between classmates

would enable them to improve socially which would lessen the risks of conflicts among classmates.

Another study by Carbo (1992) examined recommendations for teachers that would assist them in utilizing whole language in their special education classrooms. Teachers in this study disliked the whole language approach because it did not provide enough structure for their students. Carbo addressed several key components that special education teachers need to be aware of in order to successfully implement this type of program into their classroom. These components included the Fernald Method (reversal correction), the Echo Method (repetition of words/phrases), rereading stories to students, vocabulary games, story tapes (listening centers), and private reading time (individualized silent reading). Carbo (1992) concluded by stressing the importance of motivating students to read and write and that this can only be accomplished when they are confident in themselves and their abilities in the classroom.

Research by Farris and Anderson (1990) dealt with teachers' perceptions of whole language versus the traditional methods of reading instruction. A survey method was used to determine the attitudes of special education teachers in regards to whole language. Results from the research indicated that whole language strategies motivated learning disabled students to read and that these students also carried this motivation over to other academic areas in the classroom.

Another study by Lancia (1997) dealt with the effects of literature on learning disabled students' writing. He conducted his study within a second grade classroom of special education students and examined how a literature-based reading approach impacted students' writing abilities. Over the course of the school year, he collected 128 samples of student writing and kept records from individualized writing conferences in order to identify literary borrowing skills of learning disabled students. According to Lancia (1997), "literary borrowing" involves the spontaneous borrowing of ideas from literature in order to create their own pieces of writing. Lancia (1997) concluded that literature offered a most effective model for writing and that these writers became successful language users and were able to connect reading and writing in meaningful ways.

Hiebert and Colt (1989) conducted a study, which examined the patterns of literature-based integrated reading instruction and its effect on students with mild learning disabilities. They focused primarily on how student interest in a literature-based reading program would effect the writing skills of these students. Hiebert and Colt (1989) outlined three patterns of literature-based instruction. Pattern one, or teacher-selected literature in teacher-led groups, focused on the teacher modeling and guiding the students through the selected passage. Pattern two, teacher- and student-selected literature in teacher- and student-led groups, dealt with the specific needs and interests of the students. And pattern three, student-selected literature read independently, provided the opportunity for students to partake in

individualized silent reading. Researchers found that patterns one and two had a more positive impact on the students' written language due to the small group settings which provided unique opportunities for fulfilling instructional and self-selection needs (Hiebert and Colt, 1989). The small groups also provided students with situations that enabled them to describe favorite books and to demonstrate their interpretations of passages read. Once confidence was developed in these areas, researchers observed this same confidence carried over to their written language assignments. Unlike patterns one and two, more guidance and assistance with their thought processes was required for the completion of pattern three, which was almost impossible for them. It was concluded that a total reading program should contain interaction between both students and teachers and that if this is done accurately, students will enjoy not only the process of reading but the writing portion that is a follow up as well.

In a study that more clearly specified a whole language model, Houston, Goolrick, and Tate (1991) discussed the frustrations of teachers over the past decade in dealing with specific limitations of skill and drill reading programs. They examined the demands placed upon today's teachers for higher standardized test scores and more measurable tasks.

In this study, Houston et al. (1991) focused on the effects of these pressures on exceptional learners and how this emphasis on test scores diminishes the self-esteem of these students. They emphasized the importance of a holistic approach to language learning in order for these

particular students to obtain success. The researchers described a whole language based process to writing entitled the "Tell Me A Story" project. This project was co-sponsored by IBM Corporation and Good Housekeeping magazine and provided a whole language based process approach to writing and storytelling. It was developed for grades kindergarten through sixth grade and was used nationwide as a step-by-step model for teachers of disabled and nondisabled students. The project encouraged students to elicit stories based on their classroom reading program and was teacher-directed. It was carried out in eight procedural steps. Step One: Hearing A Storyteller, involved listening to a live storyteller and posing several significant questions at the conclusion of their story. Step Two: Writing A Class Story, required students to write about an event the class shared together. Step Three: Learning To Take Notes, taught students the importance of note-taking and interview techniques. Step Four: Beginning the Writing Process, had students using their notes from Step Three and creating a first draft of their story. Step Five: Writing Dialogue, explained the narrative aspect of story writing and the importance of punctuation in writing. Step Six: Editing, enabled the students to make revisions with partners and some teacher assistance. Step Seven: Preparing the Final Written Draft, was when students rewrote their final copy or utilized word-processing skills on the computer. The final step, Step Eight: Publishing/Storytelling, involved students sharing their stories with an audience. According to teacher response, students with exceptionalities of all types experienced success and most teachers believed that the success of

the project stemmed from its use of oral language as a stage in learning written language (Houston, Goolrick, & Tate, 1991).

The article "Risk Taking, Bit By Bit" (Salvage and Brazee, 1991) focused on getting special education students to become risk takers when involved with reading and writing in their classroom. Salvage and Brazee examined a group of special education students and teachers who were new to incorporating a holistic reading and writing approach into their classrooms. Initially the researchers observed these teachers getting discouraged when the students didn't respond immediately or as competently as regular education students that they were compared to. These teachers started to believe that an integrated approach would not be successful with special needs students.

According to Salvage and Brazee (1991), their challenge was to introduce to a group of students labeled "behavior disordered/learning disabled" a type of classroom that enabled the teacher to trust the students to learn, and the students trust each other to share their learning together. Salvage and Brazee were aware, prior to their study, that this would be uncomfortable for the students at the onset.

Incorporated into this study were two very important paradigms: the medical model (labeled handicapped or disabled), and the whole language model, which rather than identify a deficiency, seeks to expose what the student already knows in reference to language and print.

After a three-year extensive study in which an integrated reading and language arts model was implemented into a self-contained class of thirteen

students, Salvage and Brazee (1991) learned three specific lessons applicable to all special education teachers. First, in order for a whole language approach to be successful, the teacher must remain patient. Second, special education students will respond well to whole language teaching practices over a long period of time if reading and writing are introduced using informational print. And the last lesson learned was that risk taking and decision making are crucial components to successful whole language in the special education classroom. Special education students need to be encouraged to take risks and not be reluctant towards change. These children learn best when the material they are learning is personally relevant and has meaning to them.

MacInnis and Hemming (1995) conducted research, which linked the needs of learning disabled students to a whole language curriculum. The purpose of their study was to examine why a whole language model to teaching language arts was effective in addressing the needs of learning disabled students and how cognitive strategies were the most prevalent form of instruction with these children. This study examined the characteristics of these learners and their implications within the realm of a whole language environment. Learner characteristics and aspects of a whole language curriculum were the two primary concerns addressed in this research. MacInnis and Hemming (1995) concluded by supporting the idea that a whole language curriculum allows the needs and interests of the children to be central to its curriculum. Because of this, there is greater likelihood that the

learning disabled child will relate new information to existing knowledge. It also provides the type of environment that enhances students' performances and enables them to feel secure throughout the learning process.

READING AND WRITING DIFFICULTIES OF **LEARNING DISABLED STUDENTS**

In the previous section the topic of whole language and learning disabled students was reviewed. In this section reading and writing difficulties of learning disabled students will be reviewed with articles relevant to the topic. One such article focused on a study by De La Paz and Graham (1997). Their study concentrated on teaching three students with learning disabilities a strategy to enable them to become more effective writers. De La Paz and Graham (1997) utilized the Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD) model for teaching writing. This model taught students specific strategies for improving written language skills. These included brainstorming, use of text structure, and revising for both mechanics and substance. The results of this research indicated the SRSD had a positive effect on each of the participants' writing. Their papers became longer and the overall quality of their work improved.

Another study pertaining to the SRSD model by Sexton, Harris, and Graham (1998) involved six students with learning disabilities. This

investigation attempted to assist these students in developing a strategy for planning and writing essays by incorporating the Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD) model into their daily language lessons. Students would collaborate, regulate, and revise throughout the writing task. In this particular study, expository writing was targeted using a three-step planning strategy for writing opinion essays. Students used a mnemonic device, TREE, to help generate ideas for their writing. Researchers found that in order for SRSD to be successful, teachers must engage in active collaboration with their students. Sexton et al. (1998) concluded by stating that SRSD is an effective method of improving both what and how students with learning disabilities write, as well as improving their attitudes about writing and themselves as writers.

A study by Drecktrah and Chiang (1997) attempted to identify elementary teachers' instructional approaches (direct instruction or integrated instruction) and effective instructional strategies in teaching reading and writing. Surveys were issued to approximately three hundred licensed teachers in the state of Wisconsin. These included regular elementary teachers and elementary teachers of students with learning disabilities. Results indicated that the majority of teachers, both regular and special education, believed that integrated instruction was effective in teaching reading and writing to their students with learning disabilities. Drecktrah and Chiang (1997) concluded that with the inclusion of students with learning disabilities in the regular classroom becoming more common in education

today, strategies incorporated by both regular and special education teachers needs to be consistent and compatible. The goal of every educator is to implement effective instructional strategies, and with the use of integrated instruction and collaboration among teachers, all students can achieve literacy.

Teacher-student-directed instruction was the focus of a study conducted by Kau (1995). Kau described the experiences of first and second grade learning disabled students as they discovered the readable word in work produced by themselves and their classmates. Kau, along with her student Gilberto, conducted a writer's workshop that encouraged student writing and provided them with a vast opportunity of writing experiences. As the children's writing progressed, Kau and Gilberto allowed the students to take more and more responsibility for their writing. Kau (1995) concluded that when children see language being used, they want to use it themselves. They look at their written work, see their accomplishments, and strive to continue on with the same success with other written projects in their future.

The body of research involving story composition that investigates aspects of mechanics, syntax, and fluency holds few surprises for teachers of students with learning disabilities. There is evidence of depressed performance in punctuation, spelling, and grammatical errors. These issues were addressed in a study done by Graham, MacArthur, Schwartz, and Page-Voth (1992). Their research involved teaching a planning and writing strategy approach to students with learning disabilities who were poor writers. This strategy was designed to facilitate five goals: generate and process goals,

develop notes, organize notes, write and continue planning, and evaluate the successfulness in obtaining these goals (MacArthur, Schwartz, & Page-Voth, 1992). This strategy was first implemented as students were taught argumentative essay writing. At the conclusion of the research, Graham and his colleagues found that strategy instruction had a significant effect on the students' essays, particularly the length of their papers and their ability to follow the instructions of the teacher.

Vallecora and Garriss (1990) also looked at the composition abilities of learning disabled students. They compared the story composition abilities of learning disabled and normally achieving young adolescents as indicated by measures of writing category, cohesion, and fluency. Their findings indicated that learning disabled students struggled with rudimentary knowledge of story construction as compared to their peers who were nondisabled. The students with learning disabilities were also deficient in their cohesion and were less fluent writers.

The third study on composition skills was conducted by Graham (1990). He studied the effects of mechanics, rate, and content on the quantity and quality of fourth- and sixth-grade learning disabled students' compositions. Primarily he concerned himself with examining how learning disabled students make considerably more capitalization, punctuation, and spelling errors when writing compositions. This was done over a three-week period in which twenty-four fourth- and sixth-grade learning disabled students were asked to compose a prompted essay, one per week. The results

indicated that these students' writing difficulties stemmed from deficits in mechanics and problems in sustaining production during the writing process (Graham, 1990). The slow rate of production did not interfere with their writing, learning disabled students used this time to generate more ideas.

Another influential body of studies dealt with interactive writing between teachers and students. One study conducted by Zaragoza and Vaughn (1995) involved interviewing twenty-four third grade students in order to discover their perceptions on how written language should be taught effectively. The students interviewed were from lower to middle socioeconomic status groups and were considered mildly disabled. Each child was interviewed for approximately one hour. Within that hour, students were asked to enlighten the interviewer on how they felt new teachers should teach writing. All interviews were audiotaped and the interviewers jotted down notes as the interviews progressed. At the conclusion of their research, Zaragoza and Vaughn (1995) found that students' perceptions of teachers' practices were crucial to the instruction of the writing process and that their responses should serve to encourage educators to establish classrooms that allow students to construct, transform, and appropriate knowledge within a framework of social interaction.

Button, Johnson, and Furgerson (1996) also examined interactive writing in the classroom. Interactive writing enables students, both disabled and nondisabled, to take an active role in the writing process. The teacher's role is to oversee and explicate the children's emerging knowledge about the

printed word. Button et al. (1996) stated that interactive writing provided an authentic means for instruction and that all children learn the conventions of spelling, syntax, and semantics as they engage in the construction of letters and stories. They concluded by stressing the importance of this writing strategy in providing personal meaning for students. This enables them to enjoy the process and motivates them with other writing experiences.

The collaborative writing approach was maintained in the Fine (1989) study. This article briefly described three moments from the researcher's classroom experiences that revealed the importance of collaborative writing instruction. Each situation occurred within a fourth grade classroom consisting of "behavioral special education" boys. Fine described each circumstance that involved success in student writing when a collaborative approach was utilized. She emphasized how many learning disabled students decide not to write in fear that their written word will not be "heard" by teachers. Fine (1989) concludes by stating that collaborative projects in which learning disabled students have a guaranteed place in the discussion make it possible for educators to understand these students and "hear" them as well.

Englert, Raphael, Anderson, Anthony, and Stevens' (1991) evaluated the effectiveness of students' knowledge of the writing process and the role of expository writing. This research examined the effects on a particular program, Cognitive Strategy Instruction in Writing (CSIW), on students' abilities to produce well-organized pieces of writing. Subjects included one

hundred and eighty-three fourth- and fifth-grade learning disabled and nondisabled students from twelve separate schools. All students were instructed with the CSIW model. Englert et al. (1991) in their results indicated strong support for the positive effects of the CSIW model in terms of improved overall writing quality for their expository texts.

Another study included in this section on writing strategies was done by MacArthur (1996) and reviewed the ways in which computers can support the writing skills of students with learning disabilities. MacArthur emphasized computer applications that go beyond word processing such as sentence generation and transcription processes. These processes have the potential to enhance the writing of learning disabled students. To conclude, MacArthur (1996) reminds us that word processing alone does not result in improvement in students' writing. Effective instructional methods must be developed in order to make use of the power provided by these tools to enhance the writing of students with learning disabilities.

Another line of investigation that appears to be highly influential for this research study are those that pertain to learning disabled students' attitudes and motivation towards writing. Koskinen (1993) conducted research to determine how to motivate independent reading and writing with learning disabled students. A literature-based reading program was designed to meet the criteria. Students were provided with opportunities to interact socially through cooperative learning as they simultaneously participated in literacy

activities that provided them with a choice of task, materials, and collaborators.

According to Koskinen (1993), implementation of the program involved three major components: 1.) classroom literacy centers which contained featured books on shelves, pillows, stuffed toys, all of which provided a warm and welcoming effect on the students, 2.) teacher-guided literature activities engaged students in story retelling/rewriting and original story writing, and 3.) independent reading and writing period (IRWP) required students three to five times per week to choose an independent activity of their choice such as read to a friend, write a story, or listen to a story tape. Analysis of the data revealed that all three components of this program contributed to the increased literacy activity and performance by the learning disabled students examined. Koskinen (1993) noted that children referred to reading and writing as fun in this social setting and that teachers were impressed with students' abilities to collaborate in literacy experiences.

Bottomley, Henk, and Melnick (1998) investigated similar issues with the same types of subjects, but evaluated writers using the Writer Self-Perception Scale. In their research, Bottomley et al. (1998) addressed the role of affect in writing by describing the psychological construct of the writer and by introducing the Writer Self-Perception Scale (WSPS). This tool provided teachers with data on students' attitudes towards writing and assisted them in evaluating individual student's literacy skills.

The WSPS was administered to an entire fifth grade class of learning disabled and nondisabled students. Once the WSPS was distributed to the students, the teacher explained the purpose of the assessment. Then students were guided through the example until they had a precise grasp as to what their task was. Students were encouraged to ask questions and were informed that there were no incorrect answers. Students were allotted 15-20 minutes for completion of the WSPS. According to the results of this study, the WSPS provided meaningful information for administrators, teachers, and parents. It also allowed teachers to make general assessments of their classroom writing environment and more specific examinations of individual student's perceptions of their writing.

Lovelace (1995) used a writer's workshop program in order to identify the attitudes of learning disabled students when involved in the writing process. Writer's workshop was chosen for this study due to the increased student interest after only one month of it being implemented into her classroom. She noted a significant change in students' attitudes between her conventional writing program from the previous year and the new writer's workshop program. Writer's workshop was initiated using basic rules. These included students writing at least nine line stories and completed illustrations had to include at least four different colors. When their stories were completed, they were handed in and corrections were added on a post-it notepaper by the teacher and passed back to the student the next day. Corrections were then done by the students.

For her study, one male subject was chosen and studied over a single school marking period. This subject was selected due to his negative views towards writing and his non-motivational ways in the classroom. At the end of the marking period, the examiner noted a significant change in the subject's attitudes towards writing. According to Lovelace (1995), the subject's writing samples were not the best conceptually or grammatically, but at the conclusion of this study, the subject enjoyed writing and sharing his work with his peers. The researcher also admitted to a change in her own perception of writing, and believed that when given an assignment, students will take pleasure in the completion of it.

Graham, Schwartz, and MacArthur (1993) conducted the final behavioral study, also investigating the self-efficacy of students as writers. This study was comprised of twenty-nine seventh- and eighth-grade students with learning disabilities, as well as eighteen of their normally achieving peers. These subjects were interviewed individually in a room at their school. Graham et al. (1993) used questions that dealt with declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge about writing. It was found that normally achieving students had a conceptually more mature knowledge base about writing than learning disabled students. Learning disabled students were as positive as their regular education peers about their ability to write and complete specific stories, reports, etc. Conclusions were drawn pertaining to learning disabled students' writing instruction in school. Graham et al. (1993) stated that too much emphasis is placed on the mechanical

aspect of writing and suggests that students with learning disabilities should receive instruction that is conceptually sound and encourages students to anticipate the writing process.

One final study in this section focused more directly on the assessment processes utilized to monitor the progress of learning disabled students with written language. Parker, Tindal, and Hasbrouck (1991) examined two primary methods for directly scoring writing samples. The first, holistic scoring, requires subjective judgments that are used to rank or rate students' papers. The second method, atomistic scoring, considers discrete countable components of the written product. Subjects for this study included thirty-six middle school students with mild learning disabilities who were investigated over a six-month time period. Each subject submitted writing samples at four points during the school year: October, January, February, and April. Students were prompted with a story starter and were asked to write on that topic for six minutes. Samples were then collected and analyzed by the researchers using both assessment measures. Holistic scoring was done using the Test of Written Language (TOWL) and atomistic scoring was calculated using specified scoring methods outlined in a training manual used by the examiners of this study.

According to Parker et al. (1991) on the basis of both direct assessment and informal judgments of the research team, students appeared not to improve in writing over the six-month study. These findings could have been attributed to the small amount of active writing instruction that

occurred in the language arts resource centers, information that had been noted throughout this study by other researchers.

SUMMARY

In conclusion, the literature reviewed supports the current trend of integrated language arts instruction in special education classrooms.

Various studies indicated that learning disabled students benefit from a reading and language arts approach that emphasizes and encourages the writing process. Providing authentic materials that are literature-based enables these students to become motivated and this in turn enables them to produce mechanically sound pieces of writing.

Research on isolated writing instruction with learning disabled students, however, indicates that specific strategies need to be revised. Their attempts to motivate and encourage writing only frustrate and create a negative attitude towards it.

Research supports the need for writing instruction in the special education classroom and when presented through an integrated language arts approach, learning disabled students can feel not only successful, but confident in their writing abilities as well.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Subjects

The subjects for this study were sixteen classified students from a rural elementary school that serves both nondisabled and disabled students. The students included in this study consisted of nine self-contained students, grades three and four, ranging in age from eight years to ten years, and seven resource room students, grades two, three, and four, ranging in age from seven years to ten years. The self-contained students receive instruction in all academic areas (reading, language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science) in the self-contained classroom with one special education teacher and a part-time instructional aide. The resource room students receive reading and language arts instruction in the resource room with one special education teacher and a part-time instructional aide. The

ethnicity of the students included 15 male and female Caucasians and 1 Afro-American male.

All students have been classified either neurologically or perceptually impaired. According to the New Jersey Administrative Code 6:28-3.5, neurologically impaired refers to a specific impairment or dysfunction of the nervous system or traumatic brain injury, which adversely affects the education of a pupil. Perceptually impaired refers to a specific learning disability manifested by a severe discrepancy between the pupil's current achievement and intellectual ability in one or more specified academic areas. Students for this study demonstrated academic functioning that varied from one to two years below grade level. Subjects were selected based on their involvement with the author (her own resource room students) and grade level equivalent self-contained students.

Instruments

The instruments used to collect pre-intervention data from both special education teachers and the subjects of this study were selected-response questionnaires constructed by the author (Appendixes). These questionnaires contained questions pertaining to students' and teachers' attitudes towards the traditional approach used in previous years and the new integrated approach being implemented this year. These questions were developed by the author to determine how both special education staff and students felt about both programs. The teacher questionnaire included questions which required them

to rate the old traditional basal program, to rate their students' attitudes towards this program, to rate their own attitude towards it, and to provide feedback on the new integrated series. Student questionnaires involved items, which asked them specific questions about their attitudes towards reading and writing and their opinions on the new integrated program.

Instruments used for intervention procedures included instructional materials that are published by the Harcourt Brace Company from their Signatures Integrated Reading and Language Arts Series. This series provides a literature-based language arts program designed to meet the needs of children of all abilities. It contains authentic children's literature, which serves as a springboard for instruction in skills, and strategies that help students develop into fluent readers and effective communicators.

Assessment tools included holistic assessment and skills assessment tests that accompanied the series. Holistic assessment used authentic literature passages and questions that assessed students' application of literal, inferential, and critical thinking. Skills assessment measured students' mastery of reading strategies and language arts skills and included a writing prompt for each theme. Written language assignments completed by the students also served as an assessment tool throughout this study.

Design

A within-subjects approach was used because the variation needed for studying the relationships involved was being obtained from changes in the

same subjects over time or across situations. Prior to intervention, a selected-response questionnaire (Appendix-A1), which presented questions regarding attitudes towards the traditional and integrated approaches to reading, was issued to all subjects to be completed and returned to the author. A questionnaire of similar format (Appendix-A2) was also completed and returned by the entire special education staff, consisting of seven resource room and five self-contained teachers, in the school where this study was conducted. Their questionnaire presented items relevant to their attitudes towards both the old and new programs that have been implemented into our special education curriculum.

Several independent variables were incorporated into this research design. They include: 1.) the type of instructional organization: self-contained or resource room classroom, 2.) type of materials for concept attainment: Harcourt Brace Signatures Integrated Reading and Language Arts Series, 3.) instructional strategy used in teaching reading and writing: teacher-directed lessons, cooperative group activities, individualized assignments, 4.) time of day for instruction: resource room- 9am-12pm, self-contained- 9am-11am, and 5.) length of individualized class periods: resource room, grades two, three, and four- 120 minutes per grade per day, self-contained, grades three and four- 75 minutes per grade per day.

Intervention procedures included implementation of the integrated reading and language arts program in one resource room and one self-contained classroom. The author conducted resource room intervention.

Another special education teacher on staff within the school conducted self-contained intervention. Intervention included the implementation of the integrated program on a daily basis. This program served as the only source of reading and writing instruction in both classrooms.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

The intent of this study was to determine whether an integrated reading and language arts program would improve the attitudes and performance on writing of second, third, and fourth grade learning disabled students. It was hypothesized that, a.) students' attitudes towards written language would improve as a result of an integrated reading and language arts program, and b.) students would demonstrate a significant improvement in their written language abilities due to their performance on an integrated reading and language arts program.

As the implementation of the new integrated program progressed, theme/unit tests were given to each student in the areas of skills assessment, language arts assessment, and holistic assessment. The first assessment was for Theme I of this program and was given as a pretest three weeks into the program. Mean calculations were established for the three assessed areas using both groups of students. The scores of the

resource room students were 88.3 for skills assessment, 78.6 for language arts assessment, and 88 for holistic assessment. The self-contained students averaged 81.3 for skills assessment, 77.9 for language arts assessment, and 82.7 for holistic assessment. Table 4 presents these results.

Posttest results were calculated using the Theme II assessments from the integrated program. Both groups of students were assessed in the same three areas: skills-based, language arts, and holistic assessments. Resource room students scored 91.9 for skills assessment, 90 for language arts assessment, and 91.1 for holistic assessment. Self-contained results were means of 84.4 for skills assessment, 83.6 for language arts assessment, and 85.3 for holistic assessment. Theme II mean scores are presented in Table 5.

Table 4. Mean Scores for Theme I Assessment

	<u>Skills-Based</u>	<u>Lang. Arts</u>	<u>Holistic</u>
Resource Rm.	88.3	78.6	88
Self-Contained	81.3	77.9	82.7

Table 5. Mean Scores for Post Test-Theme II Assessment

	<u>Skills-Based</u>	<u>Lang. Arts</u>	<u>Holistic</u>
Resource Room	91.9	90	91.1
Self-Contained	84.4	83.6	85.3

I found that both groups of students made significant gains in the three assessed areas across Theme I and Theme II. The biggest gain for

both groups was in the area of language arts, with the resource room mean score demonstrating noticeable improvement from 78.6 to 90. Self-contained students improved as well with a 77.9 average increasing to 83.6. Skills-based assessment demonstrated another significant improvement with the mean resource room scores increasing from 88.3 to 91.9, and self-contained scores improving from 81.3 to 84.4.

Eleven teachers responded to a questionnaire (Appendix-A2) pertaining to the special education department's reading and language arts programs, both old and new. The results of this survey indicated that the majority of the special education staff were displeased with the old Steck-Vaughn Focus Reading Series. Most teachers rated it "fair" and found the only beneficial component of this program to be its emphasis on comprehension skill development. Teachers indicated that supplemental materials (novels, thematic units) were used an average of two times per marking period as a supplement to the Focus program. When asked to rate both their attitudes and their students' attitudes towards the Focus program, most felt there was negativity towards it. All teachers stated that they were involved in the decision making process in the selection of the new integrated reading and language arts program and preferred this program a great deal over the old program that was previously implemented. They were satisfied with the amount of materials that the new program provided for their students and believed that the new program would motivate their students more in the areas of reading and writing. The area of concern for most of the teachers

was their students' length of writing and they had anticipated an improvement in this skill once the new program was underway. Table 6 presents specific data from this survey.

Table 6. Teacher Survey Data

<u>Question #</u>	<u>yes</u>	<u>no</u>		
<u>Q3</u>	11	0		
<u>Q7</u>	7	4		
<u>Q8</u>	11	0		
<u>Q9</u>	11	0		
	<u>very positive</u>	<u>positive</u>	<u>negative</u>	<u>extremely negative</u>
<u>Q5</u>	0	4	7	0
<u>Q6</u>	0	5	6	0
	<u>strongly agree</u>	<u>agree</u>	<u>disagree</u>	<u>strongly disagree</u>
<u>Q10</u>	3	8	0	0
<u>Q11</u>	7	4	0	0

The sixteen subjects of this study were also given a questionnaire (Appendix-A1) to respond to prior to intervention. Their survey was an interest inventory, which targeted their attitudes towards reading and writing. The majority of the students stated that they enjoyed reading biographies and they preferred both silent reading and partner reading. They felt comprehension was the most difficult area of reading for them. All students admitted to reading at home with someone for approximately 15-20 minutes each night. When asked about their attitudes towards writing most agreed that they enjoyed writing only when it was a topic of interest to them. True

stories were the main topic that they enjoyed writing about. Finally, students hoped that the new integrated reading and language arts program would help them to enjoy writing more and that they would become more motivated writers. Specific data are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Student Survey Data

<u>Question #</u>	<u>yes</u>	<u>no</u>				
<u>Q1</u>	13	3				
<u>Q5</u>	11	5				
	<u>strongly agree</u>	<u>agree</u>	<u>disagree</u>	<u>strongly disagree</u>		
<u>Q8</u>	9	3	2	2		
<u>Q11</u>	8	4	2	2		

At the conclusion of the study the questionnaire (Appendix-A1) issued prior to intervention was once again issued to all sixteen subjects. The majority of the students admitted to liking the new reading and language arts program and that the stories were fun and interesting to them. They also commented on their improved attitude towards writing and felt that the activities from the new program were fun and they liked to write more. They also weren't as easily frustrated during reading and language arts time and felt as if reading was easier for them.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

In this study I examined the question of whether an integrated reading and language arts program would improve the attitudes and performance on writing of second, third, and fourth grade learning disabled students. To qualify for the study, subjects had to be in the above specified grade levels, be a classified student under the provisions of the school district's child study team, and attend either a resource room or a self-contained classroom for reading and language arts instruction. Prior to the study it was hypothesized that, a.)students' attitudes towards written language would improve as a result of an integrated reading and language arts program, and b.)students would demonstrate a significant improvement in their written language abilities due to their performance on an integrated reading and language arts program. A within-subjects study was conducted due to the fact that the studying of the relationships involved was obtained from changes in the same subjects over time and across situations.

The study resulted in both groups of students, resource room and self-contained, making slight gains in both skills-based and holistic assessment and achieving slightly higher gains in language arts assessment. However, these results were inconclusive due to the fact that an analysis of the data determined that these increases were statistically insignificant.

Attitudes towards reading and writing improved slightly in the areas of story interest and motivational factors. Most students felt that their frustrational levels had decreased during reading and language arts instruction as a result of the new integrated program. Generally the students made some progress in both their attitudes and abilities in reading and writing.

Pike, Compain, and Mumper (1994) described reading and writing as two processes that coexist. Both are enhanced when combined in an integrated approach rather than in isolation. Though the results of the present study were not statistically significant, it was apparent through the use of the new integrated program that this coexistence can be effective if used consistently and for a longer period of time. Also effective in this study was the approach taken to the instruction of the integrated program. For example, teacher-led groups and student-led groups were implemented using teacher-selected literature. This approach was outlined in a study conducted by Hiebert and Colt (1989), where they examined the patterns of literature-based integrated reading instruction and its effect on students with mild learning disabilities.

Another approach incorporated into the integrated program examined in this study was writer's workshop. This involved allotting a specified amount of class time for writing instruction. Writing activities revolved around the literature read during reading groups and cooperative learning strategies were implemented as well. Similar to Baker's (1994) study, I found that the students enjoyed writing more and took pleasure in sharing their written ideas with their peers.

In addition to implementing a writer's workshop into this study, I also attempted to use this new integrated program as a means of fostering more independent reading and writing abilities in these students. Past studies have indicated, as with Koskinen (1993), that independent reading and writing skills can be effectively taught using a literature-based reading program. The use of classroom literacy centers, teacher-guided literature activities, and five minutes of silent reading and writing, all contributed to an increase in independent reading and writing abilities in my study.

One limitation I encountered while conducting this research involved time constraints on instructional time. These constraints were due to the specials scheduling (gym, art, music, computers, and library) of the students involved in this study. Resource room students were limited to only 60 minutes of reading and language arts instruction on two days due to their specials schedule. The other three days they received 120 minutes of instruction. The self-contained students were limited to only 40 minutes of

reading and language arts instruction on two days due to their specials scheduling as well.

Future research might take the aforementioned into account. Perhaps more significant results could have been obtained if this limitation had not existed. Future studies on this topic might use subjects without conflicting schedules, particularly conflicts that effect reading and language arts instructional time. Also the length of the study might be longer, an entire school year or a two-year analysis of an integrated program using the same subjects over two school years. Because an integrated program involves several aspects of assessment, a study which targets one specific assessment tool (skills-based, holistic, or portfolio) might be effective in demonstrating which areas students are more successful in. The possibilities for future research on the topic of integrated instruction are endless, particularly because it is a topic which encompasses so many areas of instruction and is of such interest to so many in the field of education.

For me, the implications of this study are important because of the reading and writing problems classified students have. The integrated program that was examined in this research was newly implemented into our special education classrooms in the school in which I am employed. I was pleased to see improved attitudes towards reading and writing from my students when using this program. I have also learned a great deal about integrated instruction myself through the use of this program and feel strongly that my school district will continue to implement this approach in future

years due to its positive effect on both the students and the teachers as well. Reading and writing will continue to be the biggest challenge facing learning disabled students. By implementing programs such as this one, we are providing them with more fun and innovative approaches to areas that they would otherwise have found to be frustrating and discouraging.

In conclusion, this study indicates the need for future research on the topic of whether an integrated reading and language arts program would improve the attitudes and performance on writing of second, third, and fourth grade learning disabled students. Both hypotheses dealing with improved attitudes and performance were not conclusively demonstrated. However, the results are positive enough to lend themselves to support further research in this area. Children with learning disabilities face challenges on a daily basis. The majority of these obstacles center on reading and writing difficulties. Through the implementation of integrated reading and language arts programs we, as educators, can provide these children with opportunities for academic growth and individualized accomplishments, two crucial ingredients in the recipe for educational success.

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APPENDIXES

TABLE A1

Student Reading/Writing **Interest Inventory**

***Circle the appropriate answer:**

- 1.) Do you like to read?
 - a.) yes
 - b.) no

- 2.) What do you enjoy reading about?
 - a.) fiction
 - b.) nonfiction
 - c.) biographies
 - d.) mysteries

- 3.) How do you like to read?
 - a.) aloud with a group
 - b.) silently
 - c.) partner reading
 - d.) follow along as the teacher reads aloud

- 4.) The hardest thing about reading is:
 - a.) recognizing the vocabulary words in the story
 - b.) remembering what I read in the story
 - c.) remembering to stop at the end of sentences when I read

- 5.) Do you practice reading at home?
 - a.) yes
 - b.) no

- 6.) Approximately how many minutes do you spend each night on your reading and language arts homework?
 - a.) 5-15 minutes
 - b.) 15-20 minutes
 - c.) 20-30 minutes
 - d.) more than 30 minutes

- 7.) I write because:
- a.) I am assigned to do it for a grade
 - b.) I like to
 - c.) I don't like to write
- 8.) I enjoy writing stories:
- a.) strongly agree
 - b.) agree
 - c.) disagree
 - d.) strongly disagree
- 9.) I enjoy writing:
- a.) make-believe stories
 - b.) true stories
 - c.) teacher initiated stories (story starters)
- 10.) I want the new reading and language arts program to:
- a.) help me to write more
 - b.) help me to enjoy writing more
 - c.) I don't care
- 11.) The new integrated reading/language arts program will motivate me to write/enjoy writing more:
- a.) strongly agree
 - b.) agree
 - c.) disagree
 - d.) strongly disagree

****THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP****

TABLE A2

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE PERTAINING TO SPECIAL EDUCATION READING/LANGUAGE ARTS PROGRAMS

SECTION I: SCOTT, FORESMAN, & CO.- FOCUS READING SERIES

***Circle the appropriate answer:**

- 1.) How would you rate the Focus Reading Series?
 - a.) excellent
 - b.) very good
 - c.) good
 - d.) fair
 - e.) horrible
- 2.) What did you find to be most beneficial about the Focus program? (pick 1)
 - a.) vocabulary skills
 - b.) comprehension skills
 - c.) goal/objectives for students
 - d.) I found nothing beneficial about this program
- 3.) Were supplemental materials ever used in place of the Focus program in your classroom?
 - a.) yes
 - b.) no

*If yes, briefly indicate why: _____
- 4.) If you responded "yes" to question #3, how often were supplemental materials used?
 - a.) 1 time per marking period
 - b.) 2 times per marking period
 - c.) more than 2 times per marking period
 - d.) the entire school year
- 5.) How would you rate students' attitudes towards the Focus program?
 - a.) very positive
 - b.) positive
 - c.) negative
 - d.) extremely negative
- 6.) How would you rate your attitude towards the Focus program?
 - a.) very positive
 - b.) positive
 - c.) negative
 - d.) extremely negative

SECTION II: HARCOURT BRACE CO.- SIGNATURES INTEGRATED SERIES

- 7.) Were you involved in the decision-making process in regards to the selection of the new integrated Signatures series?
- a.) yes
 - b.) no
- 8.) Do you prefer the new integrated program compared to the previous isolated programs? (Scott-Foresman, & Co., Steck-Vaughn, etc.)
- a.) yes
 - b.) no
- 9.) Do you anticipate any improvement in your students' writing abilities due to the implementation of the new integrated reading/language arts program?
- a.) yes
 - b.) no
- 10.) I feel the new integrated program will motivate my students to write:
- a.) strongly agree
 - b.) agree
 - c.) disagree
 - d.) strongly disagree
- 11.) The new integrated program provides enough activities and skills exercises that would encourage student writing:
- a.) strongly agree
 - b.) agree
 - c.) disagree
 - d.) strongly disagree
- 12.) What do you find to be the area needing the most improvement in your students' writing? (pick 1)
- a.) grammar
 - b.) spelling
 - c.) length of their writing
 - d.) remaining on-task with the chosen writing topic

****Please provide any additional comments below:**