Embracing the text: reading achievement of African-American students-implications for educational leaders

Jessalyn Roberson Askew
Clark Atlanta University

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ABSTRACT

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

ASKEW, JESSALYN ROBERSON B.A. UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA, 1984
M.ED. BRENAU UNIVERSITY, 1995
ED.S. BRENAU UNIVERSITY, 1996

EMBRACING THE TEXT: READING ACHIEVEMENT OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN STUDENTS—IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERS

Advisor: Dr. Trevor Turner

Dissertation dated May 2009

National trends in reading indicate African-American students continue to perform lower than white students. Key findings from the 2005 Reading Report card show white students in grades 4 and 8 scored higher on average than black and Hispanic students. The purpose of this study was to determine if a Balanced Reading format had an impact on the reading achievement of African-American students. It further explored the effects of teacher instructional methods, lesson planning, and student demographics (gender, ethnicity, SES) on the reading achievement of African-American students.

Research was conducted in a suburban K-5 elementary school using data generated by students sores for the Fall (pretest) and Spring (posttest) administration of Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) norm-referenced test in reading. Gain comparisons were determined using a Paired Samples t Test and An Analysis of Variance between the experimental and control groups as well as student demographic effects. Pre
and post teacher lesson plans were evaluated using a High Definition Lesson Planning format to identify growth in lesson planning. Teacher instructional methods were evaluated utilizing an Observation Based Instructional Assessment (OBIA) instrument to identify the implementation of higher order thinking skills, identification of student academic needs, and the incorporation of student social experiences in the instructional delivery of reading by the teacher.

The results of the study revealed gain scores for both the experimental and control groups indicating the Balanced Reading format for teaching reading is effective with students. Although both groups experienced gains, the experimental group’s gain was higher further indicating the treatment of lesson plan evaluation using the HDLP and teacher instructional methods as evidenced through teacher observations using the OBIA instrument was effective in raising student achievement. Through an analysis of data, student demographics of SES and ethnicity revealed an effect on student gain scores based on results of MAP posttest data.

The implications of this research for administrators is the importance of differentiating instruction through effective lesson planning to meet the needs of students and the incorporation of higher order thinking skills and questions during reading instruction based on student readiness, teaching reading strategies and skills and providing multiple opportunities for reading to promote student achievement in reading.
EMBRACING THE TEXT: READING ACHIEVEMENT OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN STUDENTS—IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERS

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

BY

JESSALYN ROBERSON ASKEW

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

MAY 2009
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The district for this suburban school implemented Balanced Reading as the framework for teaching reading in the elementary schools in 2007. Balanced Reading is implemented through a Reader's Workshop model which emphasizes small group reading instruction through the use of leveled authentic text and incorporating phonics based instruction in grades K through 2. The Balanced Reading framework's workshop approach incorporates teacher read aloud, teacher guided reading groups, independent reading by the students, partner reading, and conferencing with the teacher or with a peer. The focus and philosophy of Balanced Reading is to focus on teaching reading strategies and developing fluent readers. Guided reading groups are determined through benchmark assessments with the teacher targeting a specific reading skill or strategy for small group instruction utilizing authentic text.

According to the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (1997), 40% of the people living in America have reading problems significant enough to impact their enjoyment of reading. National trends in reading indicate African-American students continue to perform lower than white students. Key findings from the 2005 Reading Report card show white students in grades 4 and 8 scored higher on average than black and Hispanic students. The state of Georgia shows a 27-point achievement gap between the average reading achievement of white and black students
(The Nation’s Reading Report Card, 2005). Kunjufu (2007) in his article, “Reading Scores and Prison Growth,” states governors review fourth grade reading scores to determine prison growth. According to Kunjufu, this has become an epidemic in the African American community where 63% of its fourth grade students are below grade level.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which student academic achievement could be explained while controlling for variables of lesson plan evaluation through the use of the High Definition Lesson Plan Evaluation (HDLP) format, teacher observation through the use of the Observation Based Instructional Assessment (OBIA) and Student Demographics. The literature reviewed demonstrated that differences in achievement may vary in part by lesson planning, student demographics and teacher instructional delivery as evidenced through teacher observation with the OBIA instrument. The results of the study would be of benefit to classroom teachers in determining reading instructional strategies and the differentiation of reading instruction for individual students based on skill level, and student demographics. Principals and central office personnel might benefit through the identification of leadership strategies needed to influence effective reading instructional strategies in lesson planning and teacher evaluation. Ensuring the academic success of all students is a county-level goal as well as a goal of “No Child Left Behind” initiative.
The Problem of Student Achievement

Reading achievement of African-American students in a suburban, K-5, elementary school was a concern based on the data collected. This particular school is an approximately 50% minority student population in a middle socioeconomic community located in a metropolitan Atlanta school district.

The data in Table 1 show African-American students in grade 3 performing at a lower academic level in reading than white students in the same third grade classes based on Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) test results. The pretest data prompted the need for an explanation as to why African-American students perform at a lower academic level in reading. MAP, a norm referenced test administered three times during the school year of this particular county, indicates a greater percentage of African-American students scoring at or above the RIT level of 192 (meets expectations) than white students for the fall 2008 administration of MAP forming the basis of pretest data. Student performance variations need to be explained in the context of effective lesson planning, student demographics (socioeconomics [SES], gender, and ethnicity) and teacher evaluation of instructional delivery in reading.

National trends in African-American academic achievement suggest the need for further exploration. Included among these trends are a widening achievement gap between white and African-American students, a high dropout rate in secondary schools, a decline in the number of African-American males attending post secondary institutions, and an alarming number of African-American males that are incarcerated (Noguera, 2002).
Table 1

*Reading MAP Scores Fall 2008*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent of</th>
<th>African-American Males at or above RIT Level</th>
<th>Percent of White Males at or above Grade Level 192</th>
<th>Percent of African-American Females at or above RIT Level 192</th>
<th>Percent of White Females at or above Grade Level 192</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade Level</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>Level 192</td>
<td>Level 192</td>
<td>RIT Level 192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Grade</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Class 1)</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Grade</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Class 2)</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Grade</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Class 3)</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Grade</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Class 4)</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Grade</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Class 5)</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although society has formulated many theories as to why African-American students perform lower academically than other students, it is becoming increasingly apparent that African-American students are not receiving the same educational
opportunities as their dominant counterparts. Not playing on an equal field can lead to mistrust of the dominant culture as well as negative self-perceptions thereby resulting in lower academic performance. It was determined that cultural mistrust and outcome value were strong predictors of the expectations of academic outcome (Irving & Hudley, 2005).

It is hardly surprising that the experiences of black males in education, with respect to attainment and most indicators of academic performance also show signs of trouble and distress (Noguera, 2002). African-American males are more likely to be labeled as discipline problems and aggressive, they are much more likely to be classified as having a learning disability and staffed into special education classes than whites as opposed to being placed into Advance Placement and Honors classes (Noguera, 2002). Meeting the individual cultural and gender needs as opposed to teaching from a one size fits all framework may move towards closing the achievement gap.

This study examined the extent to which student academic achievement is influenced by high definition lesson planning, student demographics and teacher instructional delivery as evaluated by the Observation Based Instructional Assessment instrument.

Research suggests success of the learning environment is achieved when students perform well. Figure 1 is the organizational chart of the elementary school in this suburban school district. The school itself operates in relation to the central office which is comprised of the superintendent, and assistant superintendents. The central office is responsible for setting the goals of the county which include the methodology and the evaluation/assessment process verifying reading achievement in school based classrooms.
Figure 1. Organizational Framework
As the building level administrator, the principal is responsible for the actual operation of the school and creates a sense of community in implementing the curriculum as well as providing the curriculum leadership for reading in their respective schools.

The principal should be fully aware of the classroom dynamics and instruction delivered to students. The supervisory process of the principal is to monitor teacher methodology to ensure proper alignment with curriculum goals, the differentiation of instruction to meet individual student academic needs, and effective lesson planning. As the principal he/she works collaboratively with the teachers in adjusting the curriculum and delivery of instruction through teacher observations, evaluation of lesson plans, and providing school based professional development.

Teachers are the primary providers of the reading curriculum and instructional content within the dynamics of the classroom in a manner that differentiates to meet the needs of individual learners thereby allowing all students to gain from classroom instruction. Teacher methodology could impact student achievement as students vary in characteristics including SES, gender, and ethnicity. Teachers need to make adjustments in methodology to account for student differences. Each member of the organizational framework is instrumental in obtaining reading achievement in this selected suburban elementary school (see Figure 1).

This suburban elementary school of 507 students in grades K-5 operates with the principal as the building level instructional leader. Teachers generate lesson plans based on the Georgia Performance Standards that differentiate instruction for the various learning needs of the students and the leveled guided reading groups. The student
population is approximately 50% minority with students residing in a middle
socioeconomic community. Families are primarily two parent homes with an average
household income of $53,000 with postsecondary educational levels.

The organizational framework comprised of the Central Office Superintendents,
the principal, teachers and parents all have a vested interest in raising reading
achievement within the school. The building level principal is responsible for providing
differentiated professional learning opportunities to meet the diverse learning needs of
students. The instructional staff also receives professional learning through the county’s
professional learning department to develop the vision of raising academic achievement
within the county. Teachers, as the implementers of reading instruction, are considered
critical to student reading achievement through developing lesson plans and instructional
methods to differentiate reading instruction for reading success.

Problems in the Delivery Process

The Balanced Reading framework requires the students to be actively engaged in
reading for a 90-minute reading block. During the 90 minutes, the students may be in
teacher directed guided reading groups, reading independently, reading with a partner, or
listening to a book on tape. The students are not engaged in just one facet of reading for
the 90 minute block but rather rotating after 20-30 minutes to engage in more than one
reading experience. The reading block begins with a 15-20 minute mini-lesson on
grammar or a specific reading skill that will be reinforced in small guided reading groups.
After the mini-lesson, the students break into the small groups (reading independently,
reading with a partner, listening to a book on tape or teacher guided reading group) to
engage in reading. The guided reading groups are no more than six students at a time. The students in the teacher guided reading group are all reading the same text with instruction on a specific reading strategy, skill or phonics if needed or the teacher is conferencing with the students on text previously read. The philosophy of Balanced Reading is to move the students towards becoming fluent readers using authentic grade level text.

Although the 90-minute block is designed to be uninterrupted reading time, scheduling does not allow all grade levels to have an uninterrupted reading block. Problems in the delivery process can also arise with the organization of the teacher with group assignments and lesson planning. The students must be taught how to engage in the various reading opportunities and the expectations for reading engagement. Opportunities to teach the students how to respond to literature within the groups and modeling of good reading are necessary for classroom management. Staff development will continue to be a necessity to provide instruction to the teachers as the Balanced Reading framework is implemented.

Demographics

The selected K-5 suburban school student population identified for this study is comprised of 47% white, 40% African-American, 8% Hispanic, 3% Multiracial, and 2% Asian. The school is non-titled with 30% of the student population receiving free and reduced lunch. Located in the suburb of Atlanta, the middle income community is comprised primarily of two-parent homes with one or both parents having a level of postsecondary education.
Problem Statement

The lower level of academic achievement of African-American students in reading can possibly be explained by lesson planning, student demographics, lower-level questioning techniques, and instructional delivery as evidenced through teacher observation/evaluation.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is to impact the academic achievement of African-American students in reading by examining the current practices of educating these students relative to learning styles and learning activities. There is also a need to determine what, if any, impact high definition lesson planning, student demographics and teacher instructional delivery through observation evaluation using the OBIA assessment instrument have on the reading achievement of African-American students. The results would be relevant to:

1. Teachers who have direct instructional contact with students on a daily basis in developing lessons based on student differentiation based on academic level, student demographics (SES, gender, and ethnicity) utilizing the HDLP format.

2. Principals as building level supervisors would have data to indicate reading achievement needs for students in regards to student demographics. Data would be available to indicate methodology and lesson planning needs of teachers in developing and adjusting delivery of instruction and implementation of curriculum. The data results would provide principals with
indications of professional learning needs of teachers in implementing effective instruction ensuring student reading success.

3. County level personnel would greatly benefit from the results in setting the goals and areas of focus for the county as well as the identification of supervisory strategies for principals to assist in academic achievement within the schools.

4. Parents would find the results beneficial and be better equipped to work with the students or to identify resources to fill the academic gaps to promote reading success with their children.

Research Questions

The research study will address the following research questions:

RQ1: Is there a significant difference between the experimental group and the control group using MAP test scores?

RQ2: Is there a significant difference between posttest scores for the experimental group and pretest scores for the experimental group?

RQ3: Does Student Demographic SES have any effect on the reading achievement of students in the experimental group?

RQ4: Does Student Demographic Ethnicity have any effect on the reading achievement of African-American students in the experimental group?

RQ5: Does Student Demographic Gender have any effect on the reading achievement of students in the experimental group?
RQ6: Does the treatment based on the use of the HDLP and OBIA make a difference in reading achievement based on MAP test scores?
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The literature review explored possible variables associated with reading achievement and the possible impact on reading achievement of African-American students. Variable exploration includes student instructional needs, student demographics (SES, gender, and ethnicity), high definition lesson planning, balanced reading methodology and delivery, administrative instructional supervision and evaluation, and the Observation Based Instructional Assessment tool.

Student Instructional Needs

Tomilson (2000) states differentiation seems a common sense approach to addressing the needs of a wide variety of learners, promoting equity and excellence and focusing on best practice instruction in mixed ability classrooms. Balanced reading is a method of differentiation of reading instruction by the teacher.

Kunjufu (2004) reiterates a previously conjectured statement of Morgan’s (1980) that:

Upon entering school in primary grades, black children posses enthusiasm and eager interest; however, by fifth grade the liveliness and interest are gone, replaced by passivity and apathy. Primary grades presented a more nurturing environment than intermediate or upper grades. In early childhood education much of the activity is child-teacher centered and child-child
interactive. In primary grades, blacks progress and thrive at the same rate as their counterparts until the third grade syndrome. After the third grade, the achievement rate of blacks begins a downward spiral which tends to continue in the child's academic career. The classroom environment is transformed from socially interactive to competitive, individualistic, and minimally socially interactive style of learning. (p. 8-9)

Just as boys and girls have different educational needs, they also need to have equal opportunities to develop these specific needs. This is true of not only males and females from a dominant culture but of African-American males and females as well. Wilson-Jones and Caston (2004) found that cooperative learning was a primary factor that promoted the academic success of African-American students. They were specifically interested in the impact of cooperative learning on academic achievement. Sixteen African-American male students (grades 3 through 6) from a rural Mississippi school were interviewed over a three month period during the 2002-2003 school years. The authors examined home and school environments and the impact these environments had on the students' academic success. African-American males with limited literacy activities in home and school environments academically did not perform as well as those students with greater literacy activities in home and school environments. Cooperative learning was found to be a primary factor that promoted the academic success of the students.

McMillian (2004) focuses on educating African-American male students and the No Child Left Behind Reform suggesting that the academic achievement gap of African-
American males must receive special attention. McMillian reframes the gap as a “treatment” gap and presents findings of a population of African-American male students and considers academic disengagement and teaching methods and how these variables impacted academic achievement. McMillian’s findings highlight societal misperceptions she terms as “inaccuracies” and discusses the problem in expecting African-American male children to perform at the same level as others even though they are not receiving the same educational opportunities as other students. According to the researcher, it is the focus on inputs (teaching methods, eliminating stereotypes) can we then see the closing of achievement gaps.

Student Demographics

Early learning activities experienced by children are often the foundation for learning. Hess and Shipman (1956), in a study of early socialization of children and their cognitive experiences, found that the social system and the structure of the family shape communication and language.

According to Orr (2003), academic achievement can be affected by wealth, which is an indicator of both financial and human capital, as well as help to explain the gap in black-white test scores. Analyses reveal that wealth affects achievement through its effect on the amount of cultural capital to which a child is exposed. Because blacks often times have substantially less wealth than whites, wealth can help to explain a portion of the racial achievement gap. Having less wealth, lower SES families may not find books a priority purchase with limited to funds.
Researchers seem to agree that gender does play a role in the academic achievement of African-American males; however, it does not appear to be the sole factor in determining academic achievement. According to Kunjufu (2004), the poor transition boys make between the primary and intermediate division can be referred to as the *Fourth Grade Failure Syndrome*. In his study of 20 African-American males and their reading scores on the ITBS (Iowa Test of Basic Skills), over a five-year period beginning with third grade, 14 decreased, 4 improved, and 2 remained constant. Two students scoring at the 98th and 92nd percentile at the beginning of the third grade year, dropped to 35th and 24th by the end of the seventh grade. Meeting the individual cultural and gender needs as opposed to teaching from a one size fits all framework will move towards closing the achievement gap.

Kunjufu (1988) further states that an unacceptable percentage of African-Americans believe they are inferior to Caucasians in education and economics. To improve their self-esteem, the mental bondage that is clearly expressed by young people is not wanting to be on the honor roll because they do not want to be considered white must be confronted

African-American students tend to have many social inequalities to deal with in their pursuit of academic achievement. Quite often African-American students live in single-parent households and in poor neighborhoods. The economics of the parents then becomes a factor that can contribute to the achievement or lack of achievement of students. The outside family life can have a direct influence on the academics as the expose to crime, drugs and a spirit of apathy can impact the desire and the relevance of
academic achievement as related to success. A child’s socioeconomic status, language ability, past performance, appearance, weight, and numerous other factors can influence our opinions of that child (Lynch, 2006). These early assumptions we make often become self-fulfilling prophecies, a point not often realized (Lynch, 2006). According to Schunk (1996, as cited in Lynch, 2006), teachers should not accept excuses for poor performance, nor should they develop expectations based on ethnicity or family income or any other factor unrelated to student performance.

Ethnicity and SES often introduces peer and social pressure to students. Each student is an individual with varying abilities to handle peer pressure and social pressure. This pressure can include being isolated by students for conforming to another culture or giving this appearance by taking advanced classes or classes considered “smart classes.” It becomes even harder when they are on the honor roll because they are accused of “acting white” (Kunjufu, 2004, p. 20). Black students who perform at high levels often are ostracized by their peers as traitors and “sell outs,” and are compelled to adopt a “raceless” persona to avoid the stigma associated with membership in their racial groups (Noguera, 2003, as cited by Fordham & Ogby, 1986). The effect of peers is a particularly strong influence in academic achievement, especially for fourth graders (The National Assessment of Educational Progress as cited by Johnson, 2000).

The findings of Meece, Glienke, and Burg (2006) indicate student gender is directly related to student achievement through the role of gender in shaping achievement motivation. According to their findings, girls’ and boys’ motivation related beliefs and behaviors continue to follow gender roles.
High Definition Lesson Planning

Reading teachers and content area teachers alike need to be able to design lessons that help students comprehend (i.e., learn from) specific texts and need to develop comprehension strategies that readers can use on many different types of texts (Gill, 2008). According to Darling-Hammond (1995), a substantial part of effective teaching is based on knowledge of students and their experiences, their prior knowledge, and the ways in which they learn. Students construct their own knowledge based on their previous understandings and experiences and on the new experiences that they encounter.

High Definition Instructional Lesson Planning, according to Persaud and Turner (2002), a teacher needs to know the knowledge to be taught in its various forms. The theory of the lesson planning format emphasizes the teacher preparation for the students. The delivery process sets the expectations for the students. If the teacher delivers at a higher order thinking skills level, the students will most likely perform at a higher order thinking skills level both in the classroom and on standardized tests. The same is true for lower order thinking skills levels of instruction. Bloom’s Taxonomy’s (1956) lower order thinking skills focus on knowledge and recall, not allowing the students an opportunity to process or problem solve.

Getzel and Guba’s (1956) social system states that defined roles for teachers and having their needs met will cause teachers to want to work harder thereby allowing for high student success. Teachers wanting to work harder can lead to effective lesson planning leading to student achievement.
The High Definition Lesson Planning Format (Persaud & Turner, 2002) utilizes four dimensions to rate the weekly lesson plans of teachers. The first dimension, Needs Assessment, assesses performance in relation to causal variables. This rationale for this dimension is that the teacher must know the variations in their student's performance in order to best meet their needs. In order to differentiate instruction, the teacher must know the students that are below expectations, meeting expectations and exceeding expectations. Teachers must also know the students they are teaching. Often variables such as gender, SES, and ethnicity can directly impact student achievement. Based on the needs assessment, the teacher is able to plan lessons for student success.

Dimension two, Objectives: Outcomes, is much like the road map for the teacher. It gives direction to the teacher by allowing the identification of weak concept areas, the use of Bloom’s HOTS and objectives that will assist low achieving students with content. The dimension of Objectives also requires the introduction of content knowledge. The teacher must have a map and content to allow the students to arrive at the destination of student success and content mastery.

Methodology: Delivery-transaction process or the third dimension spells out the road of travel for the teacher. It is in this dimension that must specify the questions and formative evaluation for the students. It is important that the methodology and formative evaluation utilizes the range of Bloom’s (1956) Taxonomy. Based on student responses, the teacher is able to adjust the questions to link to prior knowledge, textbook knowledge and whatever hands-on opportunities the teacher has developed to make the learning meaningful for the students.
The final dimension of the High Definition Lesson Planning Format for Rating (Persaud & Turner, 2002) is Summative Evaluation. This is the teacher’s opportunity to see if the instruction has been successful with the students. If not, the teacher has an opportunity to make changes and reteach. A variety of assessment methods may be used while utilizing the various levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy.

There are several theorists of curriculum and learning that impact the development of content methods in the development of lesson plans. Bloom’s Taxonomy can be utilized to improve higher order thinking skills and to assist students by reconstructing textbook knowledge to lead them to a higher level of thinking. Bloom’s also allows the knowledge to be broken down into parts for greater understanding.

Roger’s theory of Experiential Learning can be utilized to develop lesson plans (Kearsley, 2008). According to Rogers, the teacher is the facilitator of the learning process. When the teacher makes the lesson relevant to the student, there is a greater likelihood for student understanding leading to student achievement.

Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences theory of learning is also a consideration in developing the various activities for student learning (Kearsley, 2008). Based on the understanding that students are individuals and have various strengths and intelligences, a variety of activities will allow for a greater level of success (Kearsley, 2008).

The learning theory of Schema developed by Anderson based on Piaget believes that prior knowledge is important when learning new information (Kearsley, 2008). With a foundation to build on, there is less conflict with learning new knowledge.
Although research supports the development of meaningful lesson plans, it is still a challenge to have teachers develop lesson plans based on the High Definition format. The question as to why teachers are not constructing lesson plans to meet the diverse learners found in the classroom can be addressed by the use of the lesson planning format. Often when teachers are made aware of the expectations of the lesson planning format through professional learning, they are better able to develop lessons that meet the expectations of the format and the needs of the students.

The validity of the assessments from the lesson plans also plays an integral part in utilizing lesson planning for student success. Content validity ensures the matching of the objectives with the test items as they have been taught by the teacher. This is important as the teacher is able to review the performance of the students and determine areas of weakness based on missed test items. The teacher is then able to reteach and reassess until all content and objectives are mastered.

Predictive validity allows the teacher to check for mastery and reteach based on items missed. Teacher made tests that are predictive in determining students that perform well on standardized tests and benchmark tests based on their performance on teacher made tests.

Validity is necessary for effective lesson planning, instruction and assessment. It is critical in constructing lesson plans to meet the various ability ranges in a classroom. Its effectiveness is demonstrated through the mastery of skills by students and the ability of the classroom teacher to adjust to reteach for the mastery of all ability levels. The
adjustment by teachers may prompt changes or nontraditional methods of teaching reading or literacy.

Ladson-Billings (1992) in a study of two minority educators’ approaches to literacy teaching found that classrooms that make it difficult not to become literate have certain constants. The classrooms are filled with books and various forms of print matter, including trade books, comic books, pamphlets, journals, magazines, letters, and student-developed bulletin boards.

Differentiating instruction through lesson plans is critical in meeting student reading academic needs. According to Benjamin (2006), it is not enough to declare that differentiating instruction is going to be the order of the day. Benjamin further states differentiated instruction is a practice that grows out of certain values that are important in the way we treat our students, design our curricula, establish rules and talk about learning. Effective lesson planning provides teachers an opportunity to incorporate student social conditions leading to teacher quality of instruction, higher order thinking skills, the incorporation of content knowledge and prior knowledge and opportunities for student involvement and engagement in the learning process.

Glenn (2001) identified qualities of effective teachers. The qualities most essential are: enthusiasm, knowledge of content, active teaching, people skills, effective questions, differentiated instruction, providing students with experiences of success, high expectations and flexibility. Effective differentiation of instruction based on the academic and social needs of the students within the classroom are a result of effective lesson planning.
Meaningful learning requires engaging students in inquiry, discovery, and hands-on problem solving. The teacher functions as a coach, a guide, a facilitator, and a questioner, as well as an information transmitter (Darling-Hammond, 1995).

Balanced Reading Methodology and Delivery

According to Pressley and McIntyre (as cited by Stoicheva, 1999), the theoretical base for balanced instruction is cultural and psycholinguistic. It is a useful term for what good teaching is: thoughtful planned instruction based on children’s backgrounds, interests, strengths and needs. According to Grenawalt (2004), incorporating higher-level thinking skills into classroom discussions serve as a counterbalance to the recall-based comprehension tests. Students can use books they chose for independent reading to practice reading skills. Class discussions go from "What happened in Chapter 14?" to sharing enthusiasm for books and examples of inferences or other reading skills.

Blair-Larsen and Williams (as cited by Mackh, 2003) stated that balanced literacy is an approach through which the teacher combines skills instruction, genuine children’s literature, writing and student selected reading. It is not just a balance of phonics and whole language, but of many components that have been part of both ways of teaching. In other words, it takes what has been learned through research and practice in both areas and combines them into a means of providing each individual student with the best possible reading education.

A truly balanced program will be inclusive, not exclusive. It can be defined as a decision-making approach by which a teacher makes thoughtful decisions daily about the
best way to assist every child become a better reader. It requires the teacher to modify daily instruction based on the needs of the individual learners (Mackh, 2003).

Balanced reading one component of balanced literacy is comprised of four main components. It is generally taught through a Reader’s Workshop method. During Reader’s Workshops, students engage in small group teacher direct instruction, reading independently, shared/partner reading or listening to a book, and reader response. Students have an opportunity to participate in each component of the Reader’s Workshop over the course of the weekly reading block. Balanced literacy puts a great deal of emphasis on classroom teachers and their ability to seek out and address students’ individual needs (Mackh, 2003).

OBIA Teacher Evaluation Instrument

According to Hillyer (2005), the teacher evaluation process can impact student achievement. Through a case study of teacher evaluation and supervision at a high performing urban elementary school, four themes emerged as having the greatest impact at the school level. The themes of staff collaboration, quality leadership, professional development, and an emphasis on student achievement emerged.

Persaud (2006) states the classroom is a social system and can be mapped into objectives measurable as outcomes with curriculum content the input and instruction as the means for achieving the objectives as measured outcomes. The OBIA instrument is designed to evaluate curriculum content as the input and instruction as the means or independent variables for achieving the objectives.
The OBIA through its development is to measure outcomes or dependent variables. Bloom's Taxonomy is utilized to measure outcomes such as: knowledge, skills and dispositions (Persaud, 2006). Based on the use of Bloom's Taxonomy, the OBIA's operational definitions as defined by Persaud (2006) are included in the instrument to assist the teacher in understanding the levels of Bloom's.

1. Knowledge and comprehension refers to the extent to which a teacher explains, asks questions and uses answers on facts and opinions occurring in textbook knowledge, clinical work experience or diverse curriculum issues: Textbook, previous knowledge in the same content area or different content/subjects, test concepts on content taught, in students' or in social, multicultural contexts.

2. Comprehension/understanding refers to the extent to which a teacher explains, asks questions and uses answers on facts and opinions to demonstrate basic literal experience or diverse curriculum issues. This is considered a basic understanding level often reflected in paraphrasing of the meaning being taught or the teacher stating in his/her own words.

3. Application refers to the extent to which a teacher explains, asks questions and uses answers to apply knowledge learned as basic facts and principles or opinions in textbooks or experiences. Application is done by explaining a problem in another situation and requiring the students to solve by using the textbook knowledge, and or clinical knowledge and skills.
4. Analysis refers to the extent to which a teacher explains, asks questions and uses answers to break down a holistic meaning into its parts and the examination of the relationship among the parts or parts to the whole. Demonstrated when the teacher asks a student to conceptualize a clinical situation into its subparts and showing the interrelationships by reconstructing the concept from its sub-parts or the teacher asking questions and using their answers to reconstruct from their experiences.

5. Synthesis refers to the extent to which a teacher explains, asks questions and uses answers to construct new ideas or products based on what was taught. Synthesis is demonstrated when the teacher explains to show logical relationships as in analysis and asking students to develop inferences with the teacher utilizing the answers generated to reword the textbook principle.

6. Evaluation refers to the judgment or estimation of the worth of the same or different ideas according to stated criteria. Evaluation is demonstrated by diagrams, models or verbally stating criteria for judgment and asking for application towards a choice. This is demonstrated through the use of comparison skills.

7. Dispositions refer to the human values and attitudes that move one to take action for social justice and equity by: responding to or accepting differences of opinions and persons and collaborating with others to make a difference.

According to the development of the OBIA evaluation instrument (Persaud, 2006) there are four main tools for transfer of knowledge, skills and dispositions from
curriculum areas: Explanation, Questioning, Use of Answers, praising, valuing and Commanding, criticizing (behavior management).

A. Explanation is the primary opportunity for the teacher to make observations about clinical experiences, curriculum diversity and their assessment.

B. Questioning is the primary opportunity for the teacher to chunk the explanations into subsets, generate student responses, assess the quality of understanding by students through their responses, facilitating student opportunities for praise and expectation, use of student ideas resources and conducting higher order thinking sense-making and modeling with opportunities for feedback into revision of questions and explanations.

C. Use of student answers is the primary opportunity for teacher praising, building on ideas and motivating learners through the demonstration of high expectations.

D. Behavior management through commands or criticisms is the primary opportunity for a teacher to seek compliance through commands (lower thinking) or reasoning (higher order) for the direction or criticism.

The use of the OBIA evaluation provides a rating to assist teachers in improving the delivery of instruction. Lower SES students often lack experiences making it critical for teachers to explain, question and use answers and direct behavior thereby raising student achievement.
CHAPTER III
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

African-American students begin school like all other children—with unbridled enthusiasm and high motivation, eager to learn and looking forward to spending the day with teachers and peers. However, when the little boy enters third grade he has grown larger in physical stature and more active and more vocal. It is in third grade that the black males’ positive early experiences in public school begin to sour. These negative experiences begin to have an affect on his level of academic achievement, which first becomes evident in the fourth grade (Brown, 2004).

The theory of this study examines the level of academic achievement of African-American students in reading. The study assumes the level of academic achievement might be explained by investigating variables of High Definition lesson planning, student demographics, and the use of the OBIA teacher observation instrument (see Figure 2).

Definition of Variables

Dependent Variable

Student Achievement in Reading is defined as the extent student’s show reading performance as evidenced by student Measures of Academic Progress. The norm referenced test, Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) is designed to measure student achievement and academic growth.
Figure 2. Theoretical Framework

MAP is developed by the Northwest Educational Association and administered in a computerized format. Academic growth is determined through three test administrations of fall, winter and spring and is required for all students in grades 2-8 in the district where this research takes place.
Independent Variables

**High Definition Lesson Planning** is defined as the planning of reading instructional activities for the students based on student skill level and the Georgia Performance Standards.

**Student Demographics** is defined as the gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status of the students.

- **Gender** is defined as either male or female students.
- **Ethnicity** is defined as the ethnic culture of students including white, African-American, Hispanic, Bi-racial or Indian.
- **Socioeconomic status** is of the student is determined by their free and or reduced lunch status.

**OBIA Teacher Observation Instrument** is defined as the instrument for evaluating teachers on instructional strategies based on higher order questioning and the use of students’ life experiences and their relationship to reading instruction.

**Interrelationships of the Selected Variables**

The theory of academic achievement of African-American students proposes that student demographics impact the transitioning level of achievement. Student preference for instructional methods can impact the achievement level of students. Students can learn as much from what they experience in school as they can from the formal content of classroom assignments (Goodland, 1984).

Although whole class instruction is the most common form of instruction, cooperative or small group instruction may better meet the needs of the students.
Students of color are more prone to function better within group settings than individually and they have a preference for learning cooperatively (Wilson-Jones & Caston as cited by Pang & Barba, 2004).

Teachers must have high expectations for all students regardless of race or socioeconomic status (Lynch, 2006). High expectations for students promote a sense of trust and a positive attitude. A positive student identity instills confidence in students. Children whose teachers exhibited higher levels of racial-ethnic trust and perceived fewer barriers due to race and ethnicity, showed more trust and optimism (Smith, 2003).

Parental involvement can impact academic achievement. Parental involvement demonstrates to the students the importance of school, resulting in improved student attitudes, morals, and academic achievement. Parents’ active interest also results in increased attendance, lower dropout rates, fewer discipline problems and higher aspirations in life (Lynch, 2006). Students from lower SES homes generally have less parental involvement and tend to value education less.
CHAPTER IV
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Plan of Study

The design of this study was a Quasi-experimental design. This design allowed
the researcher to conduct the study utilizing a select group of students to test the
independent variables that constituted the treatment. The selected independent variables
were compared with pre and post test administrations of Measures of Academic Progress
(MAP) testing.

The test Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) is a norm- referenced test
distributed by the Northwest Evaluation Association. MAP is administered in the county
of this study in lieu of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) as a norm-referenced
assessment in reading. State aligned and computerized, MAP provides teachers with
achievement data to assist in providing instruction to students for student growth and
achievement. Data reports generated from MAP testing provide projection reports for
teachers as to the students that may not pass the state mandated (grades 1-8) Georgia
Criterion Referenced Competency (GCRCT) test and the specific skills necessary to meet
expectations on the GCRCT. Performance levels for third grade MAP scores to correlate
to GCRCT levels are defined as: RIT Level 1 (191 and below); RIT Level 2 (192 to
200); RIT Level 3 (200 and above).
MAP data were utilized for this study as its accessibility provided the researcher and teachers with timely data to assist with teacher lesson planning and instruction. Endorsed by the county of this study MAP data was incorporated into the instructional program for student achievement.

Description of the Setting

The population for the study consisted of third grade students and teachers in a K-5 elementary school located in a suburban school district. MAP scores were compiled from the Fall 2008 administration as a baseline for reading achievement of African-American students. The population of the study included five third grade teachers and third grade students. Spring 2009 MAP scores were used to measure the effectiveness of the treatment.

Instruments

The Observation Based Instructional Assessment (OBIA) for Effective Teacher Evaluation (Persaud & Turner, 2006) was used to measure teacher methodology during classroom observations. The instrument is designed to observe and evaluate the use of higher order thinking skills during questioning of students and the ability of teachers to use student life experiences in relation to classroom instruction.

Lesson plans of the experimental group were evaluated using the High Definition Lesson Plan Instrument. The lesson plans were evaluated to observe teacher awareness of students taught, the inclusion of higher order thinking skills and the inclusion of student social experiences. Teachers must know the variations in their student’s
performance in order to best meet their needs. Based on the needs assessment, the teacher is able and expected to plan lessons for student success.

Data Collection Procedures

Student demographic data of gender, ethnicity, and SES were collected through the school’s student records and data base. Data prompted by scores from teacher observations utilizing the OBIA (Persaud & Turner, 2006) were used to measure the effectiveness of balanced reading teacher methods and methodology through classroom observations. The use of higher order thinking skills during the questioning of students and the incorporation of authentic text as a method of incorporating real life experiences for students will be determined by OBIA teacher observations.

The five third-grade teachers were observed during Balanced Reading instruction in the Fall of 2008 using the OBIA to evaluate the methodology, the use of higher order thinking skills through questioning techniques and the use of text in teaching reading to the students. Fall 2008 observation data of the five third-grade teachers were utilized to determine pretest data in determining the effectiveness of balanced reading teacher methods and methodology and the use of higher order thinking skills as illustrated in Table 2. Spring 2009 observation data of the five third-grade teachers will generate post test data in determining the effectiveness of balanced reading teacher methods and methodology and the use of higher order thinking skills through the use of the OBIA instrument.
Table 2.

*OBIA Pretest Results*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task Areas and Means</th>
<th>Third Grade</th>
<th>Third Grade</th>
<th>Third Grade</th>
<th>Third Grade</th>
<th>Third Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Procedural</td>
<td>DNM</td>
<td>DNM</td>
<td>DNM</td>
<td>DNM</td>
<td>DNM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Experiences</td>
<td>DNM</td>
<td>DNM</td>
<td>DNM</td>
<td>DNM</td>
<td>DNM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Content</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relates concepts</td>
<td>DNM</td>
<td>DNM</td>
<td>DNM</td>
<td>DNM</td>
<td>DNM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relates concepts to</td>
<td>DNM</td>
<td>DNM</td>
<td>DNM</td>
<td>DNM</td>
<td>DNM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>different subject areas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assesses</td>
<td>DNM</td>
<td>DNM</td>
<td>DNM</td>
<td>DNM</td>
<td>DNM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance on Concepts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manages Social Behavior Positively</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>DNM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of technological resources</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roll Play/Hands On (Y or N)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend: NO = Not Observed; DNM = Does Not Meet Expectations; M = Meets Expectations; E = Exceeds Expectations
According to the data, the five third-grade teachers did not meet expectations in the area of Procedural Communication, Social Experiences, Relates Concepts to, Relates Concepts to Different Subject Areas, and Assesses Performance on Concepts. The data further indicate the five third-grade teachers met expectations in the area of Curriculum Content. Teacher five according to the data did not meet expectations in the area of Manages Social Behavior Positively however, teachers one, two, three, and four met expectations in Manages Social Behavior Positively. The data identifies teacher one as the only third-grade teacher utilizing technology in instruction and no third grade teacher utilizing the strategy of Role Play or Hands On instruction.

Teacher lesson planning effectiveness was measured through the use of the Teacher Lesson Plan evaluation (Persuad & Turner, 2002) to determine the effectiveness of utilizing higher order thinking questions and the incorporating of student real life experiences during reading instruction. Lesson plans for Teachers 1 and 5 were evaluated using the High Definition Lesson Planning evaluation during the first six weeks of the Fall semester to determine pre test data on the effectiveness of teacher lesson planning. The results of the lesson plan evaluation were compiled to form pretest data. Utilizing the lesson planning form to evaluate the lesson plans in practice, the researcher found the majority of the areas needing improvement based on the evaluation of teachers 1 and 5. There were no identified areas of strength. The area of Needs Assessment was not in line with model as there was no evidence of needs assessment being assessed in the lesson plans. Areas that were rated needs improvement with the model include Content, Delivery-Transaction Process and Summative Evaluation. The lesson plans in practice
did not develop a Needs Assessment and did not have a mix of Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) and Lower Order Thinking Skills (LOTS). The content was not developed at all with the use of LOTS and HOTS; the Delivery-Transition Process was not included as there were no explanations or questions identified to cover LOTS in relation to student experiences. There was no evidence of questions to probe for HOTS to reconstruct textbook knowledge during small group reading instruction. The objective was not clearly stated and was not stated in terms of improving higher order thinking skills based on Bloom’s (1956) Taxonomy. The Formative Evaluation was not clearly indicated by the posing of questions to assess performance on higher order thinking skills, and/or the use of tests. No explanations or questions identified for assessing HOTS in relation to experiences were noted in the lesson plans of teacher 1 or teacher 5. There were no areas meeting standards evidenced in the lesson plans based on the HDLP evaluation. The data are evidenced through Table 3, High Definition Lesson Planning Evaluation Results.

To exceed in the various areas of the lesson planning form, Bloom’s Taxonomy should be used when writing the lesson plans. It is necessary to conduct a needs assessment that identifies the independent and dependent variables as it begins the process to ensure the needs of the students will be met through the implementation of the lesson. This strategy will also ensure the varying learning styles of the students are met. The actual objective/outcomes should be based on lower and higher order thinking skills with the test items constructed to measure the actual objectives/outcomes.
Table 3

Pretest: High Definition Lesson Planning Format Rating Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Needs</th>
<th>Content/Methodology</th>
<th>Formative Evaluation</th>
<th>Summative Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

High Definition Lesson Planning Format Rating Scale:

1 = Not in line with Model or Well Below Standard  
2 = Needs Improvement  
3 = Meets Standard  
4 = Exceed Standard

An evaluation/assessment component is also necessary in order for the teacher to make changes in instruction when students do not meet expectations. The interpretation of the data further shows teachers need to construct lesson plans based on the needs of the students. In order to effectively teach students, teachers need to know how to construct a lesson plan (Persaud & Turner, 2002).

Teacher 1 and Teacher 5 were given professional development on the OBIA and Lesson Planning utilizing Higher Order Thinking Skills and Questions as the beginning of the treatment phase of the study. The data from the pre and posttest evaluation of all third grade teachers were compiled to determine improvement in delivery of instruction and effective lesson planning for student achievement. Professional development on the OBIA and the use of HOTS and HOTS questioning was ongoing throughout the study. Data for the MAP administrations of fall and spring were compiled to determine the effects of the treatment on student achievement through pre and posttest evaluation.
Reliability Summary

The reliability of the data was determined using the SPSS reliability procedure. A Paired Samples t Test, and An Analysis of Variance were used to reveal differences in gain scores. Pre and posttest MAP scores were analyzed to determine gain differences for the control and experimental groups. The data were further analyzed to determine the effects of SES, gender, and ethnicity on gain scores. Pre and Posttest results of teacher lesson plans as evaluated utilizing the HDLP evaluation format and teacher instructional delivery as evaluated utilizing the OBIA teacher evaluation instrument were analyzed to identify growth and improvement in teacher lesson plans and instructional delivery.

Description of Treatment

The grade level of third was selected for the study as research indicates future success of African-American students is often determined by reading levels of third grade students. According to Kunjufu (2007), governors review fourth-grade reading scores to determine prison growth validating the need for reading success of African-American students by the third grade.

In September of 2008, the researcher met with the third grade teachers to present the research proposal and enlist their assistance. The researcher and the teachers of the experimental group agreed to meet on a monthly basis to receive professional learning after the initial professional learning session to discuss the results of pretest evaluations.

All teachers in third grade received professional learning in the Balanced Reading framework for teaching reading during the months of August and September as a refresher from Balanced Reading professional during the previous school year. The
professional learning included the components of balanced reading and the instructional strategies for implementation within the classroom.

Third grade teachers were observed by the researcher during the third week of September using the OBIA to identify pretest data on teacher methodology and delivery of instruction. Results of the lesson plan evaluation based on the HDLP indicated areas of weakness. The researcher met with the teachers of the experimental group to go over the results of the pretest OBIA and HDLP evaluations the following week in an effort to work collaboratively in identifying the variables impacting meeting expectations and to identify strategies to counteract the areas of weakness. The HDLP and OBIA complement one another through the development of lessons based on higher order thinking skills, student social experiences and Bloom’s (1956) Taxonomy while the OBIA evaluates these areas through teacher instructional delivery.

Teachers in the experimental group (1 and 5) received additional individual professional learning on the HDLP and the OBIA during the professional learning session to discuss the results of the pretest observations as the two instruments were a part of the treatment. The HDLP professional learning consisted instruction in the use of Higher Order Thinking Skills and the incorporation of the levels of Bloom’s (1956) Taxonomy in lesson planning. Assisting the teachers with the understanding of the two instruments working together, expectations were set with the teachers of the experimental group.

Teachers of the experimental group were taken through the steps of identifying students within their classrooms by SES and reading levels using Fall MAP data and
using the information to develop effective lesson plans to meet student needs as well as the Georgia Performance Standards for third grade.

By taking the experimental group through the process of understanding the skills identified by the OBIA, teachers were able to design their small groups based on student need and demographics. During monthly planning sessions, the teachers of the experimental group reviewed lesson plans, formative assessments including teacher made test to raise the level of lesson planning making adjustments in lesson plans to further master the incorporation of higher order thinking skills and the levels of Bloom's (1956) Taxonomy to raise student achievement. Through referencing the evaluation instruments, the teachers were able to identify areas of continual weakness and develop strategies for improvement.

During the second week of December, the winter administration of MAP was administered to the third grade students. The winter administration provides teachers with growth information for the students allowing them to monitor the progress of the students and areas of weakness. The researcher met with the teachers of the experimental group to identify the students still projected to not meet expectations on the GCRCT and to identify reading strategies necessary for reading achievement. The professional learning session also identified new students to the grade level. This was necessary as the elementary school of the study experienced a level of transiency beginning in the fall and continuing through the spring administration in response to the economic conditions of parents losing jobs and homes. It was found that many students new to the school were a
part of families living with extended family members in the attendance zone of the school of research.

The researcher again met with the teachers of the experimental students the second week of January to revisit Bloom' Taxonomy, the use of higher order thinking skills in reading instruction and the incorporation of student social experiences in lesson planning and instructional strategies. The teachers were thanked again for participating in the research process and reminded of the need for consistency with the students in providing balanced reading instruction and developing high definition lesson plans.

A posttest evaluation of the experimental group using the OBIA was conducted in the Spring of 2009 (last week of February) prior to the Spring administration of the MAP test (first week of March). Lesson plans were evaluated during the spring (last week of February) to identify the level of lesson planning for student achievement as posttest data. The teachers of the experimental group through posttest data experienced growth by meeting expectations during the spring evaluation utilizing the HDLP.

The teachers were observed the last week of February using the OBIA instrument to identify posttest data on teacher instructional delivery. Posttest OBIA indicated growth with the teachers of the experimental group in the majority of the areas of the instrument. The data reveal growth but not a level of meeting/exceeding in all categories based on the posttest OBIA evaluation with both experimental teachers. The researcher met with the teachers to review the posttest data from the Spring posttest evaluation of HDLP and OBIA and what each may have done differently to indicate a level of mastery or meeting/exceeding expectations in each category according to the OBIA.
The planning session also included the review of student data from the Spring MAP administration and a discussion on the effects of the OBIA and HDLP as well as any weaknesses identified through the spring MAP posttest data.

Data prompted by this study will be utilized by the researcher in developing professional learning for the teachers in the use of HDLP and the effects of lesson planning combined with the OBIA teacher observation instrument. It should be noted the researcher is the principal of the school of this study as well as a member of a cohort at Clark Atlanta University.

Administrative Procedures

Upon approval from the members of the Clark Atlanta University School of Education Department of Educational Leadership Dissertation Committee, a letter was sent to the Department of Research and Accountability of the suburban school district of the intended study. The letter submitted requested permission to conduct the study and to use the data from this district. Permission was granted from the Office of Research and Accountability of the suburban school district. Consent was granted by the third grade teachers to participate in this research study. Student Demographics and student MAP scores were tabulated in an EXCEL spreadsheet and placed into a Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program for analysis. The results from the evaluation of the lesson plans using Pretest and posttest data were tabulated in a format using the HDLP and OBIA instruments. The results provided as group data, no person could be identified.
Working with Human Subjects

This study involved student MAP scores and teacher observation evaluation information. The information was collected, recorded and coded to ensure all participants and information remained confidential and anonymous. No information that could identify any individual or school was revealed in the study.
CHAPTER V
DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which student academic achievement could be explained while controlling for variables of lesson plan evaluation through the use of the High Definition Lesson Plan Evaluation (HDLP) format, teacher observation through the use of the Observation Based Instructional Assessment (OBIA), and Student Demographics. Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) norm-referenced test scores in reading. The data analysis represents a study of differences in gains. The data were analyzed using SPSS statistical testing of A Paired Samples t Test, and An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Data for the HDLP and the OBIA observation instrument were analyzed through pretest and posttest evaluations to determine growth in lesson planning and instructional delivery of teachers and the impact on student achievement.

Gain Comparison of MAP Reading Scores

A Paired Samples t Test was used to establish a baseline for both the experimental and control groups (Pretest). The Experimental MAP Fall administration (M = 197.69) and the Control MAP Fall administration (M = 198.22) showed no significant differences between the experimental group and control group in mean scores with a statistical level of .869 as referenced in Table 4.
Table 4

Paired Samples t Test Comparing the Fall 2008 MAP Scores for Experimental and Control Groups (Pretest)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Error</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall MAP Experimental</td>
<td>197.691</td>
<td>11.806</td>
<td>2.087</td>
<td>-.167</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>.869</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall MAP Control</td>
<td>198.22</td>
<td>12.425</td>
<td>2.196</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student performance levels on MAP for third grade (Level 1 = 191 and below; Level 2 = 192 to 200; Level 3 = 201 or above).

Results of the Paired Samples Test of the Experimental Group’s Fall and Spring MAP Scores revealed a significant difference in the mean scores, Fall (M = 198.62) and Spring (M = 203.72) as provided in Table 5. Spring MAP scores were significantly higher indicating the treatment seemed to work.

Table 5

Paired Samples t Test Comparing Experimental Group’s Fall and Spring MAP Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Error</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall MAP Experimental</td>
<td>198.62</td>
<td>11.534</td>
<td>2.142</td>
<td>-.3094</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall MAP Control</td>
<td>203.72</td>
<td>10.882</td>
<td>2.021</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student performance level on MAP for third grade (Level 1 = 191 and below; Level 2 = 192 to 200; Level 3 = 201 or above)
The results were further analyzed to determine the level of gain for both the Experimental (M = 5.19) and Control groups (M = 3.38). Means and standard deviations are provided in Table 6. The results show no significant difference in gain scores between the Experimental group and Control group.

Table 6

*Paired Samples t Test Comparing MAP Gain Scores for Experimental and Control Groups (Posttest)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Std. Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Error</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gain Score Experimental</td>
<td>5.19</td>
<td>9.355</td>
<td>1.835</td>
<td>.680</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>.503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gain Score Control</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>9.716</td>
<td>1.906</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student performance level on MAP for third grade (Level 1 = 191 and below; Level 2 = 192 to 200; Level 3 = 201 or above)

The Control group comparison results of Fall (M = 198.40) and Spring (M = 201.29) MAP scores indicated a significant difference however the gain in the control group was not as great as the experimental groups gain (M = 203.72). Table 7 indicates the gains of the Control group.
Table 7

Paired Samples t Test comparing Control Group's Fall and Spring MAP Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Error</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall MAP Control</td>
<td>198.40</td>
<td>11.596</td>
<td>1.674</td>
<td>-2.203</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>.033</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring MAP Control</td>
<td>201.29</td>
<td>10.825</td>
<td>1.563</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student performance level on MAP for third grade (Level 1 = 191 and below; Level 2 = 192 to 200; Level 3 = 201 or above)

Although there is a significant difference in the gain scores of both the experimental and control groups the results do not tell the direction of the differences.

The data was tested for effects to see if there were any Student Demographic effects. It was found that yes, there were significant differences based on Student Demographics.

The scores of the experimental group were further examined to see which of the Student Demographic factors might account for the differences. SES was used to test as a variable. The results found a significant difference in higher SES (SES 2) and lower SES (SES 1). Higher SES was doing better than lower SES. The difference was .021 which was significantly less than .005. Differences were determined by rank scores (1 = 10.50), (2 = 17.64) and level of significance (.021) provided in Table 8.
Table 8

ANOVAdifference in Student Reading Achievement (MAP) Based on SES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>Std Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SES1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10.50</td>
<td>94.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES2</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17.64</td>
<td>370.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>582.914</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>582.914</td>
<td>5.972</td>
<td>.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>2732.952</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>97.605</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3315.865</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Low SES (1 Free/Reduced Lunch); High SES (2 Paid Lunch)

The data were again tested for effects. Ethnicity was used to group the scores of the experimental group. When grouped by ethnicity, there was a significant difference between the groups: Group 2 (white students) were not doing as well as group 1 (African-American), and group 3 (other students). Differences were determined by mean scores (1 = 198.60), (2 = 209.43), and (3 = 199.00); level of significance (.018). The difference of .018 is significantly less than 0.05 (Table 9). However, when there are more than two scores as found in the Student Demographic Ethnicity, it is necessary to run another test to tell exactly where the significant differences lie.
Table 9

*Student Reading Performance Based on Ethnicity*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>Std Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity 1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>198.60</td>
<td>12.039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity 2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>209.43</td>
<td>7.154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity 3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>199.00</td>
<td>9.940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>203.73</td>
<td>10.693</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>852.038</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>426.019</td>
<td>4.669</td>
<td>.018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>2463.829</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>91.253</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3315.867</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ethnicity 1 (African-American); Ethnicity 2 (white); Ethnicity 3 (other)

The Scheffe’s test was used as a Post Hoc test after the ANOVA was run to determine the where the differences lay. The significant difference is between Ethnicity 1 and Ethnicity 2 as determined by the Scheffe’s test (Table 10).
Table 10

Scheffe's Test Difference in Student Demographics in Terms of Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity (I)</th>
<th>Ethnicity (J)</th>
<th>Mean Difference (I-J)</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-10.83*</td>
<td>3.955</td>
<td>.037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.40</td>
<td>4.933</td>
<td>.997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.83*</td>
<td>3.955</td>
<td>.037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.43</td>
<td>4.661</td>
<td>.101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>4.933</td>
<td>.997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>-10.43</td>
<td>4.661</td>
<td>.101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Ethnicity 1 (African-American); Ethnicity 2 (white); Ethnicity 3 (other)

Further testing of the data for effects when grouped by gender showed no significant difference with gender indicated by Table 11. Mean scores (1 = 204.07), (2 = 203.40), and level of significance of (.868) indicated there is not a significant difference as the acceptable level of significance for this study is (0.05).

Analysis of the posttest HDLP format indicated an improvement in lesson planning with a greater emphasis on the inclusion of higher order thinking skills and the identification of students and student needs. Student identification includes SES, reading level and other factors related to specific student needs as evidenced by Table 12.
### Table 11

**ANOVA Difference in Student Demographics in Terms of Gender**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>Std Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender 1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>204.07</td>
<td>9.632</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender 2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>203.40</td>
<td>11.993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>203.73</td>
<td>10.693</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>3.333</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.333</td>
<td>.028</td>
<td>.868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>3312.533</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>118.305</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>3315.867</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 12

**Posttest: High Definition Lesson Planning Format Rating Chart**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Needs</th>
<th>Content/</th>
<th>Formative</th>
<th>Summative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>Objectives</td>
<td>Materials</td>
<td>Methodology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

High Definition Lesson Planning Format Rating Scale:

1 = Not in line with Model or Well Below Standard  
2 = Needs Improvement  
3 = Meets Standard  
4 = Exceed Standard
Data analysis of the OBIA posttest evaluation revealed an improvement in teacher instructional delivery with the teachers of the experimental group. Teachers met expectations in each task area indicating growth in areas previously receiving a DNM rating (Table 13).

Table 13

*OBIA Posttest Results*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task Areas and Means</th>
<th>Third Grade</th>
<th>Third Grade</th>
<th>Third Grade</th>
<th>Third Grade</th>
<th>Third Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Procedural</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>DNM</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>DNM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Experiences</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>DNM</td>
<td>DNM</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Content</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relates concepts</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relates concepts to</td>
<td>DNM</td>
<td>DNM</td>
<td>DNM</td>
<td>DNM</td>
<td>DNM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>different subject areas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assesses</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>DNM</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance on Concepts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manages Social Behavior Positively</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The data were analyzed to determine the level of significance of each research question. The extent to which student academic achievement could be explained while controlling for variables of High Definition Lesson Plan Evaluation (HDLP), Student Demographics and teacher instructional delivery as evaluated by the Observation Based Instructional Assessment (OBIA) and the relationship between the independent and dependent variables, research questions developed for this study were answered using the results of the analysis of the MAP pretest and posttest data.

**RQ1:** Is there a significant difference between the experimental group and the control group using MAP test scores?

A Paired Samples t Test was used to determine the level of gain between the experimental and control group based on the Fall 2008 MAP scores. The gain score for the experimental group ($M = 5.19$) and the control group ($M = 3.38$) with a level of
significance of .503 (see Table 4). The accepted level of significance for this study is 0.05. There is no significant difference between the experimental group and the control group in score gains in reading. Therefore, the research question can be answered as negative.

RQ2: Is there a significant difference between posttest scores for the experimental group and pretest scores for the experimental group?

A Paired Samples $t$ Test was used to determine the level of gain between the posttest ($M = 203.72$) and pretest scores ($M = 198.62$) for the experimental group (see Table 5). The level of significance was .004 indicating a significant difference in score gain. Therefore there is a significant difference between posttest and pretest scores for the experimental group. The research question can be answered as positive.

RQ3: Does SES have any effect on the reading achievement of students in the experimental group?

An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to determine the effect of SES on the reading achievement of students in the experimental group. Group 1 (SES) was determined to have an effect on the reading achievement of students with a level of significance of .021 below a significance level of 0.05, and a mean rank of 10.50 (see Table 8); mean score were 197.00 and 206.62 for Group 1 (Low SES) and Group 2 (High SES), respectively. Therefore, there is a significant difference of SES on the achievement of students. The research question can be answered as positive.

RQ4: Does Ethnicity have any effect on the reading achievement of students in the experimental group?
An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to determine the effect of Ethnicity on the reading achievement of students in the experimental group. Ethnicity Group 2 (white) was determined to have an effect on the reading achievement of students with a significance of .018 and a mean rank of 209.43 (see Table 9). Mean scores were 198.60 and 209.43 for Group 1 (African-American) and Group 2 (whites), respectively. Therefore there is a significant difference of Ethnicity on the achievement of students. The research question can be answered as positive.

RQ5: Does Gender have any effect on the reading achievement of students in the experimental group?

An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to determine the effect of Gender on the reading achievement of students in the experimental group. The data revealed no effect of gender on reading achievement of students based on a significance level of .868 and a mean rank of (203.73) (see Table 11). Mean scores were 204.67 for Group 1 (females) and 203.40 for males. The research question can be answered as negative.

RQ6: Does the treatment based on the use of the HDLP and OBIA make a difference in reading achievement based on Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) test scores?

A Paired Samples t Test was used in determining the gain between the experimental pretest and posttest and control group pretest and posttest. The gain score for the experimental group posttest ($M = 203.72$) and the control group posttest ($M = 201.29$), (Table 7) indicate in both cases a significant difference. The experimental group indicates a stronger difference between the experimental group and the control group in
mean score gains in reading indicating the use of the HDLP and OBIA had an impact on score gain. Therefore, the research question can be answered as positive.
CHAPTER VI

FINDINGS, DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which student academic achievement could be explained while controlling for variables of lesson plan evaluation through the use of the High Definition Lesson Plan Evaluation (HDLP) format, teacher observation through the use of the Observation Based Instructional Assessment (OBIA), and Student Demographics. The data collected on teacher observation, lesson plan evaluation and student demographics were from third grade classes in a suburban elementary school.

Data analysis is related to the six research questions as identified in chapter one of this study. The SPSS statistical tools used to analyze the data were: A Paired Samples t Test, and an Analysis of Variance. Research questions were answered based on the results obtained through the analysis. The level of significance used in this study for data analysis was 0.05.

Pretest and Posttest data from the HDLP evaluation tool was analyzed to determine growth by the teachers of the experimental group in the area of lesson planning to include growth in the use of higher order thinking skills in lessons plans by the teachers of the experimental group. The theory of the lesson planning format emphasizes the teacher preparation for the students and sets expectations for the students. If the
teacher delivers at a higher order thinking skills level, the students will most likely perform at a higher order thinking skills level both in the classroom and on standardized tests. The same is true for lower order thinking skills levels of instruction. Bloom’s (1956) Taxonomy can be utilized to improve higher order thinking skills and to assist students by re-constructing textbook knowledge to lead them to a higher level of thinking. Bloom’s also allows the knowledge to be broken down into parts for greater understanding.

Pretest and posttest data on teacher instructional delivery as evaluated by the OBIA teacher observation instrument was also analyzed to determine growth in teacher instructional delivery to include the incorporation of higher order thinking skills and questions with the teachers of the experimental group. The OBIA teacher observation instrument extends the lessons developed by the HDLP format to allow the teacher to incorporate higher order thinking skills into the delivery of instruction.

Research Question 1 can be answered in the negative. There is no statistical difference in gain between the experimental and control group MAP scores in reading.

Research Question 2 can be answered in the positive. There is a significant statistical difference in score gain between posttest and pretest scores for the experimental group in reading.

Research Question 3 can be answered in the positive. There is a significant effect of SES on the achievement of students in reading.

Research Question 4 can be answered in the positive. There is a significant effect of Ethnicity on the achievement of students in reading.
Research Question 5 can be answered in the negative. There no significant effect of gender on the achievement of students in reading.

Research Question 6 can be answered in the positive. There is a higher statistical difference between the experimental group and the control group in score gains in reading indicating the use of the HDLP and OBIA had an impact on score gain.

Based on the results in score gains, the treatment worked. The analysis of data also indicated the effects of SES and Ethnicity on reading achievement score gains. The higher SES students scored at a higher level than the lower SES students as evidenced by an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Ethnicity analysis indicated white students scored lower than African-American and other ethnicities in reading based on an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) utilizing the MAP scores of the Experimental group. Gender did not indicate a significant difference in reading achievement of score gain based on an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

The lesson plans of the experimental teachers improved with the incorporation of higher level thinking skills and real life experiences as evidenced through the posttest evaluation of the teachers of the experimental group using the HDLP tool. Teacher instruction and delivery improved for the experimental teachers based on the results of the posttest using the OBIA evaluation form.

Discussion

Closing the achievement gap of African-American students continues to challenge educators. The significant findings of the research indicate the use of HDLP and teacher methodology/delivery as evidenced through the use of the OBIA and a balanced reading
framework for teaching reading is effective for students, especially African-American students. Both the experimental and control groups showed significant gains through posttest data. Student Demographics of SES and Ethnicity were also found to impact reading achievement of students. Student Demographic of SES revealed low SES students achieved gains at a lower rate than students of a high SES. Student Demographic of Ethnicity identified Ethnicity 2 (white) students achieved a lower level of gain than African-American students. These findings are significant as all third grade teachers received professional learning on reading instruction through the balanced reading format further indicating the balanced reading format is effective in teaching reading to students. However, African-American students had greater gains than white students further indicating the balanced reading format is an effective method of teaching reading to African-American students as is the use of HDLP and teacher evaluation based on the components of the OBIA including the incorporation of higher order thinking skills and student social experiences as they relate to content knowledge.

The findings also indicate low SES achieving a lower level of gain perhaps indicating a lower level of social experiences at home and the lack of availability of resources such as books, computers, and educational level of parents thereby limiting student learning assistance. Low SES students did however make gains indicating the treatment of the use of HDLP and teacher evaluation based on the OBIA teacher evaluation tool and the incorporation of higher order thinking skills and social experiences did impact student achievement although at a lower level of gain.
The lesson plans of the third grade teachers improved as they incorporated higher level thinking skills and real life experiences. Teacher reading instruction using the OBIA evaluation form showed improvement in the delivery of instruction. Given both groups made gains with the experimental group making stronger gains, the difference could be ascribed to the effects of the OBIA.

According to Persaud and Turner (2002), teachers need to know the knowledge taught to students in a variety of forms. Knowledge forms of literal meaning, inferential meaning, lower and higher order thinking skills, related dispositions and parallel meanings in student experiences are critical areas to effectively plan for student achievement. Teachers should plan for student social experiences, prior knowledge in the content area and cross content areas incorporating higher level thinking skills.

Persaud and Turner (2002) state that the purpose of teacher evaluation is to determine if the teacher planning process is valid in terms of delivery and students’ outcomes and adequately controlling for socioeconomic status (SES) and learning styles factors. The data indicate the HDLP and the OBIA were effective as a treatment in raising student achievement suggesting effective lesson planning and instructional methods based on higher order thinking skills, SES knowledge of students, prior social experiences and prior content knowledge exposure affects student achievement and the delivery of content knowledge.

The balanced reading framework requires teachers to instruct reading through teacher directed small groups and having the students to participate only in reading activities during a 90-minute reading block. The small groups are determined by the
reading levels of the students with teacher instruction on skills specific to the level and needs of the small group. During the 90-minute period, the students work with the teacher for approximately 20 to 30 minutes then rotate to another component of balance reading. Small group instruction unlike whole group instruction where the teacher instructs the entire class at the same time, allows the teacher to focus on specific needs of students. Instruction at the reading level of students allows them the opportunity to receive more individualized instruction while reading ability level material rather than getting lost in the instruction of a large group. Often students in large groups hide by not answering questions or participating prohibiting the teacher from actually knowing the ability level of students. Although student reading achievement grades indicate low performance, unless opportunities are available for the teacher to really know the skill level and skill deficit of the students, he/she is unable to meet specific reading skill needs.

Small cooperative learning groups have been shown to be an effective instructional strategy for African-American students. Wilson-Jones and Caston (2004) found that cooperative learning was a primary factor that promoted the academic success of African-American students in a study of a rural Mississippi school system.

In this study, Student Demographics of SES and Ethnicity were significantly related to student achievement in reading. SES is the socioeconomic status of students as determined by their free/reduced lunch status. Students with a higher SES do not receive free/reduced lunch indicating a higher family income.

SES findings revealed higher SES students made greater gains than lower SES. Reasons for the difference may include limited early learning experiences by the parents.
Early learning activities experienced by children are often the foundation for learning. Hess and Shipman (1956) in a study of early socialization of children and their cognitive experiences found that the social system and the structure of the family shape communication and language.

According to Orr (2003), academic achievement can be affected by wealth, which is an indicator of both financial and human capital, as well as help to explain the gap in black-white test scores. Analyses reveal that wealth affects achievement through its effect on the amount of cultural capital to which a child is exposed. Because blacks often times have substantially less wealth than whites, wealth can help to explain a portion of the racial achievement gap. Having less wealth, lower SES families may not find books a priority purchase with limited to funds.

Kunjufu (1988) states that an unacceptable percentage of African-Americans believe they are inferior to Caucasians in education and economics. African-American students tend to have many social inequalities to deal with in their pursuit of academic achievement. Quite often African-American students live in single-parent households and in poor neighborhoods.

According to Persaud and Turner (2002), teachers need to know the knowledge taught to students in a variety of forms. Knowledge forms of literal meaning, inferential meaning, lower and higher order thinking skills, related dispositions and parallel meanings in student experiences are critical areas to effectively plan for student achievement. Teachers should plan for student social experiences, prior knowledge in the content area and cross content areas incorporating higher level thinking skills.
Persaud and Turner (2002) state that the purpose of teacher evaluation is to determine if the teacher planning process is valid in terms of delivery and students' outcomes and adequately controlling for socioeconomic status (SES) and learning styles factors. The data indicate the HDLP and the OBIA were effective as a treatment in raising student achievement suggesting effective lesson planning and instructional methods based on higher order thinking skills, SES knowledge of students, prior social experiences and prior content knowledge exposure affects student achievement and the delivery of content knowledge.

The gains of the African-American students reveal although SES impacts student achievement, reading taught in a small leveled group with opportunities to receive direct instruction directly impacts student achievement of African-American students as does lesson plans that incorporate higher order thinking skills and real life experiences and effective teacher instructional delivery. Small direct instruction is based on the development of instructionally sound lesson plans taking into consideration student social experiences, content knowledge, higher order thinking skills and higher order questions to students. The use of HDLP and OBIA evaluations assist teachers with the necessary planning tools to deliver content rich lessons to students for reading achievement success.

Implications

The implications of this research for administrators is the importance of differentiating instruction through effective lesson planning to meet the needs of students and the incorporation of higher order thinking skills and questions during reading instruction based on student readiness, teaching reading strategies and skills, and
providing multiple opportunities for reading to promote student achievement in reading. Having a consistent reading block of time to implement the balanced reading format is critical in providing the various opportunities for reading as well as effective lesson monitoring and teacher observation.

It is also critical for administrators to monitor teacher reading lesson plans for the inclusion of higher order thinking skills and real life experiences. It is imperative the teacher know his/her students and their needs. In order to know the students, teachers must create flexible lesson plans just as they create flexible groups. On a weekly basis, the teachers must evaluate the students within the class and develop lessons based on student skill level, SES, gender, ethnicity, and any other factors that may contribute to reading achievement in students and make the necessary adjustments for the students. Administrators must monitor the process through lesson plan checks to ensure adequate planning for instruction and meet with the teachers to ensure adjustments are being made to the instructional adjustments. This information along with ongoing formative assessments will provide necessary data to plan effectively for the student reading achievement.

As an administrator, it is important to understand the effects of SES whether in a title one school or not. The impact of low SES often prohibits parental support with work or the opportunity to purchase books or even to be able to read to the students. A support system of volunteers may be necessary to further reduce the small groups to provide almost one on one instruction for students well below grade level. Teachers need to address lower SES students as the research indicates lower SES students receive less or
fewer higher order thinking skills than higher SES. Since lower SES students often come to school behind due to the lack of early learning opportunities, it is imperative the teachers adjust to give lower SES students an equal playing field for learning. The data support lower SES needs more instructional attention.

The use of effective lesson planning is critical to student achievement in reading. Based on the use of the HDLP format, real life experiences coupled with higher order questions and identification of student needs allows the classroom teacher to continuously revise instruction based on the needs of the students as evidenced through student responses and opinions as related to real life experiences. Teachers will need to plan instruction to provide opportunities for lower SES students to build on their experiences moving them to higher SES experiences through examples and discussions. Teachers will also need to meet weekly as a grade level to discuss student achievement and the needs of the students. Grade level chairs will need to be trained to assisting the teachers with developing lesson plans for the grade level and classrooms to meet the academic needs of the students based on student needs.

An emphasis on consistent Balanced Reading instructional methods is necessary to ensure all classrooms provide reading instruction specific to effective Balanced Reading instructional methods. When teaching reading, it is important that the teachers provide reading instruction to students at their respective levels benchmark testing the students to continue moving them to higher readability levels. Teachers also need to identify social experiences of students and identify reading material that reflects the social experiences of students. This would possibly impact lower SES students moving
them to a level of processing instruction through experiences by meeting the students where they are taking them to a higher level.

Cultural proficiency to assist the teachers with meeting instructional needs of students is necessary for an understanding of the students taught. The data revealed African-American students made greater gains than white students supporting the need to adjust instructional strategies for students. Small group instruction appears to be a strategy that is effective for African-American students as the gain was greater with this ethnicity. Instructional strategies for all students need to be identified to ensure reading success of all ethnicities.

The findings can be controlled at the local school level through adjustments in instructional strategies and lesson planning. Adjustments in instructional strategies to include professional learning for teachers, grade level chairs, assistant principals and school counselors in HDLP and the use of the OBIA in raising the level of instruction and delivery within the classroom. The findings can also be controlled at the county level as school systems are becoming increasingly diverse and the need for cultural diversity increases in its importance. The findings can further be controlled at the county level through professional learning to principals, instructional coordinators and coaches on higher order thinking skills, the effects of SES and effective delivery of instruction based on the needs of the students.
Recommendations

Reading proficiency is much like a key unlocking a door. Once opened, students are able to maneuver through other academic areas. Recommendations for administrators and future research interest:

- The use of the OBIA as an evaluative tool by administrators for effective instructional delivery including the incorporation of higher order thinking skills, incorporating prior content knowledge, formative assessing for achievement, the incorporation of hands-on activities and technology.

- The use of the HDLP format for effective lesson planning for student achievement. Professional Learning to include instruction in the effects of SES, gender, ethnicity, and how to incorporate these specifics into the lesson planning for student achievement in reading.

- Professional Learning for grade level chairs to effectively lead teachers in grade level meetings in the identification of students below grade level and on developing lesson plans based on the identification of students and their needs.

- Observation of teacher balanced reading instructional strategies to ensure consistency among all teachers. Differences in Balanced Reading instructional methods were not assessed which may have influenced the effectiveness of the treatment as Balanced Reading instructional methods may be different from third grade class to third grade class.
• Professional Learning for teachers in the following areas: Bloom’s (1956) Taxonomy, the effects of SES on student achievement, the effects of gender on student achievement and the effects of ethnicity on student achievement.

• The inclusion of Benchmark assessment results to monitor student progress.

• Teacher Demographics to determine if experience, gender or ethnicity of teachers impacts reading achievement.

• Further study in the effectiveness of Balanced Reading instruction and the extent of how well it works is needed.
APPENDIX A

High Definition Lesson Planning Form

Please rate the weekly lesson plan using the following scale:

1 = Not in line with Model, or Below Standard;  
2 = Needs Improvement;  
3 = Meets Standard;  
4 = Above Standard;  
5 = Well Above Standard

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson Planning</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Needs Assessment: Assesses Performance &amp; Research</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Identifies variation in students’ performance, or identifies number of students below expectation, meet expectation, etc. (NCATE-PSC)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Identifies weak concept areas, etc. (NCATE-PSC)</td>
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<td>3 Identifies causes for failure: Teaching Methods &amp; Materials used; SES-social conditions, learning styles, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Objectives: Outcomes</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Stated to improve weak concept areas</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Stated to improve higher order thinking skills -Bloom’s</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 Stated in terms of helping low achievers to improve on outcomes</td>
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<tr>
<td>C. Content/Materials</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7 Contains/Identifies basic knowledge in content</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Contains/Identifies higher order thinking skills-Blooms in content</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Indicates/demonstrates facts ideas related to students’ contextual experiences, learning level, learning styles, related knowledge, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>D. Delivery-transaction process</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10 Specifies explanations and questions to convey lower order text meanings in relation to students’ experiences</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11 Specifies explanations and questions to probe higher order thinking skills of text in relation to students’ experiences</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 Specifies explanations to show how students’ answers will be utilized to re-construct textbook knowledge (Constructivism)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix A (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson Planning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E. Formative evaluation for feedback in teaching process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Specifies questions to assess performance on full range of Bloom’s taxonomy &amp; Dispositions as identified in objectives/tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Provides questions to assess performance on full range of Bloom’s taxonomy if experiential and/or hands-on or group work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Provides questions to assess performance on full range of Bloom’s taxonomy in relation to experiences simulated in use of technology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>F. Summative evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16 Multiple choice items, true-false items, or short sentence completion tests are constructed based on content as taught and measured on full range of Bloom’s taxonomy &amp; dispositions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Essay, or project assignments are constructed to cover full range of the Bloom’s taxonomy &amp; dispositions as stated in objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Results on assignments are utilized in needs assessment above</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

19. (a) School/Admin level _______ (b) Grade Team Level _______

20. Time: (a) Pre-trained _______ (b) Field applied-1 _______

21. School SES/FRL: _______

22. Grade teacher Code _______ School Code__________
## APPENDIX B

### OBIA System (Simple Form)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate ID/Name: ____________________________</th>
<th>Department Program ____________________________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade Level: _____</td>
<td>Subject area: _______</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Teacher Task Areas & Means

**Teacher Task Areas:** Teacher & Students
Explains, asks questions, uses answers in each area:

**Rating:**
- 0 = Not observed;
- 1 = 1-2 times;
- 2 = 3-4 times;
- 3 = 5-6 times
- 4 = 7-8 times;
- 5 = 9 plus

### Teacher and Candidate/STUDENT OUTCOMES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Task Areas:</th>
<th>Teacher &amp; Students Explains, asks questions, uses answers in each area:</th>
<th>SPSS EXCEL Code</th>
<th>Lower Order Thinking: Recalling knowledge, paraphrasing</th>
<th>Higher Order Think Skills: Application, Analysis, synthesis, evaluation, dispositions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. <strong>Procedural Communication:</strong></td>
<td>Intention of instruction and procedural steps: Explains, asks questions, uses answers</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. <strong>Uses student social experiences:</strong></td>
<td>Explains concepts in relation to students' experiences; utilizes questions to elicit students' responses in alignment with higher thinking skills in correspondence with text; uses answers to build the text concepts.</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. <strong>Uses Curriculum content:</strong></td>
<td>Paraphrases textbook knowledge (Lower order); or Higher order: Uses questions &amp; answers to analyze (constructivist), apply to different situations, create inferences, compare ideas, consider fairness, equity, and change issues</td>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TEACHER SPSS EXCEL Code

- **0** = Not observed
- **1** = 1-2 times
- **2** = 3-4 times
- **3** = 5-6 times
- **4** = 7-8 times
- **5** = 9 plus

### Lower Order Thinking

- **0** = Not observed
- **1** = 1-2 times
- **2** = 3-4 times
- **3** = 5-6 times
- **4** = 7-8 times
- **5** = 9 plus

### Higher Order Think Skills

- **Application**
- **Analysis**
- **Synthesis**
- **Evaluation**
- **Dispositions**
Appendix B (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Task Areas &amp; Means</th>
<th>TEACHER and Candidate/STUDENT OUTCOMES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Task Areas: Teacher &amp; Students Explains, asks questions, uses answers in each area: Rating: 0 = Not observed; 1 = 1-2 times; 2 = 3-4 times; 3 = 5-6 times 4 = 7-8 times; 5 = 9 plus</td>
<td>SPSS EXCEL Code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Relates concepts to previous lessons - in same subject area Explains, asks questions and uses answers to link current lesson to previous (linking, webbing)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Relates knowledge to different subjects Explains, asks questions and uses answers to link current lesson to different subjects’ concepts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Assesses performance on concepts: Uses questions to identify meanings to be tested; Uses opinions to explore possible answers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Manages Social Behavior (Positive): If using criticisms, etc. to control (0); Using praise, eye contact, proximity, dialogue to manage (1-5)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rate an act = Complete statement with meaning. Yes and No are complete meanings
15. Check Technology: 1. NO ____; 2. YES ___
16. Check Groups, hands-on, role play: NO ____; YES ___
17. Class ability: Low ____; Middle/High ___
18. Free Lunch Percent ___
19. Class Size: Below 20 ____; 21-23 ____; 24-26 ____; 27++ ___
21. Pre-Test = 1; Post-Test = 2
REFERENCES


