IS THE DEVELOPMENTAL READING ASSESSMENT (DRA2) A PREDICTOR
OF SUCCESS ON THE 3RD GRADE TEXAS ASSESSMENT OF KNOWLEDGE
AND SKILLS (TAKS) READING TEST?

A Doctoral Thesis Presented to the
Faculty of the College of Education
University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

by

Nancy Lee Lewin

May, 2011

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the children who are impacted by the decisions of adults,

the teachers who inspire their students through caring hearts and conscientious

implementation of tailored plans.

I dedicate this study to those who must lead with courage.

I dedicate the ideas in this work to "The Team" and those who never ceased to

believe in me, (D. P., D.C., L.E., A.M., D.H., T.H., L.M., S.N., and P.H.).

Debbie, you will always be my rock!

I dedicate the will to achieve to my siblings and my parents.

Maggie Cuellar, thank you for your inspirational leadership!

Mom, thank you for instilling the characteristics necessary for accomplishing my

goals and teaching me the difference between empathy and sympathy.

Dad, thank you for modeling the "spirit of adventure" and the "joy of living."

Linda, Alma, and Diana, my sisters, you always inspire me, you bring

steadfastness to my heart and we will always share the unbreakable bond of

sisters.

My special children, Linnea, Reneé, and David, you make life a more joyous

adventure.

Dave, my husband, thank you for always letting me be me, for being my soul

mate and most of all, for loving me with all that you are.

Thanks be to GOD for all the blessings that have been and will be bestowed upon

me.

IS THE DEVELOPMENTAL READING ASSESSMENT (DRA2) A PREDICTOR OF SUCCESS ON THE 3RD GRADE TEXAS ASSESSMENT OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS (TAKS) READING TEST?

An Abstract
of A Doctoral Thesis Presented to the
Faculty of the College of Education
University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

by

Nancy Lee Lewin

May, 2011

Lewin, Nancy L. Is the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA2) A Predictor of

Success on the 3rd Grade Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS)

Reading Test? Unpublished Doctor of Education Dissertation, University of

Houston, April, 2011.

Abstract

Accountability for student achievement is urgent business in the world of

education today. Within Texas, strict accountability measures have been in place since

1980. Various accountability assessments have moved schools through new tests and

testing procedures meant to raise the assessment standard. At present, students take their

first Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) tests in Reading in third grade.

Prior to Spring 2009, students had three opportunities to pass the reading portion of the

TAKS test. Third grade students who did not pass the reading portion of the assessment

were retained in the third grade. The limitation of one administration of the reading

TAKS test as of the Spring of 2009 is that it does not allow for feedback toward progress

in passing the reading portion of the test. Specifically, the elimination of these prior test

opportunities means that educators no longer have access to a Confidential Student

Report of student performance. This report provided formative information to use in

modifying instruction for students. Districts have turned to the use of other reading tests

to determine student progress in years prior to TAKS testing. The (DRA2) is presently

used by many districts to determine a student's reading level. The purpose of this study is

to determine whether the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA2), is a predictor of

success on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) reading test. The

three subtests of the DRA2 provide information on a student's reading level,

comprehension level, and fluency rate. This study researched the effectiveness of this test as a predictor for the performance on the 3rd Grade TAKS Reading test through a multiple regression analysis. A multiple regression analysis was conducted and served to determine that the DRA2 subtests can serve as a performance predictor to the 3rd Grade TAKS Reading test. The three subtests include (1) DRA level, (2) fluency, and (3) comprehension. The multiple regression analysis showed that the (1) DRA level subtest was a significant predictor of outcome for the 3rd Grade TAKS Reading test. Decisions based on reading level can drive instruction with direction toward success on the 3rd Grade TAKS Reading test. Consideration for effective use of instruction time, instructional decisions and fiduciary expenditures are impacted by this factor.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Accountability for student achievement is urgent business in the world of education today. More specifically, academic growth is measured for the sake of accountability through student assessments in order to hold individual schools and states accountable for overall student performance. The first emerging actions toward school reform were initiated by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. An important goal of this legislation was that all students would be able to read by the end of third grade (BUSH TEA). Even considering the ever-present looming news of schools failing to adequately educate or to close persistent achievement gaps, the continuous flurry of reform has yet to ensure that no children are, indeed, being left behind.

In the state of Texas, a particularly rigid system of accountability has been in place since the 1980s. The various accountability assessments have cycled educators and students through novel tests meant to raise the assessment standard. In particular, the tests in Texas have evolved from the TABS (1980-1985), TEAMS (1986-1990), TAAS (1990-2002) and, presently, the TAKS test (since 2003), and the soon-to-be STAAR test (scheduled to be administered in 2012) (SB1031, 2009). The STAAR name will be used for the twelve end-of-course assessments mandated by SB 1031 in 2007 and the new grade 3-8 assessments mandated by House Bill 3 in the 2009 legislative session.

Currently, students complete their first Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) tests in the third grade. For the sake of accountability, children are assessed and measured through TAKS assessments in both Reading and Math. As of the spring of 2009, Texas Legislation instituted a mandate called the Student Success

Initiative. This legislation mandated that students who failed the third-grade TAKS Reading test would be retained in the third grade.

For roughly six years, from 2003-2009, students received three opportunities to pass the Reading TAKS test. The first two scores made available some necessary student data on a Confidential Student Report (CSR). This CSR report provided information based on four major areas: (1) Basic Understanding, (2) Literary Elements (3) Strategies to analyze text, and (4) Apply critical thinking skills. Subsequently, if the student passed then test, no further test would be administered. However, if the student did not pass on the first opportunity assessment, then the second TAKS Reading test was administered on the second administration date. The CSR data from the first assessment was used to make changes in instruction for the students who did not pass the test. If the second test was not passed, the CSR data for the second administration then provided information on progress toward achieving success on third administration of the Reading TAKS test. If the second test was not passed, then a third administration of the Reading TAKS test was necessary.

The data provided after the first two TAKS Reading tests allowed for the assessments to be used as formative assessments. Targeted instructional changes could then be made to adhere to the development of the mandated Accelerated Instructional Plan (AIP). The AIP is an individual plan intended to accelerate learning for each student who is not successful in passing the test. The plan allows for targeted reading interventions that will increase the score on the following administration of the TAKS Reading assessment. For those students not successful on the first two administrations,

the third and final administration was then, for all intents and purposes, a summative assessment.

The final passing scores for students are used in the calculation of the School Rating by the State of Texas. From 2003 to 2009, all three test administrations provided scores that were used to determine a schools accountability rating. This differed from the 2010 administration in which the first two administration passing rates were used in determining a school's TEA accountability rating. Even though students may have successfully passed the third administration, eliminating the use of scores for any student who passed the TAKS Reading test on the third administration meant that any passing scores were not taken into account in determining a school's rating.

Prior to the spring of 2010, students who did not pass the required Reading TAKS test were in jeopardy of grade level retention. Starting in 2004-05, students who failed the third grade or the fifth grade TAKS were automatically retained. By the 2006-07 school year, students in third, fifth, and seventh grades were then automatically retained (TEA, 2003).

While the policy stipulates that final decisions regarding promotion will be made by a school "grade placement committee," it requires that only a unanimous vote by the committee members (i.e., the campus principal, the teacher, and a parent) can prevent retention. It is inevitable that the great majority of students failing the TAKS will be retained. Fortunately, as of the spring of 2010, retention for non-passers is no longer required for a student in the third grade. Given the negative factors associated with grade level retention, students are luckily no longer suffering the consequences of high-stakes

testing within the third grade. However, the issue raises another worrisome issue that should be considered.

In previous years, each testing opportunity provided guidance as to how close a student came to passing the test. This autonomy gave teachers an opportunity to accelerate instruction in the areas of weakness. Furthermore, providing only one opportunity to pass the test removes the ability to use the first two administrations as formative assessments for those students who are unsuccessful. Students in third grade now only have one opportunity to pass the TAKS Reading test. Therefore, the elimination of two of the test administrations consequently removes the opportunity to work on improving a score that becomes attached a student's academic record and a school's accountability rating.

Each individual public school in Texas is measured by the results of student progress using the Texas Accountability Rating System. Now that third graders only have one opportunity to take the TAKS Reading test, and the first two test administrations are not available to provide formative assessment data, the passing rate used to determine the school's rating is taken from the first "at bat." An important question must be asked if the TAKS test is only used as a summative assessment: How can progress with regard toward success be monitored for the one-shot assessment? It can be likened to getting only one "at bat."

The state of Texas provides TAKS released tests. The released tests are the TAKS tests that have been administered to students in previous years. A previously administered TAKS test is usually released to the public the year following its administration. A major obstacle in using a released TAKS test is that the released tests

change from year to year, which does not provide for a reliable outcome indicator toward mastery. The released assessments can be used as somewhat of a formative measure for a student who performs well on the released test and would generally perform well on the TAKS test to be administered at end of the school year. This would be a reliable use of released TAKS tests; however, the assessment includes field test questions which may or may not be used in subsequent TAKS administrations.

A secondary obstacle to consider is the issue of availability. The number of released TAKS tests available with which to practice is limited to the number of assessments that have been previously administered at that particular grade level in the state of Texas. Multiple uses of the same assessments to check for progress ultimately create the added issue of validity as well. These released TAKS tests are public information available for preview to any parent, teacher, or student. If a released TAKS test is used more than once as practice, or if parents and/or teachers have exposed the children to the contents of the test, the data derived would then not be valid to use to measure progress or predict the success of a student taking a future TAKS test.

The outcome for students who have seen the test or test items would, thus, be compromised and the use of these results would not be valid to use to monitor progress or predict the possible success or failure on a future TAKS test. Then, what formative assessments can a school use to monitor progress toward TAKS Reading success? Success in any assessment includes the use of benchmark formative assessments to gauge and monitor growth in progress toward the summative assessment.

The gasoline gauge analogy describes the use of benchmarks. Just as one might view an automobile's gasoline gauge to check on progress of a full gas tank, one can

"gauge" a formative assessment used to measure the goal of reaching increased student progress. If a gasoline gauge is removed from an automobile, then how do you know when you have consumed the contents of the gas tank? Similarly, if formative assessments are not used, student progress cannot be monitored adequately in order to guide them further down the road of assessment success. What gauges can educators use to assist students in reaching the destination point of passing the 3rd grade TAKS Reading test? What formative assessment might be utilized by educators working with such children? Is there an assessment that can be used that would be a valid predictor toward passing the third grade TAKS reading test?

Statement of the Problem

Considering the high-stakes assessment mandates required within the state of Texas, the formative assessment is imperative for monitoring student progress. Furthermore, formative assessments provide an opportunity to not only monitor progress, but also to make necessary decisions for appropriate student intervention. A list of recommended progress assessments provided by the Texas Commissioner of Education as required by the Texas Education Agency lists the following assessments: Texas Progress Reading Inventory (TPRI), Developmental Reading Inventory, Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), or an alternate research based assessment must be used for monitoring student progress in Kindergarten through grade three. In the case of reading skills and comprehension level, varied formative reading assessments are used at the elementary school level across the state. The formative assessment to be used is left up to the school district. In the case of the school district

used for the purposes of this research, the Developmental Reading Assessment 2 (DRA2) is administered twice a year in 3rd grade, beginning and end of the school year.

When a formative assessment is selected by the school district, progress monitoring effectiveness should be expected. The expenses associated with purchasing assessment materials is something that makes the selection of a viable predictor toward student success on the TAKS Reading test an important element in decision making. Given the current financial and budgetary hardships plaguing the nation, the use of a reliable and valid formative assessment would be fiscally prudent in order to make sure that the dollars used per student are optimal. Accountability also requires that educational leaders analyze their present practices with regard to the validity and reliability of the use of our current formative assessments. Again, such informed practice will better ensure that we are not wasting valuable instructional time and money.

Teachers spend a great deal of time testing and assessing their students. The sought-after assessment data is used to make necessary instructional decisions and changes for students. While teachers can select their own assessments, in this research piece, the DRA2 assessment is already required by the district. Thus, instructional time could be used more efficiently if the DRA2 data can also give guidance regarding the outcome of the TAKS Reading test, as well as meeting the state expectation of merely reporting student reading levels. Teachers and students would both benefit from data that provides any link between the DRA2 and the TAKS Reading test. By using the data that is already required, instructional time would be more efficient.

Retention is a serious action to take when a student in an SSI year does not pass a state test. Fortunately, in 2010, third graders are not held to the Student Success Initiative

(SSI) of retention due to TAKS failure. These students, however, will face the TAKS Reading and Math assessments and will have to meet the SSI requirement of passing both evaluations in order to be promoted when they get to the fifth grade. Students in the fifth grade who do not pass the Reading and Math TAKS tests are retained upon recommendation by the Grade Placement Committee that convenes after the failure of these assessments at an SSI year. As we strive to meet the Texas state expectation that all students will read "on grade level" by the time they complete their third grade year (TEA, 2002), we must use formative assessments that assist educators in the monitoring of student growth and predicting the success rates of third grade students prior to the single administration of the TAKS reading test. If a valid and reliable formative assessment is found, then more assured passing rates can be improved. Furthermore, schools can, thus, avoid falling into the cataclysm of "low performing" – thereby avoiding serious negative consequences.

In order to avoid increased numbers of student retentions in any grade, effective formative assessments must be used. These formative assessments provide guidance for planning and for providing intervention before a student must meet the consequence of retention in subsequent grades previously noted (TEA, 2004). A parent or guardian may appeal the retention decision to their school district's Grade Placement Committee (GPC). School districts maintain discretion in overseeing retention decisions, providing student intervention and ensuring accelerated instruction (Texas Administrative Code 19). The impact of retention on student performance has serious implications in future dropout rates; therefore, anything that can be found effective in predicting a student's success in the TAKS Reading assessment would be of great benefit to both student and

educator. Empirical studies of retention indicate that children who are retained generally fair worse than comparable peers who are not retained and are at a much higher risk for dropping out of school (Alexander et al., 2003; Holmes, 1989, 2000; House, 1998; Nichols, Glass, & Berliner, 2005). The negative impact of grade level retention is clear; yet, the mandated retention is in complete opposition to the scholarly views.

Beginning in the 2008-2009 school year, the TAKS reading test in the third grade is only administered once a year. Hence, failure for passing the TAKS test is now determined after only one opportunity. But how can we determine whether a student will pass the TAKS Reading test successfully? The one administration of the TAKS Reading test consequently becomes a summative assessment offering no way to change the outcome. Is there a formative assessment that can determine whether a student will be able to pass the required TAKS reading assessment? Is there some sort of assessment that can predict whether a student is ready to tackle the test and succeed? What formative assessment can be used to determine how well a student will perform on the TAKS Reading test according to their reading level?

If a formative assessment that indicates reading level can be identified, then an efficient and effective use of time and money would be achieved. Moreover, higher student reading performance success rate on the state mandated assessment could be gained as well. Efficient use of an already required DRA2 assessment to determine reading level could serve as a dual purpose assessment. If found to be a predictor, then the reading level information data, which is already required by TEA , could also be used to provide guidance toward instructional interventions that would move students toward achieving TAKS Reading test success. If a relationship between reading level as

determined by the DRA2 used as a formative assessment is found, then educators could determine a plan for targeted instruction toward success in the Reading TAKS test. Moreover, this would also be more effective method for increasing the use of instructional time. Ultimately, the instructional leader would be able to provide more instructional guidance and clear vision of based on the outcome of this research.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this research study is to determine through simple linear regression whether performance on the TAKS Reading can be predicted by performance on the DRA2. Because the TAKS test will now only be administered in the spring for third graders, a formative test is needed to target students for instructional intervention. For this study, the researcher will examine archival DRA2 data and TAKS data to see if the DRA2 has predictive validity.

Research Question

The following question will guide the purpose and direction of the present study:

1. Do the reading level, fluency and comprehension scores on the DRA2 predict performance on the 3rd grade TAKS Reading test?

Significance of the Study

As the level of school accountability has gradually increased, educators have accepted state mandated assessment as a natural component of education. These assessment instruments have been designed to "measure what students know and can do, improving instruction, and helping students achieve higher standards" (Zucker, 2003, p. 2). The Texas Legislature has continued to hold educators accountable for academic

progress. And, in so doing, the focus on TAKS success is tied not only to accountability, but also to student retention, school rating, and providing intervention for students not meeting the minimum requirements of passing the TAKS test. In this research analysis, if the DRA2 does have predictive validity when compared to performance on the TAKS Reading 3rd grade tests, then the DRA2 assessment can be used as a tool for identifying and providing additional instruction to students. Because third grade students will only take the TAKS Reading test one time, as initiated in the spring of 2010, a predictor will be invaluable in targeting students for supplemental instruction and support.

If the monitoring of progress is accomplished through the DRA2 assessment, an appropriate intervention is created based on the DRA2 reading level, the student success rates in passing the TAKS reading TAKS will increase. Furthermore, the data can also be used to continue reading interventions for those students who are slower in achieving progress after the third grade TAKS test.

Assumptions

1. The Texas Education Agency student data is reliable.

2. Students performed with the same effort on the DRA2 and the TAKS Reading test.

Limitations

1. The research is limited to the 2009 TAKS Reading for the test data.

2. The research is limited to the 2009 DRA2 student data 3rd Grade TAKS Reading scores.

3. The research is limited to students who were in attendance for both the TAKS Reading administration and the DRA2 assessment.

Definition of Terms

Accountability: As the nation is holding the American public schools to a higher standard the term accountability is linked to the expectation and demand for high levels of student achievement based on specific performance standards (Behuniak, 2004).

Academically Exemplary Rating: The rating assigned to schools according to student performance for the TAKS content areas. This rating was assigned if the TAKS passing rate was at, or above, 90% in both the math and reading content areas. The accountability rating takes into account the following subgroups: African American, White, Asian, Hispanic, and Economically Disadvantaged. (The term and rating definition changes for different grade levels.)

Academically Acceptable Rating: The term assigned to schools according to student performance for the TAKS content areas. The required passing rate for math is 55%, and 70% for reading. The accountability rating takes into account the following subgroups: African American, Asian, White, Hispanic, and Economically Disadvantaged. (This term is defined for third grade expectations only. The term and rating definition changes for different grade levels.)

Academically Recognized Rating: The term TEA assigns to schools according to student performance for the TAKS content areas. The required passing score for math and reading was 75%. The accountability rating takes into account the following subgroups: African American, White, Hispanic, and Economically Disadvantaged. (This term is defined for third grade expectations only. The term and rating definition changes for different grade levels.)

Academically Unacceptable Rating: The term assigned to schools according to student performance for the TAKS content areas. This rating was assigned if the TAKS passing rate was below 55% in math and below 70% in reading. The accountability rating takes into account the following subgroups: African American, White, Asian, Hispanic, and Economically Disadvantaged. (This term is defined for third grade expectations only. (The term and rating definition changes for different grade levels.)

Comprehension: Is defined as the understanding of the written word in texts.

Confidential Student Report: The individual score report detailing a student's performance on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and skills (TAKS) tests.

Developmental Reading Assessment 2: Is defined as the instrument that measures the reading level, comprehension level and fluency of a student.

Fluency: The term used to describe oral reading fluency as in words correct per minute.

Formative Assessment: The term is used to describe the assessment that is used as part of the instructional process that provides information to guide instruction.

High-stakes Assessments: Defined as tests with results that have major impact on the test-taker, teacher, and educational system.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001: Defined as the act that was signed into U.S. law by President Bush on January 8, 2002 which seeks to increase accountability for student's performance. The NCLB revised versions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 and 1994.

Reading Level: The term, for the purpose of this research, that is assigned after administering the DRA2. The DRA2 levels are as follow: Kindergarten – Pre-primer

levels A, 1, 2, 3,4, 6, and 8; First Grade Pre -Primer levels 10 and 12; and Primer levels

14 and 16, Second Grade levels 18, 20, 24, and 28, Third Grade levels 30, 34 and 38.

Retention: The term defined as the repeating of a grade level and its grade level

objectives.

Student Success Initiative (SSI): The term defined as The Texas Legislation from 1999

that was later modified by the 81st Texas legislature in 2009. The SSI specified that a

student in grades 5 and 8 may advance to the next grade level by passing the TAKS tests

required. Grade placement could only be made if the committee unanimously agreed that

the student would perform at grade level after additional instruction. Prior to 2009, the

legislation included 3rd graders in the legislation.

Summative Assessment: The term is used to describe the assessment used to determine

whether a student has met the standards met by the state, district, or classroom.

Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS): The term defined as a criterion-

referenced high-stakes state assessment utilized in the state of Texas.

Texas Education Agency (TEA): The group that is defined as the agency that reports

and validates TAKS scores.

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS): The term used for the Texas state

academic curriculum standards and objectives.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

As educators work and function within the system of educational mandates, the use of an already required assessment could serve to meet the state requirements of assessing for reading and monitoring reading level. In addition, it might also provide a more effective use of instructional time by using the derived data to predict the outcome of the 3rd grade TAKS Reading test. As noted in Chapter One, this study will provide instructional guidance for school instructional leaders through the use of data analysis from the subtest scores derived from the Developmental Reading Assessment 2 (DRA2). If the DRA2 is found to be an effective predictor to student success in the 3rd grade Reading TAKS test, then the impact on student instruction could be guided with more precise direction toward success. Therefore, it is important to find whether fluency and comprehension scores on the DRA2 predict performance on the 3rd grade TAKS Reading test.

A literature review was conducted from a variety of sources relating to the topic of study. The review also includes information in relation to instructional leadership, as well as a summary of the increasing mandates that dictate the educators who are put to task with meeting the growing accountability changes that have transpired in our schools. The research that provides a foundational background for this research is vast. This chapter will provide a review of the literature in the following subsections: (1) Instructional Leadership; (2) Instructional Leadership and Student Achievement; (3) The

National Status of Reading; (4) Reform Efforts and State Mandates; and (5) Using

Formative Assessments as Motivation.

Instructional Leadership

      The role of a principal has gone through many changes as a result of the

increasing emphasis upon student progress and accountability. As a principal, the role as

an instructional leader has changed from being merely a management principal to being

what Brewer (2001) describes as "one that requires focusing on instruction; building a

community of learners; sharing decision making; sustaining the basics; leveraging time;

supporting ongoing professional development for all staff members; redirecting resources

to support a multifaceted school plan; and creating a climate of integrity, inquiry, and

continuous improvement" (p 30). In addition to the altered role of the principal , the

required skill sets needed to maintain these new expectations have shifted significantly as

well.

      Principals in today's schools must be able to move beyond the everyday

management tasks and effectively take on the transformative role of an instructional

leader for their entire campus. In the early 1980s, the call for moving from a

management role toward the role of instructional leader was a key indicator within more

effective schools (Brookover & Lezotte, 1982). Then, in the 1990s, school-based

management temporarily detracted from the focus of what Lashway (2002) called an

"attention to instructional leadership" with the ideas of "school-based management and

facilitative leadership" (p. 1). Ultimately, the tide has quickly turned, as the call for

accountability and outcry for academic improvement has taken the forefront in our

nation. One common impetus to change faced by almost every educational leaders in the

United States is the extensive set of state policies designed to hold schools more accountable (Leithwood, 2001). Thus, accountability in Texas certainly requires an instructional leader to focus on student progress.

The instructional leader is called to focus on instructional quality to achieve academic growth and success. *eHow* contributor, Virginia Cowart (2010), describes good instructional leadership as skills necessary for advancing student learning goals, standards and evaluating outcomes. Moving beyond simply possessing the skill, an instructional leader must have the ability to create change in students' learning through their interaction with teachers. Good instructional leaders are expected to be knowledgeable and have high student and instructional expectations. Additionally, they must have the ability to lead and organize professional staff development sessions for teachers as well as to provide classroom walkthrough feedback with the purpose of improving teacher instruction (Quint et al, 2007).

One trend in the realm of education was for a principal to provide what Cheng (1997) cites as the notion of "transformational leadership". Research in relation to transformation leadership is vast is scope, and much of this research provides evidence that this concept substantially influences employee motivation and performance (Barling, Weber, & Kelloway, 1996; Dvir, Eden, Avolio, & Shamir, 2002; Lowe, Kroeck, & Sivasubramaniam, 1996; Waldman, Ramirez, House, & Puranam, 2001). Thus, understanding that principals must transform the educational setting with skills required of an instructional leader, we must find our way through the quagmire of accountability mandates, policies, and laws. Cowart (2010) maintains that transformational leadership draws attention to a broader array of school and classroom conditions that may also need

to be altered if learning is to improve student outcomes and stimulate genuine student learning.

There are as many definitions of an instructional leader as there are educators with opinions on the subject. Furthermore, the role of instructional leader is not always clearly defined by school systems or district administration. We are provided with a working definition from the executive summary as given at the national conference by the Wallace Foundation as presented by Leithwood (2004): "Instructional leadership encourages a focus on improving the classroom practices of teachers as the direction for the school" (p 6).

The top priority of a school instructional leader is to guide the school and to provide the school's vision. In fact, making the school vision a reality is a crucial factor involved in ensuring students' achievement. As of the early 2000s, the definition of instructional leadership has been expanded to a role where overall institutional learning is emphasized. In fact, the focus has shifted from teaching to learning. The National Association of Elementary School Principals (2001) describes instructional leadership as a leader who provides for guidance through learning communities. Richard DuFour (2002) also refers to this new role through the term "learning leader" over "instructional leader" (p. 12-15). As an outcome of this research as a leader, the hope is that the findings of this research provide guidance to this leader as a learner.

Richard DuFour (2002) expounds on learning communities when he provides guidance in regard to what must occur in a learning community. In particular, he states that, within learning communities, staff members should meet on a regular basis to discuss their work, work together to problem solve, reflect on their jobs, and take

responsibility for what students learn. They operate in networks of shared and complementary expertise rather than in hierarchies or in isolation. People in a learning community "own their problems" and become instrumental in finding solutions to their particular issues. Instructional leaders also make adult learning a priority; they set high expectations for performance; they create a culture of continuous learning for adults; and they gain the community's support for school success. The essence of an instructional leader comes as a result of specific behaviours, such as making suggestions, giving feedback, modelling effective instruction, soliciting opinions, supporting collaboration, providing professional development opportunities, and giving praise for effective teaching (Blase and Blase, 2000).

Nonetheless, what should a principal specifically be able to do to have successful academic achievement? According to various educational leaders, "Successful leadership is based more on a set of 'practices." These practices include 21 specific leadership practices linked to student learning (Waters, Marzano, & McNultt, 2003). These practices are directed in the following areas: (1) Create and sustain a competitive school, (2) Empower others to make significant decisions, (3) Provide instructional guidance, and (4) Develop and implement strategic school improvement plans.

Instructional Leadership and Student Achievement

Leithwood and Jantzi (2005) inform educators with regard to "the relationship between the instructional leader and student achievement" (p. 4). Their findings linked the following important guiding questions to identify the factors of an effective instructional leader:

1. What effects does successful leadership have on student learning?

2. How should the competing forms of leadership visible in the literature be reconciled?

3. Is there a common set of "basic" leadership practices used by successful leaders in most circumstances?

4. What else, beyond the basics, is required for successful leadership?

5. How does successful leadership exercise its influence on the learning of students?

For the purposes of this research, the two questions linked to student achievement are questions number 1 and number 5. Thus, one might ask the following question: What is the effect of successful leadership on student learning? A principal who takes initiative needs to know the findings of the Wallace Foundation's research. When an administrator considers their role and impact on academic achievement, the Wallace Foundation research demonstrated that "The total (direct and indirect) effects of leadership on student learning account for about a quarter of the total school effects"(Leithwood et al, 2004, p. 5). As we are faced with educational reform we must "stimulate people to think differently about their work." (Leithwood, 2004). "There seems little doubt that both district and school leadership provides a critical bridge between most education reform initiatives and their consequences for students" (Leithwood, 2004, p 5).

Regardless of how instructional leadership is defined, most definitions of leadership are two functions at their core: (a) providing direction and (b)exercising influence (Leithwood et al., p. 9). That being said, one might ask another question: How does a principal provide that direction and exercise influence to impact student achievement? From the research of Leithwood et al (2010), titled *In the Investigation the Links to Improved Student Learning*, we glean that school leaders have impact on student

achievement primarily through their influence on teachers' motivation and working conditions: their influence on teachers' knowledge and skills makes less impact on student achievement.

As school principal and school leader, it is the researcher's expectation that student achievement is influenced through data analysis as a means to impact instruction, especially at the local level. Certainly, when considering whether the DRA2 is a predictor, direction would be provided based on the research data outcomes, the influence for needed change would impact modification of instruction, and the decision whether to continue using the DRA2 assessment to its fullest advantage if the recommendation is to continue to use it at all.

The Condition of Reading in America

Student success in reading is and will continue to be a focus within our state and our nation. As reform has triggered and established policies, guidelines, and mandates, the problem associated with all children learning to read is still at the forefront of the challenges in our schools across the educational system. The 1983 report, *A Nation at Risk,* initiated our first reforms as a result of the serious problems in our schools. While facing the issues brought to the forefront by this report, educators and researchers were forced to review and rethink the practices and policies of our educational system.

Subsequently, after more than fifty years, the issue of less than effective reading instruction continues today. In fact, over one third of U.S. school children still have serious literacy deficits. This problem also continues to be an issue with first year college students. In particular, one quarter of the students entering American colleges require remediation for literacy deficiencies (Moloney, 2006). In 2001, the National Assessment

of Education Progress revealed that only 32% of the nation's fourth graders read at or above grade level. In reaction to this, No Child Left Behind's (NCLB) responded by the NAEP results of 2001 and made the Reading First recommendation, to support improved instruction from research through professional development, instructional materials and programs, and ongoing assessments for accountability, especially in the area of reading (Reading First, 2008).

As a component of NCLB, Reading First emphasizes the need to have students read proficiently by grade 3. In addition, the Reading First expectation requires the use of research as the basis to make sound instructional decisions for students. Included in the Reading First program, states are eligible to receive funding to improve reading achievement. These funds are intended for the establishment and improvement of high quality comprehensive reading instruction for all students in Kindergarten through third grade.

Through reading instruction, students are taught phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension (Reading First, 2008).

NCLB also supports programs to help children build language and pre-reading skills before they start kindergarten through Early Reading First, especially for those from low income families (Reading First, 2008). The National Reading Panel determines the funding for programs in the areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension (Reading First, 2008).

To raise the standard as a result of reform for educational improvement, most states have embraced the accountability zeal with the implementation of standardized testing. Such accountability requires that students in selected grade levels take required

assessments in grades 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, and 10. The various content areas depend on the grade level.

In grade 3, students are required to take the TAKS Reading and TAKS Math tests. The addition of a writing assessment along with the Reading and Math TAKS tests are administered to students in grade 4 & 7. The questions asked on these assessments greatly depend on a students' ability to read and comprehend questions and respond to the questions in the assessment (TEA, 2004). A student's lack of reading ability and comprehension ability makes an impact on the outcome of the assessment results. Yet, when does a student make the shift from merely decoding, word-calling and truly grasping the skill of comprehension? What can a teacher do improve a student's reading ability? What strategy, approach or program is best? More importantly, we look for an answer for when to do "what" and "when?" (NRP and NCLB).

In 2001, the National Assessment of Education Progress showed that only 32% of our nation's fourth graders read at or above grade level. As a result, NCLB's answer to this problem was to ensure that all teachers benefit from relevant research through professional development, instructional materials, and programs based on sound research, and by ensuring accountability through ongoing assessments (Reading First, 2008). Reading First, a program which is part of NCLB, reflects the concern of making sure students read well by the end of third grade. Reading First is based on the expectation that instructional decisions for all students will be guided by the best available research. In Reading First, states can receive federal funding to improve reading achievement. Funds are dedicated to helping states and local school districts establish high quality comprehensive reading instruction for all children in kindergarten through third grade.

Through reading instruction, students are taught phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension (Reading First, 2008).

NCLB also supports programs to help children build language and pre-reading skills before they start kindergarten through Early Reading First, especially for those from low-income families (Reading First, 2008). The Reading First program builds on the findings of the National Reading Panel's report. Funding is determined for programs based on the recommendations of the National Reading Panel in the areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension (Reading First, 2008).

State Assessment for Student Reading

At present, the State of Texas does require that educators provide assessments to determine students' reading levels. Instead, individual school districts determine the recommendations and make the selection from the list. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) requires the following to receive funding from the state: As a condition of funding, the Reading First Initiative (RFI) focus is on assessment, assessment driven instruction, and data analysis to inform instruction. Reading First requires schools to administer screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring, and outcome assessments. The expectation for Reading First school teams calls for instruction, professional development and budget to be driven by assessment data. Informed instruction based on assessment data must be used to determine flexible instructional groups and interventions. Individual student needs and timely adjustment of the instruction are also necessary requirements of the Reading First Initiative.

Assessments on the approved Texas list include: (1) Classroom-based instructional assessments, (2) AIMSweb, (3) Istation's Indicators of Progress (ISIP),

Developmental Reading Assessment, Second Edition (DRA2). The district of the school

where this research will be conducted has selected to use the DRA2 for assessing and

monitoring fluency and comprehension for second, third, and fourth grades. The DRA2

is listed for assessing the areas of fluency and text comprehension. If the district

selection of DRA2 is used to assess, monitor, and make changes to instruction, then why

not analyze to see if the DRA2 can be used as a predictor to TAKS 3rd grade Reading

success or lack of success? And, is the one our district selected the best choice?

For the sake of both student and educator, we must find whether or not this

assessment is beneficial, whether it should continue to be used as a benchmark formative

assessment, or whether an alternate reading level assessment should be considered. The

state of Texas requires that we assess student reading levels and provides a list of

acceptable assessments. Hence, school districts have a choice to select. Nonetheless,

how do we know what the benefits of the required district assessment are if we do not

actively search for its connectivity to the State Reading assessment (i.e., TAKS)? If the

Reading TAKS test ends up being a summative assessment, then what benchmark

assessment (also used as a formative for the purposes of this research) do we have in

place to determine how a student will do on the TAKS test as it relates to the level of

their reading ability?

It is important to understand whether the implementation of the selected

assessment has merit and whether the level derived can be used as a predictive

measure. At a time when we must provide students with the best education

possible, we are still tied to state assessment for the purpose of accountability. In

order for educators to compete for funding we must make the best use of the

assessments and data we have available at the school level. During these difficult

economic times, the charter school popularity that is even now being driven by

the "Race to the Top" competition is certainly a salient reason for finding the best

determiner of TAKS test outcome.

The U.S. Department of Education is supporting further support for

assessment development. In September of 2010, The U.S Department of

Education offered the following announcement:

> In an effort to provide ongoing feedback to teachers during the course
>
> of the school year, measure annual student growth, and move beyond
>
> narrowly-focused bubble tests, the U.S. Department of Education has
>
> awarded two groups of state grants to develop a new generation of
>
> tests. The new tests will be aligned to the higher standards that were
>
> recently developed by governors and chief state school officers and
>
> have been adopted by 36 states. The tests will assess students'
>
> knowledge of mathematics and English language arts from third grade
>
> through high school.

The assessment craze continues and has even had leading supporters of school

accountability make a 180 degree turn in their support for the way the assessment inertia

has taken hold. For instance, on March 5, 2010, Diane Ravitch communicated the

following: "At this moment private huge foundation funding is not being directed toward

the public school. Million dollar foundation funding is being handed out to states where

charter schools are the forerunners for the funding" (Ravitch, 2010). She also says, "No

Child Left Behind was a failure, and charter schools aren't going to be any better"
(Ravitch, 2010).

For the public school, fiscal responsibility requires that we evaluate whether our
expenditures on assessments are worth the investment. Moreover, we should also
evaluate whether the students we serve in the public school setting are getting the most
for the money when assessing reading and guiding instruction to achieve Reading TAKS
success. There has never been a more important time to do so.

Using Formative Assessments as Motivation

The State TAKS tests are in place for the sake of accountability, and to measure
student progress within individual school environments. Yet, are educators expected to
wait to see the outcome of the TAKS assessment before instruction is changed for
students? Moreover, what other assessment is available to us that will give the
opportunity to take corrective measures before the final verdict of the 3rd grade Reading
TAKS test? Fortunately, there are assessments that can be used to modify instruction.
Although Stiggins (2007) notes that assessments of learning are important, he urges
teachers to focus more on assessment for learning if we are to actually hold students
accountable. These types of formative assessments support learning during the learning
process. Therefore, if the DRA2 is used as a formative assessment, we can modify
student instruction. If a student reading level is assigned based on the DRA2, then
instruction based on the areas for growth can be developed for more tailored student
instruction and growth. Students need to know exactly where they are in their reading
level and get feedback on the area of need that requires more focused effort and work – a
notion supported by Wiggins (1998). Students can learn from their mistakes, and that

their learning errors can help them focus on areas of improvement. Wiggins states his purpose in the first sentence of his preface (p. xi): "This book presents a rationale for learning-centered assessment in our schools and an overview of the tools, techniques, and issues that educators should consider as they design and use assessments focused on learner needs."

Teachers can best make instructional decisions after they have administered the DRA2 to their students. This assessment can be used to guide decisions about issues such as grouping, the instructional pace, and individual need for support (Honig, Diamond, & Gutlohn, 2000). When an educator has enough information relating to students' fluency and comprehension, he or she can integrate this knowledge into lesson planning, skills targeting, and feedback that can motivate students to provide an increased effort that leads to measurable achievement. After attaining knowledge of their specific levels comprehension and ability, and realizing that one must have reachable target, students become motivated and generate more effort toward improving their comprehension. A result of such increased motivation ultimately results in a student's great desire to read more often. If we are to achieve our goal of students to continue reading, it is important that they be able to recognize that their effort impacts improvement in performance which in turn increases the effort they put into reading (Block & Pressley, 2002).

So, if the DRA2 as a formative assessment reading level test indicates areas where growth is needed, what should the educator do? Thomas Guskey (2007) provides some direction and guidance in this area by suggesting that, for assessments to become an integral part of the instructional process, teachers need to change their approach in three

important ways – namely, they must: (1) use assessments as sources of information for both students and teachers, (2) follow assessments with high-quality corrective instruction, and (3) give students second chances to demonstrate success. Therefore, if we intend to improve student progress in Reading, we should use the assessment recommended by the state and required by the school district. This effort should be conducted to see if we can not only assign a reading level for students but to even more importantly to find out whether the assessment is somehow linked to a 3rd graders success on the Reading TAKS test.

 If used as a formative assessment, the DRA2 can provide and guide both the educator and student to better track their progress toward growth and feel more motivated to achieve the next step in reading level. Motivation to read plays a critical role in developing reading skills. An important goal of reading instruction is to develop an intrinsic desire to read. Effective students who have increased comprehension will want to read more; thereby, developing more improved reading skills. Motivation and achievement are, therefore, critically connected. The result of an integrated connection between these two factors ultimately results in better comprehension, and, subsequently, better overall reading ability.

 Because the DRA2 provides a score for fluency and comprehension, targets toward instruction and improvement can be implemented to increase reading level, thereby impacting comprehension. Effective comprehension instruction increases students' motivation to read. Comprehension instruction can support the development of motivated readers by rewarding improvement and emphasizing effort (Block & Pressley,

2002). A positive cycle of learning in reading could also be a further hidden benefit of using the DRA2 as a formative assessment as well.

Accountability is a concern for instructional leaders, teachers, and students. Catherine Horn's 2003 article, *High-Stakes Testing and Students: Stopping or Perpetuating a Cycle of Failure?*, illuminates the fact that the present Texas accountability system (as it is has shown that the "high-stakes" assessment in current use) negatively impact students who are subjected to a grade level retention. She shows evidence that states with these punitive assessment systems are those that more negatively impact students of color and students with special needs. This impacts School "A" because the majority of students at this particular school are students of color. Because the state of Texas has rescinded its policy on grade level retention for students in the 3rd grade, this does not cease to continue as an issue of high concern as 5th graders are still held to the retention policy.

For students and educators that must survive during this time of greater accountability, an instructional leader must actively analyze data that is both acceptable by the state and school district. In addition, they must also discover whether a dual purpose can be usurped from an assessment like the DRA2, which is already required. If a student reading level on the DRA2 can provide guidance as a formative assessment before the end of the line grade level Reading TAKS test, why should we not take that opportunity to use it for instructional guidance? This research could shed light on how to determine whether the DRA2 provides critical tools that provide a foreshadowing of student performance on the state accountability assessment for Reading Comprehension

is a consuming, continuous, and complex activity, but one that, for good readers, is both satisfying and productive (Farstrup, et al., 2002).

Establishing a positive attitude and perception is vital to learning, and therefore deserves the direct attention of educators. Furthermore, students must be encouraged to read more to enhance literacy skills. For instance, fluency, vocabulary knowledge, and comprehension skills can only develop when exercised regularly (Guth & Heaney, 1998). In order for meaningful learning to occur, students must have positive attitudes about themselves as learners, about their ability to succeed in school, about the instructional goals that have been set for them (Graves, Juel, & Graves, 1998).

Possessing the motivation to read also plays a critical role in developing reading skills, and an important goal of reading instruction is to develop an intrinsic desire to read. In order for students to effectively comprehend what they read they must develop both the skill *and* the will to read. Therefore, motivation and achievement are connected. When a reader reads more, they read better and learn more. The result is better comprehension, and thus better achievement is the result. Effective comprehension instruction increases students' motivation to read. Comprehension instruction can support the development of motivated readers by rewarding improvement and emphasizing effort (Block & Pressley, 2002).

Just as effective comprehension instruction increases students' motivation to read, research suggests that competition diminishes one's motivation. In particular, with regard to struggling readers, competition undermines motivation for students who do not tend to be the TAKS Reading test winners. In this time of TAKS accountability, TAKS failure definitely diminishes motivation to improve the skill of reading. If found to be a

predictor, the DRA2 as a formative assessment could be used to reinforce a students'

desire to continue to improve reading skills because this it provides feedback for specific

areas of growth. Recognizing effort and improvement in performance increases the

probability that a student will exert more effort towards reading (Block & Pressley,

2002).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the procedures for examining the prospective predictive relationship of the Developmental Reading Assessment, 2nd edition, (DRA2) assessment through a multiple linear regression analysis of the DRA reading level, fluency, and comprehension portions of the DRA2. This data was analyzed to predict performance on the criterion-referenced Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) in English Reading assessments. This chapter also focuses on the research design, setting, subjects, procedures, measurement instruments, data analysis and limitations of this research study.

Research Design

For this study, a multiple linear regression of the three components derived from the DRA2 in comparison to the 3rd grade TAKS Reading test results was performed. The DRA2 reading level, comprehension, and fluency were employed for this analysis. Quantitative analysis of archival data from the 2009 administration of the 3rd grade TAKS reading assessment and subtest scores from the Fall Developmental Reading Assessment 2nd Edition (DRA2) was used.

Setting

For the purpose of this study, the school whose data is studied will be referred to as School "A". School "A" is one of 24 elementary schools in the school district. This is an encapsulated district that is surrounded by five metropolitan school districts. The 36.6 square mile school district is located in southwest Houston. This once rural school

district is now an ethnically diverse urban school district. As of 2009-2010, the district

was a Texas Education Agency (TEA) Recognized school district. Prior to the 2009-

2010 academic school year, however, the district was rated as "acceptable". Figure 3.1

illustrates the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) data reported by the state of

Texas was used for consistency of state, district, and school data. A focus on specific

data included both ethnic and disadvantaged subgroup percentage totals. The total

district student population for the 2008-2009 school year was 45, 410. For the purpose of

this study, the demographic data provided by the state derived by the AEIS report for the

2009-2010 academic school year was used for consistency of calculation.
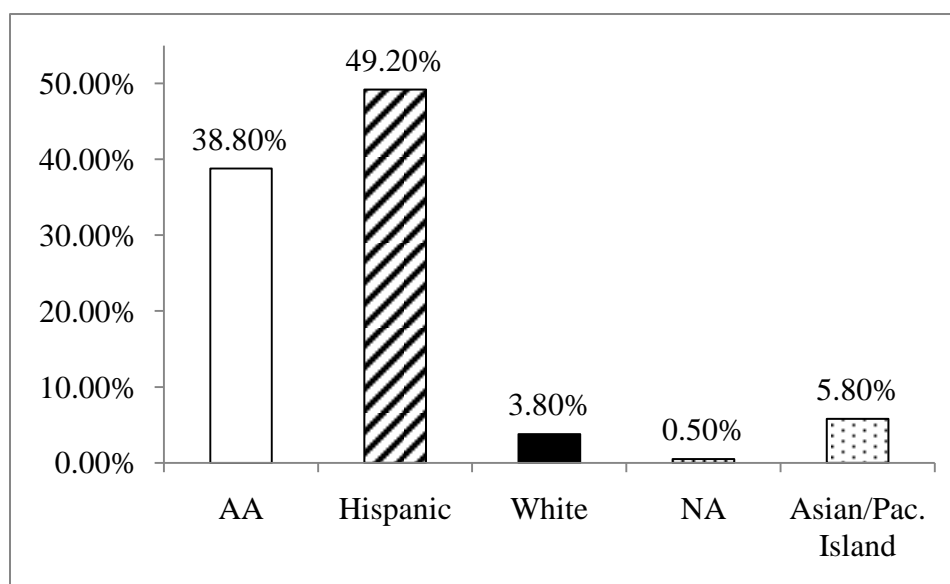
Figure 3.1. District ethnic demographic data. The school district is made up of a diverse

demographic of ethnic subgroups that are acknowledged by the state of Texas with regard

to the subgroup data used to quantify the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS)

information for each school and district. The schools in this district are comprised of a

majority of Hispanic and African American students. The White, Asian and Native

subgroups make up a very small number of the student population.
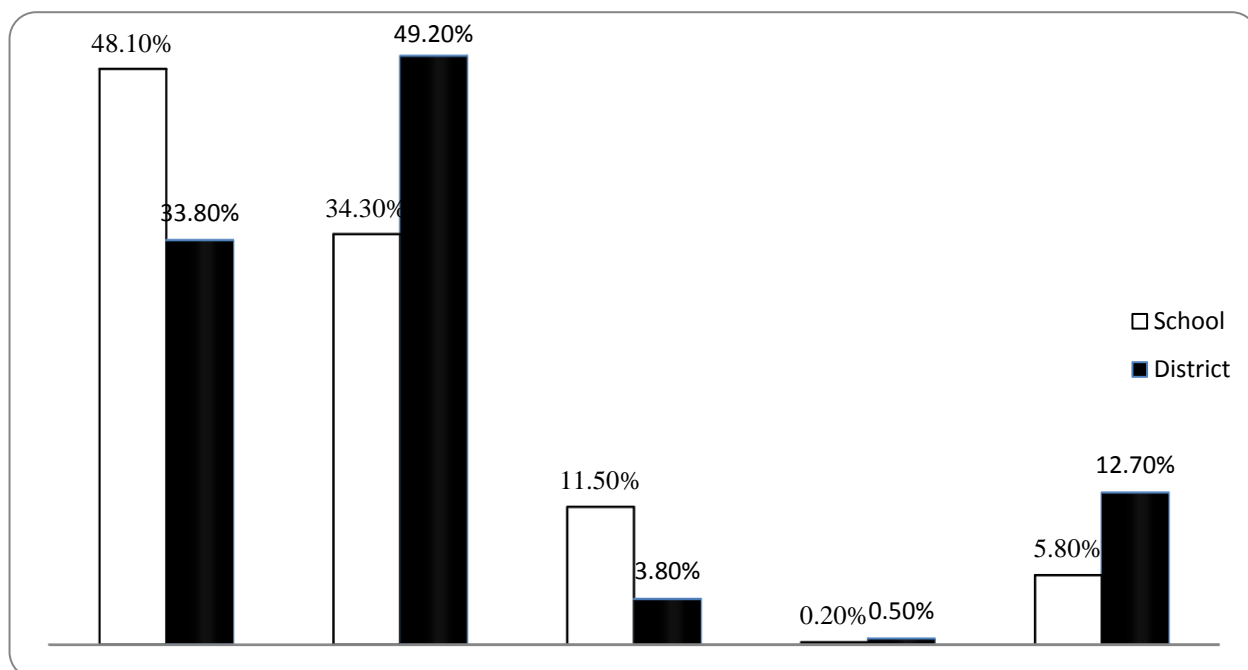
Figure 3.2. School ethnic demographic data. The school from which data was used for the study was very similar to the district in its ethnic diversity. During the 2008-2009 school year, the total school student population was 993. At School "A" there was a slightly higher percentage of African American students (10.7% more) as compared to the district. Additionally, there was 14.9% fewer Hispanic students as compared to the district percentage. The White student population at this school was also slightly higher (7.7%) as compared to the district percentage. The Asian/Pacific Islander ethnic subgroup was exactly the same as the district. The school ethnic data, by and large, mirrors the district ethnic demographic data with the exception of the higher percentage of African American students and lower percentage of Hispanic students.
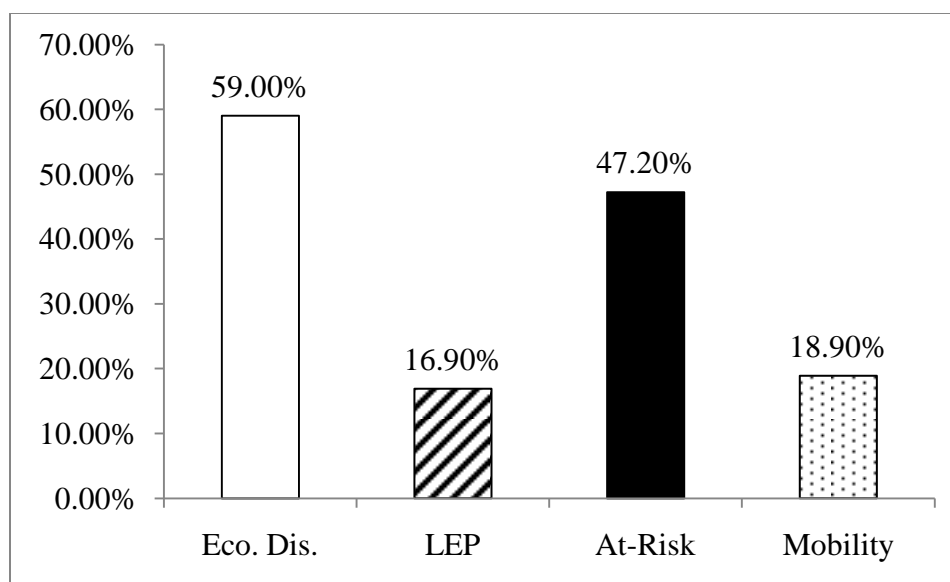
Figure 3.3. State disadvantaged data. Consideration of ethnic subgroups was not the

only method in which the state viewed the progress of students. AEIS information was

also provided for the four major subgroups of disadvantaged students. The subgroups the

state reported data for were Economically Disadvantaged, Limited English Proficient, At-

Risk and high student Mobility rate. When looking at the subgroups that include

disadvantaged students, a higher percentage of students made up the district's

disadvantaged population than the state average.

Bar chart showing district disadvantaged data with four categories: Eco. Dis. at 78.50%, LEP at 36.80%, At-Risk at 68.10%, and Mobility at 23.10%.
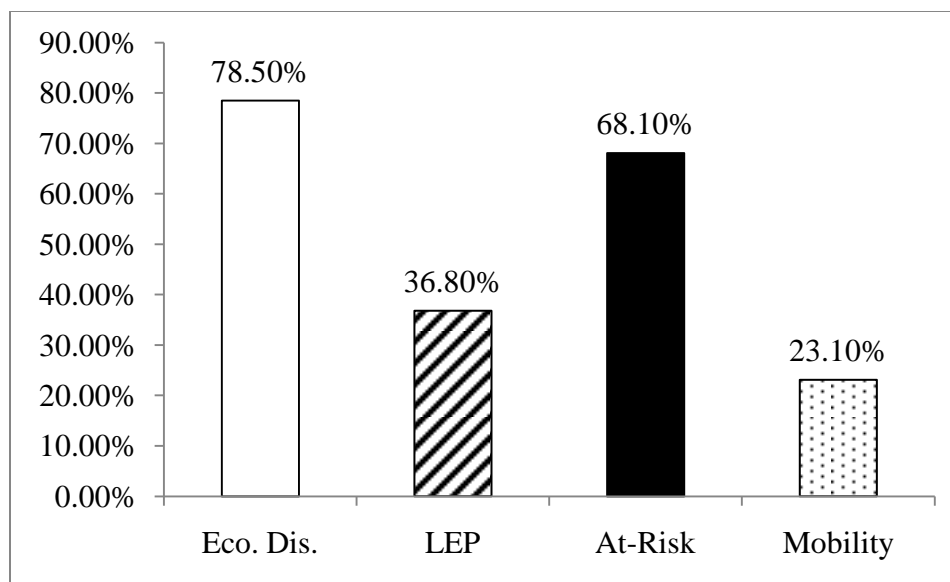
Figure 3.4. District disadvantaged data. As compared to the state data, the 2009 state

AEIS data for this district showed a higher percentage of disadvantaged students

represented (as noted in the graph above). The district's economically disadvantaged rate

was much higher than the state at 59.0% statewide, while the district percentage was at

77.5%. The difference between the state and district Economically Disadvantaged rate

was 18.5%. When considering the Limited English Proficient subgroup, the state

percentage was reported at 16.9%, while the district was at 36.8%. There was an increase

of 19.9% more LEP students when compared to the state data. In comparing the state and

district At-Risk and Mobility subgroups, the state percentages were at 47.2% and 18.9%

respectively, while district percentages were 68.1% and 23.10%.
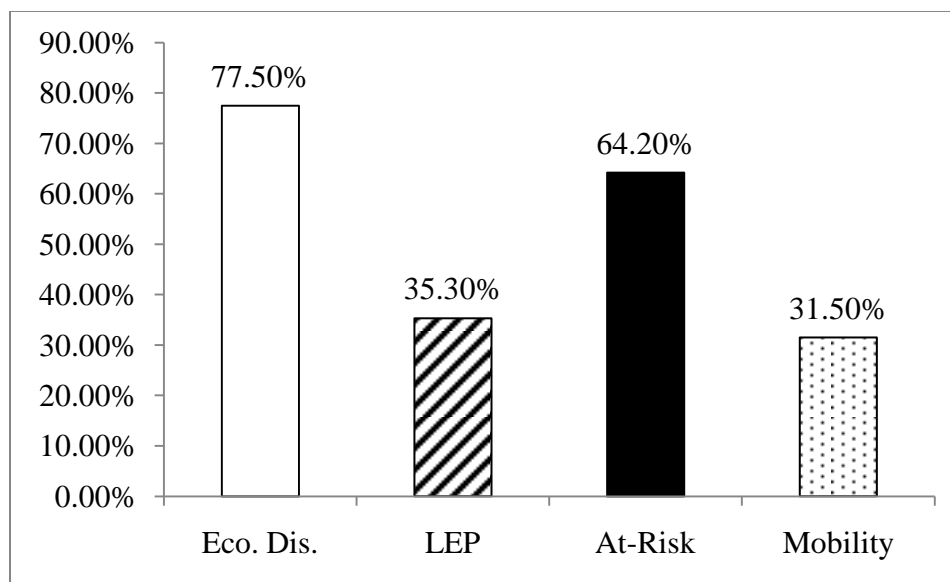
Figure 3.5. School "A" disadvantaged subgroups. When comparing School "A" to the district, the disadvantaged subgroups were mostly aligned with district percentages, except for the Mobility subgroup. When comparing the state, district, and school, the mobility numbers were 18.9%, 23.1%, and 31.5%, respectively. Observably, the school subgroup was at quite a higher rate.

In the name of accountability, schools vied for the top defining labels assigned to them by the state. The state's "exemplary" or "recognized" was highly sought after by most Texas schools (see Table 3.1). In considering the TAKS reading scores over time, School "A" has had a positive trajectory. Scores for 2007 through 2010 show four years of reading growth in the English form of the 3rd Grade TAKS tests.

Table 3.1.

Reading Scores for School "A"

Year	3rd Grade Reading English	Rating
2007	81%	Recognized
2008	82%	Recognized
2009	88%	Recognized
2010	91%	Recognized

*Table 1. Scho*ol "A" reading score trajectory. Over time, 3rd Grade TAKS English Reading scores have increased 10 percentage points from an 81% to a 91%. The school used for this study has been a Texas Education Agency Recognized school since 2007. This rating has been achieved since the first AEIS Report Card was generated based on the outcome of TAKS Results.

Subjects

The research was limited to existing data for 3rd grade students, and included DRA2 data for the Fall 2008 and scores for the 2009 TAKS administration. In the 2008-2009 school year, the total number of students in 3rd grade at this school (i.e., School "A") was two hundred twenty-five (N=225). It is important to note that, due to a high rate of student mobility, the total number of students at School "A" varies considerably. Student data is required to be available for both the DRA2 and TAKS Reading test instruments. Out of the two hundred twenty-five students, only English DRA levels, comprehension and fluency data as well as TAKS Reading English test form was used so

that results in the use of data for one hundred twenty-seven students (N=127) was included in the SPSS calculations. The TAKS Reading data and the DRA2 data will be studied to observe whether the analysis rendered the DRA2 to be useable as an outcome predictor for the 3rd grade TAKS Reading test. Given that the DRA2 was an assessment already being used to determine reading level, as required by the Texas Reading First Initiative, we may able to rely on this assessment to guide instructional decisions and to influence student achievement.

It is important to note that the students from this school were students of medium to low socio-economic backgrounds. Although there were few neighborhoods of individually standing homes, most of the students came from large multi-family housing units. Two of the multi-family housing units were federally subsidized. Several other apartment housing locations were more financially feasible for immigrant families and are more cost effective for families who are going through financial difficulties. There was constant flow of students moving into and out of these apartment complexes, which generally accounted for the mobility rate for students in the school. During the 2007-2008 school year, the total percentage number of economically disadvantaged students was 71.8%.

Table 3.2.

Increase of Economically Disadvantaged and Highly Mobile Students.

School "A"	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Economically Disadvantaged	No data available	71.80%	77.50%
Mobility	21.20%	30.2% = 267 stds	31.5% = 263 stds

Note. Std = Students.

The above table illustrates that the number of students in these categories increased over time. Monitoring student data and student needs was an increasingly more difficult challenge at School "A". Furthermore, acquiring data useful for guiding instructional practices was of utmost importance.

Procedure

Approval for the research was received by the University of Houston, Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects. In order to maintain the privacy of all students and to remove all identifiers that might point to individuals, the names were removed to maintain an anonymous procedure for looking at the data. DRA2 subtest scores and the 3rd Grade TAKS Reading test results were viewed with all student names removed from the data set was randomly assigned a number. Then, the data was entered into an excel spreadsheet to run through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program, which would carry out the multiple regression analysis. The regression analysis provided evidence as to whether the DRA subtest scores were (1) DRA level, (2) Fluency, (3) Comprehension scores impacted the outcome of the 3rd grade TAKS Reading test, or whether each individual subtest served as a better predictor.

In order to be included in the analysis, data for DRA Reading level, comprehension and fluency in the beginning of year and end of year as well as TAKS Reading scores were required for use in this investigation. If one of the pieces of data was not available for a particular student, then the data was not included.

	Data used for SPSS Multiple Regression Analysis for School "A"		
Assessments	Beginning of Year DRA2	End of YearDRA2	Third Grade TAKS Reading Test Score
√	Reading Level	Reading Level	
√	Comprehension	Comprehension	
√	Fluency	Fluency	
√			Spring 2009 Score

Figure 3.6. Data used for SPSS Multiple Regression. The data available for both the 3rd grade TAKS Reading test and the DRA2 was archival data; therefore, this information did not require any interaction with students nor full Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects review. The only foreseeable concern was that the data for 3rd graders cannot be used if the student was not present for all needed data required for the analysis.

The required data included results from the two required DRA2 administrations and the 3rd Grade TAKS test administration. The beginning of school year DRA2 subtest data and the TAKS Reading test data was necessary student data included in this multiple regression analysis.

Data for all DRA2 administrations, as well as for the TAKS Reading test for the

Spring of 2009, was required to determine if the DRA2 was useable as a predictor.

Student scores for the Developmental Reading Assessment 2nd edition (DRA2) beginning

of year DRA reading score, fluency score, and comprehension score data, as well as the

TAKS Reading score results, were considered in the multiple linear regression analyses.

Because the research included all 3rd grade students who were present for both

assessments, the data used included only English and data DRA2 and TAKS Reading test

scores. The data used did not include students from special education programs who

were administered the TAKS Modified Reading test.

Instruments

The instruments used for this study are the DRA2 and the 3rd grade TAKS reading

test. The DRA2 instrument subtests included reading level, fluency rate, and

comprehension. The validity and reliability on the DRA2 assessment included these

subtests that were used for the multiple regression analysis to understand whether they

were useful as predictors for the outcome of the 3rd grade TAKS Reading test.

Development of the DRA2 was based on what educators and the extant research literature

identified as being key characteristics and behaviors of good readers. The DRA2 was

founded on a number of premises drawn from various sources, including the research

literature concerning reading development and instruction.

The use of the DRA2 was found to be reliable and valid according to the technical

guide developed by Pearson Publishing.   In addition, during the development of the

DRA2, four methods of reliability were reviewed for the DRA2. The four methods of

reliability were analyzed for internal consistency, parallel equivalency, re-test, and inter-

rater reliability. The validity of DRA2 accuracy, fluency and comprehension were measured by three types of validity, criterion-related validity, construct validity and content validity.

The DRA2 has three main subtests that were administered. All three DRA assessments were field tested across various racial, ethnic, and gender groups in urban, suburban, and rural settings. As detailed in the technical manual, after the field tests were completed, feedback and suggestions were collected from teachers who participated, and revisions were made and created a more reliable and effective assessment (Beaver and Carter 2006).

The DRA2 was developed in response to the published report titled *A Nation at Risk,* and due to public concern over the nation's diminishing abilities in reading. The need for monitoring and guiding instruction supported the need for the development of an assessment; thus, through the use of the DRA2, teachers could obtain reading levels on individual students. Furthermore, they could subsequently be able to meet the needs of the learners. The DRA2 monitored and measured how well students could read nonfiction and fiction text, their skills, and their use of strategies to become a more successful reader in the classroom. The assessment required a one-on-one administration and is conducted two times a year. Furthermore, the DRA2 is a criterion-referenced assessment, and its limitations were that it is only one source of information on a student's reading level.

The Pearson and Texas Education Agency provided information for the 2008-2009 Standard Technical Process for TAKS test reliability. The TAKS test reliability for multiple assessments was used to estimate the reliability of the TAKS test. An estimation

method was used that required only one test administration. The method of estimating a one-test administration was used to determine the reliability of the TAKS test. The internal consistency method is used in Texas to estimate assessment reliability. This estimation measured the consistency with which students responded to the items within the test. The one test administration method showed internal consistency measures.

TAKS test validity information was reported by the Pearson Educational Measurement and the Texas Education Agency in the 2008-2009 Standard Technical Process. Validity is the measure to determine whether the TAKS test does, in fact, measure what it was intended to measure. In order to be valid, the evidence for test score validity continues to be accumulated. Evidence to support validity is based on five categories: test content, response processes, internal structure, relations to other variables, and consequences of testing. Validity evidence supporting Texas' test content derives from the established test development process and documentation of subject matter expert judgments about the relationship between the test items and the test construct. The 3rd grade TAKS Reading test is the instrument was found to be valid and reliable. The 3rd grade TAKS Reading test scores were used to see if the subtests of the DRA2 could be used as predictors for the outcome of the TAKS test. According to the online Texas Education TAKS Technical Digest (2007) the TAKS reading assessment has a reliability coefficient of .91 that was derived from the Kuder Richardson Formula (KR20).

Analyses

The linear multiple regression analyses determined whether the DRA2's reading level, fluency rate, and comprehension were predictors of the 3rd Grade TAKS Reading test outcome. Linear multiple regressions with the data from English DRA2 subgroups of reading level, fluency, and comprehension were performed. The English Language DRA2 data analyzed was found to have one or more of the DRA2 subtests useful as a predictor on the performance of the 3rd grade TAKS Reading test.

Limitations

The major limitation of this study was that it only uses one year of data. The data available for DRA was available for the three years of School "A's" existence Texas Projection Measurement (TPM) impacted score reports for the 2009 administration passing rates. The Texas Projection Measure estimated whether a child was likely to pass the TAKS assessments given at the fifth-grade level. This measure is based on the following two areas: (1) the child's current performance on TAKS, and (2) the TAKS scores of other third graders at the child's school. In consideration of this study, an associated limitation was the small sample size, which also raised validity concerns. Thus, it was difficult to compare the reporting data by student as the score report scores were changed after the 2009 TAKS administration. The required passing scores changed from a scaled score where passing was 2100 to a three digit number scaled score where 483 was the passing score. In lieu of the change in scaled score expectations from the 4-digit to the 3-digit scores, observing raw scores may be a future option for comparing reading program content area performance.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

As in Chapter One, the study discussed in this chapter evaluated whether the norm-referenced Developmental Reading Assessment 2 (DRA2) is a predictor for the outcome of the criterion referenced 3rd grade Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) Reading test. The results from the fall 2008 DRA2 three sub-tests – which include DRA Reading Level, Fluency Rate and Comprehension Level – and the 3rd Grade TAKS Reading tests scores for the spring of 2009 scores are reported. This chapter is organized in the three sections: research sample, descriptive findings, and statistical results obtained through the multiple regression analysis.

The archival student data used for analysis in this research was drawn from a public Texas elementary school. Grade 3 student data for the one hundred twenty-seven students (N=127) who were administered both the English DRA2 and TAKS Reading test, English language form was used. The standards and performance-based TAKS Reading and Math assessments were also administered to grade 3 students, as required by state law. The passing score for the Reading TAKS assessment is 2100. In addition, students who scored 2400 (or above) are considered to have achieved a "Commended" level of performance.

The few students who completed the 3rd grade Reading TAKS-Modified assessment were not included in the study. Given that this particular study only required data for students who were both present for the beginning of year DRA2 three subtest administration and for the 3rd Grade TAKS Reading test in spring 2009, only English Reading and English language DRA2 subtest data was used to carry out the multiple

regression analysis. One hundred twenty-seven of students not included as part of the sample.

The first component of the output data for the multiple regression analysis is the Model Summary. Table 4.1 below illustrates the coefficient of determination (R Square) that represents the proportion of variance for the 3rd TAKS Reading test outcome. The variation of the independent variables DRA2 subtests (i.e., (1) Reading level, (2) Fluency Rate, (3) Comprehension level) can be explained by the variance in the independent variables. A .224 (22%) of variation in 3rd Grade TAKS Reading test score (dependent variable) can be explained by the differences in the three DRA2 subtests. The obtained R Square is .224 variation and a regression equation of Reading TAKS scores 1972.388 + .443 (comprehension level) + .576 (fluency) + 9.129 (reading level).

Table 4.1

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	SE of the Estimate
1	.473a	0.224	0.203	126.702.5

The second output component in the multiple regression analysis is the ANOVA summary table. The ANOVA resulted in a significant linear regression. The F = 10.750 with 3 and 112 degrees of freedom (F). F is significant at less than .001. A multiple linear regression was calculated to predict passing TAKS Reading Score based on DRA2 reading level, fluency rate, and comprehension level. A significant regression equation was found. $F_{(3,112)} = 10.750$, $p < .001$, with and R^2 of .224 (See Table 4.2).

Table 4.2

ANOVA Summary

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	517727.12	3	172575.708	10.75	.000a
	Residual	1797981.9	112	16053.41		
	Total	2315709	115			

a. Predictors: (Constant), DRA2 Total Reading Score, DRA2 Comprehension Score, DRA Fluency Score
b. Dependent Variable: TAKS Reading Score

The final multiple regression output component is the Table of Coefficients. The Table of Coefficient provides the predictive equation. For this multiple regression equation, the $Y^1 = B_0 + B_1X_1 + B_2 X_2 + B_3 X_3$. When observing the B column of the Unstandardized Coefficients, the predictive equation for the 3rd Grade TAKS reading outcome is 1972.388+443 (comprehension level) +576 (fluency rate) +9.129 (reading level). TAKS Reading outcome was impacted by each increase of 2.232 in reading level, for each .668 increase in reading fluency and for each .443 increase in comprehension level (see Table 4.3).

Table 4.3

Table of Coefficients

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	SE B	β	t	Sig (p)
1	(Constant)	1972.39	78.53		25.116	0.000
	DRA Comp. Score	0.443	2.263	0.016	0.196	0.845
	DRA Fluency Score	0.576	0.668	0.862	0.862	0.391
	DRA Reading Score	9.129	2.232	0.418	4.091	0.000

Results Summary

The beginning of year 2008 DRA2 subtests indicate that there is a significant

level to indicate predictive validity for the outcome of the 3rd grade TAKS Reading test.

The results presented in this chapter demonstrate significant linear regression and

provided a predictive validity equation. The predictive validity equation can then be used

to determine the TAKS score dependent on the DRA2 subtest data.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to determine if the DRA2 was a prospective predictor to the outcome of the 3rd Grade Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) Reading test. Given that the DRA2 is used to report student reading levels, as required by the Reading First Texas Initiative, then using this data is advantageous to educators. Hence, through the use of such data, educators can make instructional modifications that will impact the 3rd Grade TAKS Reading outcome. The ability to use an assessment that is already required, such as the DRA2, will provide the opportunity to use the DRA2 data for more than just reporting reading levels, which is required for students in grades Kindergarten through the 3rd Grade.

This research study has served this instructional leader as validation for instructional practices that were once intuitive yet lacked statistical support. This study now provides some statistical evidence that elevates those decisions beyond simple intuition. Chapter Five, therefore, is organized as follows: (a) discussion of findings, (b) placement of these results in the context of current literature, (c) implication of the results for practice; (d) limitations, and (e) recommendations for future research.

Discussion of Results

The three subtests (i.e., Fluency, Comprehension, and Reading Level score) were the subtests used to predict performance on the TAKS Reading score. The Reading Level score subtest was found to be significant at <.0001. The DRA2 Reading Level subtest as noted in the Table of Coefficients substantiates that a student's reading level is a

predictor for the outcome of the 3rd Grade TAKS Reading test. The fluency and

comprehension subtests did not have a significant impact on 3rd Grade TAKS Reading

test outcome. Although the DRA2 subtests of Fluency and Comprehension were not

statistically significant in their impact, it does not necessarily mean that a student can

read fluently, or that they can comprehend well in isolation. The student can only reach a

DRA2 reading level score if the student has comprehension of what was read as they are

assessed with the DRA2 instrument. And, if a child does not understand what is read,

then the reading level is not assigned at the higher reading level score. A student must

have a comprehension rate of 19 in order to assign that reading level score to that student.

If the comprehension rate is lower than 19, the assessor must drop down to the next

reading level until the comprehension rate notes that the student has comprehended the

text at the level in which they are being assessed. Therefore, the DRA2 reading level

score is only accomplished if the comprehension at that level is achieved as well. If a

student can comprehend yet cannot read at a higher reading level, that student can only

achieve a lower reading level score. Because a DRA2 reading level score is derived

through the relationship to comprehension, then it is evident that the significance of the

DRA2 Reading level score includes comprehension as a factor. Comprehension alone, or

fluency alone, do not have an isolated significance to the outcome on the 3rd grade TAKS

Reading test.

Support from the Literature

The impact of increased accountability in the field of education has induced

legislative mandates, and the impact has been palpable in the area of instruction within

the classroom. Since the development of the various Texas assessments, and in the name

of accountability, the unintended curriculum of teaching to gain the highest scores on the test has also been a significant driving force. Grade levels have been impacted by the latest accountability instrument developed, with the latest being the new STAAR test. The importance of the literature reviewed is foundational to the purpose and to obtaining guidance that will make direct impact in the classroom as well. As presented in Chapter Two, the specific topics of reform efforts, state mandates, high stakes assessment for accountability, instructional direction, and instructional leadership are areas that provide the literature that supports the context of this study.

As the state's accountability assessments have evolved, the success in passing those assessments are a constant concern for students who are impacted by retention mandates, especially when students at specified grade levels do not pass that test. As noted in Chapter One, only until recently are students no longer required to be retained in the same grade level if they were unsuccessful on passing the 3rd Grade TAKS Reading test. Since the grade level retention is still required in the fifth grade, retaining a student as a result of failing the state assessment is still of great concern for our students. Catherine Horn's 2003 article, titled *High-Stakes Testing and Students: Stopping or Perpetuating a Cycle of Failure?*, identifies those students who are more negatively impacted by the required retentions. This pattern of negative student impacts will continue if we cannot guide students toward success in their third grade reading assessments before their fifth-grade "high-stakes" assessment year (p. 31). The negative affect of grade level retention not only impact a student's self-esteem, it also carries a negative impact of great concern on School "A" because the majority of students at this school are students of color.

As a result of the serious problems prevalent within our schools at the time, the 1983 report *A Nation at* Risk served as the impetus for our nation's first reforms. Then, in 2001, the *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) *Act* legislation mandated and required accountability. Thus, the continued legislative shift toward creating an educational system with a greater and greater emphasis on accountability created the environment of not only assessing students with the state accountability assessments in grades 3 and above. In addition, as a result of the Texas Reading First Initiative, it required that each student's reading level be measured and reported in Kindergarten through 3rd grade. In the district where School "A" is located, instructional time is used to assess children in the beginning of the school year as well as at the end of the school year. The assessment selected, DRA2, has several components and the data is recorded and reported to satisfy the state requirement. If valuable instructional time has already been used to determine reading levels for merely satisfying the state requirement to simply report the data, then it behooves educators to make use of the data in a more efficient manner. Thus, the reading level data should serve to give instructional guidance, and to provide data to determine how a student's reading level will impact their performance on the 3rd grade TAKS reading test as well as for decision making by the teacher and school instructional leader.

In regard to instructional leadership, the principal's role has changed from simply maintaining merely a managerial focus to being what Brewer (2001) describes as "one that requires focusing on instruction; building a community of learners; sharing decision making; sustaining the basics; leveraging time; supporting on-going professional development for all staff members; redirecting resources to support a multifaceted school plan; and creating a climate of integrity, inquiry, and continuous improvement" (p 30).

Furthermore, making use of data that is required by the state only for reporting purposes certainly embodies the leveraging of time and for providing on-going professional development. Making better use of time and data also serves to create and support a climate of continuous improvement as well.

Administrators and teachers are driven by the state system of accountability and we all work to satisfy the outcry for academic improvement in our nation. The state accountability emphasis requires each instructional leader to respond to the call for change through their individual state structures; hence, the system of accountability in the state of Texas has created that extensive set of state policies designed to hold schools more accountable (Leithwood, 2001). Accountability in Texas certainly requires that an instructional leader focus upon effective and efficient practices in order to achieve student progress and success, especially in the first test that challenges our 3rd Grade TAKS reading testers.

The noted working definition from the executive summary provided by the Wallace Foundation National Conference as presented by Leithwood (2004): "Instructional leadership encourages a focus on improving the classroom practices of teachers as the direction for the school" (p. 6). If guidance toward success results from the use of data derived from the DRA2, then we must move to impact those instructional practices toward the 3rd Grade TAKS Reading test assessment. Wiggins (1998) supports the notion that students can learn from their mistakes, and that their errors help them focus on the areas needed for improvement. We also find guidance through changes that we make as we modify our instruction according to students' individual needs. Stiggins (2007) notes that assessments of learning are important; furthermore, if we are to provide

IS THE DEVELOPMENTAL READING ASSESSMENT (DRA2) A PREDICTOR OF SUCCESS ON THE 3RD GRADE TEXAS ASSESSMENT OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS (TAKS) READING TEST?

student accountability, he urges that teachers place more focus on assessment for learning. This assessment will give the opportunity to take corrective measure prior to the final verdict of the only administration of the 3rd grade Reading TAKS test. Thus, the DRA2 reading assessment will provide direction and the data will provide the instructional leader with the ability to provide direction. Therefore, the DRA2 assessment can be viewed as a formative assessment that will serve to make the needed changes in instructional practice.

As school principal, it is the expectation of this researcher & campus principal that student achievement is influenced with data analysis to impact instruction at the school where the research data is derived. Certainly, when considering the significance of DRA2 reading level as a predictor for the 3rd Grade TAKS Reading test, direction will be provided based on the derived reading level data and the influence for needed change will impact modification of instruction. Using DRA2 reading level data allows educators to take full advantage of the data itself. Moreover, use of the DRA2 assessment is also a recommendation for continued use as both a report state required data *and* as a predictive assessment method in relation to observing the significant statistical significance related to the 3rd Grade TAKS reading test.

Importance of the Study

This research study has statistical significance and provides the support for using data to its fullest. Since the use of data is already required by the state of Texas for reporting purposes, then the use of the data derived from the approved DRA2 only makes

IS THE DEVELOPMENTAL READING ASSESSMENT (DRA2) A PREDICTOR OF SUCCESS ON THE 3RD GRADE TEXAS ASSESSMENT OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS (TAKS) READING TEST?

logical sense as a means for instructional guidance toward achieving an increased student success on the 3rd Grade TAKS Reading test. The efficient use of coveted instructional time is more effective when the data for each child provides guidance in tailored instructional decisions in the classroom. The DRA2 components are all useful in determining a student's reading level and knowing the specific characteristics of a reader at that instructional level serves to improve reading weaknesses displayed by students in accordance to their reading level. Once the specific reading weaknesses are addressed, a student's reading level increases and thereby making impact on their ability to pass the TAKS test.

Due to the present system of accountability, administrators find themselves having to focus on ensure that students pass the state-mandated tests. The educational marketplace has seen the need for materials that provide practice and help to improve skills to pass those assessments. In fact, every time a new assessment is created, publishers develop an entire new line of materials that serve to achieve success. It is of great interest that the developers of the state tests are usually also involved in developing the practice materials, which can be viewed as a financial burden each time a new assessment is designed. We have seen this in Texas as assessments for accountability, as well as the new materials for instruction, which have been so frequent and onerous, and have been developed for purchase. Yet, that being said, making use of specific data as derived in the DRA2 can also provide instructional guidance without having to purchase every new piece of assessment practice material that is published. Some materials will

need to be purchased because of the specific changes in state assessments; nonetheless, we need to use data that is already within our power to be more fiscally responsible at the classroom, school and district level.

Limitations

The limitation for this study relates to the use of one year archival data for analysis. The data was limited to third grade students who were present for both the DRA2 assessment administered at the beginning of the school year as well as 3rd Grade Reading TAKS test. The mobility rate at School "A" also limited the number of students included in the study to one hundred twenty-seven.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study has generated a litany of new questions that, once resolved, will surely have a direct impact on student performance for state required accountability reading assessments like the present 3rd Grade TAKS Reading test. Identifying whether the DRA2 reading level derived has a direct link to "how well" a student will do on the test can give specific guidance to targeted reading levels to provide students with a better chance of passing the TAKS Reading test. There is also a great interest in finding whether there is a specific reading level that presents evidence of correlation to the passing of a state required assessment. Furthermore, and of even greater importance, we must seek to answer whether using the DRA2 as a predictor will have the same impact on future required reading tests like the new STAAR assessment that will be administered in the Spring of 2012. Will a student's reading level still serve as a predictor for the STAAR reading assessment and will the data derived still be able to make tailored

instructional changes to achieve student success for students taking those assessments? This researcher would venture to say that the DRA2 will still be usable as a predictor. It is with great enthusiasm that as a school principal, I find myself drawn to carrying out more research that will provide guidance for teachers and students while also gaining further success in any state accountability reading assessment.

References

Blase, J., & Blasé, J. (2000). Effective instructional leadership: Teachers' perspectives on
how principals promote teaching and learning in schools. *Journal of Educational
Administration 38(2).* 130-41.

Block, C. C., & Pressley, M. (Eds.). (2002). *Comprehension instruction: Research-based
best Practices*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Brewer, H. (2001). Ten steps to success. *Journal of Staff Development*, 22(1), 30-31.

Brookover, W. B., & Lezotte, L. (1982). *Creating effective schools*. Holmes Beach, FL:
Learning Publication.

Cheng, P. W. (1997). From covariation to causation: A causal power theory.
Psychological Review, 104, 367–405.

DuFour, R. (May, 2002). The learning-centered principal. *Educational Leadership 59(8)*,
12-15).

Pearson Education, Inc. (2009). DRA2 K-8 Technical manual, developmental reading
assessment.

Farstrup, A. E., Samuels, & Samuels, S. J. (2002). What research has to say about reading
instruction. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Graves, M. F., Juel, C., & Graves B. B. (1998). Teaching reading in the 21st century.
Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Guskey, T. R. (2007). Using assessments to improve teaching *and* learning. In D. B.
Reeves (Ed.), *Ahead of the Curve: The Power of Assessment to Transform
Teaching and Learning* (pp. 14-29). Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree.

Guth, N., & Heaney, P. (1998). A challenge for school administrators: Motivating

   adolescents to read. *NASSP Bulletin, 82,* p. 34-40. Retrieved on February 12,

   2001, from WilsonWeb online database on the World Wide Web:

   http://library.valdosta.edu/.

Honig, B., Diamond, L,. & Gutlohn, L. (2000). *CORE: Teaching reading sourcebook:*

   Assessment for reading instruction. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

Horn, C. (2003) High-Stakes Testing and Students: Stopping or Perpetuating a Cycle of

   Failure?

   The College of Education, The Ohio State University, *Theory Into Practice* 42.1

   (2003) 30-41. (p. 31).

House, R. J., & Mitchell, T.R. (1974). Path-goal theory of leadership. *Contemporary*

   Business, 3, Fall, 81-98.

Lashway, L. (2002). Developing instructional leaders. *ERIC Digest 160* (July),

   Clearinghouse on Educational Management, University of Oregon.

Leithwood, K. (2001). School leadership in the context of accountability policies.

   International Journal of Leadership in Education, 4(3), 217-235.

Leithwood, K., Seashore Louis, K., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004, September).

   How leadership influences student learning. (p5-9).Retrieved June, 2005, from

   http://www.wallacefoundation .org/NR/rdonlyres/E3BCCFA5-A88B-45D3-8E27-

   B973732283C9/0/ReviewofResearchLearningFromLeadership.pdf.

Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D. (2005). A review of transformational school leadership

   research: 1996-2005. *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 4*(3), 177-199.

Leithwood, K., Harris, A., Strauss, T. (2010). Leading school turnarounds. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

Lowe, K.B., Kroeck, K.G., & Sivasubramaniam, N. (1996). Effectiveness correlates of transformational and transactional leadership: A meta-analytic review. *Leadership Quarterly*, *7*, 385-425.

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Pub. L. 107-110, 115 Stat. 1425 (2002).

Quint, J.C., Akey, T.M. Rappaport, S., & Willner, C.J. (2007). Instructional leadership, teaching quality, and student achievement: suggestive evidence from three urban school Districts: MDRC.

Ravitch, Diane MARCH 9, 2010 Why I changed my mind about school reform federal testing has narrowed education and charter schools have failed to live up to their promise. The Wall Street Journal Opinion Journal retrieved on March 14, 2011 from http://www.nea.org/grants/40241.htm

Stiggins, Rick (05/01/2007). Assessment through student eyes. *Educational Leadership, 64(8), 22-26.*

Texas Education Agency (2002). *A standard-setting plan for the State Board of Education*. Austin, TX: Texas Education Agency.

Texas Education Agency (2004). *Texas student assessment program: Technical digest*. Austin, TX: Texas Education Agency.

Texas Education Agency (2007). *Technical digest 2006-2007*. Austin, TX: Texas Education Agency.

Waldman, D. A., Ramirez, G. G., House, R. J., & Puranam, P. (2001, February). Does leadership matter? CEO leadership attributes and profitability under conditions of perceived environmental uncertainty. *Academy of Management, 44*(1), 134.

Waters, T., Marzano, R. J., & McNulty, B. (2003). Balanced leadership: What 30 years of research tells us about the effect of leadership on student achievement. Aurora, CO: Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning. Available online at www.mcrel.org.

Wiggins, G. (1998). *Educative assessment: Designing assessments to inform and improve student performance*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

APPENDIX A

REQUIREMENTS FOR EACH CATEGORY RATING

Table 7: Requirements for Each Rating Category

	Academically Acceptable	Recognized	Exemplary
Base Indicators			
TAKS (2008-09)* • All students *and each student group meeting minimum size:* • African American • Hispanic • White • Econ. Disadv. **TAKS (Accommodated) included for some grades and subjects. See Table 3.*	Meets each standard: • Reading/ELA ... **70%** • Writing .... **70%** • Social Studies.. **70%** • Mathematics .... **55%** • Science .... **50%** **OR** Meets Required Improvement **OR** Meets standard with TPM	Meets **75%** standard for each subject **OR** Meets **70%** floor and Required Improvement **OR** Meets standard with **TPM**	Meets **90%** standard for each subject **OR** Meets standard with **TPM**
Completion Rate I (Class of 2008) • All students *and each student group meeting minimum size:* • African American • Hispanic • White • Econ. Disadv.	Meets **75.0%** standard **OR** Meets Required Improvement	Meets **85.0%** standard **OR** Meets floor of **75.0%** and Required Improvement	Meets **95.0%** standard
Annual Dropout Rate (2007-08) • All students *and each student group meeting minimum size:* • African American • Hispanic • White • Econ. Disadv.	Meets **2.0%** standard **OR** Meets Required Improvement	Meets **2.0%** standard **OR** Meets Required Improvement	Meets **2.0%** standard **OR** Meets Required Improvement
Additional Provisions			
Exceptions *(See Chapter 3 for more details.)*	May be applied if district/campus would be *AU* due to not meeting *AA* criteria.	May be applied if district/campus would be *AA* due to not meeting *Recognized* criteria.	May be applied if district/campus would be *Recognized* due to not meeting *Exemplary* criteria.
Check for Academically Unacceptable Campuses (District only)	Does not apply to *Academically Acceptable* districts.	A district with a campus rated *Academically Unacceptable* cannot be rated *Recognized*.	A district with a campus rated *Academically Unacceptable* cannot be rated *Exemplary*.
Check for Underreported Students (District only)	Does not apply to *Academically Acceptable* districts.	A district that underreports more than **150** students or more than **5.0%** of its prior year students cannot be rated *Recognized*.	A district that underreports more than **150** students or more than **5.0%** of its prior year students cannot be rated *Exemplary*.
Hurricane Ike	For eligible districts and campuses, if the 2009 rating is *AU* or lower than the rating received in 2008, the campus or district will be rated *Not Rated: Other*.		n/a

APPENDIX B

CPHS APPROVAL FORM EXEMPT STATUS

APPENDIX B

UNIVERSITY *of* **HOUSTON**

COMMITTEES FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS

December 6, 2010

Mrs. Nancy Lewin
c/o Dr. Doris Prater
Curriculum and Instruction

Dear Mrs. Lewin:

Based upon your request for exempt status, an administrative review of your research proposal entitled "Is the Developmental Reading Assessment 2nd Edition (DRA2) a Predictor for the Outcome of the 3rd Grade Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills Reading Test" was conducted on November 15, 2010.

At that time, your request for exemption under **category 4** was approved pending modification of your proposed procedures/documents.

The changes you have made adequately respond to the identified contingencies.   As long as you continue using procedures described in this project, you do not have to reapply for review.*   Any modification of this approved protocol will require review and further approval.   Please contact me to ascertain the appropriate mechanism.

If you have any questions, please contact Alicia Vargas at (713) 743-9215.

Sincerely yours,

Enrique Valdez, Jr.
Director, Research Compliance

*Approvals for exempt protocols will be valid for 5 years beyond the approval date. Approval for this project will expire **November 1, 2015.** If the project is completed prior to this date, a final report should be filed to close the protocol. If the project will continue after this date, you will need to reapply for approval if you wish to avoid an interruption of your data collection.

Protocol Number: 11122-EX

Learning. Leading."   316 E Cullen Building   ·   Houston, TX 77204-2015   ·   713/743-9204   ·   Fax: 713/743-9237