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The relationship between vocabulary development, low socioeconomic status, and teacher discourse

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ABSTRACT

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M.S. in Education, Walden University, 2004
B.S. in Education, S.U.N.Y. at Fredonia, 1977

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
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ABSTRACT

Elementary students from low socioeconomic households often begin and remain behind other socioeconomic groups in vocabulary knowledge. Many reasons for this gap, including cognitive, environmental, and educational, have been researched. The current study examined the relationship between vocabulary knowledge, socioeconomic status, and type of teacher discourse within an early elementary setting not yet explored within the research. This concurrent mixed-method research study investigated this relationship using study groups, taped classroom lessons, and the DIBELS word use fluency assessment measure. Interpretative analysis was used for the qualitative data, and correlational analysis was used to determine relationships between the discourse types and the DIBELS word use fluency growth scores. The quantitative results suggested that as two-way teacher-student conversation increased, vocabulary knowledge in students from low socioeconomic households also increased. The qualitative results indicated that lesson reflection alters teachers' perceptions of discourse beliefs. The findings of this study initiate social change by assuring quality professional development methods so that all teachers use effective communication along with best practices. These improved techniques may result in every child gaining an equal opportunity to learn how to read successfully and may assist in closing the socioeconomic achievement gap.

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DEDICATION

This doctoral study is dedicated to two people: one who began my life journey and one who began my professional journey.

Mom, you are my inspiration and my rock. You truly believe that life is learning and learning is life. I am where I am today because of your beliefs about who we should be as humans, where we should travel in life, and what we should stand for as followers of our faith. Thank you.

Mr. Gorvine, as my reading teacher you began my professional journey when I was in third grade, though neither of us knew that at the time. Your skilled and caring manner gave me the tools to become successful at what I do. I truly believe that my journey was guided by how you instructed me. Your caring conversation instilled the importance of this teaching technique that has led me to where I am today. Thank you.

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there for me throughout life's ups, downs, and straight-aways. I could not ask for a better

friend, colleague, and mentor.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Introduction

The goal of many primary grade teachers is to teach their students to become

successful readers. It is the foundation upon which all future learning is based. In fact, the

federal government mandates primary grade teachers to accomplish this goal through the

No Child Left Behind legislation (No Child Left Behind [NCLB], 2002) This legislation

requires that all children read on grade level by third grade, and schools have until 2014

to meet this goal. Aside from this mandated legislation, most primary grade teachers have

always aspired to teach every child to read. By the nature of the age level taught, primary

school teachers are most often nurturing, caring individuals who want the best for their

students. Even with this supportive trait, there is usually a portion of the student

population that has a difficult time becoming readers. The reasons for this difficulty are

numerous. Difficulties have been linked to learning disabilities, gender, race, and

socioeconomic status (SES; Baker, Simmons, & Kame'enui, 1995; Rathbun, West, &

Walston, 2005; Wagner, 2005). The National Assessment of Education Progress

(Donahue, Voelkl, Campbell, & Mazzeo, 1999) investigated the link between parental

educations, eligibility for free and reduced lunch, and reading success.

Lack of early literacy experiences has also been linked to socioeconomic status

and reading success. Noble, Farah, and McCandliss (2006) labeled this connection

multiplicative factors hypothesis. This hypothesis "predicts that the relationship between

academic achievement and reading achievement will be systematically modulated by

socioeconomic status" (Noble et al., 2006, p. 350). The student's prior literacy experience

is a vital component to reading success and a lack of literacy experiences is related to low SES. Molfese, Modglin, and Molfese (2003) found that many environmental factors affect reading success including activities in the home and parenting practices. Hoff (2003) continued this line of thought and analyzed the importance of maternal speech on vocabulary development as it relates to socioeconomic status. Maternal speech varies with socioeconomic levels. This maternal speech affects vocabulary development and the low vocabulary of incoming kindergarteners from low SES households affects reading development. Biemiller (2003) stated, "If we could avoid the growing vocabulary gap during kindergarten to Grade 2, and possibly fill in some words already missing at the beginning of kindergarten, reading comprehension, perhaps, could improve" (p. 328).

The question then proceeds to how to increase this vocabulary in children from low SES households. If maternal speech affects the vocabulary development of preschool age children, then could teacher speech affect the vocabulary development of school age children? Could effective teacher talk escalate the vocabulary development of low SES children so that the achievement gap will narrow? This relationship between vocabulary development, low SES, and teacher talk is the topic of this research.

<center>Problem Statement</center>

The lack of vocabulary development in children from low socioeconomic households has long perplexed reading specialists. Children from low socioeconomic households who begin kindergarten behind their middle socioeconomic counterparts in vocabulary development seem to continue to lag behind throughout their schooling (Hart & Risley, 2003). It is this socioeconomic achievement gap which drives this research,

with the goal being to find an underlying cause for this gap. If remedies can be made that will close this gap, then children from low socioeconomic backgrounds can achieve similar reading progress as their classmates from higher socioeconomic backgrounds and the goal of NCLB (2002) can be achieved.

The National Reading Panel (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [NICHHD], 2000) outlined five components to effective reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonological awareness, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary. Each element is vital to reading success and an effective curriculum uses all five components for a balanced approach to literacy instruction. If a school uses all five components with research-based approaches, one would conclude that all children within that school would achieve grade level reading skills. This is not always the case. In this researcher's school there is a portion of the K-2 population who do not read at grade level based upon the measurement tool Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS; Good & Kaminski, 1996). The research-based curriculum used within this school is Pearson Scott Foresman's *Reading Street* (2007). This reading series is research based (Pearson Scott Foresman, 2008). If most teachers are using this program, the assumption could be made that all students would achieve grade level reading. The question remains as to why all children are not reading at grade level and whether the type of teacher talk within the classroom has an effect on the vocabulary development of the students.

Researchers have postulated that the atmosphere of a classroom affects learning (Johnston, 2004; Mooney, 2005; Pressley et al., 2003), so it may be that the way a teacher

talks within the classroom can have an effect on low SES students and their vocabulary development. A number of studies have explored the affect of teacher discourse on math achievement in older students (Adbi, 2007) and high school English group discussions (Putnam, 2006). One study (Freedman, 2005) found a significant relationship between teacher talk during group instruction and vocabulary growth in low SES Latino pre-kindergarteners. A relationship between teacher discourse and low SES kindergarten through second graders has not been studied. It is imperative to research this relationship in kindergarten through second grade students so that the mandates of NCLB (2002) can be met and so all children will benefit from the proficiency that comes with grade level reading skills.

<div align="center">Nature of the Study</div>

This study used a mixed method approach combining qualitative and quantitative data to explore the relationship between low SES, vocabulary development, and teacher talk. Student participants are from low SES households as defined by federal free or reduced lunch guidelines in grades kindergarten through second in a small southwestern Ohio school district. Six kindergarten through second grade teachers participated in the qualitative portion of this study. The quantitative data included a pre- and post-test using the DIBELS Word Use Fluency (WUF) subtest and the quantification of teacher talk during 12 audio-taped literacy block sessions during the 10-week study period. The pre- and post-test WUF scores were analyzed for a +/- growth differential, and the literacy block taped lessons were coded for teacher discourse labels. These were then analyzed using descriptive statistics with the Pearson product-moment correlation and the Fisher's

exact test. The qualitative aspect of the study included group interviews with the teachers before and after the audio taped lessons. The teachers discussed and analyzed their perceptions and methodologies of vocabulary development prior to the audio taping and then discussed their views and ideas after the audio taped lessons. This aided in a deeper awareness of the values that are reflected in the vocabulary approaches that make up their classroom lessons and a better understanding was gained of how their classroom discourse can affect vocabulary development.

The results of this study added to the body of knowledge regarding the relationship between low SES kindergarten through second graders, vocabulary development and teacher discourse. A better understanding of this relationship is needed to meet the guidelines of NCLB federal legislation (2002) so that all third grade children will be reading at grade level by the year 2014.

Research Questions

The following questions were explored in this study. The first three questions were studied through quantitative measures while the last two were qualitatively investigated.

1. Is there a significant relationship between socioeconomic status and vocabulary development? Research supports this relationship (McLloyd, 1998), but is it evident within this small southwestern Ohio school? The null hypothesis stated that there is no significant difference between socioeconomic status and vocabulary development. The alternative hypothesis stated that there is a significant difference between socioeconomic status and vocabulary development.

2.   Is there a significant relationship between the DIBELS WUF scores of low SES students and types of teacher discourse? The null hypothesis stated that there is no significant difference between DIBELS WUF scores of low SES students and types of teacher discourse. The alternative hypothesis stated that there is a significant difference between DIBELS WUF scores of low SES students and types of teacher discourse.

3.   Is there a relationship between vocabulary development and the type or nature of teacher talk within the literacy block of a kindergarten through second grade classroom? The null hypothesis stated that there is no significant difference between the type of teacher talk and vocabulary development within the literacy block of a kindergarten through second grade classroom. The alternative hypothesis stated that there is a significant difference between the type of teacher talk and vocabulary development within the literacy block of a kindergarten through second grade classroom.

4.   How do kindergarten through second grade teachers view the role of vocabulary within their classrooms?

5.   Do teachers' perceptions of their classroom discourse change after lesson reflection?

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between vocabulary development in students from low socioeconomic households and how it is affected by teacher talk. Low SES students who begin kindergarten with low vocabulary tend to continue this deficit throughout their career (Rathbun et al., 2005). This achievement gap has been studied for many years (Cunningham, 2006; Cutts, 1963; Donahue, Voelkl,

Campbell & Mazzeo, 1999), and various techniques to alleviate this gap have been evaluated (Baumann & Kame'enui, 2004; Graves, 2006; Marzano, Norford, Paynter, Pickering, & Gaddy, 2001; Nagy & Herman, 1987; Scott, Skobel, & Wells, 2008; Taylor & Pearson, 2002; Thompson & Frager, 1984; Wagner, Muse, & Tannenbaum, 2007). Many researchers agree that teacher talk affects the academic progress of students (Allington, 2001, Baker, 2007, Johnston, 2004). The relationship between teacher talk and the vocabulary development of low SES kindergarten through second grade students has not been studied. If a relationship between classroom discourse and vocabulary development can be established, then another technique to close the socioeconomic achievement gap can be recognized and utilized to ensure that all students achieve reading success.

<div align="center">Theoretical Framework</div>

Current research advocates the use of five components to a balanced reading program. The Institute for the Development of Educational Achievement (IDEA; 2006) states these five *big ideas* as alphabetic principle, phonemic awareness, comprehension, fluency, and vocabulary. These elements are essential in an early literacy program. Alphabetic principle and phonemic awareness are early reading skills that are explicitly taught, can be mastered, and become automatic as reading progresses. The remaining three develop over time and grow to be more complex as reading skills progress. Pressley (2002) interrelated fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension and stated that letter and word processes directly influence the depth of comprehension. Therefore, vocabulary development is an essential skill that must precede proficient reading skills. Limited

vocabulary development is often found in children from low SES households (Donahue et al., 1999). Research illustrates that this limited vocabulary is a source for slower reading progress and one reason for the achievement gap (Rathbun et al., 2005).

Classroom discourse has a significant effect on student learning (Dickinson & Smith, 1994; Poston, 2004). Students need intentional verbal interactions with teachers for dynamic vocabulary development to occur (Mooney, 2005). Teacher utterances, interactions, gestures, or curricular decisions, for example, influence student learning and who students become within the classroom and in the larger world (VanSluys, Lewison, & Seely Flint, 2006). Analyzing this classroom discourse is also an effective way to improve student learning through teacher reflection (Kucan, 2007).

Vocabulary is an integral component to reading instruction and must be systematically taught using positive, deep, thought provoking, interpersonal discourse (Qian, 2002; Rupley & Nichols, 2005). Students from low socioeconomic households historically begin formal schooling behind their middle and upper socioeconomic counterparts in vocabulary development (Hart & Risley, 2003) and require a significant relationship to acquire new knowledge (Payne, 1996). Therefore, the relationship between their vocabulary development and classroom discourse may affect the reading success of students from low SES households.

This relationship coincides with Vygotsky's (as cited in Daniels, 2001) theory of learning, which states that adults make reading a social activity by providing the means for children to participate in the activity of reading before he or she can actually read alone, thus transferring control of the activity from the adult to the child. The process of

learning is active, engaging, and social, according to constructivist theory (Costa & Kallick, 2000; Lambert et al., 2002; Marzano, 2003). Utilizing deep, meaningful conversation within a primary grade classroom to assist students from low SES households to increase their vocabulary is one way to close the socioeconomic achievement gap.

The constructivist pioneer, Dewey (1938), best stated this theory as learning through experience: "All human experience is ultimately social: that it involves contact and communication" (p. 38). Dewey felt that it was the responsibility of the educator to ensure that this experience encourages optimum learning for all students.

Freire's (2000) social justice pedagogy is also an overarching theory surrounding this research. Freire's belief that knowledge requires the interaction of others with others is central to understanding why teacher discourse is so important to student achievement. Freire's idea was to problem-pose instead of fill a student with knowledge (Bartlett, 2005). This problem-posing requires a "respectful relationship between teacher and student" (Bartlett, p. 347). It is through this respectful relationship that knowledge can be shared and explored by teacher and student and reflected on by teachers.

Definitions

Alphabetic principle: the ability to associate sounds with letters in order to form words (National Reading Panel, 2000).

Comprehension: the ability to understand what is being read (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000).

Direct instruction: the planned, systematic study of vocabulary (Thompson & Frager, 1984).

Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS): a research-based measurement system formulated by the University of Oregon that measures the risk factors for beginning reading skills (Good & Kaminski, 1996).

Fluency: the automatic, fluid reading of words (National Reading Panel, 2000).

Indirect instruction: vocabulary instruction that relies on wide reading with an emphasis on word learning strategy instruction. (Blachowicz, Fisher, Ogle, & Watts-Taffe, 2006).

Low socioeconomic status (SES): refers to students who qualify for free or reduced lunch as outlined by federal guidelines. It is noted that there are many more factors that influence socioeconomic status such as parent's educational level, maternal speech during the preschool years, the level of literacy activity within the home, and outside experiences, but these can not be aggregated within the parameters of this study (Donahue et al., 1999; Hoff, 2003; Manzo, Manzo, & Thomas, 2006; Rupley & Nichols, 2005).

Perception: gaining knowledge or becoming aware of something. As it relates to a teacher's attitude or opinion of his or her classroom vocabulary experience, a self-perception theory would relate where one would infer his or her own attitude or opinion by observing behavior and circumstances surrounding the behavior (Colman, 2006).

Phonemic awareness: the ability to hear and manipulate the sounds in words (National Reading Panel, 2000).

Teacher talk: the talk between a teacher and students within a classroom (Mooney, 2005). Teacher talk can be divided into many categories. For this study the broad categories will be knowledge and action exchanges (Jewett & Goldstein, 2000). Within the knowledge exchange the categories will be clarify/repeat, justify/reflect, prompt/focus, and tell. Within the action exchange the categories will be behavioral and directional. The terms teacher talk, teacher speech, and teacher discourse will be used interchangeably.

Word Use Fluency (*WUF):* a subtest of the DIBELS system that measures the meaning vocabulary of the student (Good & Kaminski, 1996). Unlike the other subtests of the DIBELS assessment package, exact percentages for risk factors have not been solidified. Currently the cut off for low risk is 40% and some risk is 20% (Kaminski et al, 2004).

<center>Assumptions</center>

It is assumed that the DIBELS measurement system is an effective method of measuring vocabulary growth in kindergarten through second grade students (Good & Kaminski, 1996). It is also assumed that the audio-taped classroom discourse is typical of a primary grade classroom and typical of the classroom from which it came. There were more taped sessions than were transcribed in the present study. The audiotape was deemed a normal part of the environment and was assumed not to affect classroom performance. Another assumption of this study was that the building in which the data

were gathered used best practices for vocabulary development. These best practice techniques were taken from the Pearson Scott Foresman (2007) *Reading Street* reading series.

Limitations

This study was limited to utilizing data from one K-2 building school in a small southwest Ohio town. The classroom discourse that was recorded may not be typical of a primary grade classroom. Though the DIBELS assessment system has been used for over 10 years (Good & Kaminski, 1996) and has been researched and validated, the WUF subtest does not have set benchmarks for risk factors. There are rough percentages of 20% and 40% for low risk and some risk, but no validated, specific benchmarks (Kaminski et al, 2004). Low SES is measured by the federal standards for free and reduced lunch. No other guidelines were used to measure socioeconomic status, though others may be found within the sampling. This research was limited because it used a small number of student participants—60 students, and 6 teachers—within a small southwestern Ohio school district. The time allocation was 10 weeks for all data collection procedures.

Delimitations

Classroom discourse was restricted to kindergarten through second grade classrooms in a small town southwestern Ohio school district. Vocabulary growth was measured using the WUF subtest of the DIBELS risk measurement system. Low SES was measured by the federal guidelines of free and reduced lunch. Classroom discourse was taped during the literacy block of a typical school day.

Significance

A major significance of this study concerns the achievement gap. The results of this research will give educators added information concerning ways to close the socioeconomic achievement gap. Much research has been generated in the various subtopics of this gap, both the reasons for this disparity and methods to eradicate this difference. This study garnered information for educators who are using best vocabulary development practice yet continue to see the socioeconomic achievement gap. It will add to the body of information regarding the reasons for this continued gap when all other components are in place. Students from low socioeconomic households are the beneficiaries of this new information because they will be able to reach similar vocabulary knowledge as their middle socioeconomic counterparts.

Teacher talk has been studied and its significance has been researched (Baker, 2007; Johnston, 2004; Mooney, 2005; VanSluys, et al., 2006). This study links teacher talk with low SES as it relates to vocabulary development in kindergarten through second grade students. The review of the literature delved into the background research that maintains that vocabulary is a major component to reading success. The association between low SES and a lack of vocabulary development was also explored. Finally, the importance of teacher talk on the academic achievement of students was investigated. This study is significant because the relationship between teacher discourse and early elementary vocabulary development has not been examined.

It is imperative that the achievement gap be eradicated from our educational system. Every child has the inherent right to become a proficient adult reader. This study

searched for one way to assist in this eradication of social injustice so that all people have the opportunity to reach their full potential through effective education. The implication for social change is significant because students from low socioeconomic households benefit from increased vocabulary development and enhance their ability to become successful readers. With a successful learning experience, these students have a greater probability of becoming accomplished members of society.

Summary

This concurrent mixed-method study is based on teachers using research-based practices to teach vocabulary within their classroom. The federal government has mandated that all children read on grade level by the time they reach third grade. A problem arises when teachers who are using research-based practices continue to have students who do not read on grade level even after many interventions have been used. This study explored one possible reason for this problem so that a better understanding of this dilemma can be developed.

Section 2 examines the historical perspective of reading instruction and the role of vocabulary instruction within the scheme of total reading instruction. It also delves into the effect of teacher discourse and the role of socioeconomic status on learning. Section two investigates various professional development tools that can be used for effective teacher training. Section two continues with a survey of the effectiveness of the University of Oregon's DIBELS assessment tool and ends with an overview of research methodology. Section 3 outlines the methodology of this study, explaining the exact steps that were followed within this research. Section 4 thoroughly analyzes the data that were

gathered and explains the findings within the research. This study culminates in section 5 with a complete discussion of the findings along with further research topics that should be explored to ensure that all children are reading on grade level by the third grade.

SECTION 2:

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The reading process is complex and multifaceted (Huey, as cited in Israel & Monaghan, 2007). Stanovich (2000) named the scientific research base that is currently available to understand the process of reading as the *grand synthesis* (p. 405). This grand synthesis of research included work on eye movement, levels of comprehension, phonological understanding, phonemic awareness, brain functioning, and word recognition. This study explored one minute facet within this complicated endeavor to gain a better understanding of the process. It is always important to examine the historical journey of a topic so that one can obtain a better understanding of the subject in its entirety. Therefore, this literature review begins with a brief overview of the history of reading instruction. The reading process will then be outlined so that an understanding of the importance of vocabulary within this process can be obtained. An overview of vocabulary instruction will follow summarizing past and current trends. This review will continue with an analysis of teacher talk as it pertains to student achievement. A discussion of how socioeconomic status affects student achievement and vocabulary growth will then be explored. An investigation of professional development, its history and its relation to reading instruction will follow. This literature review will continue with an analysis of the researchers who repudiate the effectiveness of the DIBELS measurement tools as well as the research supporting the effectiveness of the DIBELS system to predict reading difficulties. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of

research methodology, its development over time, major approaches to research and how these approaches relate to this study.

This review developed as a continuation of master's degree research. An analysis had previously been made of the weaknesses within this researcher's district reading program. The master's work focused on the most evident problem, a lack of phonemic awareness in kindergarteners. Progress was gained in this area, yet a discrepancy in student reading achievement continued. A review of possible causes led to the topic of this study. Extensive journal review and book and dissertation searches were performed. Personal communication with fellow researchers, leaders in the field of reading, allowed a focus to ensue so that a clear purpose could be gained. This literature review encompasses all of the facets to this doctoral study as a better understanding of the relationship between teacher talk, vocabulary development, and socioeconomic status is garnered.

The literature search strategy was multifaceted. The databases used were Academic Search Primer, Education Research Complete, Educational Resource Information Center, PsychARTICLES, Teacher Reference Center, OhioLINK, EBSCO, International Reading Association, National Staff Development Council, Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development, Questia, National Center for Education Statistics, ProQuest, and the library at University of Miami, Ohio. Key terms were numerous as various subjects encompass a thorough understanding of the study. Some terms used were: reading, vocabulary development, teacher discourse, teacher talk, socioeconomic, professional development in literacy, brain-based learning, reading

process, methodology, history of reading, student achievement, DIBELS, constructivism, phonics, fluency, comprehension, and teacher language. This is a partial list of key terms.

History of Reading Instruction

The question of how one learns to read has been asked for the last 100 years. Nineteenth century educators used rote learning as the major method of teaching reading. The use of the McGuffy reader that used adult language and the *alphabetic method of teaching* (Vail, 2005) techniques and practice best illustrated this method. Even though this was the principal method of instruction, other philosophies were introduced during this time. Johann Pestalozzi postulated that children should learn from experience using whole-to-part practices rather than part-to-whole while Samuel Worcester advocated whole word methods (as cited in Israel & Monaghan, 2007). Francis Parker (as cited in Israel & Monaghan, 2007) also supported student interest as the best method of teaching children how to read. These progressive ideas spurred by Dewey's (1938) educational philosophy brought about a century of controversy within the reading field.

The mid-20th century found the *whole word* and controlled *Dick and Jane* method (Britton, 2004). Basal readers became the accepted form of reading instruction with a limit on the number of words used in each story. By the 1930s the average number of words in a typical primer dropped by almost a third from a typical 1920 primer (Israel & Monaghan, 2007). In 1955 Flesch published *Why Johnny Can't Read-And What You Can Do About It,* which criticized the whole word method and advocated the phonics approach to reading instruction. It became a bestseller and caused a great debate over the best way to teach reading. During the late 20th century there was the whole language

approach (Dahl & Freppon, 1995) which emphasized intense, rigorous reading

experience as the method of gaining knowledge of the reading process. The 21st century

has brought a balanced approach to teaching children to read. The strengths of

Pestalozzian principles of whole-to-part learning (Israel & Monaghan, 2007) tempered

with the progressive theories embodied in Colonel Parker and Dewey and the National

Society for the Study of Education (NSSE) organization's 1949 goals of a good reading

program (Israel & Monaghan, 2007), all combined to encompass today's theory of

reading education.

      This balanced approach includes the use of five basic components: phonemic

awareness, alphabetic principle, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension (IDEA, 2006).

Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear and manipulate sounds in our language. The

alphabetic principle is the understanding that these sounds are related to letters and that

these letter sounds form words. Vocabulary is the ability to understand what those words

mean. Fluency is the ability to read those words in sentences smoothly and clearly, and

comprehension is the ability to make sense and understand what is being read. Once

persons master the phonemic awareness and phonological knowledge necessary to sound

out words, then vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension are intertwined to form the

backbone of how they make sense of the written word (Pressley, 2002). Educators

currently use this balanced approach to the reading process to facilitate reading

instruction.

The Reading Process

Of these five reading processes, phonemic awareness and the alphabetic principle are two early skills that are explicitly taught and mastered first. The remaining three— fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension—are processes that develop over time and with increasing complexity (Pressley, 2002). These three skills are also interrelated (Beck, Perfetti, & McKeown, 1982; Biemiller, 2003; Carver, 2000; Qian, 2002; Roundtree, 2006; Rupley & Nichols, 2005). It is now an accepted principle that reading for understanding involves the fluid, smooth reading of text, knowledge of all words read, and higher level thinking of what is being read (Pressley, 2002).

As reading ability increases, the fluent reading of text must continue at ever higher reading levels. Comprehension is the "complex cognitive process involving the intentional interaction between the reader and text to convey meaning" (IDEA, 2006, ¶ 1). Pressley (2002) stated that reading comprehension is actively thinking about text using multiple strategies and that word recognition and fluency are interrelated with word meaning, vocabulary, and comprehension. Before Pressley, Stahl and Fairbanks's meta-analysis (as cited in Stahl & McKenna, 2006) indicated a significant effect of vocabulary instruction and reading comprehension.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary can be defined as the understanding of word meaning and how words are used in text (Vaughn & Linan-Thompson, 2004). The importance of vocabulary development to reading progress has long been documented in research (Biemiller, 2003; Carver, 2000; Qian, 2002; Roundtree, 2006; Rupley & Nichols, 2005; Stahl & McKenna,

2006; Thompson & Frager, 1984). The emphasis placed on how vocabulary should be taught has stirred some controversy. The philosophies of direct versus indirect instruction have oscillated throughout the second half of the 20th century. Thompson and Frager noted that planned, individualized vocabulary instruction is an important element in developmental reading classes. Attention was on the use of vocabulary flash cards to improve reading comprehension. Over the past 10 years, many researchers have advocated this direct instruction method for vocabulary development (Joshi, 2005; Long, 2000). Conversely, Nagy and Herman (1987) iterated that indirect instruction of vocabulary was the method that should be used to guarantee reading progress. Blachowicz et al. (2006) suggested that certain characteristics of good vocabulary instruction should be evident within a classroom. Intentional teaching of certain words should be evident. Within this intentional teaching, there should be "multiple types of information about each new word" (Blachowicz et al., 2006, p. 527). Elements of word-learning strategies should be taught that foster word-learning independence. McKeown and Beck (as cited in Stahl & McKenna, 2006) advised a combination of strategies for effective vocabulary instruction. Multiple exposures that were similar to natural vocabulary learning, direct word property instruction, and deep understanding of meaning were advocated.

Most current practice involves this combination of direct and indirect instruction (Biemiller, 2003; Joshi, 2005). Manzo et al. (2006) discussed the historical journey that vocabulary instruction has traveled. Both articles lamented the inadequate vocabulary

instruction of the past 30 years and cited the need for increased attention to vocabulary instruction in U.S. schools.

In analyzing the instructional methods for vocabulary the National Reading Panel (2000) recognized the variety of methods available but neither recommended one type or method over another nor rated one over another. This panel acknowledged a lack of vocabulary research in the early elementary years and found that the majority of research was between the third and eighth grades. The panel's conclusion coincided with previous researchers' findings that multiple measures, both direct and indirect, should be used for effective vocabulary instruction.

Although few studies exist using the early elementary years, one study that used early literacy instruction found that student initiated talk or active participation was important. This 1994 study by Dickinson and Smith used preschool children and the effects of teacher talk on vocabulary acquisition. It was found that vocabulary gains were made when there was a large amount of child-initiated talk. This research has implications for this current study in that a relationship was found between large amounts of talk and vocabulary acquisition.

Teacher Talk and Vocabulary Development

Hoff (2003) and Molfese et al. (2003) linked maternal speech with the achievement gap. The importance of maternal speech to academic achievement was posited. Children from higher SES households were spoken to differently than children from low SES households. There was more conversation in the homes of higher SES households then in lower SES households. Parents from low SES households tended to

speak in directives rather than conversation. The findings of these two studies would raise the question as to whether talk within the classroom would also affect academic achievement. Speculation concerning the quality of teacher talk prevalent within a classroom and the affect it would have on the vocabulary development of children from low SES backgrounds could also be made.

The type of teacher language does affect students according to several studies. For example, Moorman and Weber (1989) stated, "Your choice of words and your language selections are critical to the self-esteem, the academic success, and the healthy mental and emotional development of your students" (p. i). Johnston (2004) noted that teachers' interactions with students shows what kind of people teachers think their students are and provide models for students to practice being those kinds of people. These researchers found that the way a teacher speaks affects the students in all domains. Allington (2002) spoke of the importance of teacher tone in a strong literacy classroom. Research with the National Research Center focused on the importance of effective teachers to strong academic progress. Among the six T's of effective reading instruction, Allington spoke of the importance of teacher tone, stating that tone should be conversational in response to student responses instead of interrogational.

Mooney (2005) highlighted the conversational aspect of teacher talk and spoke of an early study by McCarthy in 1984 (as cited in Mooney), which found that high-scoring children had teachers who used fewer controlling and more information-giving conversations with children. This early study illustrates the importance of teacher talk on testing scores.

Webb's (2009) study of small group instruction highlighted the importance of teacher talk to encourage deep thought processes in students. This researcher's goal was to assess the impact of teacher talk on students' thinking during collaborative group work. Types of teacher talk were divided into *high-press* and *low-press* classrooms. In high- press classrooms, teachers probe and question for deep explanations to their problem- solving choices. In low-press classrooms there was less teacher-student interaction and students summarized their findings but did not explain why they chose a technique.

A British study examined the change in teacher interactions between 1976 and 1996 and found very little change over this 20-year period (Galton, Hargreaves, Comber, Wall, & Pell, 1999). These researchers concluded that teachers talk and students listen with very little speculative or open ended questioning. Another British study, spurred by the country's national initiatives in education, investigated the nature of classroom discourse on pupil learning (Myhill, 2006). Myhill found that classroom discourse is largely about teacher control spurred by curriculum requirements and lacked the necessary dialogue to increase and enhance student learning. An Australian study explored teacher training as it relates to discourse and student achievement (Gillies & Khan, 2008). This study found that when teachers are taught higher order communication skills, their students adopt the same type of communication when speaking in cooperative groups and they score higher on standardized tests.

Brain-Based Research and Learning

Knowledge of brain-based research relates to the topic of vocabulary development of students from low SES households. The neuroscientific community has increased

understanding of the brain's function in learning to the point where the brain can actually be seen actively engaging with stimuli (Wolfe, 2001). Educators understand how to teach so that information travels from sensory memory to working memory on to long term memory. Scientists recognize that the capacity to retain information in working memory is limited but the ability to chunk information into larger sections allows individuals to learn ever increasing pieces of information (Wolfe, 2001). The brain will "attend first to information that has strong emotional content" (Wolfe, p. 88). Emotional content is regulated by the type of teacher talk and the atmosphere of a classroom. A better understanding of the function of the brain while learning will give a teacher the tools necessary to orchestrate a classroom atmosphere that is conducive to optimum learning for all students.

<div align="center">The Role of Socioeconomic Status</div>

The focus of this research was to analyze how teacher talk affects the vocabulary development of students from low SES backgrounds. The role of SES on learning is an important one. Educators have established that low socioeconomic status often coincides with poor reading ability and low vocabulary growth. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (Donahue et al., 1999) illustrated that there was a direct link to parental educations, eligibility for free and reduced lunch and reading success. A student's prior experiences is an essential component to early reading success in that a lack of early literacy experiences lead to weak reading skills. Noble et al. (2006) spoke of this relationship as a *multiplicative factors hypothesis* which "predicts that the relationship between academic achievement and reading achievement will be

systematically modulated by socioeconomic status" (p. 350). The authors discussed the importance of understanding the relationship of cognitive factors such as phonemic awareness to the child's background and experiences. The student's prior literacy background is an essential component to early reading success in that low literacy experiences lead to weak reading skills.

In addition to the economic level of the household, SES involves other factors that relate to reading skill acquisition. Genetic and environmental factors have also been explored as having an effect on reading skill acquisition. Wagner (2005) asserted that genetics accounts for 50% or more of the variance in levels of reading skill acquisition. Baker et al. (1995) found that low socioeconomic status alone does not insure low vocabulary development. How a mother speaks to her child also affects vocabulary development. Low SES is often associated with low verbal vocabulary interaction between mother and child (Hoff, 2003). Maternal interaction is not the only environmental factor that affects reading ability. Molfese et al. (2003) stated:

> The environment plays any important role in the development of reading abilities. Activities in the home, home characteristics and parenting practices contribute to the development of children's cognitive abilities-both intellectual abilities and reading abilities…The child's abilities and behaviors interact and are affected by the people and experiences in the environment. (p. 65)

Rathbun et al. (2005) analyzed several risk factors and their effect on early educational achievement. The factors that were analyzed in their study were (a) mother's education less than a high school diploma, (b) living below the poverty level, (c) single parent household, and (d) non-English primary home language. These factors alone and in combination cause children to progress at a slower pace than children without these

risk factors. The research community continues to struggle with the causes of the achievement gap. It remains the responsibility of the schools to educate each child to the best of its ability. This includes reaching those children who have disadvantaged environments.

<div align="center">History of Professional Development</div>

Staff development is an integral part of student success. If teachers are not trained in the best research-based practices, then students will not reach their full potential. The history of reading instruction illustrates that early teaching techniques had little basis in research. Thirty years ago, when this author began teaching, students were taught the alphabet, sounds associated with the alphabet, vocabulary needed for the lesson and then they read and read and read (Ediger, l996). During the 1980s research began to unfold that shed light on the intricacies of the art of teaching reading. The Commission of Reading (1985) commanded professional development for reading teachers in the report, *Becoming a Nation of Readers*. This was the beginning of the complex connection between research and reading instruction. This association produced an increase in professional development (PD) within the nation's schools. The International Reading Association's (IRA; 2000) position statement regarding the rights of all children stated that "Children have a right to well-prepared teachers who keep their skills up to date through effective professional development" (p. 5).

Many districts now have formal PD programs that assist teachers in improving teaching technique. There are three organizations that outline methods for professional development improvement within schools. They are the National Staff Development

Council (NSDC), the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD),

and the National School Board Association (NSBA). These national organizations

regularly publish articles and books that assist school districts in improving professional

development. For instance, NSDC's Killian (2002) outlined eight steps to effective PD

evaluation that will help improve PD program. The NSDC also stated that all staff

development should be results-driven, standards-based, and job-embedded. The

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD; 2007) offered a

website that assists in effective professional development implementation. It included a

survey, with an analysis of the results, as well as suggestions to strengthen any weak PD

areas that were found within the survey. The National School Board Association (NSBA;

2007) also provided a website for PD improvement. It outlined procedures for PD

improvement, listed characteristics of effective PD, and offered samples for developing a

professional development plan (PDP). L'Allier & Elish-Piper (2007) noted that models of

professional development with single workshops presented by outsiders who do not

understand the school, community, and curriculum are inadequate for today's teachers

and students.

Professional development collaboration must maintain continuous support and

improvement. This continuous support will produce professional learning communities

(PLCs) whose characteristics will include "supportive and shared leadership, shared

values and vision, collective learning and application of that learning, supportive

conditions, and shared personal practice" (Hord, 2003, p. 1). Tillema and van der

Westhuizen (2006) continued this conceptual framework by outlining the efficacy issues

through knowledge productivity and reflective collaboration. The premise was that for knowledge productivity to occur the three criteria of problem understanding, perspective, and commitment need to be met. Knowledge productivity occurred when these criteria are fostered. This type of study approach provides opportunities for professionals to work on common problems as a team.

This inquiry stance is viewed in the many types of PD positions currently available. The NSDC advocated several types of constructivist professional development techniques. They are three types of coaching, peer, collegial, and cognitive, as well as the action research approach, mentoring, lesson study, and study group format (Dantonio, 2001; Neufeld & Roper, 2003; Richardson, 2000, 2001, 2003, 2004; Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2001). The constructivist based approach to PD is reflected in the study team type of professional learning. Lieberman & Miller (2001) stated:

> The knowledge teachers need to teach well is generated when teachers treat their own classrooms and schools as sites for intentional investigation at the same time that they treat the knowledge and theory produced by others as generative material for interrogation and interpretation. (p. 48)

The study group format was used in the qualitative section of this research study.

Professional Development as It Relates to Reading Instruction

The National Reading Panel (NRP; 2000) reported that the early reading skills of phonemic awareness and phonology had research-based practices that allowed for effective professional development and instruction implementation. The components of fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension needed more research in order to ensure effective instruction for all students. Since this time there has been research that covers

these reading components as they relate to professional development. Chard (2004)

proposed a conceptual structure to improve reading PD. Three areas of concern that

Chard outlined were teacher knowledge, teacher capacity, and the teachers' sense of

efficacy. The question could be raised as to whether teachers have the pedagogical

knowledge base necessary for effective teaching as well as whether they have the

capacity to incorporate this knowledge in the daily instructional needs of all readers. The

question of whether teachers feel that their teaching is effective can also be posited. A

dialogue around these questions needs to be a part of all professional development to

ensure effective reading instruction.

Grant, Young, and Montbriand (2001), who were commissioned by the U.S.

Department of Education, made five recommendations for proficient PD. The

recommendations included commitment of time, personnel, and finances, a focus on

teacher beliefs as it pertains to instructional methods, appropriate training methods,

proper evaluation of PD methods used, and thorough research into effective PD methods.

In an unpublished doctoral dissertation, Blair (2006) concluded that teachers do not feel

adequately trained to teach emergent readers. The researcher recommended a

reassessment of university standards of teacher preparation. Cunningham, Perry,

Stanovich, and Stanovich (2004) went one step further and concluded that "teachers do

not always know what they do not know" (p. 162). Teachers lack relevant technical

knowledge fundamental to the teaching of reading. Teachers' knowledge or lack of

knowledge and their inability to judge what they know and do not know must be

calculated in the process of new professional development within any school. The

scaffolding necessary to assist all adult learners to discover the wealth of knowledge that they do not know is paramount to the successful implementation of all staff development.

DIBELS as a Measurement Tool

This author's inquiry used the DIBELS assessment as its measurement tool for progress. A look into its effectiveness as an assessment tool for reading progress is warranted.

The accuracy of the DIBELS measure has come under some scrutiny. There are two websites and a book devoted to the disclaimer of DIBELS as a viable research-based assessment tool. One such site, the Vermont Society for the Study of Education, outlined a book written by Ken Goodman that discussed the weaknesses of the DIBELS assessment. Goodman (2004) argued that the time aspect of the assessment does not give a clear picture of the student's reading ability and disputed the effectiveness of high stakes testing in our country. Coles (2003) also argued against the use of the DIBELS assessment and stated that it does not include a justifiable comprehension measure. Unfortunately, research to validate these claims that the DIBELS tool was not accurate could not be found. The following studies give some validity to the accuracy of the DIBELS tool to predict reading difficulties

Vander Meer, Lentz, and Stollar (2005) found a correlation between the DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) score and performance on the Ohio Proficiency Test. Students in three elementary schools in southwest Ohio were studied. Using the DIBELS ORF and a CBM ORF measure, these researchers found a moderately high correlation

between students who scored in the benchmark range in ORF scores and those who scored in the proficient range on the Ohio Proficiency Test.

A second reliability study was completed by researchers at the University of Kansas (Elliott, Lee, & Tollefson, 2001). Here 75 kindergarten students were tested using several DIBELS assessment tools as well as three other standardized criterion measures and an informal teacher rating questionnaire. The DIBELS measure was found to be a reliable measure of early reading success.

A third reliability study involved 215 third-grade students in rural and urban Alabama (Paleologos, 2005). It examined the validity of the ORF score to predict reading comprehension on the SAT–10 in children with varying socioeconomic levels. The researcher found the DIBELS ORF to be a significant predictor of reading comprehension (p. 59).

Most of the DIBELS studies analyzed the accuracy of the ORF subtest. A recent study (Riedel, 2007) found that the ORF measure was more accurate than the Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF), Phonemic Segmentation Fluency (PSF), or Letter Naming Fluency (LNF) subtests for the predictive value for first and second grade comprehension levels. Riedel found that the ORF measure classified 80% of students correctly for future reading comprehension. This study concluded that the DIBELS measurement system accurately identified students who may need early intervention and did predict future reading difficulties.

A recent unpublished doctoral dissertation analyzed the reliability of the WUF measure and third grade reading outcomes (Potter, 2008). This study found a moderate

correlation between the end of kindergarten WUF scores and third grade comprehension as measured by the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test. The first and second grade scores did not show a correlation with third grade reading outcomes, but the author noted some important limitations to the study that may have influenced the results. There were inconsistencies in the implementation of the measure where different people carried out the pre- and post-test measures. A variance in the training of these people may have influenced the outcomes of the study. One conclusion made was that the WUF measure may be a better predictor of third grade reading outcome when used at the earlier elementary grades before the skill of reading connected text is reached.

The authors of the DIBELS measurement system advocate the use of the DIBELS tests for predicting reading difficulty so that early intervention can prevent future reading failure (Good, Kaminski, Simmons, & Kame'enui, 2001). Used as a predictor of future reading problems, the DIBELS measurement system has been accepted as an accurate measure for assessing early intervention. It was used within this study to measure vocabulary growth in kindergarten through second grade low-socioeconomic students.

<div align="center">Research Methodology</div>

A definition of research is "to study (something) thoroughly so as to present in a detailed, accurate manner" (The American Heritage Dictionary, 1992, p. 1534). Methodology can then be defined as, "a body of practices, procedures, and rules used by those who work in a discipline or engage in an inquiry" (p. 1136). A definition of research methodology would then combine these two definitions of detailed, accurate study of practices and procedures. DeMarrais and Lapan (2004) stated that research

methodology "involves the researcher's assumptions about the nature of reality and the nature of knowing and knowledge" (p. 5). These authors also make a distinction between methodology and methods where methods are the tools that are used in research and methodology is the paradigm under which the researcher bases the study.

Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2000) stated that there was no universal way to plan research and advised that a matrix be used in planning so that there is organization to the study and coherence of thought. This suggestion will help a researcher plan a study, as educational research has changed dramatically over the past thirty years (deMarrais & Lapan, 2004). Prior to the 1980s most educational research was quantitative and focused on statistics, measurement and experimental methods. During the past three decades qualitative resources have increased and the *paradigm wars* (deMarrais & Lapan, p. 3) ensued. Researchers debated over the merits of quantitative and qualitative, which was true research, and which was not. Currently, there are many choices, whether they be quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods, with numerous methodologies from which to choose, such as positivist, constructivist, or feminist (Hatch, 2002).

The matrix devised by Cohen et al. (2000) allows a researcher to make clear decisions regarding the design of the study, moving from general ideas to specific research questions. This matrix begins with the aims and purpose of the research, continues into questions, reliability and validity, and narrows the focus to data gathering, sampling, analysis, and reporting techniques.

With this matrix in mind, a researcher must decide which method to use. Creswell (2003) stated that mixed methods research has become more widely accepted and fills

gaps that may exist in qualitative or quantitative research alone. When choosing a mixed methods approach a knowledge claim must be chosen. A researcher's approach to the study must be defined so that the how and why of what will be learned through study is understood. Hatch (2002) outlined five paradigms as positivist, postpositivist, constructivist, feminist, and poststructuralist. The positivist paradigm encompasses an objective view of the universe that is orderly and independent of human perceptions, while the postpositivist agrees with this world view but believes that the universe can never be fully understood. Constructivist thinking believes that the world is understood based on an individual constructing meaning from one's world. A feminist world view believes that historical events have shaped lives and resulted in differential treatment based on race, gender, and social class. The poststructural paradigm essentially believes that there is no reality and meaning comes from individuals attempting to make sense of the world.

The research conducted in this study followed the constructivist approach because this researcher believes that realities are uniquely understood by individuals' understanding of their surroundings. The qualitative portion of this study explored the views and beliefs of teachers as they explored their knowledge of vocabulary instruction and teacher discourse within their classrooms. A personal understanding of this topic was generated through discussion and research.

The methodology or strategies of inquiry (Creswell, 2003) available to qualitative studies are ethnographies, grounded theory, case studies, phenomenological and narrative research. An ethnography explores a cultural group over time primarily using observation

while a grounded theory study attempts to discover a theory about a particular phenomenon (Creswell, 1998). Case studies work with a limited number of individuals looking at a narrow focus within a limited time period (Creswell, 2003). Narrative research studies the lives of a limited number of participants concerning their lives. Phenomenological research explores the experience of individuals regarding a concept or phenomenon (Creswell, 1998). This study used the phenomenological approach to explore the experience of kindergarten through second grade teachers as they investigated their understanding of vocabulary development and teacher discourse within their classroom.

Summary

The history of reading instruction has taught that learning to read has always been seen as a complex, intricate process that involves many parts in order to become successful. Through the years many methods have been used with current practice being one where a balance of approaches chosen carefully and systematically will ensure reading proficiency. Vocabulary is seen as a vital component to the reading process, yet due to socioeconomic issues, many students fail to develop a deep understanding of words that in turn hinders their ability to read well. The type of teacher discourse within a classroom has been shown to affect student achievement. Deep conversation and effective student-teacher interaction assist in the academic progress of the student. When knowledge of vocabulary instruction is combined with the importance of effective teacher discourse, and knowledge of how socioeconomic status affects student

achievement, a better understanding of how to eliminate the socioeconomic achievement

gap will ensue.

SECTION 3:

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

As the literature review outlined, the type of teacher discourse within a classroom affects student achievement (Allington, 2002; Mooney, 2005; Moorman & Weber, 1989), and vocabulary development in low socioeconomic students has historically been a concern for reading success (Donahue et al., 1999; Noble et al., 2006). The purpose of this study was to consider the relationship between teacher discourse and vocabulary development in students from low SES backgrounds. Both qualitative and quantitative data were gathered to explain this relationship. The goal of mixed methods research is to ensure greater accuracy (Kadushin, Hecht, Sasson, & Saxe, 2008), while triangulation "will achieve a better estimate of the error inherent in any measurement both within and between the methods" (p. 47). Mixed methods research is a relatively new model to the social sciences that was introduced by Campbell and Fiske in 1959 (as cited in Powell, Mihalas, Onwuegbuzie, Suldo, & Daley, 2008). Powell et al. indicated that mixed methods research should be used in studies where the research question suggests a need for both quantitative and qualitative approaches to best answer the question and provide greater explanation of and insight into the topic studied. The research questions for this study are as follows:

1. Is there a significant relationship between socioeconomic status and vocabulary development? Research supports this relationship (McLloyd, 1998), but is it evident within this small southwestern Ohio school?

2. Is there a significant relationship between the DIBELS WUF scores of low-SES students and types of teacher discourse?

3. Is there a relationship between vocabulary development and the type or nature of teacher talk within the literacy block of a kindergarten through second grade classroom?

4. How do kindergarten through second grade teachers view the role of vocabulary within their classrooms?

5. Do teachers' perceptions of their classroom discourse change after lesson reflection?

These questions suggest that combining quantitative and qualitative data would elicit a better understanding of the socioeconomic achievement gap that has perplexed the reading research community. Using a quantitative approach alone would not garner a clear understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Creswell (2003) stated that a quantitative approach most often uses postpositivist ideals, which would involve testing a theory and then determining the effect of the theory being tested. This method would not take into account the beliefs and ideas that a teacher brings to the classroom and would not follow this researcher's constructivist paradigm. A qualitative approach alone would also not elicit a clear understanding of the topic under study. Collecting qualitative data would require more time than this researcher could give. As a classroom teacher, this researcher could not complete the field hours necessary for a thorough qualitative approach. Combining the two methods of quantitative and qualitative allowed for a deep and thorough understanding of this topic.

The quantitative portion of this study was coded teacher discourse lesson transcripts taken from two language arts lessons of each of the teacher participants as well as the teacher-study interaction types. These discourse types were counted and categorized. The growth score of the DIBELS WUF pre and post assessment (DIBELS data system, 2008) during a 10-week period was also a part of the quantitative portion of this study. The qualitative aspects of this research included a study group of 6 kindergarten through second grade teacher participants who were randomly selected from a group of volunteers.

A phenomenological tradition, as outlined by Creswell (1998), was used for this research. To follow this approach to research, certain methods need to be followed. Creswell stated that a researcher must bracket ideas about the topic so that preconceived notions will not interfere with a complete understanding of the participants' perspective on the topic. To follow these guidelines, this researcher bracketed her preconceived ideas about the relationship between teacher discourse and vocabulary development in low-SES students. The research questions explored the experience from the participants' perspective and data analysis followed outlined steps that began broadly and became more defined. This study concluded with a discussion that unified the thoughts of all participants into a central theme (Creswell, 1998).

Research Design

A concurrent mixed-method research design was used in this study. Creswell (2003) stated that a concurrent procedure "converges quantitative and qualitative data in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem" (p. 16). The qualitative aspect of this study included a study group that was established with the

participating teachers before data were collected. First, the participants explored their feelings and methodologies of vocabulary development within their classrooms. Teacher discourse was then collected using the audio taping of six language arts lessons over the 10-week study period. These audiotapes were coded and transcribed, and the focus group met again, discussed the lessons and explored the differences and similarities of their perceptions and the transcript findings. These qualitative methods were mixed with a quantitative measure and aided in the clarification of the findings of this study. The quantitative measure was a pre- and post-test using DIBELS WUF measurement. The amount of growth during the 10-week period was then assessed. The type of teacher talk was quantified using discourse analysis.

Creswell (2003) stated that "a mixed methods research problem may be one in which a need exists to both understand the relationship among variables in a situation and explore the topic in further detail" (p. 76). Combining the quantitative measures of the DIBELS WUF and discourse analysis with the qualitative measure of a study group allowed for a deeper understanding of the relationship between vocabulary development and teacher discourse through detailed exploration.

Population and Sample

The population for this study was kindergarten through second grade students and teachers. The sampling frame was a small southwestern Ohio school district. Teachers were presented with the purpose and the structure of the study during a faculty meeting and were asked for voluntary participation. Six volunteers were randomly selected from this pool of volunteers, with 2 teachers from each of the grades kindergarten through second grade. According to Gravetter and Wallnau (2005), a random sample should meet

two conditions: There must be an equal chance for all participants to be selected, and there must be a constant probability for each participant throughout the selection process. Teacher names were separated by grade level when necessary, and two names were chosen at random for each of the three grade levels.

Students who receive free or reduced lunch within the classrooms of these 6 teachers were the participants in this study. Free or reduced lunch qualification was determined through a federal application that requests parent income and number per household. This measure does not consider other underlying factors that are associated with SES such as parental educations, number of parents in household, availability of printed material, or mother and child verbalizations (Baker et al., 1995; Hoff, 2003; Rathbun et al., 2005; Wagner, 2005). This small southwestern Ohio elementary school has 64% of its student population receiving free or reduced lunch; therefore, it would be accurate to state that a similar percentage of each classroom contains students who receive free or reduced lunch. Three of the classes chosen for this study had free or reduced lunch percentages much higher than the district average—as high was 83%. Ten children from each class were randomly selected to participate in this quantitative portion of the study, for a total participant number of 60 students.

In this small town community of 13,663 (U.S. Census, 2000), 41.6% of the adult population received a high school diploma, and 8.4% received a college degree. The school district is composed of one high school, one junior high school, one upper elementary school, and one lower elementary school. This study took place in the lower elementary school, which houses the pre-kindergarten through second grades and contains approximately 625 students. The researcher's role in this study was as observer

and data quantifier and has been employed for 9 years within the school where the sample was drawn.

To collect further information regarding the vocabulary level of the current sample school district an additional test was performed. A comparison sample using the Fisher's exact test was performed. The comparison sample was used from a middle socioeconomic school district in Ohio that used the DIBELS WUF measurement test.

Design Sequence

This pre- and post-test non-experimental design (Trochim, 2006) gathered data concurrently so that all data, both quantitative and qualitative, could work together to form a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between vocabulary growth and teacher discourse during language arts lessons. It is imperative that vocabulary growth in kindergarten through second grade students of low SES households increase at a rapid rate to eliminate achievement gaps that have been plaguing the nation's students for many years (Stanovich, 2000). By using a mixed-method approach, an inclusive understanding of this problem was gleaned from the data analysis.

The researcher obtained the necessary permission to conduct the study (Appendix A). This study used 2 teachers from each of the grades kindergarten, first, and second for a total of 6 teachers. All faculty in this pre-kindergarten through second grade building were given an oral presentation outlining the topic and objectives for this study. Voluntary participation was requested. Two teachers from each grade level were randomly chosen from the pool of volunteers. These 6 teachers made up the study group that met prior to the observations. This study group explored the importance of vocabulary in their classroom and discussed the various techniques that were used. The

topic of teacher discourse was discussed analyzing the various types of discourse and where the participants lay in the spectrum of discourse. These discussions followed a group interview style in that there were guiding questions (Appendix B) that investigated the teachers' perceptions of vocabulary and teacher discourse while the researcher acted as moderator. The discussion followed a concept clarification model outlined by Rubin and Rubin (2005) that further identified the study group participants as conversational partners, emphasizing the active role of the interviewee in determining the direction of the discussion and the paths of the research. Data analysis of this study group followed the interpretive analysis model (Hatch, 2002). Using written transcripts of the audiotape used to record this study group, this type of analysis allowed interpretations to be formed after repeated readings and impressions were made. The participants also had input as to the accuracy of the impressions and interpretations of the researcher. A summary of the transcription findings was given and discussed with each teacher participant.

After this study group, the students were given the DIBELS WUF assessment. Only the scores of the low-SES students within each of the six classrooms being charted were used. This was the pre-test score that analyzed vocabulary growth.

The researcher then audio taped two language arts lessons within the 10-week period in each of the six classrooms. Each lesson was transcribed and coded for six categories of teacher discourse. Coding followed the macro and micro coding protocol used by Hogan, Nastasi, and Pressley (2000). This protocol begins with broad categories (macro coding). Within these broad categories, lesser categories were generated. The two broad categories were knowledge exchange and action exchange (Jewett & Goldstein, 2000). Knowledge exchanges center on the exchange of information and activity

exchanges center on one doing something or getting someone to do something. Under the knowledge exchange, teacher talk was further coded into clarify/repeat, justify/reflect, prompt/focus, and tell. Under the action exchange, discourse was further coded into behavioral and directional (see Appendix C for teacher discourse and type samples). These categories allowed analysis for teacher talk as it relates to the revised Bloom's taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001).

Bloom's taxonomy is a multi-tiered model of cognitive thinking that has been used by psychologists for 50 years (Stanovich, 2000). This taxonomy breaks cognition into six hierarchical action components (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). The first component, that requires the most basic thinking skill, is *remembering*. A teacher may ask a student to recall or recognize. The second component is *understanding*, when a teacher asks a student to summarize, compare, or explain. The next layer of cognitive thinking is *applying*, where a teacher asks a student to execute a product that would illustrate understanding of the topic. The fourth tier in this revised taxonomy is *analyzing*. This cognitive function requires students to differentiate qualities or attributes of what is being learned. The fifth step is *evaluating* or learning by critiquing. The last tier in Bloom's revised cognitive taxonomy is *creating*, where the student generates a plan and produces a product. By using the discourse categories in relation to Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive functions, a better understanding of the type of teacher talk within the classroom can evolve. The knowledge exchange categories of clarify/repeat and justify/reflect require the student to evaluate, analyze, and apply learning, whereas the prompt/focus and tell would require the student to remember and understand.

The audio transcripts also looked at the conversation between teacher and students. Cazden (2001) spoke of the difference between a two-way conversation versus one-way reporting. This author stated that teachers should attempt to avoid large amounts of I-R-E (IRE) discourse where the teacher initiates, student responds, and teacher evaluates. Instead, deeper learning and understanding comes with two-way conversation where the teacher scaffolds understanding so that students gain a deeper understanding of curriculum.

Following these two discourse protocols, the transcripts were coded for IRE discourse versus two-way conversation (2W). Each teacher-student transaction was given a code of either IRE or 2W. Along with this conversation code, each transaction was coded for the type of exchange, knowledge or action. The action exchanges were coded for Ab, action/behavioral or Ad, action for direction. The knowledge exchanges were coded for Kcr, knowledge clarify/repeat, Kjr, knowledge justify/reflect, Kpf, knowledge prompt/focus, or Kt, knowledge tell. These two protocols structurally corroborated (Creswell, 1998) the level of teacher discourse within the taped lessons. By looking at both the type of conversation and the type of talk, this dual coding lends verification to the study. Inter-rater reliability was also added to the reliability of this research. Two raters and the researcher coded the same audiotape to ensure at least an 80% agreement. One rater was the district literacy specialist, who was a classroom teacher and currently works with classroom teachers both in the classroom and in small group professional situations. The second rater was the district curriculum director, who also works with teachers both in and out of the classroom.

The DIBELS WUF assessment was then administered 10 weeks later. Table 7 in section 4 summarizes the pre- and post-test scores and the gains made by grade level. A summary of each classroom teacher's coded lessons appears in Appendix D.

For the quantitative portion of this study the independent variable was the teacher discourse types that were coded through two observations per each of six classes. The dependent variable was the difference between the pre- and post-DIBELS WUF scores over the 10-week period. Descriptive statistics using a Pearson product-moment correlation and the Fisher's exact test were run to analyze the possible relationship between the six teacher discourse types and the two interaction types and the growth score of the DIBELS WUF. The purpose of a Pearson product-moment correlation is to measure, "the degree and the direction of the linear relationship between two variables" (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2005, p. 415). The correlation can produce a measure of 1.00 or -1.00 with 1.00 being a perfect positive linear relationship and -1.00 being a perfect negative linear relationship. A perfect relationship would mean that as X increases so does Y. A perfect negative relationship would mean that as X increases Y decreases. If there is no relationship the number would be zero. A weak correlation would be in the range of .10, a moderate correlation would be in the range of .30 and a strong correlation would be at or above the .50 level. This test allowed an analysis of the possible relationship between teacher discourse and interaction with vocabulary growth.

The decision to use the Pearson product-moment correlation and the Fisher's exact test were chosen based on Wadsworth's (Cengage Learning, 2005) criteria for choosing statistical tests. Based on the type of measurement scale of both the dependent and independent variables and the type of data collection methods, these two tests would

allow for a detailed analysis of the data collected. The ANOVA would have been chosen

if the teacher participants had a greater variability in discourse styles. This did not occur

in the random sampling. Most of the teachers used more IRE discourse and less 2W;

therefore, the Pearson product-moment correlation was chosen. The Fisher's exact test

was chosen due to the size of the sample. This test is usually used for small samples

instead of the Chi-square test (Cengage Learning, 2005). A *t* test would have been an

option had there been only two treatments that were being compared (Gravetter &

Wallnau, 2005). Both tests were run using the SPSS 15.0 (2006) program with which this

researcher is familiar. The use of both the Pearson product-moment correlation and the

Fisher's exact test ensured a thorough examination of observed relationships compared to

expected relationships of teacher discourse and vocabulary growth. To minimize the risk

of a Type I error, the alpha level was set at $p < .05$

Data Analysis

The quantitative research questions were as follows:

1. Is there a significant relationship between socioeconomic status and

vocabulary development? The null hypothesis stated that there is no significant difference

between socioeconomic status and vocabulary development.

2. Is there a significant relationship between DIBELS Word Use Fluency [WUF]

scores of low-SES students and types of teacher discourse? The null hypothesis stated

that there is no significant difference between the DIBELS WUF scores of low-SES

students and types of teacher discourse.

3. Is there a relationship between vocabulary development and the type of nature

of teacher talk within the literacy block of a kindergarten through second grade

classroom? The null hypothesis stated that there is no significant difference between the type of teacher talk within the literacy block of a kindergarten through second grade classroom and vocabulary development.

DIBELS data were collected via the University of Oregon DIBELS website to which the participating school district subscribes (DIBELS data system, 2008). These data were gathered before and after the 10- week study period. Pearson product-moment correlation and Fisher's exact test were used to analyze data.

The two qualitative research questions are as follows:

1. How do kindergarten through second grade teachers view the role of vocabulary within their classroom?

2. Do teachers' perceptions of their classroom discourse change after lesson reflection?

These questions were addressed in several ways. The researcher audio taped the two study group sessions. Interpretive analysis was used for the qualitative portion of this study following the steps outlined by Hatch (2002). This design was chosen so that a sense of each teacher's attitude and philosophy of vocabulary development and discourse could be understood. After reading the entire study group transcript and getting a "sense of the whole" (Hatch, 2002, p. 181), a review of previous research was studied to gather information to properly interpret the group's feelings and attitudes toward vocabulary development and discourse. After rereading the data coding for opinions that both support and challenge other research, this information was shared and discussed with the participants. This professional dialogue enhanced and strengthened the participants' teaching methods and benefited not only their professional growth but also the teaching

experiences of their current and future students. The qualitative data were collected and analyzed by the researcher. The audiotapes were transcribed by the researcher.

Confidentiality

The rights of all participants were of utmost importance to this researcher. The teachers' names were designated with random letters on all documents. The researcher and teacher participants read the confidentiality agreement (Appendix E) together, and all questions were answered at the time of reading. Teacher participants signed the consent form which explicitly explained their rights of volunteerism (Appendix F). They signed this form that explicitly outlined their rights of volunteerism. This researcher used pseudonyms in any discussions with others in or out of the district.

Researcher Role and Bias

The researcher is a first grade teacher within the district where this study took place and has taught in this state for 9 years. The previous 23 years of teaching have been in several other states. The researcher also holds the math department chair position within the building, but this position does not have any administrative or seniority roles. It is a clerical and research-based position. These roles were not likely to affect the data collection for this study.

As a mixed-method research study, it is important that this researcher's bias be bracketed so that an understanding of a professional paradigm is clear. Merriam and Associates (2002) stated that "it is important to identify them and monitor them as to how they may be shaping the collection and interpretation of data" (p. 5). The 1960s and 1970s were the educational decades that shaped this researcher's vocabulary paradigm. During this time isolated phonics instruction and whole language was the norm and the

term vocabulary was little mentioned and often missing in reading textbooks (Manzo et al., 2006). The researcher remembers a feeling of uncertainty in understanding the meaning of vocabulary in teaching methods. The training to teach reading was complete, the curriculum was in place, and the books were plentiful, but there was always a feeling that something was missing. The reading experts were initiating studies that explored the different methods of teaching vocabulary (Beck et al., 1982) but the classroom teacher did not have this knowledge. As the decades passed vocabulary slowly became an important component to classroom instruction, and the researcher made vocabulary the topic of this doctoral study. This researcher's history illustrates bias because the realization has been made that a deep and thorough word consciousness must be evident within the classroom every day for students to develop a rich vocabulary.

Bracketing research bias and triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data analysis have added to the validity of this study. The researcher also used member-checking with the teacher participants through the group interview and discussion format (Creswell, 2003). Peer debriefing also added to the validation and credibility of this study.

Summary

This mixed-method research study explored the possible relationship between vocabulary development and teacher discourse in low-SES kindergarten through second grade students in a small southwestern Ohio school district. The study followed a phenomenological tradition using a concurrent design and gathered qualitative data using teacher study groups and quantitative data through lesson analysis and DIBELS WUF growth scores. Confidentiality was kept through the use of pseudonyms. Data analysis

included interpretative analysis of qualitative data and the Pearson product-moment

correlation and Fisher's exact test of the quantitative data. A complete and thorough

analysis of both types of data ensured a deep description of the relationship between

teacher discourse and vocabulary development in kindergarten through second grade low-

SES students.

SECTION 4:

RESULTS

Introduction

Students from low socioeconomic households often begin school with a smaller vocabulary than their middle socioeconomic counterparts. This gap in vocabulary knowledge continues throughout schooling (Donahue, Voelkl, Campbell, & Mazzeo, 1999). The purpose of this concurrent mixed-method study was to examine the relationship between vocabulary development in students from low socioeconomic households and teacher talk. Participants for this study were 6 teachers (2 each from kindergarten, first, and second grades) and 10 students from each classroom (60 total students). These 60 students were all eligible for free or reduced lunch as outlined by the Federal guidelines for poverty as set by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2009).

All data were collected during a 10-week period between January and March, 2009. The 6-teacher study group met twice during the first week of the study. The first meeting covered teacher's perceptions of vocabulary as it pertains to their classroom. This discussion included the teacher's opinion about the role that vocabulary plays within their own classroom and their views of vocabulary as it relates to reading instruction in general. The second meeting covered the topic of teacher discourse. The issue of how a teacher speaks to students and how this talk relates to the socioeconomic status of the students was covered during this study group. Teacher discourse was described using two categories: two-way conversation and Inquiry-Respond-Evaluate (IRE) discourse. The type of teacher talk was defined as action for direction, action for behavior, knowledge to

tell, knowledge to prompt or focus, knowledge to justify or reflect, and knowledge to clarify or repeat (see Appendix C for examples of discourse and type).

During this same week, the DIBELS WUF measure was administered to gather pre-test data. The DIBELS measurement system has been shown in past research studies to be a reliable measure of future reading success (Elliott et al., 2001; Good et al., 2001; Paleologos, 2005; Potter, 2008; Riedel, 2007; Vander Meer et al., 2005). During the following 2 weeks, one language arts lesson from each teacher's language arts block was taped and transcribed. The teachers were given summary information regarding their taped lessons. A third study group ensued to discuss the findings from these taped language arts lessons. A second language arts lesson was taped during the 9th and 10th week of this study. The post-test WUF DIBELS data were collected during the last week of the study.

The lesson audio tapes were transcribed by the researcher and coded using macro and micro coding categories (Hogan et al., 2000). These data and the pre- and post-test DIBELS data were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software (2005). The three study group sessions were transcribed by the researcher and analyzed using the interpretive analysis model (Hatch, 2002).

This section begins with a summary of the descriptive statistics used for this study. The results were then analyzed using the five research questions. The first research question concerns the possible relationship between socioeconomic status and vocabulary development using the DIBELS WUF measure. The second research question pertains to the relationship between the DIBELS WUF scores of low socioeconomic students and types of teacher discourse. The third question involves the relationship between the WUF

gain scores and teacher talk. Research Question 4 and 5 pertain to the qualitative aspect of this study. Question 4 explores the 6 teachers' views of the role of vocabulary in their classroom while Question 5 examines the perceptual change of these 6 teachers after lesson reflection.

Table 1 displays the descriptive statistics for selected variables. These include the three DIBELS scores; the pre-test, the post-test, and the gain score, the three teacher discourse variables; the teacher inquiry (IRE), two-way conversation, and the ratio of two-way to IRE, and the eight teacher talk variables—action for behavior, action for direction, knowledge to clarify, knowledge to justify, knowledge to prompt, knowledge to tell, and two ratio variables, the ratio of knowledge talk and the ratio of total talk. For teacher discourse, IRE ($M = 41.83$) was almost three times more common than two way ($M = 14.17$). For the teacher talk variables, knowledge to prompt ($M = 78.13$) was 2.5 times more common than the next most common teacher talk style (action for direction, $M = 31.33$). For all 6 teachers, the most common teacher discourse style was IRE. The most frequent teacher talk style was knowledge to prompt (Table 1). Given that the discourse style for all participants was teacher inquiry, a correlational analysis was performed. If there had been a greater variability of discourse styles, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) would have been performed. The 6 teacher participants used more IRE discourse then 2W; therefore a correlational analysis was chosen to form a ratio to measure the magnitude of the style differences.

Table 1

*Descriptive Statistics for Selected Variables (*N = 60)

Variable	M	SD	Low	High
DIBELS Pre-test	44.85	21.20	0.00	105.00
DIBELS Post-test	56.24	23.51	4.00	106.00
DIBELS Gain Score [a]	11.53	24.69	-54.00	73.00
Teacher inquiry [b]	41.83	8.66	29.00	55.00
Two way [b]	14.17	9.05	1.00	26.00
Ratio of type of conversation [b, c]	0.36	0.23	0.02	0.63
Action behavior [d]	3.50	4.15	0.00	12.00
Action for direction [d]	31.33	10.52	18.00	45.00
Knowledge to clarify [d]	14.83	10.14	1.00	28.00
Knowledge to justify [d]	4.50	4.02	0.00	12.00
Knowledge to prompt [d]	78.33	26.24	52.00	133.00
Knowledge to tell [d]	27.33	8.96	12.00	37.00
Ratio of knowledge talk d, e	0.19	0.12	0.01	0.36
Ratio of total talk d, f	0.15	0.09	0.01	0.26

[a] Gain score = Post-test score minus pre-test score.

[b] Teacher discourse variable

[c] Ratio calculated by dividing the two way score by the teacher inquire score.

[d] Type of teacher talk variable

[e] Ratio calculated by dividing the sum of knowledge to clarify and knowledge to justify by the sum of knowledge to prompt and knowledge to tell.

[f] Ratio calculated by dividing the sum of knowledge to clarify and knowledge to justify by the other four types of teacher talk.

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 asked, "Is there a significant relationship between socioeconomic status and vocabulary development?" Past research has supported this relationship (Graves, 2006); however, it was important to analyze whether or not this relationship was evident through the use of the DIBELS Word Use Fluency measure. This measure does not have the record of usage as the other DIBELS measures. The DIBELS organization was contacted and a school within the same geographic area with a low percentage of free or reduced lunch was found. This school had 27% free or reduced lunch compared to the research district's 64% free or reduced lunch percentage.

Table 2 displays the comparison of the middle socioeconomic sample with the current sample for the three grades of DIBELS scores. Stollar (personal communication, April 2, 2009) provided DIBELS cut-score performance for the 20th and 40th percentiles for the three grades. The current sample was compared to the comparison district's sample using Fisher's exact tests. The Fisher's exact test was used instead of the more common chi-square test of significance due the large difference in the size of the samples. Table 2 begins with the 20% cut score for each grade, kindergarten through second, followed by the 40% cut score for each grade. The percentage of kindergarten students at the 20 % cut score in the comparison district was 20% where the current district's number was 15%. First grade found similar percentages at this cut-off with the comparison district at 20% and the current district at 25%. The second grade numbers were 20% and 30%, respectively. The 40% cut score for kindergarten was 40% for the comparison district and 30% for the current district, for first 40% and 45%, and for second 40% and 30%, respectively. Referring to Table 2 none of the six comparisons

were found to be statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level so the null hypothesis was

accepted. This suggested that the students in the current low-SES sample had similar

DIBELS performance to the middle-class suburban sample of students.

Table 2

Comparison of Comparison District (2009) DIBELS Data with Current Grade Level

Subsamples

| Grade Level | Cut-Score | Stollar | | Current | | Fisher's Exact Probability |
		n	%	*n*	%	
Kindergarten	20%					.78
		107	20.0	3	15.0	
		427	80.0	17	85.0	
First	20%					.78
		110	20.0	5	25.0	
		441	80.0	15	75.0	
Second	20%					.39
		107	20.0	6	30.0	
		429	80.0	14	70.0	
Kindergarten	40%					.49
		214	40.0	6	30.0	
		320	60.0	14	70.0	
First	40%					.82
		220	40.0	9	45.0	
		331	60.0	11	55.0	
Second	40%					.49
		214	40.0	6	30.0	
		322	60.0	14	70.0	

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 asked, "Is there a significant relationship between the DIBELS WUF scores of low-SES students and types of teacher discourse?" Table 3 displays the Pearson product-moment correlations for the student's DIBELS gain score (post-test minus pre-test) with the three teacher discourse variables. These three variables are the IRE method, the two-way conversation method and the ratio of these two types of discourse. This ratio was calculated to gain a sense of how much more one type of discourse was used over another and to measure the affect that this ratio had on the DIBELS scores. As shown in Table 3, the gain score was positively correlated with the two-way score ($r = .28$, $p < .05$) and the ratio of type of conversation score ($r = .30$, $p < .05$). These correlations failed to reject the null hypothesis.

Table 3

*Correlations for DIBELS Gain Scores with Types of Teacher Discourse (*N = 60)

Teacher discourse	Gain score [a]
Teacher inquiry	.15
Two way	.28 *
Ratio of type of conversation [b]	.30 *

* *p* < .05.

[a] Gain score = Post-test score minus pre-test score.

[b] Ratio calculated by dividing the two way score by the teacher inquire score.

Note. Numbers in the body of the table represent the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients.

Research Question 3

Research Question 3 asked, "Is there a relationship between vocabulary development and the type or nature of teacher talk within the literacy lessons of a kindergarten through second grade classroom?" Table 4 displays the Pearson product-moment correlations for the student's DIBELS gain score with the eight teacher discourse variables. The gain score was significantly correlated with three of eight variables. Specifically, the gain score was positively correlated with action for direction ($r = .34$, $p < .01$) and knowledge to clarify ($r = .26$, $p < .05$). In addition, the gain score was negatively correlated with knowledge to justify ($r = -.26$, $p < .05$).

Table 4

*Correlations for DIBELS Gain Scores with Types of Teacher Talk (*N = 60)

Teacher talk	Gain score [a]	
Action behavior	.08	
Action for direction	.34	**
Knowledge to clarify	.26	*
Knowledge to justify	-.26	*
Knowledge to prompt	.15	
Knowledge to tell	-.16	
Ratio of knowledge talk [b]	.08	
Ratio of total talk [c]	.04	

* *p* < .05.

[a] Gain score = Post-test score minus pre-test score.

[b] Ratio calculated by dividing the sum of knowledge to clarify and knowledge to justify by the sum of knowledge to prompt and knowledge to tell.

[c] Ratio calculated by dividing the sum of knowledge to clarify and knowledge to justify by the other four types of teacher talk.

Note. Numbers in the body of the table represent the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients.

Research Question 4

Research Question 4 asked, "How do kindergarten through second grade teachers view the role of vocabulary within their classroom?" Six teachers and the researcher met during common plan time at a round table in the teacher's meeting room.   The researcher began the study group with the following question, "The word vocabulary like many words have different meanings for different people. There are different paradigms depending on how you were trained. I want to start the discussion with what vocabulary means to you. When you think of vocabulary, what do you think of?" All teachers agreed that the level of vocabulary usage was indicative of education level. One teacher stated, "Your word choices are huge when you're speaking to someone especially people that you don't know. Their first impression is what you say because they don't know you. Your first meeting has lasting effects on how you are viewed." The researcher then asked how this belief is brought into the classroom. Teacher K encouraged students to use more of a variety of words. One teacher felt that a student has to think to expand vocabulary knowledge. The group continued the discussion of the difference between feeling words and describing words, agreeing that most students use feeling words such as sad, mad, or glad very easily, but describing words were more difficult to use.

The discussion moved on to whether or not the oral vocabulary words that appear within the common reading series were identified by the term outlined by the publisher, "amazing" words. Four of the six teachers used the term "amazing words" while the remaining 2 did not use this term. Half of the teachers posted the amazing words each week while 3 used them orally as prescribed by the reading series.

The researcher clarified the terms *direct* and *indirect instruction*, as the teachers were talking about methods of teaching vocabulary. These terms were unfamiliar to the participants, so a brief history of these two types of instruction was given. Four of the teacher participants felt that they used direct vocabulary instruction over indirect instruction. Kindergarten teachers felt that their methods were more indirect through read-alouds. These kindergarten teachers also felt that word excitement was necessary to increase vocabulary knowledge. The second grade teachers stated that they used flash cards, worksheets, and dictionary searches on a weekly basis. All teachers agreed that the reading series does a good, thorough job of using the vocabulary words in many different contexts throughout the week. These vocabulary words appear in the main story of the week, short stories, oral read-alouds, poems, and songs.

Teacher A noticed a difference between spelling and vocabulary recognition. This teacher stated that students recognized the spelling words much more often than the vocabulary words. The researcher reflected and requested reflection on this point. A majority of the teachers felt that spelling words are written and also reinforced at home via homework and that may be a reason for more recognition. With this point being made, Teacher D reiterated the belief that vocabulary words should also be written, as this is one method of assessment. Teacher D shared this story; "When I had the students use it in a sentence it lets me know whether or not they understand it or not. One time we had the word 'ago' and my little boy wrote, 'I got ago.'" The session continued with a discussion of other examples to support the use of writing in vocabulary instruction including the geographic areas tendency to use the /f/ sound for the letters 'th'. Common

plan time ended with a bell. The researcher thanked the participants for their valuable input and the second session was scheduled.

<div align="center">Research Question 5</div>

Research Question 5 asked, "Do teachers' perceptions of their classroom discourse change after lesson reflection?" The second and third study group took place 7 weeks apart. The topic of the second study group session covered teacher discourse. The researcher began with the definition of discourse and outlined the many different ways to talk within the classroom. It was stressed that there was no one correct discourse method. The first question asked, "How do you feel you speak in your own classroom?" Teacher C stated that they spoke like a grandparent because they were one. Another teacher wondered whether there was a typical type of teacher discourse. Teacher J stated that they spoke differently with students depending on the grade level.

All teachers agreed that socioeconomic status was related to talk within the classroom. These teachers felt that many lower SES students did not understand all of the vocabulary spoken by the teacher. The teacher had no way of knowing just how much of this vocabulary is unknown, as most children do not ask what every word means. Teachers also agreed that SES and talk, especially as it concerns grammar and usage, are related. It was noted that students from low-SES households do not know how to make choices and that in kindergarten the skill of making choices has to be taught by the teacher. It was also stated that parents of low-SES households can rarely help their children at home because the parents do not have a solid understanding of phonics, vocabulary, or other reading processes.

Prior to the last study group session, the teacher participants had been given a summary of their taped language arts lessons. During this third study group session the researcher began the group asking the teachers if anything surprised them in the lesson summaries. The teachers analyzed the first taped lessons and noticed that the justify/reflect category of teacher discourse was the lowest for all of the teachers. Several teachers felt that higher order thinking may take place more in small group rather than whole group instruction so they chose a small group lesson for the second taping. Table 5 lists the ratio of the higher order teacher talk between the first and second lessons. Teachers K and J are kindergarten teachers. One showed a large increase in these higher order thinking interactions and the other kindergarten showed no difference in the amount of this type of talk. Teachers C and G were first grade teachers and a similar discrepancy was found. Teachers A and D were second grade teachers and a similar outcome was observed. Looking at the raw data there appears to be no consistent difference between small group and large group knowledge to clarify/repeat and knowledge to justify/reflect talk.

Table 5

Lesson 1 to Lesson 2 Ratio of Knowledge to Clarify/Repeat and Knowledge to Justify/Reflect by Teacher

Teacher C: 11:11	Teacher G: 8:20
Teacher K: 0:27	Teacher D: 0:1
Teacher A: 6:24	Teacher J: 4:4

The teacher participants also postulated that eliciting higher order thinking may take more time and that time is a real issue in the classroom, as curriculum must be covered. One teacher felt that all types of thinking are important in Bloom's taxonomy, not just the higher order skills. Half of the teachers stated that since the kindergarten through second grades are the beginning of formal schooling, instruction would require more knowledge-based discourse instead of higher order discourse. Participants stated that the basics have to be acquired before reflection can take place. Teacher K stated that at the kindergarten and lower level grades the student must be taught how to articulate thinking because this knowledge does not come from the low socioeconomic household. Other teachers reiterated the point that most of these households had little conversation. Parents used more directive speech, where the children are told what to do instead of the type of discourse that would generate thinking. Teacher G also felt that age and brain development was a factor in this lack of metacognition. The teacher stated that at this early stage of schooling, the basics should be reinforced with just a small amount of reflection and higher order thinking. Teacher G felt that most of the higher order thinking should be saved until the upper elementary grades after the basics of how to read have been mastered.

The session ended with restatements by the teachers and researcher of the major parts of all three study groups. The teachers deemed vocabulary an important facet in reading instruction within their classrooms. Teachers used both direct and indirect methods of vocabulary in their classrooms. Teacher discourse was important to instruction, yet knowledge-based instruction is more important at this early elementary level than higher order thinking.

Additional Findings

Additional analyses were performed in order to gain a better understanding of the difference between grade levels and the difference between pre- and post-test scores of the DIBELS WUF measure. Table 6 displays the mixed-measures ANOVA model that used the pre-test and post-test DIBELS scores as the within-subjects variable and the grade level (kindergarten, first and second) as the between-subjects variable. A significant within-subjects effect was noted ($p = .001$) with post-test DIBELS scores being significantly higher. Grade level was also a significant main effect ($p = .001$). The Bonferroni post hoc tests found kindergarten students to have significantly lower DIBELS scores than the first grade students ($p = .01$) and the second grade students ($p = .001$). No significant differences were noted between the first and second grade students ($p = .31$). In addition, a significant time X grade level interaction effect was noted ($p = .04$). Table 7 found the gain score for second grade students ($M = 22.83$) to be three times larger than for the first grade students ($M = 7.55$) and over five times larger than for the kindergarten students ($M = 4.20$).

Table 6

Mixed-Measures ANOVA for Pre-test and Post-test DIBELS Based on Grade Level

(N = 60)

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p
Time [a]	3,893.10	1	3,893.10	13.85	.001
Grade Level [b, c]	11,401.98	2	5,700.99	10.91	.001
Time X Grade Level	1,882.13	2	941.06	3.35	.04
Error (Time)	16,026.64	57	281.17		
Error (Grade Level)	29,797.14	57	522.76		

[a] Time: Pre-test (*M* = 44.85, *SE* = 2.64) and Post-test (*M* = 56.24, *SE* = 2.53).

[b] Grade: Kindergarten (*M* = 37.65, *SE* = 3.62), First (*M* = 52.78, *SE* = 3.62) and Second (*M* = 61.21, *SE* = 3.62).

[c] Bonferroni post hoc tests for grade level: Kindergarten < First (*p* = .01); Kindergarten < Second (*p* = .001); First = Second (*p* = .31).

Table 7

*DIBELS Pre-test, Post-test and Gain Scores Based on Grade Level (*N = 60)

DIBELS score	Grade level	*n*	*M*	*SD*
Pre-test				
	Kindergarten	20	35.55	20.66
	First	20	49.00	20.70
	Second	20	50.00	20.07
Post-test				
	Kindergarten	20	39.75	20.34
	First	20	56.55	20.97
	Second	20	72.43	17.33
Gain Score [a]				
	Kindergarten	20	4.20	18.28
	First	20	7.55	27.89
	Second	20	22.83	23.94

[a] Gain score = Post-test score minus pre-test score.

Conclusion

The analysis of the data found that all teacher participants used the IRE type of conversation three times as much as two-way conversation within the language arts block of the school day. Data also suggested that there was a one to five ratio between

knowledge to clarify or justify and knowledge to prompt or tell. There was a moderate positive correlation between two-way conversation and DIBELS WUF gains.

The findings for research question 1 did not support a significant relationship between socioeconomic status and vocabulary development between the study's low-SES students and the students from a neighboring middle class school using the WUF measure of the DIBELS measurement system. The findings for the second research question supported a relationship between the type of teacher discourse and DIBELS gain. The third research question had several findings. A positive correlation was found between the type of talk that involved action for direction and knowledge to clarify, yet there was a negative correlation between DIBELS gain and knowledge to justify. The findings for research question 4 supported the belief that vocabulary indicated social status and that kindergarten teachers used more indirect methods of teaching vocabulary compared to second grade teachers. Half the teachers felt that vocabulary instruction should include written assignments to develop a better understanding of the words. The findings of research question 5 supported the idea that teachers' perceptions do change upon lesson reflection. Ideas that were new to the participants developed that they began examining within their daily lessons.

The reliability and validity of this study was secured using several methods. Inter-rater reliability was obtained using two raters, the district's literacy specialist and the district's curriculum director. They were chosen because they work closely with faculty and staff in all aspects of professional development often visiting and coaching faculty on best practice. The researcher and these two raters read and coded random samples of taped lessons and achieved an 85% agreement. This study was verified using

four verification procedures (Creswell, 1998). The quantitative data collected along with the qualitative procedures provided triangulation. Dividing the quantitative data coding into types of conversation and types of talk also substantiated details of classroom interaction. The researcher also bracketed bias so that it would not interfere with data analysis. The outcome of transcribed materials was reviewed with all teacher participants and allowed for member checking. The research process was reviewed with a peer researcher so that an external check was in place throughout data collection and analysis. These methods of verification and validity add to the reliability of the findings within this study.

SECTION 5:

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The ability to read is often a prerequisite to becoming a vital, productive member of society (Freire, 1973). If "every experience affects for better or worse the attitudes which help decide the quality of further experiences" (Dewey, 1938, p. 37), then it is crucial that every student learn to read. Instilling an enthusiasm for learning usually develops where there is social interaction with deep meaningful conversation between teacher and student. This premise of affording every child the opportunity to read well in a supportive, nurturing environment motivated this study.

The purpose of this research was to investigate the possible relationship between teacher discourse and vocabulary development of students from low-SES backgrounds. The questions explored were as follows:

1. Does a relationship exist between vocabulary development and low socioeconomic status?

2. Does a relationship exist between types of teacher discourse and DIBELS Word Use Fluency scores of low socioeconomic students?

3. Does a relationship exist between types of teacher discourse and the nature of teacher talk within the literacy block of kindergarten through second grade students?

4. How do kindergarten through second grade teachers view their role in the vocabulary development of the students in their classrooms?

5. Does professional development change the teacher perceptions of classroom discourse after lesson reflection?

This section will discuss the results of each research question and examine research that supports and refutes the findings from this study. Within each research question will be recommendations for further study. A discussion of the implications for social change at the local, state, and national level will follow. A conclusion and researcher's reflection will culminate this section.

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 asked if there was a relationship between vocabulary development and low socioeconomic status. Using sample data from a local school district with a significantly lower free or reduced lunch population, the findings, as outlined in Table 2, did not find a statistically significant difference at the $p < .05$ level. The comparison district was larger than the research district by 4,568 pupils. Their cost per pupil was $894.00 more in the comparison district than the research district. Almost 89% of third graders passed the Ohio Achievement Test compared to 91.7% of the research district. Ninety percent of the comparison district had a high school diploma and 30% had a bachelor's degree or higher. Seventy four percent of the research district had a high school diploma, with 7% achieving a bachelor's degree or higher. Ninety one percent of the comparison district was Caucasian while 96% was Caucasian in the research district (S. Stollar, personal communication, April 2, 2009). These statistics suggest that the research district would qualify as a low-SES district at the income and education level. As Donahue et al. (1999) illustrated that reading success is linked to parent education and eligibility for free and reduced lunch, it would follow that the research district in this study should have lower DIBELS WUF scores than the

comparison district. Yet the results found no significant difference between the research district and the comparison district.

This finding does not align with past research that finds a correlation between low-SES and a smaller vocabulary (Donahue et al., 1999; Hoff, 2003; Molfese et al., 2003; Noble et al., 2006; Rathbun et al., 2005). One possible reason for this discrepancy could be the use of research-based practices within the Pearson Scott Foresman *Reading Street* (2007) series that is used by all teachers in the research district. The comparison district does not use this system. They use the Harcourt *Trophies* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2005) series. The research school also has an intensive intervention program that focuses on low performing students in a small group daily intervention. Progress monitoring systems periodically assess the progress of students who are at risk for reading failure. The daily intervention lessons are based on this progress monitoring data that target each student's academic weaknesses. It is not known whether the comparison district has this type of intervention program in place.

Another possible reason for this finding could be the factors used to determine low socioeconomic status. Researchers have determined that many factors form socioeconomic differences. Noble et al. (2006) spoke of *multiple factors* affecting reading achievement. They emphasized the prior knowledge of the student and cognitive factors and number of life experiences as all affecting academic achievement. Baker et al. (1995) emphasized maternal speech and verbal interactions as a factor in SES. Molfese et al. (2003) attributed environmental factors as affecting a child's academic success. These factors included parenting practices, family activities, and the characteristics of the home. This study only used parental income as established by the federal free or reduced lunch

program as the determinant of SES. There were no other comparisons made between the research district and the comparison district. This limited comparison model may be a reason for the results of this research question. The small sample size may also have affected the findings of the research question.

Future research into the reason for this finding would be warranted. It would also be interesting to look at other components of reading and evaluate the differences with middle SES districts. Was the lack of an achievement gap only in vocabulary or would the same hold true in any of the components of reading? An analysis could be completed that compares the third grade Ohio Achievement Test (OAT) of the research district to a neighboring district with a lower percentage of free or reduced lunch. The OAT scores between the comparison district and the research district is 88.7 and 91.7, respectively, a difference of 3% (S. Stollar, personal communication, April 2, 2009). A more detailed look at the component parts of the OAT would be warranted to see exactly where the differences lie. This would help to inform whether or not the lack of a SES achievement gap is in vocabulary only or in all academic areas of the district.

<center>Research Question 2</center>

Research Question 2 asked if there was a significant relationship between the DIBELS WUF scores of low-SES students and types of teacher discourse. The two types of discourse were IRE and two-way conversation. The IRE approach is the type of discourse that is typical in an elementary classroom. It involves the teacher asking a question, or inquiring, the student responding to the question, and the teacher evaluating the response. An example of an IRE exchange comes from a kindergarten class where they are just beginning to look at a book for oral reading.

T: Put your finger on the title of the book for me. What is the title of this book?

S: Jen and Will

T: Very good.

The two-way type of teacher discourse involves the back and forth conversational exchange of talk between the teacher and student. It involves the scaffolding of student understanding through the use of questions and reflective comments that extract more thoughtful responses from the student. An example of this type of teacher-student exchange comes from a first grade classroom where they are discussing the excitement of a surprise party. This discussion comes before a first reading of a book about a little boy preparing a surprise party for his mother's birthday.

T: Tell me why you like surprises?

S: Because you get stuff.

T: Okay, A lot of times you get gifts. That is nice.

S: You might go somewhere special.

T: Okay, you might go somewhere special like Chucky Cheese.

S: You might have a surprise birthday party.

T: That would be nice, wouldn't it?

S: You might dig for treasure.

T: You are telling me what you might do instead of telling me why you like all of these surprises.

S: They're fun!

T: Okay, they are fun.

S: Presents are nice.

T: I think presents are nice, too. Surprises are usually nice, aren't they?

S: Because you get to do something new

T: Oh, you get a new experience.

S: Surprises are exciting.

T: Yes, they are.

S: They come from your family.

T: That's important, isn't it?

This example illustrates the reflecting and restating that this type of exchange elicits to assist the students to think deeper into a topic. In this case the teacher is setting the atmosphere of excitement before the book is read. This teacher is assisting the students in connecting with their own experiences regarding surprises so that they will be better able to comprehend the events of the story.

A positive correlation was found with two-way conversation and the WUF scores, but not with IRE which can be interpreted to mean that as the gain score for DIBELS WUF goes up so does the amount of two-way conversation. Research supports this finding as far back as 1989 when Moorman and Weber posited the importance of word choice and language to a student's academic success. Allington (2002) put forth the belief that the tone of the teacher should be more conversational rather than interrogational. Johnston (2004) found that student-teacher interactions assist in the development of the child.

The ratio calculation also supports the two-way type of discourse. The ratio variable was calculated by dividing the two-way score by the IRE score of all teacher participant lessons combined. As the ratio between these two types of discourse increases

so does the DIBELS WUF scores. It should be noted that a .30 correlation is considered a moderate correlation. Had the statistic been higher, such as .50, a strong correlation would be made. This moderate correlation would be explained by saying that r2 = .09 or 9% of the variance can be accounted for by the type of discourse within the classroom.

A portion of this study was realized after reading two studies (Hoff, 2003; Molfese et al., 2003) that interrelated maternal speech and academic achievement. It was found that households with more conversation tended to have a higher level of income and education. It may be that conversation, or the verbal interaction between two human beings, whether they are parent and child or teacher and student, is the impetus that allows the brain to make sense of the world around us. If the emotional content of information is strong, the brain will attend to it first (Wolfe, 2001). Conversation will have more emotional content than an IRE exchange, thereby allowing for the information to travel into working memory where it will be retained.

The data results are significant because they suggest that more two-way teacher-student interactions results in more vocabulary gain as assessed by the DIBELS WUF measurement scale. More research needs to be completed so that a clearer picture can be formed regarding this relationship. This study used only 6 teacher participants who tended to use the similar teaching methods. Four of the 6 teachers used IRE twice as much as two-way, 1 teacher used IRE five times as much as two-way, and the sixth teacher used two-way only once within the two audio taped language arts lessons. Future research needs to use teachers who use more two-way interactions to assess whether or not similar results can be obtained. A better balance of teacher exchange styles and a larger population of DIBELS WUF scores need to be used.

Research Question 3

Research Question 3 asked whether there was a significant relationship between vocabulary development and the type of teacher talk within a literacy block of kindergarten through second grade classrooms. Teacher talk was divided into eight categories, two action types, four knowledge types, and two ratio types. The action types of teacher talk were action for direction, when a teacher gave a direction, and action for behavior, when a teacher gave a direction that involved behavior. An example of an action-for-direction exchange is as follows:

> T: Boys and girls, when you get your paper, please hold it like this and do a hot dog fold first. That's a long fold that looks just like a hot dog bun. When you have your hot dog fold then we are going to hamburger fold in half, just like so…
>
> S: What's a hamburger?
>
> T: When you fold it the short way not the long way. Like this…

This was a second grade example of a teacher giving directions for a foldable activity where they would be using different parts of the foldable for vocabulary words, definitions, and original sentences.

An example of an action-for-behavior exchange is as follows:

> T: You need to sit up and have your finger on the word with us. It is your job to read, too.

This was an example of a kindergarten teacher refocusing an off-task student during a read together session.

The first knowledge type of teacher talk was knowledge to clarify or repeat. An example of this type of talk is the following student-teacher interaction where there is a discussion of the meaning of the word homeland:

T: So we live in the town of Any City, in the state of Ohio. What country do we live in?

S: The United States

T: The United States of America. So our homeland is the United States. It is where we are live. So if you are visiting Australia and someone comes up to you and asks where your homeland is, what would you say?

S: The United States.

This student-teacher conversation illustrates the knowledge to clarify/repeat type of teacher talk. The teacher is repeating what the student is saying and clarifying the student's thoughts about the meaning of the word homeland.

The second teacher talk type is knowledge to justify or reflect. An example of this type is illustrated here where a kindergarten class is discussing the term 'Spot Mom' that was read during a read aloud:

S: They spot Mom.

T: What does it mean when they say spot Mom?

S: They saw her.

T: They saw the Mom. How did you know that? What did you use to help you know that? Did you just know that word because we talked about it before or did you use the picture to give you a clue?

This final teacher verbalization is asking the student to reflect on their understanding of the word 'spot' so that they will realize how they learned the word.

The third teacher type is knowledge to prompt or focus. For this example a second grade class is talking about the word 'flashes' as it pertains to a thunderstorm.

T: Now let's take a look at that first word. What is that first one?

S: Flashes

T: What kind of image pops into your mind when you read the word flashes?

This example is asking the student to focus in on the word 'flashes' and build an image in their mind as to what happens when lightening flashes in the sky.

The fourth type of teacher talk is knowledge to tell. This example has a first grade teacher talking about the meaning of the word 'rare'.

T: If something is 'rare' what does it mean?

S: It is worth something.

T: It could be worth something. It means there aren't very many of them. It's something that you don't see very often and that is why it may be worth something because you don't see it very often.

The teacher simply gives the definition to the student.

The final two types of teacher talk are ratios based on the level of thinking that is required by the student. The knowledge to prompt/focus and knowledge to tell talk can be related to Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive thinking (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) categories of remembering and understanding. The knowledge to clarify/repeat and justify/reflect can be related to Bloom's evaluate, analyze and apply categories of thinking. The first ratio is the knowledge talk ratio that divides the sum of knowledge to

clarify/repeat and knowledge to justify/reflect by the sum of knowledge to prompt/focus and knowledge to tell. This ratio allows for the relationship between the higher order thinking tasks and the more basic thinking tasks. The second ratio divides the sum of knowledge to clarify/repeat and knowledge to justify/reflect with the four other types of teacher talk. This ratio allows for a comparison to be made between the higher order skills and all other tasks combined.

The results of this research question found a positive correlation with three of the eight variables. Action for direction was found to be positively correlated with the DIBELS WUF scores with $r = .34$. As the action-for-direction teacher talk increased, so did the WUF scores. The action categories were used in order to get a sense of the classroom climate. An example of an action-for-behavior interaction is from a kindergarten classroom where the class is discussing antonyms. The teacher asked for a word that means the opposite of 'lug'. There is some talking amongst the students and the teacher says: "One, two, three, eyes on me. Oh, I see eyes up here on me immediately. That's what I like to see." The students had lost focus on the task at hand, and the teacher brought them back to task through this verbal cue. This example, along with the previous example, illustrates a teacher with good classroom control and a strong sense of educational purpose. It may be that a high action-for-behavior score may indicate that the climate of the classroom is unstructured and not conducive to learning. Five of the six classrooms within this study had five or fewer action-for-behavior interactions. A high action-for-direction score may indicate that the climate of the classroom is more structured and conducive to learning. Four of the six teacher participants had 30 or more action-for-direction prompts.

This data could suggest that there was a strong sense of educational purpose within these classrooms. The moderate correlation could possibly be related to this sense of resolve that may be the climate of the classrooms within this study. It is possible that everyone knows that school is for learning and that every moment should be spent gaining new knowledge. This interpretation correlates with the McCarthy study in 1984 (as cited in Mooney, 2005), which found that teachers who used more information-giving conversation and less controlling conversation had students who scored higher on standardized tests.

The second significant finding within this research question is the positive correlation between knowledge to clarify/repeat and increased DIBELS WUF scores. This relates to the positive correlation found in the previous research question with two-way conversation. Using the clarification/repeat model of instruction, the teacher scaffolds, using conversational technique, until the student grasps the concept. This model would usually not be used with the IRE type of teacher discourse because with IRE the teacher would evaluate and then either tell the correct answer or prompt to the next question. If Cazden's (2001) premise is followed, then it is logical that this correlation is significant. Cazden stated that deeper learning comes from two-way conversation where scaffolded learning is utilized.

The third significant finding for this question is at first puzzling. There was a negative correlation between knowledge to justify/reflect and the DIBELS WUF scores. That means that as the knowledge to justify/reflect type of teacher talk went up, the WUF scores went down. This does not coincide with the correlation above as these two types of teacher talk are related to the same Bloom's taxonomy categories. If they are both related

to higher order thinking skills, then it would be reasonable to assume that both would have similar correlations. But in this instance, one correlation was positive and one was negative.

Learning to read is a complex process that requires many different skills working together to make meaning from words (Huey, as cited in Israel & Monaghan, 2007; Pressley, 2002; Stanovich, 2000). Vocabulary acquisition is one element within this complex process. Much of the reading skills that are needed to make meaning from text are, in fact, knowledge based. One needs a clear understanding of phonemic awareness, the alphabetic principle, and vocabulary. The question is whether this knowledge base is best supported through understanding and remembering these skills before the higher order thinking skills of analyzing, evaluating, and applying them can emerge. It could be that the justify/reflect type of teacher talk is a higher order thinking skill than clarify/repeat.

Further research is needed to expound on this conundrum. A larger study using teacher participants who have a greater variety of talk styles may clarify the findings from this study. Research focusing on only the justify/reflect and clarify/repeat types of teacher talk may also help to explain this relationship with vocabulary development. If early reading skills are knowledge based, then further research using the upper elementary grades of three through five may shed light on the teacher talk-vocabulary development relationship. By the end of second grade, most students are reading for meaning. There is more emphasis on comprehension and fluency and less on phonemic awareness and alphabetic principle at the upper elementary level. This may allow for more higher-order thinking leading to higher vocabulary development. Further

exploration into these details may garner a deeper understanding into the relationship between the vocabulary development of low-SES students and teacher talk.

Research Question 4

Research Question 4 asked how kindergarten through second grade teachers's view the role of vocabulary within their classroom. The qualitative results for this question were gathered using a concept clarification model as outlined by Rubin and Rubin (2005) and analyzed following the interpretive analysis model (Hatch, 2002). After repeated readings several categories unfolded. These categories included participants' beliefs regarding the type of instruction that should take place in an early elementary classroom, the role that vocabulary play in socioeconomic status, and the importance that vocabulary plays in reading instruction.

The study group participants believed that direct instruction was the strongest approach to teaching vocabulary; though the kindergarten teachers used more indirect approaches through their read-alouds. The participants also believed that there was a difference between how kindergarten vocabulary and second grade vocabulary was taught. Kindergarten teachers not only said that they used more of an indirect approach, but they also used more oral vocabulary, whereas the second grade teachers used more writing and dictionary work. All teachers agreed that vocabulary used in speaking reflected the type of educational level reached. They thought that improper grammar and usage reflected a low education level, whereas proper grammar and a lack of colloquial speech indicated more education. Half of the teachers believed that most of the vocabulary taught within the *Reading Street* series was best taught using the Little Books. The format of *Reading Street* is a weekly story that is reread throughout the week as well

as several different little books at various reading levels that relate to the theme of the weekly story. These teachers reasoned that the use of these books allowed for a deeper understanding of the vocabulary words that were being presented each week. The study group teachers also stated that spelling words were learned at a faster rate than vocabulary words due to the nightly review and the written work that was involved with the spelling words.

The kindergarten through second grade teachers believed that vocabulary was an important part of the curriculum because vocabulary reflected the educational level of a person. These teachers stated that vocabulary development should be exciting and thoughtful. Kindergarten teachers used more indirect approaches to vocabulary development while the second grade teachers used more direct approaches that included sentence writing and dictionary use. Half of the teachers thought that the use of writing assignments helped students to learn and recognize new vocabulary as seen by the fact that students recognize spelling words more often than vocabulary words.

Some of these views coincide with current research while some contradict current research. The teacher participants did believe that both the indirect and direct approaches to teaching vocabulary were necessary though they did feel that grade level was a factor. Current research advocates the use of both direct and indirect approaches within every classroom (Blachowicz et al., 2006). Direct word learning is a necessary element of sound vocabulary teaching. This approach was seen most frequently within the language arts lessons in this study. Methods to teach students how to independently learn new words should also be part of good vocabulary teaching (Williams et al., 2009). Williams stated, "Students should be engaged in learning new words and expanding their

understanding of words through instruction that is based on active processing" (p. 206).

An example that illustrates this type of teaching showed internet dictionary use during

this study's audio taping sessions. It is also important to develop an excitement for

learning new words (Graves & Watts-Taffe, 2006). One of the kindergarten teacher

participants stated the importance of word excitement as the teacher was describing the

students' thrill when they heard one of their new words in a new story. They are excited

when:

> They hear it in another story. Like the word burro from 'Armadillo's Oranges'.
> It's in a lot of other stories like 'The Mitten' and they are so excited. They say,
> 'Oh, my gosh, we heard that word in another story! (Teacher K)

Researchers and participants agree that both direct and indirect approaches should be

evident in vocabulary instruction.

The study participants agreed with current reading research that places great

importance on vocabulary as a major component to early reading instruction (Biemiller,

2003; Carver, 2000; Qian, 2002; Roundtree, 2006; Rupley & Nichols, 2005; Thompson

& Frager, 1984). The teacher participants also agreed with reading research that posits

that a balanced approach to vocabulary instruction should be in every classroom

(Blachowicz et al., 2006; Biemiller, 2003; Joshi, 2005). It is apparent that these teachers

have a solid knowledge base in the instructional techniques that offer students an

instructive, dependable learning environment.

Teachers' views of vocabulary development are intricately tied to their

understanding of the reading process. A teacher who does not understand the intricacies

of this process also does not understand the importance of vocabulary. A teacher who has

a thorough understanding of the process will also understand how to weave vocabulary

development into all lessons. Further research should explore this relationship. A study

that explores the teacher's knowledge base of the reading process against the vocabulary

practices of the classroom will garner a better understanding of teachers' view of

vocabulary instruction.

<div align="center">Research Question 5</div>

Research Question 5 asked if teachers' perceptions of their classroom discourse

change after lesson reflection. Using the interpretative analysis model (Hatch, 2002)

when analyzing two study group sessions, it could be said that the teachers had a deeper

understanding of the impact of teacher discourse types on learning after they reflected on

the topic. During the first study group session participants spoke of tone using adjectives

such as "grandma" talk and talking "down" to the kindergarten level of understanding.

The relationship of socioeconomic status and grammar was also a topic of discussion.

The importance of using talk to control behavior within a classroom was also discussed.

A participant shared how their tone and manner changed after the first year of teaching.

With experience, their tone and manner became more authoritative. A better

understanding of classroom management had been gained.

After this study group, language arts lessons were audio taped, transcribed, and

coded. These coded lessons were shared, explained, and discussed with the participants.

The second study group discussion focused on the various types of teacher talk and the

different types of discourse. One participant felt that a teacher's goal should be to teach

students how to articulate their thoughts. It was said that the background knowledge of

articulation is not present in children from low socioeconomic households.

All teachers believed that all types of talk are important, especially at the early elementary level. Because kindergarten is the first formal schooling year for most students, a knowledge base needs to be formed first before the higher order thinking can take place. One first grade teacher said, "I can understand and I believe that we should be reflecting at this level, but you have to have the knowledge to be able to reflect on it." It was felt by all participants that every type of talk needs to be present at the early elementary level. Prompt/focus, tell, justify/reflect, and clarify/repeat all need to be evident throughout the day. They were not sure that the higher order types should be more evident until the later elementary years when the students have more background knowledge and conceptual understanding. This belief opposes the research of Mooney (2005), who found that students with higher test scores had teachers who used more informational conversation and fewer controlling words. It also refutes Cazden's (2001) finding that two-way conversation elicits deeper learning.

Lesson reflection is an effective method of professional development. Though these teachers held beliefs that challenge current research, they did reflect on their lessons and they did begin to develop a deeper understanding of their own learning. Tillema and van der Westhuizen (2006) advocated reflective collaboration and knowledge productivity as the strongest, most effectual form of professional development. This study group exhibited knowledge productivity by displaying a change in their understanding of the types of vocabulary instruction and teacher talk. They reflectively collaborated during study group, listening to colleagues and changing or expanding on previous knowledge in order to demonstrate a deeper understanding of the subject matter.

This study used a small number of study group sessions over a short period of time. To further research the effect of reflective collaboration and knowledge productivity in the study group format within the educational setting, research needs to span the school year with weekly or monthly sessions. It would also be beneficial to use participant journaling in order to garner more reflective thoughts of the participants.

Additional Findings

The mixed-measures ANOVA was calculated to gain a better understanding of the difference between grade levels as well as the difference between the pre- and post-test scores of the DIBELS WUF test. The additional findings allowed for a further quantification of the descriptive statistics by grade and test time. The WUF measure is the least researched and does not have benchmarks set of the Dynamic Measurement Group (Potter, 2008). It was important to run the ANOVA so that a clearer picture could be garnered of the interaction between the grade level gains and the pre- and post-test differences. This adds to the validity of the measurement tool used for this research.

A significant difference between the pre- and post-test scores at all grade levels was found, which suggest that this test does measure vocabulary growth. A significant difference between grade levels was also realized. Further tests revealed that the kindergarten students had a significantly lower score than the first grade students but there was no significant difference between the first and second grade students. One possible cause for this is could be related to Potter's (2008) unpublished doctoral dissertation that suggested that the WUF measure may be more accurate at the kindergarten level than at the higher levels. Potter stated that the WUF may be a more

accurate measure for students who are not yet reading for meaning (p. 97). The results of this study would coincide with this previous study.

The time X variable found in Table 5 found interesting results. This variable measured the change of the pre- and post-test at all three grade levels. The average gain of all students was 11.39 points, yet there were discrepant differences between the grade levels. The second grade students had a gain five times greater than the kindergarteners and the first grade students gained three times greater than the kindergarteners. This lends credence to earlier research that suggested that this measurement tool may be more accurate for students who are not yet reading for meaning.

These additional findings suggest that the DIBELS WUF is an accurate measure of vocabulary development. There was a significant difference between grade level variables and pre- and post-test variables. It may suggest that the WUF is more accurate at the early reading level before students begin to read for meaning. Further research is needed to garner a deeper understanding of the reliability of the DIBELS WUF test to measure later reading success.

<center>Implications for Social Change at the State and Local Level</center>

Using teacher discourse as a measure of academic achievement may be one way for state officials to look at schools that are in need of academic assistance. When the state report card scores are low, the state of Ohio will become involved in the district's daily functions and monitor teacher performance. One neighboring urban school district must have bulletin boards displayed on a regular basis that follow a prescribed format, showing examples of state standards and indicators. Teachers need to know what state standards they are teaching to be able to assess knowledge gained, but perhaps

observation of teacher discourse would be a better indicator of learning. A large amount of IRE teacher-student exchange could possibly be an indication that low level learning is taking place.

State personnel should not to go into a district and mandate bulletin boards and lesson plans without nurturing the learning atmosphere of the teachers. All districts can reach state minimum standards of academic achievement as long as emphasis is placed on the learning of students and teachers alike. The intention of this researcher is to share this information through publication of the results in a peer-reviewed journal.

At the district level the formation of teacher study groups may be another way to ensure high level thinking and learning is taking place within the classroom. Using a book such as Mooney's *Use Your Words: How Teacher Talk Helps Children Learn* (2005) as the catalyst for discussion may allow teachers to improve their understanding of the effects of teacher talk on student achievement. If less time is available for professional development, then articles could be used as the impetus for discussion. Such titles as *The Knowledge Gap: Implications for Early Education* (Neuman in Dickinson & Neuman, 2006) or *Teacher-Child Relationships and Early Literacy* (Pianta in Dickinson & Neuman, 2006) are two examples of the plethora of information that is available for professional development discussion.

It has long been stated that professional development is best when the teachers involved choose and maintain their own topics and learn together in an atmosphere that is accepting and nurturing (Grant et al., 2001; Hord, 2003; Lieberman & Miller, 2001; Tillema & van der Westhuizen, 2006). By working with the district curriculum director and the literacy specialist, the formation of this type of professional learning community

will enhance the learning of all teachers within the district. This improved professional development will allow every student the opportunity to reach his or her highest level of academic performance.

<div align="center">Implications for Social Change at the National Level</div>

Since the federal government mandate of No Child Left Behind (2002), which requires all schools to produce increased student achievement, changes have inundated the education field. From changes in student assessment to changes in administrative leadership to changes in quality teaching practices, most of these differences have afforded a better quality of education for many students. When international standards of excellence are analyzed, it is evident that the United States has improved its educational policies (PIRLS, 2006). The United States is currently ranked at the same level or higher than 22 out of 44 countries in fourth grade reading. A report by the Center on Education Policy (2007) reported that time spent on tested subjects has increased while areas such as art, music, and recess have seen a decrease in time. The findings of this report suggest that the NCLB (2002) legislation has improved the academic outcomes of its population through the use of standard-based tests. President Obama's educational policy, like that of his predecessor G.W. Bush, wants to place emphasis on teacher quality. The gauge of quality is based on this test preparedness. Test preparedness does not offer a quality assessment of a teacher's effectiveness. Teacher quality can best be judged by how well the students can analyze, synthesize, and metacognate. These qualities are offered to students through well-trained, professional educators who thrive on learning themselves so that the ever-increasing task of educating the next generation can be successfully mastered.

Effective professional development techniques should be developed that will allow all teachers to transform their students into analytical thinkers who constantly question their world and continually refine their learning. This professional development must be teacher-driven, continuous, and a priority within each district. By refining teaching techniques, whether it is through discourse analysis or any other improvement to classroom communication, all of our children will be afforded the opportunity to successfully learn and not just to complete the task of passing a government test. The intention of this researcher is to disseminate the results of this study in a regional conference format so that the larger educational community can continue to dialogue and research this important subject.

Conclusion

Using the outcomes from this study, the recommendation that improved teacher-student communication through effective teacher discourse will improve the vocabulary development of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds can be made. The participants in this study did not demonstrate a noticeable gap in vocabulary knowledge according to the DIBELS WUF scores and a comparison district with a smaller free or reduced lunch population, yet there was a significant gain in WUF scores when increased two-way teacher-student interaction was present. The implication that reflective professional development that emphasizes improvement in teaching technique will improve this vocabulary development can also be made. These recommendations will increase student learning and allow all students to reach grade level reading standards as outlined by NCLB (2002) legislation. The outcome of research question 5 demonstrated that teacher reflection allowed for a change in perception regarding

discourse beliefs. The study group design of professional development affords the climate of learning best practice so that every child can experience the thrill of learning.

This research supplemented the existing knowledge base concerning the relationship between low-SES status and vocabulary development as it relates to teacher discourse. Research on the subject should continue to make available the best practices for all students. In that way the stipulations of NCLB (2002) can be met and all children, regardless of socioeconomic background, can be academically successful.

Researcher's Reflection

This study began with the purpose of finding a better way to help low-SES students learn to read successfully. As a teacher of children from low-SES households, it was observed that many did not have the resources of their middle SES counterparts. It did not seem fair that all children did not have the same opportunity to become academically successful. While reflecting on my past experience, a low-SES student who struggled with reading through third grade, I realized that aside from new strategies, what probably triggered my reading growth was a personal relationship. This personal relationship was with my third grade reading teacher, Mr. George Gorvine. I remember many of his techniques. Some are still used today—finger tracking, flash cards, and reading instructional level material. One method I do not believe is used anymore. It was a box that I looked into and words flashed quickly in different places on the screen. I am sure there were many more, but these are my recollections. It was not the techniques that were used that allowed me to master this life skill; it was the relationship that was developed between the student and the teacher. Mr. Gorvine believed in me. He believed that I could be a reader. I distinctly remember his confidence in me. That is what allowed

me to become a reader and that, I now believe, is what lead me on this journey to help others experience the joy of reading. It is too late for me to thank Mr. Gorvine for this gift, which is why I dedicate this study to him, posthumously. Thank you, Mr. Gorvine, for giving me the lifelong gift of reading.

It is important for professional educators to stay current on all techniques of their craft, but the most important piece of the educator's experience is conversation. It should be meaningful, respectful, and deep. This conversation should intertwine best practices that fit the unique abilities of that student with stimulating, motivating conversation. This will broaden a student's thinking and expand their metacognition so that every student, regardless of their SES status, may experience the thrill of learning for a lifetime.

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APPENDIX A:

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT STUDY

C████ T████, Superintendent
Local Board of Education
█████ Road
█████, Ohio 45122

July 10, 2008

Dear Ms. Pritts,

        Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled "An Analysis of Teacher Discourse and Vocabulary Development in Low Socioeconomic Status Kindergarten through Second Grade Students" within the ██████ Local School District. As part of this study, I authorize you to invite members of my organization, whose names and contact information I will provide, to participate in the study as professional study group subjects. Their participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

        I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the research team without permission from the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,

C████ T████
Superintendent
██████ Local School District
513-███-████

APPENDIX B:

STUDY GROUP QUESTIONS

1. What does the term 'vocabulary' mean to you?

2. How do you view vocabulary within your classroom?

3. On average, what percentage of teaching time do you spend on vocabulary?

4. Could we share some of our successful vocabulary teaching techniques with each other?

The other topic that we are discussing in group is teacher discourse. Discourse comes from the Latin meaning 'conversation, speech'. Teacher discourse is the talk within a classroom. There are many different ways to view teacher discourse. There are the many different types of questions to ask, monitoring student progress, recitation, listening, clarifying, justifying, reflecting, summarizing, repeating, probing…

1. How do you feel you speak in your classroom?

2. Do you think that your manner of speaking has changed over the years? How and why?

3. How do you feel your method of speaking in your classroom compares with colleagues?

TEACHER DISCOURSE AND TALK SAMPLES

Teacher discourse type IRE – Inquire, Respond, Evaluate

This exchange was in a kindergarten classroom at the beginning of an oral book reading lesson:

> T: Put your finger on the title of the book for me. What is the title of this book?
>
> S: Jen and Will
>
> T: Very good.

Teacher discourse type 2W – Two-way Conversation

This discussion was in a first grade classroom and comes before a first reading of a book about a little boy preparing a surprise party for his mother's birthday.

> T: Tell me why you like surprises?
>
> S: Because you get stuff.
>
> T: Okay, A lot of times you get gifts. That is nice.
>
> S: You might go somewhere special.
>
> T: Okay, you might go somewhere special like Chucky Cheese.
>
> S: You might have a surprise birthday party.
>
> T: That would be nice, wouldn't it?
>
> S: You might dig for treasure.
>
> T: You are telling me what you might do instead of telling me why you like all of these surprises.
>
> S: They're fun!
>
> T: Okay, they are fun.

S: Presents are nice.

T: I think presents are nice, too. Surprises are usually nice, aren't they?

S: Because you get to do something new

T: Oh, you get a new experience.

S: Surprises are exciting.

T: Yes, they are.

S: They come from your family.

T: That's important, isn't it?

Teacher talk type Action for Direction – Ad

This example was in a second grade classroom during a reading vocabulary lesson.

T: Boys and girls, when you get your paper, please hold it like this and do a hot dog fold first. That's a long fold that looks just like a hot dog bun. When you have your hot dog fold then we are going to hamburger fold in half, just like so…

S: What's a hamburger?

T: When you fold it the short way not the long way. Like this…

Teacher talk type Action for Behavior – Ab

This example was in a kindergarten classroom during a small group reading lesson.

T: You need to sit up and have your finger on the word with us. It is your job to read, too.

Teacher talk type Knowledge to Clarify or Repeat - Kcr

This example was in a second grade classroom during a vocabulary lesson.

T: So we live in the town of Any City, in the state of Ohio. What country do we live in?

S: The United States

T: The United States of America. So our homeland is the United States. It is where we are live. So if you are visiting Australia and someone comes up to you and asks where your homeland is, what would you say?

S: The United States.

Teacher talk type Knowledge to Justify or Reflect – Kjr

This example was taken from a kindergarten guided reading lesson.

S: They spot Mom.

T: What does it mean when they say spot Mom?

S: They saw her.

T: They saw the Mom. How did you know that? What did you use to help you know that? Did you just know that word because we talked about it before or did you use the picture to give you a clue?

Teacher talk type Knowledge to Prompt or Focus – Kpf

This example was taken from a second grade vocabulary lesson.

T: Now let's take a look at that first word. What is that first one?

S: Flashes

T: What kind of image pops into your mind when you read the word flashes?

Teacher talk type Knowledge to Tell – Kt

This example was from a first grade guided reading lesson.

T: If something is 'rare' what does it mean?

S: It is worth something.

T: It could be worth something. It means there aren't very many of them. It's

something that you don't see very often and that is why it may be worth

something because you don't see it very often.

APPENDIX D:

SUMMARY OF TEACHERS' CODED LESSONS

Teacher	Type of Conversation/Talk	Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Total
C	IRE	16	13	29
	2W	1	4	5
	Ab	0	0	0
	Ad	10	8	18
	Kcr	11	4	15
	Kjr	0	7	7
	Kpf	18	34	52
	Kt	22	1	23
K	IRE	20	28	48
	2W	14	6	20
	Ab	9	3	12
	Ad	25	20	45
	Kcr	0	15	15
	Kjr	0	12	12
	Kpf	51	82	133
	Kt	30	3	33
A	IRE	18	16	34
	2W	15	6	21
	Ab	1	0	1
	Ad	28	4	32
	Kcr	5	23	28
	Kjr	1	1	2
	Kpf	30	41	71
	Kt	8	4	12

G	IRE	25	16	41
	2W	17	9	26
	Ab	5	0	5
	Ad	17	14	31
	Kcr	7	19	26
	Kjr	1	1	2
	Kpf	48	33	82
	Kt	19	17	36
D	IRE	37	18	55
	2W	1	0	1
	Ab	0	1	1
	Ad	24	19	43
	Kcr	0	1	0
	Kjr	0	0	0
	Kpf	35	36	71
	Kt	19	4	23
J	IRE	27	17	44
	2W	8	4	12
	Ab	1	1	2
	Ad	10	9	19
	Kcr	3	1	4
	Kjr	1	3	4
	Kpf	37	25	62
	Kt	13	24	37

APPENDIX E:

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

Name of Signer: **Amy M. Pritts**

During the course of my activity in collecting data for this research: "An Analysis of Teacher Discourse and Vocabulary Development in Low Socioeconomic Status Kindergarten through Second Grade Students" I will have access to information, which is confidential and should not be disclosed. I acknowledge that the information must remain confidential, and that improper disclosure of confidential information can be damaging to the participant.

By signing this Confidentiality Agreement I acknowledge and agree that:

1. I will not disclose or discuss any confidential information with others, including friends or family.
2. I will not in any way divulge, copy, release, sell, loan, alter or destroy any confidential information except as properly authorized.
3. I will not discuss confidential information where others can overhear the conversation. I understand that it is not acceptable to discuss confidential information even if the participant's name is not used.
4. I will not make any unauthorized transmissions, inquiries, modification or purging of confidential information.
5. I agree that my obligations under this agreement will continue after termination of the job that I will perform.
6. I understand that violation of this agreement will have legal implications.
7. I will only access or use systems or devices I'm officially authorized to access and I will not demonstrate the operation or function of systems or devices to unauthorized individuals.

Signing this document, I acknowledge that I have read the agreement and I agree to comply with all the terms and conditions stated above.

Signature: **Date:**

APPENDIX F:

CONSENT FORM

You are invited to take part in a research study exploring vocabulary development and its relation to teacher discourse. You were chosen as a potential participant because you are a K-2 teacher and you teach reading and vocabulary. Please read this form and ask any questions you have before agreeing to be part of the study.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Amy M. Pritts, who is a doctoral student at Walden University and first grade teacher at ▇▇▇ Local Schools.

Background Information:
The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship of vocabulary development and teacher discourse, or how a teacher approaches the classroom. There are many good, effective methods of communicating with students. There is no one way to teach, but many, many effective methods that work for different teachers. This study will investigate the association, if any, between vocabulary development and how a teacher approaches the classroom.

Procedures:
If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:
- Participate in a study group that will explore vocabulary techniques and teacher discourse
- The study group will meet two or more times over the course of a ten week period
- Allow the use of students' DIBELS scores to be used for analysis
- Participate in two 40-minute audio taping sessions of a reading lesson. The first session will take place during the first five weeks of the ten-week study and the second audio taping will take place during the second five week period. The lessons that will be taped will be mutually agreed upon between you and the researcher.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
Your participation in this study is voluntary. This means that everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you want to be in the study. No one at ▇▇▇ Local Schools will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. If you feel stressed during the study you may stop at any time. You may skip any questions that you feel are too personal.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:
Participation in this study will allow the participant to explore his/her own teaching methods and exchange and collaborate professional thoughts and ideas in a collegial, mutually respectful setting. There are no known risks with this study.
Compensation:
There is no compensation for participation in this study besides the provision of food and beverages during study group time.
Confidentiality:
Any information you provide will be kept anonymous. The researcher will remove the signature blanks below to provide true anonymity. The researcher will not use your information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in any reports of the study.

Contacts and Questions:
The researcher's name is Amy M. Pritts. The researcher's faculty advisor is Dr. Lucille Lang. You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via cell phone, 513-515-5227, or email, AmyPritts@cinci.rr.com or the advisor at 520-444-5342 or lucille.lang@waldenu.edu. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Director of the Research Center at Walden University. Her phone number is 1-800-925-3368, extension 1210.

The researcher will give you a copy of this form to keep.

Statement of Consent:

☐   I have read the above information. I have received answers to any questions I have at this time. I am 18 years of age or older, and I consent to participate in the study.

Printed Name of

Participant

Participant's Written or   _____

Electronic* Signature

Researcher's Written or   _____

Electronic* Signature

                                                           _____

Electronic signatures are regulated by the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act. Legally, an "electronic signature" can be the person's typed name, their email address, or any other identifying marker. An electronic signature is just as valid as a written signature as long as both parties have agreed to conduct the transaction electronically.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Amy M. Pritts

EDUCATION

Doctorate of Education, Teacher Leadership 2009
Walden University, Minneapolis, Minnesota
Dissertation: The Relationship Between Vocabulary Development,
Low Socioeconomic Status, and Teacher Discourse
Adviser: Dr. Lucille Lang

Master of Science, Education 2004
Walden University, Minneapolis, Minnesota
Research Project: Increasing the Phonemic Segmentation Fluency Score of
Children in the At-Risk Category of DIBELS

Bachelor of Science, Education and English 1977
SUNY at Fredonia, New York

Guidance and Counseling 1979-1985
Western Illinois University/Jacksonville University
19 hours towards Guidance and Counseling degree

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teacher 2000- present
▉▉▉▉ Elementary School
Teacher of Title Reading, second, and first grades

Department Chair 2003- present
▉▉▉▉ Elementary School
Chairperson of math department

Teacher 1992-1999
Stony Brook School
Teacher of basic skills in first through fifth grades

Teacher/Owner/Consultant 1989-1991
Colonial Hill Learning Center and Apple B's Development Center
Teacher/Owner/consultant of preschool

Teacher/Administrative Assistant 1986-1989

Immaculate Conception School
Teacher/Administrative Assistant in sixth through eight grades

Teacher 1984-1986
Hendricks Day School
Teacher of social studies and geography in sixth through ninth grades

Teacher 1983-1984
Convent of the Sacred Heart
Teacher of eighth grade

Teacher 1982-1983
Bohemia Manor High School
Teacher of seventh through twelfth grade English

Teacher 1980-1982
Mount Aviat Academy
Teacher of seventh and eighth grade

Teacher 1979-1980
University Day Care Center
Teacher of preschool

Reading Assistant/Media Aide 1977-1979
Central School/North Ridge Street School

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

International Reading Association
Ohio Chapter of the International Reading Association
National Council of Teachers of Mathematics
National Staff Development Council
Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development
National Council of Teachers of English

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Presentations
Bloom's Taxonomy: Then and Now
Family Nights: Cross-curricular Family Enjoyment

Activities
Mentor: First year teacher Praxis preparation
Mentor: Student teacher preparation
Parent Room: Researched, developed, and implemented
Building Leadership Team: curricular operations