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# Preschooler's Perception about Reading: Is There a Correlation between Interest Level and Reading Concept Development Among Emergent Readers?

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PRESCHOOLER'S PERCEPTION ABOUT READING: IS THERE A  
CORRELATION BETWEEN INTEREST LEVEL AND READING CONCEPT  
DEVELOPMENT AMONG EMERGENT READERS?

THESIS

Submitted to the Graduate Committee of the  
Department of Curriculum and Instruction  
Faculty of Education  
State University College at Brockport  
in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Science in Education

by

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## ABSTRACT

This study was designed to examine preschoolers' interest levels in reading and their knowledge of basic reading concepts to determine if there is a statistically significant correlation between interest and concept development. In addition, preschoolers were asked twelve questions to determine their understanding of the reading process to see if any trends emerge such as age and sex.

Forty preschoolers (20 male--20 female), ages 3 and 4, participated in this study. The subjects were selected from preschools across Monroe County in upper New York State. Data were collected from preschoolers' teachers and in 1:1 sessions with the preschoolers. The data were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively.

The quantitative analysis revealed that there was a statistically significant positive correlation ( $p < .01$ ) between interest levels and concept development in preschoolers. In addition, there were no gender differences found for either interest levels or concept development scores. However, the qualitative analysis revealed that male subjects demonstrated a better understanding of the reading process than female subjects. No significant differences in responses were found between the 3- and 4-year-old preschoolers.

## Table of Contents

<u>Chapter I:</u> STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM.....	1
Purpose.....	1
Research Question.....	1
Need for the Study.....	1
Definition of Terms.....	3
Limitations.....	3
<u>Chapter II:</u> REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	4
Purpose.....	4
What Do Avid Readers Have In Common?.....	5
High Interest Versus Low-Interest Readers....	6
How Do Teachers Promote Interest in Reading?.....	6
The Attainment of Literacy.....	7
Children's Perceptions of Reading and Writing.....	8
Children's Conception of Reading and Reading Performance.....	9
Summary.....	11
<u>Chapter III:</u> RESEARCH DESIGN.....	13
Purpose.....	13
Research Question.....	13
Null Hypothesis.....	13
Methodology.....	14
Subjects.....	14
Materials.....	14
Procedure.....	15
Analysis of Data.....	15
<u>Chapter IV:</u> ANALYSIS OF DATA.....	17
Purpose.....	17
Analysis of Concept Skills.....	17
Gender Analysis.....	18
Analysis of Responses To Questions.....	18
Summary.....	27
<u>Chapter V:</u> CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS.....	31
Purpose.....	31
Conclusions.....	31
Implications for the Classroom.....	33
Implications for Research.....	34
REFERENCES.....	36

APPENDICES.....	39
Appendix A.....	40
Appendix B.....	41
Appendix C.....	42
Appendix D.....	43
Appendix E.....	44
Appendix F.....	45

## CHAPTER I

### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

#### Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there is a statistically significant correlation between reading interest levels and reading concept development among emergent readers at the preschool level.

#### Research Question

What is the correlation between preschoolers' level of interest in reading and their level of concept knowledge about reading?

#### Need for the Study

Researchers who have studied the field of motivation for literacy have identified several of the same variables that contribute to a child's becoming an

eager reader. In addition to these important variables being present in children's early years is their conception of the reading process. Research clearly shows that conceptions form before formal instruction (Mason, 1977, Long, Roberts, et al., 1982, Purcell-Gates and Dahl, 1991). If we understand these conceptions and how they might play a role in motivation to read, teachers and parents will possibly have yet another avenue to help influence a child to appreciate and to enjoy reading.

Morawski and Brunhuber (1993) studied early reading recollections of proficient and remedial adult readers. Significant differences were identified regarding their perceptions of reading.

Individual perceptions of themselves as readers as well as their views of the reading process cannot help but play a major role in their reading development. Therefore, it is imperative that an understanding of these perceptions be reached and acted upon during reading instruction. (p. 45)

This study was designed to provide some insight into the role that children's perception of the reading process plays in their interest in reading. Will this research show that the children who demonstrate an understanding of the reading process will also have a high interest in reading?



### Definition of Terms

- Aliteracy:** The ability to read but an unwillingness to do so.
- Emergent literacy:** The first stage in children's growth toward literacy.
- Emergent reader:** One who engages in the first stage in children's growth toward literacy.

### Limitations of the Study

Reading interest levels were determined by the subjects' teachers which is subjective even though efforts were made to control this by designing the rubric (Appendix A). Subjects' responses to questions in Appendix B may not have reflected their true understanding due to shyness or unfamiliarity with this examiner. Finally, very few subjects scored in the low interest range.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there is a statistically significant correlation between reading interest levels and reading concept development among emergent readers at the preschool level.

It is intriguing to some classroom teachers that certain students embrace literature with a passion while others tend to ignore it. Within the wide scope of research on reading achievement, there has been extensive research on identifying factors that motivate a child to want to read.

### What Do Avid Readers Have In Common?

Bonacci (1989) distributed 120 questionnaires to explore reading autobiographies. Her subjects ranged in chronological age from 10 to 82 and were 64% female and 36% male. She asked questions that explored how people come to reading, sustain reading, and grow in reading. From the questionnaires, anecdotes revealing commonalities and/or differences were examined. Their individual perceptions and reading experiences were also examined. Once responses were descriptively analyzed, Bonacci was able to identify six conditions reported by avid readers that were present in combination and in varying degrees in their reading experiences. Among these conditions were: being read to as children, observing reading behavior in the home environment, having positive reading experiences with particular materials, active library use, exposure to and availability of books in the home environment, and the impact of receiving direct encouragement to read from parents, family, teachers, librarians, and/or friends. Hansen (1969) also identified characteristics of voluntary readers. He found that they tend to come from homes in which there is a supportive "literary environment," as indicated by the availability of books, the amount of reading done with the child, reading guidance, and good models of voluntary readers.

## High-interest Versus Low-interest Readers

Morrow (1983) compared groups of kindergarten children who had either a high or low interest in literature:

Significant differences were found between the high and low interest groups in most areas. High-interest children were read to more often than low-interest children, watched less television, and had more children's books placed in many rooms at home. Parents and teachers of the high-interest children provided supportive literary environments at home and in school, whereas those in the low-interest group did not. (p. 221)

## How Do Teachers Promote Interest In Reading?

Speigel (1989) found that when teachers read aloud it generated interest, captured enthusiasm, and created excitement in the audience, emotions which provide a foundation for students to read voluntarily.

Neuman and Roskos (1989) found that literacy-enriched play centers have the potential to influence young children's literacy activities. The subjects were 25 boys and 12 girls aged 4 and 5 years from 2 urban preschool classes. They were observed before and after design changes were made in the classrooms. Four distinct play centers were created and the children were allowed to play freely in any of the centers. The results were measured qualitatively and quantitatively

and they indicated that children used print for play purposes considerably more than before the intervention, their scores on a test of print awareness rose considerably, duration and density of literacy demonstration increased, and literacy play themes appeared more instrumental to the play experience in the new centers.

These studies reveal several reasons why students might become eager readers, but an important variable not discussed in the above articles is the child's perception of the reading process itself.

#### The Attainment of Literacy

A growing body of research suggests that the attainment of literacy is a developmental process that begins well before formal instruction. Chomsky (1980) provided the theoretical foundation for viewing literacy as developmental. He proposed that language is a preprogrammed, innately human characteristic that unfolds by environmental influences. Smith (1978) and Goodman (1967) have both contributed to a psycholinguistic theory of reading. Reading, from this perspective, grows from the knowledge a child has of language and consists of gaining proficiency using cues to construct meaning from print.

## Children's Perceptions of Reading and Writing

According to Long, Manning, G., Manning, M., Martin, Williams, and Wolfson (1982), studies of the child's conception of reading and writing acts indicate that the understanding of these processes is based on the understanding of the language system. Kita (1979) studied 5-year-olds' understanding of why we read and write. Interviews were conducted with each of 20 kindergarten children. The questions constructed for this interview dealt with the children's concepts about reading and writing and also about the purposes they establish about writing. Following the interview, the children completed a writing sample on a topic of their choice. Kita concluded that her subjects understood the reasons for writing much better than reasons for reading. The students felt that writing had a definite purpose whereas reading did not. While the students acknowledged the importance of word recognition in some situations, such as when reading labels or signs, they were quick to say that it was not important when reading books. Downing (1972) concluded that understanding the communicative nature of the writing process was the first in a hierarchy of understandings which interlock together and culminate in the development of cognitive clarity about the nature of reading. Mason (1977)

confirmed this finding when longitudinally studying preschool children's knowledge of printed words and letters. The results indicated that not only does knowledge of printed words exist before children receive formal instruction, but also the children showed a uniformly similar order of acquisition of this knowledge, concluding that a hierarchy for reading readiness exists.

#### Children's Conception of Reading and Reading Performance

Many children enter reading instruction with little understanding of the purpose and nature of reading. It has been found in several studies that children form concepts of reading as reading is presented to them in their classroom experiences. Rasinski and DeFord's (1988) study confirms this statement. They studied first graders and their experiences in the classroom in regard to reading instruction. They found that if instruction emphasizes correct decoding or encoding of small units of language, children tend to view reading and writing as a process of saying or spelling words correctly with little regard for meaning. Conversely, if reading instruction emphasizes the apprehension and use of meaning, they tend to see reading and writing as purposeful and meaningful activities.

Freppon (1991) also studied the relationship of classroom experience and children's concepts of reading.

In this study, children were given the option of defining reading as thinking about a story in their mind or saying all the words correctly. Of the children in a literature-based group, 83% chose "thinking about the story" or both "thinking about the story and saying the words," while only 34% of the skill-based students selected these answers.

Purcell-Gates and Dahl (1991) found a positive relationship between concepts of reading and scores on the Written Language Knowledge pretests. They studied low socio-economic urban children from kindergarten and first grade. Overall, they found that the children who were the most successful at reading and writing at the end of first grade began kindergarten with more highly and broadly developed schemata about written language as compared to the children who were the least successful.

Faulks (1993) researched this area to see if there was a statistically significant relationship between fourth grade students' concepts of reading and their reading comprehension performance. Her subjects were 40 fourth grade students who attended one of four schools in western New York. The children's concepts of reading were measured by an interview and their reading comprehension performance was measured by



results on the NYS Reading PEP test. In contrast to the above studies, she found that there was not a statistically significant relationship between the child's concept of reading and his/her reading comprehension scores.

### Summary of the Chapter

There is a wealth of literature on commonalities of avid readers, differences between high-interest and low-interest readers, the attainment of literacy, and how teachers can promote it. In addition, there has been much research on children's perception of the reading process and its effect on reading performance. One question, however, has not been raised. Can a child's perception of the reading process affect his/her eagerness to read? Only one study that touched on this question was found. Bondy (1990) explored children's definitions of reading and what they could tell educators about improving teacher education. Bondy was concerned to find that those students who believed that reading was "saying the words" did not choose to spend free time reading books. According to Bondy, it appeared that because those children believed that reading meant saying words aloud to an audience,

they tended to avoid books except when they saw an opportunity to achieve social status. Throughout this study, attempts were made to research this area more thoroughly to answer the question: Does a child's perception of the reading process effect his/her desire to read?

## CHAPTER III

### RESEARCH DESIGN

#### Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there is a statistically significant correlation between interest levels in reading and reading concept development among preschool children.

#### Research Question

What is the correlation between preschoolers' level of interest in reading and their level of concept knowledge about reading?

#### Null Hypothesis

There will be no statistically significant correlation between interest level and concept knowledge of the reading process.

## Methodology

### Subjects:

This study involved preschool students (n=40), 20 male and 20 female, ages 3-4 years old whose teachers have identified their interest levels in reading using a rubric pre-designed by this examiner (See Appendix A). Students were selected from preschools across Monroe County in upper New York state which have classes containing 3-5 year-old children. Subjects were selected from a preschool in an eastern suburban area, an inner city area, and a western suburban area across the county.

### Materials:

- Rubric to determine interest levels of children in reading (See Appendix A)
- The following books were selected that possessed text features of interest, interesting text-picture relationships, interesting use of language and story structure:
  - Mud Puddle by Robert Munsch
  - Something Good by Robert Munsch
  - Corduroy by Don Freeman
  - It's the Bear! by Jez Alborough
- A pre-designed set of questions to be asked of the student during the 1:1 sessions (Appendix B)
- Tape recorder

### Procedure:

The teachers were provided with rubrics (See Appendix A) to complete for each of the children in their classrooms. Teachers or researchers read one story to students and asked a set of questions (See Appendix B) on a 1:1 basis at times convenient to the individual teacher. During the story, the researcher observed for demonstration of particular concept skills (e.g., Does the child hold the book right-side-up?, Can the child point to the beginning and end of the story?, Does the child demonstrate understanding that we read page by page?, etc; See Appendix C). A second story was read at a later date. All sessions were tape recorded. Each teacher or researcher also recorded the students' answers to the questions to allow the researcher to transcribe and examine responses at a later date. Multiple stories were used to be sure that a child's response to the examiner's questions was consistent for different sessions. The stories were read by multiple readers to control for possible researcher bias.

### Analysis of the Data

Data were collected from each examiner. Each child's level of interest was converted into a numerical score based on responses from teachers to the

rubrics. Three points were scored for each response in the "often" column, two points were scored for each response in the "sometimes" column, and one point was scored for each response in the "rarely or never" column. Score ranged from 5 to 15 points. Scores were also obtained for each child's concept development by scoring one point for each concept skill they demonstrated for a total of 8 possible points. Data were analyzed using the Pearson-Product Moment to determine if there was a statistically significant correlation between interest level and concept development. Answers to questions that could not be analyzed quantitatively were analyzed qualitatively to determine if any trends were found among the students such as gender differences and/or age differences.

## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS OF DATA

#### Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there is a statistically significant correlation between reading interest levels and reading concept development among emergent readers at the preschool level.

#### Analysis of Concept Skills

The results of the analysis of concepts skill development in relation to interest level computed to .60303773 (See Appendix D) suggesting a statistically significant relationship ( $p < .01$ ): as a child's interest in reading increases, skill development also increases. The results were also plotted on a scattergram to present the information visually (See Appendix E). A gender analysis was also done with the above

information. As shown in the tables below, no gender differences were found in interest level or concept development scores.

GENDER ANALYSIS

(40 Subjects--20 male, 20 female)

Table 1

INTEREST SCORES

		High	Moderate	Low
SEX	Male	13	5	2
	Female	13	6	1

Table 2

CONCEPT SCORES

		1-4	5-8
SEX	Male	1	19
	Female	3	17

Analysis of Responses to Questions

The questions (See Appendix B) were designed to explore knowledge of the reading process in preschool children. The questions were analyzed qualitatively to determine if any trends emerge among the subjects



regarding interest levels, sex, and age. Responses were categorized and counted for each question according to the type of response.

### Question 1

Tell me about reading. What do you know about it?

Responses were divided into four categories.

Category A included responses that described a reading activity (e.g., "We read books.", "Teachers show people pictures."). Category B included responses indicating reading is a learned activity (e.g., "You have to know how."). Category C included responses indicating reading is for fun or enjoyment (e.g., "I only read if it's good." "I only read when I want to."). Category D included "I don't know" responses.

Figure 1	Categories	# Total Responses
1.	Described a reading activity	9
2.	Gave reference that it was a learned act	14
3.	Fun or enjoyment	4
4.	"I don't know" response or no response given	13

### Question 2

Do you want to be able to read? Why or why not?

Responses were divided into four categories.

Category A included "yes" responses, indicating that reading is something they want to do (e.g., "Yes, be-

cause it's fun." or "Yes, because I like to and I like homework and I want to read by myself."). Category B included responses indicating they needed to know how (e.g., "Yes, because I want to be an officer when I grow up," or "Yes, because I'm supposed to."). Category C included responses indicating that reading is a learned activity (e.g., "Yes, I don't know how yet."). Category D included "No" responses.

Figure 2

Categories	# Total Responses
1. Stated that they desire to know how to read	19
2. Stated that they <u>need</u> to know how to read	3
3. Indicated that reading is a learned process	15
4. Stated "No"--no reason given	3

### Question 3

Who do you think will help you learn to read?

Responses were divided into five categories A-E as shown below.

Figure 3

Categories	# Total Responses
1. Parent or other family member	20
2. Teachers	10
3. Computers or books	1
4. "Myself"	3
5. "I don't know" response	6

#### Question 4

##### Does someone read to you at home? Who?

Responses were divided into three categories as shown below.

Figure 4	Categories	# Total Responses
1.	Stated yes, a family member	28
2.	Stated no, "I read to myself."	4
3.	stated no--no reason given	8

#### Question 5

##### What do they read to you?

All subjects responded with "Books or stories." This question was designed to determine whether children were aware that people read cards, letters, or even daily menus to them. This question did not produce useable results.

#### Question 6

##### What other things do people read besides books?

Responses were divided into seven categories as shown below.

Figure 5	Categories	# Total Responses
1.	Mail	2

2. Computer	3
3. Writing	1
4. Magazines	3
5. Papers	8
6. Stories	4
7. "I don't know" response	19

### Question 7

#### When do people read?

Responses were divided into six categories. Category A included responses that people read at specific times during the day (e.g., "at napttime", "at bedtime"). Category B included responses that reading happens at school. Category C included responses that people read for desire (e.g., "When they want to and at night"). Category D included responses indicating understanding that reading is developmental (e.g., "when you're old enough". Category E included a response that reading is a positive experience because it is sometimes used as a reward (e.g., "When you're good"). Category F included "I don't know" responses.

Figure 6	Categories	# Total Responses
1.	Specific time of day at home	21
2.	"at school"	2
3.	"When people want to"	4
4.	"When you're old enough"	2
5.	"When you're good" (reward)	1
6.	"I don't know" response	10

### Question 8

Do you like to be read to? Why or why not?

Responses were categorized into four categories. Category A included responses that indicated children enjoy books (e.g., "Yes because it's my favorite thing to do."). Category B included responses that indicated children enjoyed spending time with the reader (e.g., "Yes, because we're together."). Category C included "yes" responses but no reason given. Category D included "no" responses.

Figure 7	Categories	# Total Responses
1.	stated yes because they like books	15
2.	stated yes because they like spending time with reader	9
3.	stated yes--no reason given	13
4.	stated no	3

### Question 9

"If I said, "I'm going to read you a story," what would I do?"

Responses were categorized into three categories. Category A included responses indicating understanding that reading is a visual/verbal act (e.g., "You would have to have your eyes open," "You would read the words."). Category B included responses of those who interpreted the question literally, and responded, "Read a story." This question was not age-appropriate

for most subjects. Category D included "I don't know" responses.

**Figure 8**

Categories	# Total Responses
1. Indicated reading is a visual act	7
2. Stated that a story would be read	28
3. "I don't know" response	5

#### Question 10

If I said, "I'm going to tell you a story,"  
What would I do?

Responses were divided into three categories.

Category A included responses that reading is a verbal activity ("You would have to use your mouth."). Category B included the responses of those who interpreted the question literally and responded, "You would tell me a story." Again, this question was not age-appropriate for most subjects. Category C included "I don't know responses."

**Figure 9**

Categories	# Total Responses
1. Indicated a verbal activity	6
2. Indicated a story would be read	23
3. "I don't know" response	11

### Question 11

Can people read with their eyes closed?  
Why or why not?

Responses were divided into four categories. Category A included responses that indicated understanding that reading is a visual process (e.g., "No, because you can't see the words."). Category B included "no" responses with no reason given. Category C included "yes" responses with no reason given. Category D included "I don't know" responses.

Figure 10	Categories	# Total Responses
1.	stated no, indicating reading is a visual process	18
2.	stated "no" but could not give reason	15
3.	stated "yes"	3
4.	"I don't know" response	4

### Question 12

Why do you think people read?

Responses were divided into six categories. Category A included responses indicating that people read for enjoyment ("Because it's really fun," "Because they like it."). Category B included responses indicating that people read because they need to (e.g., "Because they have to read books sometimes."). Category C included responses indicating that people read to learn ("Because they learn stuff."). Category D in-

cluded responses that people read because they are able to (e.g., "Because they know how."). Category E included "I don't know" responses. Category F included nonsense responses.

**Figure 11**

Categories	# Total Responses
1. enjoyment or desire	20
2. because they need to	2
3. "to learn things"	1
4. because they know how	1
5. "I don't know" response	15
6. Nonsense answer	1

The results to these questions were tallied in chart form (See Appendix F) to determine if any trends were evident. The responses were examined carefully to determine if there were any trends regarding interest levels, age or sex. In contrast to the quantitative analysis, some trends did emerge regarding gender.

Particular responses were selected that demonstrated understanding of the reading process (desired responses). The data were examined to determine the age and sex of those subjects who answered with a desired response (See Appendix F). Male preschoolers gave 59 total desired responses. Female preschoolers gave 41 desired responses. This finding suggests that males may have a better understanding of the reading process at the preschool age level. No differences between 3-year-old and 4-year-old responses were found.



## SUMMARY

The analysis of data of this research was organized into two parts. The first section analyzed preschool children's interest level and concept development scores qualitatively to determine if there was a significant correlation between the scores. Using the Pearson-Product Moment, a statistically significant correlation ( $p < .01$ ) was found (.60303773) indicating that as interest levels increase, concept development also increases. A gender analysis was also done to determine if there were any differences in the scores of male and female subjects. No gender differences were found for either interest scores or concept development scores.

The second part of the data analysis involved analyzing responses to questions asked of the subjects that would determine preschooler's understanding of the reading process.

Preschoolers' responses to question one, "Tell me about reading. What do you know about it?" indicated that 2/3 of the testing population could either describe a reading activity, verbalize that reading is a learned skill, or express that it is an enjoyable activity. One-third answered, "I don't know," indicating that they did not understand the term "reading" or that they did not know how to express their knowledge.

When presented with question two, "Do you want to be able to read?" 47% of preschoolers expressed a desire to read and 37% of preschoolers indicated that they would need to learn how.

The responses to question three, "Who do you think will help you learn to read," indicated that 50% of the preschoolers believed that a family member would teach them how to read and 25% indicated that a teacher would help them.

For question 4, 70% of preschooler's responded "yes" that they were read to at home, indicating that parental involvement in the reading process is high in this testing population.

Question 5, "What do they read to you?" produced no useable results as all preschoolers responded with either "books" or "stories." This question was designed to determine if the subjects understood that people read several things to them besides stories (e.g., menus, cards, letters, etc.).

Question 6, "What other things do people read besides books?" addressed the above issue more directly. Forty-seven percent of the preschoolers reported that they didn't know what else people read besides books. The remaining preschoolers were able to respond with at least one other reading material.

Question 7, "When do people read" was answered by

52% of the preschoolers, that reading happens at scheduled times of the day (e.g., bedtime).

Seventy percent of the preschoolers indicated "yes" to question 8 that they enjoyed being read to. Thirty-eight percent stated "yes" because they liked books. Fourteen percent stated, "yes" because they liked spending time with the reader. Thirty-three percent stated "yes" but gave no reason.

Questions 9 and 10 were designed to determine if preschoolers were aware that reading is a visual process and different from simply telling a story. Most responses indicated lack of understanding by either simply describing a reading activity or answering "I don't know." Eighteen percent were able to verbalize that reading was both a visual/verbal activity. Fifteen percent were able to verbalize that telling a story is strictly a verbal activity.

When asked question 11, "Can people read with their eyes closed?" 83% of the preschoolers seemed to understand that you need your eyes open to read.

The final question, "Why do you think people read?" indicated that 60% were able to give an appropriate answer. The remainder of the preschoolers were unable to give a response.

The responses were examined carefully to determine if there were age and/or gender differences. In con-

trast to the quantitative analysis, some trends did emerge regarding sex of the subjects. Male preschoolers gave 59 desired responses, 52 (87%) were in the 4-year-old category. Females gave 41 desired responses, 34 (79%) were in the 4-year-old category. Although the difference is slight, male preschoolers were able to demonstrate more understanding than female preschoolers. In addition, the majority of the desired responses were given by 4-year-old subjects, which is congruent with previous findings that the acquisition of reading is a developmental process. Due to the low number of low-interest subjects, it was not possible to examine the data for trends involving interest levels.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

#### Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there is a statistically significant correlation between reading interest levels and reading concept development among emergent readers at the preschool level.

#### Conclusions

The results of this study concluded that there is a statistically significant correlation between interest levels among preschoolers and concept development ( $r=.60303773$ ); those with high interest in reading tend to have a high concept development as well. In addition to this finding it was evident that there were no gender differences between interest level scores and concept development scores. This is contrary to previ-

ous research (McKenna, Kear, & Ellsworth, 1995) that has found that girls as a group possess more favorable attitudes than boys at all grade levels. However, when reading questions presented to the children were analyzed quantitatively, some slight gender differences did emerge. Male preschoolers gave 59 desired responses, indicating understanding of specific reading concepts. Female preschoolers gave 41 desired responses. Although the difference is slight, it appears that male preschoolers may have a better understanding of the reading process again contradicting the McKenna et al. study. When comparing responses among 3-year-old versus 4-year-old preschoolers, there was not a significant difference. Out of 100 desired responses, 86 were given by 4-year-olds, and 32 were given by 3-year-olds. Based on the fact that 4-year-olds made up 75% of the total subjects, there was no significant difference between the age-levels. This finding does not substantiate Sulzby's (1985) study that among two-, three-, and four-year-olds, there was a developmental progression across age-levels.

It is also conclusive from this study that parental involvement for this population is high (70%) which may attribute to the large number of high interest readers. In addition to parental involvement, all preschoolers in the study are exposed to literature-

enriched environments in their classrooms which could also influence their high-interest scores. This substantiates the Neuman and Roskos (1989) study which found that literacy-enriched play centers have the potential to influence young children's literacy activities.

### Implications for the Classroom

Much research has been conducted on how teacher's can influence young children to become interested in reading. This study concluded that there is a relationship between interest in reading and concept development in preschoolers. A significant finding in this study is that there were so few low-interest preschoolers (3) as compared to 26 high-interest and 11 moderately interested preschoolers in reading. This suggests that the recent push for literacy-enriched preschools and parental involvement may be positively influencing young children in the world of literature.

Downing (1971) concluded that understanding the communicative nature of the writing process was the first in a hierarchy of understandings which interlock together and culminate in the development of cognitive clarity about the nature of reading. Perhaps the introduction of writing centers in the preschool class-

rooms could be influencing young preschoolers' attainment of reading concepts.

Overall, modeling the importance of reading in the lives of young children by helping them make connections (e.g., we read the menu daily to find out what will be served for lunch, we read the job chart daily, we read messages daily to communicate with others, we read books to learn, and we read books for entertainment.) Teachers have countless opportunities each day to model these connections. Finally, modeling enthusiasm and a love for literature may be the most important influence teachers have in helping their students become readers.

#### Implications for Research

It would be beneficial to investigate further the interest levels and concept development in preschoolers by designing a similar study, but with a more equal representation of low-interest readers. This would allow researchers to investigate concept development in such children and also would lend some insight to answer the following questions:

- Is there a significant difference between male and female concept development in low-interest readers?
- Is there a significant difference between 3- and 4-



year-old responses to reading questions in low interest readers?

Furthermore, a more balanced sample (high-interest vs. low interest readers) would be desired to substantiate the results in this study.

When examining the geographic areas these preschools were selected from, there is no apparent difference in interest levels or concept development among the three schools. With the knowledge that many inner-city schools struggle with lower reading scores than surrounding suburban areas, it would be interesting to investigate at what point that inner-city children's interest and/or concept development tends to fall below those living in other geographical areas.

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## APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

CHILD'S INITIALS: \_\_\_\_\_ M/F \_\_\_\_\_ AGE: \_\_\_\_\_

	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	RARELY OR NEVER
The child requests that you read a book to him/her			
The child chooses a book over other alternatives			
The child is attentive during storytime			
The child responds either verbally or nonverbally to questions during storytime			
The child asks questions throughout the story			

## APPENDIX B

Researcher will ask the child the following questions either before or after reading the book. The session will be tape recorded for transcription at a later date:

1. Tell me about reading. What do you know about it?
2. Do you want to be able to read? Why?
3. Who do you think will help you learn to read?
4. Does someone read to you at home? Who?
5. What do they read to you?
6. What other things do people read besides books?
7. When do people read?
8. Do you like to be read to? Why or why not?
9. If I said, "I'm going to read you a story," what would I do?
10. If I said, "I'm going to tell you a story," what would I do?
11. Can people read with their eyes closed?
12. Why do you think people read?

## APPENDIX C

### DURING BOOK SHARING:

Researcher will observe to see if the child demonstrates understanding of the following concepts (it is helpful to start with the book lying on a table and ask the child to pick up the book and handle it throughout the reading):

- Does the child hold the book right side up?
- Can the child point to the front and back of the book?
- Can the child point to the beginning and end of the story?
- Can child point to where we start reading (do they point to the words or pictures)?
- Does the child demonstrate understanding that we read page by page (does the child turn pages one by one)?
- Can the child make a prediction about what might happen next before turning the page?
- Throughout the story, does the child make any reference to his/her own schema of the story subject? (Sometimes this is easiest to determine if after you introduce the title, you ask the child what he/she thinks the story might be about.)
- Does the child give an affective response at the end of the story? (Prompting is okay)

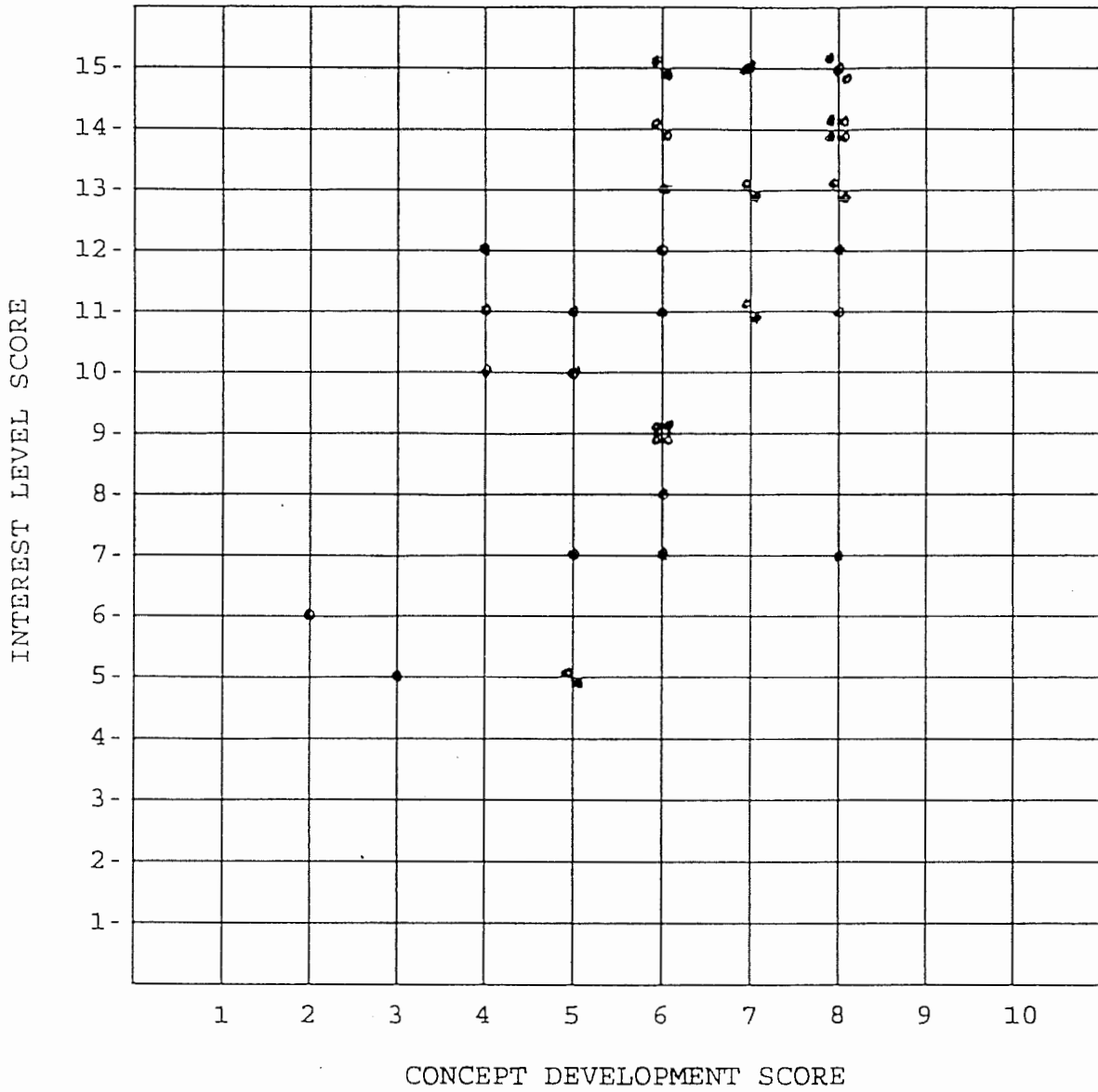


APPENDIX D

Child	Interest Score	Concept Score			
1	7	6		Column 1	Column 2
2	11	7	Column 1		
3	11	8	Column 2	0.603037773	
4	11	5			
5	7	5			
6	5	5			
7	14	8			
8	9	6			
9	8	6			
10	13	6			
11	11	7			
12	9	6			
13	9	6			
14	10	5			
15	14	6			
16	12	6			
17	7	8			
18	15	8			
19	15	6			
20	15	6			
21	5	5			
22	14	8			
23	15	8			
24	13	7			
25	14	6			
26	14	6			
27	14	8			
28	11	4			
29	11	8			
30	15	7			
31	13	8			
32	9	6			
33	15	8			
34	11	6			
35	13	8			
36	14	8			
37	5	3			
38	10	4			
39	6	2			
40	14	7			

APPENDIX E

INTEREST LEVEL SCORES VERSUS CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT SCORES



## APPENDIX F

QUESTIONS	TOTAL RESPONSES	HIGH				MODERATE				LOW				RESPONSES	
		MALE		FEMALE		MALE		FEMALE		MALE		FEMALE			
		3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4		
QUESTION 1 Tell me about reading.	A	9		I	II	IIII	I	I							A. Described reading activities *
	B	14	I	IIII I	I	II		III	I	I					B. Gave reference that reading is a learned skill. *
	C	4		II	I							I			C. Fun or enjoyment *
	D	13	I	III	I	II			I	III		I		I	D. "I don't know"
QUESTION 2 Do you want to be able to read?	A	19	I	IIII II	II	II	I	III		III		I			A. Stated yes - reading is something they want to do
	B	3		II								I			B. Stated yes - reading is something they need to do
	C	15		IIII	II	IIII II		I	I					I	C. Indicated reading is a learned process.
	D	3	I			I			I						D. "No" (no reason)
QUESTION 3 Who do you think will help you learn to read?	A	20		IIII I	II	IIII II	I	IIII		I		I			A. Parent or family member
	B	10	I	IIII	I	II						I		I	B. Teachers
	C	1										I			C. Computers or books
	D	3		II								I			D. "Myself"
	E	6	I		I	I			II	I					E. "I don't know"

\* desired response indicating understanding of reading process

APPENDIX F - PAGE 2

QUESTIONS		TOTAL RESPONSES	HIGH				MODERATE				LOW				RESPONSES
			MALE		FEMALE		MALE		FEMALE		MALE		FEMALE		
			3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	
QUESTION 4 Does someone read to you at home?	A	28	11	1111 111	111	1111 111	1	1111	1	1		1		1	A. Yes, a family member
	B	4			1	1				11					B. "No, I read myself"
	C	8		1111		1			1	1		1			C. "No"
QUESTION 5 What do they read to you? NO USEABLE DATA															NO USEABLE DATA
QUESTION 6 What other things do people read besides books?	A	2				11									A. Mail*
	B	3			1			11							B. Computer*
	C	1		1											C. "Writing"*
	D	3		11		1									D. Magazines*
	E	8	1	11	1	111						1			E. Papers*
	F	4				1		1		1		1			F. Stories
	G	19	1	1111 11	11	11	1	1	11	111				1	

\* desired response indicating understanding of reading process

APPENDIX F - PAGE 3

QUESTIONS	TOTAL RESPONSES	HIGH				MODERATE				LOW				RESPONSES	
		MALE		FEMALE		MALE		FEMALE		MALE		FEMALE			
		3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4		
QUESTION 7 When do people read?	A	21	1	111 1	1	111 111	1	111	11	11					A. Specific time of day at home
	B	2		1	1										B. At school
	C	4		111		1									C. "When they want to"
	D	2		1		1									D. "When you're old enough"
	E	1				1									E. "When you're good"
	F	10	1	11		11		1	1	1		1		1	F. "I don't know"
QUESTION 8 Do you like to be read to? Why or why not?	A	15		111 11	111 1	111 1	1	111		1					A. "Yes, because I like books"
	B	9		111 11		11				1		1			B. Yes, because they liked spending time with the reader.
	C	13	11	111	1	111		1	11					1	C. "Yes" (no reason).
	D	3								11		1			D. "No"
QUESTION 9 If I said, "I'm going to read you a story," what would I do?	A	7		11	1	111		1							A. Indicated visual/verbal activity*
	B	28	1	111 111 11	11	111 11	1	111	1	1111		11		1	B. Indicated general reading activity
	C	5	1	1	1	1			1						C. "I don't know"

\* desired response indicating understanding of reading process

APPENDIX F - PAGE 4

QUESTIONS	TOTAL RESPONSES	HIGH				MODERATE				LOW				RESPONSES	
		MALE		FEMALE		MALE		FEMALE		MALE		FEMALE			
		3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4		
QUESTION 10 If I said, "I'm going to tell you a story," what would I do?	A	6													A. Indicated verbal activity*
	B	23		 			1		1			1		1	B. Indicated general reading activity
	C	11			1				1	1		1			C. "I don't know"
QUESTION 11 Can people read with their eyes closed?	A	18		 		 1									A. "No" (indicated it is a visual process)*
	B	15					1		1					1	B. "No" (no reason given)*
	C	3		1				1		1					C. "Yes"
	D	4			1				1						D. "I don't know"
QUESTION 12 Why do you think people read?	A	20	1	      1	1										A. Enjoyment or desire*
	B	2		1	1										B. "Need to"*
	C	1				1									C. "To learn things"*
	D	1				1									D. "Because they know how"
	E	15		1			1	1		1				1	E. "I don't know"
	F	1		1											F. Nonsense answer

\* desired response indicating understanding of reading process