

Formative Elementary Reading Program Assessment:
An Interim Tool For Improvement

Mark D. Tavernier

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Dr., Travis W. Twiford, Chair

Dr. Larry Byers

Dr. Patricia P. Kelly

Dr. James D. Rayfield

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to develop and test a classroom observation inventory as a formative program implementation tool. This formative study of a district's primary (kindergarten through second grade) literacy program implementation was conducted in an effort to provide information that will improve and hopefully strengthen the program and serve as a tool for other districts that are implementing similar programs.

The passage of the No Child Left Behind Act by Congress in 2002 (Public Law 107-110) signaled the beginning of a renewed emphasis on the impact of educational programs, specifically literacy instruction and assessment. All states that accept NCLB monies must create standards and design an assessment system that will measure adequate yearly progress (AYP) for all students, with the goal of all students being proficient in reading by the 2014 fiscal year. In an effort to meet this federal mandate, school districts will continue to pour even more money into programs that promise to escalate the literacy achievement of all students. The general concepts of program evaluation are reviewed as they relate to the context of this study as well as several studies that have been designed to determine the effective components of specific literacy programs that focus instruction and ultimately improve student achievement.

The classroom observation tool that was used in this study, while unobtrusive, is highly structured with protocols for recording specific attributes focused around five domains of effective literacy instruction. A quantitative rating for each item on the instrument was assigned. Results of the observation are reported using descriptive and inferential statistics that compare the observation instrument elements by grade level and school type within each of the instrument's domains.