A Study of the Knowledge about Reading Concepts of Principals of Schools Holding Membership in the Association of Christian Schools International

Maxine Edge Margesson

Western Michigan University

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A STUDY OF THE KNOWLEDGE ABOUT READING CONCEPTS OF
PRINCIPALS OF SCHOOLS HOLDING MEMBERSHIP
IN THE ASSOCIATION OF CHRISTIAN
SCHOOLS INTERNATIONAL

by

Maxine Edge Margesson

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Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan
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A STUDY OF THE KNOWLEDGE ABOUT READING CONCEPTS OF
PRINCIPALS OF SCHOOLS HOLDING MEMBERSHIP
IN THE ASSOCIATION OF CHRISTIAN
SCHOOLS INTERNATIONAL

Maxine Edge Margesson, Ed.D.
Western Michigan University, 1983

This study focused upon the amount of knowledge that elementary principals in schools holding membership in the Association of Christian Schools International have regarding primary reading instruction. The problem was based on the contention that the elementary principal is responsible for the instructional program in his or her school, and in order to offer quality supervision, he or she must be knowledgeable about curriculum.

Data were obtained from a research questionnaire completed by 220 principals and 1,065 elementary teachers. The questionnaire contained 40 statements relating to primary-grade reading. Seven categories of reading concepts were utilized: (1) word recognition, (2) comprehension, (3) reading readiness, (4) materials, (5) methods, (6) evaluation of teachers, and (7) evaluation of students. The responses of the principals were compared to the responses of a panel of reading specialists and to the responses of the teachers they supervise.

To analyze the data collected, an F-ratio was used to compare the mean scores of the responses of the principals and the national jury and also the mean scores of the principals and teachers in each
of the seven categories mentioned.

Support for each of the seven hypotheses which stated that the knowledge of principals would compare favorably with the knowledge of the national jury was not found. Support for each of the seven hypotheses which stated that knowledge of the principals would compare favorably with the teachers they supervise was not found.
Margesson, Maxine Edge

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Western Michigan University

University Microfilms International

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An expression of appreciation also goes to the principals and teachers who participated in the study.

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Maxine Edge Margesson
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

There is substantial agreement among educators that reading instruction is the foundation of the academic program of the elementary school. This statement is supportable by consideration of the great amount of importance placed on reading research in the past reflected not only by the increase in the number of studies done, more than 700 reported by Gray (1960) to over 1,400 in 1969 (Ebel, 1969), but also by the willingness of countless individuals, foundations, and local, state, and federal government agencies to spend huge amounts of money on reading research (Allen, 1970).

Although no single factor can be isolated and identified as that which has the greatest effect on the developmental program in reading, much has been written about teacher effectiveness and its relationship to the program. Bond and Dykstra (1967) wrote: "The fact that differences in achievement among the classes still persist even after the pupil variations are held constant by statistical means, implies that much of the variation found between classes is due to the differences in teachers" (p. 8). If this premise is accepted, it seems logical to assume that certain factors exist which directly affect teacher effectiveness. One of these was identified by Sweeny (1969), "The key person in the operation of any elementary school is the supervising principal" (p. 504). The basic premise of this statement probably arises from the assumption that
one of the major functions of the elementary principal is that of educational leadership (Boles & Davenport, 1975). A brief look at the development of the elementary principalship with regard to instructional leadership suggests how this concept came into being.

The first educational law passed during the colonial period of our development was in 1642 requiring town officials to institute action against parents of children who failed to provide for the education of their children. The basic educational requirements were learning to read, understanding the principles of religion, and capital laws of the country. This was followed in 1647 by further legislation that required the establishment and maintenance of schools (Gehring, 1977).

One teacher who assumed both administrative and instructional duties was employed in these early schools. Instructional duties were considered to be the primary responsibility. Elected public officials generally functioned in the administrative role. This procedure established the tradition that the first responsibility of the elementary school administrator was to teach and that lay leaders would determine the policies of the elementary school. As years passed, laws were enacted that provided localities with the power of taxation for education and of selection of school board members (Gehring, 1977).

The principalship has grown step by step, changing from a teacher-administrator to the current position of full-time supervisor. Crouch (1926, pp. 208, 212) identified several milestones as he related the history of the principalship.
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In the one-teacher stage of organization, the basic responsibility of the teacher was that of instruction. As the student population increased, it became necessary to employ more teachers, build more schools, and find new means of support. Tice (1842/1926) wrote that a resolution in St. Louis, Missouri, allowed the hiring of assistant teachers and that "teachers of said schools recommend suitable persons" (p. 205) for the job. The inference was that the teacher was placed in the position of being accountable for the assistant teachers' performance in the classroom.

As the number of assistants increased, the principalship evolved to the second stage—head teacher. The head teacher was expected to perform certain specific duties in addition to the teaching task. Usually included in the list of responsibilities was reference to the obligation to supervise instruction. This period brought with it an accumulation of duties to such a degree that it became necessary to modify the head teacher function to one of part-time teacher. Thus came the period of the teaching principal. Relief was given from some classroom duties and part of the day was spent with problems of attendance, discipline, promotion, and methods of instruction.
The length of the period was directly related to the size of the communities, and the elementary school with the more populous areas moved into the building-principal stage rapidly. Once the trend was established, administrative duties and responsibilities quickly accumulated so that acceptance of the principal as chief administrative official of the school became fairly common. As an administrator, he or she was directly responsible to the various authorities above him or her for the successful administration of his or her building. It seems that this person's most important function was a managerial type of role, but Crouch (1926) stated, "It must not be presumed that he does no supervision" (p. 212).

The final phase is the emergence of a supervising principal whose most important responsibility was that of supervision of instruction. Historically, visitation of classrooms was founded with the beginning of public school education. After a period which saw parents visiting schools to observe the progress of their children, the superintendent became the individual responsible for supervision. As districts expanded it became impossible for her or him to personally visit every classroom and this responsibility was delegated to the building principal. The degree of the principal's involvement with supervision of instruction was the controlling factor of her or his identification, and the contrast between building principal and supervising principal became obvious. To be a supervising principal one had to devote a great deal of time to the function of supervision. In 1921, McClure reported that superintendents expected principals to devote more time to supervision than to
administrative duties. Gist (1924) stated, "The principal has been required to assume an increasing amount of responsibility for a high type of instruction in his school" (p. 205). The major difference between the two final stages of development lies in the amount of emphasis placed upon supervision. In this final stage the principal's main concern was high quality instruction. It became imperative for the principal to assume the role of educational leader and to devote sufficient time to achieve that end.

In the preceding section, the evolvement of the role of the principal as one of instructional leadership was cited. History and tradition have imposed that function upon the job. Studies completed during the late 1920s indicated that ideally principals should spend about one-half of their time dealing with the improvement of instruction. In 1948, the Federal Department of Elementary School Principals (NEA, 1948) conducted an analysis of the principalship at that point in time and assessed progress made since 1928. In this, as in the earlier report, a substantial amount of the principal's time was given to supervision. The total time was increased to 39% actual time spent compared with 34% in 1928 (NEA, 1948). This indicated a shift toward more time spent in supervision, a reflection of adherence to ideals reported 20 years earlier. The editorial committee of the Twenty-Seventh Yearbook (NEA, 1948) indicated that supervision should take even a more important role: "It seems reasonable to expect, on the average, that supervision (including pupil personnel activities) will require approximately fifty percent of the time of supervising principals and fifteen
percent of the time of teaching principals" (p. 85). This contention was supported by the elementary principals indicating that ideally they should spend about 55% of their time in this task.

Ten years later there was little noticeable shift in the overall emphasis placed on educational leadership. The 1958 study reported that 35% of the principals' time was devoted to supervision and curriculum. As in the earlier studies, the principal would, if possible, increase this time to one-half of the total time allotment (NEA, 1958). The study further reported that 71% of the principals participating in the study were responsible for instructional improvement in their schools.

Professional literature written during the period following supports this contention to a great degree. Curtin (1964) wrote that by its nature the elementary principalship was concerned with instructional leadership. This concern was evidenced in three ways: (1) educational programs for the principalship, (2) on-the-job analysis of the duties of the principal, and (3) reactions of the principals themselves to their positions. Bradfield (1964) wrote:

The role of the instructional leader in the modern elementary school is gaining increased attention because of the recognition of the need for improvement in instruction. It has become apparent that the in-service growth of teachers and the improvement of education are enhanced materially by dynamic instructional leadership. (p. 1)

Ebel (1969) cited the importance of instructional leadership and gave 20 references, all of which discuss the leadership role. Curtin and Gilbertson (1965) aptly stated: "One could indefinitely extend the list of intelligent, alert, and experienced people who
clearly see an important relationship between curriculum and instruction and the elementary school principalship" (p. 54).

That a divergent view of the concept exists cannot be denied. Some see the principal as an administrator, rather than a supervisor. Campbell (1965) stated, "you are administrators" (p. 21) and further proclaimed, "you are not instructional experts" (p. 22). Erickson (1965), in the same publication, made this statement "Instructional supervision by the principal seems, then, to be less and less defensible in many schools" (p. 22). These are interesting ideas but there is little evidence of concurrence according to NEA (1968) Principalship Research Report. In that study, it was reported that 38% of the principals' time was spent in tasks related to educational leadership, and that the preferred time was 53%. It is evident that the prevailing view as stated by Curtin and Gilbertson (1965) remains:

Elementary school principals are administrators, but they are not only administrators; elementary school principals are (or should be) instructional experts, and instructional supervision by the principal seems to be more and more defensible and is becoming more necessary. (p. 55)

Studying the principalship during the 1970s, according to the numerous publications, does not change the direct image of the responsibilities implied. Gehring (1977) used the following statement:

The principal is an educational administrator, with all that the term implies. His major responsibility should be—in cooperation with his staff—to direct, guide, and coordinate the total educational program within the school. His cardinal function is the improvement of instruction, which will enhance the learning experience of his students. The principal, then, is first and foremost an instructional leader. All his other activities must
directly support this central function, or else he jeopardizes his raison d'etre. (p. 20)

Erickson and Relier (1978), in a study of urban school principals, wrote, "The principal is expected to observe, evaluate, and improve the instructional performance of teachers" (p. 22). Essentially, school principals must assume roles and responsibilities as educational leaders, agents for change, and instigators of innovation. The role of helping teachers solve educational problems is the crucial function of educational leadership (Chappel & Layton, 1975).

"The school has a sense of mission, unity, identity, and wholeness that pervades every aspect of its functioning" (Goodlad, 1979, p. 32). Central to the accomplishment of the goals of the school is the principal. He or she, more than any other person, shapes and articulates the prevailing ambiance and creates a sense of mission. In studies of successful schools, the significance of the principal came to the surface (Goodlad, 1979).

The principal is the crucial implementer of change. Any proposal for change that intends to alter the quality of life in the school and that intends to direct the school toward the accomplishment of its goals depends primarily on the principal (Mitchell, 1972). The leader behavior of the principal has been identified as one factor that distinguishes successful schools from typical failures (Weber, 1971).
Statement of the Problem

Because there seems to be substantial agreement with the premise that the primary duty of the elementary school principal is one of instructional leadership, a question concerning his or her familiarity with curriculum can be raised. How knowledgeable must a principal be about the curriculum to fulfill the demands of instructional improvement placed upon him or her? It is logical to assume that if a principal is to offer leadership in a given subject area, he or she must have knowledge about that subject area. Thus the problem addressed in this study was: Are principals of schools holding membership in the Association of Christian Schools International knowledgeable in concepts related to reading and the teaching of reading in the primary grades?

A review of literature reveals that little research has been done to evaluate formally the principal's knowledge of specific curricular areas. No research has been done involving the schools to be studied in this project. Based on the contentions stated earlier in this paper, the decision was made to limit this research project to the area of reading.

The study endeavored to answer the following questions:

1. How does the knowledge of elementary school principals of reading concepts and the teaching of reading in the primary grades compare to the views held by reading experts?

2. How does the knowledge of the principals compare with that of the teachers they supervise regarding these concepts?
Summary

Chapter I has given a brief developmental history of the role of the elementary principal from that of teacher to administrator to instructional supervisor. Studies were cited that stressed the importance of the role of the principal in the improvement of instructional performance of teachers and the significance of the principal to schools that were considered to be successful.

The problem that was investigated in the study was stated, and specific questions to be answered were given.

Chapter II focuses attention on literature and research relevant to instructional leadership, knowledge of the principal, a comparison of the knowledge of the teacher and principal, and a study of reading concepts.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

The question investigated in this study dealt with the degree of knowledge elementary principals in schools holding membership in the Association of Christian Schools International have regarding primary reading instruction, and compared their knowledge with that of primary grade teachers. The problem was based on the contention that the elementary principal is responsible for the instructional program in his or her school, and in order to offer quality supervision, he or she must be knowledgeable about curriculum. It has been suggested that this need is especially crucial in reading and the reading program.

Although the literature search revealed no studies or reports pertaining directly to the stated problem, the literature indicated that better informed principals had superior reading programs (Austin & Morrison, 1963; Brookover & Lezotte, 1977; Conant, 1961; Weber, 1971). This chapter contains a review of literature and research relevant to instructional leadership and knowledge of the principal. The review of literature is organized to illustrate the following: (a) historic basis of supervision, (b) supervision and curriculum knowledge, (c) instructional leadership and reading knowledge, (d) identification of needed reading information for the
principal, (e) relationship between principal knowledgeability and successful reading programs, (f) comparison of the knowledge of teachers and principals, and (g) important reading concepts.

Historic Development

The historic development of the principalship has been briefly traced in the preceding chapter. It was shown that, from its inception, the principalship was linked in some manner to instructional leadership. Thus, the concept of linking principalship and instructional leadership is not new; rather, it is an established idea which evolved with the position itself. Snyder and Peterson (1970) briefly summarized the development of the concept:

Since colonial schools were first established, there has been supervision in the public schools. . . . With the growth of school districts, elementary principals were assigned supervisory responsibility for attendance centers. At first the principals were expected to direct the instructional program and judge its outcome. Principals of the 1910's and 1920's were expected to tell teachers what they should do and follow up to see if they were functioning as directed. In the 1930's, desirable supervision was frequently described as "democratic," but few principals functioned in a truly democratic manner. By the 1950's supervision in elementary school attendance centers was perceived as a process by which administrators provided "assistance in the development of better teaching-learning situations." (p. 11)

Supervision, then, has long been an integral operational characteristic of elementary schools with a primary function of supervisors being improvement of instruction. Lucia and McNeil (1962) indicated that by 1870, "executive officers, with supervision of instruction as one of their duties" (p. 4) were to be more concerned
with improvement of the weak teacher's deficiency than with his or her dismissal.

Supervision and Curriculum Knowledge

Along with emphasis on responsibility of instructional leadership came charges that the principal was not sufficiently informed to fulfill this task. In a summary of the "new meaning" of supervision Curtin (1964) stated:

Supervision is an old concept with new meanings. These new meanings and how they are understood influence the quality of instruction in today's elementary schools, for in its broadest sense supervision means the improvement of instruction. Although this definition is commonly accepted, it is not new. Improvement of school programs has always been the ultimate goal of supervision, for there has always been concern for good instruction. Indeed, when the rise of graded schools necessitated freeing principals from teaching, more intense supervision clearly was expected of them. However, because of the limited backgrounds of these early principals, much of the real supervision was exerted by "specialists" who worked out of the superintendent's office. (pp. 3-4)

In a discussion regarding school curriculum and instructional leadership, the following question was asked by McHugh (1967): "How well equipped is the principal to meet this challenge?" (p. 22). McHugh describes the position of today's principal as "untenable." Stressing the need for a change in the principal's thinking regarding a change in her or his role, and of her or his commitment to needed teaching innovations for children's benefit, he goes on to discuss his own question:

In far too many situations the principal is poorly trained for the emerging school curriculum that is rapidly developing. He has the title of "instructional leader" but neither the skills nor breadth and depth of background in
each curriculum area to prepare himself for the problem he faces. (p. 33)

In another publication, Carlson (1969) also discussed the principal. He briefly traced the historic development of the position marking the trend to "accord principals further responsibilities for curriculum development and the improvement of instruction" (p. 23). He then discussed deterrents to educational leadership; supporting the views of McHugh (1967), Curtin (1964), and others, he stated: "Another major deterrent to educational leadership is the lack of competence of the school principal in the area of instruction. The incompetence often stems from inadequate emphasis on curriculum and instruction in the training of the administrator" (p. 3).

Austin and Morrison (1963), in the Harvard Report, further supported this contention: "On the other hand, there is evidence that some principals are reluctant to accept major responsibility for instructional improvement because they are unfamiliar with curriculum matters, particularly those relating to the reading program" (p. 204).

In the previous section it was shown that supervision in the elementary program was necessary, and further, that improvement of instruction was the ultimate goal. It was pointed out, that to be an effective instructional leader, the principal must be informed; and that possession of knowledge was linked to effective supervision. The statements presented dealt with the topic encompassing a global view of knowledge and instructional leadership. The following section narrows the consideration specifically to the area of reading.
Carlson (1969), in his examination of the function of the principalship, focused attention directly to specific needs of the principal as curriculum specialist. He posed a question similar to the one asked by McHugh (1967), "How much can a principal be expected to know?" (p. 33). He then stated this answer:

Can he be expected to be an expert in all curriculum areas? Practically speaking, the criterion of cruciality will need to be applied. Certainly the more knowledge a principal has of all curriculum areas the greater his effectiveness and the more complete his security. To survive, however, a principal needs to know the area of reading instruction in some depth. (p. 33)

Carlson recognized that it may be impossible for the principal to be equally knowledgeable in all areas of curriculum, but that it is crucial for him or her to be well informed about reading matters.

McHugh (1967) also isolated reading as the curricular area in which principals must have special knowledge. He stated, "He must change his thinking, his role, his commitment to needed teaching innovations for children—especially in reading" (p. 32). McHugh's discussion continued indicating some reasons for knowledge about reading:

Mounting pressures from many directions are forcing principals to examine carefully their reading programs. Recent research, new programs, technologies, systems, and strategies for implementing improved programs combined with massive federal and state windfalls have placed a difficult burden on the school principal. (p. 33)

Because it was expected that educators with preparation and background in the area of reading would support contentions indicating particular need of reading knowledge, the survey was extended
to examine the views of the primary figure of this study, the principal. Following are samples of principal's consideration with regard to instructional leadership and reading.

Karbal (1965), a principal in Detroit public schools, examined the elementary school principalship in terms of supervision and reading knowledge. He stated:

It is trite to repeat at this time that the principal is the instructional leader in the school. . . . What is being said about the many facets of reading instruction is probably beyond the ability of a single teacher or principal to acquire. This is where the principal set as liaison between those in the know and the faculty. It goes without saying that the principal must be well read himself. (p. 489)

Lobdell (1966) discussed the philosophy of an elementary school reading program. In his discussion he gave consideration to a definition of reading, the consistency of philosophy regarding reading, and an excellent review of the important principles of a school reading program. He then considered the individual responsible for a school reading program asserting that:

The primary leadership task in reading as in every other aspect of the school program is ours, the administrators. . . . We can't as administrators— or as educational leaders— afford to throw the entire responsibility for the reading program onto other shoulders. We have to show by our active support and our understanding that we are deeply, vitally concerned. (p. 20)

Studies by Austin and Morrison (1963) and the Conant (1961) report bear out the contention that mediocre teaching can be ascribed, at least in part, to administrators' lack of background in the teaching of reading. Carlson (1972) held that instructional excellence is dependent upon administrative leadership and expertise in
curriculum and teaching.

Sweeney (1969) came to the conclusion that the full development of reading instruction—the core of the academic program—must depend on the best efforts of the key person in the school—the principal. He further pursued this view when he said:

The key person in the operation of any elementary school is the supervising principal. He is generally described as being the educational leader of the school. He is conceived to be a well trained generalist ready to cope with the realities to be found in the operation of a complex institution. (p. 504)

Sanders (1971) believed that the responsibility of the administrator to the reading program was quite clear. She or he must both encourage and ensue the adequate definition of a philosophy.

Sanders wrote:

The administrator then has several roles to play. He must be the impetus, first causing the philosophy of reading to be defined. He must be a participant in the learning undergone and the decisions made, and he must be the facilitator, too, for the implementation of new ideas. His willingness to recognize and to accept these roles will in many respects determine how well the reading program is to succeed. (p. 552)

Several pertinent points were brought out in a study done by C. B. Smith (1971). He found that the attitude of the principal was extremely important in promoting or preventing innovation. He cited an example of principals involved in a New York ghetto, where indigenous mothers were being trained as reading assistants. It was observed that the principals who gave enthusiastic support were swamped with volunteer full-time teachers who wanted to take part in the experiment. The principals who were lukewarm or skeptical had to assign unwilling teachers to work with the mothers. C. B. Smith
claimed that the attitude of the administrator, obviously, sifts down through the ranks and has a great deal to do with the success of using nonprofessional personnel in the schools.

Research published in 1970 that reviewed programs constructed to overcome environmentally caused reading problems found that the principal's role was a crucial one. As Henry Bruckell (cited in C. B. Smith, 1971), former Assistant Superintendent of Manhasset, New York, public schools wrote:

The administrator may promote—or prevent—innovation. He cannot stand aside or be ignored. He is powerful not because he has a monopoly on imagination, creativity, or interest in change—the opposite is common—but simply because he has the authority to precipitate a decision. Authority is a critical element in innovation, because proposed changes generate mixed reactions that can prevent consensus among peers and result in stagnation. (p. 34)

McHugh (1967), in his studies of several California school districts, found that after principals had been trained to assume instructional leadership—and were accepted by teachers in this role—there was a marked improvement in reading achievement. It must be noted that there have been some shortcomings. Cramer (1960) pointed this out when he said:

Despite what might be termed tacit agreement that the real functions of the elementary school principals are the improvement of instruction, analysis of how the elementary school principals spend their time has revealed that the major portion of their activity is by no means devoted to the improvement of classroom teaching. (p. 7)

The literature cited has indicated that emphasis on instructional leadership increased as the principalship evolved. It was further illustrated that, because of its importance in the total program, the principal must be especially knowledgeable about
reading instruction. It was believed that he or she must assume major responsibility for the reading program and its supervision in his or her school. Literature presented indicated that professional educators support this principle, as do the findings of Austin and Morrison (1963). Reporting the results of a survey of administrators, they illustrated an 83.6% agreement among principals and superintendents to the contention that supervision of reading is a primary function of the principal.

If the contentions made by the writer, and supported by the literature, are tenable, it seems important to examine the literature in an effort to discern what knowledge is necessary to fulfill this role.

Needed Reading Knowledge

Sheppard (1966) discussed the organization of an elementary school reading program. He cited various important facets of the program, including its description, implementation, working with personnel, and qualities of leadership. In the description of qualities necessary to put techniques into practice he referred to knowledge, and specifically to knowledge which is needed to administer the reading program. He stated:

The second quality is administrator knowledge of curriculum and, in this case, reading. The administrator is not expected to be a specialist in reading. However, he should have a broad general knowledge of the reading field. He must understand various approaches of classroom management in reading, the fundamental mechanics of basal readers, the systematic development of skills, how to apply the techniques of reading to the various content field,
the best in children's books, techniques of diagnosis, and the leading methods of effective corrective reading instruction. (p. 28)

In the same publication, discussing in-service training for principals, Murphy (1966) pointed out:

The first is the realization of the obligation we have as administrators and supervisors to "know reading." We must have more than a nodding acquaintance with what research and leaders are telling us about reading principles, psychological factors related to learning, and of methods and techniques which constitute good practice. (p. 30)

In an examination of what the classroom teacher looks for in leadership, Green (1966) evaluated various facets of leadership. He examined a cross section of teachers with varied experience, talent, and enthusiasm. One section of responses dealt with the quality of competence and another with knowledge a supervisor should have.

Green stated:

This brings us to our third basic quality, competence. The administrator must lead from knowledge. Teachers did not expect that the administrator should be able to do all things better than the teacher. However, they felt strongly that he should have the knowledge to judge properly and to appreciate good reading instruction; they felt that he should have the background from which to offer practical aid where needed. (p. 35)

Can anyone sincerely expect the principal to accept responsibility for the reading program? In answer to that question, Rutledge (1975) posited:

Actually, as leader of the school, he not only must accept that responsibility, but he also has several responsibilities toward the reading teacher. He owes her: (1) his enthusiasm; (2) his listening ear; (3) his watchful eye; (4) his nose to smell trouble; (5) a warm and protective heart; (6) his intestinal fortitude; (7) his sense of humor and (8) his awareness. (pp. 748-749)
From a discussion by Carlson (1969), the following list of factors was identified as concepts with which the principal must be familiar in order to offer leadership in reading instruction. Included in the list were the following:

- Complexity and nature of reading.
- Varied methods of teaching reading.
- Quality of experience.
- Knowledge at all grade levels (especially primary).
- Assessment of reading competence.
- Reading difficulty, diagnosis and remediation. (p. 23)

In summary he declared: "The competencies discussed do not comprise a complete and exhaustive list. The list is only representative of the background that would enable a principal to be a leader in the development of reading instruction" (p. 33).

Principals' Reading Knowledge and Successful Reading Programs

Based on the contention that the elementary school principal is responsible for the instructional program in his or her school, and in order to offer quality supervision, he or she must be knowledgeable about curriculum, a review of research findings pertaining to principals' knowledgeability about reading follows. Apparent successful elementary reading programs are also reviewed. Studies by Brookover and Associates (1976) and Brookover and Lezotte (1977) support the contention that the expectations that a principal holds has an effect on student achievement. In those studies it was not
unusual to see the principal regularly in the classroom as an inducement to students rather than as a check on teachers. This type of behavior occurred more often in schools classified as effective, i.e., in schools where student achievement was improving.

In addition to having expectations about students and their ability, and communicating those expectations, principals in effective schools were also found to be greatly interested in curriculum and instructional matters. Weber (1971) found that in four effective inner-city schools the principal was committed to working directly with staff for curriculum and instruction strategies. Rankin (1979) found that 98% of regional staff and principals described successful principals as curriculum leaders. Similar findings were noted by Brookover and Lezotte (1977) and Brookover and Associates (1976).

In a report of an investigation instituted by Conant (1961) the following statement was presented:

A characteristic noted in schools with strong reading programs was active and informed leadership by the superintendents, principals, and supervisors. Such leaders know what good reading instruction is and insist upon it in their schools. Good classroom teachers thrive in such company. (p. 27)

This statement, along with seven other concluding statements expressed the findings of the Carnegie researchers, and received the endorsement of 27 of the 28 reading experts attending the reading conference.

A longitudinal study by Morris (1966) was undertaken to examine the reading standards of pupils in the primary schools of Kent,
England. The inquiry involved 60 primary schools and 8,197 pupils. The research program consisted of: "(i) extensive studies in representative samples of primary schools; (ii) intensive studies in ten selected primary schools; and (iii) follow-up studies of selected children to the stage when they entered their first jobs" (p. 1).

Findings of this very intensive, carefully designed study were similar to the reports of the Conant (1961) investigation. Morris (1966), in a summary explanation, pointed out: "After allowing for these predisposing factors, prolonged observation in the selected schools showed clearly the importance of effective leadership" (p. 71). Morris went on to discuss the modifications in the reading programs made by the better informed principals, then concluded:

Thus, after the attributes of their population and material conditions had been considered, each school's success or failure in promoting good reading standards and/or program seemed to depend primarily on the quality of its head (principal) and secondly on that of its staff. (p. 72)

A very important question to be asked would be: What effect do administrative weaknesses have on the reading program? In the Harvard Report, Austin and Morrison (1963) gave the following answer:

In those schools where principals admitted their lack of understanding of reading, where no effort was made to help beginning teachers or those suffering from professional atrophy, and where the principal devoted his time almost exclusively to office details, the teaching methods used by most teachers were inferior. (p. 204)

The report also said:

In those schools where the principal was knowledgeable about the reading program, where he was aware of the strengths and weaknesses of teachers, and where he devoted a major portion of his time to the improvement of the reading program, instruction was good. (p. 189)
Along the same line, Morrison (cited in Austin & Morrison, 1963) expressed a belief that the principal, to a large extent, determines the effectiveness of reading programs. The principal's understanding of the philosophy and psychology of reading, he believed, is conveyed to all members of the staff. This will occur, he reported, when the principal is acquainted with research relating to current theory and practice concerning the teaching of reading. A principal, he suggested, must know what reading involves, what the objectives of the reading program should be, how reading instruction differs at various grade levels, what methodological techniques are most appropriate for children with varying characteristics and abilities, and what material will produce the desired results for different children.

The view of today's principalship, and it is a growing one, is that the principal is the critical person in the educational process. After all the legislation is passed, after all the negotiations are completed, after all the policy is implemented, the principal is left to perform his or her leadership role where it really counts, at the school (Tye, 1977).

Comparison of the Knowledge of Principals and Teachers

Aldridge (1973) compared 20 elementary school principals' knowledge of reading instruction with that of 100 elementary classroom teachers. He concluded that the principals knew as much about reading instruction as the teachers. In Nevada, Gehring (1977) found
that principals were neither poorly trained in reading nor seriously lacking in knowledge of reading concepts and that they were qualified to offer instructional leadership in reading. However, in the Aldridge study, only three out of the 100 teachers identified the principal as their best source of help in matters relating to reading instruction.

Howell (1975) indicated that the best way to teach reading is with a dedicated, perceptive teacher who taught "the child" rather than the method. However, Howell also stated that the role of the building administrator was important in improving a reading program. The support that the principal gives to the teacher and the reading program needs to be knowledgeable, pertinent, and specific, not vague and general. Robinson and Rauch (1965) believed the success of the principal in working with other support staff depended on how the principal viewed the reading program. They (Robinson & Rauch, 1965) wrote:

> It is vital that the administrator view reading as an intrinsic part of the curriculum and that he be willing actively and publicly to support the activities of the reading teacher. In fact, as they both try to meet objectives, the teacher has the right to expect that the administrator be familiar with the objectives and practices of the reading program and with the behavior of his school population. . . . On his part, the reading teacher should be prepared to answer questions that the administrator might ask about reading instruction and theory. (p. 12)

A principal must become involved actively in the area of reading, if teachers are expected to do likewise (Barnard & Hetzel, 1976).

Ralston (1978) studied the impact of principal and teacher attitudes on students' reading achievement test scores. She found that

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both the principal and teacher attitudes affected mean achievement test scores. Students with higher scores attended schools where both teachers and principals had positive attitudes toward the students and the total reading program.

Cox (1978) found that many principals believe that the teacher is the most important factor in determining the success of a reading program. However, he or she may fail to realize that the principal is the most important person to help the teacher become truly effective and efficient.

Important Concepts in Reading

In an effort to identify concepts that are important in the teaching of reading, Panchyshyn (1977) examined professional literature and teachers' manuals and discussed reading concepts with professional reading experts, principals, and teachers. One hundred fifty concepts were listed. The criterion used for the selection and inclusion of the concept on the list was that reference had to be made to it in at least one of the following:

1. Professional reading text books.
2. Professional journals and publications.
3. Teachers' manuals.
4. Research reports.

The concepts listed appeared to fall into eight different categories:

1. Methodological approaches.
5. Students' reading evaluation.
6. Reading readiness.
7. Comprehension.
8. Miscellaneous factors.

To test the reliability and validity of the instrument he was developing, Panchyshyn (1977) conducted a pilot study using the 150 concepts in the form of a questionnaire with 10 advanced graduate students, all of whom were specialists in reading, and two university professors of reading. Each person was asked to respond to each item in terms of agree or disagree and to suggest clarification of wording and phrasing as well as to point out ambiguities that existed. One hundred four statements were retained for further development and consideration.

The remaining statements were submitted to a panel of nationally recognized reading experts who were asked to respond to the statements in an effort to develop a list of important reading concepts. Twenty-seven potential jurists were selected for the panel and 21 (78%) responded.

The following criteria were used in the selection of the National Jury of reading experts (Panchyshyn, 1977, p. 28):

1. They were members of the International Reading Association.
2. They were currently or formerly members of a university staff assigned to supervise or teach reading or reading-related subjects to graduate or undergraduate students.

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3. They had published in the area of reading.
4. They had participated in national, regional, or state reading conferences.

When the questionnaires from the national panelists were returned, Panchyshyn (1977) compiled a list of 43 concepts that were considered to be important by the panel of experts for the teaching of reading. He used the following standard for the selection:

1. Seventy-five percent agreement among the jurists regarding the agree or disagree response.
2. Seventy-five percent agreement among the jurists regarding importance or unimportance of the concept as it related to reading instruction.

**Hypotheses**

Several studies reviewed in Chapter II indicated that principals were knowledgeable in the area of reading. Aldridge (1973) concluded that principals knew as much about reading instruction as the teachers they supervised. Gehring (1977) found that principals were qualified to offer instruction in reading. The work of Cox (1978), Howell (1975), Ralston (1978), and Robinson and Rauch (1965) support these findings. Based on these illustrative samples of research, the following hypotheses were investigated in this study:

1. The knowledge of reading concepts of elementary principals of schools holding membership in the Association of Christian Schools International will compare favorably with the views held by reading specialists in the following areas: (a) methodological
approaches, (b) use of materials, (c) word recognition, (d) evaluation of teachers, (e) students' reading evaluation, (f) reading readiness, and (g) comprehension.

2. The knowledge of reading concepts of elementary principals in schools holding membership in the Association of Christian Schools International will compare favorably with the knowledge of the teachers they supervise in the following areas: (a) methodological approaches, (b) use of materials, (c) word recognition, (d) evaluation of teachers, (e) students' reading evaluation, (f) reading readiness, and (g) comprehension.

Summary

In this chapter it has been illustrated that the concept of supervision of instruction was established along with the public school, and that instructional leadership evolved with the principalship. It was further shown that concern regarding the principalship and curriculum knowledge, and more specifically reading knowledge, became apparent. Following was a discussion identifying some of this specific reading information needed by the principal to fulfill his or her obligation. Findings of research citing the relationship between principal knowledge and successful reading programs were cited. Studies were cited that compared the knowledge of principals and teachers in the area of reading. Finally, a study to determine which concepts are important in reading was described, and hypotheses were stated.
CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

This study was designed to discern how knowledgeable elementary school principals and teachers of schools holding membership in the Association of Christian Schools International were about concepts related to reading and the teaching of reading in the primary grades. Also, the similarity and differences on test questions between principals and teachers were compared. A research questionnaire (Appendix A) was used to gather the necessary data.

Population

The population selected for this study was the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI). This association is a service organization serving Christian schools located in each of the 50 states and 24 other countries. The 1982 ACSI School Directory listed 1,671 member schools. ACSI is not a member of or part of any other organization and each of the member schools retains its operating independence. Membership into the organization is obtained by paying the membership fee and subscribing to the ACSI Statement of Faith (Appendix B).

As a full-service association, ACSI is designed to be a meaningful aid to its member schools; however, participation in any or all
of the services of ACSI is voluntary. Some of the services provided by ACSI are:

1. Teachers' conventions with exhibits and seminars for teachers, administrators, secretaries, pastors, and board members.
2. Pre-school conferences.
3. Administrators conferences.
4. National Institute of Christian School Administrators held each summer.
5. National Institute of Christian School Teachers held each summer.
6. Legislative representation.
7. Consulting services.
8. Achievement testing.
10. School accreditation.
12. Placement services for teachers and administrators.
13. Student activities.
15. Volume purchasing.
16. Credit union.

Sample

Of the 1,671 member schools of the Association of Christian Schools International, 1,172 have grades kindergarten through sixth.
Of these 1,172, 300 (25%) schools were selected by random number sample procedure as participants for the study. Questionnaires were sent to the principal and teachers of each of these schools.

Survey Instrument

The survey instrument that was used to gather data for the study was a research questionnaire designed by Panchyshyn (1977) in accordance with recommendations found in Parten (1966), Likert (1967), and Kerlinger (1965). This research questionnaire was constructed using concepts that appeared in professional reading textbooks, journals, and publications; teacher's manuals; and research reports.

Validity and reliability were sought in a number of ways. Concepts important in reading instruction were identified through a review of literature. These concepts were then divided into eight categories: methodological approaches, materials, word recognition, evaluation of teachers, student's reading evaluation, reading readiness, comprehension, and miscellaneous factors. A pilot study was then conducted using two university professors of reading and 10 advanced graduate students, all of whom were specialists in reading. The object of this initial questionnaire was, first, to refine its format, and second, to pretest the statements involved. Each person was asked to respond to each item in terms of agree or disagree, to suggest clarification of wording and phrasing, and to point out ambiguities that existed.
Following the pilot study the statements were submitted to a panel of nationally recognized experts who were asked to respond to each statement listed. Upon return of the questionnaires from the national panelists, Panchyshyn (1977) compiled the responses to each item. The following standards were used for final selection of items: 75% consensus among jurists regarding the agree or disagree responses and 75% agreement among the jurists regarding importance or unimportance of the concept as it related to primary grade reading instruction. Permission was secured from Panchyshyn (1982b) (Appendix C) to use the statements for this study. The instrument is in two sections.

Part I of the research form was designed to gather general demographic data regarding the principals and teachers selected for the sample. The investigator was interested in ascertaining the percentage of males and females in both the position of teacher and principal, the years of experience of each, the type of certification held by each, and the training each had in reading related courses.

Part II of the questionnaire deals with primary-grade reading concepts and practices. It was used to gather information to answer the two questions stated in Chapter I. Three of the questions that were given by Panchyshyn (1977) did not deal specifically with the seven concepts listed in the hypotheses stated in Chapter II; therefore, they were removed from the questionnaire.
Data Collection

Permission to use the data gathered from the national jury of reading experts to determine what concepts were important in the teaching of reading was secured from Panchyshyn (1982b) (Appendix C) to be used as a criterion by which the knowledge of principals of schools holding membership in the Association of Christian Schools International could be compared. On October 14, 1982, an introductory letter (Appendix D) was sent to the principals of the 300 schools selected in the random sample. Included with this letter was a letter of endorsement from Roy Lowrie, Jr., President of the Association of Christian Schools International (Appendix E). The introductory letter contained an assurance of the confidential handling of all information contained in the questionnaire and an explanation of the research project.

Eight days later, on October 22, 1982, a packet containing a letter to the principals further describing the project (Appendix F), a letter to the teachers (Appendix G), copies of the questionnaire (Appendix A) with directions for completing it, a white envelope for the teachers to enclose their questionnaire for confidentiality as they returned them to their principal, and a 9 x 12 inch self-addressed, stamped return envelope was sent to each of the 300 schools. On November 17, 1982, 220 postcards (Appendix H) were sent to those schools who had not responded. A second postcard (Appendix I) was sent to 150 nonresponder schools on December 7, 1982. A second packet was sent to the 110 schools that had not responded on
January 3, 1983.

Two hundred twenty-eight (76%) completed packets were returned to the investigator. Five additional packets were returned with a statement that they did not wish to participate, and three were returned because of improper address.

Data Analysis

As the questionnaires were returned to the investigator, they were examined and, if found to be usable, the information was transferred to a mark sensor sheet and renumbered for confidentiality. A DEC-system 10 computer located at Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan, was used to analyze the data.

Mean scores were obtained for the individual responses of both the principals and members of the national jury for the items listed in each of the seven categories stated in Question 1. An F-ratio was used to determine if the two groups were similar. A significance level of .30 was selected to diminish the possibility of a Type II error.

To answer Question 2, mean scores were obtained for the individual responses of both the principals and teachers for the items listed in each of the seven categories stated in the hypotheses. An F ratio was used to determine if the two groups were similar. To diminish the possibility of a Type II error, a significance level of .30 was selected.
In this chapter the population used in the study was described. The procedure for the selection of the sample was stated and the research questionnaire was described. The method of data collection and the procedures for data analysis were discussed. The following chapter will include the analysis of the data gathered by the instrument described in this chapter that are pertinent to the basic questions.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine to what degree elementary principals of schools holding membership in the Association of Christian Schools International were knowledgeable about commonly accepted concepts related to the teaching of reading in the primary grades. In addition, a comparison was made between the scores of the principals and the scores of the teachers who were sampled for the study.

For reporting purposes this chapter is divided into three sections. Section 1 contains a description of the sample population. Section 2 gives a comparison of the principals and the national jury. Section 3 contains a comparison of the principals and the teachers.

Description of the Sample Population

Packets of Research Questionnaires were sent to 300 elementary schools which were members of the Association of Christian Schools International. A description of the sample population and selection procedures used is contained in Chapter III. Table 1 gives a summary of the returns. Of the 300 schools that were contacted, 228 (76%) returned questionnaires to the researcher. This response
<table>
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<th>Variable</th>
<th>Principals (N = 220)</th>
<th>Teachers (N = 1,065)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Sex: Male</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>3. Teaching experience: 0</td>
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<td>5</td>
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Table 1—Continued

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<th>Teachers (N = 1,065)</th>
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<td>4. Type of certification:</td>
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<td>5. Semester hours of reading related courses:</td>
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<td>0-4</td>
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<td>27</td>
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<td>21</td>
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<tr>
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represents usable questionnaires from 220 principals and 1,065 elementary teachers.

From Part I of the Research Questionnaire, it was determined that a majority (65%) of the principals responding were male. One hundred seventy-nine (82%) of the principals had 9 or less years of experience as a principal. One hundred seventy-four (79%) had 9 or less years of teaching experience. Some type of certification was held by 78% of the principals. One hundred fourteen (52%) of the
principals had taken 10 or more hours in reading related courses.

Part I of the Research Questionnaire also revealed that 970 (91%) of the teachers responding were female. Seven hundred ninety-nine (75%) of the teachers had less than 10 years of teaching experience. Some type of certification was held by 84% of the teachers, and 582 (55%) of the teachers had 10 or more hours of reading related courses.

Comparison of Principals and National Jury

An analysis of data to compare the responses of the principals and the national jury to questions related to the seven categories of reading concepts included in the stated hypotheses will be presented in this section. A DEC-system 10 computer was used to analyze the responses of the two groups using the $F$-ratio to compare the mean scores of the two populations for each of the seven categories. The higher mean score implies more knowledge in each category. A significance level of .30 was selected to diminish the probability of making a Type II error. Table 2 provides a summary of results.

Methodological Approaches

Five questions on the Research Questionnaire related to methodological approaches. The mean score obtained by the national jury on the responses to these questions was 4.25 with a standard deviation of .58. The computed mean score for the principals was 3.11 with a standard deviation of 1.02. An $F$-ratio of 19.48 was obtained.
Table 2

Summary of Mean Scores, Standard Deviations, and F-Ratio Obtained for National Jury and Principals

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<th>Number</th>
<th>Mean</th>
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<th>Category 7</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>4.25</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>Materials</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5.53</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>Word recognition</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4.53</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>Evaluation of teachers</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4.72</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>Student reading evaluation</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>Reading readiness</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7.65</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6.47</td>
<td>.64</td>
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Support for the hypotheses that the knowledge of reading concepts of elementary principals of schools holding membership in the Association of Christian Schools International will compare favorably with the views held by reading specialists in the area of methodological approaches was not found at the .30 significance level.

**Use of Materials**

There were six questions related to the use of materials stated on the Research Questionnaire. In their response to these questions, the national jury obtained a mean score of 5.53 with a standard deviation of .61. The computed mean score for the principals was 4.68 with a standard deviation of .90. The \( F \)-ratio was 16.02. Support for the hypothesis that the knowledge of reading concepts of elementary principals in schools holding membership in the Association of Christian Schools International will compare favorably with the views held by reading specialists in the area of use of materials was not found at the .30 level of significance.

**Word Recognition**

The Research Questionnaire contained five statements that related to the concept of word recognition. In this category the mean score of 4.53 with a standard deviation of .72 was obtained by the national jury. For the principals, the computed mean score of 3.89 with a standard deviation of .89 was obtained. An \( F \)-ratio of 8.40 was obtained. Support for the hypothesis that the knowledge of reading concepts of elementary principals in schools holding
membership in the Association of Christian Schools International will compare favorably with the views held by reading specialists in the area of word recognition was not found at the .30 significance level.

**Evaluation of Teachers**

Five questions which related to the evaluation of teachers were included on the Research Questionnaire. The mean score obtained by the national jury on their responses to these questions was 4.72 with a standard deviation of .46. The computed mean score for the principals was 3.68 with a standard deviation of 1.09. The F-ratio obtained was 16.03. Support for the hypothesis that the knowledge of reading concepts of elementary principals of schools holding membership in the Association of Christian Schools International will compare favorably with the views held by reading specialists in the area of evaluation of teachers was not found at the .30 level of significance.

**Students' Reading Evaluation**

Included on the Research Questionnaire were four statements that related to the evaluation of students' reading. In response to these questions the national jury obtained a mean score of 3.70 with a standard deviation of .47. The computed mean score for the principals was 3.41 with a standard deviation of .71. The F-ratio was 3.16. Support for the hypothesis that the knowledge of reading concepts of elementary principals of schools holding membership in the
Association of Christian Schools International will compare favorably with the views held by reading specialists in the area of students' reading evaluation was not found at the .30 significance level.

**Reading Readiness**

Eight questions on the Research Questionnaire related to reading readiness. The mean score obtained by the national jury on their responses to these questions was 7.65 with a standard deviation of .49. The computed mean score for the principals was 5.28 with a standard deviation of 1.04. An $F$-ratio of 86.50 was obtained. Support for the hypothesis that the knowledge of reading concepts of elementary principals of schools holding membership in the Association of Christian Schools International will compare favorably with the views held by reading specialists in the area of reading readiness was not found at the .30 significance level.

**Comprehension**

There were seven questions related to comprehension listed on the Research Questionnaire. In their responses to these questions the national jury obtained a mean score of 6.47 with a standard deviation of .64. A computed mean score of 5.35 with a standard deviation of 1.01 was obtained by the principals. An $F$-ratio of 17.85 was obtained. Support for the hypothesis that the knowledge of reading concepts of elementary principals in schools holding membership in the Association of Christian Schools International
will compare favorably with the views held by reading specialists in the area of comprehension was not found at the .30 level of significance.

Comparison of Principals and Teachers

This section will include an analysis of data to compare the responses of the principals and the teachers to questions related to the seven categories of reading concepts included in the stated hypothesis. A DEC-system 10 computer was used to analyze the responses of the two groups using the F-ratio to compare the mean scores of the principals and the teachers on each of the seven categories. A higher mean score implies more knowledge in each category. A significance level of .30 was selected to diminish the probability of making a Type II error. Table 3 gives a summary of results.

Methodological Approaches

Five questions on the Research Questionnaire related to methodological approaches. The mean score obtained by the principals was 3.11 with a standard deviation of 1.02. The computed mean score for the teachers was 3.21 with a standard deviation of 1.00. An F-ratio of 1.66 was obtained. Support for the hypothesis that the knowledge of reading concepts of elementary principals in schools holding membership in the Association of Christian Schools International will compare favorably with the knowledge of teachers they supervise in the area of methodological approaches was not found at the .30 significance level.
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Table 3
Summary of Mean Scores, Standard Deviations, and F-Ratio Obtained for Principals and Teachers
Use of Material

There were six questions related to the use of materials stated on the Research Questionnaire. In their responses to these questions, the principals obtained a mean score of 4.68 with a standard deviation of .90. The computed mean score for the teachers was 4.60 with a standard deviation of .84. The F-ratio was 1.45. Support for the hypothesis that the knowledge of reading concepts of elementary principals in schools holding membership in the Association of Christian Schools International will compare favorably with the knowledge of the teachers they supervise in the area of the use of materials was not found at the .30 level of significance.

Word Recognition

The Research Questionnaire contained five statements that related to the concept of word recognition. In this category the mean score of 3.89 with a standard deviation of .89 was obtained by the principals. For the teachers the computed mean score of 4.04 with a standard deviation of .88 was obtained. The F-ratio was 5.35. Support for the hypothesis that the knowledge of reading concepts of elementary principals in schools holding membership in the Association of Christian Schools International will compare favorably with the knowledge of teachers they supervise in the area of word recognition was not found at the .30 level of significance.
Evaluation of Teachers

Five questions which related to the evaluation of teachers were included on the Research Questionnaire. The mean score obtained by the principals was 3.68 with a standard deviation of 1.09. The computed mean score for the teachers was 3.58 with a standard deviation of .96. An F-ratio of 1.94 was obtained. Support for the hypothesis that the knowledge of elementary principals in schools holding membership in the Association of Christian Schools International will compare favorably with the teachers they supervise in the area of evaluation of teachers was not found at the .30 level of significance.

Students' Reading Evaluation

Included on the Research Questionnaire were four questions that related to the evaluation of students' reading. In response to these questions, the principals obtained a mean score of 3.41 with a standard deviation of .71. The computed mean score for the teachers was 3.31 with a standard deviation of .76. The F-ratio was 3.03. Support for the hypothesis that the knowledge of reading concepts of elementary principals of schools holding membership in the Association of Christian Schools International will compare favorably with the knowledge of the teachers they supervise in the area of students' reading evaluation was not found at the .30 level of significance.
**Reading Readiness**

Eight questions on the Research Questionnaire related to reading readiness. The mean score obtained by the principals on their responses to these questions was 5.28 with a standard deviation of 1.04. The computed mean score for the teachers was 5.15 with a standard deviation of 1.08. An F-ratio of 2.51 was obtained. Support for the hypothesis that the knowledge of reading concepts of elementary principals of schools holding membership in the Association of Christian Schools International will compare favorably with the knowledge of the teachers they supervise in the area of reading readiness was not found at the .30 level of significance.

**Comprehension**

There were seven questions related to comprehension listed on the Research Questionnaire. In their responses to these questions the principals obtained a mean score of 5.35 with a standard deviation of 1.01. A computed mean score of 5.26 with a standard deviation of 1.02 was obtained by the teachers. An F-ratio of 1.27 was obtained. Support for the hypothesis that the knowledge of reading concepts of elementary principals in schools holding membership in the Association of Christian Schools International will compare favorably with the knowledge of the teachers they supervise in the area of comprehension was not found at the .30 level of significance.
Summary

This chapter was divided into three sections. The first section gave a description of the population used in the study. A comparison of the responses of the principals and the national jury to questions related to the seven categories of reading concepts that were included in the hypothesis was presented in the second section. This was followed by a comparison of the principals and the teachers. Support for the hypotheses that the national jury and principals would compare favorably in each of the seven categories of reading concepts was not found at the .30 level of significance. Support for the hypotheses that the principals and teachers would compare favorably in each of the seven categories of reading concepts was not found at the .30 level of significance.

Implications and recommendations are discussed in Chapter V.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of the Study

The problem undertaken in this study focused upon the knowledge that principals of schools holding membership in the Association of Christian Schools International had about concepts related to reading and the teaching of reading in the primary grades. The need for this determination stemmed from charges instituted by administrators and reading authorities, both inferring that as instructional leaders, many principals lack the training and/or knowledge to supervise reading programs effectively in the schools they administer.

A search of the literature revealed that educational authorities supported the premise that an important function of the principal is the task of supervision of instruction. It was further revealed that if the reading program is to attain maximum effectiveness, the principal must offer quality supervision based on knowledge. Studies were also cited indicating that superior reading programs existed where principals were knowledgeable about reading concepts.

Although a substantial number of professional educators discussed specific kinds of reading knowledge a principal should have, in no case were any recommendations found specifying levels of mastery needed. Discussions seemed to be limited to generalized
indications of what he or she needs to know to be an effective instructional leader.

After considering various ways in which a study of principals' knowledge of reading might be undertaken, it was determined to use an attitudinal scale developed by Panchyshyn (1977) relating to reading concepts. Principals holding membership in the Association of Christian Schools International were compared to a national jury of reading experts and to the teachers they supervise in the following categories of reading concepts: methodological approaches, use of materials, word recognition, evaluation of teachers, students' reading evaluation, reading readiness, and comprehension.

To analyze the data collected, an F-ratio was used to compare the mean scores of the responses of the principals and the national jury in each of the seven categories mentioned. The F-ratio was also used to compare the mean scores of the responses of the principals and the teachers in each of the seven categories.

The hypotheses that the groups would compare favorably was not accepted for each of the seven categories at the .30 level of significance.

Conclusions

On the basis of the data in this study, the following conclusions seem warranted:

1. Principals included in this study were less knowledgeable than the national jury of reading specialists in each of the following areas of reading concepts: methodological approaches, use of
materials, word recognition, evaluation of teachers, student reading evaluation, reading readiness, and comprehension. The greatest discrepancy of scores was in reading readiness.

2. Principals included in this study were more knowledgeable than the teachers they supervise in the following areas: use of materials, evaluation of teachers, student reading evaluation, reading readiness, and comprehension.

3. Teachers were more knowledgeable than the principals in methodological approaches and word recognition.

Recommendations

A logical purpose of any research is the recommendations based on the research findings. Such recommendations can be helpful in planning for needed change and in seeking direction for future action. Research findings indicate that the principal is the key person in any good reading program.

Since the role of the principal is vital and necessary in order that each student might achieve in reading equal to his or her ability it is recommended that:

1. Further investigation be undertaken to fully assess and better understand the total function and influence of the principal in successful reading programs.

2. Further investigation be undertaken to study the extent to which elementary principals in schools holding membership in the Association of Christian Schools International understand what is actually being achieved by the reading programs in their schools.

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3. Further investigation to examine the nature of the relationship of staff members as they relate to the involvement of the principal in a total reading program.

4. Further investigation to examine the administrative style of principals as it relates to their involvement in a total school reading program.

Summary

This final chapter presented a brief summary of the study. Conclusions were stated, and recommendations were given.
Appendix A

Research Questionnaire
Instructions to participants:

This research questionnaire will take you approximately 20 minutes to complete. To achieve maximum accuracy it is important that you respond to each item that is applicable to you.

PART I

Directions: Please place a mark (X) in front of the response which best describes you or your situation.

1. Sex: _____ Male _____ Female

2. Position: _____ Principal _____ Teacher

3. Classroom teacher only: Please indicate the number of years (including this one) that you have been a classroom teacher.
   _______ 0-4 _______ 10-14 _______ 20-24 _______ 30 or more years
   _______ 5-9 _______ 15-19 _______ 25-29

4. Classroom teacher only: Please indicate the type of certification that you hold.
   _____ ACSI _____ State _____ None _____ Other (Please specify) ________

5. Principals only: Please indicate the number of years (including this one) that you have been a principal.
   _______ 0-4 _______ 10-14 _______ 20-24 _______ 30 or more years
   _______ 5-9 _______ 15-19 _______ 25-29

6. Principals only: Please indicate the number of years you taught in an elementary school before becoming a principal.
   _______ 0 _______ 5-9 _______ 15-19
   _______ 1-4 _______ 10-14 _______ 20 or more years

7. Principals only: Please indicate the type of certification that you hold.
   _____ ACSI _____ State _____ None _____ Other (Please specify) ________
8. Please indicate the approximate number of semester hours you have had of undergraduate and graduate reading and reading related (e.g., Reading Methods, Language Arts, Children's Literature, Linguistics, Diagnosis, etc.) courses.

___1. 0-4  ___3. 10-14  ____5. 20 or more
___2. 5-9  ____4. 15-19

PART II

This section of the survey is designed to elicit your attitudes toward a number of reading issues. The concepts you are asked to consider are drawn from a careful review of literature on procedures, practice, and principles of reading instruction.

Directions: Kindly indicate how you view each item in this section by circling the appropriate number according to the following scale: 1 - agree; 2 - disagree.

1. An orderly presentation of reading skills is one of the strongest features of basal reading programs.

2. Reading diagnosis is one of the most important tasks of the classroom teacher.

3. For best results and efficiency, formal reading instruction should be postponed until the child reaches a mental age of 6.5 years.

4. Literal comprehension is dependent upon the ability to think like and with the author.

5. Making provision for a wide background of meaningful experience is the first essential in a program of vocabulary development.

6. In teaching reading in the early grades most American schools operate from a premise that no sex differences exist in learning to read.

7. Most children will develop the ability to use context clues without any formal instruction.

8. An excellent foundation in primary grade reading prepares the child for all the problems he will meet as a reader in the content areas.
9. The development of ability in letter recognition should be an integral part of prereading or readiness programs.

10. If many children need remedial reading help, the developmental reading program should be evaluated.

11. Whenever they are needed, phonics rules should be taught inductively.

12. One of the major advantages of the basal reading program is the organization and vast source of ideas contained in the teacher's manuals.

13. Primarily, diagnosis of reading abilities should be reserved for the student having reading problems.

14. Tutoring of children by other children is a good way to provide for poor readers.

15. In the beginning stages, learning to read should be treated as an independent process, later becoming an extension of language skills.

16. The most effective appraisal of reading readiness is derived from standardized reading readiness test combined with ratings based on teacher evaluations.

17. If a teacher displayed four words, three alike and one slightly different, and had the children tell which one was different, she or he would be trying to promote visual discrimination.

18. Ideally, a beginning reading vocabulary should be heavily weighted with words already in the child's speaking vocabulary.

19. Providing time for large amounts of sustained silent reading is an important part of a good basal reader approach.

20. One of the most important aspects of the reading readiness program is to develop the ability to use and interpret oral language.

21. Knowledge of letter names is a good predictor of first grade reading success.

22. Special instruction in listening comprehension has little effect on improving children's reading comprehension.
23. The kindergarten teacher need not be concerned with reading comprehension skills.

24. Good teaching materials are the key elements in determining whether or not a child learns to read and the extent to which he achieves the necessary skills.

25. Interspersed questions help the student direct his reading, resulting in better retention of material.

26. The concept of readiness is best applied to the beginning phases of reading and has little relation to reading beyond the first grade level.

27. The main value of a reading readiness test is to assess whether or not the child is ready for formal reading instruction.

28. The classroom teacher of reading can be certain that he or she is doing an excellent job of teaching reading when the range between the highest and lowest pupil in his or her class has been effectively reduced.

29. Oral reading by the teacher should be common practice at each primary grade level.

30. A first grade child's speaking vocabulary is equal to his listening vocabulary.

31. Communications with parents concerning their child's reading progress should be initiated immediately after a child first encounters reading difficulty.

32. The ability of a child to recognize and define words in context is more useful than the ability to recognize them in isolation.

33. All kindergarten and first grade children must receive reading readiness training to insure adequate preparedness for formal reading instruction.

34. In developing primary grade reading comprehension the teacher should be satisfied if the children can recall the facts presented in a story.

35. It is important for every child to take part in workbook activities to insure the extension of skills initiated in the reading group.
36. Growth in reading is best fostered when reading is assumed to be a developmental process, i.e., a process of sequential skill building.

37. The best measure for evaluating classroom teacher's effectiveness in teaching reading is pupil's growth on standardized reading test scores.

38. Because of the completeness of basal reading programs, there is little need for supplementary reading material.

39. Improving the effectiveness with which teachers utilize a variety of instructional and supplementary reading materials produces better results than devising new methods of teaching reading.

40. A student should never be asked to read orally without advance preparation.

NOTE TO TEACHERS: When you have completed this form, please place it in the attached envelope and return it to your principal.

NOTE TO PRINCIPAL: Please place the teachers' envelopes along with your questionnaire in the self-addressed, stamped envelope and mail them.

Thank you all for your time and the help you have given to this research project.
Appendix B

ACSI Statement of Faith
ACSI Statement of Faith

We believe the Bible to be inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God.

We believe there is one God, eternally existent in three (3) persons: the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit.

We believe in the deity of Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death, in His resurrection from the dead, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory.

We believe in the absolute necessity of regeneration by the Holy Spirit for salvation because of the exceeding sinfulness of human nature; and that men are justified on the single ground of faith in the shed blood of Christ and that only by God's grace and through faith we are saved.

We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life, and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.

We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in Christ.
Appendix C

Letter of Permission from Robert Panchyshyn, Ph.D., WKU
Ms. Maxine Margesson
2581 Ashville N.E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49505

Dear Ms. Margesson:

This letter is in response to your phone call of 14 August, 82. Thank you for your interest in my reading study of 1971.

I am sorry that I did not capitalize on the work in terms of stressing the findings regarding the eight important issues. Perhaps it is not too late to reinvestigate.

With the current stress on the key role for principals position in good reading programs, I am happy that you are proposing to do work in the area. I believe you are investigating an important issue whether it be in public or private schools.

You requested permission to use materials from my study pertaining to the survey questionnaire and National Jury data. You may use the material in any way you feel that it is appropriate for your needs.

Please keep me informed as you progress with your work. If items need modification or alteration, I would be happy to discuss the changes with you and perhaps offer suggestions.

Best wishes for success in your endeavor.

Sincerely,

Robert Panchyshyn, Ph.D.
Professor of Education

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Appendix D

Introductory Letter to Principals
October 14, 1982

Dear Educator,

Because of your interest in Christian education and your membership in the Association of Christian Schools International, you have been selected to participate in a reading research project. With the rapid growth that is taking place in the Christian school movement, it is important for us to build quality programs in each of our schools. As I undertake this project for my doctoral dissertation through Western Michigan University, my desire is to gain information that will help in that building process.

In a few days you will receive a packet containing a questionnaire for you and each of your elementary teachers (K-6) to complete. As a Christian school administrator, I know that you are very busy and have many demands made upon your time. I shall be most grateful to you if you will take a few minutes to distribute a questionnaire to each of your teachers and then collect them and return the questionnaires, along with your own, to me in the self-addressed, stamped envelope that will be enclosed.

At this point in the study, it is vital to obtain your views on selected statements regarding elementary reading practices. Because of the limited number of Christian schools selected, your response is considered as an extremely important contribution to the overall project. You will find that the questionnaire can be completed quickly and efficiently.

All responses will be treated confidentially. You can be assured that no principal, teacher, or school will be identified in the results of the study. Your opinions will be combined with those of other administrators selected, and the results will be tabulated and examined on the basis of a collective response.

Thank you for your help with this project.

Sincerely,

Maxine E. Margesson
Principal
Baptist Academy - Crestview

Enclosure
Appendix E

Letter of Endorsement from Roy W. Lowrie, Jr., Ed.D.,
President, ACSI
Dear Fellow Administrator:

Since the ACSI is committed to quality research among its member schools, I would like you to know that I endorse the enclosed study by Maxine Margesson, principal of the Baptist Academy - Crestview Branch - Grand Rapids Baptist Academy, Grand Rapids, Michigan. I encourage you to take the time to give her the data she is requesting. It is important that she have enough participants to make her study valid.

All of us administrators know the importance of reading instruction. I personally think that this is especially true about reading instruction in the primary grades. This study publishes the perceptions that principals of Christian schools have about that level of reading instruction. The study is only among ACSI member schools.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. It is good to have your participation.

Your friend in Christ,

Roy W. Lowrie, Jr.
President

RWL:ch
Enclosure
Appendix F

Letter to Principals
October 22, 1982

Dear Educator,

A few days ago you received a letter in which I asked for your help in a research study designed to obtain your opinions on certain practices in elementary reading. This was accompanied by a letter of endorsement by Dr. Roy W. Lowrie, Jr.

Enclosed is a copy of the research questionnaire for you to complete and questionnaires with explanatory letters for each of your teachers in grades kindergarten through six. Will you please distribute the questionnaires to your teachers and set a specific time for them to be returned to you. Your completed questionnaire, along with the teachers' questionnaires, may be returned to me in the self-addressed, stamped manilla envelope which is enclosed. I will greatly appreciate your prompt response to this project.

Again, let me assure you of complete confidentiality in the project. The code number that appears on the questionnaire is to indicate that a response has been made. It will be destroyed upon receipt of the completed questionnaire. A summary of the results of the study will be sent to all administrators who participate in the project.

Your response will be an important contribution to the overall study regarding reading practices. Thank you for your prompt cooperation.

Sincerely,

Maxine E. Margesson
Principal
Baptist Academy - Crestview

Enclosures
Appendix G

Letter to Teachers
October 22, 1982

Dear Teacher,

Your Christian school is one of a limited number that has been selected to participate in a reading research project. With the rapid growth that is taking place in the Christian school movement, it is important for us to build quality programs in each of our schools. As I undertake this project for my doctoral dissertation through Western Michigan University, my desire is to gain information that will help in that building process. The study has the endorsement of Roy W. Lowrie, Jr., president of ACSI. Your principal has received a letter from Dr. Lowrie stating such. Only schools holding membership in the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) are participating in the project.

Each of the elementary teachers (K-6) in your building is asked to complete the questionnaire independently, place it in the envelope, and return it to your principal. At this point in the study, it is vital to obtain your views on selected statements regarding elementary reading practices. Because of the limited number of Christian schools selected, your response is considered as an extremely important contribution to the overall project. As a former elementary teacher, I am aware of the many demands made upon your time. Therefore a conscious effort has been made to design the questionnaire in a manner which will enable you to complete it with the least possible imposition upon your time.

Your responses will be treated with confidentiality. You can be assured that no teacher, principal, or school will be identified in the results of the survey. Your opinions will be combined with those of other teachers and examined on the basis of a collective response.

I am most grateful for your time and effort. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Maxine E. Margesson
Principal
Baptist Academy - Crestview

Enclosure

COPY

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Appendix H

First Follow-Up Postcard
Dear Christian School Principal,

Recently you received questionnaires for you and your teachers to complete as a part of a reading research project involving ACSI schools. If you have already returned the questionnaires, please consider this card a "thank you" for your valuable help.

If you have not had a chance to do so, may I ask you to return the completed forms now? Your participation is vital to the success of the study.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Maxine E. Margesson
December 7, 1982

Dear Christian School Principal,

A fairly large number of Reading Research Questionnaires have been returned to me. The closer to 100% the return becomes, the greater the significance of the study will be. Since each school included in the study was carefully selected to represent all the Christian schools in ACSI, every response is urgently needed.

If you have not already done so, would you please have the questionnaires completed by you and your staff and return them to me before your school is dismissed for Christmas vacation? I shall be grateful to you.

Sincerely,

Maxine E. Margesson
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