Effects of a student portfolio on parents' perceptions of kindergarten children's emergent literacy.

by

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INTRODUCTION

A parent is handed a picture made by their kindergarten student that has several flowers emerging from a green field, a thin blue line at the top for a sky, and a string of unconnected letters across the middle of the page. Along with the picture comes the demand, "Read what I wrote!" The parent looks at the jumbled letters and thinks...

"Doesn't the teacher spell the words for the children?"

"Don't they teach the children how to make the letters anymore?"

"How will Timmy learn to spell correctly if he is allowed to make all these mistakes?"

"He doesn't even know how to read and yet they expect him to write!"

Reading and writing development will always be a concern for parents of young, school-aged children. Parents often worry and try to help their children in any way they can, usually with no clear idea of what to do. According to Lamme (1985) and Cambourne (1989), children learn to read naturally if they are surrounded by adults who also read, adults who read to their children, and who respond to questions about reading and writing. This type of environment enhances the literacy development of children rather than forces the skills that are thought to be essential for reading and writing to occur. However, Mills and Clyde (1991) suggest that parents often perceive that only skill and drill techniques help a child learn to read and write.

Hunt and Paraskevopoulos (1980) suggest that clear perceptions of their children's abilities are necessary for parents to interact at a level beneficial for the child. For the parent unfamiliar with the development of literacy, it may be difficult to determine the child's abilities. Hunt and Paraskevopoulos found the match between parents'

perceptions of their children's capabilities and the actual performance of their child to be an important indicator of the parent's ability to give the child appropriate learning experiences. If the parent is unsure of the child's capabilities and the appropriate expectations for the age level, they may be unable to create an environment or learning experience that benefits the child. Thus, however good the intentions, the natural unfolding of literacy development may be interrupted by inaccurate parent perceptions.

Communicating goals, expectations, and actual abilities to parents is important in the learning process and is an on-going challenge for the educator (Fredericks & Rasinski, 1990). Without the parent in the classroom, it can be difficult for them to understand the developmental process of reading and writing and their child's actual abilities. Adequate information is often not available in order for the parent to interpret the samples of work, or evaluative measures received (Flood & Lapp, 1989). If the parent does not understand the purpose or goal of an assessment, the outcome of the evaluation also may not make sense to the parent.

Formal assessment instruments are prominent in the American educational system and have been used widely to show student's progress in all areas (Stallman & Pearson, 1990). These tests have been applauded and criticized during their existence. Questions have been raised concerning whether assessment instruments are valid and actually measure the intended concepts. Test scores and report forms are usually the only types of information shared with parents about their children's abilities (Smith, 1990). Flood and Lapp (1989) found that parents often read more into a single test score than do educators. Since parents are not educated in the teaching of reading and writing, they may rely more heavily on test scores as the basis for their child's abilities. Classroom teachers are starting to use observational

techniques to determine a child's strengths and areas of growth rather than relying solely on test scores (Teale, 1990). However, if parents are not trained in the observational techniques, they also will not know what to look for or expect with this type of measurement.

Assessment and measurement need to match the goals and objectives of the classroom if they are to be of value to the teacher, parent, child, or administrator (Mason & Stewart, 1990). Professionals in education are beginning to feel that traditional standardized tests do not match the goals and reflect the actual learning process of reading and writing. Research in the theory and practice of teaching of reading and writing has surpassed research on educational assessment (Cambourne & Turbill, 1990; Pikulski, 1989; Valencia & Pearson, 1987). In order for changes in the educational system to occur regarding assessment, "we must overcome our habit of using product-oriented assessment techniques to measure process-oriented education" (Costa, 1989, p.168).

While parents and teachers need to work together for the benefit of the children, parents are often expected to be the teachers at home and supporters of the school (Fredericks & Rasinski, 1990). In a review of the literature, Walberg (1984) found that the importance of the parent and the home environment to the child's achievement, has been documented by many researchers. Thus, the more information parents can get regarding their children's emergent literacy skills, the more it could possibly benefit the children.

A portfolio is a relatively new technique being used in early childhood education to show the progress and ability of students. A portfolio is a sampling of a student's work that is selected by the teacher and the student and demonstrates growth toward curricular and individual goals (Roettger & Szymezuk, 1990). Portfolios may reflect

growth in any area, but the current emphasis regarding portfolios is in reading and writing assessment, or the development of emergent literacy (Jongsma, 1989). Portfolios may serve to better demonstrate a child's progress to all involved in the assessment and education of the child. It is anticipated that the use of portfolios will provide parents with information about their child's emergent literacy skills so that they are able to accurately perceive their child's ability and provide developmentally appropriate feedback and experiences to the children.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to examine the effects of using portfolios on parents' perceptions of their child's emergent literacy skills. Assessment of parents' perceptions of emergent literacy skills were administered to a group of parents whose children were in a classroom that used portfolios and progress reports. The same assessments were administered to another group of parents whose children were in a classroom that used a reporting form only for progress reports. The following research questions were addressed in this study.

A. Are child variables (gender, presence or absence of older sibling, or presence or absence of prior preschool experience) or demographic variables (parent age, income, and education) related to parents' perceptions of their child's ability or teacher assessed emergent literacy skills?

B. Is the literate environment provided by the parent related to the teacher assessed emergent literacy scores of children? Is the literate environment related to parents' perception of their child's emergent literacy skills?

C. Is there a difference between the teacher assessed scores and the parents' perception of their child's emergent literacy skills in the portfolio classroom? Is

there a difference between the teacher assessed scores and the parents' perception of their child's emergent literacy skills in the non-portfolio classroom?

D. Is there a significant difference in the accuracy of parents' perception of emergent literacy skills in the portfolio classroom compared to the non-portfolio classroom?

E. Is there a significant difference in parent satisfaction regarding information related to child's progress in the portfolio classroom compared to parent satisfaction in the non-portfolio classroom?

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Not only are parents often assumed to be their child's first teacher, classroom teachers frequently ask for parental assistance in working with their children on beginning reading tasks (Becker & Epstein, 1982). Parents perceptions can be very important in the educational process, especially regarding emergence of literacy. It may be difficult for a parent to determine the child's abilities and thus, parents must rely on the school and teacher for accurate information (Cambourne & Turbill, 1990). David Elkind (1987) states his concerns that parents are trying to push their children much too fast and expecting them to accomplish tasks that they are not developmentally ready for. Emergent literacy is one area Elkind is concerned about regarding parental knowledge of the child's ability and accurate expectations. He believes that as a society we have accepted the "trickle down" effect of education; if a child can learn a task at six, they can probably learn that same task at five, then four, and so on. Thus we begin to accept inappropriate expectations at earlier ages and ultimately, are not providing activities that educationally benefit the child. The following review of literature will summarize the background and current status of emergent literacy, the relationship of the parent role, and the home environment to children's emergent literacy abilities and the use of portfolios in early childhood education.

Emergent Literacy

Historical Background

Early childhood professionals have acknowledged the emergent, wholistic language development of children for a long time (Bissex, 1980; Calkins, 1986; Clay,

1975). Marie Clay (1975) coined the term "emergent literacy" to explain the process of literacy development as a series of stages leading to the ability to read and write. She explored young children's use of written language and demonstrated that early writing begins well before children have received any formal reading and writing instruction. She identified the value of accepting nonconventional approximations as important for writing development. Clay observed five- year- olds who lived in a city and came from mostly English-speaking homes. She found that children who did not have formal lessons in forming letters and printed words, in addition to daily drawing and writing activities, did not appear to differ significantly from those who did. Thus, she concluded that children who are given formal instruction in reading and writing are not making significant gains over those that have no formal instruction.

The idea that literacy starts developing before a child enters a formal education system is in clear contrast to the traditional view of education. The traditional view, adhered to since the 1920s, believes that literacy development is dependent upon the maturational level of the child (Ferreiro & Teberosky, 1982). Traditionally, it was thought that children would reach an age, usually around six, that they would be ready to learn reading and writing. There were many tests developed to determine the "reading readiness" of a child (Parker, 1990).

Professionals adhering to this point of view thought that reading readiness was biologically determined (Willer & Bredekamp, 1990). They believed that children "blossomed", and that the maturation of motor and cognitive skills led to the ability to read and write. Thus, it was logical to delay literacy instruction until the child was ready. After studying the reading development of 141 first-graders, Morphett and Washburne (1931), concluded that it was beneficial to wait with reading instruction until a child reached 6 years, 6 months of age.

During the 1960's and the "War on Poverty", government money was funnelled into early childhood programs. Along with this money, came a growing awareness of the importance of the environment on a child's foundational knowledge base (Steiner, 1976). Researchers and professionals began to worry that a child reared in a culturally deprived environment would not be as ready for school as would a child reared in a middle or upper-class home. Not only were they concerned that the child would be unready, they began to question whether the child would ever "catch up!" Community leaders began to argue for early intervention regarding writing and reading, which led to the Head Start program (Zigler & Valentine, 1979).

Schools, while acknowledging the importance of the environment, still believed that children were not ready to learn reading and writing until the age of six (Wells, 1986). They were focusing on the actual ability to read or write, rather than the ability to understand literacy concepts. According to Dr. Ken Goodman (1986), the technology of reading and writing got in the way during a period called "Scientism." The materials created for instruction were not based upon the best knowledge of how children learn but rather the most efficient, error-free technique of teaching. He noted that the scientifically based alternative to "teacher-proof" materials is the philosophy of teaching wholistically.

Those who believe in wholistic teaching and emergent literacy believe that the earliest literacy concepts begin in infancy (Cambourne, 1989; Hall, 1987; Schickendanz, 1986). Cambourne (1989) studied the development of speech in young children and concluded that the same conditions required for a child to learn speech, need to be present for a child to learn reading and writing. These conditions include; immersion, demonstration, expectation, responsibility, use, approximation, and

response. Cambourne believes that when these conditions are present, children learn literacy concepts before any skill and drill exercises are necessary.

While there was an overemphasis on skill and drill in the past decade, there is currently increasing interest in emergent literacy and the philosophy of whole language and literature based curriculum. Goodman (1986) states that "whole language" is a lot of different things to a lot of different people. He notes that the difficulty in defining terms such as whole language and emergent literacy stems from the fact that its research base is so diverse. The first supporters of whole language and emergent literacy used scientific theories based on research from linguistics, language development, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, anthropology, and education (Goodman, 1989). Not only are all of these varied fields merged into one theory, but it blends the beliefs of Piaget and Vygotsky (Blazer, 1989). What emerges is a theory of language development in children from birth through eight years of age.

Charles Read (1975) also was somewhat instrumental in the development of the concept of "emergent literacy". He was interested in the fact that many parents were reporting that their children, as young as three years old, were spelling words. He examined the writing of 30 preschoolers who were already able to identify and name the letters of the alphabet and had some sound-letter correspondence. He found that even though the words were not spelled conventionally, the children seemed to have some sort of understanding of the language structure. He concluded that learning to spell is not a process of memorization, but a developmental step that ends with a greater understanding of the language than simple sound-letter associations. He identified a series of stages that children go through in their development of spelling. He believes that the foundation for children's writing begins with being read to, then

moves to the first linear scribbles, the first Roman letters, the first representation of speech segments, the first creative spelling, the first standard spellings, and concludes with the first standard abstract spellings not represented by speech sounds.

Yetta Goodman (1989) followed up Read's original research on preschoolers' spelling and found similar results. She found that two year olds understood what a story was and that the story came from the page, but did not understand letters, words, or sentences. When she studied the same children a year later, she discovered they knew the story came from the text, not the pictures and that more than half of them were beginning to read (in the sense they could identify appropriate familiar words).

Thus, the term "emergent literacy" assumes the development of reading and writing occurs gradually, naturally, and through a process of trial and error, reflective of a child's whole development. Walton (1989) was reminded of this process as she observed her own daughter develop literacy skills without initial instruction in print recognition and sound/symbol relationships. As an educator in a teacher education program, it was also a reaffirmation of the importance of communicating this information to parents. She developed guidelines for adults involved with young children's emergent reading and writing skills. The guidelines, based on her current research, state the importance of reading to children as often as possible, letting them see the adult read and write everyday, creating an environment that is safe to risk, talking about stories, and encouraging children to read and write. Walton feels that with an environment, both at home and school, based on these principles, a child's emergent literacy skills will be enhanced and encouraged.

Research Studies

Bissex (1980) presented a case study of a child's reading and writing that highlighted the importance of experimentation in what the child was doing. She

observed her own son's writing and reading development in the home environment. She collected much data during the six years of her observations. She came to the conclusion that "although reading and writing have long been associated with teaching and instruction, this and other studies of preschoolers show that children learn more about print and learn it earlier than they are taught. In a literate society, learning to write and read may be natural. In the broadest sense of the words, (writing and reading) ....are universal" (Bissex, 1980, p. 200).

Several studies (Ferreiro & Teberosky, 1982; Hiebert, 1981; Lavine, 1977) have focused on the child's ability to distinguish between the written language and graphic material. Ferreiro and Teberosky (1982) found that four year olds were able to view the print and pictures as a unit. Lavine (1977) found in a study of cross cultural nature, children as young as three could distinguish between print and graphic material. These children were from both literate and non-literate environments. Hiebert (1981) discovered that young children of three years old were confused as to what a reader should look at while reading. Many of the children pointed to the pictures and print as what a reader should read. But all the children, no matter the age, acknowledged the book with just print could be read. All of these studies point to the fact that children learn early to recognize the differences between print and graphics.

Some studies have examined print awareness in young children (Hiebert, 1981; Huba & Kontos, 1985). Hiebert (1981) discovered, by studying children three years old to five years old, that the three year old is already beginning to understand the purposes of print. She also found that the child's print awareness increased with age as children move toward six years old. Children increased their print awareness score by 35 percent or more by the time they were five. Huba and Kontos (1985) studied

the children's knowledge of the purpose of print. These children also improved their scores from one-fourth correct at the age of three to three-quarter correct at the age of five. According to these studies, print awareness is present at three years of age and increases tremendously as the child grows older.

Young children also become aware of and are able to identify print seen often in the environment. Hiebert (1978) examined the ability of three and four year olds to recognize environmental print both in and out of context. Children were shown ten common words, first the way they are seen in the environment and then printed. She discovered that children shown the words in context replied more often with the word, or another word that made sense. When they were shown words out of context, there was often no response or a response that made no sense at all. Several other studies report similar findings (Goodall, 1984; Masanheimer, Drum & Ehri, 1984). Goodall (1984) replicated Hiebert's (1978) study. She found, as did Hiebert, that the four year olds in her study were often not able to identify the printed word out of context. Masanheimer, Drum and Ehri (1984) discovered that children who could identify three fourths of the pictures of signs and labels were, for the most part, unable to identify the words alone. They followed up their study by changing one of the letters of a logo to a different shape and discovered that most of the children did not notice the change, even after they were asked if there was a mistake. These studies seem to indicate that children use environmental cues instead of letter (graphic) cues to read.

Mason (1980) identified three levels of reading ability in four year olds. The context dependent group, as reported by parents, was interested in naming letters and being read to. They could identify one to ten signs or labels and their name. These children were able to learn a few words but would forget most or all of the words even after a fifteen minute delay. After four learning trials, the letter case of some or

all of the letters of 12 words were changed and the children at this level could no longer identify the words they had learned prior. This suggests that they were able to attend to overall visual cues rather than letter information.

Naming letters is often cited as important for reading readiness (Clay 1989). Hiebert (1981) discovered that children as young as three years old could identify more than half of the letters of the alphabet. Mason (1980) found that in May, 95 percent of four year olds in her study could identify twenty-one or more letters of the alphabet. Hiebert and Adams (1987) also used letter naming as one of their measures in determining literacy development in young children from their study. They found that letter naming was one task that parents are very accurate at predicting their child's ability.

In summary, all of these tasks; print awareness, environmental print, reading print out of context, and letter identification are a part of a child's emergent literacy (Clay 1989). According to Teale, Hiebert and Chittenden (1987), classroom assessment should cover the complete view of emerging literacy, children's concepts about functions and conventions, emergent reading, attempts to write, environmental print recognition, invented spelling, auditory discrimination, letter recognition and word identification.

Impact of Home Environment

Family and home environment has always been acknowledged as important to the education of children (Hymes, 1977). The family furnishes the first informal education to the infant by teaching, modeling, and guiding. As children develop, their education is jointly influenced by the family and school environments. The

communication between these two settings may be important for fostering optimal development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

As early as 1935, the Pennsylvania Department of Public Instruction suggested that parents need assistance in interpreting evaluations concerning their children. One of the published goals for parent education classes stated "to aid parents to interpret the findings of specialists in regard to various aspects of child and family life" (Brim, 1965, p. 15). According to that document, the importance of parental knowledge regarding their child's ability was already realized. The goal illustrated the increasing trend of the time to consider the family an integral part of a child's educational background (Brim, 1965).

Although parent education was already seen as important in the 1930s, it wasn't until the 1960s decade that major changes occurred regarding parent involvement and education (Braun & Edwards, 1972). In 1965 the Office of Economic Opportunity began a program for disadvantaged preschool children that launched the Head Start program. This program was implemented to improve a child's development, strengthen family relationships, and encourage self-help through career development and parent education. The family was seen as an integral part of the child's education because of research indicating that parent involvement and family background have a positive effect on academic success (Zigler & Valentine, 1979).

In a review of the literature, Walberg (1984) found that the importance of the parent and the home environment to the child's achievement has been documented by many researchers. He states that stimulating educative experiences, both in the home and school, predict adult knowledge much more than motivation and effort. Walberg also concluded from his literature review that studies of academic learning show that parents directly or indirectly influence the determinants of cognitive, affective, and

behavioral learning. Researchers in the area of literacy (Heath & Thomas, 1984; Leichter, 1984) concur that the existence of a supportive home environment enhances the development of reading and writing in young children. Their findings suggest that children's reading abilities develop as they become aware that reading and writing are purposeful in their environment.

Research Studies

Burns and Collins (1987) questioned the impact of the home environment on young children with high IQ's. They wondered if the impact of the home was the key factor in early reading, considering some high IQ preschoolers read before entering school and others do not. They identified 125 potentially gifted four- and five- year-olds. These children were given the Stanford Binet Intelligence Test to identify those with an IQ of 120 or above. The children were then administered the Letter-Word Identification subtest of the Woodcock-Johnson Psychological Battery. The children able to read 13 or more of the words on the test were classified as accelerated readers. Those not able to identify any words were classified as nonreaders. They used 15 accelerated readers and 15 nonreaders for their study. By analyzing the demographic material received regarding the homes, it was established that there were no significant differences in the home environments and the types of activities the children were provided. The only major difference between the two groups was that the mothers of accelerated readers reported using some type of reading program in the home or that their child had been exposed to a reading program in preschool.

The questionnaire administered to the parents by Burns and Collins, focused on print concepts, print in the environment, spelling, and story recall. A likert scale was used to estimate the degree to which certain experiences were offered in the home that would enhance any of the four areas of the questionnaire. Results revealed significant

differences between the two groups. Mothers, of the children who were reading early, reported that a greater number of opportunities to discuss, recall, and interact with story related material were offered in their home than the group of nonreaders. They also conveyed that early readers were provided more opportunities in the home to directly interact with pictures, letters, sounds, words, sentences, and book related concepts than nonreaders. But, both home environments offered ample opportunities to interact with words and labels, and to draw, scribble, write, invent words, and copy words.

Burns and Collins concluded that a supportive home environment did not automatically result in early readers. They surmised that the key to the home environment lies not only in the quality, but in the type of experiences offered in the home. But, the research does not address the issue of when the activities were initially introduced to the accelerated readers. Does the parent introduce and encourage special types of activities because the child is showing a preference for them, or does the child develop a preference for special activities because the parent offered them in the home?

Dunn (1981) concluded from her research that the home environment is very important to the development of academic skills. She discovered that the amount of informal exchanges between the parent and child was significantly related to the size of vocabulary, an indication of general knowledge. Thus, an assumption could be made that the more informal interactions between parent and child, the more informed the parent and skilled the child. The home environment has been indicated as very important by other researchers also (Ferreiro & Teberosky, 1982; Hall, 1987; Schickendanz, 1986). The home environment may be an integral part of the learning process for both the child and the parent.

Some researchers have studied the relation of parents' perceptions of their child's abilities and the home environment. It has been found that within the home, parents' perceptions of their child's abilities influences the activities they provide for the child (Entwistle & Hayduk, 1978). Hiebert and Adams (1987) studied the nature of the parents' perceptions of emergent literacy and the relationship of the perceptions to children's achievements. The purpose of the study was to determine if there was a difference between the fathers' and mothers' perceptions of their child's abilities. They also wondered if there was any connection between the children's age and gender and parents' predictions of performance.

Three- and four- year- old children in this study (Hiebert and Adams, 1987) were administered a series of measures. Parents were then asked to predict their children's performances on the measures. The measures were related to three basic areas of emergent literacy, conventional reading readiness, functional reading, and interest. The test consisted of letter naming, auditory discrimination, context-dependent word recognition, storybook orientation, a writing measure, and interest measure. Their results indicate that parents' perceptions were not similar to children's performances in more than half the measures. They found that parents of older preschoolers were not more accurate in their perceptions than parents of younger preschoolers. However, they did find that parents of older preschoolers made higher predictions of their child's ability more often than parents of younger preschoolers. They also found that the parents in their study had the same expectations for both boys and girls. Fathers' and mothers' predictions did not differ from children's performances on two measures: letter naming and writing measures. Hiebert and Adams surmised that letter recognition and name writing is something that parents are familiar with, which may have led to the accuracy of their predictions. They also found a high degree of

association between perceptions of mothers and fathers within a family on several measures. This finding suggests that mothers are not the only source of knowledge concerning the ability of their child.

Heibert and Adams (1987) concluded that discrepancies between the child's performance and the parents' perceptions may be significant in the fact that many times parents are asked to work with their child on beginning reading task (Becker & Epstein, 1982). They suggest that the results of their study may have a significant impact on the idea of educating parents as to appropriate expectations and developmental levels.

Although Entwisle and Alexander (1990) did not investigate the accuracy of parents' perceptions of the child's math abilities, they found that parent expectations to be a strong influence on children's math skills at the point of school entry. They examined the environmental effects on 785 children's math scores. They concluded that parents' psychological impact on their children is a determining factor for school success in certain cognitive areas. These researchers reason that parents who think their children will do well compared to other children, probably have had high opinions of their children all along and have shared these opinions with their children during their preschool years.

Parents with higher education levels were found to have higher expectations of their children (Entwisle & Alexander, 1990). Thompson, Alexander and Entwisle (1988) concluded that mother's educational level to be the most important socioeconomic predictor of school achievement. Both of these studies indicate that a higher educational level for a parent has a direct correlation to what the parent expects from the child and also how the child performs. However, neither of these studies indicates how accurate the expectations were. Hunt and Paraskevopoulos (1980)

found that mothers with more education and outside work experience made fewer errors of overestimation of their child's intellectual abilities. They combined the factors of working outside the home with the mother's education, so it is difficult to note which has more or less of an effect. It should also be noted that some of the mothers in this study did not have twelve years of education. Thus, the education levels examined in this research were significantly different than in the present study.

Dunn (1981) used parents' perceptions of their child's abilities in her research to predict their academic skills. She did not test the children on the same constructs in order to examine for accuracy, but rather, used parent reports of their child's ability as accurate skill levels. Dunn used this information, and information gathered through a diary, to compare child's ability to the parent teaching sets. She cautions that parents may be biased reporters of their children's abilities because of the possibility that parents may inflate their children's scores, either to have their children appear more skilled than their peers or to give the impression that they have been teaching their children these skills effectively.

Children's success as readers and writers is not only affected by the parents' perceptions of their abilities, but the teacher's beliefs as well. DeFord and Harste (1982) found that students reflect the reading and writing strategies employed by the teacher in their classroom. For example, when children are asked to write a story in a whole language classroom, their stories reflect their own thoughts as well as the literature used in the curriculum. When children write a story from a classroom where basals are prominent, it reflects more the style of the published basal to which they have been exposed.

Mills and Clyde (1991) also found the teacher's expectations to be of significant importance while conducting a case study of a child exposed to differing belief

systems concerning the teaching of reading. The child in the case study had reportedly been failing in kindergarten and was transferred to another classroom that was whole language based and more developmentally appropriate. The case study showed tremendous growth in the child's skills. When comparisons of the classrooms were made, the differences in the environment became obvious. In one classroom, the teacher believed in correctness and conventionality and part-to-whole teaching. In the other classroom, the teacher believed in making sense of language and the curriculum was meaning-based. The child flourished in the language based classroom. The teacher's perceptions of what was appropriate for the child and how children learn to read and write had a profound impact on that student. It may be that a child's environment is a crucial part of learning, whether at home or at school.

Most of these studies did not look at presence of an older sibling or preschool experience as variables affecting parents' perceptions of their child's ability. Thompson, Alexander, and Entwisle (1988) found the number of siblings to have a significant negative effect on children's academic scores. It seems that parents with large numbers of children have less time with their children individually, thus effecting their learning tasks. Mercy and Steelman (1982) found similar findings from a population of white children from intact homes. However, neither of these studies examined the effects of presence or absence of an older sibling rather than the total number of siblings. Several studies (Entwisle & Alexander, 1990; Hunt & Paraskevopoulos, 1980) found the number of siblings not to be a significant factor while researching children's academic skills. Hunt and Paraskevopoulos did not find differences for the birth order of the child in the family either.

The effect of prior preschool experience is another variable that has not often been studied in relation to parents' perceptions. Entwisle and Alexander (1990) found no

significant differences related to child's academic scores when examining the effects of preschool on children's math scores upon entering first grade. However, Sava (1985) is quick to point out that the Perry Preschool program, in Ypsilanti, Michigan, resulted in some substantial differences between the groups that experienced preschool and those that did not. He also sights several other projects that resulted in benefits to the children after experiencing preschool. These studies all seem to result in long term gains, but do not address the question of the effect of preschool on parents' perceptions of their child's abilities.

According to Feingold (1988), gender differences in academic abilities seem to be decreasing. While comparing the scores of a battery of tests over the past forty years, he found the stereotypical differences associated with language, reasoning, and math are disappearing. By 1980, boys had completely closed the gap on verbal tests, and girls have closed the gap on several reasoning and math tests. This research offers hope for the lack of gender differences, but the issue still remains controversial. Entwisle and Alexander (1990) found gender differences relating to math ability when their results were separated by the factor of race. Afro American males compared to females scored significantly higher on math tests. However, Hiebert and Adams (1987), in their research, found no differences for the parents' expectations for either boys or girls. It appears that mothers and fathers had the same expectancies of the child, no matter what the gender. But, while comparing the actual scores, boys were found to score significantly higher than girls on context-dependent word recognition tasks and girls were found to score significantly higher on the interest level.

In summary, it appears that the home environment and specifically, literacy activities may have an effect upon the accuracy of the parents' perceptions of their child's emergent literacy skills. This study will investigate the effect of the home

environment, parent education, gender, prior preschool experience and presence of an older sibling on the accuracy of parents' perceptions and the child's actual ability.

Portfolio Development

Artists gather samples of their work and collect them in a portfolio that enables them to demonstrate their skills and achievements. The samples they choose depict the breadth and depth of their expertise. The portfolio may include many different pieces, a variety to show versatility, several pieces of the same type to indicate refinement of skills, and collected work over time to demonstrate growth. The portfolio becomes a valuable source of information for them and those they share it with. A portfolio approach to assessing student's emergent literacy is based on the same reasoning. A portfolio is a sampling of student's work that is selected collaboratively and demonstrates growth toward curricular and individual goals (Roettger & Szymezuk, 1990). Portfolios may reflect growth in any area, but the current emphasis of portfolios revolves around reading and writing assessment, or the development of emergent literacy (Jongsma, 1989).

Research in portfolio use is currently increasing. One study completed by Roettger and Vavrus (1990) involved portfolio use for reporting progress in selected school districts in Iowa. The researchers developed a pilot project involving all grade levels using portfolios in connection with the traditional reporting forms. The project focused on the development of portfolios, the benefit of the information contained in portfolios, and the development of a staff model for implementing portfolios. Their findings indicate that portfolios benefit teachers for accurate assessment of their student's skills. The teachers were able to show development for a variety of goals and objectives through the portfolio. They were also able to involve the students in

this process which led to self-assessment by the students. This research also led to the development of the Guide for Developing Student Portfolio (1990). The pilot project was continued and has expanded to include more schools.

Much is written concerning portfolio use and development based on qualitative measurement rather than empirical research (Au et al., 1990; Bailey et al., 1988; Harp, 1988; Haupt, 1990; Johnston, 1987; Jongsma, 1989; Valencia, 1990). These authors investigated and discussed alternative assessment methods in their articles. Valencia (1990) summarized four principles of reading portfolios based on research and instructional practices. These principles are : 1) Assessment grows out of authentic reading instruction and activities. This assessment is not focused on subskills since isolated skills do not reflect authentic reading; 2) Assessment must reflect the on-going process of learning rather than an end product that indicates completion; 3) Valid reading assessment must be "multidimensional" to reflect the reading process which is "multifaceted"; and 4) Assessment procedures should be a collaborative effort between teacher and student. These principles emphasize the importance of process versus product-oriented assessment. Product-oriented assessment focuses on demonstrated skills rather than the internal cognitive processes involved in emergent literacy (Harp, 1988 ; Hiebert & Adams, 1987). In order to assist parents in understanding their children's abilities, it appears necessary to directly involve parents in the process-oriented assessment procedure, such as a portfolio. "The writing folder (portfolio) enables the teacher to document development over time and provide an invaluable resource for parent conferences" (Teale, 1989, p.45).

Wolf (1989), Howard (1990), and Camp (1990), report of a special project entitled PROPEL, based in the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania schools as a collaborative effort with

the Harvard Project Zero and the Educational Testing Service. Administrators, researchers, and teachers had been searching for alternatives to standardized assessment for reporting pupil progress. The project had two major goals: 1) to design ways of evaluating student learning that not only supplied information to teachers, but also modeled student responsibility in reflecting upon their own work and 2) to find ways to show growth over time so that students could assess their own work. The project involved the use of student portfolios. At the end of the year, the students reported they took responsibility for their work and played an active role in assessing their own progress. The people involved with this study were very pleased and concluded that the use of portfolios in the assessment of student's progress was very accurate and beneficial.

Murphy and Smith (1990) interviewed teachers involved in the California Assessment Program concerning the use of portfolios for assessment. The researchers conclude portfolio projects are a series of decisions and not an answer to the assessment problem. They stated that not only do portfolios provide information, but they stimulate discussions and help teachers collect and interpret data for reforming schools. The importance of supporting and documenting successful curriculum and teaching practices was also noted. From these conclusions, the value of portfolios is obvious and the benefit to the classroom teacher invaluable. This information could also benefit parents in explaining curriculum, teaching practices, and the students' actual ability, along with stimulating discussions among parents, teachers, students, and administrators.

Fredericks and Rasinski (1990) developed an attitudinal scale and observational guide for parents to encourage involvement with the assessment process of their child. Their assumptions were based on the premise that parent participation can

dramatically affect the reading development of the students as well as help eliminate misconceptions or misunderstandings during conferences or at reporting time. They also anticipated parent-child interaction would help give parents direction to aid in their children's literacy development. The researchers interviewed the principal of Escondido Elementary School in Stanford, California, which is currently involving parents in the assessment of student literacy. As a result of parent involvement, the school is noticing parents taking an active role in observing and a greater awareness of their child's growth in reading and language arts. The principal states, "Parents are a child's first teacher - and we need to validate that" (Fredericks & Rasinski, 1990, p. 348). Realizing the importance of parents' perceptions and helping them build a knowledge base to more effectively offer educational experience for their child can also create a communication bond between educator and parent. This bond can have a significant impact on the lives of the students.

Portfolios can be beneficial in building this bond and helping parents become involved in their child's education. Levi (1990) documents the importance of portfolios for students, parents, and teachers. He states that portfolios involve everyone in the assessment process. Rynkofs (1988) and Bingham (1988) encourage others to send the writing folders home with an explanation of their contents. An explanation of each piece in a portfolio helps parents understand the goals and objectives of the teacher as well as assess their child's progress in relation to expectations. Schools often communicate a lot of information, some of which is not always reflective of the goals and objectives (Flood and Lapp, 1989).

Freeman and Hatch (1989) studied 76 kindergarten report forms in the state of Ohio. The kindergartens represented six types of school districts, ranging from a city with more than two high schools to a city with one high school of fewer than 1,000

students. They found a significant number of kindergarten reporting forms were based on a behaviorist theoretical approach to learning, which was often in contrast to the interactional philosophy of the programs. For example, items included on the report form were a small part of what was being taught in the classroom. It is possible that the philosophy of emergent literacy, which assumes an interactional approach, may frequently be assessed and reported in a manner that is incompatible with the philosophy. If this is occurring, parents may need different types of information from the school regarding their child's emergent literacy.

Another concept of portfolios is the idea of passing them on from year to year. It is the documentation of the child's progress and ability that is important to the next teacher. Vavrus (1990) suggests passing them on to other teachers for the benefit of the child and teacher. According to Turbill (1985), evaluation is the process of reviewing progress (or lack of) and judging if the progress meets the needs of the "four share-holders in the enterprise of evaluation - child, teacher, principal, parent" (p. 66). Portfolios can enhance the collaborative measure between all parties and increase the knowledge base of those involved.

Parents want their children to learn to read and write. The concern for these skills to develop is often a major focus of teacher-parent communications. The use of a portfolio may enhance the communications between school and home as well as increase the knowledge base of all involved.

This study will examine the following questions...

A. Are child variables (gender, presence or absence of older sibling, or presence or absence of prior preschool experience) or demographic variables (parent age, income, and education) related to parents' perceptions of their child's ability or teacher assessed emergent literacy skills?

B. Is the literate environment related to the teacher assessed emergent literacy scores of children? Is the literate environment related to parents' perception of their child's emergent literacy skills?

C. Is there a difference between the teacher assessed scores and the parents perception of their child's emergent literacy skills in the portfolio classroom? Is there a difference between the teacher assessed scores and the parents perception of their child's emergent literacy skills in the non-portfolio classroom?

D. Is there a significant difference in the accuracy of parents' perception of emergent literacy skills in the portfolio classroom verses the non-portfolio classroom?

E. Is there significant difference in parent satisfaction regarding information related to progress in the portfolio classroom verses the non-portfolio classroom? Overall, how do the parents involved with portfolios rate them?

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of a portfolio in explaining the emergent literacy skill level of a child to parents. This was accomplished by conducting the research in two classrooms, one that used portfolios, and one that did not. This study pursued knowledge relating to the effects of a portfolio on the accuracy of the parents' perceptions of their child's emergent literacy skills.

Subjects

Ninety-eight kindergarten students in the two classrooms were identified for phase one of the research. All the children were enrolled in one of two elementary school classrooms in the West Des Moines, Iowa, School District. Both classrooms were one-half day programs and each school had two sections of kindergarten. One classroom utilized portfolio and reporting forms as a means of communicating with parents, and the other utilized only the standard reporting form. The classroom using the portfolio was the researcher's classroom and the second classroom was selected because it was similar in several ways. Both teachers are in their early -to mid-thirties and have degrees in early childhood education. Both the researcher and the other teacher send home weekly newsletters, follow the same district curriculum, participated in the same testing related to emergent literacy, attended the same parent-teacher conferencing training, and both have degrees in early childhood. Requests for consent for participation were sent to the parents of all the ninety-eight subjects from both classrooms(see Appendix B). Only those responding to the request were included in this study. Twenty-one (44.7%) of the non-portfolio classroom parents and thirty-four (66.6%) of the portfolio classroom parents responded to the request

and gave consent for their child to be involved in the study. Descriptive data for the subjects is summarized in Appendix A, Table A1.

Of the fifty-five children involved in the study, twenty-nine were male and twenty-six were female. There were 14 males and 20 females in the portfolio room and 15 males and 6 females in the non-portfolio room. A Pearson Chi Square analysis reveal significantly more females in the portfolio group compared to the non-portfolio group (X^2 (1, N = 55) = 4.77, p<.05). There were no significant differences in children's ages, prior preschool experience, or presence of older siblings, between portfolio group verses the non-portfolio group.

Fifty-five primary care-givers were involved in this study. Primary care-giver was defined as the person who provides the most care for the child, not necessarily the 'head of the household'. Primary care-givers were mothers except for three fathers and one grandparent. The majority of the adult subjects were Caucasian, married, and with an income of a mean range of $36,000 to $55,000 for both groups. A Pearson Chi-Square showed there was no significant difference between the two groups for parent education. There was a significant difference between the ages of parents in the portfolio room and the non-portfolio. Parents in the non-portfolio room were significantly older (t (2,53) = -2.49, p<.05).

Procedure

School administrators in West Des Moines, Iowa, were contacted by telephone and in person during the early part of the 1990-1991 school year. They were informed about the purpose of the study and the extent of involvement required for the teachers, parents, and children. Permission to conduct the study was granted from the district administrators and the two school principals involved (see Appendix C).

Permission was also granted to proceed with the study from the Human Subjects Committee at ISU (see Appendix D). A classroom roster containing all parents' names and addresses was provided by both schools so that direct contact could be made with the parents.

Throughout the year, parents were given information regarding their child's progress. Parents in the non-portfolio classroom received the report form every quarter and also at parent-teacher conference at the end of first and third quarters. Parents in the portfolio classroom received the report form every quarter and conferences at the first and third conferences, along with their child's portfolio every quarter. The information in the portfolio focused on the reading and writing development of the students. Examples and captions of the child's work were in the portfolio. Captions are statements attached to the child's work that explain the activity, goal of the activity, teacher objectives, how the student performed, and any additional comments. The portfolios were shared with the parents prior to conference time so that parents could review them before to meeting with the teacher. See Appendix E for forms related to progress reports.

An initial mailing was sent out to all parents asking for their involvement in the study and explaining the research. A postcard was enclosed for them to return their response. A second letter was mailed to parents giving them the date and time of a meeting where questionnaires would be completed(see Appendix B for forms communicating to parents). Eighty-two percent (n=45) of the parent questionnaires were completed during a special meeting , at which time the surveys were completed independently. Parents unable to attend the meeting (n=10) were supervised in completing the surveys at the school during individual meetings, either before or after

school hours. Parents were not informed of the specific results of the chid measures administered for this study, prior to the completion the questionnaire.

The children's measures were administered in the second and third week of May, 1991, during school hours. Two of the measures, writing a story and a dictation test, were administered in a group setting in the classroom by classroom teachers. The other two measures, letter identification and a word identification test, were administered independently to the children in a private setting during school hours. The two classroom teachers administered all the measures to children in their respective rooms. All subjects were allowed to withdraw from the study at any time. The classroom teachers had been through the 'reading intervention' training through the West Des Moines Public Schools and have been using the assessment tools in the classroom for four years.

Study Variables and Measures

Measures of children's literacy

Children were administered a series of four measures of emergent literacy. The children's measures were taken from Marie Clay's Diagnostic Surveys (1989). These measures are assessments of children's abilities in the areas of letter identification, word identification, writing development, and sound/letter association. For the purpose of this study, these measures were used as assessment measures rather than diagnostic tools. See Appendix F for measures administered to children.

Letter Identification: A large print alphabet with the letters, upper case, lower case, and the text print "a" and "g" were shown to the child in an individual setting. The letters were in random order. A correct score was given if the child identified an alphabet name, a sound that was acceptable for that letter or a response of "...it begins

like..." giving a word for which that letter is the initial letter. The scoring was not weighted or prioritized according to their response. There was a possibility of 54 correct. Scoring was recorded as either correct or incorrect for each letter. Reliability is reported at .97 for split-half and validity .85 for correlation with word reading. (Clay, 1989)

Word Identification: The West Des Moines School District uses the Wright Group 'Ready to Read' series of predictable books for the children's first readers. Each child, in an individual setting, was shown a list of fifteen high frequency words with one practice word (see Appendix F). The child was asked to read the words on the list out loud to the teacher. These words are high frequency words identified by Marie Clay for her diagnostic survey based on the Wright Group Books. Help was given for the practice word if needed, but the practice word was not scored. There was no study time as it was scored instantaneously. A possibility of fifteen correct existed for this test. Scoring was recorded as either correct or incorrect for each word. Reliability is reported at .90 and validity at .90 for correlation with a word test. (Clay, 1966)

Writing: A sample of the child's story writing was gathered and rated for three separate skills. The children were asked, in a group setting, to write a story (part of their everyday routine in both classrooms) and these pieces were collected and scored. There was no time limit. Story topics were chosen by each child, not dictated by the teacher. They were scored on language level, message quality, and directionality. The child was asked to read back what they wrote to the teacher and point as they read to indicate knowledge of directionality. Students received a score ranging from one to six for each of the areas listed below. The three separate scores add up to a writing score for a possible total of 18. (Clay, 1989)

Language level: A score was given for the highest possible level used by the child in his or her writing.

1. Alphabetic (letters only).
2. Word (any recognizable word).
3. Word group (any two-word phrase).
4. Sentence (any simple sentence).
5. Punctuated story (two or more sentences).
6. Paragraphed story (two themes).

Message quality: Each story was given a score for the best description of the sample.

1. S/he has a concept of signs (uses letters, invents letters, uses punctuation).
2. S/he has a concept that a message is conveyed.
3. A message is copied.
4. Repetitive use of sentence patterns like "Here is a ....."
5. Attempts to record own ideas.
6. Successful composition.

Directionality: The highest score is given for which there is no error in the child's writing sample.

1. No evidence of directional knowledge.
2. Part of the directional knowledge.
3. Reversal of the directional pattern (right to left and return down right).
4. Correct directional pattern.
5. Correct directional pattern and spaces between words.
6. Extensive text without any difficulties of arrangement and spacing of the text.

Because writing samples are more subjective than the other measures, an independent scorer blind to child and room identification was involved in scoring this measure. She is a reading specialist trained in Marie Clay's assessment survey. The writing samples were scored and coded according to Clay's (1989) tests. Interrater

reliability, as calculated by percentage of agreement, was .97 and was established by having two coders, the independent scorer and one of the classroom teachers, recode 10 writing samples for language level, message quality, and directionality of print.

Sound/Letter Association: Two sentences were read slowly to the child and then reread, one word at a time, while the child attempted to write what they heard. The children had some prior experience with dictation in the classroom. A correct score was given for each sound (phoneme) the child analyzed and recorded correctly. A total of 37 sound/letter associations were possible for identification in the two sentences. The test was administered in a group setting, with each child working independently. The scoring for this measure was straight forward since the response to each item were either correct or incorrect. See Appendix F for the scoring of the sentences. The sentences were: The bus is coming. It will stop here to let me get on. (Clay, 1989)

Total Emergent Literacy Score (TELS): The children's scores from the four emergent literacy measures were summed to determine their overall score.

Measures of parents' perceptions

Parents filled out questionnaires that involved rating the frequency of literacy activities in the home, perceptions of their child's actual abilities in emergent literacy, and their judgment of how informed they were. This questionnaire was field tested and adjustments made where necessary. Rating of the use of portfolio satisfaction were also included. Questions related to portfolios were included only for the group that used them (see Appendix G for questionnaire).

Descriptive data: The parent questionnaire sought information concerning parent age, relationship to child, race, marital status, education, income, presence of older siblings and attendance in preschool for child.

Literate environment: A scale to measure the literate environment for the child was developed for this study. Parents were asked to rate each of 13 items according to the frequency of their involvement in the activities. A range from "not at all to always" (1 to 5 scale) was used. The items related to literature enrichment activities "in the home" were modeled after Burns and Collins (1987). A total score, literate environment, was computed by finding the mean of the ratings for "books, times visited the library, questions asked while reading, asking child to identify words, asking child to identify letters, asking child to read story, encouraging child to write, encouraging temporary spelling, allowing free access to writing materials, spell words for child, correct child's writing, providing desk space, and displaying child's writing in home or office". The Chronbach coefficient alpha of the thirteen items was .72.

Perceptions of child's ability: The same measures used to assess the child's emergent literacy were shown to the parents for them to predict their child's ability. The parents predicted how many letters their child would identify, how many words their child would be able to read, how their child's sample of writing would be scored,and how many sound/letter associations their child would be able to reproduce. These measures were scored in the same manner as the child's. The four measures of parents' perceptions were summed to form a Total Perceived Emergent Literacy Score (TPELS).

Parent satisfaction: A scale to measure parent satisfaction was developed for this study. The total score of satisfaction with the reporting process was created by using the mean for four items that assessed the parents' satisfaction with how well informed they were about child's ability, understand expectations of child, evidence in child's growth over the year, and understand criteria of teacher to assess student. The

original items were rated on a one-to-five scale ranging from "not at all" to "always". Chronbach's coefficient alpha using the four items was .88.

Parent Accuracy Score

A discrepancy score was developed by subtracting the parents' perception of their child's emergent literacy skills from the child's actual abilities score. The perceived score reflects the expectations held by the parent regarding their child's capabilities. The actual score reflects the child's the teacher assessed performance on the reading and writing tasks. A disparity, either positive or negative, meant the parent was not accurate in their perceptions of the child's ability, either over or underestimating. The accuracy of the scores was compared for the different rooms. The absolute value of the difference between parents' perception and teacher assessed scores on the four emergent literacy measures and the total were used in the analyses. This resulted in the following accuracy variables: Total Parent Accuracy, Accuracy of Letter Identification, Accuracy of Word Identification, Accuracy of Writing Score, and Accuracy of Sound/Letter Association.

RESULTS

The purpose of the study was to determine if teacher assessed emergent literacy skills and parents' perception of their child's emergent literacy differed significantly between a classroom that used additional information in the form of a portfolio to report the child's abilities and a classroom that only used traditional reporting forms. The accuracy of parents' perceptions of child's emergent literacy were determined by comparing the actual score of the child on the four different measures and parents' perception of the child's ability of those measures. The measures were letter identification, word identification, writing composition, and sound/letter association. The absolute value of the difference scores between child's actual ability and parents' perceptions were used in the analysis of the data. The results of this study will be discussed by research questions.

Descriptive Comparisons

Are child variables (gender, presence or absence of prior preschool experience, and presence or absence of an older sibling) or family demographic variables (parent age, income, education) related to parents' perceptions of their child's emergent literacy ability or teacher assessed emergent literacy skills?

In order to determine if parents' perceptions of their child's abilities are related to child variables, t-tests were performed for gender, preschool experience, and presence of an older sibling. Significant differences were found between boys and girls for items related to the writing score (see Table 1). Parents of girls rated them

Table 1. T-tests of child variables related to parent perceptions of child's ability and teacher assessed emergent literacy skills

	GENDER					PRESCHOOL					SIBLING				
MEASUREMENTS	Male Mean	SD	Female Mean	SD	t-value df(2,53)	NO Mean	SD	YES Mean	SD	t-value df(2,53)	NO Mean	SD	YES Mean	SD	t-value df(2,53)
PARENT PERCEIVED															
Letters	46.862	9.265	45.807	10.715	.39	43.923	10.210	47.146	9.919	-1.01	47.571	8.565	45.111	11.137	.92
Words	7.310	3.983	8.807	4.186	-1.36	7.153	4.930	8.243	3.891	-.82	8.964	4.282	7.037	3.757	1.77
Writing	10.137	3.472	12.346	2.560	-2.66**	11.230	2.651	11.219	3.461	.01	12.107	2.885	10.222	3.367	2.23*
Language Level	2.827	1.338	3.923	1.230	-3.15**	3.615	1.261	3.268	1.450	.77	3.821	1.188	2.851	1.433	2.74**
Message Quality	3.344	1.758	3.769	1.531	-.95	3.384	1.557	3.634	1.699	-.47	3.928	1.514	3.148	1.725	1.78
Directionality	3.965	1.117	4.653	.485	-3.02**	4.230	1.092	4.317	.907	-.28	4.357	1.026	4.222	.847	.53
Sound/Letter	21.655	9.162	25.307	8.620	-1.52	20.846	9.599	24.024	8.861	-1.10	25.500	8.262	21.185	9.389	1.81
Total Score	85.965	19.651	92.269	23.491	-1.08	83.153	21.571	90.634	21.783	-1.08	94.142	19.565	83.555	22.597	1.86
TEACHER ASSESSED															
Letters	48.586	6.439	49.192	8.343	-.30	50.307	2.750	48.390	8.333	1.27	50.857	3.064	46.814	9.664	2.08*
Words	5.413	4.548	7.038	4.919	-1.27	6.384	4.822	6.146	4.845	.15	7.500	5.059	4.814	4.067	2.16*
Writing	10.862	2.013	12.076	1.547	-2.49*	11.153	1.573	11.609	1.935	-.77	12.035	1.753	10.814	1.861	2.51**
Language Level	2.413	1.086	3.038	1.113	-2.10*	2.846	.801	2.707	1.209	.39	3.107	.994	2.296	1.137	2.82**
Message Quality	4.724	.751	4.923	.272	-1.33	4.615	.870	4.878	.458	-1.04	4.785	.630	4.851	.534	-.42
Directionality	3.724	1.066	4.115	.952	-1.43	3.692	1.109	4.024	.961	-1.05	4.142	1.044	3.666	.961	1.76
Sound/Letter	19.724	9.227	25.307	8.009	-2.38*	21.769	7.293	22.658	9.681	-.30	25.285	7.302	19.333	9.782	2.56**
Total Score	84.586	19.886	93.615	20.048	-1.67	89.615	14.997	88.804	22.063	.12	95.678	15.362	81.777	22.541	2.66**

*p<.05
**p<.01

significantly higher on the total perceived writing score ($t = -2.66$, $p < .01$) as well as two of the subtests of the writing measurement, language level ($t = -3.15$, $p < .01$) and directionality ($t = -3.02$, $p < .01$). No significant differences were found for the presence or absence of prior preschool experience and the parents' perceptions of their child's ability. Children with no older siblings were rated significantly higher by their parent on the total perceived writing score ($t = 2.23$, $p < .01$) and the subtest of language level ($t = 2.74$, $p < .01$).

In order to determine if parents' perceptions of their child's emergent literacy abilities were related to family demographic variables, Pearson correlations were performed for parent age, income, and parent education (see Table 2). No significant correlations were found for parent age and income, but several were found for parent education. A significant positive correlation was found between parents' education and the total writing score ($r = .28$, $p < .05$). A significant positive correlation was also found between the language level subtest and the parents' education ($r = .26$, $p < .05$). The total perceived score also had a significant positive correlation to the parents' education ($r = .30$, $p < .05$). These correlations indicate that as the education level of the parents increase, they perceive their child's ability to be higher.

To determine the relationship between the teacher assessed scores and the child variables, t-tests were performed for gender, preschool experience, and presence or absence of an older sibling. Significant differences were found between boys and girls for three items (see Table 1). Girls score significantly higher on the total writing score ($t = -2.49$, $p < .05$), the subtest of writing, language level ($t = -2.10$, $p < .05$) and the sound/letter association score ($t = -2.38$, $p < .05$). No significant differences were found for the presence or absence of prior preschool experience. Significant differences were found between the presence or absence of an older sibling with six

Table 2. Pearson correlations of demographic variables and the literate environment related to parent perception of child's ability and teacher assessed emergent literacy skills

MEASUREMENTS	PARENT AGE	INCOME	EDUCATION	LITERATE ENVIRONMENT
PARENT PERCEIVED				
Letters	.1882	.1491	.2566	.2384
Words	-.0073	.1127	.2505	.2131
Writing	-.2047	.1003	.2827*	.2231
Language Level	-.0409	.0670	.2649*	.1095
Message Quality	.0324	.1490	.2203	.2331
Directionality	-.0822	-.0140	.1971	.1985
Sound/Letter	-.0905	.1846	.2209	.2346
Total Perceived Score	.0435	.1818	.3002*	.2815*
TEACHER ASSESSED				
Letters	.1365	.2005	.0726	.0897
Words	.0644	.1610	.2322	.1044
Writing	-.1095	.0806	.3491*	.2407
Language Level	-.0944	.1102	.2767**	.3029*
Message Quality	.2017	.1504	.3512**	.0509
Directionality	-.2124	-.0574	.1401	.0810
Sound/Letter	.0229	.1535	.3268**	.1838
Total Teacher Assessed Score	.0644	.1859	.2588*	.1612

*p<.05
**p<.01

out of the eight measures. Children without older siblings in the home scored significantly higher on letter identification ($t = 2.08$, $p < .05$), word identification ($t = 2.16$, $p < .05$), total writing ($t = 2.51$, $p < .05$), the subtest of language level ($t = 2.82$, $p < .01$), and the sound/letter association score ($t = 2.56$, $p < .01$). Children without

older siblings in the home also scored significantly higher on the total score for the teacher assessed measures ($t = 2.66$, $p < .01$).

To compare the relationship of teacher assessed scores and demographic variables, Pearson correlations were performed for parent age, income, and parent education (see Table 2). No significant correlations were found for parent age and income. Pearson correlations revealed a significant positive correlation indicating the association between parent education and five of the teacher assessed measures. The total writing score had a significant positive correlation ($r = .35$, $p < .05$) as well as two of the three subtests of the writing measure, language level ($r = .28$, $p < .01$) and message quality ($r = .35$, $p < .01$). Sound/letter association score ($r = .33$, $p < .01$) had a significant positive correlation as did the total teacher assessed score ($r = .26$, $p < .05$). These correlations indicate that the higher the parent education, the higher the actual scores of the children.

In summary, both parents' perceptions and teacher assessed ratings of girls' writing skills were significantly higher than those of boys. Girls also scored higher on teacher assessed sound-letter associations. Children without siblings were rated significantly higher by their parents on writing ability and scored significantly higher on all four measures of teacher assessed emergent literacy skills.

Literate Activities in Home

Is the literate environment related to the teacher assessed emergent literacy scores of children? Is the literate environment related to parents' perceptions of their child's emergent literacy skills?

Pearson correlations between the total literate environment score and the teacher assessed emergent literacy scores and the parents' perceived scores are shown in Table 2. A significant positive correlation was found between the teacher assessed language level score and the literate environment ($r = .30$, $p < .05$). A significant positive correlation was also found between the total perceived score of parents' perception of their child's emergent literacy skills and their perception of the literate environment they provide at home ($r = .28$, $p < .05$). These significant positive correlations between the literate environment score and the perceived or teacher assessed scores indicates that the more literate activities reported to be in the home, the higher the child's emergent literacy score assessed by the teacher and the higher the parent perceived their child's score to be.

Accuracy of Parents' Perceptions

Is there a difference between the teacher assessed scores of the emergent literacy skills and the parents' perception of their child's emergent literacy skills in the portfolio classroom? Is there a difference between the teacher assessed scores of the emergent literacy skills and the parents' perception of their child's emergent literacy skills in the non-portfolio classroom?

T-tests were used to determine significant differences for the portfolio classroom between the teacher assessed scores and the parents' perceived scores of their child's emergent literacy skills. Descriptive data for each of the scores can be found in Table 4. For the portfolio classroom, there were several significant differences between parents' perceptions and teacher assessed abilities (see Table 3). The results indicated a significant difference between the teacher assessed measure of word

Table 3. Comparisons of teacher assessed score to the parents' perceived score including mean score and standard deviation for both portfolio and non-portfolio rooms

	PORTFOLIO					NON-PORTFOLIO				
	Teacher Assessed		Perceived Ability			Teacher Assessed		Perceived Ability		
Measures	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t-value df(1,33)	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t-value df(1,20)
Letter Identification	48.264	8.229	46.500	10.512	1.59	49.857	5.651	46.142	9.057	1.80
Word Identification	5.647	4.873	8.529	4.172	-5.90**	7.047	4.533	7.190	3.970	-.25
Writing Score	12.000	1.651	12.058	2.795	-.15	10.523	1.940	9.765	3.477	1.23
Language Level	3.000	1.015	3.676	1.342	-3.81***	2.238	1.179	2.809	1.327	-1.92
Message Quality	4.882	.537	3.852	1.579	3.54***	4.714	.644	3.047	1.687	5.23**
Directionality	4.117	.844	4.529	.662	-2.92**	3.571	1.207	3.904	1.179	-.94
Sound/Letter Association	23.441	9.310	25.205	7.896	-1.73	20.619	8.517	20.428	10.092	.12
Total Score	89.352	21.440	92.294	22.243	-1.57	88.047	18.771	83.523	19.783	1.57

*p < .05
**p < .01
***p < .001

Table 4. Descriptive data pertaining to the teacher assessed scores of the children, parents perception scores, disparity scores, and the absolute difference scores of the individual measures of emergent literacy

Measurements	PORTFOLIO Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Range	NON-PORTFOLIO Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Range
Letter Identification										
# Identified	48.265	51	54	8.229	17 to 54	49.857	52	52	5.651	30 to 54
# Perceived	46.500	51	54	10.512	7 to 54	46.143	50	54	9.057	27 to 54
Disparity Score	1.765	1	0	6.458	-12 to 19	3.714	2	0	9.440	-17 to 23
Absolute Difference	4.765	3	2	4.639	0 to 19	6.667	4	0	7.545	0 to 23
Word Identification										
# Identified	5.647	4	1	4.873	1 to 15	7.048	6	4	4.533	1 to 15
# Perceived	8.529	8.5	2	4.172	2 to 15	7.190	7	10	3.970	2 to 15
Disparity Score	-2.882	-2	-1	2.847	3 to -11	-.143	0	-1	2.575	-6 to 4
Absolute Difference	3.059	2.5	1	2.651	0 to 11	1.952	2	2	1.627	0 to 6
Total Writing Score										
# Identified	12.000	12	13	1.651	8 to 15	10.524	10	8	1.940	8 to 14
# Perceived	12.059	13	13	2.795	6 to 16	9.762	9	9	3.477	4 to 15
Disparity Score	-.059	0	0	2.335	-5 to 5	.762	1	2	2.844	-4 to 6
Absolute Difference	1.765	2	2	1.499	0 to 5	2.476	2	2	1.504	0 to 6
Language Level										
# Identified	3.000	3	3	1.015	1 to 5	2.238	2	1	1.179	1 to 4
# Perceived	3.676	4	4	1.342	1 to 5	2.810	3	3	1.327	1 to 5
Disparity Score	-.676	-1	-1	1.036	-3 to 1	-.571	-1	-1	1.363	-3 to 2
Absolute Difference	.971	1	1	.758	0 to 3	1.143	1	1	.910	0 to 3
Message Quality										
# Identified	4.882	5	5	.537	2 to 5	4.715	5	5	.644	3 to 5
# Perceived	3.853	5	5	1.579	1 to 6	3.048	2	5	1.687	1 to 5
Disparity Score	1.029	0	0	1.696	-2 to 4	1.667	2	0	1.461	0 to 4
Absolut Difference	1.265	.5	0	1.522	0 to 4	1.667	2	0	1.461	0 to 4

Table 4. (continued)

Measurements	PORTFOLIO Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Range	NON-PORTFOLIO Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Range
Directionality										
# Identified	4.118	4	4	.844	1 to 5	3.571	4	4	1.207	1 to 5
# Perceived	4.529	5	5	.662	3 to 6	3.905	4	4	1.179	1 to 5
Disparity Score	-.412	0	0	.821	-1 to 2	-.333	0	0	1.623	-3 to 3
Absolute Difference	.647	1	1	.646	0 to 2	1.095	1	0	1.221	0 to 3
Sound/Letter Association										
# Identified	23.441	24	24	9.310	0 to 37	20.619	18	18	8.517	3 to 37
# Perceived	25.206	27	30	7.896	0 to 37	20.429	20	15	10.092	1 to 34
Disparity Score	-1.765	-2	-3	5.965	-15 to 11	.190	0	-2	7.380	-14 to 17
Absolute Difference	4.882	3.5	3	3.772	0 to 15	4.952	2	1	5.362	0 to 17
Total Scores										
# Identified	89.353	90.5	83	21.440	34 to 120	88.048	87	81	18.771	42 to 120
# Perceived	92.294	98	105	22.243	16 to 121	83.524	82	58	19.783	58 to 118
Disparity Score	-2.941	-2.5	1	10.915	-32 to 18	4.524	5	-5	13.189	-23 to 27
Absolute Difference	8.529	7	1	7.287	0 to 32	10.810	9	5	8.530	0 to 27

identification and the parents' perception of their child's ability on that measure ($t = -5.90$, $p < .01$). A significant difference between the teacher assessed language level score and the parents' perceived score of their child's ability pertaining to language level ($t = -3.81$, $p < .001$) was also found. The t-test comparing the child's actual message quality in their writing and the parents' perception of that ability yielded significant differences ($t = 3.54$, $p < .001$). Comparisons of the directionality scores yielded significant differences also ($t = -2.92$, $p < .01$) for the portfolio classroom. For each of these comparisons, except message quality, parents significantly overestimated their child's abilities.

Paired t-tests were used to compare the teacher assessed scores of emergent literacy to the parents' perceptions of their child's ability on those same measures for the non-portfolio classroom. There was no significant differences for any of the measures except message quality. A significant difference was found between the teacher assessed score for message quality and the parents' perception of their child's message quality score ($t = 5.23$, $p < .01$) with parents underestimating their child's abilities.

Comparisons of Scores Between Rooms

Is there a significant difference in the accuracy of parents' perceptions of their child's emergent literacy skill in the portfolio classroom compared to the non-portfolio classroom?

An analysis of variance was used to determine the presence of mean differences in the Total Parent Accuracy Score by room, parent age, and gender of child (see Table 5A). Parent age and child gender were used as part of the model because these two

Table 5A. ANOVA for the Total Parent accuracy Score by room, child gender, and parent age (n=55)

Source	Sum of SQ.	df	Mean SQ.	F	Prob. of F
Main Effects	231.878	5	46.376	.744	.596
ROOM	83.100	1	83.100	1.332	.255
GENDER	19.630	1	19.630	.315	.578
PARENT AGE	116.660	3	38.887	.623	.604
2-Way Interaction	469.410	7	67.059	1.075	.397
ROOM, GENDER	93.656	1	93.656	1.502	.228
ROOM ,PARENT AGE	422.255	3	140.752	2.257	.092
GENDER , PARENT AGE	169.984	3	56.661	.908	.446
3-Way Interactions	79.055	2	39.527	.634	.536
ROOM , GENDER , PARENT AGE	79.055	2	39.527	.634	.536
Model	780.343	14	55.739	.894	.571
Residual	2494.857	40	62.371		
Total	3275.200	54	60.652		

Table 5B. ANOVA for Accuracy of the Letter Identification Score by room, child gender, and parent age (n=55)

Source	Sum of SQ.	df	Mean SQ.	F	Prob. of F
Main Effects	166.501	5	33.300	.916	.481
ROOM	95.614	1	95.614	2.629	.113
GENDER	9.345	1	9.345	.257	.615
PARENT AGE	118.955	3	39.652	1.090	.364
2-Way Interaction	272.941	7	38.992	1.072	.399
ROOM, GENDER	13.700	1	13.700	.377	.543
ROOM, PARENT AGE	167.233	3	55.744	1.533	.221
GENDER, PARENT AGE	7.805	3	2.602	.072	.975
3-Way Interactions	1.416	2	.708	.019	.981
ROOM, GENDER, PARENT AGE	1.416	2	.708	.019	.981
Model	440.859	14	31.490	.866	.599
Residual	1454.887	40	36.372		
Total	1895.745	54	35.106		

Table 5C. ANOVA for the Accuracy of Word Identification Score by room, child gender, and parent age (n=55)

Source	Sum of SQ.	df	Mean SQ.	F	Prob. of F
Main Effects	27.779	5	5.556	.924	.475
ROOM	21.734	1	21.734	3.616	.064
GENDER	7.246	1	7.246	1.206	.279
PARENT AGE	5.574	3	1.858	.309	.819
2-Way Interaction	28.151	7	4.022	.669	.697
ROOM, GENDER	4.600	1	4.600	.765	.387
ROOM , PARENT AGE	20.409	3	6.803	1.132	.348
GENDER, PARENT AGE	12.522	3	4.174	.694	.561
3-Way Interaction	4.392	2	2.196	.365	.696
ROOM, GENDER, PARENT AGE	4.392	2	2.196	.365	.696
Model	60.323	14	4.309	.717	.745
Residual	240.405	40	6.010		
Total	300.727	54	5.569		

Table 5D. ANOVA for the Accuracy of Writing Score by room, child gender, and parent age (n=55)

Source	Sum of SQ.	df	Mean SQ.	F	Prob. of F
Main Effeects	16.489	5	3.298	1.405	.243
ROOM	3.970	1	3.970	1.692	.201
GENDER	2.824	1	2.824	1.203	.279
PARENT AGE	5.833	3	1.944	.829	.486
2-Way Interaction	10.737	7	1.482	.632	.727
ROOM, GENDER	4.535	1	4.535	1.933	.172
ROOM, PARENT AGE	5.136	3	1.712	.730	.540
GENDER, PARENT AGE	2.161	3	.720	.307	.820
3-Way Interaction	5.204	2	2.602	1.109	.340
ROOM, GENDER, PARENT AGE	5.204	2	2.602	1.109	.340
Model	32.067	14	2.290	.976	.493
Residual	93.861	40	2.347		
Total	125.972	54	2.332		

Table 5E. ANOVA for the accuracy of Sound/Letter Association Score by room, child gender, and parent age (n=55)

Source	Sum of SQ.	df	Mean SQ.	F	Prob. of F
Main Effects	123.379	5	24.676	1.476	.219
ROOM	9.844	1	9.844	.589	.447
GENDER	15.746	1	15.746	.942	.338
PARENT AGE	116.317	3	38.772	2.319	.090
2-Way Interactions	149.854	7	21.408	1.280	.285
ROOM, GENDER	18.590	1	18.590	1.112	.298
ROOM, PARENT AGE	95.759	3	31.920	1.909	.144
GENDER, PARENT AGE	1.129	3	.376	.023	.995
3-Way Interactions	102.448	2	51.224	3.063	.058
ROOM, GENDER, PARENT AGE	102.448	2	51.224	3.063	.058
Model	375.681	14	26.834	1.605	.120
Residual	668.864	40	16.722		
Total	1044.545	54	19.343		

demographic variables were found to be significantly different between the two classrooms. There were no significant main effects or interactions for this analysis. The lack of significance of the model shows that room, child gender, or parent age do not help to predict the Total Emergent Literacy Score and the Total Perceived Emergent Literacy Score. ANOVAs with the same factors were also performed for each individual accuracy score (see Table 5B - 5E). Again, no significance was found for any of the main effects or interactions. These results suggest that in this study, the accuracy of parents' perceptions of their child's emergent literacy skills is not different for portfolio verses non-portfolio classroom, for parent age, or child gender.

Satisfaction of Reporting Techniques

Is there a significant difference in parent satisfaction regarding information related to child progress in the portfolio classroom compared to parent satisfaction in the non-portfolio classroom? Overall, how do the parents involved with portfolios rate them?

An analysis of variance was performed to determine presence of mean differences in parent satisfaction by room, parent age, and child gender (see Table 6). Parent age and child gender were used in the model because those variables were found to be significantly different between the two classrooms. The ANOVA revealed a significant main effect for room ($F = 10.43$, $p < .01$). There were no significant two-way interactions. The three-way interaction statistically was significant, but since all three variables were not found independently significant, the three-way interaction is non- interpretable. The total model was also significant ($F = 2.71$, $p < .01$). The significant difference between the parent satisfaction is explained by the higher parent satisfaction for the portfolio classroom ($M = 4.43$, $SD = .67$) compared to the parent satisfaction in the non-portfolio classroom ($M = 3.87$, $SD = .88$).

Descriptive data from the parent questionnaire was used to describe how parents in the portfolio room feel about the use of the portfolio in the reporting process (see Table 7). The results of the questionnaire show that 28 (90 %) of the parents in the portfolio room indicated that they "frequently" or "always" liked the use of the portfolio. All parents responded positively regarding the use of the portfolio. Twenty-five parents in the portfolio room (80%) reported that they feel more informed with the use of a portfolio. When asked if they found portfolios complicated, 26 (83.9 %) reported "not at all". The parents were also asked if they

would prefer a portfolio to a reporting form and 19 (63 %) said "frequently" or "always".

Parents were also asked if they wanted more involvement in assessing their child's ability and 14 (46.7%) reported "sometimes", whereas three (10%) said "always", and two (6.7 %) said "not at all". Twenty-seven (90.3%) parents indicated that they "frequently" or "always" want the use of portfolios in the reporting process to be continued.

Table 6. ANOVA comparing the parent satisfaction with reporting child progress by room, child gender, and parent age (n=55)

Source	Sum of SQ.	df	Mean SQ.	F	Prob. of F
Main Effects	4.899	5	.980	2.219	.071
ROOM	4.606	1	4.606	10.429	.002***
GENDER	.407	1	.407	.923	.343
PARENT AGE	.622	3	.207	.470	.705
2-Way Interactions	1.811	7	.259	.586	.763
ROOM, GENDER	.472	1	.472	1.068	.308
ROOM, PARENT AGE	.386	3	.474	1.073	.371
GENDER, PARENT AGE	1.422	3	.474	1.073	.371
3-Way Interactions	10.052	2	5.026	11.380	.000***
ROOM, GENDER, PARENT AGE	10.052	14	5.026	11.380	.000***
Model	16.762	14	1.197	2.711	.007***
Residual	17.665	40	.442		
Total	34.427	54	.638		

***p<.001

Table 7. Descriptive data pertaining to the satisfaction of parents in the portfolio room regarding the reporting process and actual use of the portfolio

Parent Questions	N	%	Mean	SD	RANGE
Like the use of the portfolio[a]			4.645	.661	3-5
1.Not at all	0	0			
2.Occasionally	0	0			
3.Sometimes	3	9.7			
4.Frequently	5	16.1			
5.Always	23	74.2			
Feel more informed with portfolio[a]			4.323	.871	2-5
1.Not at all	0	0			
2.Occasionally	1	3.2			
3.Sometimes	5	16.1			
4.Frequently	8	25.8			
5.Always	17	54.8			
Find portfolio complicated[a]			1.355	.950	1-5
1.Not at all	26	83.9			
2.Occasionally	2	6.5			
3.Sometimes	1	3.2			
4.Frequently	1	3.2			
5.Always	1	3.2			
Prefer portfolio to reporting form[b]			3.800	1.095	2-5
1.Not at all	0	0			
2.Occasionally	5	16.7			
3.Sometimes	6	20.0			
4.Frequently	9	30.0			
5.Always	10	33.3			
Want more involvement in assessing[b]			3.167	1.020	1-5
1.Not at all	2	6.7			
2.Occasionally	4	13.3			
3.Sometimes	14	46.7			
4.Frequently	7	23.3			
5.Always	3	10.0			
Continue use of portfolio[b]			4.533	.973	1-5
1.Not at all	1	3.3			
2.Occasionally	1	3.3			
3.Sometimes	1	3.3			
4.Frequently	5	16.7			
5.Always	22	73.3			

[a] n=31
[b] n=30

DISCUSSION

Portfolios are becoming widely used as an alternative format to formal assessment procedures for showing young children's development. However, the effectiveness of their use has not been studied. The major purpose of this study was to explore the effects of a portfolio on the accuracy of parents' perceptions of their child's ability and to assess satisfaction with the portfolio for reporting progress. It is anticipated that this information will broaden our knowledge of portfolio use and may subsequently be used by school districts making decisions regarding their reporting systems.

Descriptive Comparisons

This study sought information regarding child variables (gender, presence or absence of an older sibling, and presence or absence of prior preschool experience) and their relation to parents' perceptions of their child's emergent literacy skills as well as the child's actual ability.

Gender was found significant for several of the parent perceived and teacher assessed scores. In general, there were significant difference between male and female scores on the perceived writing measurement. For the writing score and the two subtests of language level and directionality, the parents perceived the girls to have a significantly higher score. In fact, all the scores except for letter identification, were perceived to be higher for girls than boys. It is interesting that the only significant differences in the parents' perceived scores for boys and girls occurs with the writing measure. This finding could be related to the stereotypical ideas that boys are encouraged to spend more time and energy on "large muscle activities" and girls are encouraged to participate in more sedentary types of activities (Downing, 1975).

Thus lending support for the idea that fine motor skills are used more by girls and fine motor activities are more comfortable for girls than boys.

Gender was also found significant for several of the teacher assessed scores. Again, the writing score and subtest of language level were significantly different between boys and girls, with the girls scoring significantly higher. The sound/letter association score was also significantly higher for girls. This finding coincides with Johnson's (1976) findings of girls scoring better than boys on six literacy measurements. It seems that not only do parents perceive the females scoring higher on these measures, but their teacher assessed abilities are higher also. Gender does seem to play a role in parents' perception of their child's skills as well as the actual ability of girls compared to boys. These results suggest that gender differences in academic skills, found to be disappearing by Feingold (1988), may still be present. This suggests that gender differences are indeed still controversial.

Attendance in preschool prior to kindergarten had no effect on the accuracy of the parents' perceptions or the teacher assessed scores. This is similar to Entwisle and Alexander's (1990) findings that preschool had no effect on the children's scores in certain academic areas. It is possible that children not attending preschool are at home during the day and the interaction between parent and child is at a higher level, thus taking away the effect of either perceived or actual ability. Another possibility is that many of the children may have attended day care settings that incorporate preschool curriculum. The parent questionnaire for this study asked "Did your kindergarten child attend a preschool? (not including day cares or day care homes)".

This study also found that the lack of older siblings in the home led to significantly higher perceived scores as well as higher teacher assessed scores. The parents perceived their child to have a significantly higher writing score and a higher

score for the subtest of language level if there were no older siblings in the home. Children who lack older siblings in the home scored significantly higher on all of the teacher assessed measures except two of the subtests of writing, message quality, and directionality. This researcher assumed that children with older siblings in the home would score higher because of the peer tutoring opportunities and that parents perceptions would be more accurate since they had another child to observe emergent literacy development. Both of these assumptions proved false. These results, however, support the findings of past research which have shown that large numbers of siblings has a significant negative effect on children's academic scores (Thompson, et. al., 1988; Mercy & Steelman, 1982). One possibility may be that as an older child, or only child at home, the parents may spend much more time with the child on academic activities.

This research study also investigated the relationship between demographic variables (parent age, income, and parent education) and parents' perceptions of their child's ability or teacher assessed emergent literacy skills. The correlations indicate no significant relation between parent age and parent income with either the perceived scores of parents or the child's actual scores of emergent literacy. Parent education level resulted in significant correlations with the parents' perceived scores and teacher assessed scores. The results indicate that the higher the parent education, the higher the parents' perceived ability of their child, as well as the higher the child's teacher assessed score. These findings specifically support those studies which have shown the effects of parent education on expectations and ability levels (Entwisle & Alexander, 1990; Hunt & Paraskavopoulos, 1980; Thompson, et. al., 1988). A possibility may be that these parents are high achievers themselves, and push their children to exceed at a high level.

Literate Activities in the Home

This study investigated the relationship between the literate environment in the home, as perceived by the parent, and the parents' perception of their child's ability as well as the actual abilities of the child.

The overall results do not lend support for the significance of the home environment as a factor in children's emergent literacy skills. Parents who perceived themselves as offering literate activities in the home and creating a literate environment did perceive their child as having higher skills. On the other hand, the only teacher assessed score that positively correlated with the literate environment was language level. A positive correlation for the child's score indicates as the child score is higher, the literate home environment is higher. The significant correlation for one factor does not support the premise that there is a relationship between the literate environment and the teacher assessed scores. Burns and Collins (1987) found similar results in their research. They concluded that a supportive home environment did not automatically result in early readers, but related to the type of experiences offered. The questions asked in determining the literate environment in this research project did not ask for a judgment on the quality of items, but rather the quantity of the activities. It is possible that the quality is lacking and thus does not result in any relationships between the teacher assessed scores and the literate environment. In addition, the assessment of the literate environment is a subjective rating by the parent, limiting the validity of these findings. As Dunn (1981) stated, parents may be biased reporters of their child's ability or home environment either to have their child appear more skilled than their peers, or to give the impression that they have been teaching their children these skills effectively.

Accuracy of Perceptions

Investigation of the accuracy of parents' perceptions of their child's ability, for portfolio verses non-portfolio classroom, reveal many interesting findings. It appears, the use of a portfolio in reporting to parents the child's ability, does not seem to have a significant effect upon the accuracy of the parents' perceptions of their child's ability. This study found no significant main effects of the room, child gender, or parent age. The added information from a portfolio does not seem to significantly increase the knowledge level of the parents regarding their child's ability. When looking at the absolute values of the scores though, a trend becomes apparent that parents from the portfolio classroom were more accurate in their perceptions, just not significantly more accurate than parents in the non-portfolio classroom. This would indicate that the use of a portfolio may contribute to the accuracy of parents' perceptions, but not enough to make a meaningful difference.

Comparing the total actual score to the total parents' perceived score, 61 percent of the portfolio group overestimated their child's ability as compared to 38 percent of the non-portfolio group. This could be due to the fact that the group feels much more informed and sure of their child's ability compared to the non-portfolio group. Since research comparing the use of portfolios is lacking, it is hard to draw conclusions from this one study. However, relating to parents' perceptions, Hiebert and Adams (1987) found that parents of young children to be inaccurate in their estimations of their child's emergent literacy skills. In that respect, the results of this study support those findings.

Letter identification: Looking at the individual measures from this study gives more information. Overall, there was no significant main effect between the "difference scores" concerning letter identification and room, parent age, and child

gender. The results indicate that both the portfolio and non-portfolio room parents responded similarly in predicting their child's ability. The results also showed no significant difference between the accuracy of the parents' perceptions and the child's ability for either portfolio classroom or non-portfolio classroom. Both sets of parents were very accurate while predicting their child's ability to identify letters. Hiebert and Adams (1987) found similar results in their study while comparing the parents' perception of their child's ability to the child's actual ability of identifying upper case letters. There could be several reasons for this result. One is, that recognition of letters is a very visible skill, one that is very easy for parents to see their child's ability in more of a day-to-day basis. If their child asks how to spell a word and then, asks an additional question of how to form that letter, it becomes instant feedback to parents about the child's ability.

Another explanation may be that many parents believe that young children should know the letter names by kindergarten (Dunn, 1981). This explanation coincides well with the present data findings that both sets of parents, regardless of the information given them about their child's ability, are very accurate in predicting their child's ability.

After computing the difference scores to absolute values, 44 percent of the parents in the portfolio room and 38 percent of the parents in the non-portfolio room were accurate within two points of their child's actual scores (range 0 - 19 for portfolio room and 0 - 23 for non-portfolio room). In general these results indicate an accurate judgment on the parents' part in predicting their child's knowledge of letter identification. These results are important since Durrell (1980) found letter recognition as the most consistent indicator of success in beginning reading

instruction. If parents are aware of their child's ability, they will be better equipped to help their child with the task of naming all the letters.

Word identification: Looking at the absolute value of the child's ability to identify words minus the parents' perception shows no significant main effects between the accuracy of the scores and room, parent age, and child gender. These results indicate that between the groups there was no difference in the parents' ability to predict their child's ability. Although, there is some evidence when looking at the mean score for accuracy level that the non-portfolio parents seem to be closer in accuracy in predicting their child's ability to identify words, but not significantly more accurate.

Comparing the child's score to the parents' perceived score shows a significant difference within the portfolio classroom, but not within the non-portfolio classroom. After averaging the over- and underestimations, the parents in the portfolio classroom were considerably more inaccurate in their perceptions of their child's ability. The results also point out that parents in the portfolio classroom overestimated their child's ability considerably more than the non-portfolio classroom. Eighty-five percent of the parents overestimated their child's ability in the portfolio classroom as compared to 38 percent in the non-portfolio classroom. Only 3 percent underestimated their child's ability in the portfolio classroom as compared to 43 percent of the non-portfolio classroom. Hiebert and Adams (1987) also found significant differences between the parents' perceptions and the child's ability while identifying context-dependent words. They discovered that parents overestimated their children's performances on all measures. This study indicates similar results, except for the fact that some parents in both rooms underestimated their child's ability. However, these results indicate a tendency for the portfolio parents to feel more informed of their child's ability and, therefore, overestimate their actual ability. It is possible the parents knew the children

could identify the words in context, while reading with them, but when the children were shown the sight words out of context, they were not able to identify them. Several researchers (Goodall, 1984; Hiebert, 1978; Masanleimer, Drum & Ehri, 1984) have found the same results, young children unable to identify words out of context. The portfolio room's presentation of sight words is always in context, rather than isolated skill and drill situations. It is possible that the two rooms present the material differently. It may be that the test measured the children's comfort level rather than their knowledge base.

Writing score: Results of this study indicate there is no significant main effect between the absolute value of child's score minus the perceived score and rooms, parent age, and child gender. Examination of the accuracy level of the parents within the classrooms showed no significant difference between the child's writing score and the parents' perception of their child's writing score. The writing score was the sum of the three measures; language level, message quality, and directionality. The perceived writing score was the sum of the same perceived measures. These results indicate that a portfolio approach to assessment does not change the ability of parents to perceive their child's ability. This study found that overall, both groups were fairly accurate in their perception of their child's ability. Seventy-four percent of parents within the portfolio classroom and 57 percent within the non-portfolio classroom were within two points of their child's actual score. Hiebert and Adams (1987) found similar results when comparing the parents' perceptions of the child's ability to a writing measure. An explanation of this score may be that writing is a visible task and easy for parents to see and assess.

Looking at the individual components of the writing score shows different results. There was a significant difference between the child's actual language level score and

the parents' perceived language level score within the portfolio classroom. There was no significant difference between these same scores for the non-portfolio classroom. This means that parents in the portfolio classroom were significantly inaccurate in predicting their child's language level ability in their writing. Again, when looking at the absolute values of the accuracy scores, there was a trend for parents in the portfolio classroom to be somewhat more accurate, but not significantly more accurate. The parents from the portfolio classroom again overestimated at a higher percentage than the parents of the non-portfolio classroom. Results show that 62 percent of the parents in the portfolio classroom overestimated their child's ability as compared to 52 percent of the non-portfolio classroom. The pattern of more parents from the non-portfolio classroom underestimating their child's ability follows true for this measure also.

Another measure of the writing score was "message quality". There was a significant difference between the actual score and the perceived score within the portfolio classroom and the non-portfolio classroom. This means that all parents were considerably inaccurate in their perceptions of their child's ability on this measure. However, fifty percent of the portfolio classroom parents had accurate perceptions of their child's ability, compared to 33 percent of the non-portfolio group. For this measure, 67 percent of the non-portfolio group underestimated their child's ability, compared to 41 percent of the portfolio classroom group. Even though parents in the portfolio classroom had more accurate perceptions of their child's ability regarding message quality, the large number of parents who underestimated their child's ability leads this researcher to believe that parents in both rooms did not have a very good understanding of the concept of message quality.

The last component of the writing score is "directionality". When comparing the child's score to the parents' perceived score for the separate classrooms, there was a significant difference within the portfolio classroom, but not within the non-portfolio classroom. Again, this indicates that parents in the portfolio classroom were significantly inaccurate in their perceptions of their child's ability for this measure. These results also follow the pattern of the portfolio classroom parents overestimating to a greater degree than the non-portfolio classroom parents. Forty-five percent of the parents in the portfolio classroom overestimated their child's ability, as compared to 33 percent of the non-portfolio classroom. Only 12 percent of the portfolio group underestimated their child's ability, whereas 19 percent of the non-portfolio classroom underestimated on this measure. It appears that the portfolio group feels more informed and thus more sure of their child's ability. The lack of research in this area makes it difficult to draw conclusions from these findings.

Sound/letter associations: The last measure included in this study involved the child's ability to hear and reproduce on paper the correct sound/letter associations for 37 separate phonemes. The absolute value of child's score minus the parents' perceived score did not yield significant main effects between the room, parent age, and child gender. This measure also did not show significant differences between the child's score and the parents' perceived score within either group. It seems both groups were very accurate with their predictions of their child's ability. This may relate to letter naming and overall writing score. Both of those items were very accurately predicted also. If a child is trying to spell a word and a parent responds with the letter and/or sound association, the child can give immediate feedback to the parent concerning their actual ability by the questions they ask or the letter they produce. This is the same type of feedback that Marie Clay (1975) finds so integral in

the classroom. Without that interaction and feedback, the teacher has no knowledge of the child's ability, and the same can be true for parents regarding their child's knowledge of sounds and letters. Many parents may be unaware of the importance of the other components of emergent literacy, such as word identification.

In summary, the use of a portfolio did not increase the level of accuracy for parents while predicting their child's performance on emergent literacy task. The results indicate that parents who use a portfolio while reviewing progress of their child, often have an exaggerated sense of what their child is capable of accomplishing regarding emergent literacy tasks. Parents not involved with the portfolio were just as inaccurate, but tended to underestimate their child's abilities, rather than overestimate. It is important to note the overestimation done by the portfolio classroom parents. This could be due to the fact that parents feel very satisfied and knowledgeable concerning their child's skills and thus tend to think their child is more capable. Another explanation may be that the portfolio supplies more information to the parents with examples of the child's actual work. Parents may not have had these examples of their child's skills pointed out to them before. Thus, they may be celebrating their child's strengths rather than questioning their abilities. It also could be that their child is more capable, but the measures did not assess their ability. These children were not accustomed to testing situations, and as comfortable as the researchers tried to make it, children still seem to be cognizant of the implications of tests.

An explanation for many of the results, both the lack of differences and the overestimating, may be the amount of parent contact from both of these classrooms. Both rooms used consistent parent newsletters to communicate with the families as to what is occurring in the classroom, as well as what is appropriate for children of this

age. It could be that the amount of information shared with the parents from both classrooms overrides the need for a portfolio. In other words, they may all be receiving ample information regarding their child's abilities.

Satisfaction with Portfolios

Parents' ratings regarding their satisfaction of the reporting methods used by the teacher in their child's class provide some insights into which method would be most effective for parent-teacher communications. The results of this study indicate a significant main effect for satisfaction of reporting process by the portfolio classroom. Parents in that classroom felt significantly more informed of their child's ability, felt they understood the expectations on the child better, could see evidence of the child's growth over the year, and understood the teacher criteria used to assess their child. Fredericks and Rasinski (1990) found the same type of satisfaction when parents were more involved in the assessment process of their children. The results of this study support the notion that parents want to understand the process of how their child is assessed. Simmons and Brewer (1985) found the same thing, parents want to know what is expected of their child. Freeman and Hatch (1989) found that the traditional reporting forms do not always report what is valued in kindergarten and that parents want to know what is expected of their child as well as what is assessed.

SUMMARY

The present study found that the use of portfolios does not increase the accuracy level of parents' perceptions of their child's emergent literacy skills. In fact, it appears the use of portfolios has ambiguous effects on the accuracy level of the parents involved. Specifically, the parents from the portfolio classroom significantly overestimate their child's ability on several measures, as compared to the non-portfolio classroom.

In contrast to the non-portfolio classroom, the average score for the parent's perceptions from the portfolio room was overestimated on all the measures except letter identification and one of the subtests of writing, message quality. When looking at the degree of inaccuracy, rather than the level of over- or underestimating, a difference in the scores appears. There is a trend for the portfolio classroom parents to be slightly more accurate in their estimations of their child's ability as compared to the non-portfolio classroom parents, on all of the measures except word identification. This means that the portfolio may have some effect on the parents being closer in accuracy, but these results were not significant. It seems that the over- and underestimating scores tend to balance themselves. This can especially be seen in the fact that all the disparity scores for the subtests of writing are significantly different for the portfolio classroom, but the total writing disparity score is not significant. It seems that with out breaking the total writing score down, there is no difference between the portfolio and non-portfolio classrooms. The range of scores for all the measures were very similar for the two rooms.

The most significant finding of this research project seems to be the satisfaction of parents in the portfolio classroom with the reporting process. Parents of the portfolio

classroom were very satisfied with the way their child had been assessed during the year and their understanding of what was expected. In fact, the parents in the portfolio classroom all reported that they at the very least , sometimes liked the use of the portfolio. The majority of them also felt more informed about their child's ability with the use of a portfolio.

For the most part, the parents did not find the portfolios complicated to use, but the preference of parents to use only portfolios rather than just reporting forms, was not as overwhelming. It seems that parents like the portfolio, but do not want it to replace the use of a reporting form. However, 90 percent of the parents would like to see the use of portfolios continued, evidently in connection with the reporting form. Two-thirds of the parents were satisfied with their current level of involvement in assessing their child and one-third wanted more involvement. This research study found that parents seem to be very pleased with the use of a portfolio and for the most part, would like to see them continued.

Limitations

The findings of this study must be interpreted with caution due to several limitations of the study. A significant limitation of this study was that the researcher was the teacher in the portfolio classroom. Although the use of the portfolios had been established and used for nine months prior to collection of data, the researcher obviously was not blind to the expected outcomes. This study was also unable to control for the differences created by teacher effect in the different classrooms. A way to control for this would be to have a control group and an experimental group from one classroom, but this would result in a very small number of subjects. Another limitation of the study was the population group used, predominantly white,

upper-middle class, married and some post high school education. The population limits the ability to generalize the findings to other groups. Additional research should be done in multi-cultural classrooms, with a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. Although the variables of the literate environment were modeled after another study, a limitation of this research is the fact that the parents are rating their own home environment. In replicating this research, it would be wise to use independent observations of the home environment or interviews with the parents.

Implications

The type of reporting form and the manner it is communicated to parents has an effect on parents' perception. One implication of this study is that further use of portfolios is indicated because of the satisfaction level of the parents regarding the reporting process. However, it is important to somehow improve the accuracy of parents' perceptions.

These implications reflect directly to teachers and school districts. It may help parents' perceptions of their child's ability if goals are stated clearly on the caption and a summary of the child's ability is on every piece. School districts may be able to incorporate these aspects into their staff development and in-service workshops. Parents' perceptions of emergent literacy skills may be more related to parent knowledge of literacy development than the reporting process. This has clear implications for parent seminars and education programs led by early childhood professionals to explain the developmental process of literacy and writing. Also, parent-teacher communication seems to be a factor in parents' perceptions. This has implications for school district policies as well as teacher education programs.

Another aspect that school districts may want to examine is the actual report form, and its effect as a standard report form verses a developmentally appropriate form.

Future Research

This study identifies several areas for future research. The impact of parent-teacher communication on parents' perceptions of their child's ability and parent satisfaction with reporting progress needs to be further investigated. Also the differences between grade levels and the effects of a portfolio on parents' perceptions of their child's abilities needs further investigation. This research project used a predominantly all upper-middle class, white neighborhood, and the effects of a portfolio for a multi-cultural classroom are not known. Finally, future research with portfolios should be conducted across districts to pursue the question of the effect of reporting forms compared to the effect of the use of a portfolio. In this study, the reporting form had been revised to include current curriculum, reflecting emergent literacy aspects. It is probable that more significant results would be found comparing a classroom with traditional report forms and portfolios.

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APPENDIX A: DESCRIPTIVE DATA FOR SUBJECTS

Table A1. Descriptive data for subjects

Descriptive	Portfolio Room (n=34) N	%	M	SD	RANGE	Non-portfolio Room (n=21) N	%	M	SD	RANGE
CHILDREN										
Gender:										
MALE	14	41.2				15	71.4			
FEMALE	20	58.8				6	28.6			
Older Siblings:										
YES	15	44.1				12	57.1			
NO	19	55.9				9	42.9			
Attended Preschool:[a]										
YES	28	82.4				13	61.9			
NO	6	17.6				7	33.3			
Child Age (in months)			74.67	3.707	68-83			74.66	4.963	67-86
PARENTS										
Relationship:										
MOTHER	32	94				19	90			
FATHER	2	6				1	5			
OTHER	0	0				1	5			
Race:										
CAUCASIAN	33	97				20	95			
AFRO AMERICAN	1	3				0	0			
ASIAN	0	0				1	5			
HISPANIC	0	0				0	0			
OTHER	0	0				0	0			
Marital Status:										
MARRIED	28	82				17	81			
SEP.	0	0				1	5			
DIVOCED	6	18				2	9			
NEVER	0	0				1	5			
Income:[a]			3.212	1.269	1-6			3.526	1.429	2-7
1. BELOW 15	2	5.9				0	0			
2.16-35	8	23.5				4	19.0			
3.36-55	10	29.4				7	33.3			
4.56-75	10	29.4				6	28.6			
5.76-95	0	0				0	0			
6.96-115	3	8.8				0	0			
7.115 +	0	0				2	9.5			
Education:			3.588	.857	2-5			3.048	.865	2-5
1.PARTIAL H.S.	0	0				0	0			
2.H.S. DIPLOMA	3	9				6	28.6			
3.SOME COLLEGE	13	38				9	42.9			
4.COLLEGE GRAD	13	38				5	24.8			
5.POST GRAD	5	15				1	4.8			
Parent Age:			4.382	.888	3-6			5.046	1.071	3-7
1. 16-19	0	0				0	0			
2. 20-24	0	0				0	0			
3. 25-29	5	14.7				1	4.8			
4. 30-34	15	44.1				6	28.6			
5. 35-39	10	29.4				7	33.3			
6. 40-44	4	11.8				5	23.8			
7. 44+	0	0				2	9.5			

[a] n = missing data

APPENDIX B: CONSENT LETTERS AND FORMS

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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Dear Kindergarten Parent,

Parents are one of the most important ingredients in a child's school success. From the research, we know that if parents have an understanding of their child's actual ability, they are better able to help their child learn. We also know that some of the parent's knowledge about thei child's ability comes from reporting forms and conferences. What is not known, is how successful the current reporting techniques are in communicating information about children's educational progress and abilities to parents.

I am a graduate student in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies at Iowa State University and am working on a study to evaluate the techniques of reporting progress used by the West Des Moines Schools. This study is being carried out under the supervision of Dr. Susan McBride. We think the results will be useful to the teachers, parents, and the district.

The study would involve both you and your child if you choose to participate. The children will complete four activities at school. These activities are reading and writing tasks similar to ones they have already done in their classroom. Two of the four activities will be completed in a group setting and the other two in an independent setting with a teacher. If at any time your child does not wish to participate, s/he can withdraw from the study. Your participation in this study involves filling out a questionnaire at an half-hour evening meeting which will take place at 7:00 p.m., May 22nd, at Clegg Park School. The parent who is considered the primary caregiver is asked to complete the questionnaire. Both your's and your child's responses will be completely confidential. Each questionnaire will have an identification number for matching purposes only. This is used so that names will not be placed on the questionnaire nor activity forms. After completion, the questionnaires will be collected at the evening meeting. A reminder card and notification of exact location will be sent to each participant. Again, your participation in this study is voluntary and you may decide to withdraw from the study at any time.

The procedure and design of this project have been reviewed by the West Des Moines School administration and by the Iowa State University's Committee on the Use of Human Subjects.

We would greatly appreciate your participation in this project. Through the contribution of you and your child's time and energy, we hope the information gained will help establish effective educational reportin techniques. Please indicate on the enclosed postcard if you wish to participate and receive a copy of your child's reading and writing activities or a copy of the final results. If you have any questions please feel free to contact either Dr. McBride or myself.

Sincerely,

Luann Johnson(255-8907)
Human Development and Family
Studies Graduate Student

Susan McBride(294-3040)
Associate Professor
Department of Human Deve
opment and Family Stuc

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

College of Family and
Consumer Sciences
Department of Human Development
and Family Studies
101 Child Development Building
Ames, Iowa 50011-1030
515 294-3040
FAX 515 294-1765

Dear Kindergarten Parent,

I am a kindergarten teacher in the West Des Moines disrict and a graduate student in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies at Iowa State University. I am currently working on a study to evaluate the techniques of reporting progress used by the West Des Moines Schools. This study is being carried out under the supervision of Dr. Susan McBride. We think the results will be useful to the teachers, parents, and the district.

The Clegg Park kindergarten was chosen because of the excellent classroom environment and teacher knowledge. We know that Chrys Messer is a dedicated teacher and works hard to communicate with parents concerning their child's abilities. This enables us to evaluate the types of reporting techniques used in the district with assurance that parents have received much information.

We would really like you to reconsider participating in this study. We are hoping for an equal balance of participants between the classrooms. Your involvement entails only 30 minutes of your time. If you are unable to attend the Wednesday, May 22nd meeting at 7:00 p.m. in the Media Center at Clegg Park School, I will schedule a time convenient for you. Please leave a message on my answering machine to indicate your interest in participating. (255-8907).

Again, we would greatly appreciate your participation in this project. We hope the information gained will help establish effective educational reporting techniques.

Sincerely,

Luann Johnson(255-8907)
Human Development and Family
Studies Graduate Student

Susan McBride(294-3040)
Associate Professor
Department of Human Development
and Family Studies

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

College of Family and
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Department of Human Development
and Family Studies
101 Child Development Building
Ames, Iowa 50011-1030
515 294-3040
FAX 515 294-1765

Dear Kindergarten Parent,

Thank you for responding to the request to participate in this thesis project. Your involvement will entail filling out a questionnaire that will take approximately 30 minutes. The questionnaire will be completed at a meeting on Wednesday, May 22nd at 7:00 p.m. Please come to the Clegg Park Media Center. The parent who is considered the primary caregiver is asked to complete the questionnaire. A primary caregiver is defined as the person who provides the most care for the child, not necessarily the 'head of the household'.

Again, we greatly appreciate your participation in this project. We hope the information gained will help establish effective educational reporting techniques.

Sincerely,

Luann Johnson (294-8907)
Human Development and Family
Studies Graduate Student

Susan McBride (294-3040)
Associate Professor
Department of Human Development
and Family Studies

_____ Yes I agree to participate and can attend the May 22nd meeting.
_____ Yes I agree to participate but I can not attend the May 22nd meeting.
_____ I would like more information.
_____ No thank you. I choose not to participate.

Name _____

Phone #_____

Best time to call_____

INFORMED CONSENT
Iowa State University

TITLE: Effects of a student portfolio on parents' perceptions of kindergarten children's emergent literacy.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this project is to examine how successful the current reporting techniques are in communicating information about children's educational progress and abilities to parents. The findings will be used to help establish effective educational reporting techniques. The project is being conducted by a graduate student in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies.

PROCEDURE: The subjects for this study will be 97 family groups consisting of the primary caregiver and the kindergarten student. All children attend West Des Moines Schools and are enrolled in two of the nine elementaries. The children will be administered four measures; letter identification , word test, writing and dictation. These will be completed in approximately a thirty minute session. The children will be in a group setting for the writing and dictation, and an individual setting with the tester for letter identification and word test. Primary caregivers will complete a questionnaire at an half-hour parent meeting.

RISK: Family member participation and completion of written questionnaire will be voluntary. The child assessments are measurements that are normally collected during the school year, therefore there is little or no risk to the children involved. If at any time a child chooses not to write or to be involved in the study, they may withdraw. Any concerns of participants regarding the procedures will be discussed fully.

BENEFITS: The information gained will help in establishing effective educational reporting techniques that will benefit participants and all family units in the West Des Moines Schools.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality of the participants. Code numbers will be used to identify all measures. Matching lists of names and code numbers will be locked in a separate file.

I understand what my participation in this project will entail. I also understand the regularly administered measures of my child will be used for research purposes. I understand that my participation and my child's participation is voluntary and that we may withdraw at anytime.

(Name)_____ **(Date)**_____

(Witness)_____

APPENDIX C: PERMISSION FROM SCHOOL DISTRICT

West Des Moines
Community Schools

1101 Fifth Street
West Des Moines
Iowa 50265

Leaders in Learning

Phone (515) 226-2700
FAX (515) 226-2691

May 6, 1991

LuAnn Johnson
Crestview Elementary School
8355 Franklin Ave.
Clive, Iowa 50325

Dear LuAnn,

Your request to conduct research in the West Des Moines Community School District in conjunction with your thesis proposal has been reviewed and approved.

Your communication with the teacher and principal involved is appreciated and speaks well for the care you have undertaken in designing your work. Thank you for your effort.

Respectfully,

C.D. Buchanan, Ed.D.
Executive Director of Educational Services
West Des Moines Community School District

APPENDIX D: PERMISSION FROM HUMAN SUBJECTS COMMITTEE

Checklist for Attachments and Time Schedule

The following are attached (please check):

12. [X] Letter or written statement to subjects indicating clearly:
    a) purpose of the research
    b) the use of any identifier codes (names, #'s), how they will be used, and when they will be removed (see Item 17)
    c) an estimate of time needed for participation in the research and the place
    d) if applicable, location of the research activity
    e) how you will ensure confidentiality
    f) in a longitudinal study, note when and how you will contact subjects later
    g) participation is voluntary; nonparticipation will not affect evaluations of the subject

13. [X] Consent form (if applicable)

14. [X] Letter of approval for research from cooperating organizations or institutions (if applicable)

15. [X] Data-gathering instruments

16. Anticipated dates for contact with subjects:

First Contact	Last Contact
5/20/91	5/31/91
Month / Day / Year	Month / Day / Year

17. If applicable: anticipated date that identifiers will be removed from completed survey instruments and/or audio or visual tapes will be erased:

5/31/92
Month / Day / Year

18. Signature of Departmental Executive Officer | Date | Department or Administrative Unit

5-13-91 | HDFS

19. Decision of the University Human Subjects Review Committee:

[X] Project Approved [ ] Project Not Approved [ ] No Action Required

Patricia M. Keith | 5-28-91 | [signature]

Name of Committee Chairperson | Date | Signature of Committee Chairperson

APPENDIX E: REPORTING FORMS

WEST DES MOINES COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
PUPIL PROGRESS REPORT - KINDERGARTEN
Year 199_ 90 199__

Student _____ Building _____ Teacher _____

CD = Consistently Demonstrating DV = Developing
ND = Not Demonstrating NA = Not Applicable

Attendance:

	1	2	3	4
Absent				
Tardy				

Quarters	1	2	3	4	COMMENTS (Optional)

SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL SKILLS

YOUR CHILD:

Displays a positive self-concept and confidence				
Displays initiative and responsibility				
Uses self control in expressing emotions				
Works independently				
Plays and works cooperatively with others				
Listens attentively for a reasonable length of time				
Follows directions and classroom procedures				

MOTOR SKILLS

YOUR CHILD:

Demonstrates large motor control and coordination				
Manipulates scissors easily				
Draws recognizable shapes and copies simple designs				
Prints first and last name				
Forms/copies some letters and numbers				

SCIENCE/MATH SKILLS

YOUR CHILD:

Exhibits curiosity about science				
Uses problem solving skills and logical thinking				
Demonstrates sorting and classifying skills				
Understands some basic math concepts (more, less, measurement)				
Recognizes basic shapes				
Applies patterning skills (copies, creates, predicts)				
Counts accurately to:				
Demonstrates one to one relationships				
Identifies numerals out of order				

WHOLE LANGUAGE
Speaking, Listening, Writing, Reading

YOUR CHILD:

Expresses clearly ideas and feelings				
Willingly contributes to small group and class discussions				
Actively listens				
Enjoys listening to books/stories				
Understands concepts of sequencing				
Voluntarily chooses to look at books				
Recognizes some environmental print (familiar words)				
Identifies and names most letters (capital and lower lower case)				
Recognizes some rhyming words				
Hears beginning and/or ending sounds				
Understandsbeginning concepts about print (top to bottom, left to right, spaces between words)				
Participates in group reading activities				
Realizes print has meaning				
Attempts to write using some letter/sounds				
Uses art to communicate ideas relating to story				

ASSIGNMENT NEXT SCHOOL YEAR: (Completed 4th Quarter) GRADE: _____

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

GOAL: Communicates through the writing process
Shows growth in letter/sound association and use of conventions

ACTIVITY: Students discussed the following wordless picture book:

Students then wrote a sentence or two to "tell the story" of each illustration.

CRITERIA:	**CD**	**DV**	**ND**	**Comments**
Message relates to illustration				
Letter/sound association				
Spacing				
Directionality				
Punctuation				
Capitalization				

APPENDIX F: MEASURES ADMINISTERED TO CHILDREN

Letter Identification

What letters does the child know? Which letters can he identify? It is not sufficient to say that he knows 'a few letters'. His tuition should take into account exactly what he knows. (This testing should take 5 to 10 minutes.)

- Test all letters, lower case and upper case. The large print alphabet that is printed in this book should be used. It could be removed from the book and mounted on a clipboard for this purpose. Ensure that the child reads *across* the lines so that the letters are treated in a random order.
- Use the Letter Identification Score Sheet (see Appendix). Mark A for an alphabetic response, S for sound, or W for word beginning similarly, and record the incorrect responses.
- Score as correct

— an alphabet name
— a sound that is acceptable for that letter
— a response which says '*...it begins like...*' giving a word for which that letter is the initial letter.

The scores given below apply when any one of these three criteria is used to mark a response correct. Obtain sub-totals for each kind of response, alphabetic, sound or word beginning similarly, and note down

- the child's preferred mode of identifying letters
- the letters a child confuses so that they can be kept apart in the teaching programme
- the unknown letters.

Administration

Use only the following questions to get the child to respond to the letters. *Do not ask only for sounds, or names:*

To introduce the task:

- What do you call these?
- Can you find some that you know?

Pointing to each letter:

- What is this one?

If a child does not respond:

Use one or more of these questions and try to avoid bias towards any one of them.

- Do you know its name?
- What sound does it make?
- Do you know a word that starts like that?

Then moving to other letters:

- What is this? And this?

If the child hesitates start with the first letter of his name, and then go to the first line. Point to every letter in turn working across the lines. Use a masking card if necessary.

A	F	K	P	W	Z
B	H	O	J	U	
C	Y	L	Q	M	
D	N	S	X	I	
E	G	R	V	T	
a	f	k	p	w	z
b	h	o	j	u	a
c	y	l	q	m	
d	n	s	x	i	
e	g	r	v	t	g

Word Tests

Standardised word tests are based on the principle of sampling from the child's reading vocabulary. They cannot be reliable until the child has acquired sufficient vocabulary to make sampling a feasible strategy.

For early identification a different approach is required. Word lists can be compiled from the high frequency words in the reading materials that are adopted. The principle here is a sampling from the high frequency words of that restricted corpus that the child has had the opportunity to learn. The following test works well for children who are using the New Zealand 'Ready to Read' series (1963).

'Ready to Read' Word Test

It should be noted that any test of first year instruction must be closely linked to that instruction. *The most frequently occurring words* in whatever basic reading texts are being used will probably provide a satisfactory source of test items.

It was found for Auckland children that a small list of 15 words systematically sampled from the 45 most frequently occurring words in the twelve little books of the New Zealand 'Ready to Read' series (1963) was a very good instrument for ranking or grouping children during *the first year* of instruction and for retarded readers in the second year (Clay, 1966). This test, which takes about two minutes to administer, can be removed and mounted on a clipboard for easy administration.

Administration

Ask a child to read *one* list. Give List A *or* List B *or* List C. Help the child with the practice word if necessary and never score it. Do not help with any other words and do not use the list for teaching. Use alternate lists for retesting.

Use of the Test

The score will indicate the extent to which a child is accumulating a reading vocabulary of the most frequently used words in the *Ready to Read* series (1963) during his first year at school.

The scores may be used for ranking or grouping children (together with teachers' observations recorded for book reading). Successive tests will indicate whether a progressive change is occurring in the child's reading skill.

Score

The following table shows scores on the *Ready to Read* Word Test as Stanine scores for a large sample of children aged five to seven years. (Stanines distribute scores according to the normal curve in nine groups from 1, the lowest, to 9.) It is possible for children to completely master this learning. One would therefore expect a child to move through the Stanine score range until he reached perfect scoring.

What the Test does not do:

- It does not give a reading age.
- It does not discriminate between better readers after one year of instruction. On the contrary it groups them together.
- Differences of less than three score points are not sufficiently reliable to support any decisions about the child's progress, without other evidence.
- It does not sample a child's reading skill if he is working beyond the level of the first twelve books of the *Ready to Read* series (1963).

LIST A
Practice Word
the
I
Mother
are
here
me
shouted
am
with
car
children
help
not
too
meet
away

Examine examples of the child's writing behaviour. Does he have good letter formation? How many letter forms does he use? Does he have a stock of words which he can construct from memory with the letters correctly sequenced? What are they?

A poor writing vocabulary may indicate that, despite all his efforts to read, a child is in fact taking very little notice of visual differences in print. He requires an all-out effort to induce more writing behaviour to correct for his faulty visual perception. In learning, the hand *and* eye support and supplement each other, organising the first visual discriminations. Only later does the eye become a solo agent and learning become faster than at the hand-eye learning stage.

Writing samples

A rating technique for early attempts to write stories

Use this kind of appraisal for the early reading stage. Take three samples of the child's stories on consecutive days or for three successive weeks and rate them for language level, message quality and directional features. (One sample is not sufficiently reliable for this evaluation technique.)

Language level

Record the number of the highest level of linguistic organisation used by the child.

1 Alphabetic (letters only).
2 Word (any recognisable word).
3 Word group (any two-word phrase).
4 Sentence (any simple sentence).
5 Punctuated story (of two or more sentences).
6 Paragraphed story (two themes).

Message quality

Record the number below for the best description of the child's sample.

1 He has a concept of signs (uses letters, invents letters, uses punctuation).
2 He has a concept that a message is conveyed.
3 A message is copied.
4 Repetitive use of sentence patterns like 'Here is a...'
5 Attempts to record own ideas.
6 Successful composition.

Directional principles

Record the number of the highest rating for which there is no error in the sample of the child's writing.

1 No evidence of directional knowledge.
2 Part of the directional pattern is known:
Either start top left
Or move left to right
Or return down left.
3 Reversal of the directional pattern (right to left and return down right).
4 Correct directional pattern.
5 Correct directional pattern and spaces between words.
6 Extensive text without any difficulties of arrangement and spacing of text.

A dictation test*

Simple sentences can be used as a dictation test. The child is given credit for every *sound* that he writes correctly, even though the word may not be correct. The scores give some indication of the child's ability to analyse the word he hears or says and to find some way of recording the sounds he hears as letters.

Administration

Say to the child:

'I am going to read you a story. When I have read it through once I will read it again very slowly so that you can write down the words in the story.'

Read the test sentences at normal speed:

'Some of the words are hard.
Say them slowly and think how you would write them.'

Dictate slowly. When the child comes to a problem word, say:

'You say it slowly. How would you start to write it... What can you hear?'

Then add:

'What else can you hear?'

If the child cannot complete the word say:

'We'll leave that word. The next one is...'

Point to where to write the next word if this helps the child.

Support the child with comments like these to keep the child working at the task.

There are five alternative dictation tests with one or two sentences. When retesting it is advisable to use an alternate form. The tests are listed on the following page.

Recording

Write the text below the child's version.

hm	skol	b
him	school	big

Tests and scoring

Score one point for each *sound* (phoneme) the child has analysed that is numbered one to 37 below and total out of 37.

Changes in letter order

97 Where the child has made a change in letter order, take one mark off for that word. For example:

ma	2 − 1 = 1	gonig	5 − 1 = 4
am		going	

Alternatives accepted

Alternatives are accepted when the *sound* analysis is a useful one. For example:

skool	tace
school	take

Additions and omissions

1 If a letter does not have a number underneath it in the scoring standards on the next page then it receives *no* score even if a preceding letter is omitted. For example:

tody	= 3
today	

2 Additions do not affect scoring as long as numbered letters are included. For example:

todae	= 4
today	

Make some notes about:

- any sequencing errors
- omission of sounds
- unusual use of space on the page
- unusual placement of letters within words.

These may provide teaching points later in the child's programme.

Form D

T h e	b u s	i s	c o m i n g .	I t
1 2	3 4 5	6 7	8 9 10 11 12 13	14 15

w i l l	s t o p	h e r e	t o	l e t	m e
16 17 18	19 20 21 22	23 24 25	26 27	28 29 30	31 32

g e t	o n .
33 34 35	36 37

APPENDIX G: PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

DIRECTIONS: Please complete the following questionnaire. Your questionnaire has been numbered to correspond with your child's number for coding reasons. All information will be kept strictly confidential. When answering questions with a one to five scale, please circle the number corresponding closest to your answer.

1. Your age:____16-19
____20-24
____25-29
____30-34
____35-39
____40-44
____45 or older

2. Your relationship to the student:____Mother
____Father
____Other

3. Race(completion of this item optional):____Caucasian
____Afro-American
____Asian
____Hispanic
____Other

4. Marital Status:____Married
____Separated
____Divorced
____Single(never been married)

5. Education:____Partial High School
____High School Diploma
____Some College or Specialized Training
____Standard College or University Graduation
____Graduate Professional Training

6. Total household income:____below 15,000
____16,000-35,000
____36,000-55,000
____56,000-75,000
____76,000-95,000
____96,000-115,000
____115,000 and above

7. Does your kindergarten child have older siblings at home?____yes____no

8. Did your kindergarten child attend a preschool?(not including day cares or day care homes)____yes____no

9. How many books do you read to your child during a week?

1	2	3	4	5
(0)	*(1-3)*	*(4-6)*	*(7-10)*	*(10+)*

10. How often do you visit a library with your child in a month?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all	*occasionally*	*sometimes*	*frequently*	*always*
(0)	*(1)*	*(2)*	*(3)*	*(4+)*

11. While reading to your child, do you ask your child questions about the text or pictures?

1 2 3 4 5
not at all *occasionally* *sometimes* *frequently* *always*

12. While reading to your child, do you ask her/him to identify some words in the text?

1 2 3 4 5
not at all *occasionally* *sometimes* *frequently* *always*

13. While reading to your child, do you ask her/him to identify some letters in the text?

1 2 3 4 5
not at all *occasionally* *sometimes* *frequently* *always*

14. Do you ask your child to read a story to you?

1 2 3 4 5
not at all *occasionally* *sometimes* *frequently* *always*

15. Do you encourage your child to write?

1 2 3 4 5
not at all *occasionally* *sometimes* *frequently* *always*

16. Do you spell the words for them?

1 2 3 4 5
not at all *occasionally* *sometimes* *frequently* *always*

17. Do you encourage temporary spelling?

1 2 3 4 5
not at all *occasionally* *sometimes* *frequently* *always*

18. Do you correct your child's writing?

1 2 3 4 5
not at all *occasionally* *sometimes* *frequently* *always*

19. Does your child have free access to writing supplies, such as, paper, pencils, markers, etc?

1 2 3 4 5
not at all *occasionally* *sometimes* *frequently* *always*

20. Does your child have a desk or space available for use at any time?

1 2 3 4 5
not at all *occasionally* *sometimes* *frequently* *always*

21. Do you display your child's writing somewhere in your home or office?

1 2 3 4 5
not at all *occasionally* *sometimes* *frequently* *always*

22. Your child was shown the upper and lower case letters of the alphabet in the following random order. Notice the lower case letter 'ɑ' is also written 'a' and the 'g' is written 'g'. Thus the total letters presented are 54. (A correct score was given for a letter name, letter sound, or word starting with that letter.)

How many letters do you think your child verbally identified? _____

A F K P W Z

B H O J U

C Y L Q M

D N S X I

E G R V T

ɑ f k p w z

b h o j u a

c y l q m

d n s x i

e g r v t g

23. Your child was shown a word list. The words are high frequency words from the 'Ready to Read' series, published by Wright Group. These books are the 'predictable' easy-to-read books in your child's classroom. Of the following words, how many do you think your child correctly read out loud? (A practice word was given and not scored.)

____all 15
____14
____13
____12
____11
____10
____9
____8
____7
____6
____5
____4
____3
____2
____1
____0 (none)

PRACTICE WORD: the

I
Mother
are
here
me
shouted
am
with
car
children
help
not
too
meet
away

24. Your child was asked to write a story. The story was given three scores from the following areas. Please circle the number in each area that indicates how you feel your child's story was scored.

I. LANGUAGE LEVEL:

1	2	3	4	5	6
letters only	*any recognizable word*	*any two word phrase*	*any simple sentences*	*two or more sentences*	*two themes (paragraph)*

II. MESSAGE QUALITY:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Has a concept of using letters, inventing letters, tries punctuation	*Has a concept that a message is conveyed*	*a message is copied*	*repetitive use of sentence patterns like, "here is..."*	*attempts to record own ideas*	*successful composition*

III. DIRECTIONAL PRINCIPLES:

1	2	3	4	5	6
no evidence of writing left to right in lines	*may start direction-but only part of pattern is known*	*goes right to left(reverses pattern)*	*correct direction*	*correct direction and space between words*	*extensive text without difficulty*

25. Your child was asked to write two sentences. The sentences were read through once. Then, they were read again very slowly so that your child could write what they heard. Your child was given one point for each sound they wrote. One point was subtracted for changes in letter order (e.g., 'gonig' for 'going'). Additional letters did not effect scoring (e.g. 'goeing' for 'going'). Your child could score a total of 37 points.
How do you think your child scored?____

Th e b u s i s c o m i n g. I t
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15

w i l l s t o p h e r e t o l e t m e
16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32

g e t o n.
33 34 35 36 37

WHILE ANSWERING THE NEXT QUESTIONS, PLEASE REFER TO YOUR CHILD'S INVOLVEMENT FOR THE PAST ACADEMIC YEAR.

26. Did you feel well informed of your child's reading and writing ability?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all	*occasionally*	*sometimes*	*frequently*	*always*

27. Did you easily understand the expectations of your child concerning writing and reading assignments?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all	*occasionally*	*sometimes*	*frequently*	*always*

28. Did you understand the criteria used by the teacher to assess your child's reading and writing?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all	*occasionally*	*sometimes*	*frequently*	*always*

29. Did you see evidence of change in your child's reading and writing ability this year?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all	*occasionally*	*sometimes*	*frequently*	*always*

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ONLY IF YOUR CHILD WAS A STUDENT IN THE ROOM THAT USED PORTFOLIOS.

30. Did you like the use of a portfolio to explain growth?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all	*occasionally*	*sometimes*	*frequently*	*always*

31. Do you feel you are more informed than parents who did not have access to a portfolio?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all	*occasionally*	*sometimes*	*frequently*	*always*

32. Did you find the portfolio complicated?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all	*occasionally*	*sometimes*	*frequently*	*always*

33. Do you prefer a portfolio to a reporting form?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all	*occasionally*	*sometimes*	*frequently*	*always*

34. Would you like to be more involved in assessing your child's progress? (e.g., observation at home, then included in your child's portfolio)

1	2	3	4	5
not at all	*occasionally*	*sometimes*	*frequently*	*always*

35. Portfolios take a lot of work on the teacher's part. Do you think they are worth it?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all	*occasionally*	*sometimes*	*frequently*	*always*

APPENDIX H: CODING MAP

CODING SHEET: THESIS DATA - Johnson

COL	VARIABLE LABEL	VALUE LABEL
1-2	CARDNO	1
3	ROOM _	1 = portfolio 2 = non-portfolio
4-5	ID	
6	PAGE(parent age)	1 = 16-19 2 = 20-24 3 = 25-29 4 = 30-34 5 = 35-39 6 = 40-44 7 = 45+
7	RELCM(relationship to child-mother)	1 = no 2 = yes
8	RELCF(relationship to child-father)	1 = no 2 = yes
9	RELCO(relationship to child-other)	1 = no 2 = yes
10	RAC(Caucasian)	1 = no 2 = yes
11	RAAA(Afro American)	1 = no 2 = yes
12	RAA(Asian)	1 = no 2 = yes
13	RAH(Hispanic)	1 = no 2 = yes
14	RAO(other)	1 = no 2 = yes
15	MSM(married)	1 = no 2 = yes
16	MSS(separated)	1 = no 2 = yes
17	MSD(divorced)	1 = no 2 = yes
18	MSSNBM(single, never been married)	1 = no 2 = yes
19	EDPHS(partial high school)	1 = no 2 = yes
20	EDHSD(high school diploma)	1 = no 2 = yes
21	EDSC(some college or specialized training)	1 = no 2 = yes

22	EDUG(standard college or university grad)	1 = no 2 = yes
23	EDGPT(graduate professional training)	1 = no 2 = yes
24	IN(income)	1 = below 15 2 = 16-35 3 = 36-55 4 = 56-75 5 = 76-95 6 = 96-115 7 = 115+
25	SIB(presence of older sibling)	1 = no 2 = yes
26	PRES(preschool attendance)	1 = no 2 = yes
27-28	BKS(number of books read/week)	
29	LIB(number of library visits/month)	1 = not at all 2 = occasionally (1) 3 = twice 4 = frequently (3) 5 = a lot (4+)
30	QUEST(ask questions while reading)	1 = not at all 2 = occasionally 3 = sometimes 4 = frequently 5 = always
31	WD(words identified while reading)	1 = not at all 2 = occasionally 3 = frequently 4 = sometimes 5 = always
32	LET(letters identified while reading)	1 = not at all 2 = occasionally 3 = frequently 4 = sometimes 5 = always
33	RD(child read to parent)	1 = not at all 2 = occasionally 3 = frequently 4 = sometimes 5 = always
34	WR(encourage child to write)	1 = not at all 2 = occasionally 3 = frequently 4 = sometimes 5 = always

35	SP(spell words for child)	1 = not at all 2 = occasionally 3 = frequently 4 = sometimes 5 = always
36	TS(encourage temporary spelling)	1 = not at all 2 = occasionally 3 = frequently 4 = sometimes 5 = always
37	COR(correct child's writing)	1 = not at all 2 = occasionally 3 = frequently 4 = sometimes 5 = always
38	AC(child has access to writing supplies)	1 = not at all 2 = occasionally 3 = frequently 4 = sometimes 5 = always
39	DES(desk/space available)	1 = not at all 2 = occasionally 3 = frequently 4 = sometimes 5 = always
40	DIS(display child's writing)	1 = not at all 2 = occasionally 3 = frequently 4 = sometimes 5 = always
41-42	PLETS(perceived letter score)	1-54
43-44	PWDS(perceived word score)	1-15
45	PLL(perceived language level)	1 = letters only 2 = recognizable word 3 = two word phrase 4 = simple sentence 5 = two or more senten 6 = two themes
46	PMES(perceived message quality)	1 = concept of letters 2 = message conveyed 3 = message copied 4 = repetitive use of sen 5 = records own ideas 6 = successful compositi

47	PDIR(perceived directionality)	1 = no left to right 2 = start direction 3 = right to left 4 = correct direction 5 = direction and spaces 6 = no difficulty
48-49	PSL(perceived sound/letter)	1-37
50	INF(informed of child's ability)	1 = not at all 2 = occasionally 3 = sometimes 4 = frequently 5 = always
51	EX(understand expectations of child)	1 = not at all 2 = occasionally 3 = sometimes 4 = frequently 5 = always
52	CR(understand criteria for assessing)	1 = not at all 2 = occasionally 3 = sometimes 4 = frequently 5 = always
53	GR(evidence in growth over year)	1 = not at all 2 = occasionally 3 = sometimes 4 = frequently 5 = always
54	LIKE(parents like the portfolios)	1 = not at all 2 = occasionally 3 = sometimes 4 = frequently 5 = always
55	MOINF(parents feel more informed)	1 = not at all 2 = occasionally 3 = sometimes 4 = frequently 5 = always
56	COM(find portfolios complicated)	1 = not at all 2 = occasionally 3 = sometimes 4 = frequently 5 = always

57	PREF(prefer portfolio to reporting form)	1 = not at all 2 = occasionally 3 = sometimes 4 = frequently 5 = always
58	MOINV(parent want more involvement in assesssing child)	1 = not at all 2 = occasionally 3 = sometimes 4 = frequently 5 = always
59	CON(continue use of portfolios)	1 = not at all 2 = occasionally 3 = sometimes 4 = frequently 5 = always
60-61	CAGE(child's age in months)	
62	SEX(child's gender)	1 = male 2 = female
63-64	LETS(number of letters identified)	1 - 54
65-66	WDS(number of words identified)	1 - 15
67	LL(language level score)	1 = letters only 2 = recognizable word 3 = two word phrase 4 = simple sentence 5 = two or more sentences 6 = two themes
68	MES(message quality score)	1 = concept of letters 2 = message conveyed 3 = message copied 4 = repetitive use of sent. 5 = records own ideas 6 = successful composition
69	DIR(directional score)	1 = no left to right 2 = start direction 3 = right to left 4 = correct direction 5 = direction and spaces 6 = no difficulty
70-71	SL(number of sound/letter associations made)	1-37