

PREDICTION OF PRESERVICE TEACHERS' KNOWLEDGE AND READING OF
CHILDREN'S LITERATURE WITHIN A TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM

A Dissertation

by

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This dissertation meets the standards for scope and quality of
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi and is hereby approved.

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ABSTRACT

Reading is essential for personal growth and social and economic success. Smith (2002) proposed that reading was the most important subject in American early schools, and explained that reading continues to be the most significant subject in schools throughout the United States. Educators need to consider ways to strengthen our educational system beginning with teacher preparation. Researchers have outlined the close interconnectivity between teacher preparation and reading preparation; however, relatively few researchers have asked questions about the involvement of reading preparation courses, reading-related demographics, and past reading experiences in relation to reading habits and knowledge, specifically of children's literature.

This quantitative study analyzed 12 specific demographic and reading-related variables in the prediction of preservice teachers' knowledge and current reading habits of children's literature in a teacher preparation program at a public, four-year, Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) in South Texas. The correlational study employed bivariate and multivariate analyses on data collected from 168 undergraduate students enrolled in at least one reading course during the fall 2014 semester.

Results of correlational analysis indicated that there were statistically significant associations for current reading habits of children's literature on the basis of READ 3310—Principles and Practices of Early Reading Instruction, READ 3320—Principles and Practices of Reading Instruction, and READ 4380—Children's and Adolescents' Literature, and daily contact with children outside of school. There were statistically significant associations for knowledge of children's literature based on READ 3320, READ 4380, and past reading experiences. Results of the regression analysis indicated daily contact with children outside of school, READ

4380, READ 3310, and READ 3320 were significantly correlated with current reading habits. READ 4380, READ 3320, and past reading experiences were the variables used in the prediction of knowledge of children's literature.

The results of the study have implications for teacher preparation programs, literacy scholars, in-service educators, preservice educators, and parents. Some recommendations for future research include: complete a comparison study with in-service teachers, replicate the study to include a larger number of participants, update the Children's Literature Title Recognition Test to reflect in-class and out of class fiction and non-fiction titles, and add a qualitative aspect.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to God and my family and friends, without whom I would have never had the courage or ability to pursue graduate work, let alone a PhD. Their support makes me want to be a better student, teacher, wife, daughter, sister, aunt, friend, and human being; their patience and understanding guided me to continue through the arduous journey.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Reading is fundamental for personal development and social and economic success (Barton & Hamilton, 1998; Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998; Department for Culture, Media, and Sport, 2003; Freire, 1983; Holden, 2004; Lone, 2011; Moore, Bean, Birdyshaw, & Rycik, 1999). Reading historian, Nila Banton-Smith (2002), proposed that reading was the most important subject in early schools in the United States, and it continues to be a vital factor American schools today. Warranting that students become proficient readers through effective classroom instruction continues to be a serious concern in teacher and literacy education (Alvermann, 2002; Bond & Dykstra, 1967/1997; Cassidy & Grote-Garcia, 2012, 2014; Flippo, 2001; National Reading Panel, 2000; Robinson, 2005). With the increase of Federal mandates such as No Child Left Behind (NCLB), state standards including Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) or Common Core State Standards Initiative [CCSSI] (CCSSI, 2010), and the ongoing debate about how teachers should teach students to read (Pearson, 2004), producing skillful and expert reading teachers continues to be a multifaceted and challenging task (Clark, Jones, Reutzel, & Andresen, 2013). With the changes in educational reform, it is arguably essential for educators to consider newer and modern methods to strengthen our teacher preparation programs and public schools. Darling-Hammond (1990) noted that a majority of teachers completed teacher preparation programs at public universities. In order to ensure they graduated highly-qualified teachers, universities played a significant role in the investigation and strengthening of their teacher preparation programs. However, many colleges of education at universities received the fewest resources, including money, time, or attention for adequately preparing teachers (Darling-Hammond, 1990). Other organizations such as the National Council for Teacher Quality (NCTQ) issued reports critical of elementary teacher preparation including major factors that

influence the preparation of elementary teachers. Greenberg and Walsh (2010) reported one factor as early reading instruction. Given the need for highly qualified elementary teachers, universities need to incorporate effective, cost-efficient practices in producing quality elementary reading teachers. Cremin, Mottram, Bearne, and Goodwin (2008) suggested that elementary teachers' reading habits and knowledge of children's literature is paramount in order to cultivate positive attitudes, sustain and develop young readers. Accordingly, Cremin et al. (2008) stated that teacher preparation programs might not be exposing recently trained teachers to a wide variety of literature-informed curriculum.

Teacher Preparation Programs

There have been significant changes in education in the United States over the past 200 years (Smith, 2002). According to Borrowman (1965), Horace Mann, who many regard as the father of the common school, established common schools in the 19th century. Mann established the common school so all students would be educated without regard to social class and religion, and all children would experience a similar learning opportunity. By 1850, Lucas (1997) pointed out that the people of the United States had established nearly 81,000 public common schools. Kaestle (1983) indicated with the development of common schools came the influx of student enrollment, which arguably led to the establishment of teacher preparation institutions, known as normal schools (Fraser, 2007; Urban, 1990).

Messerli (1971) credited Horace Mann with the idea of teacher preparation schools, referred to as normal schools. Mann (1845) stated, "in order to bring up our schools to the point of excellence demanded by the nature of our institution, must there not be a special course of study and training to qualify teachers for their office?" (p. 65). The establishment of the first public normal school took place in Lexington, Massachusetts in 1839 (Fraser, 2007; Urban,

1990). Coble, Edelfelt, and Kettlewell (2004) described the normal school as a place where prospective elementary school teachers studied the subjects they would teach students, they learned teaching methodology, and for up to one year, they practiced teaching in model schools before they accepted responsibility for students of their own. By the end of the 19th century, more than 167 public normal schools existed from Maine to California (Johnson, 1968).

According to Urban (1990), education programs began to appear in universities by the end of the 1800s. With the appearance of teacher preparation in universities, normal schools began to make changes, and by 1933, Massachusetts required all normal schools to make the transition to state teachers colleges (Fraser, 2007). The evolution of teachers colleges to state colleges allowed students to choose a major other than education, and thus, brought the demise of teachers colleges.

Teacher Quality

Quality of teachers continues to play an important role in education reform. Heck (2007) defined teacher quality to include teachers' knowledge, preservice education, instructional content, and delivery. The creation of the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) in 1954 established high quality teacher preparation. Five groups that represented different areas of education created NCATE, which replaced American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE). The purpose of NCATE was to provide accreditation to teacher preparatory programs. By 1964, according to Fraser (2007), 46 of 50 states required all new teachers to obtain a bachelor's degree. Legislative acts such as The Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965 [ESEA] (United States Department of Education, 1965) and the Teacher Corps legislation (United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare,

1965) signaled the entry of the Federal government as a change agent into teacher education (Bush, 1977; Freiberg & Waxman, 1990). Moss, Glen, and Schwab (2005) noted:

Since the publication of *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* (1983), a document that challenged many assumption about the effectiveness of the public schools, states have been upgrading student standards, and a number of efforts have been made to upgrade the teaching profession. (p. 178)

A Nation at Risk (National Commission on Excellence in Education [NCEE], 1983) reported declines in educational performance in four important aspects in education: content, expectations, time, and teaching. Moss et al. (2005) claimed that the report's findings raised the public's awareness that "all children in America's classrooms deserve nothing less than a well prepared, and caring professional who has the knowledge base and power to ensure that they reach their full potential" (p. xv).

Although teacher quality continues to be an important aspect of education, Cochran-Smith and Fries (2005) argued that the changes in the 21st century brought disagreements as to what teacher quality meant, indicating there are currently varying definitions as to what a quality teacher really is. Heck (2007) defined teacher quality as teachers' knowledge, preservice education, instructional content, and delivery. While Invarson and Rowe (2008) offer a similar definition, it is much more ambiguous: the measurement of teacher quality is what teachers are able to do and what they know. Much of the knowledge that teachers gain is brought from past experiences as well as their skills developed in teacher preparation programs (Clark, Jones, Reutzler, & Andersen, 2013). Darling-Hammond (2006) proposed that the formation of good teachers is in traditional teacher preparation programs, and those programs are in institutions of

higher education. However, Darling-Hammond (2006) acknowledged that the creation of all teacher preparation programs is not equal.

Reading Teacher Preparation

In the seminal work, *American Reading Instruction*, Smith (2002) outlined the close interconnectivity between teacher preparation and reading teacher preparation. Hoffman and Pearson (2000) and Alvermann (1990) stated that historically, courses on how to teach reading were not always a requirement in teacher preparation programs in the United States.

Prospective teachers were only required to study general courses in pedagogical methods and courses related to subject areas of the curriculum in elementary.

The Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Graduate School of Education at Harvard University grant funded the study, *The Torch Lighters*, (Austin & Morrison, 1961). The study served two major purposes: (a) to be informed of how universities and colleges in the United States were preparing teachers of reading and (b) to provide recommendations for improving the preparation of the future reading teachers. The results indicated that preservice reading teacher programs did not adequately prepare preservice educators to teach students how to read. Universities and colleges received 22 recommendations, which provided information to improve reading preparation programs in universities and colleges within teacher preparation programs.

Three questions originated from *The Torch Lighters* (Austin & Morrison, 1961) and led to the second Harvard-Carnegie reading study, *The First R: The Harvard Report on Reading in Elementary School* (Austin & Morrison, 1963). The research focused on reading programs in school districts in the United States. The results of the study concluded that elementary school

reading programs were substandard. The findings also provided five areas of improvement, one being “improved teacher preparation” (p. 3).

Published 16 years after the original study, *The Torch Lighters*, Morrison and Austin (1977) created a follow-up study titled *The Torch Lighters Revisited*. The creation of the follow-up study determined whether schools used any of the original 22 recommendations to improve their preparation programs. Findings concluded that the majority of the recommendations were in effect; however, there were still issues within the teacher preparation program. The reading courses noted most changes, including the content of the courses and experiences in observations and tutorials.

Hoffman and Roller (2001) explained, “the profession stopped thinking seriously about reading teacher education” (p.33). This was attributed to the follow-up study *The Torch Lighters Revisited* (Morrison & Austin, 1977), which observed that the majority of universities and colleges recognized and implemented the 22 recommendations in *The Torch Lighters* (Austin & Morrison, 1961) in reading teacher education programs. However, 25 years later, reading educators found the programs under attack (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986; Holmes Group, 1986). Both reports, *A Nation Prepared* and *Tomorrow’s Teachers*, set the agenda for restructuring teacher education and provided seven recommendations:

- develop a National Board for Professional Teaching Standards,
- provide a professional environment through the restructuring of schools,
- have Lead Teachers,
- require a bachelor’s degree in the arts and sciences [Holmes pushed for graduate degrees],

- develop a Master of Teaching degree which would be based on systematic knowledge of teaching with internships and residencies in schools,
- incentives for teachers to school-wide performance, and
- make teachers' salaries competitive with those in other professions (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986; Fraser, 2007; Holmes Group, 1986).

Fourteen years later, the literacy rate of students continued to be a national concern, with teacher education being a major factor. In one attempt to address this concern, the formation of the National Reading Panel [NRP] (2000) transpired. The NRP was created and charged to release a report that addressed five topics of study: alphabets, fluency, comprehension, teacher education and reading instruction, as well as computer technology and reading instruction. During the NRP regional meetings, the panel developed the “most frequently mentioned” (p. 5-1) concerns about teacher education. The International Reading Association (IRA)—a global organization dedicated to reading/literacy—in a synthesis of available research, noted that the key to addressing the challenges of reading achievement was to have high-quality teachers in classrooms (IRA, 2007). Producing high quality reading teachers continues to be an issue. The teacher quality report specifically addressed the amount and kind of reading preparation that preservice elementary teachers received in their teacher preparation programs (Greenberg & Walsh, 2010). The IRA created a Certificate of Distinction of the Reading Preparation of Elementary and Secondary Teachers (IRA, 2011) to recognize the high quality of the reading teacher preparation programs. The IRA awards the certificate to teacher preparation programs who consistently prepare well-qualified teachers of reading who are knowledgeable about evidence-based practices and use them effectively in the classroom.

Although research continues to discuss the importance of reading teacher preparation programs, Anders et al. (2000) contended that reading teacher preparation has not been a priority within the reading research community. Accordingly, Jack Cassidy has conducted an annual study for nearly 20 years in which literacy leaders within the United States and from around the world have participated in the identification of topics in reading/literacy that are deemed as “hot” topics or “not hot” topics. The study is titled *What’s Hot & What’s Not*, and identified teacher education for reading as a topic that is “not hot” (Cassidy & Grote-Garcia, 2012, 2014). However, more than 75% of the participants of the study reported that the topic of teacher education for reading “should be hot.”

Influences on Reading Instruction

Research studies have continued to identify major factors that influence reading habits and knowledge of instruction. Duffy (2004) suggested that teacher knowledge is a primary factor of students’ learning. Reutzel and Cooter (2012), in a text that is commonly used in reading preparation programs, discussed seven pillars of learning [reading] that were required for students’ academic success: teacher knowledge, evidenced-based teaching practices, motivation and engagement, family and community connections, assessment, response to intervention, and technology and new literacies; of these seven factors, teacher knowledge of reading was paramount. Further, years of research exist that explore the influence of teacher knowledge of reading (Coleman, 1966; Ferguson, 1991; Flippo, 2001) and their motivation to read (Applegate & Applegate, 2004; Gambrell, 2001) in relation to student learning. Edmunds and Bausermann (2006) found that teachers influence their students’ amount of children’s book reading. Researchers also reported that teachers model the practice of engaged reading for their students (Allington, 1994; Ruddell, 1995; Skinner & Belmont, 1993). Research, along with reading

authorities, established that teachers bring their own personal aspects of educational and reading experiences in their classrooms. These experiences influence, and sometimes dictate, how reading is taught (Clark et al., 2013), as many new teachers instruct in the same manner in which they were taught.

Along with teachers' understanding of content, motivation to read played an important role in reading development (Gambrell, 1996). Researchers have noted that reading motivation and engagement of students required teachers to model habits of a proficient reader (Applegate & Applegate, 2004; Benevides & Peterson, 2010; Cline, 1969; Gambrell, 2001; McKool & Gespass, 2009; Morrison, Jacobs, & Swinyard, 1999; Mueller, 1973; Nathanson, Purslow, & Levitt, 2008). Phillips and Lonigan (2009) considered children with positive past reading experiences, including literature-rich environments and involvements with receptive adults, to be at an advantage for future literacy development and reading proficiency. With this in mind, it is important for preservice and in-service educators to be avid readers and have knowledge of wide range of literature. When teachers incorporated these instructional and behavioral practices into the classroom, students became inspired to read and engaged in their own learning activities. The Professional Standards and Ethics Committee of the International Reading Association [IRA] (2011) created a document, *Standards for Reading Professionals*, which included five standards: candidate knowledge and performance; instructional strategies and curriculum materials; assessment, diagnosis, and evaluation; creating a literature environment; and professional development. The IRA acknowledged the importance of creating a literate environment, which the organization labeled as one of the five standards for reading professionals.

In teacher preparation programs, teachers gain pedagogical and content knowledge (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Clark et al., 2013). An analysis of The National Assessment of Educational Progress [NAEP], commonly known as the “nation’s report card”, is a project overseen by the Commissioner of Education Statistics. The NAEP provides continuing assessments to students in grades 4, 8, and 12 in the United States in order to assess what they know and can do in certain subject areas. Darling-Hammond’s analysis (2000) of the NAEP found that teachers who had more professional training had classroom students that displayed higher reading achievement. She identified teacher preparation programs as an important component in the development of future teachers’ classroom literature knowledge and instructional practices. Darling-Hammond concluded that students’ success was dependent on teacher training. In *Ed School Essentials: Evaluating the Fundamentals of Teacher Training Programs in Texas*, Greenberg and Walsh (2012) identified 67 education schools in Texas as part of a report for the National Council of Teacher Quality [NCTQ]. One of the five main conclusions was that the content preparation of many Texas teachers was inadequate. The NCTQ identified early reading instruction as one of the major components that is essential for training highly qualified teachers.

Cremin et al. (2008) conducted a study in England that explored teachers’ reading habits and preferences and investigated their knowledge of children’s literature. In an attempt to fill a gap in the literature, Cremin et al. (2008) conducted the study because “no studies have systematically documented primary teachers’ reading habits and their knowledge...of literature...” (p. 452). Although three-quarters of the 1,200 participants read for pleasure during the last month, only 6.5% reported to have read children’s literature. In addition, less than half of the teachers named six children’s authors, only 10% named six children’s poets, and only 10%

named an author or illustrator of a children's picture book. Thus, warranted is the examination of teacher preparation programs, underlying influences of the reading program curricula, and preservice teachers' experiences that influence knowledge acquisition and dispositions to deliver high-quality instruction.

Statement of the Problem

Educating proficient reading teachers is a progressively complex and challenging endeavor (Clark et al., 2013), and the IRA acknowledges the variability of required courses devoted to reading instruction in teacher preparation programs across the nation (Barone & Morrell, 2007). Seminal works discussed the characteristics of teacher preparation programs (Carter, 1990; Grand & Secada, 1990; Sleeter, 2001) and reading teacher education programs (Darling-Hammond, 1999; Pearson, 2001; Pang & Kamil, 2006; Risko et al., 2008). Researchers have devoted studies to examine which characteristics described preservice educators reading behaviors (Mueller, 1973; Cogan, 1975; Applegate & Applegate, 2004; Clark et al., 2013; Stocks, Pearce & Ricard, 2013); yet, it is unclear as to the particular characteristics of preservice teachers that contribute to current reading habits and knowledge of children's literature. Research studies have explored the gap in the literature of teachers' reading habits and their knowledge of children's literature (Cremin et al., 2008); however, a limited amount of research has been documented that explored preservice teachers' knowledge of, or reading habits of, children's literature. Additionally, Cremin et al. (2008) found that primary teachers with less experience knew fewer picture books; suggesting that recently trained educators have had less exposure and involvement to a literature-informed curriculum, specifically in the teacher preparation program.

Consequently, findings about preservice teachers' reading knowledge and practices of children's literature have future implications for teacher education programs. To achieve maximum impact in teacher preparation programs, it is warranted to conduct a thorough analysis of the demographics and reading-related characteristics of preservice elementary and their current reading habits and knowledge of children's literature.

Theoretical Framework

Many research studies with focus on educators' personal experiences and characteristics are set in the framework of Sociocultural Theory. Sociocultural Theory focuses on the social aspect of learning, including the concept of culture (Tracey & Morrow, 2012). The model used in this study is nestled within the Sociocultural Theory. Pascarella et al.'s (2004) Conceptual Model identified four types of influences taken into account to accurately predict and understand college students' success. As such, the four categories accommodated the independent variables employed in this study. This section outlines the respective framework and discusses the model used to guide this study.

Sociocultural Theory is the theoretical framework underlying this research. Sociocultural Theory is rooted in the Ecological Systems Theory, which is the work of Bronfenbrenner. Bronfenbrenner (1979) discussed the various levels of influence on development and suggested they are "nested structures, each inside the next, like a set of Russian dolls" (p. 3). The Ecological Systems Theory has four interacting layers, referred to as microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem (Bush & Bush, 2013; Leu, 2008). This framework recognizes that individuals do not develop in isolation but continuously change in relation to their family, home, school, community, and society: the development of oneself is dependent on the interactions within and among the layers.

Using Bronfenbrenner's (1979) theory as a skeleton model, Sociocultural Theory highlights the importance of social, cultural, and historical factors in the human experience (Tracey & Morrow, 2012). Teachers bring with them their own education experiences, and these experiences can influence their teaching styles (Clark et al. 2013). According to Davidson (2010), "...literacy development is understood by exploring the cultural, social, and historical contexts in which the children have grown" (p. 249). Sociocultural Theory suggests that the settings and experiences that individuals have in their life influence what they learn and understand (Gee, 2000; Martin, 2004). The framework of this study is set within the cultural and social aspects of the preservice teachers. The future educators bring various levels of cultural and social practices to college and acquire additional knowledge and understandings while enrolled in higher education. According to the theory—the influences of the preservice teacher's reading experiences and personal demographics along with their current enrollment in a social setting, in this case reading courses—are factors that should predict knowledge and current reading habits of children's literature.

Researchers, such as Bakhtin (1981) and Scribner and Cole (1981), noted that the introduction of Sociocultural Theory to preservice teachers helped them to understand how their own culture influenced their practices and how others' cultural experiences influence their individual practices. Ellsworth (1989) pointed out that this concept allowed the preservice educators to recognize the impact that cultural experiences had on teaching and gaining knowledge, along with the value of implementing culturally supporting materials and methods of reading. The Teacher Education Task Force of the International Reading Association conducted an analysis that described Sociocultural Theory as incorporating the belief that learning is what happens to the individual in relation to multiple forms of interactions with others and a social

context (Risko et al., 2008). In the investigation, Risko et al. (2008) reported that 8.4% of the studies analyzed were framed using Sociocultural Theory and addressed preservice teachers' beliefs. In one of the studies in the analysis, Foote and Linder (2000) framed their research to investigate prospective teachers' knowledge of family literacy in Sociocultural Theory. In focusing on preservice teachers' knowledge, Sociocultural Theory has been a theoretical framework in many studies; however, there are limited studies that focus on children's literature and implement Sociocultural Theory.

Within the context of Sociocultural Theory, Clark et al. (2013) framed their research, which examined the influences of teacher preparation programs on beginning teachers' reading instruction stating, "reading teachers also bring with them their own education experiences and their experiences with learning to reading, which can influence and shape how they learn to teach reading" (p. 88). However, findings suggested that there were limited number of studies that examined the associations between teacher education and factors such as self-perception and knowledge gained during teacher preparation programs.

Moreover, Pascarella et al. (2004) used a conceptual framework to guide a study in which the purpose was to "assess the factors influencing students' learning and cognitive development during college" (p. 252). The conceptual works of Astin (1993), Chickering (1969), Pascarella (1985), and Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) inspired the framework that categorized specific independent variables. The framework, referred to as Pascarella et al.'s Conceptual Model, suggested the following four types of influences to be taken into account in order to accurately predict and understand the impact of college students: "(1) student demographic or precollege characteristics, (2) organizational or structural characteristics of the

institution attended, (3) students' academic experiences, and (4) students' nonacademic experiences" (p. 256).

Accordingly, the independent variables employed in this study fit into the four categories of Pascarella et al.'s (2004) Conceptual Model, which is nestled in the theoretical framework of Sociocultural Theory.

1. student demographic data (i.e., first-generation status and ethnicity),
2. organizational or structural characteristics of the teacher preparation program (i.e., READ 3310, READ 3320, READ 3351, READ 3352, READ 4352, READ 4380, and READ 4394),
3. students' academic experiences (i.e., past reading experiences in school and GPA), and
4. students' nonacademic experiences (i.e., past reading experiences at home and daily contact with children outside of school).

Significance of the Study

According to Barone and Morrell (2007), there is limited reading-related, research-base for teacher preparation programs; however, they should use "the best evidence that is currently available" (p. 169). Thus, the aim of this study was to identify demographic and reading-related factors that were useful in the prediction of current reading habits and knowledge of children's literature. Clearly, any evidence to support an increase of reading habits or knowledge of children's literature would be worthy of note to any institution with a teacher preparation program.

Risko et al. (2008) analyzed prior research that studied the beliefs of preservice teachers within the concept of Sociocultural Theory. Twenty-one percent of the studies analyzed reported

on preservice teachers' knowledge, and according to the analysis, the results did not indicate any connections to each other or identify factors that would improve teaching. In seven of nine studies that investigated knowledge of preservice educators, the results did not report the validity and reliability of the researcher-developed instruments. The participants' academic history and past experiences were not reported in the studies analyzed.

Additionally, Cremin et al. (2008) stated that research studies discussed the gap in the literature of teachers' reading habits of and knowledge of children's literature; there is limited amount of research that explored preservice teachers' knowledge of or reading habits of children's literature. Their findings also indicated that primary teachers with less experience knew fewer picture books, suggesting that recently trained educators had less exposure and involvement to a literature-informed curriculum, specifically in the teacher preparation program. With this in mind, findings about preservice teachers' reading knowledge and practices of children's literature have implications for enriching teacher education programs.

As stated previously, the teacher preparation program under review restructured the delivery system. Those associated with the reading preparation program continuously seek to increase the probability of preservice educators' success, with reading education being at the forefront. The results of the study discuss particular characteristics of preservice educators. Interventions directed toward students, READ courses, and the program have the influence to affect preservice teachers' beliefs and practices in positive ways (Shaw, Dvorak, & Bates, 2007). With increasingly limited resources, being able to predict where there is needed attention in teacher preparation programs is priceless. Extending the properties of the statistically significant factors to the other READ courses and discussions with the preservice educators would be ideal. Although the specific predictors and models created in the study may not be generalizable to

outside teacher preparation programs because of different student populations and unique demographics, other settings could easily replicate the process of analyzing demographics and reading-related variables.

Preservice educators, in-service educators, course instructors, and directors of teacher preparation programs would undoubtedly be interested in results that contribute to the growing body of literature about characteristics of preservice educators and teacher preparation programs. More specifically, those related to reading teacher preparation and current reading habits and knowledge of children's literature.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of the study was to test the hypothesis that specific demographic and reading-related variables were useful in predicting knowledge of and current reading habits of children's literature in a sample of preservice teachers in a teacher preparation program.

Research Questions

The following questions informed this research study:

1. What are the predictors of preservice teachers' current reading habits of children's literature?
2. What are the predictors of preservice teachers' knowledge of children's literature?

Definition of Key Terms

For the purpose of the study, the following operational definitions were employed:

- *Children's and Adolescents' Literature Course*—A course that introduced and taught application of teaching strategies using a variety of titles and works of children's and adolescents' literature. The children's and adolescents' literature course used in this study was READ 4380—Children's and adolescents' literature.

- *Children's Literature*—Signified a work recommended for readers ranging in age from five-years-old to 12-years-old.
- *Content Area Course*—A course that focused on the use of reading strategies and materials in disciplinary studies. The content area reading course used in this study was READ 3352—Content area reading for elementary students.
- *Current Reading Habits*—Reading practices that were measured by self-reported practices employed by readers, which included reading purpose, text choice, and frequency of reading (Stocks et al., 2013).
- *Daily Contact with Children Outside of School*—Used to define those who were in contact with children outside of a school setting on a daily basis.
- *Elementary*—Early childhood through sixth grade (EC-6).
- *Ethnicity*—An affiliation resulting from racial or cultural ties.
- *First-Generation Status*—A student whose parent(s) had no college or university experience; the student was the first in their families to continue education beyond high school (Stocks et al., 2013).
- *Foundation Course*—Course that served as a prerequisite to all other READ courses in the teacher preparation program at the South Texas university. The foundation courses used in this study were READ 3310—Principles and practices of early reading instruction and READ 3320—Principles and practices of reading instruction.
- *Grade Point Average (GPA)*—A measure of a student's academic achievement as an undergraduate; it is calculated by dividing the total number of grade points received by the total number attempted.

- *International Reading Association (IRA)*—A global organization that promotes literacy. In 2015, the name changed to International Literacy Association (ILA). This study uses International Reading Association (IRA).
- *Knowledge of Children’s Literature*—Knowledge of familiarity of titles of children’s literature measured using the *Children’s Literature Title Recognition Test (CLTRT)*.
- *Pascarella et al.’s Conceptual Model*—A conceptual framework developed by Pascarella et al. (2004) in which independent variables were categorized based upon the four type of influences that should be taken into account in order to predict and understand the impact of college students.
- *Past Reading Experiences*—Measured by the reader’s perception of their early environmental and cultural influences on reading attitude and development (Stocks et al., 2013) using the *Personal Literacy Questionnaire – I (PLQ-I)* and *Personal Literacy Questionnaire – II (PLQ-II)*.
- *Practicum-style Course*—Courses that applied knowledge learned in previous foundation reading courses while working with students in a classroom or lab setting. The practicum-style courses used in this study were READ 3351–Diagnosis and correction of reading problems, READ 4352–Advanced practices in reading/ language arts, and READ 4394–Field experiences in reading.
- *Preservice Teachers*—College students enrolled in a teacher preparation program before they received their state teacher certification.
- *READ Courses*—Courses within a teacher preparation program that taught skills, strategies, and concepts, and introduced instructional materials about reading/literacy.

- *Reading-Related Variables*—Data that defined the students’ past and current enrollment in READ courses.
- *Teacher Preparation Program*—A program made up of college-level coursework in which students were pursuing a degree in teacher education.

Overview of Dissertation

This researcher organized this dissertation into five sections, references, and appendices. Chapter 2 presents the review of literature. Chapter 3, Chapter 4, and Chapter 5 discuss the data collection and findings. Chapter 3 presents the purpose, research questions, research design, instrumentation, participants, procedures for data collection, and data analysis. Chapter 4 offers the results of the study. Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the study’s findings, implications of the study, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Five major headings frame the review of related research: teacher preparation programs, other factors that influence reading, current reading habits of children's literature, knowledge of children's literature, and summary.

Introduction

In the seminal work, *American Reading Instruction*, Smith (2002) recognized that teachers have worked to help their students be proficient readers for more than three hundred years. Smith discussed the experimental methods and materials used in classrooms from Colonial to modern times. These instructional methods and materials provided a background for current reading teaching practices. The United States experienced periodic emphases that led to transitions in education over the past two centuries. Education in the United States began for the purpose of patriotism and unity within the new nation and not long after, a shift to cultural emphasis in pursuits of the arts and literature occurred. Leading into the early 1900s, Smith (2002) described the era as the scientific movement in education, which had a focus on wartime literacy. The era of scientific movement preceded the application of the results of research era. The atomic age and World War II shadowed reading instruction, but the time period followed the increase of knowledge and advancement of technology, which caused many changes in education, specifically reading instruction. Finally, transitions in education spanned through the reading wars and into the introduction of criterion-referenced tests, followed by the concept of reading as a language process and schema theory, then to the teaching of reading and writing through a balanced approach in literacy. Although the various eras have produced transitions in reading instruction, methods, and materials, there seems to be a continuous pendulum swing

from one extreme to the other, subscribing to the standard of van Manen (1996) “...to be fit for teaching is to be able to handle change...” (p. 29).

Research has established that teacher knowledge is paramount in student success (Coleman, 1966; Ferguson, 1991; Flippo, 2001). There has been an increase of Federal mandates for education such as NCLB, and educators are mandated to structure instruction based on state standards such as TEKS or CCSSI (CCSSI, 2010); teacher preparation programs are charged with producing skillful and expert teachers (Clark et al., 2013). Policy makers, national organizations, and scholarly researchers such as Barone and Morrell (2007), Darling-Hammond (1997), and Hess et al. (2005) have worked together to create and revise standards for teacher preparation programs and teaching professionals.

Ruetzel and Cooter (2012) support the notion that teacher knowledge is the most important factor in students’ success. According to Barone and Morell (2007), Clark et al. (2013), National Institute of Child Health and Development [NICHD] (2000), and Risko et al. (2008), teachers gain a significant amount of knowledge in preparation programs. Darling-Hammond (1990) argues that programs play an important role in the development of teacher quality because public universities devote faculty to preparing future teachers based on pedagogical research. Applegate and Applegate (2004) and Cummins (2012) also assert that teachers should foster a love for reading, books, and learning. In order to ignite a fire and kindle its flame, teachers need to be teacher-readers (Draper, Barksdale-Ladd, & Radenchich, 2000; Many, Howard, & Hoge, 1998; Risko et al., 2008), and educators need to identify works and have knowledge of children’s literature (Benevides & Peterson, 2010; McCutchen et al., 2002; Smith, 2002). The following review of literature describes existing research on teacher preparation programs and reading teacher preparation programs, other factors that influence

reading, current reading habits of children's literature, knowledge of children's literature, and finally, synthesizes the research to form a strong argument for this study.

Teacher Preparation Programs

Many changes occurred over the past two centuries in education in America, and the development and evolution of the preparation of teachers intertwined and closely connected to public education. The first two centuries of America's history marks the specialization to prepare future teachers beginning with the establishment of specialized academies, such as Emma Willard's, in 1814. In 1839, Horace Mann established the first normal school, and over the next century, the evolution from normal schools to teachers colleges in the 1930s occurred. Beginning in the 1890s, universities established education departments, and finally, teachers colleges transitioned to all-purpose colleges in the 1950s (Fraser, 2007; Urban, 1990).

According to Urban (1990), in the 17th and 18th centuries, education in schools and in teacher preparation programs varied—either taking place within the family or in the local community, in the family church, and/or through apprenticeships and indentures. Moreover, historical work by Cremin (1970), which reviewed education during the Colonial period, referred to people who taught at church or in a community as educators rather than teachers, implying that those who taught did not view their teaching as their primary occupation or role in life. During the nation's early history, teachers taught in a variety of settings, and largely, the individual's social class set the primary setting. Private tutors often taught children from wealthy families, while mature women usually taught children of lower social class in their homes. However, Urban (1990) points out that the schools most often charged tuition and had restrictions for students of class and color. Consequently, teachers who had training in college most often taught in academies while away from the college and did not intend to teach as a

career, while teachers in other schools often had little preparation other than the ability to read and write and possessed high moral character and orthodox religious beliefs. This continued to be the process of learning and preparation to teach well into the early 19th century until the establishment of common schools (Fraser, 2007; Urban, 1990). Tax funds supported common schools, which meant free tuition and universal attendance. With the development of common schools came the influx of student enrollment, which arguably led to the establishment of teacher preparation institutions, at that time, known as normal schools (Fraser, 2007; Kaestle, 1983; Urban, 1990).

Normal Schools and Teachers College

According to Messerli (1971), Horace Mann is the founding father of normal schools. Mann established the teacher preparatory institutes in the late part of the 19th century in Massachusetts (Fraser, 2007). In *Preparing American's Teachers: A History*, Fraser (2007) discussed that Horace Mann also served as the secretary of the [Massachusetts] State Board of Education from 1837 to 1848 and attempted to systematize instruction and education in the state through fostering normal schools. Mann established the first public normal school in Lexington, Massachusetts in 1839, and others dotted the nation's landscape until the late 19th century (Urban, 1990). Arguably, the primary function of normal schools in the early 20th century was to train teachers for common schools (Pangburn, 1932); however, the training and preparation varied widely. Herbst (1980) suggested that normal schools also acted as post-elementary education, similar to a high school. Urban (1990) stated that the official curriculum dominated teacher preparation; however, there was diversity in purpose. Because the background of the students at the normal schools varied—some had high school training while the majority only attended the same elementary they were preparing to teach—the curriculum focused on academic

subjects rather than technical concerns such as pedagogical studies. By the end of the 20th century, normal schools were a post-elementary school that competed for enrollment with high schools. Mattingly (1975) suggested that during this time, the normal schools enhanced the image of teaching as being scientific; meaning, it was a systematic enterprise. Historians such as Pangburn (1932) described the process of the growth of normal schools to teachers colleges as evolution, implying the growth was a normal occurrence because more of the students entered the normal schools with high school experience or a diploma rather than merely having an elementary education. The rigor of the preparation program had an increase with the change in students' background; however, according to Tyack (1967), as late as 1898, less than one-quarter of the new teachers graduated from normal schools. In order to improve teacher preparation programs, the 20th century brought about the concept of certification requirements.

Urban (1990) indicated that education programs appeared in the universities in the late 1800s, beginning with John Milton Gregory in 1879 at the University of Michigan then moving to the University of Illinois, where he organized the university study of education. During this time, university professors of education attempted to provide a systematic approach to teaching, considered the science of education by relating it to theoretical subjects such as philosophy or the social sciences such as psychology. Dykhuizen (1973) mentioned that through combined approaches to teacher education, John Dewey assumed the position of chair at the University of Chicago in the Department of Philosophy, Psychology, and Pedagogy in 1894. Krug (1964) specified that normal schools had a primary purpose of preparing elementary teachers, which provided the education departments at universities with a distinction from them because universities also had a purpose of preparation for high school teachers. According to Urban (1990), although normal schools provided no degree, their main purpose was the preparation of

elementary teachers, and arguably, they were not willing to let universities have a monopoly in the training of high school educators in a program that also provided a bachelor's degree. This preference, along with the desire to obtain a position in the hierarchy of education, led to the transition of normal schools to teachers colleges, although different places made the shift in various ways and times. However, according to Fraser (2007), in 1933, Massachusetts required all normal schools to make the transition to state teachers colleges. The advancement to a four-year, degree-granting institution also brought challenges to teachers colleges. Because colleges brought faculty of other academics to the colleges to teach subjects not related to teacher training, many of the graduates that received teacher certification chose to honor the field of expertise rather than the occupation of schoolteacher. Urban (1990) reported that the purpose of a teacher-preparatory campus encountered a decline when the teachers colleges became colleges, and the ability to choose other majors without receiving a teaching certification became the student's choice. Dunham (1969) and Urban (1990) stated that normal schools evolved during this time through the development of teachers colleges to state colleges, whose desire to become a university blanketed the main purpose of teacher preparation. By the 1920s, the continuous changes and transition to teacher education programs at universities and over the next four decades, caused the demise of teachers colleges (Fraser, 2007).

Teacher Quality

Within teacher preparation, the transition from apprenticeship to university status brought many positive results for the teacher preparation programs within state colleges and universities. Darling-Hammond (1990) advanced the notion that professionalization of teaching was related to delivery of collective, high-quality education. In 1954, the creation of the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) occurred in order to establish high-quality

teacher preparation. Five groups that represented different areas of education created NCATE, which replaced AACTE. The following are the five groups that represented NCATE: the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC), the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE), the National Education Association (NEA), the National School Boards Association (NSBA), and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) (NCATE, 2008). The purpose of NCATE was to provide accreditation to teacher preparatory programs.

According to Fraser (2007), by 1964, 46 of the 50 states required a bachelor's degree for all new teachers. The states expected future teachers to complete high school prior to beginning college-level coursework, which included content that discussed subject matter and pedagogy. They were also required to obtain a baccalaureate degree for completion of the teacher preparatory program. Freiberg and Waxman (1990) noted that in the early 1960s, the Federal Government implemented a new strategy of change for American education: education moved from an exclusive system to an inclusive system. In order to implement changes, the government provided resources to school districts and to teacher preparation programs at colleges and universities. Legislative acts such as The Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965, which included Title I and Head Start programs, and the Teacher Corps legislation signaled the entry of the Federal Government as a change agent into teacher education (Bush, 1977; Freiberg & Waxman, 1990). Similarly, the restructuring of the institutions signaled the transition of teachers colleges to state colleges. Along with the newly implemented requirement that all teachers must have a bachelor's degree, the teaching profession and preparation programs attained a level of uniformity.

In 1981, the United States Secretary of Education created the National Commission on Excellence in Education (NCEE). The U.S. Secretary of Education tasked the NCEE to present a report on the quality of American education (Gardner, 1983). Barone and Morrell (2007) specified, when the education and literacy crisis arose in the 1980s, it accompanied concerns about U.S. competitiveness in the global economy, and reports such as *A Nation at Risk* (NCEE, 1983) caused the nation to scrutinize the education system, specifically teacher preparation. Goodlad (1990) stated that calls for reform led the way for highlighting attention to the teacher preparation program.

According to Fraser (2007), in 1986, The Carnegie Forum on Education (1986) and the Economy published *A Nation Prepared*, and the Holmes Group (1986) of Education Deans published *Tomorrow's Teachers*; both reports set the agenda for restructuring teacher education. Unlike previous reports, the two, which researchers noted as difficult to separate, provided solutions for the critiques. The Carnegie Forum on Education and the Holmes Group developed the reports separately, yet they proposed similar solutions:

- develop a National Board for Professional Teaching Standards,
- provide a professional environment through the restructure of schools,
- have Lead Teachers,
- require a bachelor's degree in the arts and sciences [Holmes pushed for graduate degrees],
- develop a Master of Teaching degree which would be based on systematic knowledge of teaching with internships and residencies in schools,
- incentives for teachers to school-wide performance, and

- make teachers' salaries competitive with those in other professions (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986; Fraser, 2007; Holmes Group, 1986).

In response, within the first two years of the publication of the Carnegie and Holmes reports, the majority of the states made changes to their certification laws. In addition, education institutions implemented state standards, which drove classroom instruction, and states assessed mastery of the standards through state-created, criterion-referenced assessments. Universities with teacher preparation programs attempted to respond to the new challenges seen in the classrooms by making an effort to professionalize teacher education programs (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Hess et al., 2005). In 1987, the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) was born. The purpose of NBPTS is to create an assessment structure for professional certification of teachers. There is continued advancement of educators with standards developed for 25 certification areas. Five core propositions serve as the foundation for NBPTS:

1. Teachers were committed to students and their learning.
2. Teachers knew the subjects taught and how to teach those subjects to students.
3. Teachers were responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.
4. Teachers thought systematically about their practice and learned from experience.
5. Teachers were members of learning communities. (NBPTS, 2012)

In *Teachers and Teaching: Signs of Changing Profession*, Darling-Hammond's (1990) stated that by 1988, virtually all states had changed their requirements for obtaining teacher certification, indicating efforts to regulate entry into the profession of teaching.

By the mid-1990s, in another work, which focused on teacher standards by Darling-Hammond (1996) titled *What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future*, the National Commission on Teaching and American's Future (NCTAF) issued the challenge to improve teacher quality in order to enhance school performance. The NCTAF report was built upon the two previous works that drew attention to the importance of teachers and teaching: *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century* (Carnegie Forum) and *Tomorrow's Teachers* (Holmes Group). The following two standards are applicable to this review:

- I. Standards for teachers linked to standards for students. The Commission recommends that states:
 - Establish professional standards boards.
 - Insist on professional accreditation for all schools of education.
 - License teachers based on demonstrated performance of ability to teach to the new standards, including tests of subject matter knowledge, teaching knowledge, and teaching skill.
 - Use National Board standards as the benchmark for accomplished teaching.
- II. Reinvent teacher preparation and professional development. The Commission recommends that states, schools, and colleges:
 - Organize teacher education and professional development around standards for students and teachers.
 - Institute extended, graduate-level teacher preparation programs that provide year-long internships in a professional development school.
 - Create and fund mentoring programs for beginning teachers that provide support and assess teaching skills.

- Create stable, high-quality sources of professional development; then allocate one percent of state and local spending to support them, along with additional matching funds to school districts.
- Embed professional development in teachers' daily work through joint planning, study groups, peer coaching, and research (Darling-Hammond, 1997, pp. 11-12).

Darling-Hammond (1997) continued work, which focused on the quality of teachers in *Doing What Matters Most: Investing in Quality Teaching*. Policy makers, national organizations, and practitioners worked together in an attempt to link teacher standards to student standards.

With the association between standards, a correlation between student-teacher knowledge existed, and teacher preparation programs had a minimum standard for curricula. In a continued attempt to professionalize teacher education, programs received accreditation through the NCATE. Furthermore, Barone and Morrell (2007) discussed the idea that accreditation ensured that preservice educators could implement the strategies and content taught during coursework, and how well university programs documented the work of the students in classrooms and the effect on pre K-12 student achievement determined accreditation.

Barone and Morrell (2007) found that preservice educator preparation programs required standards in order to prepare teachers for classroom instruction. Over the past two decades, there had been an attempt to create professionalism within teacher preparation programs: the creation of The National Council on Teaching and America's Future, which challenged states to implement standards and practicum experiences in their programs (Darling-Hammond, 1997); the formation of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, which created standards in each discipline in higher education for teacher educators; and the development of

the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, which implemented new standards for teacher preparation programs that held preservice educators to the standard of applying knowledge and skills that were gained in coursework into the classroom. Through implementation of standards in all teacher preparation programs, the profession gained a value of rigor.

Reading Teacher Preparation

In the seminal work, *American Reading Instruction*, Smith (2002) outlined the close interconnectivity between teacher preparation and reading teacher preparation. Zeichner (1983) found that historically, research supported the idea that three contrasting conceptions of teacher education influenced reading teacher preparation. Alvermann (1990) identified the conceptions as interrelated components found in each concept of teacher education: (a) the traditional-craft approach, (b) the competency-based approach, and (c) inquiry-oriented approach. Results noted the traditional-craft approach as the apprenticeship model. The competency-based approach focused on the proficiency in skills, and the inquiry-oriented approach was concerned with the understanding on how people acquired knowledge. Along with Alvermann (1990), Ogle (1989) noted that in each model, there was a radical release from teacher dependence to teacher independence.

By the end of the 19th century, Alvermann (1990) described teacher preparation programs as an apprenticeship model of teaching. Zeichner (1983) referred to this as the traditional-craft concept of teacher education, and explained that novice teachers learn what constitutes good reading practices through observation of a master teacher. Competency-based reading teacher education programs required students to demonstrate proficiencies in explicit and observable skills related to the effective teaching of reading, which commonly used modules as the

instructional vehicle. The instructional modules contained three primary components: (a) preassessment, (b) several learning activities, and (c) post assessment. According to Alvermann (1990), since the late 1980s, the competency-based concept has dominated the assessment programs throughout the nation, and future teachers were required to pass assessments that measure their knowledge based on competencies. Zeichner, Tabachnick and Densmore (1987) described the inquiry-oriented concept of reading teacher education as being complex, but generalized it as being concerned with how teachers acquire knowledge of reading methods, beliefs, and strategies, and how they use this knowledge to guide their reading instruction, including self-reflection.

Hoffman and Pearson (2000) and Alvermann (1990) established that, historically, courses on how to teach reading have not always been a requirement in teacher preparation programs in the United States. Austin (1968) indicated that in the United States, as late as 1968, there was no structured method that existed for defining roles, responsibilities, and competencies of reading professionals. Prospective teachers were only required to take general courses in pedagogical methods and courses related to subject areas of the curriculum in elementary (Alvermann, 1990; Austin & Morrison, 1961; Monroe, 1952). Researchers documented the practice of preparing reading teachers in seminal works such as *The Torch Lighters* (Austin & Morrison, 1961), *The First R: The Harvard Report on Reading in Elementary School* (Austin & Morrison, 1963), and *The Torch Lighters Revisited* (Morrison & Austin, 1977). These landmark works reported the practice of preparing reading teachers or instructors to teach reading in colleges and universities within the United States and drew attention to preparatory programs across the nation.

The Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Graduate School of Education at Harvard University grant funded the landmark study, *The Torch Lighters* (Austin & Morrison,

1961). This study served two primary purposes: (a) to inform how universities and colleges in the United States were preparing reading teachers and (b) to provide recommendations for improving the preparation of the future reading teachers. Researchers collected data from 74 on-site interviews at liberal arts colleges, single purpose colleges devoted primarily to the education of teachers, and universities with professional schools of education and 638 questionnaires with instructors. Questions in the questionnaire included:

1. What are the objectives of the reading course?
2. What topics in the reading course receive the most emphasis?
3. Which of the concepts developed in the initial reading course are the most difficult for the students to grasp?
4. To what extent are theoretical information and practice teaching integrated?
5. How much emphasis is placed on specific instructional techniques, e.g. phonics?
6. To what extent are the latest research findings incorporated in classroom instruction? (Austin & Morrison, 1961, p. 3)

Findings from the on-site interviews and questionnaires yielded responses that caused concern. The results indicated that preservice teachers of reading were not adequately prepared to teach students to read. Instructors who participated in the study mentioned concerns about inability to observe students during the student-teaching process; therefore, they were not able to gauge their ability of preparing the preservice educators to teach reading. Although 93% of the colleges sampled required at least one reading course, only half of the programs that required reading taught it as a separate course, while the remaining integrated the course with language arts or another related subject. Rather than the expected 45-hours of preparation for a 3-credit hour course, results of the study indicated that between 4.5 and 11.25 actual hours of preparation

of reading instruction took place. The majority of college instructors also reported that the actual reading instruction in the practice teaching classrooms did not match the instruction or theories presented in the college classrooms, signaling a disconnect of praxis. The primary focus of the study was on the instruction given in undergraduate reading courses; however, in an attempt to update the instruction of reading, researchers felt the need for an examination of admission policies, total curriculum requirement, and associated specialized education courses.

Accordingly, the 22 recommendations provided focus on the content of basic reading course as well as examined areas of administration and instruction. This study also led the authors to ask three questions concerning reading instruction in public elementary schools:

1. What guidance do teachers receive after they complete their baccalaureate education?
2. What instructional methods and techniques are being used in the elementary schools to help children read?
3. What role do administrative officers play in improving the status of reading instruction in public schools? (Austin & Morrison, 1963, p. ix)

In order to address these three questions, Austin and Morrison (1963) initiated the second Harvard-Carnegie reading study, *The First R: The Harvard Report on Reading in Elementary School*. Researchers sent a mail questionnaire to administrators in 1,023 school districts representing different geographic regions in the United States. They selected 51 schools for follow-up on-site visits in which investigators conducted interviews with principals, teachers, and office personnel and observed elementary classrooms. Results of the study concluded that reading programs at elementary schools were below average in general and not capable of preparing students for future literacy demands (Austin & Morrison, 1963). Included in the five

areas of improvement was “improved teacher preparation” (Austin & Morrison, 1963, p. 3). This conclusion brought continued attention to the reading preparation programs.

Morrison and Austin (1977) conducted a follow-up study, *The Torch Lighters Revisited*, to determine if any school used the original 22 recommendations to improve their teacher preparation program. A questionnaire was mailed to 220 institutions with reading teacher preparatory programs, including the 74 from the original study. Findings concluded that the majority of the recommendations were in effect; however, there were still issues within the teacher preparation program. The reading courses, the content courses, and experiences in observations and tutorials represent the majority of changes.

In a survey of state departments of education, conducted by Flippo and Hayes (1984), results indicated a two reading-course requirement in 24 states, one reading-course requirement in 17 states, and nine states gave the local institution the decision of reading-course requirements. Guthrie, Seifert, and Mosberg (1983) located only one review on reading teacher education, which implies that reading teacher education lacks status as a research topic. Accordingly, Fitzgerald’s (1984) survey of 455 graduate-level reading teachers assessing definitions of, purpose of, and attitudes toward reading research revealed that teachers had a restricted view of what constituted reading research. Alvermann (1990) reported that reading teacher education lacks status as a topic in the field of reading research but also stated that the reports from the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy (1986) and the Holmes Group (1986) raised issues, which were likely to bring attention to reading teacher preparation.

Anders, Hoffman, and Duffy (2000) reviewed studies conducted on reading over a 30-year period, 1965–1995, and concluded that of 19,457 studies reviewed, only 140 focused on preservice reading education, which all varied in significance of findings, methodology, and

factors investigated. In addition, researchers published more than four times the number of reading teacher education articles during the decade spanning from 1985–1995 than the prior decades. Similar to Alvermann’s assumption (1990), Anders et al. (2000) concluded that preservice reading teacher education had not been a high priority within the reading research community due to the fact that “it is a difficult and under-supported area of study” (p. 724). In addition, Anders et al. (2000) suggested that the teacher education programs had become increasingly more complex than in previous generations.

The challenges of teaching reading.

The literacy rate of students continued to be a national concern (NRP, 2000). The creation of the NRP was one response to this concern. The Panel was charged to release a report that addressed five topics of study: alphabets, fluency, comprehension, teacher education and reading instruction, and computer technology and reading instruction. Concerns about teacher education were “most frequently mentioned” (NRP, 2000, p. 5-1) during the NRP regional meetings. The discussion brought attention to teacher preparation programs across the nation. According to the NRP (2000), “preservice teachers do adopt the teaching methods and attitudes they acquire during the course of their education” (p. 5-13). Preservice teachers benefit greatly from the effectiveness and structure of their teacher preparation program. These programs have a strong influence on preservice teachers’ views and beliefs (Shaw, Dvorak, & Bates, 2007).

In order to continue to meet the challenges of teaching reading, Hoffman and Pearson (2000) advocate for an increase in research in reading teacher education in order to: (a) promote research for teacher preparation in reading; (b) create safe spaces for discussion and debates in regard to teacher education in reading; (c) become aware of programs in reading teacher education; (d) create instruments to assess the impact of reading teacher education; (e) advocate

for relations between teacher training and teacher education; (f) be open to feedback from the community and policy makers; (g) integrate new literacies into reading teacher curriculum; and (h) prioritize issues of diversity.

The IRA Commission (Hoffman & Roller, 2001) conducted a three-part study. The first study surveyed preservice preparation programs in reading across the United States. The commission collected data from more than 900 reading teacher educators research-one institutions, research two institutions, teaching institutions, and other types of institutions in order to determine current practices. Results from the study indicated that:

- Most programs taught using a balanced approach to reading.
- The average number of reading courses was greater than two courses.
- More than 80% of the programs offered 4-year baccalaureate.
- Almost half of the programs offered a specialization in reading.
- Practicum and field experiences in reading prior to student teaching were common.
- Most teaching faculty had advanced degrees in reading and classroom teaching experience.
- Many programs emphasized learning of diverse learners.
- More than 85% of the respondents rated their programs as “very good” or “outstanding.”

The results showed improvement in teacher preparation since the publication of the studies by Austin and Morrison (1961) and Morrison and Austin (1977). However, it also suggested that there was variation within the data, which indicated a large range in program quality and characteristics. The IRA Commission’s work began with the survey but continued through two following studies. In the second study, they identified eight sites across the United States, seven

universities and one college, as excellent in preparing elementary teachers in reading. Through an analysis of the critical features to all the programs, results identified eight common features of exemplary programs: content, apprenticeship, vision, resources and mission, personalized teaching, autonomy, community, and assessment. The third study followed a group of graduates from the programs identified as excellent during their first two years of teaching. Researchers collected data over the two-year period, and findings indicated that participation in “high-quality teacher preparation programs that focused on the teaching of reading positively influenced the experience of the teachers entering the profession” (p. 280).

Risko et al. (2008) reviewed and analyzed 82 peer-reviewed works published between 1990 and 2006 that investigated teacher preparation for reading instruction of K-12 preservice teachers in the United States. An inductive paradigmatic analysis process was conducted, which produced seven content topics: university pedagogy (23%), theoretical orientation (21%), struggling readers (17%), content area reading (14%), diversity (12%), reflection (8%), and assessment (6%). The analysis was then refined to identify four categories: research on prospective teachers’ beliefs, research on prospective teachers’ knowledge and reflection, research on prospective teachers’ pedagogy, and research on teacher education programs (p.257). Only 7% of the studies reviewed fell into the teacher education programs group, and divided the six studies into two categories: two studies that examined the processes involved in changing programs or described program features and four studies that followed graduates into teaching. The results of the analysis concluded that reading teacher preparation programs have experienced success in altering the preservice teachers’ knowledge and beliefs and in conjunction with practicum experience, pedagogical knowledge benefit students.

A significant amount of research continues to discuss the importance of the reading teacher preparation programs (Barone & Morrell, 2007; Hoffman, 2004; Hoffman & Roller, 2001; Hoffman & Pearson, 2000; IRA, 2003, 2004; Lenski, Grisham, & Wold, 2006; Snow, Griffin, & Burns, 2005). Jack Cassidy's *What's Hot & What's Not* study has been conducted on an annual basis for nearly 20 years. This study interviewed 25 literacy leaders in the United States, Canada, and outside North America, questioning their views on current topics receiving attention (noted as "hot") or not receiving attention ("not hot"). The same criteria was used to determine whether the top should be receiving attention ("should be hot"), or should not be receiving attention ("should not be hot"). Over the past few years, although teacher education for reading was not a hot topic in literacy, results indicated it should be a hot topic (Cassidy & Grote-Garcia, 2012, 2014).

Clark et al. (2013) suggested there have been a limited amount of studies that focus on reading-related and demographic factors, including past reading experiences, personal beliefs and abilities, and knowledge gained during teacher preparation programs, that influence and shape the development of preservice educators. In the longitudinal study by Clark et al. (2013), results showed that preservice teachers' self-perception of their ability to teach reading increased as they continued to progress through the teacher preparation program, and upon graduation, they continued to express confidence in the training of teaching reading they had received; the participants also demonstrated continued use of reading strategies and concepts learned while in the teacher preparation program. According to Clark et al. (2013), "Reading teachers enter the classroom having received specific instructional, pedagogical, and methodological training to teach reading to young children, along with varying degrees of practicum and clinical experiences (p. 88)," but their past reading and educational experiences also influence their

teaching style of reading. Although the study presented results that discussed the classroom use of various concepts, strategies, and ideas learned in the reading preparation program, it did not present the notion of knowledge or current reading of children's literature. This leads the author to conclude that either these concepts were not believed to be important to the beginning teacher or the importance was not emphasized in the reading preparation program.

There are many works that discuss the importance for modifying and adapting reading-preparation coursework (Snow et al., 2005); however, there are also studies that attack the current content as well as materials and instruction used to deliver the content in reading teacher preparation programs (Ballou & Podgursky, 2000; Farkas & Johnson, 1997; Finn, 1999; Finn, 2003; Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000). Walsh, Glaser, and Wilcox (2006) offered six recommendations to solve the dismal situation in teacher preparation programs. They suggested that reading courses across the U.S. have national curriculum and deliver similar content using a comparable textbook. Ball and McDiarmid (1990) described two competing views on the role of courses in teacher preparation: (a) students obtained an understanding of the content taught through subject-matter study (Anderson, 1988) and (b) practical application and participation of content serves as preparation for teaching (Buchmann, 1984; Dewey, 1904). Knowing that the programs have a large influence on future teachers' classroom practices and behaviors, it is important to discuss the classroom value of their personal experiences and characteristics as well as their knowledge and current practices of subject matter.

Best practices of reading preparation programs.

Darling-Hammond (1990) identified the preparation of reading teachers as a top priority to close the achievement gap in the United States. A recent synthesis by the IRA (2007) documented specific qualities of effective reading teacher preparation programs. The IRA also

stated that the fundamental task of addressing the challenges of reading achievement in our schools was to have effective teachers of reading. The IRA (2007) identified outstanding reading teacher preparation programs as those that were: (a) designed around research-based content, (b) staffed by faculty members who are committed to excellence, (c) engage preservice educators in field experiences and practicum courses where they are able to apply learned content, (d) successful in presenting their prospective educators to all forms of diversity, (e) constantly assessing their program, and (f) regularly developing and sustaining programs that have a foundation of quality teaching. Reflected by the six identifying factors of an outstanding reading teacher preparation program, the IRA awarded the Certificate of Distinction to distinguished reading teacher preparatory programs that regularly prepared highly qualified reading teachers (IRA, 2011). The IRA Certificate of Distinction of the Reading Preparation of Elementary and Secondary Teachers application provided six standards in which the colleges and universities used to analyze their programs (see Appendix A). In 2012, the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards [NBPTS] updated the standards that they developed to describe the national consensus of the characteristics of effective teachers of literacy. NBPTS (2012) and Tompkins (2014) list the following 13 characteristics of an effective teacher of literacy:

1. Knowledge of Learners. Teachers use their knowledge of learning theories to inform their teaching.
2. Equity, Fairness, and Diversity. Teachers provide equal access to learning, capitalize on diversity, and encourage all students to respect themselves and their classmates.
3. Learning Environment. Teachers establish a community of learners in their classroom that's safe, supportive, inclusive, and democratic.

4. **Instructional Resources.** Teachers collect, create, and adapt instructional resources, involve students in creating resources, and invite community members to enrich the instructional program.
5. **Assessment.** Teachers use a range of assessment tools to monitor instructional progress, evaluate students' learning, and make instructional decisions.
6. **Reading** Teachers use their knowledge of the reading process, types of texts and instructional procedures to develop strategic, lifelong readers.
7. **Writing.** Teachers apply their knowledge of the writing process, writer's craft, and instructional procedures to develop writers who can write for a variety of purposes and audiences.
8. **Listening and Speaking.** Teachers teach listening and speaking as essential components of literacy and provide opportunities for students to use oral language for a variety of purposes and audiences.
9. **Viewing.** Teachers value viewing as an essential component of literacy and use a variety of print and multimedia resources to develop students' visual literacy capabilities.
10. **Content Literacy.** Teachers understand the reciprocal nature of reading and writing and integrate written language with oral and visual language.
11. **Teacher as Learner.** Teachers improve their knowledge about literacy learning and teaching through professional reading and inquiry.
12. **Collaboration with Families and Communities.** Teachers develop positive and purposeful relationships with families and community members.

13. Professional Responsibility. Teachers actively contribute to the improvement of teaching and learning and to the advancement of knowledge and professional practice (NBPTS, 2012; Tompkins, 2014).

Other Factors that Influence Reading

This section provides a review of the literature related to past reading experiences and specific demographics that influence reading. Along with eight reading courses in the teacher preparation program, past reading experiences, first generation status, daily contact with children outside of school, ethnicity, and GPA are the predictors in the study. Current reading habits and knowledge of children's literature are the outcome measures in the study. Due to the overlap in literature of the two outcomes, the researcher will review each one independently, then conduct a synthesized review.

Past Reading Experiences

Benevides and Peterson (2010) found that prospective teachers did not enter into teacher education programs with an equally high level of reading proficiency or positive attitudes toward reading and reading-based behaviors. Accordingly, a quantitative study conducted by Stocks et al. (2012) surveyed 181 undergraduate students enrolled in reading education courses at two South Texas Universities for the two purposes: (a) to determine the reading experiences of first and continuing generation preservice teachers and (b) to identify differences in the habits, experiences, and reading of children's and adolescents' literature between first and continuing generation students. Results indicated that continuing generation students reported greater number of past reading experiences.

Just as developing readers' personal experiences affect reading, proficient readers also have past experiences that contribute to their reading habits (Stocks et al., 2012). Applegate and

Applegate (2004) suggested that, specific to education, many preservice and in-service teachers have reported that their early literacy experiences and instruction had either a positive or a negative effect on their reading habits. Accordingly, Hoewisch (2000) suggested that in-service teachers base the majority of what they do in their classrooms upon their former teachers' practices and attitude during their 13-years of formal education.

A contributing factor to the focus of Carpenter's (1997) doctoral dissertation, *Preservice Teachers as Readers*, was highlighted by the past childhood experience of reading with her mother and trips to the library and local bookstore with her mother. According to the personal testimony, Carpenter "was blessed with a mother who loved to read herself and read to me from an early age" (p. 15) and visiting the library was a weekly routine. Readers past experiences were often a framework for current actions, including those in literacy (Applegate & Applegate, 2004; Stocks et al., 2012). At the conclusion of their study, Applegate and Applegate (2004) stated "Successful experiences in early elementary reading instruction were positively correlated to level of enjoyment of reading as were positive home experiences" (p. 559). If teachers hope to infuse a love for reading in their students, they needed to possess the same love (Cummins, 2012).

First Generation Status

According to Pascarella, Pierson, Wolniak, and Terenzini (2004), the increased accessibility of higher education has not only increased diverse populations of ethnicity, socio-economic status, gender, and age, but it has also allowed more people who are the first in their family to attend college. Choy (2001) points out that more than one-third of the student population entering four-year institutions, and more than half of students beginning at two-year institutions were first-generation students. Specific to education, Stocks et al. (2012) found first-

generation preservice elementary education teachers to have higher reading habits than those who are continuing generation, meaning those that are not the first in their family to attend college. Also noted in the study conducted by Stocks et al. (2012) was first-generation elementary preservice educators engaged in reading children's literature more frequently than continuing generation students, yet had lower scores of past reading experiences than their counterparts.

Daily Contact with Children Outside of School

Tharp (2014) commonly referred to parents as a child's first teacher. Six important points for parents to remember were also presented: (a) read to your child daily, (b) think about what books you want to share with your child, (c) converse with your child as you are reading with them, (d) incorporate books that including singing, (e) create your own books based on family stories or special occasions, and (f) model reading and writing for your child. Britto, Brooks-Gunn, and Griffin (2006) and Storch and Whitehurst's (2001) findings showed that engagement in home literacy activities such as shared book reading may lead to higher levels of school literacy. When parents exposed children to reading at home, they were more likely to read at school because the parent valued reading. Accordingly, Senechal and Young (2008) found that activities such as shared reading allow parents (or those as the child's primary guardian) to read aloud to children or listen to the children as they read aloud. Carpenter (1997) referred to parents as the primary influence for the enjoyment of reading.

GPA and Ethnicity

Other predictors deemed as important are GPA and ethnicity. According to The Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), within the state of Texas, Latinos accounted for 36% of the total enrollment in higher education in 2009; this was an 11.5% rise from 2008 (THECB,

2009). Based on the previous statistics from THECB, it is important that researchers and educators focus on the needs of the rising number of Latino students enrolling in colleges and universities.

Moje, Overby, Tysvaer, and Morris (2008) conducted a study that focused on whether literacy practices of adolescents had any relationship to school achievement. Data analyzed through multiple linear regression indicated that frequency of reading outside of school as measured by the question “reading for pleasure” had a positive relation with English grades, science grades, and cumulative GPAs. In relation to novel reading, data analyzed from a differing school in the study predicted an increased cumulative GPA with increased novel reading. Moje, et al. (2008) concluded that a relationship exists between adolescent students who read books more frequently and academic success; however, the current investigator found little research on preservice educators’ frequency of reading and academic success.

Current Reading Habits of Children’s Literature

Irving (1980) wrote, “The role of teachers in stimulating voluntary reading among children and young people is... potentially the most powerful of all adult influences upon the young” (p. 7). Morrison, Jacobs, and Swinyard (1999) argued that a teacher’s classroom reading was not the only factor that can influence the ways they interacted with students in a literacy setting; teachers involved in personal, recreational reading could also be an influence.

Smith (2002) identified the use of children’s literature in the classrooms as a staple material since the 19th century, and stated that teachers’ modeling of reading and knowledge of the texts can play an important role in students’ learning. The use of children’s literature [books] in the classroom stretches far beyond entertainment: it broadens background knowledge, allows readers to make connections that build self-efficacy and self-awareness, promotes cognitive

development, and enhances vocabulary and language development. Teachers are encouraged to engage in discussions about literature with their students during book clubs and literature circles. Risko et al. (2008) identified two studies—Draper et al., 2000 and Many et al., 1998—that investigated the concept that good teachers of reading found reading a pleasurable experience. However, the findings of the studies did not show associations in predictable directions.

According to the National Endowment for the Arts [NEA] (2004), 65% of college freshmen read for pleasure one-hour or less per week, and the United States Department of Labor (2011) reported that full-time college students spent 3.6 hours per day involved in a leisure activity that was not reading. Even more troubling, Chen (2007) found that education majors read for pleasure less than other college students did. Research continues to show that many preservice and in-service educators are not readers (i.e., Applegate & Applegate, 2004; Mueller, 1973). In a study by Gray and Troy (1986), 29 of 80 preservice teachers were reading a book at the time of the survey. Nearly 10 years prior, Mour (1977) found similar results: more than 50% of graduate students surveyed reported reading less than two books per year, and 75% of participants were light to moderate readers. Many preservice teachers did not demonstrate criteria that fell within the definition of an engaged reader (Guthrie & Anderson, 1999). Research has shown that teachers' personal reading habits affect their students' literacy development (Gray & Troy, 1986). Motivation to read has become a critical issue with the understanding that the more practice you have reading, the better reader you become (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997; Gambrell, 2011). Gambrell (1994) stated that the "most important goal of reading instruction is to foster the love of reading" (p. 14). With this in mind, the reported lack of enthusiasm toward reading among preservice teachers is troubling (Applegate & Applegate, 2004; Benevides & Peterson, 2010; Stocks et al., 2012). The

disconnect between preservice teachers' reading goals for students and their personal motivation levels and reading habits has been labeled the Peter Effect, referring to the biblical story of the Apostle Peter who was unable to give what he did not have (Applegate & Applegate, 2004). The "Peter Effect" is when educators were not able to teach or build a love for reading when they do not read or have a desire for reading. Nathanson, Pruslow, and Levitt (2008) found that the "Peter Effect" was relevant for in-service and preservice educators. Several studies suggested a direct correlation between teachers' personal reading habits and their ability to effectively teach and motivate students to read (Applegate & Applegate, 2004; Benevides & Peterson, 2010; Cline, 1969; McKool & Gespass, 2009; Morrison et al., 1999; Mueller, 1973; Nathanson et al., 2008). However, in a qualitative dissertation conducted by Carpenter (1997) at the University of Arizona that focused on the reading practices of preservice teachers and how those practices were or were not influenced by their experiences in a children's literature course at the university level, results indicated that a majority of the students chose to read daily in the beginning of the semester.

Knowledge of Children's Literature

The use of children's literature for reading instruction has been a prime material, whether seen in a basal reader or individual text, since the 19th century (Smith, 2002). Dillingofski (1993) reported that more than 50% of American elementary classrooms use trade books along with basal readers, while 20% implement a pure literature-based curriculum. In a study that focused on 19 teachers' use of picture storybooks in the elementary classroom conducted by Allen, Freeman, Lehman, and Scharer (1995), every teacher interviewed demonstrated interest in using literature in the classroom, with few of the teachers using a basal reader as the central component of the reading program. For teachers to create and maintain a literate environment

for their students, then they should be knowledgeable about various children's literature. The knowledge base should include current and classic titles of children's literature (McCutchen et al., 2002).

Becoming a Nation of Readers (Anderson et al., 1985) expressed the importance of a critical component of elementary reading: simply reading books. Another influential work that caused an influx of children's literature exposure was Atwell (1987), which discussed her success of having reluctant readers become engaged in authentic children's literature. In 1988, another landmark event for authentic literature occurred: The California Reading Framework. This framework mandated the use of genuine literature in the classrooms. The logic behind the concept was to increase students' interest in reading, specifically real literature (Smith, 2002). Today, we see book clubs and literature circles in our classrooms.

Austin and Morrison (1961) provided a vignette in which a third grade teacher was preparing for her day. Included in this vignette was the importance of knowledge of children's literature: "Her knowledge of children's literature should be extensive... (p.2)." In order to teach children to read, teachers must be readers themselves and have knowledge of a variety of works. Buchmann (1984) pointed out:

It would be odd to expect a teacher to plan a lesson on, for instance, writing reports in science and to evaluate related student assignments, if that teacher is ignorant about writing and about science, and does not understand what student progress in writing science reports might mean" (p. 32).

Although research acknowledges that subject-matter knowledge is an essential requirement of teaching (Ball & McDiarmid, 1990; Buchmann, 1984; Conant, 1963; Grossman, 1988), there is

limited research that focuses on the development of teachers' subject-matter knowledge (Ball & McDiarmid, 1990).

A reasonable prerequisite of reading instruction, specifically literature-based, is sufficient knowledge of children's literature (Grossman, Wilson, & Shulman, 1989). Flippo (2001) indicated that educators should provide authentic narrative and expository texts in the classroom in order to "facilitate learning to read" (p. 14) as well as motivation to read. Teachers can use the literature during instruction and provide access for students during self-selection of reading material. Research has noted one of the characteristics that foster motivation to read is student access to reading materials in the classroom and self-selection of books (Gambrell, 2011). Access to materials and a print-rich environment is part of classroom management (Reutzel & Cooter, 2012), which is fundamental to effective instruction (Morrow, Reutzel, & Casey, 2006). The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), a federal education policy initiative, required states to ensure that all teachers of academic subjects be highly qualified and receive high-quality professional development. Provisions aimed to increase teacher knowledge on teacher professional development are that it:

- increases teachers' knowledge of the academic subjects they teach, and enable teachers to become highly qualified;
- advances teacher understanding of effective instructional strategies that are based on scientifically based research, and improve student academic achievement or substantially increase the knowledge and teaching skills of teachers; and
- gives teacher and other instructional staff the knowledge and skills to provide instruction and appropriate language and academic support services to limited-

English-proficient children (Coble & Azordegan, 2004; United States Department of Education, 2001).

Gambrell (1995) found that students' motivation to read increased when they have a book-rich classroom. Moreover, researchers such as Neuman (1999) concluded that classroom environment influenced students' success, and accordingly, Pressley et al. (1997) stated that effective reading teachers build and maintain a literate environment in their classrooms (Reutzel & Cooter, 2012). With this in mind, readily available, authentic literature in the classroom has increased students' motivation to read and promoted success in reading development; if educators are to maintain a literate environment for their students, they must have knowledge of children's literature. However, if future and current teachers do not have knowledge of children's literature, then they are not able to provide a variety of works and make them available to their students.

In a study conducted by McCutchen et al. (2002), early elementary educators' knowledge of children's literature titles in lower-grade levels was "considerable and fine-tuned" (p. 222); however, the educators in upper elementary grades did not show a strong knowledge of higher-grade level book titles. In the same study, teachers' content knowledge, which investigators measured by participants' knowledge of children's literature, was a predictor of their classroom practice.

Benevides and Peterson (2010) explain that teachers who engage in personal reading are more likely to not only model reading but also choose appropriate reading strategies and instruction for their students, including authentic literature. Having a variety of teaching strategies and materials in the classroom allows educators to meet the needs of more diverse students. Vaca, Vaca, and Mraz (2011) mentioned that readers use reading strategies through

various contents, and Ward (2005) pointed out that educators use children's literature for specific instructional reasons (Cummins, 2012; Hassett, 2009). It is important for elementary educators to have knowledge of the current literature that their students are reading for leisure and academic purposes, as well as other works that hold their attention.

“We cannot, we believe, eliminate the achievement gap in our schools without closing the knowledge gap in our profession (Snow et al., 2005, p. 223). However, there is a consensus that research needed to guide teacher education program design and course content is limited (Risko et al., 2008).

Synthesized Review of Children's Literature

There were three contributing factors to Carpenter's (1997) doctoral dissertation, *Preservice Teachers as Readers*. A past English professor and a book club composed of educators influenced the second and third factors. The English professor encouraged a love of reading children's books, which led to a career that built around the love of reading and knowledge of children's literature. The opportunity to be exposed to a variety of children's books and discussing the works with teachers and librarians proved to be another major influence for the dissertation topic and guiding questions as well as her career of sharing children's literature in the classrooms. Arguably, Carpenter (1997) has observed that teachers' love and knowledge of reading influences their sharing of literature with the students in their classrooms, and teachers who are omnivorous readers (Joyce, 1983) positively influenced their students' interest in literature. Books filled the classrooms of the teachers, and the teachers modeled reading through planned experiences with literature including read-alouds, silent reading, literature groups, and author studies. These observations led Carpenter to redesign professional development and preservice education courses at the university: experiences with children's

literature immersed teachers and preservice teachers. Carpenter received positive responses from the workshops, and results of the dissertation proved that the changes were influential elements in the course. The participants enthusiasm and renewed enjoyment of reading was the major change that the participants noted. Four influential elements in the course inclined this change: (a) the influence of the instructor, (b) small group work, (c) class projects that provided active learning experiences emphasizing the affective elements of reading literature, and (d) self-evaluation that promoted students' choice and control over their own learning.

Mary Sue Dillingofski, Director of the Association of American Publishers (AAP) Reading Initiative, argued the importance and role of children's literature in classrooms. The AAP launched the Teachers as Readers pilot program throughout the state of Virginia in 1991–1992 as part of the AAP Reading Initiative. The program, which was in 36 school districts across the state, designated time to teachers to read children's books and discuss the books with colleagues. The program received rave reviews and the program continued the following years. Teachers, librarians, administrators, and parents were involved, and the success of the group received attention from the IRA and National Council of Teachers of English [NCTE] (Dillingofski, 1993). According to Dillingofski (1993), 50% of teachers indicated that reading children's books on their own was the most helpful in their personal and professional growth.

A ten-year longitudinal study conducted by Cunningham and Stanovich (1997) focused on students' reading habits. It measured differences in reading habits by knowledge of authors and titles of children's literature, which predicted differences in the growth of reading comprehension ability throughout elementary and high school years.

Cremin, et al. (2008) conducted a study in England that explored teachers' reading habits and preferences and investigated their knowledge of children's literature. Participants of the

study were 1,200 primary teachers across England, with half of the participants teaching students ages five to seven and half teaching seven to 11-year-old children. The results of the questionnaire that discussed reading habits found that the vast majority (75%) of the teachers read for pleasure within the last month, but only 6.5% of those participants reported reading children's literature for pleasure. Participants of the study completed a questionnaire that asked for six authors of children's literature, children's poetry, and children's picture book authors or illustrators. Less than half of the participants named six authors of children's literature, only 10% named six authors of children's poetry, and only 10% named six authors or illustrators of picture books. The primary teachers' knowledge of picture books was the poorest. The data also suggested that teachers with less experience knew fewer picture books, suggesting that "recently trained teachers have engaged in a less literature-informed curriculum, both perhaps in their training institutions and in their school-based experience" (p. 457). Additionally, the participants listed a limited breadth and diversity of authors. The overall results concluded that there is a lack of professional knowledge of children's literature among primary teachers.

Summary

This chapter provided a review of the literature related to the teacher preparation program, including the history of teacher preparation and reading program preparation. The chapter continued with a review of the literature on other factors that influence reading including first generation status, ethnicity, GPA, daily contact with children, and past reading experiences. Finally, the chapter presented information on current reading habits of children's literature, knowledge of children's literature, and a synthesized review of the literature.

CHAPTER III: METHODS

The content of this chapter describes the methodology employed in conducting this study. This chapter will be presented in six major sections. First, an introduction of the chapter and the hypothesis will be included. Second, design of the study will be discussed. The third section will describe the sample subjects used in the study. Fourth, the instrumentation used to collect data will be described and discussed. The fifth section will present the procedures used to collect data. The last section will discuss the data analysis of the study.

Introduction

The study was conducted to test the hypothesis that specific demographic and reading-related variables are useful in predicting knowledge and current reading habits of children's literature. The data were collected from a sample of preservice teachers who had enrolled in at least one READ course during the fall 2014 semester. The research questions that guided the study were: 1) what are the predictors of preservice teachers' current reading habits of children's literature and 2) what are the predictors of preservice teachers' knowledge of children's literature? Research design, subject selection, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis are reported in this chapter.

Research Design

The study employed a correlational research design, which is commonly used in social sciences (Urdan, 2010). The purpose of the correlation is to determine whether associations exist between or among variables (Johnson & Christensen, 2004; Kachigan, 1986). In the study, data for 12 specific demographic and reading-related independent variables were collected to explain the variation in the dependent variables, namely, current reading habits and children's literature

title recognition test scores. Due to the non-experimental nature of the study, no causal inferences were drawn.

Participants

The teacher preparation program that served as the focus of the study was located at a public, four-year, Hispanic-Serving Institution in South Texas. The latest available data showed the majority of the 9,152 undergraduate student population was composed of Hispanic (46.02%) and White (40.07%) students.

Course Descriptions

Table 1

Number of Elementary READ Courses Required per Specialization

Bachelor of Science, Interdisciplinary Studies degree Specialization	Number of Courses 2007–2013	Number of Courses 2013–2015
EC – 6 Bilingual generalist	2	2
EC – 6 Generalist with an early childhood specialization	2	NA
EC – 6 Generalist with a reading specialization	6	6
4 – 8 Mathematics	3	3
<i>Table 1 (continued)</i>		
EC – 12 Special education	2/3	5

Preservice elementary educators were required to take elementary reading (READ) courses as part of major and certification requirements; the number of READ courses was dependent upon the focus of the degree. In the fall of 2013, a transition occurred in the teacher preparation program. The program eliminated the early childhood specialization and combined the reading specialization, which required a reading specialization for those seeking an EC-6 generalist certification. Those students seeking a degree in Interdisciplinary Studies could no longer choose a focus of early childhood specialization. This shift required an increase in

elementary READ courses for the preservice educators. Table 1 shows a summary of the number of READ courses required per focus for the two degree plans.

The study focused on specific elementary-level READ courses at a South Texas university. Although the numbers and names of the courses are university specific, based upon course descriptions, this study divided courses into four categories (see Table 2).

Table 2

Category of READ Courses

Number and Title	Category
READ 3310—Principles and practices of early reading instruction	Foundation Course
READ 3320—Principles and practices of reading instruction	Foundation Course
READ 3351—Diagnosis and correction of reading problems	Practicum – style Course
READ 3352—Content area reading for elementary students	Content Area Course
READ 4352—Advanced practices in reading/language arts	Practicum – style Course
READ 4380—Children’s and adolescents’ literature	Children’s and Adolescents’ Literature Course
READ 4394—Field experiences in reading	Practicum – style Course

The two foundation courses are the first ones students will take that teach reading/literacy. A substantial portion of the content of the two courses emphasize the materials, methods, and beliefs for teaching reading, plus the theories, language development, and literacy concepts essential for pre-reading areas. Students access to formal reading instruction is limited, and they are learning the foundations of teaching reading in these courses, including the importance of self-reading and knowledge of literature. Both foundation level courses explore

theories of language and literacy development of children and introduce materials, methods, and beliefs for teaching reading in the elementary setting.

The teacher preparation program offers three practicum-style courses at the focus university. One practicum-style course's (READ 3351) emphasis is upon the precise administration, scoring, and interpretation of various diagnostic instruments used to detect reading problems. Preservice educators work with elementary students on their reading deficiencies one night per week for eight-weeks during one semester. They are encouraged to use a variety of reading strategies and material, depending on the elementary child's area of need, while two other courses (READ 4352 and READ 4394) immerse preservice educators in the literacy block at a local, public elementary school for eight-weeks during the semester.

The teacher preparation program offers READ 3352 as the content area reading course at the South Texas university. This course focuses on the use of reading strategies and materials in disciplines other than reading. The focus of the course is to teach preservice educators the importance of integrating reading strategies and materials into content areas.

READ 4380—Children's and adolescents' literature introduces titles of children's and adolescents' literature, and the course is specifically designed to build knowledge and promote reading of this type of literature. This course is an introduction and application course; it introduces titles of children's and adolescents' literature, and the students read and discuss various works. It incorporates the reading and study of literature, promotes reading of children's and adolescents' literature, and provides many uses and ideas of integrating literature in the classroom. The preparation program specifically designed this course to build knowledge and promote reading of children's and adolescents' literature. The course requires an extensive amount of reading during one semester. At the time of the study, this course was required for

students in the reading delivery system and optional for those that were generalist. Appendix A provides a description of each course from the course catalogue.

Participant Selection

The participants for the study were in the teacher preparation program and enrolled in at least one of seven elementary-level READ courses offered during the fall 2014 semester (Appendix A), totaling 260 enrollments, with concurrent enrollment in many courses. For example, students enrolled in READ 4352—Advanced Practices in Reading/Language Arts were also required to enroll in READ 4394—Field Experiences in Reading during the same semester. The program allowed students concurrent enrollment in other READ courses. Table 3 shows a summary of the sections of courses and their enrollment.

Table 3

Fall 2014 Enrollment of Elementary READ Courses

READ Course and Section of Course	Section	Enrolled
READ 3310 - Principles and practices of early reading instruction	001	25
READ 3320 - Principles and practices of reading instruction	001	25
READ 3320 - Principles and practices of reading instruction	002	23
READ 3320 - Principles and practices of reading instruction	003	25
READ 3320 - Principles and practices of reading instruction	004	25
READ 3351 - Diagnosis and correction of reading problems	001	24
READ 3351 - Diagnosis and correction of reading problems	002	25
READ 3352 - Content area reading for elementary students	001	25
READ 3352 - Content area reading for elementary students	002	25
READ 4352 - Advanced practices in reading/language arts	001	5
READ 4380 - Children's and adolescents' literature	001	28
READ 4394 - Field experiences in reading	001	5

The researcher contacted participants and collected data during instructor specified class times in the different sections of the READ courses at the beginning and end of the fall 2014 semester. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Institutional Review Board

(IRB) at Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi (Appendix B). Consent to participate in the study was collected by the researcher during the initial meeting of the fall 2014 semester. Data consisted of 188 participants at the beginning of the semester including four participants that were removed due to their non-enrollment status in the teacher preparation program. At the end of the semester, 16 participants had dropped the READ course(s) and were removed from the study; data were analyzed for 168 participants in the study.

Instrumentation

Three survey questionnaires (Appendix C) were used to collect the data: *Personal Literacies Questionnaire – I (PLQ - I)*, *Personal Literacy Questionnaire – II (PLQ - II)*, and *Children’s Literature Title Recognition Test (CLTRT)*. The *PLQ - I* was administered to collect the predictor variables; the *PLQ - II* and *CLTRT* were used to collect the outcome measures.

PLQ–I and PLQ–II

The *PLQ–I and II* were adapted from the *Personal Literacies Questionnaire, PLQ* (Stocks et al., 2013). The *PLQ* consists of four sections: Demographics, Reading Habits, Reading Experiences, and Current Reading of Children’s and Adolescent Literature. With the authors’ permission, the *PLQ* was modified for the purpose of the study. Specifically, it was constructed as a two-part questionnaire; a few changes in the demographics section were made to fit the needs of the current study; adolescent literacy questions were removed; and a 4-point Likert-type scaling replaced the original 5-point scaling.

The *PLQ–I* consisted of eight items, measuring past reading experiences, using a 4-point Likert-type scaling. There were also two open-ended questions. The *PLQ – I* was also used to collect the demographic data. The *PLQ – II*, which consisted of 13-items, was administered at the end of the semester to measure the outcome variable of the current reading habits. The

participants were also asked to indicate the genre and material they enjoyed reading. The following scaling was employed: 1 = rarely, 2 = infrequently, 3 = regularly, 4 = very often. The content validity of the modified PLQ was approved by two faculty members with expertise in the study's topic. The study's data were used to estimate the internal consistency of the scales, which are reported in Chapter IV.

Children's Literature Title Recognition Test (CLTRT)

The *CLTRT* was adapted from the *Title Recognition Test (TRT)*, which is used to assess teachers' and students' knowledge of titles of children's literature that are frequently read outside of school (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1990). The *TRT* consists of 25 children's book titles and 14 foil titles, of which many are considered outdated for today's students. A panel of educators, literacy experts, parents, and students updated the titles and developed the *CLTRT* for the purpose of the study. Specifically, in the spring of 2014, a series of informal discussions with elementary students, parents of elementary students, in-service educators, and librarians were conducted. Based upon the feedback, titles were removed from the *TRT* and replaced with those noted as relevant for today's students. A group of graduate students, preservice educators, and university faculty reviewed the updated version of the *TRT* and their feedback was used to develop the *CLTRT*, which consisted of 25 titles of children's literature, three of which were on the original *TRT*; and 14 foils, six of which were on the original *TRT*. The *CLTRT* was pilot-tested during the summer of 2014.

Data Collection

Course instructors were contacted via email in July 2014. The initial email to the instructors explained the purpose of the study, described how the subjects were selected, and provided tentative dates for data collection. Upon IRB approval in August 2014, each instructor

scheduled a date and time for initial and final data collection. The data used as predictor variables for the study were collected from 12 sections of the seven READ courses at the beginning of the semester, September 2014. The researcher attended each class meeting during the first week of September and provided potential subjects with a Letter of Informed Consent (Appendix D) and *PLQ – I*. The students who voluntarily agreed to participate in the study signed the consent form and completed the *PLQ – I* during the class time. The subjects' current GPA was obtained through the department by the researcher. The data for the outcome measures were collected at the end of the semester, November 2014 by having the study participants complete the *PLQ – II* and *CLTRT* during the class time. Of the 188 initial consenting participants, 168 were in the teacher preparation program and completed the three measures, *PLQ – I*, *PLQ – II*, and *CLTRT*.

Data Analysis

Data analysis involved descriptive statistics, correlational analysis, and regression analysis. The data were coded and entered into the computer by the researcher. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to manipulate and analyze the data. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize and organize the data; specifically, frequency and percentage distribution tables, and measures of central tendency and variability were reported. Median was reported as the most appropriate measure of central tendency for skewed distributions.

Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha (Crocker & Algina, 1986) was employed to estimate the internal consistency of the *PLQ – I* and *PLQ - II*. Specifically, $\alpha = [k / k - 1] [1 - (\sum \sigma_i^2 / \sigma_x^2)]$, where k is the number of items on the tests, σ_i^2 is the variance of the item i , and σ_x^2 is the total test variance (sum of the variances plus twice the sum of the covariance of all possible parts of its

components, that is, $\sigma_x^2 = \Sigma\sigma_i^2 + 2\Sigma\sigma_{ij}$), was used to compute the reliability coefficient, which may range from 0.00 to 1.00.

The relationship of the predictor variables and the two outcome measures were examined through correlational analysis of the data. The categorical predictor variables were binary in nature and coded as either one (1) or zero (0). Point Biserial Correlation Coefficients were computed to correlate one continuous variable with one binary variable (Urdan, 2010). For the associations involving two continuous variables, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was computed (Urdan, 2010).

Two Hierarchical Linear Multiple Regression (HLMR) analyses were performed to explain the variation in the outcome measures on the basis of the predictor variables. The associations, which were statistically significant at the univariate level, were included in regression analyses. In order to examine the unique and combined contributions of the independent variables in explaining the variation in outcome measures, the predictor variables were entered into the regression equation, one at a time, on the basis of the strength of the simple association with the outcome measure.

A detailed data checking was performed to make sure the data were suitable for regression analysis (Pedhazur & Schmelkin, 1991). Multicollinearity was examined, using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), which, if greater than one, indicates multicollinearity. Hat Elements test was performed to determine if outliers on predictor variables existed ($h = 3p/n$, where $p = k + 1$, k is the number of predictors, and n is the number of subjects). Any case with greater than the critical h must be examined to determine if it could bias the results. Cook's Distance greater than one was used to locate influential cases. Standardized Residuals were

examined to identify outliers on the dependent variable, which are defined as any case greater than three in absolute value.

Mean difference effect sizes were computed to examine the practical significance of the findings. To do so, mean difference was divided by the pooled standard deviation. The effect size were characterized as $.2 =$ small effect, $.5 =$ medium effect, and $> .8 =$ large effect (Cohen, 1988).

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

The purpose of the study was to test the hypothesis that specific demographic and reading-related variables are useful in predicting knowledge and current reading habits of children's literature. The data were collected from a sample of preservice teachers that were enrolled in at least one READ course during the fall 2014 semester.

The methodology of this study was presented in the previous chapter. Chapter IV will present the statistical analysis of the findings as they relate to the questions guiding this study.

Demographic Characteristics of the Subjects

The study's predictor variables consisted of selected demographic characteristics and personal reading experiences of 168 preservice educators. The subjects were between the ages of 17 and 52, education majors, and enrolled in at least one of seven READ courses during the fall 2014 semester: (READ 3310—Principles and practices of early reading instruction; READ 3320—Principles and practices of reading instruction; READ 3351—Diagnosis and correction of reading problems; READ 3352—Content area reading for elementary students; READ 4352—Advanced practices in reading/language arts; READ 4380—Children's and adolescents' literature; and READ 4394—Field experiences in reading). The majority were female (90.50%), not first-generation (69.00%), single (79.20%), in daily contact with children outside of school (53.60%), and not in daily contact with children in a school setting (61.90%). While no ethnicity was in the majority, 47.60% and 45.80% of the subjects identified themselves as either Hispanic or White, respectively. Almost half of the total participants were enrolled in READ 3320 (45.20%), and the majority of participants were in the EC-6 program (78.60%). Results are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4

Profile of Subjects, Categorical Variables, n = 168

Variable	F	%
READ Course		
READ 3310 - EC reading instruction	27	16.10
READ 3320 - EC-6 reading instruction	76	45.20
READ 3351 - Diagnosis and correction of reading	40	23.80
READ 3352 - Elementary, content area reading	40	23.80
READ 4352 - Advanced practices in reading	3	1.80
READ 4380 – Children’s and adolescents’ literature	26	15.50
READ 4394 - Field experiences in reading	5	3.00
Degree Major		
Education	168	100.00
Non-Education	0	0.00
Focus		
Literacy	60	35.70
Non-Literacy	45	26.80
Missing Data	63	37.50
Certification		
EC – 6 Program	132	78.60
Not EC – 6 Program	33	19.60
Missing Data	3	1.80
Gender		
Male	16	9.50
Female	152	90.50
First-Generation Status		
Non-First Generation	116	69.00
First Generation	52	31.00
Ethnicity		
Hispanic	80	47.60
White	77	45.80
Asian	3	1.80
African-American	8	4.80

(continued)

Variable	F	%
Marital Status		
Single	133	79.20
Married	35	20.80
Daily Contact with Children in School Setting		
Yes	64	38.10
No	104	61.90
Daily Contact with Children Out of School Setting		
Yes	90	53.60
No	78	46.40

The distribution of age, number of semesters in a teacher preparation program, total number of READ courses taken by the participants, and number of current READ courses were positively skewed; thus, the median must be used as the most appropriate measure of central tendency. A typical participant was 22-years-old, had been in a teacher preparation program for two semesters, had previously taken one READ course, was enrolled in at least one READ course at the time of the study, and had a GPA of 2.96 ($SD = .51$). Table 5 summarizes results.

Table 5

Profile of Subjects, Continuous Variables, n = 168

Variable	Mean	Median	SD
Age*	25.14	22.00	7.52
Number of Semesters in a Teacher Preparation Program*	2.81	2.00	2.82
Total Number of READ Courses Taken*	.99	1.00	1.51
Grade Point Average (GPA)	2.96	2.97	.51
Number of Current READ Courses*	1.29	1.00	.54

* Skewed distribution

Past Reading Experiences

There were eight items in the Personal Literacy Questionnaire–I that were used to measure the past reading experiences of the participants. A four-point Likert-type scaling was used (1 = rarely, 2 = infrequently, 3 = regularly, 4 = very often). The reliability, as estimated by Cronbach’s Coefficient Alpha, was .77, attesting to the internal consistency of the scale. Regularly was the option reported the most in describing past reading experiences. The majority of the subjects reported that books were very often (48.20%) or regularly (33.90%) accessible in their homes. There were 55 participants (32.70%) who reported seeing family members that were regularly engaged in reading; 61 (36.30%) reported visiting the library on a regular basis when they were children; 49 (29.20%) were regularly read to at home; 92 (54.80%) were regularly read to at school; 71 (42.30%) had a teacher who regularly encouraged them to read for enjoyment; and 46 (27.40%) employed the Internet for the purpose of reading on a regular basis. The majority (98, 58.30%) reported that they rarely used a digital reader. The scale scores ranged from 1.13 to 3.88 ($M = 2.73$, $SD = .58$), which suggested that the study participants were regularly engaged in the items which defined their past reading experiences. Results are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6

Frequency and Percentage Distributions of Past Reading Experiences of Preservice Teachers, n = 168

Past Reading Experience	Response	F	%
Accessibility of Books at Home	Rarely	8	4.80
	Infrequently	22	13.10
	Regularly	57	33.90
	Very Often	81	48.20

(continued)

Past Reading Experience	Response	F	%
Family Members Engaged in Reading	Rarely	22	13.10
	Infrequently	52	31.00
	Regularly	55	32.70
	Very Often	39	23.20
Library Visits as a Child	Rarely	19	11.30
	Infrequently	49	29.20
	Regularly	61	36.30
	Very Often	39	23.20
Read to at Home	Rarely	29	17.30
	Infrequently	42	25.00
	Regularly	49	29.20
	Very Often	48	28.60
Read to at School	Rarely	1	.60
	Infrequently	17	10.10
	Regularly	92	54.80
	Very Often	58	34.50
Teacher Encouraged Leisure Reading	Rarely	11	6.50
	Infrequently	25	14.90
	Regularly	71	42.30
	Very Often	61	36.30
Read on the Internet	Rarely	39	23.20
	Infrequently	44	26.20
	Regularly	46	27.40
	Very Often	39	23.20
Use of Digital Reader	Rarely	98	58.30
	Infrequently	34	20.20
	Regularly	25	14.90
	Very Often	11	6.50

The study's predictor variables were: 1) the seven READ courses (coded as either yes, currently enrolled or no, not currently enrolled), 2) GPA, 3) first generation status (coded as either yes or no), 4) ethnicity (coded as either Hispanic or non-Hispanic), 5) daily contact with

children at home (coded as either yes or no), and 6) the scale score representing the subjects' past reading experiences.

Dependent Variables

Participants were given the Personal Literacy Questionnaire–II, which measured their current reading habits and the Children's Literature Title Recognition Test, which measured their knowledge of children's book titles.

There were 13 items in the Personal Literacy Questionnaire–II that were used to measure the current reading habits of the participants. A four-point Likert-type scaling was used (1 = rarely, 2 = infrequently, 3 = regularly, 4 = very often). The reliability, as estimated by Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha, was .82, suggesting that the scale had acceptable internal consistency. Regularly was the option reported the most in describing current reading habits. The majority of the subjects reported that they read regularly (44.60%) or very often (26.80%); and regularly (40.50%) or very often (30.40%) associated enjoyment with reading. There were 56 participants (33.30%) who reported reading for leisure infrequently, and 77 (45.80%) who reported reading very often for academic reasons. Additionally, the participants reported regularly reading for personal growth (41.10%), information (48.20%), and to children (29.80%). The participants reported that they infrequently read children's books (29.20%) and children's poetry (40.50%); yet, regular home/personal (43.50%) and college (47.00%) experiences increased their knowledge of children's literature. The study participants reported that their job rarely exposed them to children's literature (44.60%); 41.70% associated enjoyment with reading children's literature very often. The scale had a mean of 2.77 ($SD = .53$), which suggested that the study participants were regularly engaged in the items which defined their current reading habits. Results are summarized in Table 7.

The Children's Literature Title Recognition Test was an assessment that consisted of 25 titles of actual children's books and 14 foil titles, ranging from zero to 25. The study participants' scores ranged from 2 to 24 ($M = 9.39$, $SD = 3.40$), which suggested that, on the average, the participants were familiar with nine (9) titles of the children's books.

Table 7

Frequency and Percentage Distributions of Current Reading Habits of Preservice Teachers, n = 168

Current Reading Habits	Response	F	%
Frequency of Reading	Rarely	9	5.40
	Infrequently	39	23.20
	Regularly	75	44.60
	Very Often	45	26.80
Enjoy Reading	Rarely	12	7.10
	Infrequently	37	22.00
	Regularly	68	40.50
	Very Often	51	30.40
Read for Leisure Purposes	Rarely	26	15.50
	Infrequently	56	33.30
	Regularly	49	29.20
	Very Often	37	22.00
Read for Academic Reasons	Rarely	2	1.20
	Infrequently	18	10.70
	Regularly	71	42.30
	Very Often	77	45.80
Read for Professional Growth	Rarely	13	7.70
	Infrequently	64	38.10
	Regularly	69	41.10
	Very Often	22	13.10
Read for Information	Rarely	5	3.00
	Infrequently	36	21.40
	Regularly	81	48.20
	Very Often	46	27.40

(continued)

Current Reading Habits	Response	F	%
Read to Children	Rarely	28	16.70
	Infrequently	43	25.60
	Regularly	50	29.80
	Very Often	47	28.00
Read Children's Books	Rarely	28	16.70
	Infrequently	49	29.20
	Regularly	48	28.60
	Very Often	43	25.60
Read Children's Poetry	Rarely	60	35.70
	Infrequently	68	40.50
	Regularly	31	18.50
	Very Often	9	5.40
Home/Personal Experiences Increase CL Knowledge	Rarely	18	10.70
	Infrequently	34	20.20
	Regularly	73	43.50
	Very Often	43	25.60
College Experiences Increase CL Knowledge	Rarely	8	4.80
	Infrequently	22	13.10
	Regularly	79	47.00
	Very Often	59	35.10
Job Expose to Children's Literature	Rarely	75	44.60
	Infrequently	23	13.70
	Regularly	22	13.10
	Very Often	48	28.60
Enjoy Reading Children's Literature	Rarely	11	6.50
	Infrequently	23	13.70
	Regularly	64	38.10
	Very Often	70	41.70

Correlational Analysis

The bivariate correlational analysis of the data consisted of examining the relationships between the predictor variables and the two outcome measures. The categorical predictor variables were binary in nature and coded as either one (1) or zero (0). For the associations involving two continuous variables, Pearson r was computed. Point Biserial Correlation Coefficients were computed to correlate one continuous variable with one binary variable.

Current Reading Habits

READ 3310—Principles and practices of early reading instruction was negatively associated with current reading habits, which was statistically significant ($r = -.18, p < .05$). Those who were not enrolled in the course scored higher on current reading habits ($M = 2.81, SD = .49$) than did those who were enrolled in the course ($M = 2.56, SD = .66$), and the mean difference effect size was .36. The negative association between READ 3320—Principles and practices of reading instruction and current reading habits was statistically significant ($r = -.18, p < .05$). The participants who were not enrolled in the course scored higher on current reading habits ($M = 2.85, SD = .52$) than did students who were enrolled in the course ($M = 2.67, SD = .52$), and the mean difference effect size was .36. Enrollment in READ 4380—Children's and adolescents' literature was positively associated with current reading habits ($r = .26, p < .01$); those enrolled in the course scored higher ($M = 3.09, SD = .40$) than did those that were not enrolled ($M = 2.71, SD = .53$), and the mean difference effect size was .53. Daily contact with children outside of school was positively associated with current reading habits ($r = .42, p < .01$). Those who were in daily contact with children outside of school scored higher on current reading habits ($M = 2.97, SD = .46$) than did those who were not in daily contact with children outside of

school ($M = 2.53$, $SD = .50$), and the mean difference effect size was .93. None of the other bivariate associations were statistically significant. Results are summarized in Table 8.

Table 8

Bivariate Correlations Between Predictor Variables and Current Reading Habits

Predictor	<i>r</i>
READ 3310 - EC reading instruction ^a	-.18*
READ 3320 - EC-6 reading instruction ^a	-.18*
READ 3351 - Diagnosis and correction of reading ^a	.11
READ 3352 - Elementary, content area reading ^a	-.01
READ 4352 - Advanced practices in reading ^a	.03
READ 4380 - Children's and adolescents' literature ^a	.26**
READ 4394 - Field experiences in reading ^a	.11
First-generation status ^a	-.01
Ethnicity ^a	.08
Daily contact with children outside of school ^a	.42**
GPA ^b	.10
Past reading experiences scale score ^b	.12

^a Binary Predictor Variable, Point Biserial Correlation Coefficient

^b Continuous Predictor Variable, Pearson *r*

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

Children’s Literature Title Recognition Test

READ 3320—Principles and practices of reading instruction was negatively associated with title recognition test scores, which was statistically significant ($r = -.16, p < .05$). Those who were not enrolled in the course scored higher on the recognition test ($M = 9.88, SD = 3.63$) than did those who were enrolled in the course ($M = 8.79, SD = 3.01$), and the mean difference effect size was .32. READ 4380—Children’s and adolescents’ literature was positively associated with title recognition test scores, which was statically significant ($r = .32, p < .01$). Those who were enrolled in the course scored higher on the title recognition test ($M = 11.88, SD = 4.12$) than did those who were not enrolled ($M = 8.93, SD = 3.05$), and the mean difference effect size was .66. The participants’ past reading experience was positively correlated with title recognition test scores ($r = .15, p < .05$), and accounted for 2.25% of the explained variation. Results are summarized in Table 9.

Table 9

Bivariate Correlations Between Predictor Variables and Children’s Literature Title Recognition Test

Predictor	<i>r</i>
READ 3310 - EC reading instruction ^a	-.14
READ 3320 - EC-6 reading instruction ^a	-.16*
READ 3351 - Diagnosis and correction of reading ^a	.04
READ 3352 - Elementary, content area reading ^a	.07
READ 4352 - Advanced practices in reading ^a	.02
READ 4380 - Children’s and adolescents’ literature ^a	.32**

(continued)

Predictor	<i>r</i>
READ 4394 - Field experiences in reading ^a	.05
First-generation status ^a	-.10
Ethnicity ^a	.11
Daily contact with children outside of school ^a	.01
GPA ^b	.10
Past reading experiences scale score ^b	.15*

^a Binary Predictor Variable, Point Biserial Correlation Coefficient

^b Continuous Predictor Variable, Pearson *r*

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

Regression Analysis

Hierarchical Linear Multiple Regression (HLMR) was performed. Data checking included searching for outliers, influential data points, and multicollinearity. The procedures are explained in chapter 3.

Current Reading Habits

Daily contact with children outside of school, READ 4380—Children’s and adolescents’ literature, READ 3310—Principles and practices of early reading instruction, and READ 3320—Principles and practices of reading instruction were the four independent variables, which were significantly correlated with current reading habits (Table 7). A hierarchical multiple regression (HMR) analysis was performed to examine the unique contribution of each of the four predictor variables in explaining the variation in the outcome measure. There were no outliers on the dependent variable as standard residuals ranged from -2.78 to 2.50. Cook’s Distance ranged from .00 to .07, suggesting that there were no influential data points. The critical Centered Leverage Value was .09, and the observed values ranged from .01 to .08; thus, it was concluded

that there were no outliers among the predictors. Variance inflation factor scores were greater than one, ranging from 1.00 to 1.11; thus, multicollinearity could not be ruled out.

The daily contact with children outside of school was entered and accounted for 17.70% of the variation ($p < .01$). READ 4380—Children’s and adolescents’ literature was entered at the second step and accounted for 5.30% of the variation ($p < .01$). The unique contribution of READ 3310—Principles and practices of early reading instruction, which was entered at the third step, was 1.80% ($p < .05$). READ 3320—Principles and practices of reading instruction was entered into the regression equation last, accounting for 1.20% of the variation, which was not statistically significant ($p = .11$). The four predictor variables explained 26.00% of the variation in current reading habits, $F(4,163) = 14.29, p < .01$. Results are summarized in Table 10.

Table 10

Unique Contributions of Independent Variables in Explaining the Variation in Current Reading Habits

Independent Variable	R	R ²	Unique Contribution	F Change	p
Daily contact with children outside of school	.42	.18	17.70%	35.64	< .01
READ 4380 - Children’s and adolescents’ literature	.48	.23	5.30%	11.34	< .01
READ 3310 - EC reading instruction	.50	.25	1.80%	3.93	< .05
READ 3320 - EC-6 reading instruction	.51	.26	1.20%	2.62	.11

Children’s Literature Title Recognition Test

The three independent variables, READ 4380—Children’s and adolescents’ literature, READ 3320—Principles and practices of reading instruction, and past reading experiences, which were significantly correlated with the title recognition test were included in regression

analysis of the data. The standard residuals ranged from -2.25 to 3.53, suggesting there was an outlier on the dependent variable. The outlier was removed, the data were re-analyzed, and the results did not change; thus, the case was kept in the analysis of the data. Cook's Distances ranged from .00 to .19, and it was concluded that there were no influential data points. The critical Centered Leverage Value was .07, and the observed values ranged from .01 to .06; thus, there were no outliers on independent variables. Multicollinearity could not be ruled out because variance inflation factor scores ranged from 1.03 to 1.12.

READ 4380—Children's and adolescents' literature was entered first and accounted for 10.00% of the variation, which was statistically significant ($p < .01$). READ 3320—Principles and practices of reading instruction was entered at the second step and accounted for .50% of the variation, which was not statistically significant ($p = .33$). The unique contribution of past reading experiences, which was entered into the regression equation last and was not statistically significant, was 1.70% ($p = .08$). The three predictor variables explained 12.20% of the variation in title recognition test scores, $F(3, 164) = 7.59, p < .01$. Results are summarized in Table 11.

Table 11

Unique Contributions of Independent Variables in Explaining the Variation in Children's Literature Title Recognition Test

Independent Variable	R	R ²	Unique Contribution	F Change	p
READ 4380 - Children's and adolescents' literature	.32	.10	10.00%	18.35	< .01
READ 3320 - EC-6 reading instruction	.32	.11	.50%	.96	.33
Past Reading Experiences	.35	.12	1.70%	3.20	.08

Summary

There were 12 potential predictor variables. Daily contact with children outside of school, READ 4380—Children’s and adolescents’ literature, READ 3310—Principles and practices of early reading instruction, and READ 3320—Principles and practices of reading instruction were significantly correlated with current reading habits, and accounted for 26% of the variation. The daily contact with children outside of school was the best predictor.

READ 4380—Children’s and adolescents’ literature, READ 3320—Principles and practices of reading instruction, and past reading experiences were the variables used in the prediction of title recognition test scores, and explained 12.20% of the variation. READ 4380 was the best predictor.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the findings of the study. The two outcome measures serve as headings in the chapter: current reading habits of children's literature and knowledge of children's literature. This chapter discusses each of the predictors based upon the two outcome measures. Each predictor will be discussed as a subheading under each outcome measure heading: teacher preparation program (READ courses), past reading experiences, first generation status, daily contact with children outside of school, ethnicity, and GPA. The chapter concludes with implications; delimitations, limitations, and assumptions; and recommendations for further research.

Current Reading Habits of Children's Literature

Associations on the basis of one outcome measure, current reading habits, were statistically significant at the bivariate level for READ 3310—Principles and practices of early reading instruction, READ 3320—Principles and practices of reading instruction, READ 4380—Children's and adolescents' literature, and daily contact with children outside of school. At the multivariate level, READ 3310—Principles and practices of early reading instruction, READ 4380—Children's and adolescents' literature, and daily contact with children outside of school were statistically significant.

Teacher Preparation Programs

Risko et al. (2008) supported the notion that preservice teachers acquire attitudes about and habits of teaching reading while in the teacher preparation program. Shaw et al. (2007) noted that preservice teachers' beliefs and habits transfer into their future classroom instruction. With this in mind, it is imperative that the courses in the teacher preparation programs are

encouraging the future educators' to read and build habits of reading, especially children's literature.

Since the results of this study indicate that only three READ courses were predictors of current reading habits of children's literature, the researcher assumes that the majority of READ courses in the teacher preparation program at the study's South Texas university primarily focus on knowledge of reading skills associated with teaching reading in the elementary classroom rather than the act of reading children's literature. This is supported by the pass rate on the state exam. For 2013, the reading delivery system had a 95% pass rate on the state exam. The results of the analysis showed only the two foundation courses (READ 3310 and READ 3320) and the children's and adolescents' literature course are potential predictors of current reading habits of children's literature. The results suggest that the course content in READ 4380—Children's and adolescents' literature played a significant role in the participants' current reading habits of children's literature.

The foundation course, READ 3310 and READ 3320, serve as a prerequisite to all other READ courses in the teacher preparation program at the South Texas university. The results show a statistically significant, negative association between both courses and participants' current reading habits of children's literature. One interpretation of this finding is students not enrolled in either foundation course had higher current reading habits than students enrolled. Enrollment in the foundation course is the first introduction to the instructional methods of teaching reading to the foundational content that focuses on the four aspects of literacy, and to the five pillars of reading (NRP, 2000). One interpretation of the results is that the courses build a knowledge base of reading processes and skills; however, it does not teach or foster reading of children's literature. Enrollment in these courses serves as a strong predictor for having

infrequent current reading habits of children's literature; meaning while taking these courses, students are not actively reading children's literature. Because the introductory courses focus on creating a scaffold for reading instruction based upon state standards, which heavily stress the Five Pillars of Reading (NRP, 2000), the results suggest that these courses do not encourage reading of children's literature.

Hoffman et al. (2001) stated that field base and practicum-style courses prior to student teaching are culminations in many teacher preparation programs. As discussed by Alvermann (1990) and Zeichner (1983), researchers describe this type of approach as an inquiry-oriented model with interrelated components of the traditional-craft approach. The three practicum-style courses (READ 3351, READ 4352, and READ 4394) had weak relationships with current reading habits of children's literature. One indication of the findings is that the three courses may not sponsor the concept of a teacher-reader of children's literature. Two possible explanations for the results are: (a) courses are not discussing the importance of a teacher-reader or (b) the participants are not retaining information from other courses that promote current reading habits (i.e., READ 4380). However, at the time of the study, students in the elementary generalist delivery system were not required to take READ 4380, and READ 4380 was not a prerequisite for the READ 3351 course. The analysis of data suggests that while the preservice teachers are working with younger children, they are not necessarily exploring a wide range of potential children's literature to use when they tutor. Grote-Garcia's (2009) dissertation supports this notion. Grote-Garcia followed eight students enrolled in READ 3351 for one semester. She found that the preservice teachers tended to not use the content of previous reading courses when tutoring but instead reverted to simpler methods of reading and questioning. Supporting Grote-Garcia's (2009) findings, Clift and Brady (2005) conclude that preservice teachers often resist

information that educators teach in methods courses. Accordingly, Munby (1982) found that preservice teachers hold onto their old beliefs even when presented with new information, suggesting that preservice teachers may need more structure and support in implementing the newly gained strategies and knowledge. If students resist the information from previous courses or revert to more simple methods, then they may have more difficulty applying methods and practices taught in the current courses. However, the results of the study suggest weak relationships between each practicum-style course and current reading habits of children's literature that are not statistically significant, suggesting that these courses are not good predictors of current reading habits of children's literature.

In order to gain a deeper understanding of the subject-matter, Anders and Guizzetti (1996) found that students benefit by having reading instruction incorporated into their content area classes, gaining the name of content area courses. Due to the nature of the course, instructors introduce students to non-fiction text, and strategies for non-fiction reading rather than fiction. Because the content in the course introduced various texts and reading strategies, the program designed the course so preservice educators would learn how to teach students to read more proficiently. The results indicated a negative association. One interpretation of the results is that students not enrolled in the course had higher current reading habits, which may be due to the fact that they have not had a broad exposure to fiction children's literature. Results of this study suggest that the content area course may not support the concept of a teacher-reader of literature. The investigator notes that one reason for the results could be that one instrument used to measure the outcome data did not primarily focus on non-fiction texts. A panel of classroom teachers, librarians, curriculum specialist/instructional coaches, students, and parents updated the titles of the original *TRT* (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1990). After a series of

informal discussions with the other literacy professionals, students, and parents and pilot testing the instrument with in-service and preservice educators, the children's literature titles were updated to reflect those noted as relevant for today's diverse students. However, only two titles on the *CLTRT* were non-fiction. Given the importance of genres in state and national standards (CCSSI, 2010), it is important to note that the panel of experts provided only two non-fiction titles of the 25 total titles. Because this study is predictive in nature, the results also suggest that enrollment in content area literacy courses at the university is not a good predictor of current reading habits of children's literature because it was not shown to be statistically significant in this study.

One course that is required for students in the reading delivery system but is optional for students with a different delivery is READ 4380—Children's and Adolescents' Literature. Statistically significant results showed there was a relationship between participants enrolled in children's and adolescents' literature and current reading habits of children's literature. Thus, suggesting this course is a strong predictor of current reading habits of children's literature. As the results suggest, this course is fostering preservice teachers' reading habits of children's literature. These results supported recommendations of Buchmann (1984) and Dewey (1904), which state that practical application and participation of content serves as preparation for teachers. The results of this study suggest that preservice educators are able to engage in literature circles and book clubs with their students, just as Morrison et al. (1999) advocates for teachers to do with their students.

First Generation Status, Ethnicity, GPA, and Past Reading Experiences

First-generation status students had a very weak, negative relationship between current reading habits of children's literature; first-generation status was determined not to be a good

predictor of current reading habits of children's literature and did not meet criteria for the regression model. Meaning, students who were not the first in their family to complete college reported higher current reading habits of children's literature than those that were the first in their family to complete college. This interpretation contradicts the findings of Stocks et al. (2012) who found first-generation students reported reading children's and adolescent literature more frequently. However, in Stocks et al. (2012), the non-first generation students in the study reported higher background experiences and exposure to children's literature, concluding that the first-generation students were attempting to read more in an effort to increase their knowledge than their peers. Although the current data suggests students who were continuing generation status had higher current reading habits of children's literature than those that were not, it is difficult to determine if there was a correlation because there were more continuing generation participants that participated in the study. The results suggest the need for further research.

Ethnicity, participants' GPA, and past reading experiences all had weak relationships that were not statistically significant with current reading habits, suggesting that these factors are weak predictors of current reading habits of children's literature. Concerning ethnicity, it was difficult to identify whether this factor was a predictor due to homogeneity of the group. Perhaps intuitively, participants with a higher GPA might have greater current reading habits of children's literature; however, results did not support previous research findings (Guthrie et al., 2004; Moje et al., 2008), which stated there is a relationship between academic success and students who read books. However, the participants in both studies by Guthrie et al. (2004) and Moje et al. (2008) were adolescents, not preservice educators. Results of the study showed that past reading experiences of the participants did not correlate with higher current reading habits. Stocks et al. (2012) supported this notion. This suggests that those with higher past reading

experiences had lower current reading habits than those with lower past reading experiences. This could be because participants who engaged more frequently in past reading feel they possess the necessary exposure to children's literature and current reading is not necessary. However, because first-generation status, ethnicity, GPA, and past reading experiences were not statistically significant at the univariate level, they did not meet criteria for the regression model. In order to examine the unique and combined contributions of the independent variables in explaining the variation in outcome measures, the predictor variables were entered into the regression equation, one at a time, based on the strength of the simple association with the outcome measure. Although the factors were not statistically significant in this study, the lack of significance adds to the body of knowledge.

Daily Contact with Children Outside of School

The study showed that participants who reported daily contact with children outside of a school setting had higher current reading habits of children's literature and were statistically significant. This variable was included in the regression model. One might expect to find higher current reading habits of children's literature if the participant was in daily contact with children because children would possibly discuss and expose the participant to titles, leading the participant to read more children's literature. Britto et al. (2006), Tharp (2014), and Storch and Whitehurst (2001) maintained the concept of parent-readers. Research supports the idea of those in contact with children on a daily basis, whether as a parent, guardian, or care-taker, are often referred to as a child's first teacher, and engagement in reading at home may lead to a higher level of literacy. Daily contact with children outside of school was the best predictor of current reading habits of children's literature.

Knowledge of Children's Literature

The second outcome measure in this study was knowledge of children's literature. The correlational analysis found that associations based on knowledge of children's literature were statistically significant at the bivariate level for four predictors: READ 3310—Principles and practices of early reading instruction, READ 3320—Principles and practices of reading instruction, READ 4380—Children's and adolescents' literature, and daily contact with children outside of school. At the multivariate level, the regression analysis concluded that READ 3310—Principles and practices of early reading instruction, READ 4380—Children's and adolescents' literature, and daily contact with children outside of school were statistically significant.

Teacher Preparation Programs

Risko et al. (2008) suggested that teacher preparation programs have been successful in increasing preservice teachers' knowledge. According to results in this study, the best predictor of the second outcome measure, knowledge of children's literature, was enrollment in READ 4380. Two variables that were also included in the model but were not statistically significant at the multivariate level were READ 3320 and past reading experiences.

The results show a statistically significant, negative association between both introductory courses and participants' knowledge of children's literature, which has one interpretation, that is, those enrolled in either course had lower knowledge of children's literature than those in other READ courses. As noted previously, this is the first introduction to the instructional methods of teaching reading and to the foundational content that focuses on the four aspects of literacy; the primary focus of the two courses is to teach reading skills and strategies. The students enrolled in the two foundation courses have not taken other reading or literacy

courses in the program, and a large amount of the content of the courses emphasizes the materials, methods, and beliefs for teaching reading and the theories, language development, and literacy concepts essential for pre-reading areas. At the time of taking the course, their knowledge base is limited, and they are learning the foundations of teaching reading, including the importance of self-reading and knowledge of literature. These results suggest that the focus of these courses is to build a knowledge base of reading skills. Accordingly, the introductory courses focus on creating a scaffold for reading instruction based upon state standards and the Five Pillars of Reading (NRP, 2000). These courses focus on teaching reading skills rather than focus on supplementary materials and serve as a prerequisite to all other reading courses. Although weak, one introductory course (READ 3320) serves as a predictor of knowledge of children's literature.

The results of the study indicated very weak relationships between students enrolled in the practicum-style courses (READ 3351, READ 4352, and READ 4394) and knowledge of children's literature. Two possible explanations of the results are: (a) the importance of knowledge of children's literature is not being emphasized or (b) the participants are not retaining information from other course that encourages knowledge of children's literature (i.e., READ 4380—Children's and adolescents' literature) or transferring past reading experiences. Supporting the latter belief, Clift and Brady (2005) concluded that preservice teachers often resist information, which instructors teach in methods courses. If students resist the information from previous courses, then they are not able to apply the methods and practices in current courses. However, it is important to mention that at the time of the study, only students in the reading delivery system were required to take the children's and adolescents' literature course prior to enrollment in two of the practicum-style courses (READ 4352 and READ 4394), and

those READ 4380 was not a prerequisite for the other practicum-style course, READ 3351. Meaning, not all students enrolled in the practicum-style courses had taken the children's and adolescents' literature course. Also important to note, Risko et al. (2008) reported that it might be difficult to maintain or develop knowledge during practicum courses due to less supportive conditions. Because the purpose of the practicum-style courses are different from the other, students' purposes are also different. The results of the study suggest weak relationships between each practicum-style course and knowledge of children's literature that are not statistically significant, suggesting that these courses are not good predictors of knowledge of children's literature.

The results of the study show a very weak association between students enrolled in the content area reading course and knowledge of children's literature. One interpretation being students enrolled in this course had lower knowledge of children's literature than those in other courses. With this in mind, it is important to discuss the genres of titles included in the instrument used to assess knowledge of children's literature, the *CLTRT*. Only two of the 25 actual titles of literature on the *CLTRT* are non-fiction. Because a focus of the content area course is non-fiction text, it is difficult to determine whether READ 3352 builds knowledge of children's literature. Because this study is predictive in nature and the results are not statistically significant, the findings suggest that enrollment in content area literacy courses at the university is not a good predictor of knowledge of children's literature.

Statistically significant results showed a relationship between those that were enrolled in children's and adolescent's literature and knowledge of children's literature. Thus, suggesting this course is a strong predictor of knowledge of children's literature. Just as the program designed the course, students gain knowledge of children's literature while in the class. As the

results suggest, this course is building preservice educators' knowledge and fostering their reading habits of children's literature.

First-Generation Status

First-generation status students had a very weak, negative relationship with knowledge of children's literature. One meaning being, students who were not the first in their family to complete college had higher knowledge of titles of children's literature than those that were the first in their family to complete college. Although the current data suggests that students who were continuing generation status had more knowledge of children's literature than those that were not, it is difficult to determine if there was a correlation because there were more continuing generation participants that participated in the study. First-generation status was determined not to be a good predictor of knowledge of children's literature because results were not statistically significant.

Ethnicity and Daily Contact with Children Outside of School

Ethnicity and daily contact with children outside of school had a weak relationship with knowledge of children's literature, suggesting that these two factors are weak predictors of knowledge of children's literature. Interestingly, participants who reported daily contact with children outside of school reported more frequent current reading habits of children's literature yet had less knowledge of titles. One might assume that those with current reading habits of children's literature would also have a greater knowledge of titles of children's literature; however, the results do not support this assumption. These factors were not statically significant and were determined not to be good predictors of knowledge of children's literature.

GPA

The study showed a weak between GPA and knowledge of children's literature. Suggesting GPA is a weak predictor of knowledge of children's literature. This suggests there is not a strong relationship between students that do well in their coursework and have greater knowledge of titles of children's literature. These results are significant to the body of research because there was no found research that could contribute to this topic. Although the results are not statistically significant, they cannot be labeled as a predictor of knowledge of children's literature and further research is suggested. Due to homogeneity of the group, there could be a possibility that several of the independent variables linked in some manner.

Past Reading Experiences

Past reading experiences of participants had a statistically significant association with knowledge of children's literature. The participants who reported high past reading experiences also had high knowledge of children's literature. Because these participants have had past exposure to children's literature material, it makes sense that they would have greater knowledge of children's literature titles. Although titles on the *CLTRT* were updated to reflect titles that elementary students are currently reading outside of school, past reading experiences was identified as a good predictor in knowledge of children's literature.

Implications

The results of the study have implications for teacher preparation programs at the university level and scholars across the country as well as in-service educators, preservice educators, and parents. The questions and findings of this study speak to reading teacher educators and researchers across the country. The most obvious implication from the results of this study is that reading-related and demographic variables can be used as predictors of both

knowledge and current reading habits of children's literature. This logical relation applies to any institution with a teacher preparation program. The following implications will be dealt with in two levels, namely, local and national.

The implications of this study for the local EC–6 teacher preparation program are: (a) the structure of the program needs to be evaluated; (b) the course content needs to be examined; (c) instructors need to be aware of past reading experiences and provide additional scaffolding for those students; and (d) instructors need to include a wide variety of individualized assignments that enhance knowledge of and reading of children's literature.

One option that the data suggested is to introduce the children's and adolescents' literature course at the beginning of the preservice educators' program. Because the children's and adolescents' literature course promoted knowledge and reading habits of children's literature, requiring the course to be a prerequisite for other courses would also be beneficial to teacher preparation programs. If the program restructured the sequence of courses that students take by moving children's and adolescents' literature to the beginning of the program, students would read and become familiar with children's literature prior to taking the practicum-style and content area courses. This would provide experience with literature as well as provide an opportunity to develop a love of reading. Another option for restricting the courses is to implement a block structure. Students would be grouped into a cohort, and required to enroll in the same courses each semester. A requirement for enrollment in the subsequent block would be successful completion of all the courses. The teacher preparation program would require children's and adolescents' literature in the first block with foundation-level reading courses, making it mandatory for all elementary education majors and a prerequisite to other literacy courses.

The results provide implications for structure of course content that would foster growth in knowledge and reading habits of children's literature. Although children's and adolescents' literature was identified as a predictor of knowledge and reading habits of children's literature, it is important to note that the *CLTRT* primarily assessed fiction titles. It is important that children's and adolescents' literature integrate non-fiction texts, and the various genres receive equal focus in the course. Modeling reading through instructor and student read-alouds are needed throughout the foundation courses. The foundation and content are courses that require an integrated practicum component, which allows students to interact with a child or children. In class and out of class assignments that integrate authentic fiction and non-fiction text are needed. The practicum-style courses need added structure and support in implementing the strategies taught and knowledge gained. In all courses, instructors need to model a love of reading for authentic fiction and non-fiction text.

Another implication of the findings for teacher preparation programs is that instructors address specific needs, and scaffold to target the students who might profit from it the most. Reading-related and demographic variables that predict knowledge and current reading habits of children's literature provide these programs with information in which they cannot only identify courses that promote the two outcome measures and courses in which modifications are needed, but they are also able to focus on the students and their background in reading, being proactive rather than reactive. Interventions such as book clubs and literature circles; exposure to children's literature through classroom activities, tutorials, and visits to the library and bookstore; modeling reading by teachers and students; and professional development opportunities are motivating interventions for preservice educators. Research strongly suggests that teachers need to be avid readers (Draper, Barksdale-ladd, & Radencich, 2000; Many et al.,

1998), and they should have the ability to engage in book clubs and literature circles with their students (Morrison et al., 1999). Having some knowledge of students' past experiences in reading is invaluable. Information can be obtained at the beginning of the semester through questionnaires that ask students to describe their past reading habits and experiences. Instructors can gain knowledge of students' self-perceptions through reflective dialogue at the beginning of the semester.

Teacher preparation programs can “tailor-fit” their instruction to promote reading. Using online tools such as Black Board or Google Docs, instructors individualize reflections and discussions for students based upon their individual and group needs. Information obtained through informal assessments such as conversations or questionnaires guide instructors' instruction for each student. Through differentiated instruction, instructors are providing opportunities that encourage students at the level of higher education; hopefully, they will integrate these useful components in their future classroom.

The implications of this study at the national level are four-fold. First, a course in children's and adolescents' literature is necessary if a desired outcome is to have graduates of a preparation program value, know, and read children's literature. Second, the amount and structure of additional reading courses may or may not contribute to the outcome of knowledge and reading habits. Third, the diversity of students comprising a course may make a difference in how courses need to be structured. Fourth, a national conversation needs to be initiated on the preparation of elementary classroom and reading teachers. Specifically, should instruction in the “five pillars” of reading instruction be supplemented by additional emphasis in the “aesthetic” aspect of literacy?

Professional literacy and professional educator organizations such as Literacy Researchers Association, Professors of Reading Teacher Educators, International Literacy Association, American Library Association, Association of Literacy Educators and Researchers, and teacher preparation programs would undoubtedly be interested in results that contribute to the growing body of works about preservice teachers and their knowledge and current reading habits of children's literature. All organizations that promote literacy will have interest and use of the results of the study. Professional organizations could highlight sessions that promote reading habits and knowledge of children's literature at their annual conferences and in publications. Bringing vendors of children's literature as well as authors and illustrators of children's literature to conferences and events would be advantageous. Creating book lists with fiction and non-fiction titles would also be constructive and motivating. Moreover, an important factor for these professional organizations is to target and create a welcoming atmosphere for preservice educators.

Again, with this information, course instructors can work to improve the students' knowledge of children's literature. With the presentation of this information, preservice educators, in-service educators, parents, and national and state education organizations generate an awareness and interest in knowledge and reading habits of children's literature. In return, they have the ability to enhance their knowledge and become more engaged in reading habits; thus, enhancing interest in children's and adolescents' literature, too.

A specific dialogue at both the national and local levels could involve an exploration of what intended consequences (outcomes) of the courses could or needs to be improved. The reading program examined in this study continues to be a successful program with a high pass rate on the state examination. The National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) study cited it

as well, ranking it among the top 20 college campuses with the best undergraduate elementary teacher programs. The NCTQ ranked the elementary program on several key standards including early reading, elementary content, and student teaching (“University Ranked Among Top 20”, 2014). With these directives in mind, this study suggests that if in fact teachers who are readers are better teachers of reading, then how to facilitate and produce elementary teachers who are readers themselves is an important question.

Ultimately, this study contributes to a niche in the current body of literature about knowledge and current reading habits of children’s literature of preservice educators’ enrolled in teacher education programs. The body of research on preservice teachers’ past and current reading habits and the importance of the teacher preparation program are plentiful, yet there is no noted research previously published about the use of reading-related or demographic variables to predict knowledge or current reading habits of children’s literature of preservice teachers enrolled in teacher preparation programs.

Delimitations, Limitations, and Assumptions

Factors that consciously limit the boundary of the study are delimitations. The study was delimited to: (a) preservice students in the teacher preparation program that were enrolled in one of seven READ courses at a single South Texas public university; (b) 12 demographic and reading-related variables which served as potential predictors; and (c) the outcome measures of current reading habits and knowledge of children’s literature. Limitations of this study were the relatively small number of participants enrolled in READ courses during the fall 2014 semester, and the limited number of non-fiction titles on the *CLTRT*. Due to the non-experimental nature of this study, no causal inferences were drawn. Some of the predictors and both outcome variables were self-reported; the underlying assumption was that students were truthful in

reporting details such as ethnicity, first-generation status, daily contact with children outside a school setting, past reading experiences, current reading habits, and knowledge of children's literature titles. The investigator assumed that the data collected from the department were accurate and complete.

Recommendations for Further Research

The researcher recommends future studies to include a larger number of participants, particularly to rule out multicollinearity and homogeneity. Also recommended is data analysis for predictive validity, using data from new students enrolled in reading courses after fall 2014. The study used data that were self-reported; perhaps a future study could include data available from the registrar (i.e., high school GPA, THEA test score or equivalent, past enrollment in developmental courses). The researcher recommends updating the *CLTRT* to include an equal number of genres of literature. Additional assessments for in-class and outside of class could also be developed.

The researcher suggests that future studies explore specific past reading experiences that promote knowledge and current reading habits of children's literature. By identifying the specific experiences, reading educators and those in daily contact with children can be proactive and promote future success with children's literature. The investigator recommends investigation of the specific course content to determine whether the difference in instructors plays a role in presentation of course material pertaining to children's literature. It would also be beneficial to teacher preparation programs to gather data from other courses within the education program.

The investigator suggests replicating the study using in-service educators in order to determine the knowledge and reading habits of current teachers. The researcher could also

include in-service educators' current instructional practices using children's literature. Additional survey components could include adding open-ended questions for the current educator to identify classroom activities, and practices proven beneficial to students' enjoyment of reading or motivation to read children's literature. A researcher could analyze the data collected from current teachers, and compare in-service educator predictors to preservice educator predictors.

A researcher could replicate a comparative study with the general population of preservice educators or secondary preservice educators. A researcher could duplicate the same study at universities in different states. For instance, a researcher could conduct a comparison study of preservice educators' knowledge and reading habits of children's literature using the International Reading Association's seven geographical regions. The researcher also recommends replication of a comparative study within preparation programs at other universities in the United States.

Based upon the results of this study, future efforts could utilize a different methodology, possibly incorporating a qualitative aspect to the study by adding a survey component such as open-ended responses for students to clarify their choice or offer additional written information. A researcher could conduct personal interviews with participants with different demographics and reading-related factors. As part of a questionnaire, researchers could ask participants to list additional titles of works recommended for elementary students. A researcher could conduct follow-up interviews for those that participated in the study. This would enrich the current database of information on the knowledge and reading habits of children's literature.

Ultimately, the researcher suggests conducting studies to determine where the love of reading is promoted in the teacher preparation programs, and how teacher preparation programs

build a love for reading during the courses. A qualitative study asking participants to discuss what the course actually does to motivate a love for reading could potentially identify courses that engage students and instills the desire to read. The researcher further suggests replicating the study with preservice teachers in field-base courses to determine if these courses promote, and encourage knowledge and reading habits of children's literature. The ability to predict where preparation programs should focus their attention on to support knowledge and current reading habits of children's literature is invaluable.

The implication, therefore, for teacher and literacy educators and scholars, is the potential for researchers to conduct this type of analysis in programs across the country. This is a way to explore the associations between the currently enrolled preservice educators and their reading-related and demographic data, specifically the reading courses within the teacher preparation program. Resulting predications can be used to construct quality programs so that all courses promote knowledge and current reading habits of children's literature.

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APPENDIX A: COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

READ 3310 - Principles and Practices of Early Reading Instruction; 3 sem. hrs.; 2 sections
This course explores theories of early language and literacy development of children. Course content addresses language development and literacy concepts essential for pre-reading areas, such as phonemic awareness, oral language development, listening comprehension development, and alphabetic knowledge. The course explores ways educators can enhance language and literacy concepts utilizing art, music, and drama. READ 3310 emphasizes development of emergent literacy skills that lead to higher literacy skills taught in READ 3320.

READ 3320 - Principles and Practices of Reading Instruction; 3 sem. hrs.; 4 sections
This course will emphasize materials, methods, and beliefs for teaching reading in the early childhood through grade 6 setting. Components of the course will include but not be limited to the five pillars of reading instruction identified by the National Reading Panel (2000): phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

READ 3351 - Diagnosis and Correction of Reading Problems; 3 sem. hrs.; 2 sections
Diagnosis and correction of reading problems are examined in detail. Emphasis is upon the precise administration, scoring, and interpretation of various diagnostic instruments used to detect reading problems. The correction processes for identified problems are also examined. Components of the course will include but not be limited to the five pillars of reading instruction identified by the National Reading Panel (2000): phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Prerequisite: READ 3320, READ 3321, or READ 3353.

READ 3352 - Content Area Reading for Elementary Students; 3 sem. hrs.; 2 sections
Readings required of elementary pupils in the content areas are introduced. In addition, an overview of the reading processes, library skills and high interest, low vocabulary reading materials is presented. Components of the course will include but not be limited to the five pillars of reading instruction identified by the National Reading Panel (2000): phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Prerequisite: READ 3320 or READ 3321.

READ 4352 - Advanced Practices in Reading/ Language Arts; 3 sem. hrs.; 1 section
The emphasis is on instructional approaches supported by current theory and research and supervised implementation in a school setting. Attention is given to word study, comprehension, critical reading and reasoning, and reading-writing connections. Components of the course will include but not be limited to the five pillars of reading instruction identified by the National Reading Panel (2000): phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Prerequisites: READ 3320, READ 3351, and READ 4380. This course must be taken concurrently with READ 4394.

READ 4380 - Children's and Adolescents' Literature; 3 sem. hrs.; 1 section

Provides students with an understanding of children's and adolescent literature. Included in the class is the reading and study of literature and how to promote reading of literature in the schools. Extensive reading is required.

READ 4394 - Field Experiences in Reading; 3 sem. hrs.; 1 section

The culminating experience for those students working toward a specialization in reading. Students are provided supervised experience in field-based activities, in addition to on-campus activities. Prerequisites: READ 3320, READ 3351, and READ 4380. This course must be taken concurrently with READ 4352.

**APPENDIX B: IRA CERTIFICATE OF DISTINCTION OF THE READING
PREPARATION OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY TEACHERS STANDARDS**

Standard 1: Content-Foundational Knowledge (Elementary). The program content and pedagogy prepare candidates with knowledge and evidence-based teaching skills necessary to help all students learn to read.

Standard 2: Faculty and Teaching. Program faculty meets IRA Standards for Reading Professionals-2003 for teacher educators and model best practices in scholarship, service, and teaching. These standards require that faculty: have appropriate qualifications, model effective professional practices in teaching, model appropriate practices in scholarship, and model appropriate practices in service.

Standard 3: Apprenticeships, Field Experiences, and Practica. The reading program and its school collaborators design, implement, and evaluate apprenticeships, field experiences and clinical practica that ensure candidates meet Standard 1. Institutions must provide evidence that their programs offer field-based and/or clinical experiences, specifically in the teaching of reading. Apprenticeships, field experiences/practica should provide sufficient time and experiences to prepare candidates to develop the skills, strategies, and dispositions being studied. Apprenticeships, field experiences/practica should include opportunities to participate in a set of specific reading activities and strategies. Apprenticeships, field experiences/practica should be closely aligned with course content and assignments.

Standard 4: Diversity. The program designs, implements, and evaluates curricula and experiences for candidates to ensure that candidates, school collaborators, and higher education faculty work effectively with diverse candidates and diverse students in P-12

schools. As a result, candidates understand and value diversity and can address this diversity in classroom literacy instruction, can develop curricula which incorporate their knowledge of diversity (e.g. cultural, linguistic, economic, gender, etc.), and interact with diverse faculty and peers.

Standard 5: Candidate and Program Assessment. The program has an assessment system that documents that candidates meet Standard 1 and that the reading preparation program meets the remaining standards. As a result, the program includes a system of admissions that evaluates applicants' potential to successfully meet the learning outcomes identified in Standard 1, gathers evidence that candidates have met or exceeded the outcomes identified in Standard 1, gathers data to guide program revisions, and has an assessment system that monitors the current program operations.

Standard 6: Governance, Resources, and Vision. The reading program has the governance, vision and resources including financial, personnel, technology and facilities to meet standards one through five. As a result, the reading faculty plays an integral role in determining appropriate content, pedagogy, assessments, and field experiences for their candidates that are guided by a shared vision of excellent teaching. The program has sufficient budget to provide the necessary content, pedagogy, assessments, and field experiences for its candidates. Faculty has appropriate work load policies allowing them to provide personalized and responsive instruction to all candidates and appropriate facilities that allow them to provide personalized and responsive instruction to all candidates (IRA, 2011, p. 10).

APPENDIX C: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD DOCUMENT



OFFICE OF RESEARCH COMPLIANCE
Division of Research, Commercialization and Outreach

6300 OCEAN DRIVE, UNIT 5844
CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS 78412
O 361.825.3497 • F 361.825.2755

Human Subjects Protection Program	Institutional Review Board
APPROVAL DATE:	August 25, 2014
TO:	Ms. Tiana Pearce
CC:	Dr. Dan Pearce; Dr. Chase Young
FROM:	Office of Research Compliance Institutional Review Board
SUBJECT:	Initial Approval
Protocol Number:	92-14
Title:	Prediction of Preservice Teachers' Knowledge and Reading of Children's Literature Within a Teacher Preparation Program
Review Category:	Expedited
Expiration Date:	August 25, 2015

Approval determination was based on the following Code of Federal Regulations:

Eligible for Expedited Approval (45 CFR 46.110): Identification of the subjects or their responses (or the remaining procedures involving identification of subjects or their responses) will NOT reasonably place them at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the their financial standing, employability, insurability, reputation, or be stigmatizing, unless reasonable and appropriate protections will be implemented so that risks related to invasion of privacy and breach of confidentiality are no greater than minimal.

Criteria for Approval has been met (45 CFR 46.111) - The criteria for approval listed in 45 CFR 46.111 have been met (or if previously met, have not changed).

- (7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies. (NOTE: Some research in this category may be exempt from the HHS regulations for the protection of human subjects. 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) and (b)(3). This listing refers only to research that is not exempt.)

Provisions:

Comments: The TAMUCC Human Subjects Protections Program has implemented a post-approval monitoring program. All protocols are subject to selection for post-approval monitoring.

This research project has been approved. As principal investigator, you assume the following responsibilities:

1. Informed Consent: Information must be presented to enable persons to voluntarily decide whether or not to participate in the research project unless otherwise waived.
2. Amendments: Changes to the protocol must be requested by submitting an Amendment Application to the Research Compliance Office for review. The Amendment must be approved by the IRB before being implemented.

APPENDIX D: SURVEY INSTRUMENTS

NAME: _____

Personal Literacy Questionnaire - Part 1

Please read the following questions and choose the response which most closely corresponds to what is true for you. In this part of the questionnaire, you are being asked about your past reading experiences. Your responses will be kept confidential. Your participation is voluntary. Use the following scale to indicate your responses:

	Rarely 1	Infrequently 2	Regularly 3	Very Often 4
<i>Past Reading Experiences</i>				
To what extent were books accessible in your home?	1	2	3	4
How often did you see other family members engaged in reading?	1	2	3	4
As a child, how often did you visit the library?	1	2	3	4
How frequently were you read to at home?	1	2	3	4
How frequently were you read to at school?	1	2	3	4
How often did your teacher encourage reading for enjoyment?	1	2	3	4
How frequently did you read on the internet?	1	2	3	4
How frequently did you use a digital reader?	1	2	3	4

What did you like the most about your past reading experiences?

What did you like the least about your past reading experiences?

Please respond to each of the following items:

Gender: _____ Female _____ Male

Age (in years): _____

Marital Status: _____ Single _____ Married

Ethnicity: _____ Hispanic/Latino
 _____ White
 _____ Asian
 _____ American Indian or Alaskan Native
 _____ Black or African American
 _____ Nonresident aliens for international students
 _____ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

Degree Major: _____ Education _____ Non-Education

 Focus: _____ Literacy _____ Non-Literacy

Are you in the teacher preparation program? _____ Yes _____ No

If yes, is it the EC-6 program? _____ Yes _____ No

How many semesters have you been in a teacher preparation program? _____

Please indicate the number of READ courses you have taken (*excluding* this semester)? _____

Please select the current READ course(s) in which you are enrolled (check all that apply):

_____ **READ 3310**-Principles and Practices of Early Reading Instruction

_____ **READ 3320**-Principles and Practices of Reading Instruction

_____ **READ 3351**-Diagnosis and Correction of Reading Problems

_____ **READ 3352**-Content Area Reading for Elementary Students

_____ **READ 4352**-Advanced Practices in Reading/ Language Arts

_____ **READ 4380**-Children's and Adolescents' Literature

_____ **READ 4394**-Field Experiences in Reading

Are you the first person in your immediate family to attend college? _____ Yes _____ No

Are you in daily contact with children in a school setting? _____ Yes _____ No

Are you in daily contact with children outside a school setting? _____ Yes _____ No

NAME: _____

Personal Literacy Questionnaire - Part 2

For the purpose of this study, please note that children’s literature is delimited to ages 5-12.

Please read the following statements/questions and choose the response which most closely corresponds to what is true for you. Your responses will be kept confidential. Your participation is voluntary.

Use the following scale to indicate your responses:

Rarely 1	Infrequently 2	Regularly 3	Very Often 4
-------------	-------------------	----------------	-----------------

Current Reading Habits

How often do you read?	1	2	3	4
How frequently do you associate enjoyment with reading?	1	2	3	4
How often do you read for each of the following:				
Leisure	1	2	3	4
Academic Reasons	1	2	3	4
Professional Growth	1	2	3	4
Information	1	2	3	4
Read to Children	1	2	3	4
How often do you read children’s books?	1	2	3	4
How often do you read children’s poetry?	1	2	3	4
Which of the following reading experiences increases your knowledge of children’s literature?				
Home/Personal Experiences	1	2	3	4
College Experiences	1	2	3	4
How often does your job expose you to children’s literature?	1	2	3	4
How frequently do you associate enjoyment with reading children’s literature?	1	2	3	4

Which types of reading do you enjoy? (check all that apply)

Fiction

Non-Fiction

Informational Text (manuals/reports)

Poetry

Novels

Short Stories

Picture Books

Newspapers

Magazines

Professional Journals

History

Online Material

Religious Material

Social Media

Children's Literature Title Recognition Test

Name _____

Below is a listing of children's book titles. Some of the titles are names of actual books and some are not. Please read the titles and check mark the ones that you believe are actual books.

For the purpose of this study, please note that children's literature is delimited to ages 5-12.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| _____ 1. Wonder | _____ 21. The One and Only Ivan |
| _____ 2. Joanne | _____ 22. The Borrowers |
| _____ 3. Island of the Blue Dolphins | _____ 23. The Book Thief |
| _____ 4. Harry Potter & The Sorcerer's Stone | _____ 24. Hot Top |
| _____ 5. Sammy Piper and the Lost Email | _____ 25. Out of My Mind |
| _____ 6. Don't Go Away | _____ 26. Flat Stanley |
| _____ 7. The Polar Express | _____ 27. He's Your Little Brother! |
| _____ 8. The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe | _____ 28. Because of Winn Dixie |
| _____ 9. Real Avatars: Deep in Space | _____ 29. Bunnica |
| _____ 10. Sadie Goes to Hollywood | _____ 30. Esperanza Rising |
| _____ 11. Divergent | _____ 31. The Lost Shoe |
| _____ 12. Joey Pigza Loses Control | _____ 32. Charlotte's Web |
| _____ 13. The Mystery of the School Cafeteria | _____ 33. Pete the Cat |
| _____ 14. The Wall | _____ 34. Hero |
| _____ 15. Tales of a Middle School Cheerleader | _____ 35. Skateboard Jim |
| _____ 16. The Magic Tree House: Dinosaurs Before Dark | _____ 36. Strega Nona |
| _____ 17. The True Story of the Three Little Pigs | _____ 37. Ethan John |
| _____ 18. Lincoln: A Photobiography | _____ 38. BASEketball |
| _____ 19. The Great Imagination Creation | _____ 39. A Light in the Attic |
| _____ 20. The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane | |

APPENDIX E: LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT

CONSENT FORM

Prediction of Preservice Teachers' Knowledge and Reading of Children's Literature
Within a Teacher Preparation Program

Introduction

The purpose of this form is to provide you information that may affect your decision as to whether or not to participate in this research study. If you decide to participate in this study, this form will also be used to record your consent.

You have been asked to participate in a research project studying preservice teachers' knowledge and reading of children's literature within a teacher preparation program. The purpose of this study is to test a hypothesis that specific factors are useful in predicting knowledge of children's literature among preservice teachers within a teacher preparation program. You were selected to be a possible participant because you are currently enrolled in a reading class in a teacher preparation program.

What will I be asked to do?

If you agree to participate in this study, during instructor specified class time, you will be asked to complete a written Updated Personal Literacy Questionnaire at the beginning of the semester and Updated Children's Literature Title Recognition Test at the end of the semester. This study will take a total of 15 minutes. The Updated Personal Literacy Questionnaire will take approximately 10 minutes, and the Updated Children's Literature Title Recognition Test will take approximately 5 minutes.

What are the risks involved in this study?

The risks associated in this study are minimal, and are not greater than risks ordinarily encountered in daily life.

What are the possible benefits of this study?

The possible benefits of participation include identifying knowledge of and reading habits in children's literature. You will also be reminded of the importance of personal knowledge and reading practices in children's literature inside and outside of the classroom.

Do I have to participate?

No. Your participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time without your current or future relations with Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi being affected.

Who will know about my participation in this research study?

This study is confidential and the researcher will take every step in order to maintain confidentiality of the data. The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you to this study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Research records will be stored securely and only Tiana M. Pearce, Daniel L. Pearce, and Chase Young will have access to the records.

Is there anything else I should consider?

As part of this study, your grade point average (GPA) will be obtained through the department by analysis of your transcript. Your GPA will be treated as confidential information and secured in a locked cabinet in which only the principal investigator has a key and password protected computer

in which only the principal investigator has access. FERPA allows schools to disclose this information, without consent, to specified parties or under specified conditions (34 CFR 99.31).

Whom do I contact with questions about the research?

If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact Tiana McCoy Pearce, 361.825.3658, tiana.mccoy@tamucc.edu.

Whom do I contact about my rights as a research participant?

This research study has been reviewed by the Research Compliance Office and/or the Institutional Review Board at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. For research-related problems or questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you can contact Erin Sherman, Research Compliance Officer, at (361) 825-2497 or erin.sherman@tamucc.edu

Signature

Please be sure you have read the above information, asked questions and received answers to your satisfaction. You will be given a copy of the consent form for your records. By signing this document, you consent to participate in this study. You also certify that you are 18 years of age or older by signing this form.

Signature of Participant: _____ **Date:** _____

Printed Name: _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent: _____ **Date:** _____

Printed Name: _____