

MEETING EMPLOYERS' NEEDS:
EXAMINING SOFT SKILLS AS PART OF CURRICULUM IN ENGLISH
LANGUAGE ARTS CLASSROOMS

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MEETING EMPLOYERS' NEEDS:
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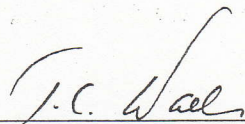
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LANGUAGE ARTS CLASSROOMS

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By

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or money that it would cost. You have been by my side when I have struggled with my health. You have allowed me peace and quiet when conversations were too painful. You have shown constant trust and support. I love you more than my words can express. You are simply amazing!

My hope is to change a small part of our educational system so that students will receive more instruction in a field that appears neglected. It is a message that is being reiterated on a regular basis in teacher meetings, “students are lacking soft skills.” If we, educators, know that there is a problem, let’s do something about it.

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ABSTRACT

Employers are indicating that students that have just graduated from high school are not prepared with adequate soft skills. High school teachers are burdened with the task to make students college and career ready. While “soft skills” is a broad term, some of its concepts can be found in the English curriculum. The speaking and listening objectives in the English curriculum are not tested on a standardized scale. This lack of testing could produce a narrowing effect that limits the amount of time spent teaching the speaking and listening content. Other potential barriers to teaching the speaking and listening skills include technology and a lack of training for teachers during their undergraduate studies. This study examined the implementation of reading and writing skills along with speaking and listening skills in English II classrooms in the state of Missouri. English II teachers were the focus of the survey due to the curriculum that they are responsible for teaching being subjected to a standardized test known as the End of Course exam. This standardized test only assesses reading and writing skills, but not speaking and listening skills. A Pearson’s r was used to determine the relationship between time spent teaching the assessed objectives of reading and writing and the non-assessed objectives of speaking and listening. A Pearson’s r was also used to determine the relationship between the time spent teaching speaking and listening skills and the potential barriers. Speaking and listening skills were not found to be taught in relation to the reading and writing skills. Although a discrepancy was found, the studied barriers of test preparation typologies, perceptions of standardized assessment, technology, and undergraduate training were not found to be the barriers that limit the soft skills implementation. More research is needed to better understand the inconsistencies.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

One of the goals of education is to prepare students to succeed in the workforce (Perreault, 2006). While secondary schools have traditionally focused on hard skills, which are technical and specific for employment, society has expected more from schools over the last several decades. Globally, employers are placing a greater emphasis on soft skills, which are intangible attributes such as the ability to communicate well and problem solve, especially as there has been a notable soft skills gap (Schulz, 2008). The Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (1991) encouraged those preparing future employees to teach soft skills, or traits such as critical thinking and interpersonal communication skills. The report did not focus simply on one subject area, but rather encouraged all content areas to increase their implementation of soft skills. The two soft skills specified in the report were thinking skills (essential for critical thinking, decision making, problem solving, etc.), and personal qualities (taking responsibility and exhibiting interpersonal and organizational skills).

The push for greater soft skill attributes by the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (1991) has been substantiated by employer feedback. Employers rate soft skills as the highest category for entry-level success and consider them to be the greatest deciding factor when choosing whom to hire (Schulz, 2008; Stewart, Wall, & Marcienic, 2016; Wilhelm, 2004). Stewart et al. found that employers look for attributes, such as verbal communication, teamwork, and critical thinking in applicants, which fall under the soft skills umbrella, but find many applicants are lacking

in those skills. If employers are seeking individuals who communicate well with others (Washor, 2015), high schools should consider how to meet this need (Perreault, 2006).

To determine if educators are teaching soft skills, the curriculum that is being implemented should be examined. The Common Core State Standards (2010) provide a framework for states to use when constructing curriculum. The subjects that have standards in place include English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. Each of these subject areas have objectives, but only English Language Arts includes the soft skills of speaking and listening (Common Core State Standards, 2010). For the purposes of this study, the English Language Arts curriculum will be the focus as it is the only core content area that includes these aspects of soft skills training.

There are many factors that may affect an English teacher's ability to teach soft skills. One factor is an increased emphasis on standardized assessment (National Center on Education and the Economy, 2007). Similarly, Perreault (2006) concluded that teachers are evaluated based upon how well their students achieve; therefore, the focus of their time is test content, and it is difficult to find the necessary time to teach skills that will not fall under immediate scrutiny. Common Core State Standards (2010) expect students in English Language Arts, or English classes, to be engaged in curriculum that teaches listening and speaking skills, which are key components of soft skills but are not typically assessed, along with reading and writing skills, which are hard skills and are assessed regularly.

Another factor that may hinder the implementation of speaking and listening skills in the English classroom is the growing use of technology. Many schools have gone to one-to-one classrooms where every student has an electronic device in their hand

to expand their connection to the internet, putting a nearly endless amount of information at their fingertips. Communication scholars claim that technology is harming interpersonal soft skills (Cooren, 2012; Hammock & Moon, 2013; Haythornthwaite, 2007; Hwang, 2011; Pettegrew & Day, 2015; Walsh, White, & Young, 2008). Educators, however, testify to the academic gains their students have experienced and claim students engage each other more through small-group interactions (Edwards, 2012; Shapley, Sheehan, Maloney, Caranikas-Walker, 2011). While technology may produce positive academic results, it may also be a substantial hindrance to mastering speaking and listening skills.

Another factor to consider that may impact how speaking and listening skills are taught in an English classroom is the training that a teacher receives during his/her undergraduate studies. Teachers that do not receive specific training over soft skills may be intimidated to teach concepts that go beyond their formal education (Ngang, Yunus, & Hashim, 2015). While not all universities cover the same information, there is evidence to suggest that some teaching programs are not including soft skill integration (Ngang, Chan, & Vetriveilmany, 2015). Another reason why soft skills may not be taught to students in their undergraduate teacher training is that it is difficult to assess (Menon & Alamelu, 2009). While there are various potential explanations, the training that a teacher receives during undergraduate studies may also impact how speaking and listening are taught in English classrooms at the secondary level.

There are various factors that may explain why a soft skills gap is being found by employers. Teachers may not implement speaking and listening skills due to pressure linked to assessment results, a push to implement more technology, or because of a lack

of training. As Common Core State Standards (2010) include speaking and listening objectives in English Language Arts classes, an examination should be made to determine the extent to which these skills are taught so that future steps may be taken to better prepare students for their professional lives.

Problem Statement

Secondary school students may not be receiving adequate speaking and listening skills training. Graduates who do not possess acceptable soft skills hurt their chances at obtaining and retaining employment (Nair & Mukherjee, 2015). Employers do not believe entry-level recruits have adequate soft skills that will make them successful in the workplace (Hart Research Associates, 2015; Society of Human Resource Management, 2016). While educators historically have provided hard skills, or technical skills training, the soft skills, or communication skills, are rarely evaluated to see how prepared graduates are for employment. According to Hart Research Associates employers look for the following soft skills in order of importance: verbal communication, teamwork, written communication, ethical judgment/decision making, critical/analytical thinking, applying knowledge and skills to the real world, problem-solving, organizing information, innovation, and staying current on technology. The range of importance was reported from 85% importance down to 60%. As the highest rated skill set listed was verbal communication, secondary school students should be receiving training over this skill set to make them marketable.

Employers know what skills are needed but are having a hard time finding qualified applicants. The Society for Human Resource Management (2016) report, which focused on employer perspectives of new employees, found a gap between what

employers were looking for and what they were finding. Employers revealed that from their perspective new employees lacked the following soft skills, which are listed in order of desirability: professionalism/work ethic, relationship building, business acumen, written communication, critical thinking, leadership, self-direction, teamwork, coaching skills, and flexibility. This range topped out at 43% of new recruits lacking professionalism down to nine percent being inflexible. Employers expressed frustration that new employees needed more on the job training beyond what was typically expected because interpersonal skills were lacking. If employers do not believe that students are adequately prepared to enter the workforce, educators must consider the extent to which they are preparing students in obtaining soft skills so that they are successful when beginning a career.

Much of the research on soft skills is focused on university undergraduates (Stewart et al., 2016), but research is lacking at the secondary school level. Perreault (2006) claims that soft skills should be addressed on a wider scale in high schools to better prepare students that will go directly from secondary education to the workforce or even give them a better foundation for university success. Mitchell (2008) reflects on soft skills in business classes, but those classes are not required for all students. English Language Arts curriculum is required for all students and includes four key aspects: reading, writing, speaking, and listening (Common Core State Standards, 2010). Standardized tests (e.g. End of Course exams in the state of Missouri) only assess two of the four key areas: reading and writing (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, n.d.b.). Soft skill attributes are generally addressed by the speaking and listening curriculum standards. Unfortunately, due to the pressure of

standardized testing, speaking and listening aspects of the curriculum may be neglected. High-stakes testing can result in some version of teaching to the test (Lai & Waltman, 2008; Phelps, 2016; Welsh, Eastwood, & D'Agostino, 2014). A result of teaching to the test is a narrowed curriculum that omits instruction that is not part of the assessed curriculum (Crocker, 2006). A greater emphasis of technology in the classroom may also limit a student's ability to grasp the intended speaking and listening content (Cooren, 2012). Lastly, a lack of formal training for the teacher may cause them to shy away from covering speaking and listening standards as well (Ngang, Chan, & Vetriveilmany, 2015). As there are known barriers in place that may cause the speaking and listening soft skills to be neglected, more research should be conducted to determine if these skills are being taught.

There is a gap between employer expectations and what employers are finding from new employees (The Society for Human Resource Management, 2016). Secondary schools should be teaching speaking and listening soft skills in English classes, but there has not been much research to substantiate whether these skills are being taught with fidelity (Perreault, 2006). There are various factors that may be hindering the implementation of speaking and listening skills at the secondary level in English classes. This descriptive study was conducted to determine if speaking and listening standards are taught by high school English teachers or if there are barriers that impede their implementation. Teacher reflections were used to determine the extent to which standards are addressed and which barriers are the greatest factors to overcome.

Theoretical Framework

America's educational system has evolved over the years. In our modern world, America's success in economic and political facets rely on the educational results of our academic products (Powell, Higgins, Aran, & Freed, 2009). Early educational theorist John Dewey spent much of his professional life constructing a pragmatic and progressive ideal for how education should be structured (Simpson & Jackson, 2003). Dewey's ideas still live today but are contrary to the heavy focus of quantifying educational outcomes to determine if students are ready to lead successful lives.

Dewey was a psychologist and pioneer of education at a time in America's history when school became compulsory throughout all of the existing states in America (Hazlett, 2011). While rote memorization and obedience were common expectations for early 20th century academics, Dewey was encouraging schools to take a holistic approach to a child's education (Schoenfeld, 2016). Dewey (1902) created a framework that considers the child's needs as well as society's needs. McKim (2007) and Simpson and Jackson (2003) refer to Dewey as a man ahead of his time who promoted education to prepare students for a well-rounded life and career. This includes what many now consider being higher-order thinking skills of problem-solving and group communication adeptness that are now known as 21st century skills (McKim, 2007).

Dewey's perspective contrasts with many modern-day educators' perspectives of curriculum. Dewey (1902) promoted a connection between the educational process and theory to meet societal needs. Simpson and Jackson (2003) clarified some of Dewey's positions by explaining that experiential knowledge was vital to move a student from an immature or inexperienced knowledge base to a mature or experienced knowledge base.

A key to Dewey's philosophy of education was how to develop synthesis in learning and think reflectively about educational and social issues to create curriculum. Teachers today might take a different approach to the curriculum if they were to heed Dewey's perspective more than focusing on assessed content. Dewey believed that teachers should create a curriculum that included experiences that allowed students to grow into more mature beings.

Abandon the notion of subject-matter as something fixed and ready-made in itself, outside the child's experience; cease thinking of the child's experience as also something hard and fast; see it as something fluent, embryonic, vital; and we realize that the child and the curriculum are simply two limits which define a single process. (Dewey, 1902, p.11)

The single process to which Dewey refers is the holistic act of education. Educators should not simply focus on curriculum that is set and assessed but adopt a broader perspective to help a child become a mature, well-rounded individual. Hargreaves and Shirley (2009) refer to this as an *either/or* thinking approach. *Either* educators are teaching and testing content covered *or* they are not adequately preparing students. Dewey disliked the polarized trends found in education during the early 20th century and are still prevalent today (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009). Dewey (1916) organized much of his writing in *Democracy and Education* to fighting against what he called "dualistic" thinking. Dewey wanted a greater integration of "Interest and Discipline," "Play and Work in the Curriculum," and "Labor and Leisure." Replacing the *either/or* thinking with a *both/and* method allows for a holistic approach to education like Dewey promoted.

A possible reason why the *either/or* thinking is prevalent is due to pressure to have students score high on educational assessments. A concept that explains some of the current negative reactions by teachers and administrators to curriculum and high stakes testing, one of the potential barriers to soft skills integration, is known as Campbell's Law. Campbell (1975) describes a phenomenon that occurs in societies when a social indicator of success becomes the focus in determining success. When an indicator such as a stock price, sales report, or in the case of education, test scores, dictate the success or failure of a person or an organization, people skew the results. In education, skewed results are the product of some version of teaching to the test or neglecting aspects of the curriculum that are not assessed (Crocker, 2006). While this approach may improve scores, or the social indicator of knowledge, it limits what students learn and hinders their ability to serve as productive members of society.

Early educational theorist John Dewey constructed a pragmatic and progressive ideal for education that is still applicable in the 21st century. Following Dewey's approach, schools should provide environments that construct curriculum that contain critical information that will be assessed as well as experiential knowledge to prepare students to become mature and productive members of society. When curriculum is narrowed by teachers, the child's long-term needs and society's needs are not taken into consideration. Dewey's theory is inclusive of curriculum standards that are assessed while also promoting a holistic approach to prepare students for multiple facets of life. High stakes testing has hindered this approach. Campbell (1975) argued that a social indicator of success will skew the way in which professionals perform in order to reach their desired outcome. This is true of educators that are held responsible for students'

performance scores. Campbell's law provides a framework that explains a potential barrier for Dewey's theory to be implemented into America's 21st century English II classrooms.

Purpose for the Study

The purpose for this study was to determine the extent to which speaking and listening skills are taught at the secondary level in English classes and whether they are impeded by factors that limit instruction. The study will examine if all four standards in the English II curriculum (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) are taught consistently, regardless of whether they are on a standardized assessment or not. Although the goal of the Common Core State Standards (2010) is for students to become college and career ready in the aforementioned curriculum areas (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, 2010), this study was conducted to determine whether all four areas are taught with fidelity.

Research Questions and Null Hypotheses

English teachers responsible for teaching the speaking and listening soft skills and proctoring standardized assessments were surveyed to determine if speaking and listening standards were taught consistently alongside reading and writing standards. Teachers were also asked to reflect on other barriers that hinder speaking and listening skills according to their perceptions. The following research questions were a guide for this study.

- Q1: What is the relationship between time spent on reading and writing skills and time spent on speaking and listening skills in English II classrooms?

- H₀₁: There is no statistically significant relationship between time spent on reading and writing skills and time spent on speaking and listening skills in the English II classroom.
- Q2: What is the relationship between the perceived barriers and the implementation of speaking and listening skills in English II classrooms?
- H₀₂: There is no statistically significant relationship between the perceived barriers and the implementation of speaking and listening skills in English II classrooms.

Limitations/Delimitations

While the study will be as thorough as possible when evaluating instructional practices, there are a few limitations that must be addressed.

Limitations. The limitations are external factors that provide parameters that influence the study.

1. The Common Core State Standards for the English Language Arts curriculum addresses only soft skills that are covered in the speaking and listening standards. Missouri does not currently adopt the CCSS, but Missouri's curriculum standards are similar to the CCSS.

Delimitations. The delimitations are parameters placed on the study by the researcher.

1. The study focused on high school (grades 9-12) English II classes in the state of Missouri.
2. The study used teacher responses to measure the extent to which the four

aspects of curriculum are implemented within their own classrooms.

3. The study used teacher responses to determine which factors hinder teachers from teaching and students from mastering speaking and listening skills.
4. The study examined only the identified barriers of the impact of standardized testing on classroom instruction, the impact of technology on soft skills, and undergraduate training.
5. The study only analyzed responses from teachers that were in their second year or more as an English II teacher. This was due to the fact that first year teachers had not proctored or potentially been impacted by the End of Course standardized assessment that is given in the spring to English II students.

Assumptions

An assumption was made that the teacher's perspective regarding the extent to which they participate in teaching to the test or consciously narrowing curriculum was an accurate reflection of classroom instruction. Another assumption was that as more time was devoted to teaching to the test or narrowing the curriculum, there would be a decrease in the amount of time specifically spent teaching the soft skills found under the speaking and listening objectives. Lastly, an assumption was made that teachers opinions regarding barriers to speaking and listening skills was an accurate reflection of barriers that were actually hindering their ability to teach speaking and listening skills and or students' abilities to master those skills.

Design Controls

This was a quantitative, descriptive study that surveyed English II Language Arts teachers in the State of Missouri and asked them how frequently they incorporated

reading, writing, speaking and listening skills in their classroom instruction. Teachers shared reflections about barriers to their teaching and to their students' mastery of speaking and listening skills. In an effort to ensure honest feedback, respondents were guaranteed anonymity when reflecting upon their responses.

Definition of Key Terms

Communication: Speaking capability, writing capability, reading capability, listening capability (Robles, 2012). This is an overarching term that encompasses the four objectives found in the Common Core State Standards English Language Arts curriculum (2010).

Hard skills: Technical, tangible, and measurable competencies (Stewart, Wall, & Marciniec, 2016). Much of the taught curriculum covers information that would be regarded as hard skills as they are measured through a summative assessment.

High stakes testing: Any single assessment of student achievement that results in rewards or sanctions for schools, educators, or students (Hendricks, 2007). The high-stakes test that is the focus of this study is the End of Course exam for English II classes in the state of Missouri.

Soft-skills: Personality traits and habits including interpersonal (written and verbal communication) and intrapersonal communication, engagement with others including teamwork, analytical skills including the ability to develop solutions to problems and take initiative (Schulz, 2008). For the purpose of this research, speaking and listening skills were studied.

Soft-skills gap: The difference between the communication, teamwork, initiative, and analytical skills recent graduates possess and the expectations of the employers in meeting the needs of a workplace-ready environment (Washor, 2015). An explanation for why this gap may exist was the driving force of this study.

Standards: Educational standards are the learning goals for what students should know and be able to do at each grade level (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Missouri Learning Standards – for parents, n.d.c.). For the purposes of this study, the standards focused on the four key areas of English Language Arts in the state of Missouri, which are reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

Teaching to the test: A ubiquitous term used to explain decontextualized instruction intended to artificially inflate test scores (Welsh, Eastwood, & D’Agostino, 2014). There are multiple practices that are considered forms of teaching to the test. These practices will be further explained in Chapter Two. These practices were incorporated into the survey instrument.

Summary

Employers need employees who communicate well with clients and colleagues. Employers express the perception that graduates are not entering the workforce with the necessary soft skills to be effective (Schulz, 2008). Educators are tasked with the challenge of preparing students to be well-rounded and workplace-ready (Perreault, 2006). Dewey (1902) argued that curriculum should go beyond assessed information and include experiential knowledge to help a child become a mature person, ready for all aspects of life. The English curriculum adopted by Missouri and other states that adhere to the Common Core State Standards (2010) comprise four skill sets that include reading,

writing, speaking, and listening. Reading and writing skills are evaluated with a standardized assessment in the state of Missouri (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, n.d.b.), but speaking and listening objectives are not, though they are the primary areas where soft skills are taught within curriculum standards. The purpose of this study was to determine if English teachers are teaching all four standards with fidelity. Results from high stakes testing can impact a teacher and their school district. The fear of consequences can drive a teacher to engage in practices that narrow the curriculum, which reduces a student's exposure to soft skills. Other factors, such as technology in a classroom and a lack of training, may also become barriers to teaching speaking and listening skills and students' abilities to master soft skills.

This study will examine two key questions: First, what is the relationship between time spent on reading and writing skills and time spent on speaking and listening skills in English II classrooms? Second, what is the relationship between the perceived barriers and the implementation of speaking and listening skills in English II classrooms? These two questions were the focus for the research.

The literature review that follows is organized through a funnel approach examining theory down to classroom procedure. A greater examination will be made of employer expectations, curriculum, and gaps between the two. The study and its methods will be described in Chapter Three. Presentations and findings will be presented in Chapter Four. A summary and the implications will be provided in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Employers desire their employees to possess certain skills to ensure that their businesses will be successful. Skills that employers are looking for that are at the forefront of the research include soft skills, otherwise known as communication skills that encompass face-to-face communication, problem-solving, and professionalism (Hart Research Associates, 2015; Society for Human Resource Management, 2016). These soft skills are highly sought after by employers.

While employers desire employees who possess strong communication skills, many people recently graduated from educational institutions lack this communication ability. Washor (2015) identifies the gap between employees' communication skills and employers' desires as the soft skills gap. Persons preparing to enter the workforce should be aware of what employers expect from them (Palmer, 2014a). An examination of perceptions shows a divide between what employers want and what employees believe are necessary.

The employment landscape is also evolving in the 21st century. Due to the changes taking place, future employees should understand the current workforce demographics to better prepare themselves to be competitive in a growing job market (Tribble, 2009). As the business world changes, educators should also take note so that they may adjust the approach used to better prepare students for their lives after they have finished their schooling. Persons responsible for implementing education in classrooms should understand demographic changes and adapt as needed to best serve their students.

Educators have a responsibility to teach skills that prepare students to be productive members of society. John Dewey (1902) believed that curriculum should provide experiences that would assist a child into becoming a well-rounded, mature being. Dewey's broad approach provides a standard by which educators today can still use as a framework for how to create and implement curriculum.

While developing well-rounded, mature people is ideal, educators are required to teach within the boundaries established in the curriculum as mandated by state and national standards. Curriculum objectives provide a framework that teachers are expected to use with classroom instruction (Common Core State Standards, 2010). The English Language Arts curriculum consists of four standards: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Soft skills, which are at the center of the soft skills gap between what employers desire their employees to possess and what employees actual exhibit, are partially encompassed in the speaking and listening objectives (Ameteppee et al., 2014). Examining curriculum standards reveals how English Language Arts classrooms are supposed to cover the four objectives.

In addition to teaching reading and writing skills, English Language Arts classroom instruction should include speaking and listening skills; however, teaching these skills is hindered by various factors. One potential hindrance is high stakes testing only focuses on reading and writing skill sets (Johnson, 2004). If speaking and listening skills are not assessed, they may not be allotted the same instructional focus as reading and writing objectives, which are assessed and can be tied to teacher performance evaluations. Another potential factor that impacts the teaching of these skills is technology. Technology use is becoming the norm in classrooms in an effort to abide by

legislative standards and to keep students abreast of societal advancements (Harris, Al-Bataineh, & Al-Bataineh, 2016). However, technology is a hindrance to a person's ability to learn face-to-face communication skills (Cooren, 2012; Pettegrew & Day, 2015). Learning technology skills is beneficial in many aspects, including obtaining knowledge, but limits a student's exposure to soft skills instruction. Finally, the training teachers receive during their undergraduate education impacts what they teach. The lack of training in soft skills pedagogy for English teachers perpetuates an environment that prioritizes reading and writing over speaking and listening (Menon & Alamelu, 2009). Lack of training during a teacher's undergraduate coursework hinders them from teaching aspects of curriculum they are not confident in themselves. High stakes testing, technology, and training are various factors that are limiting the instruction of speaking and listening skills in English Language Arts classrooms, even though they are objectives that are in the stated curriculum.

Employer Desire for Soft Communication Skills

Academic achievement has historically been the best predictor of professional success. Employers have previously wanted school systems to focus on skill-specific training or hard skills, but are now promoting twenty-first century skills, also known as soft skills, to boost the global economy and their own bottom line. Persons responsible for overseeing the educational process in public schools should understand the growing need for soft skills to better prepare students for the workforce.

Teachers, administrators, and other school personnel strive to prepare students for a career. In the past, academic achievement was the number one factor businesses considered when hiring a new employee (Jones, Baldi, Phillips, & Waikar, 2016; Werbel,

Phillips, & Carney, 1989). In general, academic achievement reflects technical skills, also known as hard skills. Employers considered these hard skills as essential for employment and for longevity in a position (Robles, 2012). This expectation in the workforce created policy decisions at all educational levels to prepare students for a future career by emphasizing cognitive abilities and assessments to measure those skills (Kyllonen, 2013). However, as technology allowed greater communication access across industries and oceans, a paradigm shift has taken place regarding what employers need and want from their employees (Jones et al., 2016). This shift in expectations should be reflected in the preparation students received through secondary education curriculum

The increased ease of communication between business and industries has created a need for employees to be adept at using 21st century skills, also known as soft skills. Soft skills that employers are looking for include communication, interpersonal relationships, professionalism, teamwork, problem-solving/critical-thinking, ethical behavior, flexibility, leadership, and diversity awareness (Stewart et al., 2016). These skills are essential for success in the workforce and are desired as much as hard skills.

This need extends beyond America into the global marketplace. Nair and Mukherjee (2015) and Schulz (2008) discuss a global trend where employers from multiple countries want a greater communication skill set from their employees. Soft skills are desired more than hard skills, even in tech startup companies that need both employees with sufficient work skills and those with the ability to relate well to customers to ensure business growth (Cooke & Zaby, 2015). A global perspective is important, especially as technology provides us with an ever-shrinking world where soft skills are necessary to cross cultural boundaries (Deepa & Seth, 2013). Employers want

employees that can easily transition from an educational setting to a profession with soft skills already in place (Deepa & Seth, 2013; Robles, 2012; Stewart, et al., 2016).

Employers expect employees to be able to communicate in such a way that businesses will prosper. There is concern that a lack of soft skills will hinder business relationships, and in turn, business profits (Deepa & Seth, 2013; Robles, 2012). Skill sets that are desired in America and abroad should be examined to determine if students are being trained adequately to become productive employees.

In the past, technical skills or hard skills were the primary focus for both industry and education. As technology has improved our ability to work from great distances, a shift in expectations has occurred. Employers now need and expect employees to demonstrate 21st century skills, also known as soft skills, more so than traditional academic abilities. This change has become evident across businesses in various nations and industries. The proficiency of these skills will have a direct impact on relationships and profits. Educational institutions must examine these skills to determine if they are competently preparing students for 21st century needs.

Soft Skills Gap

As business evolves, employers have a different focus on skills that are necessary for success. Employers now want and need effective soft skills from their employees. However, new hires are not demonstrating these competencies. New employees coming directly from educational institutions are generally well adept at using technology but are lacking in their ability to communicate effectively or problem solve. These skills, or lack thereof, will impact how well businesses meet consumer demands. There is also a disconnect between what skills employers want and what students believe are necessary

skills for success. Educational institutions should consider the needs of employers and work to prepare the future workforce.

Employers desire soft skills in their employees. However, they are not seeing evidence of soft skills in applicants (Jones, Baldi, Phillips, & Waikar, 2016; Kyllonen, 2013). While society has become inundated with technology that allows us to communicate faster, it makes people potentially worse communicators. Students are becoming experts with electronic devices, but there is a stark decline in their abilities to socialize with other people (Dovico, 2016). Dovico found that students were more comfortable using their phones to converse with a stranger than they were giving a firm handshake or even producing a smile when meeting a new person. This lack of soft skills hurts their chances for initial employment or longevity in a profession (Nair & Mukherjee, 2015). People's abilities to use soft skills such as conflict resolution or negotiation have eroded, making it more difficult to work well with others (Jones et al., 2016; Tumlin, 2013). Cooke and Zaby (2015) found that in the technology industry the most common skills that were lacking according to employers are communication skills, presentation skills, networking skills, and negotiation skills. Nair and Mukherjee found there are a plethora of engineering graduates in India, but many are not considered employable as they are unfit for the corporate world because of their lack of soft skills. Students are becoming experts with technology but are not proficient when communicating their knowledge and abilities to customers.

Many students are not aware of the discrepancy between hard skills and soft skills. Rainsbury, Hodges, Burchell, and Lay (2002) surveyed students and graduates in New Zealand business schools to determine their perceptions of workplace competencies.

They found a statistically significant difference between graduates' and students' ranking of skills that were considered soft or hard skills, leading to different ideas about what was most important for employment. At the collegiate level in America, students are entering the workforce with more confidence than previous generations. Graduates believe they are high achieving academically, possess a strong drive to excel, and are highly qualified with speaking and listening skills (Stewart et al., 2016; Twenge, Campbell, & Gentile, 2012). These perspectives are in place even though there is evidence of grade inflation and a decrease in SAT scores (Twenge et al., 2016). These student perspectives are in stark contrast to the previously mentioned employer perspectives. As a gap in perception exists, knowledge about each group's perspectives must be shared in order to close the divide.

There is a lack of soft skills from applicants according to employers. New hires are technologically proficient, but do not understand how to interact appropriately in face-to-face situations. Conflict resolution, negotiation skills, and presentation skills are all missing from new employees. Not only do new hires not have the desired soft skills, but they also do not understand that a lack of soft skills hurts their chances for employment. If educational institutions are to meet the challenge of preparing students for their future, soft skills must be improved upon and a realization must take place that soft skills are now expectations for employment in the 21st century.

Workforce Demographics

Persons preparing to leave educational institutions and move on to a career need to be aware of their competition. The demographics and abilities of other persons within the workforce will impact a person's ability to obtain and retain a job. Students and

graduates must consider how to best prove themselves to be a better option for employers in a job market with growing competition. America's workforce demographics are changing. How do new employees stack up against the competition?

Multiple factors are changing the demographics of America's workforce. One factor that will help students going into the workforce is an older median age of current employees. In 1930, the average age of employees was 26; in 1970, it was 28; and in 2000, it was 36 (Tribble, 2009). A growing average age of employees indicates that there are more workers that will retire from the workforce and new openings will become available (Modestino, 2016). In the meantime, older workers provide experience and are generally better at soft skills, making them more attractive to employers (Yuan, Hussain, Hales, & Cotten, 2016). Older adults prefer to communicate in a face-to-face setting. However, older adults are slower to adapt when using technology for communication (Yuan et al., 2016). By contrast, younger employees generally excel at using technology for communication (Harris, Al-Bataineh, & Al-Bataineh, 2016). New hires need to be aware that competition from older workers hurt their chances when comparing soft skills or experience. However, younger adults have the technology skills advantage over older adults in the workforce.

Beyond competition from older workers, there are other groups of people vying for employment. Other demographic considerations that will create more competition for students entering the workforce is the increasing number of females working outside of the home and increasing number of Hispanics in the workforce, which is the fastest growing ethnic group in the United States (Tribble, 2009). There is also an ever-rotating approach to jobs that Americans have more than any other nationality (Hunt, 1995). This

means that Americans change jobs more frequently than citizens of other nations. This rotation creates more competition for people trying to find a job because people already employed are also looking to change positions if they find another option appears to be a better situation for them. Furthermore, from 2006 to 2012, low-skill jobs, jobs requiring a high school diploma, decreased in the United States by 5.4 percent (Modestino, 2016). While soft skills are not immediately addressed with each of these other factors, an increased number of people from various groups attempting to enter the workforce will increase the difficulty of graduates' chances for employment, thus making it imperative that they receive training to prove themselves more qualified than other applicants. Also, for students that do not continue their education beyond high school, the reduction in low-skill jobs will impact their ability to obtain employment. If high school students are to enter the work force with a strong chance of successfully obtaining a job, they should receive training in all necessary skills during their high school tenure.

America's workforce is changing. While more experienced workers are generally considered to be more adept at soft skills, the median age of workers is increasing, providing the potential for more future openings as people retire. However, several demographic groups are also wanting into the workforce, which creates more competition. Graduates should understand that even though there are larger numbers of people retiring out of the workforce, the difficulties of finding employment are as real as ever with more people wanting a career or changing careers. Graduates and the educators preparing them, should evaluate what can be done to give them a competitive edge.

Educational Responsibility

While graduates should consider employers' needs and their competition, people responsible for providing education to future generations should also be aware of how employers' needs have changed and how students need to be prepared to succeed in their career. Legislators and administrators prescribe curriculum to increase test scores that are reflective of hard skills to be mastered. Much of the current curriculum, however, limits a teachers' ability to determine what is taught in a classroom that is not directly tested.

While current educational practice revolves around hard skills and testing, this was not always the case. American educational theorist John Dewey believed that students should experience a wide range of curricular experiences in order to make them mature individuals. Dewey's holistic approach to education stands in stark contrast to many of today's educational views and is a theory that should be considered again. Considering a past framework can provide rationale for future guidance.

John Dewey was an educator and theorist who influenced many education ideals. Dewey (1902) believed that education should focus on a child's experiences along with the curriculum (Ilica, 2016). Dewey viewed education as a way to grow a child, and the curriculum presented a way to organize reality to help prepare a child for life. He believed that curriculum should be as engaging as possible to ensure a student encounter the necessary experiences to excel in the adult world (Ilica, 2016). In the early 20th century, a large number of students were going to work in agriculture but were receiving an education that incorporated information that reached beyond one profession.

In Dewey's time, American society was creating a compulsory education system. The goal of education was to help students mature into productive members of society, and communities were expected to support the school (Schoenfeld, 2016). Teachers were given great freedom in structuring the curriculum and were trusted and supported by community members. Simpson and Jackson (2003) argue that Dewey would not approve of the modern-day structure of education, where legislators dictate curriculum. Rather, curriculum should be dictated by students' needs for maturity into a well-rounded person (Simpson & Jackson, 2003). Today there is much attention given to individualized education, but the emphasis on high-stakes testing dominates classroom pedagogy and curriculum (Stitzlein, 2015). A greater focus on producing well-rounded individuals would take educators back to Dewey's philosophy.

A focus on achievement scores has become more prominent. This shift reflects a desire for schools to create a society that is productive economically and helps America rise to the top internationally in student achievement scores (Stitzlein, 2015). The emphasis on achievement scores forces teachers to instruct certain aspects of the curriculum to a greater degree than other portions. To a lesser extent, parents expect schools to fulfill their personal desires to prepare their children to obtain and maintain a well-paying job (Stitzlein, 2015). Parents that do not have confidence in their local public schools choose to enroll their children in private schools in a belief that they will better prepare their own students for a lucrative career (Boyle & Burns, 2012). The desire for higher achievement scores and parental expectations of higher paying careers for their children have created pressure on public education to emphasize attention on topics that will positively impact these foci to the detriment of other important topics.

John Dewey believed that curriculum existed to help students mature and grow to be well rounded individuals. Dewey argued for a holistic approach to education that included experiential knowledge as well as prescribed curriculum. In modern times, educators have been judged on how well their students perform on assessments that focus on hard skills, thus changing their approach to curriculum. While test scores reflective of hard skills may appease politicians and community members, Dewey's approach provides skills necessary for students to succeed in a modern, professional setting.

Common Core State Standards

Much of what educators teach is dictated to them by external factors. Politicians felt compelled to intervene in schools as test scores became exposed to their constituents. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) created curriculum objectives and expectations that public school teachers and administrators were forced to implement and were held accountable for the success of their students. While these curriculum standards provide a framework for teachers to use with classroom instruction, there is still much debate regarding the effectiveness they provide.

Two key pieces of legislation have directly impacted classroom instruction. In 2003, the NCLB became the first attempt to create a curriculum based on standards from a federal level (Harman, Boden, Karpenski, & Muchowicz, 2016). The premise was that if students displayed mastery on the standards that were deemed most essential for competitiveness with students from other countries, then educators were considered to be effective and competent. The NCLB held teachers accountable by measuring student success on the prescribed standards in the curriculum. If teachers and administrators

were being held accountable, they would improve the educational setting and students would thrive (Harman et al., 2016). The end goal of the NCLB was to have 100% of students measure proficient in reading and mathematics by the 2013 – 2014 school year (Harman et al., 2016). The results from the NCLB were not evaluated, however, because the NCLB was eclipsed by the CCSS which were implemented in 2010 (Ametepee et al., 2014). The CCSS were the second piece of legislation to impact classroom instruction.

There was not an immediate shift from the NCLB to the CCSS. In 2009, the Race to the Top initiative was begun by the Obama administration for states to create standardized tests that linked directly to the soon-to-be-implemented CCSS (Jochim & McGuinn, 2016). The reward was a \$350 million dollar grant. Six consortia were created by various states in an attempt to win the grant money. However, after mergers, only two were left. The government awarded grants to the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) and the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) (Jochim & McGuinn, 2016). These two consortia created assessments to determine the effectiveness for the CCSS.

The CCSS were released in 2010. By 2011, 45 states had agreed to follow the standards and joined one of the assessment consortiums, which included the District of Columbia (Jochim & McGuinn, 2016). The goal of the standards was to create common academic principles in English Language Arts and Mathematics that would ensure all students throughout America graduate high school prepared for college, career, and life (Jochim & McGuinn, 2016). However, a sentiment of unrealistic expectations from the NCLB was still fresh (Harman et al., 2016). There was also a growing concern about a lack of local control that would be allowed under the CCSS, and many community

groups began to speak out against a standardized curriculum and assessment (Jochim & McGuinn, 2016). After the backlash, most states decided to stick with the curriculum, but abandon the consortium's assessments. By 2016, only 20 states were still planning on using a consortium's assessment as opposed to the 45 that started in 2011 (Jochim & McGuinn, 2016). While backlash from communities impacted whether states participated in the consortium's assessments, it did not stop states from using standardized testing.

Some states that do not directly adhere to the CCSS still use curriculum that aligns to the CCSS standards and use standardized assessments that measure how well students have mastered those objectives. These tests, as a parallel to the consortium's assessments, have a similar impact on teachers and classrooms (Mueller & Colley, 2015). While many states either backed out of the CCSS or the use of a consortium's assessments, curriculum and high stakes testing are still affecting classroom instruction.

In Missouri, the Missouri Assessment Program monitors student progress toward the Missouri Learning Standards, which are Missouri content standards (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, n.d.c.). These content standards are based on the CCSS (2010) that the state had initially adopted, but subsequently discontinued. There are still 20 states that use the CCSS and are a part of a consortium that use a standardized assessment to evaluate student performance across multiple states, including California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Maryland, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Vermont, Washington and West Virginia (Jochim & McGuinn, 2016). Missouri, along with the remaining 29 states, have chosen to create their own

assessment program even though the standards are very similar to those in the CCSS (Jochim & McGuinn, 2016). The Missouri Assessment Program created End-Of-Course exams for students in English I, English II, Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, American History, Government, Biology, and Physical Science. In the state of Missouri, all districts must ensure that End Of Course assessments are given to all students in Algebra I, English II, Biology, and American Government before they are allowed to graduate from high school.

One particular core curriculum area that has received more attention due to the NCLB and CCSS has been the English Language Arts curriculum. There has been a greater push for literacy in all subject areas from Kindergarten through grade 12 (Ametepee et al., 2014). These new English Language Arts standards are designed to focus on reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills to also help students with creativity and the ability to adequately relay and respond to messages (Ametepee et al., 2014). Each grade level is expected to cover the four curriculum objectives.

Even though speaking and listening standards comprise half of the objectives set forth by the Common Core State Standards, very little attention is given to them. Calkins, Ehrenworth, and Lehman (2012) devote only 5% of their textbook, written to help teachers adequately incorporate the CCSS standards into their own classrooms, to teaching speaking and listening skills. Palmer (2014a) contends that if reading and writing are half of the four primary objectives covered in the CCSS, then it would stand to reason that Calkins, Ehrenworth, and Lehman would spend approximately 25% of their textbook devoted to each of the four curriculum areas instead of 5%. This lack of attention is due to various factors. One factor is that reading and writing standards are

typically assessed, while listening and speaking standards are not (Aquino-Sterling, 2014; Perreault, 2006; Schoenfeld, 2016; Simpson & Jackson, 2003). For example, the Missouri End of Course exam for English II students is comprised only of reading and writing evaluation (Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, n.d.a.).

Another factor is that teachers believe speaking and listening skills are learned in everyday life. However, speaking and listening skills are more complex than what is learned in passing through everyday communication (Palmer, 2014b; Perreault, 2006). The CCSS “require that young adolescents perform language tasks in increasingly complex and organized ways. In other words, the standards require that young adolescents be introduced to the performance of discursive modes of communication” (Aquino-Sterling, 2014, p. 30). Simply, there is more to teaching speaking and listening skills than merely having the students engage in conversation.

In addition to the previously described concerns with standardized curriculum, educational leaders have expressed concerns over the impact of CCSS on pedagogy in English classrooms. Eppley (2015) argues that there are seven traps that people fall into with the common core curriculum, especially concerning English Language Arts, which limit or hurt the educational process. The first trap is that the curriculum is supposed to be flexible and allow teachers to exercise their professional judgment (Strickland, 2012). However, the sequencing of curriculum is so tight that it makes it difficult for teachers to have the freedom to explore curriculum as they would have in the past (Eppley, 2015). Taking flexibility away from teachers makes it more difficult to teach concepts that are not assessed.

The second trap is that close reading, the instructional practice of having students read a complex text multiple times and process it in multiple ways, is most effective. The idea is that students take a piece of literature without any previous knowledge and make sense of it without the use of outside aides or personal experience (Eppley, 2015). The process of close reading is ambiguous for teachers, also, who are responsible for using strategies to help students better decipher complex texts (Richards & Fisher, 2016). Unfortunately, the absence of outside aids, the disregard for a student's personal experience, and the uncertainty from teachers has the potential to frustrate children and minimize their connection to the relevance of a text (Eppley, 2015; Richards & Fisher, 2016). Understanding content through contextualizing is a key part of the comprehension process (Dewey, 1902; Pearson, 2013). Reading without context goes against our natural tendencies.

The third trap is the limitation on literature that should be read. While the standards do place an emphasis on reading, it narrows the type of literature that should be read and what should be gleaned from it (Eppley, 2015). Eppley notes that non-fiction text becomes the focus with a need to extract technical details. This approach limits other reasons for reading such as enjoyment or creating a broader perspective on world issues (Eppley, 2015). Again, while reading for most purposes is beneficial for students, the limited focus detracts from other objectives.

The fourth trap is dictating what and how students write. Again, while writing is good, the curriculum limits the type of writing that takes place (Eppley, 2015). According to the CCSS criteria, 70% of writing in middle school should be argumentative and 30% should be narrative, with the latter being reduced as the student

progresses into high school (CCSS, 2010). Newkirk (2012) argues that all quality writing comes through narrative, and yet the CCSS establishes that it should be used a minority of the time. The writing percentages dictated by the CCSS places boundaries on how much time teachers can spend on different writing styles.

The fifth and sixth traps deal with a focus on core standards to assist the global economy and connect big business with education. Commercializing schools and modeling them after businesses will improve efficiency and ultimately, national security (Weber, 2007). Ironically, this focus fails to account for the fact that business owners want their employees to be proficient in soft skills, which are inclusive of the very speaking and listening skills that are prescribed, but not assessed (Eppley, 2015; Perreault, 2006). If the CCSS is to achieve its goal of preparing students to become effective businesspersons, it must also account for soft skills.

The seventh trap is that the common core is optional. While it is true that states are not forced to adopt the curriculum, states will be limited in the amount of federal monies received if they do not at least create a standardized curriculum that is similar to objectives covered in CCSS (Drew, 2012; Eppley, 2015). The need for resources is so great, that Eppley believes it is misleading not to consider the standards mandatory. Funding is essential for schools to perform at an optimum level.

There are two key pieces of legislation that have directly impacted classroom instruction. The NCLB and the CCSS have created curriculum standards that teachers must abide by. Alongside the curriculum standards that the CCSS created, assessments were also created to ensure that the standards were taught with fidelity. As noted previously, there are 20 states that both use the CCSS and are a part of a consortium that

use a standardized assessment to evaluate student performance across multiple states (Jochim & McGuinn, 2016). Missouri, along with the remaining 29 states, have chosen to create their own assessment program even though the standards are similar to those in the CCSS (Jochim & McGuinn, 2016). In Missouri, End-of-Course exams were created to assess how well students have learned the curriculum standards that Missouri adopted that mirror the CCSS. There are several concerns brought up by educational leaders over the impact of the CCSS. Eppley (2015) argues that there are seven traps that the CCSS creates. The first trap is that the curriculum is not flexible even though it is advertised to be. It does not allow teachers the freedom to explore curriculum as they previously would have. The second trap is that an emphasis on close reading limits a student's ability to access other materials, including their own experiences, to better understand a text. The third trap is a limitation on fictional literature. The fourth trap dictates the percentage of stylistic writing in a classroom. The fifth and sixth traps deal with a focus to get students to assist the global economy and connect big business with education. This connection is absent of the employers' desire for soft skills, however. The seventh trap is believing that the common core is optional. Given the fact that there is money attached to objectives covered, it is hard to believe that teachers truly feel free to teach as they deem appropriate in their own classrooms.

Classroom Instruction

The government sets curriculum standards, but teachers are responsible for implementing the standards. Today's classroom instruction has been directly impacted by several historical events. These events shaped educational policy. Educational regulations that have been created include accountability in the form of testing. Test

results include repercussions for teachers and school districts that do not meet prescribed standards. These assessments, sometimes known as high-stakes testing, can impact how curriculum is taught. As high-stakes testing has evolved, it has become influential on day-to-day instructional practices within classrooms.

The cold war changed various aspects of American culture. Classroom instruction began to be impacted by high stakes testing when the Soviet Union launched Sputnik in 1957 (Hendricks, 2007; Johnson, 2004). Politically and culturally, a concern grew that American students were not receiving adequate levels of education to keep them competitive against our enemies. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was implemented in 1965. This policy was accompanied by testing expectations of the Title I Evaluation and Reporting System (TIERS). This created a standardized testing expectation in both the fall and the spring (Johnson, 2004). In the 1970's many states created their own standardized tests to determine if a student met minimum education requirements for graduation. As high stakes testing (Hendricks, 2007) evolved in the 1980's, it became clear that scores were being inflated by using the same test questions year after year to make students, teachers, and administrators look effective (Cannell, 1987). Cannell found that 90% of elementary students were scoring above the national average. This was possible because information on the test was made known to teachers, which impacted how they prepared students. Additionally, the results were compared to previous year's results instead of comparing students within the same school year (Cannell, 1987). Cannell's report created an argument over the validity of standardized testing. From the 1990s until 2002, arguments over the needs and benefits of high stakes testing waxed and waned with more or less frequency.

The turn of the 21st century created a renewed emphasis on student achievement. High-stakes testing (Hendricks, 2007) became the norm again with the implementation of the NCLB Act (2002). While the assessments were designed to create accountability for teachers and administrators, research has shown that tests produce a narrowed curriculum in order for teachers to spend the vast majority of instructional time teaching over tested subjects and topics (Berliner, 2011; Johnson, 2004; Palmer & Rangel, 2010). Hodge and Benko (2014) note several other negative impacts of testing such as the use of scripted curricula, cheating on tests by teachers and administrators in an attempt to meet Annual Yearly Progress standards, and a growth in the number of charter schools. Haney (2000) discusses other negative impacts such as an increase in dropout rates, students being improperly diagnosed with special needs to avoid testing, as well as other forms of score manipulation. These actions were taken so that schools would meet Annual Yearly Progress expectations. Schools that did not meet adequate targets would be subject to a reduction in funds, many times to the detriment of schools that had the largest number of students with the fewest resources (Haney, 2000). Teachers felt pressure as their students' success became tied to their job security. If students did not perform well in a particular classroom, a teacher may fall under increased scrutiny and become more likely to teach to the test (Berliner, 2011). While effective teachers can have a strong impact on student achievement, it is difficult to attribute all student success or failure to the quality of any individual teacher (Hamilton, Stecher, & Yuan, 2012). Even with teachers and administrators that play by the rules, Johnson (2004) found teachers and students view the curriculum and high stakes testing as more of a barrier than a support. While the high

stakes test is intended to hold teachers accountable, it has created an atmosphere of frustration, and in some cases, cheating.

These negative reactions can be explained by Campbell's Law. Campbell (1975) asserts that manipulation of results is inevitable in a high stakes setting. When a social indicator takes a prominent role in an environment, the indicator and the people who work with the indicator become corrupted. For example, Berliner (2011) compares it to law students that will be offered prestigious jobs based upon how well they perform in law school. Many law schools will then inflate grades to help their students appear to have high qualifications and land the most prominent jobs. It also helps the law schools to appear better than other institutions (Berliner, 2011). This effect can be applied to any setting where pressure to perform is linked to an evaluation.

Campbell's Law is found when examining public education. The improper actions by educators would probably not have occurred had the pressure for performance been reduced (Nichols & Berliner, 2007). A common response that is unfortunate, but understandable, is curriculum narrowing. In a review of multiple studies, Berliner (2011) asserts that time spent on standardized, tested curriculum received an average increase of 37% to 47% more time than non-tested curriculum. This phenomena created a reduction of topics and standards that were not subjected to the same high-stakes testing. While this is true for many areas, it becomes the rationale for why English Language Arts teachers are neglecting the speaking and listening standards (Perreault, 2006). Curriculum narrowing may help increase standardized test scores, but it hinders the breadth of content covered.

Curriculum narrowing is also found early in a child's educational experience. Barksdale-Ladd and Thomas (2000) discovered that teachers openly admitted to spending extra time on tested areas and were even encouraged to teach to the test. Nearly 75% of teachers involved in the study admitted to discontinuing lessons that were not directly assessed (Barksdale-Ladd & Thomas, 2000). Elementary and middle school students are not all receiving the same curriculum if teachers are discontinuing lessons.

Teachers use a variety of methods to prepare their students for assessments. Mehrens and Kaminski (1989) identified seven test preparation typologies that teachers use to prepare students for standardized assessments. The first, general instruction on objectives not determined by looking at the objectives, is considered highly ethical and is what should happen within a classroom using best practices. The last test preparation typology, practice on the same test, is considered unethical and detracts from time spent on all curriculum that is not specifically listed on the exam. Haladyna, Nolen, and Haas (1991) proposed a similar study identifying nine practices considered forms of teaching to the test and listed them from ethical to highly unethical. Smith (1991) also created test preparation typologies providing eight categories, ranging from no special preparation to blatant cheating. The more ethical the typology, the more valid the student scores are believed to be (Haladyna, Nolen, & Haas, 1991; Mehrens & Kaminski, 1989; Smith, 1991). Each of these studies were concerned with how test preparation typologies were ethical and reflective of true concept mastery.

The test preparation typologies have been found at a variety of grade levels throughout various locations. Teachers at different grade levels have been found to use teaching to the test strategies (Lai & Waltman, 2008; Welsh, Eastwood, & D'Agostino,

2014). Welsh, Eastwood, and D'Agostino studied the prevalence of teaching to the test strategies with a particular focus on third and fifth grade teachers. Lai and Waltman had a broader scope of study, focusing on a large, representative sample of teachers in public schools throughout the state of Iowa. They found that within their state, high school teachers were the least likely to teach to the test and narrow curriculum, although teaching to the test strategies were still used. Teachers in Louisiana felt limited by curriculum that was the focus of standardized tests, while other teachers appreciated the fact that the assessments and expectations were clearly established as it removed the guesswork of what objectives in the curriculum were essential (Carr, 2012). Although the tested objectives were clear, how the tested objectives related to comprehension of the curriculum was not clear. Hendricks (2007) found there was not a significant difference between students that were exposed to high-stakes testing and those that were not when comparing mastery of skills. The only exception was for students at a lower socio-economic level (Hendricks, 2007). Despite mixed reactions about the CCSS from teachers, there is little evidence to support a claim that students who are engaged in high stakes testing learn significantly more information than those that do not (Hendricks, 2007; Phelps, 2016; Welsh, Eastwood, D'Agostino, 2014). Test preparation typologies are prevalent at various grade levels and a variety of locations, but the tests that are being used to assess the students do not clearly improve content mastery.

Test results are the subject of much scrutiny. The public, politicians, and educators make many inferences based upon the results of standardized tests (Mehrens & Kaminski, 1989). A parent infers their child will perform well in another school year or in a work setting if their test results are high. Patrons assume that their local school is

adequately preparing students for the work force by examining test results (Mehrens & Kaminski, 1989). Since the tests do not cover all objectives, however, inferences should be limited.

Historical events have led to policies that impact instruction in public school classrooms in an effort to make American students more competitive globally. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act was created during the cold war and was accompanied with high stakes testing. The NCLB and the CCSS provide a modern framework for curriculum and assessments. The emphasis on testing included accountability measures that penalize teachers who do not have students that meet certain levels of proficiency. Teachers feel pressure from high-stakes testing and some engage in instructional practices that are unethical. The unethical practices can be explained by Campbell's law, which states that when a social indicator takes a prominent role in an environment, the indicator and the people who work with the indicator become corrupted. While not considered unethical, the test preparation typology of curriculum narrowing is used when a teacher neglects part of the curriculum. Although curriculum narrowing is done for the purpose of students' receiving higher marks on their standardized assessments, there is not conclusive evidence that students master concepts at a greater level simply because of curriculum narrowing. For the purposes of this study, curriculum narrowing may be directly impacting the soft skills that students are or are not obtaining. This barrier must be studied so that it may be addressed to help ensure soft skills training is requisite in classrooms.

The Impact of Technology on Soft Skills

Technology has become an everyday part of life, particularly for younger generations. Technology has impacted classroom instruction and soft skills application. Many schools have now implemented one-to-one technology, putting a device in the hands of each student. While technology is designed to improve our lives, it has also impacted how we communicate. Communication scholars believe the increased use of technology creates an increase in social anxiety and hinders soft skills. Educational institutions, however, are moving toward a one-to-one technology initiative to increase their students' access to knowledge. Teachers and administrators believe the expanded availability of technology has led to an increase in mastery of curriculum and that it provides another avenue for students to communicate with their peers.

Technology has become pervasive in the 21st century. Technology has created the ability to communicate through multiple forms of media, which impacts a person's ability to communicate in a face-to-face encounter (Cooren, 2012; Pettegrew & Day, 2015). Young adults now prefer to communicate through social media as opposed to a personal meeting or intermingling in a small group (Pettegrew & Day, 2015). Younger generations present a ventriloquial self that is more important to them than their actual selves that they present in face-to-face interactions (Cooren, 2012). Simply put, they are able to present themselves in ways that mask their true characteristics. They are also afforded additional time to process how they want to respond, which is not possible in a physical encounter (Cooren, 2012). As traditional forms of communication become less prominent, students receive less experience engaging in face-to-face communication that previously came naturally.

Mobile technology has exacerbated this phenomenon. Youth and young adults have accepted cell phones and tablets as a normal part of life (Walsh, White, & Young, 2008). Computer-mediated forms of communication (CMC), which now are found as cell phones along with regular computer usage, can intensify communication apprehension, which hinders soft skills and impacts a person's feeling of competency when communicating with others in a face-to-face setting (Hammock & Moon, 2013; Hwang, 2011). While CMC can support someone with communication apprehension by allowing them time to formulate their thoughts before engaging another person in a conversation, it amplifies their anxiety when forced to use the phone or work with another individual in person (Haythornthwaite, 2007). From a communication perspective, the increased use of technology has hindered soft skills development in younger generations (Cooren, 2012; Hammock & Moon, 2013; Haythornthwaite, 2007; Hwang, 2011; Pettegrew & Day, 2015; Walsh, White, & Young, 2008). The ease of access to technology has only compounded these effects.

In educational circles, technology has been used to provide greater access to information for all students. The NCLB Act (2002) tried to eliminate the digital divide so that all students would be technologically literate by the end of the eighth grade (Harris, Al-Bataineh, & Al-Bataineh, 2016). Part D of NCLB targeted academic achievement by expanding the use of technology in classrooms. School administrators used this policy to try to improve engagement with curriculum. As more schools put a device in the hands of every student, standardized assessments also have required schools to use online testing (Harris et al., 2016). The connection between technology and assessment is not likely to change.

Technology increases the ways in which students can interact with content. Shapley, Sheehan, Maloney, and Caranikas-Walker (2011) claim that technology makes learning more immersive and improves students' small group interactions. As the teacher becomes more of a facilitator, the technology provides a platform for students to interact with each other to create presentations supported with visual aids. Group problem-solving associated with lessons implementing technology also create environments where students interact more with each other both online and face-to-face (Shapley et al. 2011). Teachers see academic gains and appreciate the impact of technology on learning, although the use of technology and preparation that goes with it makes the teaching process more complex (Edwards, 2012). Teachers must adapt their pedagogy to use technology effectively.

Technology has become a normal part of life. Communication scholars claim that technology is harming soft skills. Young adults are more comfortable using their phones or computers to communicate than they are dealing with another person face-to-face. This has created an increase in anxiety levels for younger generations when they are forced to interact with other people in a live encounter. Due to NCLB, school administrators are trying to put computer devices into the hands of all students. Educators appreciate the academic gains they have witnessed and claim that students engage each other more through small-group interactions. While there is not a consensus regarding the impact of technology on speaking and listening skills, it is a barrier to be considered in this study.

Lack of Training

Another factor impacting speaking and listening skills taught in the classroom is the lack of training received by an English Language Arts teacher while earning their undergraduate degrees. Teachers who do not receive specific training on soft skills can be intimidated when deciding whether to teach concepts that go beyond their formal education. While not all universities cover the same information, there is evidence to suggest that some teaching programs are not inclusive of soft skill integration (Ngang, Chan, & Vetriveilmany, 2015; Ngang, Yunus, & Hashim, 2015). One reason why soft skills are not taught to students in their undergraduate teacher training is that it is difficult to assess, thus not as pertinent to a teacher's success. While practical steps are available for soft skills training for future teachers, the extent of implementation is not clear.

Not all undergraduate academic programs include speaking and listening instruction in the curriculum. Ngang, Chan, & Vetriveilmany (2015) found that soft skills were not directly taught in Malaysian universities. Professors claimed that there were too many students and not enough time to cover content that students would not be responsible for teaching and assessing when they became employed. While the professors saw the value in soft skills training, it did not seem feasible with their current structure (Ngang, Chan, & Vetriveilmany, 2015). In America, textbooks such as *Pathways to the Common Core* are available for both pre-service teachers and veteran teachers (Calkins, Ehrenworth, & Lehman, 2012). Unfortunately, only one chapter of the book is devoted to the speaking and listening standards. If pre-service teachers are not taught soft skill training by professors or textbooks, it will be difficult for them to teach those same skills to the next generation.

A lack of soft skills training for teachers also impacts their ability to deal with conflict on the job. Ngang, Yunus, and Hashim, (2015) discovered first-year teachers felt inadequate dealing with parents, superiors, and occasionally colleagues. As persons responsible for modeling soft skills to their students, they felt ill prepared (Ngang, Yunus, & Hashim, 2015). Teachers are constantly communicating with students, peers, and parents. They must be trained to deal with the various issues that arise.

Another factor impacting the level of training a teacher receives during their undergraduate education is the difficulty of measuring interpersonal skills because they are intangible. There is a lack of understanding of how to integrate all four language skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Menon & Alamelu, 2009). Menon and Alamelu list some practical suggestions to help with implementation: change in teaching methodology (e.g., debates, group discussions, case analyses, role plays, and business games), classroom management (focus on time management and student participation as opposed to a lecture format), and assessment and evaluation (consider interest/attitude, participation, assertiveness, presentation skills, and problem-solving competence). The goal is to have English teachers become more focused on facilitation and less focused on direct instruction to allow students more opportunities to practice soft skills.

An academic program's failure to teach soft skills, in particular speaking and listening skills, to future educators impacts the teachers' abilities to adequately teach future generations those same skills. Professors have admitted to the difficulty of teaching soft skills, and novice teachers have voiced frustration over not feeling prepared for the various expectations that have been placed upon their ability to use soft skills. As soft skills are difficult to evaluate, teachers at both the university level and secondary

level may shy away from them. The potential lack of training is another barrier that is analyzed in this study. If a lack of training is found to be a culprit in minimizing soft skills taught to high school students, results should be shared so universities can adapt appropriately.

Summary

The 21st century is experiencing a change in the workforce. Employers desire soft skills from their employees (Jones, Baldi, Phillips, & Waikar, 2016; Kyllonen, 2013). This desire is prevalent across a variety of industries and nations (Cooke & Zaby, 2015; Schulz, 2008; Nair & Mukherjee, 2015). The proficiency of these skills has a direct impact on relationships and profits (Deepa & Seth, 2013). As changes take place, people entering the workforce and those who are responsible for preparing future employees, should take notice.

While employer needs are changing, the skills that students bring with them into the workforce are not adapting adequately. Employers are noticing a lack of soft skills from applicants (Jones, Baldi, Phillips, & Waikar, 2016; Kyllonen, 2013). New hires are technologically proficient, but do not have strong interpersonal skills (Dovico, 2016). Conflict resolution, negotiation skills, and presentation skills are abilities that new hires do not possess (Jones, Baldi, Phillips, & Waikar, 2016; Tumlin, 2013). The gap between employer expectations and employee skills has created a cause for concern.

There are additional factors that graduates should be aware of as they prepare to enter the workforce. While more experienced workers are generally considered to be more adept at soft skills, the median age of workers is increasing, providing the potential for more openings as older workers retire (Modestino, 2016; Yuan, Hussain, Hales, &

Cotten, 2016). However, several demographic groups are also seeking employment, which creates more competition (Tribble, 2009). As students prepare to compete for a position in their chosen career, they must make themselves marketable by improving their soft skills.

Educators should examine what they can do to prepare students for life outside of school. Dewey (1902) argued for a holistic approach to education that included experiential knowledge as well as prescribed curriculum. Giving students experiences that help them to mature should be included into classroom instruction, even if they are not formally evaluated. Speaking and listening skills are beneficial across multiple careers and avenues of life.

There have been two pieces of legislation that have directed educational objectives. The NCLB (2002) and the CCSS (2010) have established curriculum guidelines for teachers. States have either adopted the CCSS or have adopted standards that are similar to ensure that all students, regardless of where they live, are graduating high school prepared for college, career, and life (Jochim & McGuinn, 2016). While some soft skills are included in the speaking and listening English standards, there are several factors that limit the attention English teachers give to those topics (Eppley, 2015). If the CCSS is followed, students will learn some soft skills under the speaking and listening objectives.

Teachers have difficulty covering the prescribed curriculum due to various factors. Classroom instruction has been impacted by high-stakes testing (Johnson, 2004). There are strategies that classroom teachers use to increase their students' scores on standardized assessments, which limits the curriculum to teach what is assessed (Lai &

Waltman, 2008; Welsh, Eastwood, & D'Agostino, 2014). While previously mentioned studies suggest that instructional time on speaking and listening standards are minimized due to these techniques, it is still unclear if Missouri English high school teachers are engaging in this approach.

The use of technology is another factor that is a detriment to soft skill learning. Communication scholars have argued that technology has changed how people interact with one another (Cooren, 2012; Hammock & Moon, 2013; Haythornthwaite, 2007; Hwang, 2011; Pettegrew & Day, 2015; Walsh, White, & Young, 2008). This change has created potential gaps in acquiring soft skill abilities. However, many in the education realm believe that technology in classrooms has had a positive effect on how students interact with each other as it provides an incentivizing way of working in small groups (Edwards, 2012; Shapley et al., 2011). While technology has been found to improve educational outcomes, it has also been found to hinder soft skill learning.

The instruction an undergraduate student receives at a university in preparation of a career as a teacher will affect how they perform as a teacher. The lack of training on soft skills impacts a future teacher's ability to providing instruction on soft skills in the classroom (Menon & Alamelu, 2009; Ngang, Chan, & Vetriveilmany, 2015; Ngang, Yunus, & Hashim, 2015). If university professors are not integrating soft skills training into education courses, then teachers are not going to feel adequate in their own ability to use soft skills (Ngang, Chan, & Vetriveilmany, 2015; Ngang, Yunus, & Hashim, 2015). If curriculum changes at the university level provide more preparation for future teachers on soft skills, more integration of speaking and listening skills should take place at the secondary level.

This chapter included background information, organized through a funnel to understand the problem of students not prepared with adequate soft skills for employment down to the barriers that keep them from attaining those skills in the classroom setting. Chapter Three includes the methodology for this study involving the balance of standards taught and what barriers impede certain objectives. It is also an overview of the quantitative approach for this study. Chapter Four includes an analysis of the data that was reported in Chapter Three. Chapter Five provides reflection of the study and implications as well as recommendations.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this non-experimental, quantitative study was to determine whether the speaking and listening objectives in the English Language Arts curriculum at the sophomore high school level in the state of Missouri are taught in correlation to the reading and writing objectives in classrooms. Barriers to the implementation of speaking and listening skills were analyzed to determine their significance on curriculum implementation. Two research questions and null hypotheses were used to guide the research.

The research was designed to analyze teaching practices and perceptions regarding speaking and listening objectives and potential barriers and was conducted using a survey instrument. The survey was divided into five parts. The first section was used to answer the first research question and null hypothesis. The remaining four sections were used to answer the second research question and null hypothesis.

A new survey was created for this study. There are various other studies that have been conducted to examine soft skills; however, none were found that analyzed how speaking and listening skills correlated to the implementation of reading and writing skills or the potential barriers. The survey went through a pilot study to ensure a valid and reliable instrument. After the survey instrument was found to be valid and reliable, it was sent out to administrators and English II teachers throughout the state of Missouri.

The final survey was sent to school districts that have high schools throughout the state of Missouri and were listed with the Department of Elementary and Secondary

Education. The surveys were sent to an administrator, a principal if the district had only one high school, or the superintendent if there were multiple high schools within the school district. If the superintendent or principal consented to allow the research, he/she was requested to send the survey to the district's English II teacher(s).

The survey was created using the QuestionPro survey software. Survey results were collected by QuestionPro and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). A Pearson's r analysis was used to determine correlations between responses.

The results of the survey provided answers to the two research questions and hypotheses. The results allowed for an examination of relationships between English objectives as well as relationships between potential barriers and the speaking and listening objectives.

Research Questions and Null Hypotheses

The primary goal of the study was to determine if speaking and listening standards were being neglected. Another goal was to determine the impact of identified barriers to the implementation of speaking and listening skills instruction. The research was designed to examine two phenomena. The first research question addressed the extent to which speaking and listening skills are taught in correlation with reading and writing skills in the English Language Arts curriculum. The second research question addressed the impact that identified barriers have on the implementation of speaking and listening skills instruction. The survey instrument asked participants to examine their own practices in order to address the two research questions. The following questions and null hypotheses were established to explore these phenomena.

- Q1: What is the relationship between time spent on reading and writing skills and time spent on speaking and listening skills in English II classrooms?
- H₀₁: There is no statistically significant relationship between time spent on reading and writing skills and time spent on speaking and listening skills in the English II classroom.
- Q2: What is the relationship between the perceived barriers and the implementation of speaking and listening skills in English II classrooms?
- H₀₂: There is no statistically significant relationship between the perceived barriers and the implementation of speaking and listening skills in English II classrooms.

The answers to these questions were addressed by analyzing survey results from English II teachers who were responsible for teaching the English Language Arts curriculum to sophomores in high school and are responsible for administering the mandatory End of Course exam for English II given throughout the state of Missouri.

Research Design

The research was designed to best answer the research questions. English Language Arts II teachers in the State of Missouri were surveyed to determine the extent to which speaking and listening soft skills are taught alongside reading and writing hard skills. School administrators for public school districts in the State of Missouri were contacted through email. A survey was sent to an administrator, a principal if the district had only one high school, or the superintendent if there were multiple high schools within the school district. Teachers in school districts that offered an English II class were eligible to participate in the study.

The research setting was the State of Missouri. While only one state was used in the selection process, the results may be applicable to other states that also use standardized assessments for reading and writing but include speaking and listening standards in their English Language Arts curriculum that are not a part of their standardized assessment. The State of Missouri was selected due to the mandatory state assessment at the sophomore English level. These phenomena may create a narrowing effect on the curriculum, limiting the teaching of soft skills in the English Language Arts classrooms.

The timeline of this study was four weeks. After the district administrator, superintendent or principal, was sent an email with the survey, he/she was contacted a second time after two weeks passed without a response. If there was not a response after the second attempt, it was assumed the administrator did not provide consent or did not desire for his/her institution to participate in the study.

Participants

The participants in this quantitative study were English Language Arts teachers in the State of Missouri who were responsible for teaching information assessed on End of Course exams in English II classrooms. High school English II teachers in the state of Missouri were chosen as participants for two reasons. First, they were a convenience population from the researcher's home state of Missouri. Finding contact information about each school district was easily accessible through the state's education website. Second, and more importantly, they were teachers that taught curriculum that included the soft skills of speaking and listening but were not required to evaluate those skills on Missouri's standardized End of Course exam. The participants could reflect on their own

practices as they are responsible for implementing both assessed and non-assessed curriculum.

Consent

Consent was needed from participants in order to conduct ethical research. Consent for the study was sought from both district administrators and teachers participating in the study. A request to participate in the study was sent via e-mail to the district administrator, superintendent, or principal. If the administrator granted consent, the administrator was requested to distribute the survey to all English Language Arts teachers who are responsible for English II curriculum and administration of the End of Course exam. Administrators who distributed the survey acknowledged consent for the study to be conducted at their high schools (see Appendix A). The sophomore level English teachers who were sent the survey from the administrator were asked to provide their own consent when completing the survey that stated, "By completing this form I give my consent to participate in this study." Participants had to either choose "Agree" or "Disagree." If they chose "Disagree," they were still able to complete the survey, but their responses were not analyzed when the results were evaluated. While email addresses were collected voluntarily, individual teacher names were not. Teachers could use a personal email address or a school email address. If the teachers used a school email address it would be possible to link them to their school district. However, email addresses were not reported and were not used aside from determining the winner of the \$50 Amazon gift card drawing. All participants had the option to not complete the survey or stop at any time (see Appendix B). The survey, informed consent letter, ethics certificate, and Research Review Board (RRB) application were sent to the RRB at

Southwest Baptist University for initial approval. The RRB gave approval to conduct research on September 26, 2018.

Selection/Sampling

A convenience sampling technique was used. The entire population of English II high school level teachers in the state of Missouri was requested to participate in the study; however, the participants were those who chose to participate. A directory of public-school districts was found on the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's website. According to the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, there are 461 districts in the state of Missouri with secondary schools. Each district was chosen as it met the necessary criteria of teaching English II curriculum and proctoring the End of Course exam for English II. Email addresses for superintendents and principals could be found on the website, but teachers' email addresses were not available. A total of 84 teachers completed the survey from 70 school districts, and it was determined that 370 surveys were not completed. This provided a response rate of 22.7%. A minimum of 64 responses were required to accurately use a Pearson's r analyses. The participants were convenient, but also an appropriate reflection of the research to be analyzed.

Survey Instrumentation

Data acquired for this research was collected through a survey process. The survey used a six-point Likert scale survey (see Appendix D). The final survey was comprised of 29 questions. The survey was divided into five sections: (a) time spent intentionally teaching the four English objectives, (b) type of test prep typologies used, (c) perceptions of the End of Course exam, (d) technology in the classroom, and (e)

undergraduate preparation for teaching speaking and listening skills. Each of these five sections were necessary to answer the research questions. Results from the first section were used to answer the first research question and null hypothesis. Results from sections two through five were used to answer the second research question and null hypothesis.

The first section examined the frequency of implementing the four primary objectives of reading, writing, speaking, and listening in the English Language Arts curriculum. The frequency of implementation was assessed to determine if teachers are consciously focusing on reading and writing objectives as well as the speaking and listening standards. This section was integral to the purpose of this study to analyze if teachers are consciously focusing on the reading and writing objectives over the speaking and listening objectives. If a negative correlation was found, more would need to be done to spread an awareness of the importance of speaking and listening skills to help prepare students for college and career.

The first section, questions 1-12, focused on the first research question (see appendix D). Survey questions 1, 2, 5, 6, 9, and 10 focused on the frequency English II teachers intentionally taught reading and writing skills as prescribed in the curriculum. The frequency of teaching reading and writing objectives was divided by unit (questions 1 and 2), by week (questions 5 and 6), and by day (questions 9 and 10). Those responses were cross applied to questions 3, 4, 7, 8, 11, and 12, which asked about the frequency of speaking and listening implementation. The frequency of teaching speaking and listening objectives was divided by unit (questions 3 and 4), by week (questions 7 and 8), and by day (questions 11 and 12). The responses were checked for their alpha level. The alpha

level used to assess the null hypothesis was .05. The responses were then analyzed to determine the strength of correlations between the frequency in which reading and writing skills were taught along with the speaking and listening skills. The correlations that were found helped to answer the first research question.

The second section, survey questions 13-19, examined how test preparation typologies impacted the implementation of speaking and listening skills. The responses from survey questions 13-19 were cross tabulated with responses found in survey questions 3, 4, 7, 8, 11, and 12 to determine if there were any relationships between frequency of teaching speaking and listening skills and the potential barrier of test preparation. The first two typologies listed from the research of Mehrens and Kaminski (1989) would not create a narrowed curriculum as they are a review of all taught curriculum. The third through seventh typologies would narrow the curriculum in the manner previously discussed. For the purposes of this study, teachers that engaged in the first or second typology at a statistically significant level would not eliminate speaking and listening objectives for testing purposes. Teachers that used typologies three through seven at a statistically significant level were considered to narrow the curriculum as the End of Course exam questions are only reflective of the reading and writing objectives.

The third section, survey questions 20-23, examined the impact of standardized assessments on the implementation of curriculum objectives by cross tabulating with responses to survey questions 3, 4, 7, 8, 11, and 12. Teachers' perceptions of the End of Course standardized assessment for English II were analyzed to determine if teachers altered their pedagogy because of the standardized assessment. Feelings of pressure or expectations of student success on the End of Course exam could create a barrier to

teaching non-assessed material. It is possible that teachers narrow curriculum because of pressure for their students to perform even if they are not using a narrowing test preparation typology.

The fourth section, questions 24-26, examined teachers' perceptions of technology in the classroom. Those responses were cross tabulated with responses found in questions 3, 4, 7, 8, 11, and 12. Perceptions were analyzed to determine if technology use was considered a barrier to teaching speaking and listening skills. As there is not a consensus whether technology is beneficial for communication skills or educational success, it should be considered as a potential barrier. It is possible that teachers are not focusing on speaking and listening skills because of their perception of technology.

The fifth section, questions 27-29, examined undergraduate training of speaking and listening skills. Those responses were cross applied to determine the strength of relationships with the time spent teaching speaking and listening skills found in questions 3, 4, 7, 8, 11, and 12. Undergraduate training was analyzed to determine if it was a barrier to teaching speaking and listening skills. If teachers were not educated on how to teach or analyze speaking and listening skills during their collegiate training, it is possible the lack of training creates an avoidance, lack of knowledge, or unrecognized need to teach speaking and listening objectives. The responses to these barriers were analyzed in relationship to the responses to teaching speaking and listening skills. If correlations were found, the barriers would be shown to impact the implementation of speaking and listening skills in English II classrooms.

Additionally, there were two questions asking the participants about the number of years of experience and email addresses. Responses to the years of experience

question were collected to focus on teachers that had at least two years of experience since first-year teachers would not be familiar with the EOC English II test and may not be able to reflect on their test preparation typologies. First year teacher responses were not included in the analysis. Email addresses were collected to contact the winners of the drawing for participants who responded to the survey and wished to be entered into the drawing for a \$50 Amazon gift card.

Pilot Survey

A new survey was created for this research. Although other studies have analyzed soft skills, there was not a research instrument found that could be used to answer the research questions. After the initial survey was constructed, a pilot test was conducted to check for validity and reliability.

Pilot survey validity. The pilot survey was tested for content validity. A panel of six experts provided feedback as to whether the questions were adequately analyzing what the researcher had intended to measure. The panel of experts included five high school English teachers and one principal who were directly responsible for overseeing the implementation of curriculum. Each panel member was given the initial survey and asked to score each survey question on a scale of -1, 0, or 1. A score of -1 indicated that the panel expert did not believe that the question was measuring what the researcher intended. A score of 0 meant that the panel expert believed it neither helped nor hurt the analysis of what was measured. A score of 1 meant that the panel expert believed that the survey question was measuring what it was intended to analyze. Scores were added and then divided by the number of responses to determine if the percentage for each question met the required minimum score of 67% as was

determined by the Rovinelli and Hambleton's (1977) Index of Item-Objective Congruency. The validity scores of all the survey questions exceeded the minimum (67%) required to be deemed valid, with the lowest score being 83% (see Table 1). After validity was determined, the researcher tested for reliability.

Table 1

Content Validity Expert Results

Question #	Percentage	Question #	Percentage
1	100	18	100
2	100	19	100
3	83	20	100
4	83	21	83
5	83	22	100
6	83	23	100
7	100	24	100
8	100	25	100
9	100	26	100
10	100	27	100
11	83	28	100
12	83	29	100
13	83	30	100
14	83	31	83
15	100	32	100
16	100	33	100
17	83		

Note. Percentages of 67% or above means the question was valid. A score of 100% would be a perfect score.

Pilot survey reliability. After the survey questions were found to be valid by an expert panel, reliability was tested. The survey was distributed to seven districts in southwest Missouri. After survey results were collected from the pilot study, reliability was tested to ensure that the questions were receiving consistent responses. Each category for research received a minimum of four questions devoted to the subject matter. The various questions allowed for the test–retest reliability to be measured. The pilot survey applied Cronbach’s alpha to determine if the results were consistent in each section. There were a total of 28 completed surveys.

The first three sections had an acceptable alpha level (see Table 2). Section D had a Cronbach’s alpha of .172, but with question 28 removed from the pilot survey it reached an acceptable level of .791 (see Appendix C). Section E had a Cronbach’s alpha of -.289, but with question 30 removed from the pilot survey it reached an acceptable level of .731 (see Appendix C). For the final survey, questions 28 and 30 were removed so that each section had an acceptable level of alpha (see Appendix D).

Table 2

Cronbach’s Alpha Reliability Results

Section A	.823
Section B	.805
Section C	.800
Section D	.791
Section E	.731

Note. Percentages of .70 or above means the section was reliable.

Final survey. After validity and reliability were determined, the final survey was created. The wording for each of the initial questions remained intact. There were two questions removed for the final survey. The final survey instrument was then created in the QuestionPro software. The final survey link was provided in the letter (email) sent to the principals and superintendents (see Appendix A).

The survey was comprised of five sections. Results from the first section were used to answer the first research question and null hypothesis. Results from the remaining four sections were used to answer the second research question and null hypothesis. The survey went through a pilot process to verify validity and reliability. After two questions were removed to reach an acceptable level of alpha, the final survey was distributed.

Data Analysis

The relationship between time spent on assessed and non-assessed objectives was determined. Data were analyzed to determine whether a relationship existed between time spent on non-assessed objectives and identified barriers. Responses gathered through QuestionPro were downloaded into SPSS and evaluated. The responses were evaluated using a Pearson's r to determine the relationship between time spent on assessed and non-assessed objectives. Results from the frequency of teaching speaking and listening objectives were then cross applied to the potential barriers using a Pearson's r to determine if there were statistically significant relationships.

Summary

The primary goal of the study was to determine if speaking and listening standards are being taught in relationship with reading and writing objectives in English

II classrooms in the state of Missouri. The secondary goal was to determine the impact of identified barriers on the implementation of speaking and listening skills instruction. The first research question aimed to uncover the relationship between time spent teaching speaking and listening skills along with reading and writing skills. The second research question aimed to uncover the impact that identified barriers have on the implementation of speaking and listening skills.

The research design focused on answering the two research questions. The research design instrument was a new, quantitative survey comprised of questions on a six-point Likert-type scale. The survey instrument was comprised of five sections. The first section was used to answer the first research question, while the remaining four sections were used to look for relationships between potential barriers and the implementation of speaking and listening skills. Correlations were found using a Pearson's *r*.

A new survey was created for this research. While other studies have examined soft skills implementation in various settings, there was not an instrument that could be found that would adequately analyze a response for the two research questions. The survey was created and tested for validity and reliability. After the pilot test showed the survey to be valid and reliable, the final survey was distributed.

Consent to participate was requested at two levels. Initially, permission was sought with the school administrator for the district to participate in the study. If the school administrator consented to participate, the administrator was requested to forward the survey to their English II teachers. English II teachers who received the survey were asked to give consent on the survey introduction.

The data were analyzed after a total of four weeks of research. Correlations were examined by downloading responses into the SPSS software. A Pearson's r was used to find all possible correlations. Results of the study are presented in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The purpose of this study was to determine if speaking and listening skills were being taught in relationship to reading and writing skills. Relationships between the frequency of teaching speaking and listening skills and potential barriers were also analyzed to determine which factors have the greatest impact on soft skills implementation into English II classrooms in the state of Missouri. There were two research questions developed to guide the research. Research question one analyzed the relationship between time spent on reading and writing skills and time spent on speaking and listening skills. The relationship was tested using a Pearson's r . The first section of the survey analyzed the relationship between teaching the four English objectives (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) and the frequency by which they are taught (every unit, week, or day). The relationships provided the answer for the first research question and null hypothesis. Research question two analyzed the correlation between time spent teaching speaking and listening skills and teachers' perceptions of the barriers. Correlations were assessed using a Pearson's r . The second section of the survey analyzed the relationships between teaching speaking and listening every unit, week, or day and the barrier of test preparation for a standardized exam. The third section of the survey analyzed the relationships between teaching the speaking and listening every unit, week, or day and the barrier of perception about the End of Course exam. The fourth section of the survey analyzed the relationships between teaching speaking and listening every unit, week, or day and the barrier of technology in the classroom. The fifth section of the survey analyzed the relationships between teaching speaking and listening every

unit, week, or day and perceptions about undergraduate training. Results from sections two through five were used to provide the answer for the second research question and null hypothesis.

The participants in this quantitative study were English Language Arts teachers in the State of Missouri who were responsible for teaching information assessed on End of Course exams in English II classrooms. Only teachers with two or more years of experience had their responses analyzed. A total of 84 teachers completed the survey from 70 school districts, and it was determined that 370 surveys were not completed. This provided a response rate of 22.7%.

Assumptions were tested to determine the validity of the Pearson's r (see Table 3). Analyses showed the relationships to be linear. None of the variables were normally distributed, as were assessed by Shapiro-Wilk's test ($p > .05$), but there were no outliers. The robust return rate allowed for the Pearson's r to be used for correlational study, even though variables were not normally distributed.

Table 3

Assumption Testing: Shapiro-Wilk

	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
Q1-Unit Reading	0.597	84	0.000
Q2-Unit Writing	0.707	84	0.000
Q3-Unit Speaking	0.909	84	0.000
Q4-Unit Listening	0.889	84	0.000
Q5-Weekly Reading	0.626	84	0.000
Q6-Weekly Writing	0.785	84	0.000
Q7-Weekly Speaking	0.934	84	0.000
Q8-Weekly Listening	0.916	84	0.000
Q9-Daily Reading	0.841	84	0.000
Q10-Daily Writing	0.901	84	0.000
Q11-Daily Speaking	0.921	84	0.000
Q12-Daily Listening	0.925	84	0.000
Q13-Test Prep Typology 1	0.709	84	0.000
Q14-Test Prep Typology 2	0.839	84	0.000
Q15-Test Prep Typology 3	0.831	84	0.000
Q16-Test Prep Typology 4	0.853	84	0.000
Q17-Test Prep Typology 5	0.879	84	0.000
Q18-Test Prep Typology 6	0.815	84	0.000
Q19-Test Prep Typology 7	0.897	84	0.000
Q20-Impact of EOC on Objectives	0.919	84	0.000
Q21-EOC Impact on Frequency of Objectives Taught	0.922	84	0.000
Q22-EOC Pressure	0.841	84	0.000
Q23-EOC Consequences	0.930	84	0.000
Q24-Technology Supports Reading/Writing	0.788	84	0.000
Q25-Technology Supports Speaking/Listening	0.866	84	0.000
Q26-Technology Improves Speaking/Listening	0.900	84	0.000
Q27-Felt Unprepared When Entering Profession	0.917	84	0.000
Q28-Would Teach Speaking/Listening More if Trained More	0.908	84	0.000
Q29-Speaking/Listening Not Part of Undergraduate Studies	0.923	84	0.000

Research Question One and Null Hypothesis

As previously discussed, the first research question sought to determine whether a relationship exists between time spent on reading and writing skills and time spent on speaking and listening skills. Thus, the first research question was, “What is the relationship between time spent on reading and writing skills and time spent on speaking and listening skills in English II classrooms?” The first section, Section A, examined relationships between teachers that implemented teaching reading and writing each unit, week, or day and teachers that implemented teaching speaking and listening each unit, week, or day. The answer to the first research question was found by conducting correlations within the first section of the survey results.

When completing the survey, the participants responded to statements indicating how frequently they taught objectives based on a scale from 1 to 6. A response of 1 indicated that the participant strongly disagreed with the statement and a response of 6 indicated that the participant strongly agreed, with the numbers 2 to 5 indicating a response along the scale accordingly. The mean and standard deviation for each response regarding the frequency of taught objectives are shown in Table 4. The mean signifies the average of responses for that on the returned surveys. The standard deviation signifies the range of responses that are within one standard deviation of the mean.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics: Frequency of Teaching English Objectives

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Unit Reading	5.30	1.19
Unit Writing	5.33	0.91
Unit Speaking	4.06	1.37
Unit Listening	4.23	1.35
Weekly Reading	5.50	0.78
Weekly Writing	5.13	1.04
Weekly Speaking	3.70	1.38
Weekly Listening	4.00	1.32
Daily Reading	4.87	1.16
Daily Writing	4.42	1.25
Daily Speaking	3.06	1.37
Daily Listening	3.38	1.34

There was a total of 36 correlations analyzed to answer research question one. The correlation data ranged from -.204 to .420. The standard being used to interpret the size of a correlation coefficient was .00 to .30 (-.00 to -.30) little if any correlation, .30 to .50 (-.30 to -.50) low correlation, .50 to .70 (-.50 to -.70) moderate correlation, .70 to .90 (-.70 to -.90) high correlation, and .90 to 1.00 (-.90 to -1.00) very high correlation (Hinkle, Wiersma, & Jurs, 2003). This scale was used to determine the strength of correlations.

The first section, Section A, analyzed the relationships between time spent teaching reading and writing and speaking and listening. Relationships were analyzed by the frequency in which each objective was taught (every unit, week, or day) and its impact upon the frequency of teaching other objectives. The correlations are shown in Table 5.

Unit reading was analyzed first by cross applying frequency of teaching speaking and listening by each unit, week, or day. There were no statistically significant relationships found. For all the relationships examined, the significance level exceeded the alpha level ($\alpha = .05$). Thus, there was no statistically significant relationship found at the unit reading level between these variables. The findings of the unit reading analysis allowed the researcher to fail to reject the null hypothesis.

Unit writing was analyzed next by cross applying frequency of teaching speaking and listening by unit, week, or day. There were four correlations found at a statistically significant level. The highest correlation was between teaching writing each unit and teaching speaking each unit with $r = .420, p < .001$, with teaching writing each unit explaining 18% of the variation in teaching speaking each unit. The second highest correlation was between unit writing and unit listening with $r = .410, p < .001$, with teaching writing each unit explaining 17% of the variation in teaching listening each unit. The third highest correlation was between unit writing and weekly speaking with $r = .311, p = .004$, with teaching writing each unit explaining 10% of the variation in teaching speaking each week. The fourth highest correlation was between unit writing and weekly listening with $r = .292, p = .007$, with teaching writing each unit explaining 9% of the variation in teaching listening each week. While each of these correlations

were statistically significant, the level of correlation, based on Hinkle, Wiersma, and Jurs' (2003) criteria, was little if at all to low, thus the relationship was weak, meaning there was a statistically significant correlation, but the correlation was minimal. In addition, there was no relationship found between unit writing and teaching daily listening and speaking skills. In these two instances, the significance level exceeded the alpha level, thus there was not a statistically significant correlation. At the unit writing level there were four low correlations found with speaking and listening each unit and each week, but no relationship was found between speaking and listening daily. Unit writing had the strongest correlation between variables in the first section of survey results, although the highest correlations were still low. The findings of the unit writing analysis allowed the researcher to reject the null hypothesis. While unit writing did show a statistically significant relationship result, the correlations may need to be viewed conservatively when discussing any applications.

Weekly reading was analyzed next by cross applying the frequency of teaching speaking by unit, week, or day. There were no relationships found at a statistically significant level. For all the relationships examined, the significance level exceeded the alpha level ($\alpha = .05$), thus, there were no statistically significant relationships found. At the weekly reading level, there were no relationships found between weekly reading and the frequency of teaching speaking by unit, week, or day. The findings of the weekly reading analysis allowed the researcher to fail to reject the null hypothesis.

Weekly writing was analyzed next by cross applying frequency of teaching speaking and listening by unit, week, or day. Five correlations were found at a statistically significant level. The highest correlation was between weekly writing and

unit listening with $r = .331$, $p = .002$, with teaching writing each week explaining 11% of the variation in teaching listening each unit. The second highest correlation was between weekly writing and daily listening with $r = .292$, $p = .007$, with teaching writing each week explaining 9% of the variation in teaching listening each day. The third highest correlation was between weekly writing and weekly listening with $r = .282$, $p = .009$, with teaching writing each week explaining 8% of the variation in teaching listening each week. The fourth highest correlation was between weekly writing and unit speaking with $r = .275$, $p = .011$, with teaching writing each week explaining 8% of the variation in teaching speaking each unit. The fifth highest correlation was between weekly writing and weekly speaking with $r = .255$, $p = .019$, with teaching writing each week explaining 6% of the variation in teaching speaking each week. While each of these correlations were statistically significant, the level of correlation, based on Hinkle, Wiersma, and Jurs' (2003) criteria, was little if at all to low, thus the relationships were weak, meaning there was a statistically significant correlation, but the correlation was minimal. There was no relationship between weekly writing and daily speaking as it exceeded the alpha level ($\alpha = .05$). At the weekly writing level there were five low correlations found with speaking and listening, but no relationship was found between weekly writing and daily speaking. The weekly writing section had the most correlations at a statistically significant level between variables in the first section of survey results, although the correlations were minimal at best. The findings of the weekly writing analysis allowed the researcher to reject the null hypothesis. While weekly writing did show a statistically significant relationship result, the correlations may need to be viewed conservatively when discussing any applications.

Daily reading was analyzed next by cross applying the frequency of teaching speaking by unit, week, or day. There were three correlations found at a statistically significant level. The highest correlation in this section was between daily reading and daily listening with $r = .334, p = .002$, with teaching reading each day explaining 11% of the variation in teaching listening each day. The second highest correlation was between daily reading and daily speaking with a correlation of $r = .279, p = .010$, with teaching reading each day explaining 8% of the variation in teaching speaking each day. The third highest correlation was between daily reading and weekly speaking with a correlation of $r = .247, p = .024$, with teaching reading each day explaining 8% of the variation in teaching speaking each week. While each of these correlations was statistically significant, the level of correlation, based on Hinkle, Wiersma, and Jurs' (2003) criteria, was little if at all to low, meaning there was a statistically significant correlation, but the correlation was minimal. The remaining variables did not have a relationship as the significance levels exceeded the alpha level ($\alpha = .05$). At the daily reading level there were three low correlations found. Although the findings of the daily reading analysis allowed the researcher to reject the null hypothesis, the correlations may need to be viewed conservatively when discussing any applications.

Daily writing was analyzed last by cross applying the frequency of teaching speaking by unit, week, or day. There were five relationships found at a statistically significant level. The highest correlation in this section was between teaching writing each day and teaching listening each day with $r = .405, p < .001$, with teaching writing each day explaining 16% of the variation in teaching listening each day. The second highest correlation in this section was between daily writing and daily speaking with $r =$

.351, $p = .001$, with teaching writing each day explaining 12% of the variation in teaching speaking each day. The third highest correlation was between daily writing and unit listening with $r = .293$, $p = .007$, with teaching writing each day explaining 9% of the variation in teaching listening each unit. The fourth highest correlation was between daily writing and unit speaking with $r = .239$, $p = .029$, with teaching writing each day explaining 6% of the variation in teaching speaking each unit. The fifth highest correlation was between daily writing and weekly listening with $r = .234$, $p = .033$, with teaching writing each day explaining 5% of the variation in teaching listening each week. While each of these correlations were statistically significant, the level of correlation, based on Hinkle, Wiersma, and Jurs' (2003) criteria, was little if at all to low, thus the relationships were weak, meaning there was a statistically significant correlation, but the correlation was minimal. Daily writing and weekly speaking had no relationship as it was above the alpha level ($\alpha = .05$). The daily writing level was tied for the section with the most correlations at a statistically significant level, but the correlations found were low. The findings of the daily writing analysis allowed the researcher to reject the null hypothesis. While daily writing did show a statistically significant relationship result, the correlations may need to be viewed conservatively when discussing any applications.

To evaluate the data to investigate the first question, a null hypothesis was developed. The null hypothesis for Question One was, "There is no statistically significant relationship between time spent on reading and writing skills and time spent on speaking and listening skills in the English II classroom." There were 17 correlations found at a statistically significant level; therefore, the null hypothesis was not accepted. The correlations show that there were relationships between time spent on reading and

writing skills and time spent on speaking and listening skills. While there were correlations found, only seven correlations were between .30 and .50 at a low correlation level, thus the relationships were weak. Of the seven low level correlations, six were between the frequency of teaching writing and speaking and listening skills. There was only one low level correlation between daily reading and daily listening. The other 10 correlations were below the .30 correlation level, thus little if any correlation was found between the frequency of teaching reading and writing and the frequency of teaching speaking and listening.

Table 5

Section A: Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening Correlations

Frequency	Unit		Weekly		Daily	
	Speaking	Listening	Speaking	Listening	Speaking	Listening
Unit Reading						
Pearson Correlation r	0.011	-0.020	-0.078	0.015	-0.204	-0.079
Sig. (2-tailed) p	0.919	0.857	0.483	0.890	0.063	0.473
Unit Writing						
Pearson Correlation r	0.420**	0.410**	0.311**	0.292**	0.197	0.191
Sig. (2-tailed) p	0.000	0.000	0.004	0.007	0.072	0.082
Weekly Reading						
Pearson Correlation r	0.152	0.188	0.151	0.175	0.062	0.137
Sig. (2-tailed) p	0.168	0.086	0.171	0.111	0.576	0.213
Weekly Writing						
Pearson Correlation r	0.275*	0.331**	0.255*	0.282**	0.147	0.292**
Sig. (2-tailed) p	0.011	0.002	0.019	0.009	0.181	0.007
Daily Reading						
Pearson Correlation r	0.165	0.212	0.247*	0.197	0.279*	0.334**
Sig. (2-tailed) p	0.134	0.053	0.024	0.072	0.010	0.002
Daily Writing						
Pearson Correlation r	0.239*	0.293**	0.205	0.234*	0.351**	0.405**
Sig. (2-tailed) p	0.029	0.007	0.061	0.033	0.001	0.000

Note: n=84

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

In summary, while relationships were found between the frequency of teaching reading and writing and the frequency of teaching speaking and listening, the

relationships were minimal and should be viewed conservatively or with caution. Most of the minimal correlations were between writing and speaking and listening. Reading and speaking and listening skills are objectives that have little to no relationship. The answer to research question one is that while there is a relationship between time spent on reading and writing skills and time spent on speaking and listening skills in English II classrooms, the relationship is minimal at best. While the results of the Pearson's r were statistically significant, the obtained results from this study should be viewed in a conservative manner as they represent a mild to moderate correlation. Speaking and listening skills are not taught in equal relation to reading and writing skills.

Research Question Two and Null Hypothesis

As previously discussed, the second research question sought to determine whether a relationship exists between perceived barriers and time spent on speaking and listening skills. Thus, the second research question was, "What is the relationship between the perceived barriers and the implementation of speaking and listening skills in English II classes?" The remaining questions on the survey were utilized for the Pearson's r analysis of this research question. The remaining questions, 13-29, were divided into sections two through five. There was a total of 42 correlations analyzed in the second section. The correlation data ranged from $-.137$ to $.284$. The standard previously discussed in research question one was used to interpret the size of a correlation coefficient in each of the remaining sections (Hinkle, Wiersma, & Jurs, 2003).

In the second section, Section B, the participants responded to statements indicating how frequently they used test preparation typologies based on a scale from 1 to 6. A response of 1 indicated that the participant strongly disagreed with the statement

and a response of 6 indicated that the participant strongly agreed, with the numbers 2 to 5 indicating a response along the scale accordingly. The mean and standard deviation for each response regarding test preparation typologies are shown in Table 6. The mean signifies the average of responses for that on the returned surveys. The standard deviation signifies the range of responses that are within one standard deviation of the mean.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics: Frequency of Using Test Preparation Typologies

	Test preparation typologies						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>M</i>	5.32	5.04	4.75	4.71	4.57	4.56	3.55
<i>SD</i>	0.81	0.81	1.06	1.23	1.23	1.55	1.72

The second section, Section B, analyzed the relationship between teaching speaking and listening skills by every unit, week, and day with the seven test preparation typologies. The correlations that were found helped to answer the second research question. The correlations are shown in Table 7.

Unit speaking was analyzed first by cross applying the seven test preparation typologies. The correlations ranged from $-.078$ to $.218$. There was only one minimal correlation found at a statistically significant level between unit speaking and the third test preparation typology with $r = .218, p = .046$, with teaching speaking each unit explaining 5% of the variation in using the third test preparation typology. While the correlation was statistically significant, the level of correlation, based on Hinkle,

Wiersma, and Jurs' (2003) criteria, was little if at all. Meaning, there was a statistically significant correlation, but the correlation was minimal. In all the remaining results, there was no relationship as the significance level exceeded the alpha level ($\alpha = .05$). At the unit speaking level, there was only one correlation found that was little if any. Although unit speaking rejected the null hypothesis, the correlations may need to be viewed conservatively when discussing any applications.

Unit listening was analyzed next by cross applying the seven test preparation typologies. The correlations ranged from $-.137$ to $.284$. There were two relationships at a statistically significant level. Unit listening and the first test preparation typology had $r = .253, p = .020$, with teaching listening each unit explaining 6% of the variation in using the first test preparation typology. Unit listening and the third test preparation typology had $r = .284, p = .009$, with teaching listening each unit explaining 8% of the variation in using the third test preparation typology. While each of these correlations were statistically significant, the level of correlation, based on Hinkle, Wiersma, and Jurs' (2003) criteria, was little if at all, thus the relationships are weak. Meaning, there was a statistically significant correlation, but the correlation was minimal. In all the remaining results, there was no statistically significant relationship as all the significance levels exceeded the alpha level ($\alpha = .05$). At the unit listening level, there are little if any correlations between teaching listening and test preparation typologies. Although the findings of the unit listening analysis allowed the researcher to reject the null hypothesis, the correlations may need to be viewed conservatively when discussing any applications.

Weekly speaking was next analyzed by cross applying the seven test preparation typologies. In all these results, the significance level exceeded the alpha level. There

were no statistically significant relationships found. Therefore, at the weekly speaking level, there were no relationships found between weekly speaking and the seven test preparation typologies. The findings of the weekly speaking analysis allowed the researcher to fail to reject the null hypothesis.

Weekly listening was analyzed next by cross applying the seven test preparation typologies. The correlations ranged from $-.130$ to $.224$. There was one relationship at a statistically significant level. Weekly listening and the third test preparation typology had $r = .224, p = .041$, with teaching listening each week explaining 5% of the variation in using the third test preparation typology. While the correlation was statistically significant, the level of correlation, based on Hinkle, Wiersma, and Jurs' (2003) criteria, was little if at all, thus the relationship was weak. Meaning, there was a statistically significant correlation, but the correlation was minimal. In all the remaining results, there were no statistically significant relationships found. Therefore, at the weekly listening level, there is little if any correlation between teaching listening and test preparation typologies. Although the findings of the weekly listening analysis allowed the researcher to reject the null hypothesis, the correlations may need to be viewed conservatively when discussing any applications.

Daily speaking was analyzed next by cross applying the seven test preparation typologies. In all the correlations, the significance level exceeded the alpha level. Thus, there were no statistically significant relationships found. At the daily speaking level, there was no relationship between daily speaking and the seven test preparation typologies. The findings of the daily speaking analysis allowed the researcher to fail to reject the null hypothesis.

Daily listening was analyzed next by cross applying the seven test preparation typologies. In all the correlations, the significance level exceeded the alpha level. Thus, there were no statistically significant relationships found. At the daily listening level, there were no relationships found between daily listening and the seven test preparation typologies. The findings of the daily listening analysis allowed the researcher to fail to reject the null hypothesis.

Table 7

Section B: Speaking, Listening and Test Preparation Correlations

Frequency	Test preparation typologies						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Unit Speaking							
Pearson Correlation r	0.157	-0.078	0.218*	-0.047	-0.064	-0.033	-0.024
Sig. (2-tailed) p	0.154	0.481	0.046	0.670	0.564	0.765	0.827
Unit Listening							
Pearson Correlation r	0.253*	-0.007	0.284**	-0.011	-0.035	-0.137	-0.018
Sig. (2-tailed) p	0.020	0.946	0.009	0.918	0.749	0.215	0.873
Weekly Speaking							
Pearson Correlation r	0.076	0.020	0.130	0.042	0.031	0.023	0.044
Sig. (2-tailed) p	0.492	0.854	0.240	0.706	0.782	0.839	0.691
Weekly Listening							
Pearson Correlation r	0.192	0.022	0.224*	0.037	0.045	-0.130	-0.005
Sig. (2-tailed) p	0.080	0.839	0.041	0.737	0.686	0.238	0.962
Daily Speaking							
Pearson Correlation r	-0.028	0.052	0.085	0.082	0.059	0.104	0.119
Sig. (2-tailed) p	0.797	0.636	0.441	0.458	0.596	0.347	0.281
Daily Listening							
Pearson Correlation r	0.097	0.098	0.118	0.103	0.115	0.012	0.065
Sig. (2-tailed) p	0.382	0.377	0.285	0.350	0.297	0.913	0.558

Note: n=84

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The second section, Section B, had four correlations at a statistically significant level, but were all little if any between time spent on speaking and listening skills and use

of test preparation typologies. The few and minimal relationships indicate that test preparation typologies are not responsible for creating a narrowing effect on the curriculum. Although the second section does not support the null hypothesis, the relationships were minimal and do not support a strong correlation between the barrier of test preparation for a standardized exam and the frequency of teaching speaking and listening objectives. Test preparation typologies were not found to be a barrier to teaching speaking and listening skills.

In the third section, Section C, the participants responded to statements indicating how the End of Course exam in English II impacted their instruction based on a scale from 1 to 6. A response of 1 indicated that the participant strongly disagreed with the statement and a response of 6 indicated that the participant strongly agreed, with the numbers 2 to 5 indicating a response along the scale accordingly (see Table 8). The mean signifies the average of responses for that on the returned surveys. The standard deviation signifies the range of responses that are within one standard deviation of the mean.

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics: Impact of EOC exam in English II

	End of Course Exam Impacts / Creates			
	Taught Objectives	Frequency of Objectives	Pressure	Consequences
<i>M</i>	4.04	4.04	4.80	3.29
<i>SD</i>	1.41	1.38	1.21	1.41

The third section, Section C, collected responses about the impact of standardized assessments, specifically the End of Course exam for English II (see Appendix D). The responses were collected to determine whether a relationship exists between teachers' perceptions about the EOC and the frequency they teach speaking and listening skills (each unit, week, or day). There was a total of 24 correlations analyzed in the third section. The correlations that were found helped to answer the second research question (see Table 9).

Unit speaking was analyzed first by cross applying the perceptions of the End of Course exam in English II. In all the correlations, the significance level exceeded the alpha level. Thus, there were no statistically significant relationships found between variables. At the unit speaking level there were no relationships found between unit speaking and perceptions of End of Course exam in English II. The findings of the unit speaking analysis allowed the researcher to fail to reject the null hypothesis.

Unit listening was analyzed next by cross applying the perceptions of the End of Course exam in English II. In all the correlations, the significance level exceeded the alpha level. Thus, there were no statistically significant relationships found between variables. At the unit listening level there were no relationships found between unit listening and perceptions of the End of Course exam in English II. The findings of the unit listening analysis allowed the researcher to fail to reject the null hypothesis.

Weekly speaking was analyzed next by cross applying the perceptions of the End of Course exam in English II. In all the correlations, the significance level exceeded the alpha level. Thus, there were no statistically significant relationships found between variables. At the weekly speaking level there were no relationships found between

weekly speaking and perceptions of the End of Course exam in English II. The findings of the weekly speaking analysis allowed the researcher to fail to reject the null hypothesis.

Weekly listening was analyzed next by cross applying the perceptions of the End of Course exam in English II. In all the correlations, the significance level exceeded the alpha level. Thus, there were no statistically significant relationships found between variables. At the weekly listening level there were no relationships found between variables. The findings of the weekly listening analysis allowed the researcher to fail to reject the null hypothesis.

Daily speaking was analyzed next by cross applying the perceptions of the End of Course exam in English II. In all the correlations, the significance level exceeded the alpha level. Thus, there were no statistically significant relationships found between variables. At the daily speaking level there were no relationships found between weekly listening and perceptions of the End of Course exam in English II. The findings of the daily speaking analysis allowed the researcher to fail to reject the null hypothesis.

Daily listening was analyzed next by cross applying the perceptions of the End of Course exam in English II. In all the correlations, the significance level exceeded the alpha level. Thus, there were no statistically significant relationships found between variables. At the daily listening level there were no relationships found between daily listening and perceptions of the End of Course exam in English II. The findings of the daily listening analysis allowed the researcher to fail to reject the null hypothesis.

Table 9

Section C: Speaking, Listening, and End of Course Exam Perceptions

Frequency	End of Course Exam Impacts / Creates			
	Taught Objectives	Frequency of Objectives	Pressure	Consequences
Unit Speaking				
Pearson Correlation r	-0.176	-0.141	0.022	0.085
Sig. (2-tailed) p	0.108	0.199	0.843	0.443
Unit Listening				
Pearson Correlation r	-0.118	-0.063	0.110	0.168
Sig. (2-tailed) p	0.283	0.572	0.321	0.126
Weekly Speaking				
Pearson Correlation r	-0.094	-0.051	0.043	0.088
Sig. (2-tailed) p	0.396	0.643	0.698	0.428
Weekly Listening				
Pearson Correlation r	-0.058	-0.020	0.136	0.182
Sig. (2-tailed) p	0.598	0.858	0.217	0.098
Daily Speaking				
Pearson Correlation r	0.043	0.056	0.044	0.016
Sig. (2-tailed) p	0.700	0.611	0.692	0.885
Daily Listening				
Pearson Correlation r	0.031	0.070	0.092	0.126
Sig. (2-tailed) p	0.780	0.525	0.403	0.252

Note: n=84

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

In the third section, Section C, the data analyses reveal that there was not a statistically significant relationship between time spent on speaking and listening skills and the perceptions of the End of Course exam. The small r values indicate that perceptions about the End of Course exam do not hinder teachers from teaching speaking and listening objectives. Thus, there is no statistically significant relationship between teaching listening and speaking skills and perceptions about the End of Course exam in English II supports the null hypothesis. The End of Course exam is not found to be a barrier to teaching speaking and listening skills.

In the fourth section, Section D, the participants responded to statements indicating their views of technology based on a scale from 1 to 6. A response of 1 indicated that the participant strongly disagreed with the statement and a response of 6 indicated that the participant strongly agreed, with the numbers 2 to 5 indicating a response along the scale accordingly (see Table 10). The mean signifies the average of responses for that on the returned surveys. The standard deviation signifies the range of responses that are within one standard deviation of the mean.

Table 10

Descriptive Statistics: Views of Technology

	Technology Supports the Objectives		Technology Improves
	Reading/Writing	Speaking/Listening	Speaking/Listening
<i>M</i>	5.24	4.43	4.36
<i>SD</i>	0.84	1.23	1.17

The fourth section, Section D, collected responses about technology. The responses were analyzed to determine if there was a relationship between perception about technology and the frequency teachers implemented the speaking and listening objectives (each unit, week, or day). Those responses were used to determine the strength of relationships between frequency of teaching speaking and listening skills and the potential barrier of the perception of technology in the classroom. The correlations that were found helped to answer the second research question (see Table 11).

Unit speaking was analyzed first by cross applying the three views about technology in the classroom. There were two relationships found at a statistically significant level. The highest correlation was between teaching speaking and technology as a support for speaking and listening skills each unit with $r = .345$, $p = .001$, with teaching speaking each unit explaining 12% of the variation in using technology as a support for speaking and listening skills. The second highest relationship was between unit speaking and technology as a tool to improve speaking and listening skills was $r = .258$, $p = .018$, with teaching speaking each unit explaining 7% of the variation in using technology as a tool to improve speaking and listening skills. While these two correlations were statistically significant, the level of correlation based on Hinkle, Wiersma, and Jurs' (2003) criteria was little if at all to low, thus the relationships were weak, meaning there was a statistically significant correlation, but the correlation was minimal. Additionally, the correlation showed a slight support for using technology as an instrument for teaching speaking and listening objectives as opposed to it serving as a barrier. There was no statistically significant relationship between unit speaking and technology as a support for reading and writing skills as it was above the alpha level. At

the unit speaking level there were two low correlations found. The findings of the unit speaking analysis allowed the researcher to reject the null hypothesis. While unit speaking did show a statistically significant relationship result, the correlations may need to be viewed conservatively when discussing any applications.

Unit listening was analyzed next by cross applying the three views about technology in the classroom. There were two correlations found at a statistically significant level in the unit listening section. The highest correlation was between teaching listening and technology as a support for speaking and listening skills each unit with $r = .393, p < .001$, with teaching listening each unit explaining 15% of the variation in using technology as a support for speaking and listening skills. The second highest correlation was between unit listening and technology as a tool to improve speaking and listening skills with $r = .247, p = .024$, with teaching listening each unit explaining 6% of the variation in using technology as a tool to improve speaking and listening skills. While these two correlations were statistically significant, the level of correlation based on Hinkle, Wiersma, and Jurs' (2003) criteria, was little if at all to low, thus the relationships were weak, meaning there was a statistically significant correlation, but the correlation was minimal. Additionally, the correlation showed a slight support for using technology as an instrument for teaching speaking and listening objectives as opposed to it serving as a barrier. Unit listening and technology as a support for reading and writing skills had no relationship as it was above the alpha level. At the unit listening level there were two low correlations found with technology in the classroom. The findings of the unit listening analysis allowed the researcher to reject the null hypothesis. While unit

listening did show a statistically significant relationship result, the correlations may need to be viewed conservatively when discussing any applications.

Weekly speaking was analyzed next by cross applying the three views about technology in the classroom. There were two correlations found at a statistically significant level in the weekly speaking section. The highest correlation was between teaching speaking and technology as a support for speaking and listening skills each week with $r = .383$, $p < .001$, with teaching speaking each week explaining 15% of the variation in using technology as a support for speaking and listening skills. The second highest correlation was between weekly speaking and technology as a tool to improve speaking and listening skills with $r = .246$, $p = .024$, with teaching speaking each week explaining 6% of the variation in using technology as a tool to improve speaking and listening skills. While these two correlations were statistically significant, the level of correlation based on Hinkle, Wiersma, and Jurs' (2003) criteria, was little if at all to low, thus the relationships were weak, meaning there was a statistically significant correlation, but the correlation was minimal. Additionally, the correlation showed a slight support for using technology as an instrument for teaching speaking and listening objectives as opposed to it serving as a barrier. There was not a statistically significant relationship between weekly speaking and technology as a support for reading and writing skills as it was above the alpha level. At the unit speaking level there were two low correlations found with technology in the classroom. The findings of the weekly speaking analysis allowed the researcher to reject the null hypothesis. While weekly speaking did show a statistically significant relationship result, the correlations may need to be viewed conservatively when discussing any applications.

Weekly listening was next analyzed by cross applying the three views about technology in the classroom. There were two correlations at a statistically significant level found in the weekly listening section. The first correlation was between teaching listening and technology as a support for speaking and listening skills each week with $r = .433, p < .001$, with teaching listening each week explaining 19% of the variation in using technology as a support for speaking and listening skills. The second correlation was between teaching listening and technology to improve speaking and listening skills each week with $r = .313, p = .004$, with teaching listening each week explaining 10% of the variation in using technology to improve speaking and listening skills. While these two correlations were statistically significant, the level of correlation based on Hinkle, Wiersma, and Jurs' (2003) criteria, was low, thus the relationships were weak. Meaning, there was a statistically significant correlation, but the correlation was minimal. Additionally, the correlation shows a slight support for using technology as an instrument for teaching speaking and listening objectives as opposed to it serving as a barrier. There was no relationship between weekly listening and technology as a support for reading and writing skills because it exceeded the alpha level ($\alpha = .05$). At the weekly listening level there were two low correlations found with teaching listening each week and perceptions about technology in the classroom. The findings of the weekly listening analysis allowed the researcher to reject the null hypothesis. While weekly listening did show a statistically significant relationship result, the correlations may need to be viewed conservatively when discussing any applications.

Daily speaking was next analyzed by cross applying the three views about technology in the classroom. There was one correlation at a statistically significant level

found in the daily speaking section. The correlation was between teaching speaking and technology as a support for speaking and listening skills each day with $r = .338$, $p = .002$, with teaching speaking each day explaining 11% of the variation in using technology as a support for speaking and listening skills. While this correlation was statistically significant, the level of correlation based on Hinkle, Wiersma, and Jurs' (2003) criteria was low, thus the relationship was weak, meaning there was a statistically significant correlation, but the correlation was minimal. Additionally, the correlation showed a slight support for using technology as an instrument for teaching speaking and listening objectives as opposed to it serving as a barrier. There was no relationship between daily speaking and technology as a support for reading and writing skills because it exceeded the alpha level ($\alpha = .05$). There also was not a relationship between daily speaking and technology as a tool to improve speaking and listening skills because it exceeded the alpha level ($\alpha = .05$). At the daily speaking level there was one low correlation found with teaching speaking every day and perceptions about technology in the classroom. The findings of the daily speaking analysis allowed the researcher to reject the null hypothesis. While daily speaking did show a statistically significant relationship result, the correlations may need to be viewed conservatively when discussing any applications.

Daily listening was analyzed last by cross applying the three views about technology in the classroom. There were three correlations at a statistically significant level found in the unit speaking section. The highest correlation was between teaching listening and technology as a support for speaking and listening skills every day with $r = .368$, $p = .001$, with teaching listening each day explaining 14% of the variation in using technology as a support for speaking and listening skills. The second highest correlation

was between daily listening and technology as a support for reading and writing skills with $r = .227$, $p = .038$, with teaching listening each day explaining 5% of the variation in using technology as a support for reading and writing skills. The third highest relationship was between unit speaking and technology as a tool to improve speaking and listening skills with $r = .265$, $p = .015$, with teaching speaking each unit explaining 7% of the variation in using technology as a tool to improve speaking and listening skills. While all three correlations were statistically significant, the level of correlation based on Hinkle, Wiersma, and Jurs' (2003) criteria was little if any to low, thus the relationships were weak. Therefore, there was a statistically significant correlation, but the correlation was minimal. Additionally, the correlation shows a slight support for using technology as an instrument for teaching speaking and listening objectives as opposed to it serving as a barrier. At the daily listening level all three correlations were statistically significant but were minimal. The findings of the daily listening analysis allowed the researcher to reject the null hypothesis. While daily listening did show a statistically significant relationship result, the correlations may need to be viewed conservatively when discussing any applications.

Table 11

Section D: Speaking, Listening, and Technology Correlations

Frequency	Technology supports the objectives		Technology improves
	Reading/Writing	Speaking/Listening	Speaking/Listening
Unit Speaking			
Pearson Correlation r	0.082	0.345**	0.258*
Sig. (2-tailed) p	0.461	0.001	0.018
Unit Listening			
Pearson Correlation r	0.121	0.393**	0.247*
Sig. (2-tailed) p	0.271	0.000	0.024
Weekly Speaking			
Pearson Correlation r	0.020	0.383**	0.246*
Sig. (2-tailed) p	0.855	0.000	0.024
Weekly Listening			
Pearson Correlation r	0.152	0.433**	0.313**
Sig. (2-tailed) p	0.169	0.000	0.004
Daily Speaking			
Pearson Correlation r	0.061	0.338**	0.190
Sig. (2-tailed) p	0.583	0.002	0.083
Daily Listening			
Pearson Correlation r	0.227*	0.368**	0.265*
Sig. (2-tailed) p	0.038	0.001	0.015

Note: n=84

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The fourth section, Section D, had twelve correlations at a statistically significant level between time spent on speaking and listening skills and perceptions about technology in the classroom. The correlations were little if any to low. The minimal relationships indicate that technology does not hinder teachers from teaching speaking and listening objectives. In fact, the minimal correlations indicate that technology has a slightly positive impact on the implementation of speaking and listening objectives. Although the fourth section does not support the null hypothesis, the relationships were minimal and do not support a strong correlation between the barrier of technology and the frequency of teaching speaking and listening objectives. Technology was not found to be a barrier to teaching speaking and listening skills; instead, it was viewed as a tool to teach speaking and listening skills.

In the fifth section, Section E, the participants responded to statements indicating views of undergraduate training based on a scale from 1 to 6. A response of 1 indicated that the participant strongly disagreed with the statement and a response of 6 indicated that the participant strongly agreed, with the numbers 2 to 5 indicating a response along the scale accordingly (see Table 12). The mean signifies the average of responses for that on the returned surveys. The standard deviation signifies the range of responses that are within one standard deviation of the mean.

Table 12

Descriptive Statistics: Undergraduate Training Responses

	Not prepared when entering profession	Would teach more if trained more	Not part of my undergraduate studies
<i>M</i>	3.82	3.71	3.90
<i>SD</i>	1.43	1.44	1.49

The fifth section, Section E, collected responses about undergraduate preparation for teaching speaking and listening skills. The responses were analyzed to determine if there was a relationship between perception about undergraduate training and the frequency teachers implemented the speaking and listening objectives (each unit, week, or day). There was a total of 18 correlations analyzed in the fourth section. The correlations that were found helped to answer the second research question (see Table 13).

Unit speaking was analyzed first by cross applying the perceptions about undergraduate preparation for English teachers. There were no statistically significant relationships found. For all the relationships examined, the significance level exceeded the alpha level ($\alpha = .05$); thus, there were no statistically significant relationships found. At the unit speaking level there were no relationships found between unit speaking and perceptions about undergraduate preparation for English teachers. The findings of the unit speaking analysis allowed the researcher to fail to reject the null hypothesis.

Unit listening was analyzed next by cross applying the perceptions about undergraduate preparation for English teachers. There were no statistically significant

relationships found. For all the relationships examined, the significance level exceeded the alpha level ($\alpha = .05$); thus, there were no statistically significant relationships found. At the unit listening level there were no relationships found between unit listening and perceptions about undergraduate preparation for English teachers. The findings of the unit listening analysis allowed the researcher to fail to reject the null hypothesis.

Weekly speaking was analyzed next by cross applying the perceptions about undergraduate preparation for English teachers. There were no statistically significant relationships found. For all the relationships examined, the significance level exceeded the alpha level ($\alpha = .05$); thus, there were no statistically significant relationships found. At the weekly speaking level there were no relationships found between weekly speaking and perceptions about undergraduate preparation for English teachers. The findings of the weekly speaking analysis allowed the researcher to fail to reject the null hypothesis.

Weekly listening was analyzed next by cross applying the perceptions about undergraduate preparation for English teachers. There were no statistically significant relationships found. For all the relationships examined, the significance level exceeded the alpha level ($\alpha = .05$); thus, there were no statistically significant relationships found. At the weekly listening level there were no relationships found between weekly listening and perceptions about undergraduate preparation for English teachers. The findings of the weekly listening analysis allowed the researcher to fail to reject the null hypothesis.

Daily speaking was analyzed next by cross applying the perceptions about undergraduate preparation for English teachers. The correlations ranged from $-.327$ to $-.237$. All three correlations found in the daily speaking section were at a statistically significant level. The highest correlation was between teaching speaking every day and

not feeling prepared to teach speaking when entering the profession with $r = -.327$, $p = .002$, with teaching speaking each day explaining 11% of the variation in feeling prepared to teach speaking when entering the profession. The second highest relationship was between daily speaking and not learning about speaking and listening skills as part of their undergraduate studies with $r = -.294$, $p = .007$, with teaching speaking each day explaining 9% of the variation in not learning about speaking and listening skills as part of undergraduate studies. The third highest correlation was between daily speaking and teachers would teach more speaking and listening if they were trained more was $r = -.237$, $p = .030$, with teaching speaking each day explaining 6% of the variation in teachers would teach more speaking and listening skills if they were trained more. While all three correlations were statistically significant, the level of correlation based on Hinkle, Wiersma, and Jurs' (2003) criteria was little if at all to low, thus the relationships were weak. Meaning, there was a statistically significant correlation, but the correlation was minimal. Additionally, the low correlations were negative, indicating that the relationship between teaching speaking and listening skills and undergraduate training were positive, as the questions were stated in the negative. At the daily speaking level all three correlations were statistically significant but were minimal. The findings of the daily speaking analysis allowed the researcher to reject the null hypothesis. While daily speaking did show a statistically significant relationship result, the correlations may need to be viewed conservatively when discussing any applications.

Daily listening was analyzed next by cross applying the perceptions about undergraduate preparation for English teachers. The correlations ranged from $-.284$ to

-.174. The relationship between daily listening and teachers not feeling prepared to teach speaking and listening skills when they entered the profession was the only relationship at a statistically significant level with $r = -.284$ and $p = .009$, with teaching listening each day explaining 8% of the variation in teachers not feeling prepared to teach speaking and listening skills when they entered the profession. While the correlation was statistically significant, the level of correlation based on Hinkle, Wiersma, and Jurs' (2003) criteria was little if at all, thus the relationship was weak, meaning there was a statistically significant correlation, but the correlation was minimal. Additionally, the low correlation was negative, indicating that the relationship between teaching speaking and listening skills and undergraduate training were positive, as the questions were stated in the negative. There was no relationship between the remaining variables because they exceeded the alpha level ($\alpha = .05$). At the daily listening level there was one correlation that was statistically significant, but minimal. The findings of the daily listening analysis allowed the researcher to reject the null hypothesis. While daily listening did show a statistically significant relationship result, the correlations may need to be viewed conservatively when discussing any applications.

Table 13

Section E: Speaking, Listening, and Undergraduate Correlations

Frequency	Not prepared when entering profession	Would teach more if trained more	Not part of my undergraduate studies
Unit Speaking			
Pearson Correlation r	-0.124	-0.114	-0.152
Sig. (2-tailed) p	0.262	0.301	0.169
Unit Listening			
Pearson Correlation r	-0.141	-0.091	-0.182
Sig. (2-tailed) p	0.200	0.412	0.098
Weekly Speaking			
Pearson Correlation r	-0.143	-0.129	-0.173
Sig. (2-tailed) p	0.194	0.243	0.116
Weekly Listening			
Pearson Correlation r	-0.172	-0.102	-0.172
Sig. (2-tailed) p	0.117	0.356	0.117
Daily Speaking			
Pearson Correlation r	-0.327**	-0.237*	-0.294**
Sig. (2-tailed) p	0.002	0.030	0.007
Daily Listening			
Pearson Correlation r	-0.284**	-0.174	-0.175
Sig. (2-tailed) p	0.009	0.113	0.112

Note: $n = 84$

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The fifth section, Section E, had four correlations at a statistically significant level, but were all little if any to low between time spent on speaking and listening skills and teachers undergraduate training. The few and minimal relationships indicate undergraduate preparation does not hinder teachers from teaching speaking and listening objectives. In fact, the one low correlation was negative, indicating that the undergraduate preparation had a minimal positive impact on a teacher's ability to teach speaking and listening objectives. Although the fifth section rejected the null hypothesis, the relationships were minimal and do not support a strong correlation between the barrier of undergraduate training and the frequency of teaching speaking and listening objectives. Undergraduate training is not found to be a barrier to teaching speaking and listening skills but has a slightly positive impact.

The null hypothesis for research question two is, "There is no statistically significant relationship between the perceived barriers and the implementation of speaking and listening skills in English II classes." There were 20 correlations found at a statistically significant level throughout sections two through five; therefore, the null hypothesis is not accepted. However, only eight correlations were between .30 and .50, which is a low correlation level, thus the relationships were weak. Seven of the eight low correlations were in section D regarding the impact of technology. The only other low correlation was in section E regarding undergraduate teacher training. All the other correlations at a statistically significant level were at the little if any correlation level between the frequency of teaching speaking and listening and the potential barriers. The null hypothesis was rejected because there were relationships found between time spent on speaking and listening skills and potential barriers. However, the relationships were

minimal and should be viewed conservatively or with caution. Additionally, the relationships that were found support the use of technology and undergraduate training as opposed to finding them to be barriers. The results from sections two through five demonstrate that while speaking and listening skills are not taught in relationship with reading and writing skills, the researched barriers are not the cause. Thus, the answer to research question two is that while there is a relationship between perceived barriers and time spent on speaking and listening skills in English II classrooms, the relationship is minimal at best. While the results of the Pearson's r were statistically significant, the obtained results from this study should be viewed in a conservative manner as they represent a mild to moderate correlation.

Conclusion

The answer to the first research question, "What is the relationship between time spent on reading and writing skills and time spent on speaking and listening skills in English II classrooms?" is minimal at best. There were 17 correlations found at a statistically significant level; therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. However, only seven correlations were at a low level with the remaining 10 correlations being little if any, thus the relationships were weak or very weak. These results show a minimal to no relationship between the reading, writing, speaking, and listening variables as they are not taught in strong correlation with one another at the unit, week, or day level. This supports the argument that soft skills are not being taught in relationship to the hard skills that are assessed.

The answer to the second research question, "What is the relationship between the perceived barriers and the implementation of speaking and listening skills in English II

classes?" is minimal at best. There were 20 correlations found at a statistically significant level throughout sections two through five; therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. However, only eight correlations were at a low correlation level, with the remaining correlations being little if any, thus the relationships were weak or very weak. Technology was responsible for seven of the eight low correlations, but they demonstrated a positive connection with the frequency of teaching speaking and listening objectives as opposed to serving as a barrier. The only other low correlation was in connection to undergraduate teacher training, again showing the correlation to be a positive as opposed to serving as a barrier. All the other correlations at a statistically significant level were little if any, thus very weak. Most of the research claimed that standardized assessments negatively impact the teaching of speaking and listening skills. While speaking and listening skills are not taught in strong correlation to reading and writing skills as is evidenced in results for research question one, standardized assessments are not the cause. In fact, none of the studied barriers were found to be the cause for the lack of relationship between teaching speaking and listening skills in English II classrooms. This negates the argument that the reason that speaking and listening skills are not being taught is due to test preparation typologies, perceptions of standardized tests, technology, or undergraduate training. In summary, although the null hypotheses were rejected, the correlations were minimal at best. Chapter Four analyzed the data collected. Chapter Five provides implications and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Research has shown that employers desire employees who demonstrate proficiency with soft skills, such as speaking and listening skills (Schulz, 2008; Stewart, Wall, & Marcienic, 2016; Wilhelm, 2004). As a result, the Common Core State Standards (2010) include soft skills objectives in the English curriculum standards. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to determine if speaking and listening skills were being taught in relationship to reading and writing skills. Relationships between the frequency of teaching speaking and listening skills and potential barriers were also analyzed to determine which factors have the greatest impact on soft skills implementation into English II classrooms in the state of Missouri.

High school English II teachers were surveyed to determine if they were implementing speaking and listening objectives to a significant degree in correlation to their implementation of reading and writing objectives. Low correlations were found between reading/writing and speaking/listening skills each unit and each day, but not when planning for the week. Those low correlations were more common when comparing the relationship between teaching writing and speaking and listening as opposed to the relationship between teaching reading and speaking and listening. There were not any correlations found above the low correlation range, thus the relationships were weak or very weak. The lack of strong relationships between the assessed and non-assessed objectives indicates that the soft skills in English II classrooms are being neglected. As speaking and listening skills are not being taught on a regular basis, more should be done to increase exposure to these skills at the high school level.

English II teachers were also asked to reflect on their perceptions of potential barriers. The only barrier found to have a correlation was a low correlation between the implementation of speaking and listening skills in the fourth and fifth sections of the survey related to technology and undergraduate preparation. However, the low correlations found supported the implementation of speaking and listening skills as opposed to hindering them. There were not any relationships found above the low correlation range, thus indicating that the relationships were weak. The barriers that were predominately discussed in previous research do not have a strong negative impact on the implementation of speaking and listening skills in English II classrooms in the state of Missouri. More research should be done to determine why English II teachers do not address the speaking and listening skills on a regular basis within their classrooms.

Research Question One

The first research question was, “What is the relationship between time spent on reading and writing skills and time spent on speaking and listening skills in English II classrooms?” The research question was analyzed by teachers responding to the first section of survey questions. The survey asked if teachers taught the four objectives: reading, writing, speaking, and listening every unit, each week, or every day. The correlations found were little if any to low, thus the relationships were weak or very weak. The low correlations were primarily found between writing, speaking, and listening but not reading, speaking, and listening. While this does not indicate a significant connection, it also does not show that speaking and listening skills are completely disregarded. The weak relationship is reflective of the fact that if a teacher gives reading or writing instruction every unit, week, or day, he/she is not necessarily

going to give speaking and listening instruction every unit, week, or day. Teachers may still provide instruction on speaking and listening skills, but not on a consistent basis. The minimal relationships between daily writing, speaking, and listening instruction indicate that some teachers are conscious of including speaking and listening objectives in their lesson plans and daily activities. Additionally, the lack of negative correlations indicates that if teachers focus on reading and writing skills, they do not necessarily neglect speaking and listening objectives. The increase in teaching reading and writing skills does not dictate a decrease in speaking and listening objectives. However, the lack of strong relationship does demonstrate that not all four objectives are being taught at the same level of consistency. While speaking and listening skills are not taught in relation to reading and writing skills, the level of implementation is ultimately unknown. It is clear, however, that speaking and listening skills are not taught consistently, which is not acceptable and needs to change. Students, who rely on their teachers to prepare them for their future, will continue to graduate from high school ill-prepared for college or a career. Teachers must understand what is at stake for students if these objectives continue to be given minimal attention.

Research Question Two

The second research question was, “What is the relationship between the perceived barriers and the implementation of speaking and listening skills in English II classes?” The four perceived barriers were test preparation typologies, perception of standardized tests, technology, and undergraduate teacher preparation. Despite much of what the research suggested, there was little if any correlation between test preparation and the teaching of speaking and listening skills, thus the relationships were weak or very

weak. There was also little if any correlation found between perceptions of standardized tests (End of Course exam) and the teaching of speaking and listening skills. There was a weak correlation between the perception of technology and the teaching of speaking and listening skills. However, the correlation was positive, meaning that teachers use technology to enhance the implementation of speaking and listening objectives as opposed to technology being a hindrance to them. Lastly, there was one weak correlation between undergraduate teacher preparation and the teaching of speaking and listening skills. The weak correlation was negative. The questions were stated in the negative, thus the low correlation indicates that teachers felt prepared to teach these skills. Therefore, it is not a barrier, but a minimal indication that teachers do feel prepared to teach speaking and listening skills in the English classroom.

Although previous research suggests that test preparation typologies, standardized assessments, technology, and undergraduate preparation are barriers to teaching speaking and listening skills, these factors were not found to have a negative impact on teaching speaking and listening objectives in English II classrooms in the state of Missouri. The cause for an uneven relationship between the implementation of reading/writing skills and speaking/listening skills was not determined in this study. It is noteworthy to find that speaking and listening skills are not consistently taught while the cause is unknown. More research should be done to clarify why English II teachers in the state of Missouri do not make the non-assessed objectives a regular priority in their lessons. If they do not have time to cover all of the objectives, another content area could be used to teach the concepts of speaking and listening along with other soft skills that are not directly covered in curriculum objectives.

Implications for Educational Practice

The findings from this study were that there is not a statistically significant relationship between the implementation of reading and writing skills instruction and speaking and listening skills instruction at the English II level in high schools that responded to this survey in the state of Missouri. Teachers that teach reading and writing every unit, week, or day are not necessarily teaching speaking and listening skills every unit, week, or day. This is an important discovery if soft skills that are supposed to be taught are not covered on a regular basis. Additionally, the identified barriers are not hindering the implementation of speaking and listening skills instruction at a statistically significant level. In fact, the identified barriers of technology and undergraduate training have a minimal positive impact on the teaching of speaking and listening skills. The value of this study is that a discovery has been made that the soft skills that are contained within the speaking and listening objectives in English II curriculum are not being taught in relation to the reading and writing objectives. This provides a starting point of understanding why students are found to be lacking in their soft skills when entering the workforce. Unfortunately, while speaking and listening skills are not being taught with a significant correlation to reading and writing skills, the perceived barriers are not what is hindering their implementation. The barriers to soft skills implementation are still not clear based on the results of this study. This study shows that more research is needed to determine to what extent speaking and listening skills are being taught and what factors are serving as barriers. More information is needed if high schools are to adequately prepare students to be college and career ready.

This study shows that there is not a statistically significant connection between the amount of time spent teaching reading and writing skills as opposed to the speaking and listening skills. Beyond the relationships of the four objectives, this study did not examine the extent of time spent on teaching speaking and listening as a ratio in comparison to the time spent teaching reading and writing objectives. The minimal correlations do not necessitate a conclusion of speaking and listening skills being completely neglected. Speaking and listening objectives may still be implemented in English II classrooms across the state of Missouri, but not on a consistent basis. The exact extent to which speaking and listening skills are implemented is still unknown.

Results from the study regarding potential barriers also provided insight. In general, test preparation and standardized tests do not impact the teachers' approach concerning how they cover content within their classrooms at the high school English II level, according to their own perspectives. This is significant because the primary argument found from previous research is that soft skills are neglected due to the lack of assessment requirements. Previous research supports the argument that what is tested is given more attention in classrooms (Berliner, 2011; Johnson, 2004; Palmer & Rangel, 2010). The results from section one sustains this argument, even though teachers' perceptions from sections two and three do not support the argument. It is possible that English II teachers are not aware they are narrowing the curriculum and their perceptions are incorrect. They may not believe that the EOC impacts their teaching practices. Whether or not teachers believe that a standardized assessment impacts what they teach, they teach reading and writing more consistently than speaking and listening. Making

inconsistencies more apparent to teachers may increase the amount of attention English teachers give to all their objectives.

Technology appeared to increase the likelihood that speaking and listening content will be taught, but the correlations were low, thus the relationships were weak according to the results of the study. It is possible that as the availability of technology increases in classrooms, there will be a greater emphasis placed on teaching speaking and listening skills. This finding supports the previous research conducted on this topic. Although communication scholars argue that technology has a negative impact on soft skills (Cooren, 2012; Hammock & Moon, 2013; Haythornthwaite, 2007; Hwang, 2011; Pettegrew & Day, 2015; Walsh, White, & Young, 2008), teachers generally believe that technology makes it easier for them to meet speaking and listening objectives (Edwards, 2012; Shapley et al., 2011). While technology may hurt soft skills in general, it increases the likelihood that speaking and listening skills will be intentionally taught. If students are guided in their use of technology, it could prove to help them master the soft skills contained within the English curriculum.

Additionally, there was a low or weak correlation that suggests teachers felt their undergraduate training prepared them to teach speaking and listening skills. Although there was a low positive correlation between undergraduate training and consistently teaching speaking and listening skills, it shows that training does not serve as a catalyst to teach the speaking and listening skills consistently. If the English curriculum consists of four objectives, it would stand to reason that teachers' undergraduate training would encourage them to teach all objectives on a regular basis. None of the studied barriers

provide an answer as to why speaking and listening skills are not taught in relation to reading and writing skills.

Curriculum developers should examine the current curriculum and make necessary edits to be more inclusive of soft skills. While speaking and listening skills are a portion of what is defined as soft skills, there are many more attributes of soft skills that are not being addressed in the English curriculum. These skills should not necessarily fall on the shoulders of English teachers, either. Mandating communication classes that take a broader approach to soft skills and devote time to providing students experiential knowledge could help meet the demands of our changing society. The theoretical framework from John Dewey supports the need for more experiential knowledge that could enhance students' training in soft skills. The English curriculum is substantial and may possibly contain too much content for English teachers to cover adequately within a school year. Additional communication courses, such as public speaking, could relieve some of the curriculum burden and expand on soft skills. While some school districts require all students to take a speech or communication class, this type of class is generally an elective. If a soft skill set is necessary to make students college and career ready, state education departments should adapt their mandates to make sure that all students receive adequate training.

Recommendations for Future Research

As there is a growing trend from employers desiring a mastery of soft skills from their new employees, persons responsible for curriculum implementation should continue to examine their practices to prepare students to be college and career ready. Future topics for research include: (a) an examination of subcategories under the speaking and

listening objectives to make sure that there are not any specific ideals being neglected, (b) the ratio of time spent on speaking and listening skills in comparison to reading and writing skills, and (c) a macro-level study examining all English teachers, not just teachers of English II curriculum. As the results of this study reveal inconsistency with speaking and listening implementation without a clear cause, more research is needed.

The first suggestion for future research is to examine the subcategories in the Missouri Language Arts curriculum under the speaking and listening objectives. It is possible that teachers are covering a portion of the subcategories but neglecting other sections. The first section is “collaborating” with three subcategories that include: conversations, questioning, and viewpoints of others (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, n.d.d.). Teachers may cover these subcategories through debates over novels or other literature that has been read. It is possible that these subcategories are covered occasionally, but not on a consistent basis. If this is the case, it would not have been reflected in the current study because the questions asked if the speaking and listening objectives were covered every unit, week, or day. Implementation of these skills that take place occasionally may have been disregarded. It is possible that only one subcategory is implemented, but not others. The second section is “presenting” with three subcategories that include: verbal delivery, nonverbal, and multimedia objectives (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, n.d.d.). Similarly, a class debate or slide presentation over literature may occur occasionally. Infrequent implementation of this subcategory may not have been recorded in the study as the survey asked about every unit, week, or day. A study of these subcategories may be beneficial to determine if there are only parts of the current curriculum that are being

applied. This would hinder students from mastering a wide array of soft skills that would be needed in the workforce.

The second suggestion for future research is to examine the ratio of time spent between the four English curriculum objectives. The current study examined only the relationship between reading and writing skills taught and speaking and listening skills taught. While correlations provide an indication whether one objective is being taught in conjunction with another objective, it does not clarify the extent to which objectives are taught. It would stand to reason that speaking and listening objectives that are only covered a few times each school year would not provide enough exposure to the concepts for students to master them. A qualitative study in future research would provide a deeper understanding of how the objectives are being implemented. The depth of responses that a qualitative study would provide may give the insight that is needed to determine the next course of action to ensure that students are mastering soft skills. A quantitative study in future research could ask about ratios of implementation regarding the four objectives. A ratio study with more precise questioning of time would provide additional insight into the extent to which speaking and listening skills are taught in an English Language Arts classroom. If low ratios are found, it would offer rationale as to why students are lacking in their soft skill abilities.

The third suggestion for future research is a macro-level study examining all English teachers, not just teachers of English II curriculum. English II teachers were targeted for this research because of the literature suggesting that standardized testing narrows curriculum. The results of this study found little to no correlations with standardized assessments, at least not according to teachers' perceptions. A future study

could examine relationships at all levels of English curriculum implementation and not be concerned with how standardized assessment is impacting speaking and listening objectives. True mastery of soft skills would take place if students were exposed to these skills year after year. Just as mathematics curriculum scaffolds upon itself, soft skills mastery occurs if one concept is learned and then built upon. A study that determines if and when the speaking and learning curriculum becomes neglected could be very helpful in determining how to adapt curriculum implementation so that students are prepared for their next phase of life after leaving high school.

Conclusion

Speaking and listening objectives were not found to be taught in relation to reading and writing objectives. This provides a starting point in understanding why students entering the workforce from high schools have been found lacking soft skills mastery. The literature identified the problem that students are not prepared with adequate communication skills when entering the workforce (Jones, Baldi, Phillips, & Waikar, 2016; Kyllonen, 2013). Much of the literature blamed the lack of soft skill preparedness on an imbalanced focus on curriculum that is assessed on standardized testing (Berliner, 2011; Hodge & Benko, 2014; Johnson, 2004; Palmer & Rangel, 2010). There was also literature that blamed the problem on technology and lack of training for teachers during their undergraduate studies (Cooren, 2012; Hammock & Moon, 2013; Haythornthwaite, 2007; Hwang, 2011; Ngang, Chan, & Vetriveilmany, 2015; Ngang, Yunus, & Hashim, 2015; Pettegrew & Day, 2015; Walsh, White, & Young, 2008). While this study supports the problem found in literature, it does not support the causes. Unfortunately, the reasoning as to why there is not a strong relationship between

objectives taught in English II classrooms was not determined. This creates a gap demonstrating that cause and effect need more exploration. However, if the theoretical framework from John Dewey is to be followed explaining the importance of experiential knowledge, the lack of soft skills integration makes sense as this study demonstrated that there was a weak relationship overall between the time spent on reading and writing instruction versus speaking and listening instruction. This study also supports the theoretical framework from the perspective of technology. Use of technology gives students experiential knowledge and a minimal relationship was found showing that teachers believe the use of technology enhances speaking and listening integration. Additional time and experiential knowledge should bolster students' mastery of those specific soft skills. More research must take place before teachers, administrators, and state education departments can make adequate changes to ensure soft skills mastery for high school students. Future topics for research include: (a) an examination of subcategories under the speaking and listening objectives to make sure that there are not any specific ideals being neglected, (b) the ratio of time spent on speaking and listening skills in comparison to reading and writing skills, and (c) a macro-level study examining all English teachers, not just teachers of English II curriculum. These areas of study should help provide direction for future decisions. If teachers and administrators at the high school level are tasked with the purpose to prepare students for college or career, they must continually evaluate what is being done to give students their best opportunity to help them become successful in their chosen fields.

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APPENDIX A

Letter to Administrator

Dear Administrator:

As a doctoral student at Southwest Baptist University working toward completion of an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership, I am writing to request your assistance with my research. The focus of my dissertation is on high school English teachers and the extent to which they teach the speaking and listening objectives in their classrooms along with the reading and writing objectives. Results will be cross applied to responses regarding perceived barriers.

First, I need to determine if your district has English II classes that take the English II End of Course exam. Second, if you confirm that your high school offers English II and proctors the English II End of Course exam, I am asking you to forward the survey to your English II high school teachers. If you consent to having your English II teachers take this survey, please forward the survey to them at your earliest convenience.

The teacher survey is electronic and will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. The teacher survey is anonymous and only asks for the teacher's email address if they would like to be entered into a drawing to win a \$50 Amazon gift card. The teacher survey contains 31 questions. The survey is composed of five sections: a) Frequency of intentionally covering reading and writing objectives or speaking and listening objectives; b) Which test taking strategies are implemented; c) Impact of standardized assessment on curriculum implementation; d) Approach to technology; and e) Undergraduate preparation to teach speaking and listening skills. Survey questions are

statements for which the respondent shows their level of agreement and is scored using a six-category Likert scale (*1 - Strongly Disagree; 2 – Disagree; 3 – Somewhat Disagree; 4 – Somewhat Agree; 5 – Agree; 6 – Strongly Agree*). The survey will only collect demographic data to determine if a teacher is in their first year of teaching or if they have taught for multiple years.

Your participation in this research will be anonymous. Your school district's participation is voluntary and teachers may withdraw at any time. This research study survey has been approved by the Southwest Baptist University Research Review Board (417) 328-1742.

Thank you for your assistance with this study. Please feel free to contact me if you have further questions or would like the results of the survey.

<https://elaobjectivessurveyfinal.questionpro.com>

Regards,

Clint Wooderson

APPENDIX B

Letter to High School English II Teachers

Dear English II Teacher:

Thank you for your hard work as an English II teacher. I know that the hours can be long. While it may be difficult to find extra time, I am writing to ask if you would take just a few minutes to complete this survey. I am a doctoral student at Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Missouri. As a final part of the doctoral program, I am completing my doctoral dissertation on the implementation of speaking and listening skills in English classrooms. English II classrooms are the primary target as they are also responsible for administering the End of Course exam, which is standardized throughout the state of Missouri.

As a growing number of business owners have concerns about soft skills in new employees, I am studying how speaking and listening skills are taught overall and what barriers may be impeding their implementation. I am surveying English II high school teachers throughout Missouri. Completing the survey should take approximately 10 minutes.

This research study has been reviewed by the Southwest Baptist University Research Review Board (417) 328-1742. Results will be used to determine how the speaking and listening soft skills are being taught in conjunction with reading and writing skills or if there is a portion of the curriculum that may be neglected due to various factors.

The teacher survey is electronic and will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. The teacher survey is anonymous. Your participation is voluntary and you

may withdraw at any time. You may provide your school email address if you would like to be entered into a drawing for a \$50 Amazon gift card. Only participants that complete the survey and provide a valid school email address will be entered into the drawing. The email address is not required, however, and no identifiable information will be used in the research results.

Thank you for your willingness to take this survey. Your participation helps me toward the completion of my dissertation and will add new information to the field of education. My hope is that this study will take educators one step closer to preparing students for their professional lives.

Regards,

Clint Wooderson

Ed.D. candidate – Southwest Baptist University

APPENDIX C

Panel Test

Please mark the appropriate response. The survey used in this study is composed of five sections: a) Frequency of intentionally covering reading and writing objectives or speaking and listening objectives; b) Which test taking strategies are implemented; c) Impact of standardized assessment on curriculum implementation; d) Approach to technology; and e) Undergraduate preparation to teach speaking and listening skills.

Most questions use a Likert-type scale for responses: 1 - Strongly Disagree; 2 – Disagree; 3 – Somewhat Disagree; 4 – Somewhat Agree; 5 – Agree; 6 – Strongly Agree.

Please review the survey and marked each question on a scale if it (1) matched, (0) neutral, or (-1) did not match the intended purpose of the section.

By completing this form I give my consent to participate in this study.	Agree Disagree
1. Please mark how long you have been in education. (Demographic)	First Year 2+ Years
2. Please enter your email address if you would like to be included in the drawing for a \$50 Amazon gift card.	
3. I devote time during every unit to teaching reading objectives in the state curriculum for English Language Arts. (Section 1)	1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6
4. I devote time during every unit to teaching writing objectives in the state curriculum for English Language Arts. (Section 1)	1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6
5. I devote time during every unit to teaching speaking objectives in the state curriculum for English Language Arts. (Section 1)	1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6
6. I devote time during every unit to teaching listening objectives in the state curriculum for English Language Arts. (Section 1)	1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6
7. I devote time each week to teaching reading objectives in the state curriculum for English Language Arts. (Section 1)	1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6

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|---|-----------------------|
| 8. I devote time each week to teaching writing objectives in the state curriculum for English Language Arts. (Section 1) | 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 |
| 9. I devote time each week to teaching speaking objectives in the state curriculum for English Language Arts. (Section 1) | 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 |
| 10. I devote time each week to teaching listening objectives in the state curriculum for English Language Arts. (Section 1) | 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 |
| 11. I devote a portion of every class period to teaching reading objectives in the state curriculum for English Language Arts. (Section 1) | 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 |
| 12. I devote a portion of every class period to teaching writing objectives in the state curriculum for English Language Arts. (Section 1) | 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 |
| 13. I devote a portion of every class period to teaching speaking objectives in the state curriculum for English Language Arts. (Section 1) | 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 |
| 14. I devote a portion of every class period to teaching listening objectives in the state curriculum for English Language Arts. (Section 1) | 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 |
| 15. I provide general instruction on objectives regardless of if they are measured on End of Course exams or not. (Section 2) | 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 |
| 16. I teach general test taking skills to prepare for the End of Course exam. (Section 2) | 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 |
| 17. I provide instruction on objectives that may have been determined by looking at the objectives that a variety of standardized tests measure, not just the End of Course exam. (Section 2) | 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 |
| 18. I provide instruction based on objectives (skills and subskills) that specifically match those on the End of Course exam. (Section 2) | 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 |
| 19. I provide instruction on specifically matched objectives (skills and subskills) where the practice or instruction follows the same format as the test questions. (Section 2) | 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 |

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|---|-----------------------|
| 20. I use a published parallel form of the End of Course exam to prepare students for the End of Course exam. (Section 2) | 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 |
| 21. Students practice or receive instruction on questions directly found on the End of Course exam. (Section 2) | 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 |
| 22. Subject matter covered on the End of Course exam impacts my decision on which objectives should be covered on a regular basis in my classroom. (Section 3) | 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 |
| 23. Subject matter covered on the End of Course exam impacts the frequency I teach tested objectives. (Section 3) | 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 |
| 24. I feel pressure for my students to perform at a high level on the End of Course exam. (Section 3) | 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 |
| 25. There would be consequences (e.g., reprimand from an administrator, negative peer reactions, etc.) for me if my students did not meet a certain standard on the End of Course exam. (Section 3) | 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 |
| 26. Technology use in my classroom supports the reading and / or writing objectives. (Section 4) | 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 |
| 27. Technology use in my classroom supports the speaking and / or listening objectives. (Section 4) | 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 |
| 28. I do not promote technology in my classroom because it is a detriment to speaking and listening skills. (Section 4) | 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 |
| 29. Technology allows students to use speaking and listening skills in a new way. (Section 4) | 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 |
| 30. I was taught how to teach speaking and listening skills in my undergraduate education courses. (Section 5) | 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 |
| 31. I did not feel adequately prepared to teach speaking and listening curriculum when I entered the teaching profession. (Section 5) | 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 |
| 32. I would cover speaking and listening objectives more frequently if I had been trained on how to teach and assess them. (Section 5) | 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 |

33. Speaking and listening skills were not a part of my teacher education program during my undergraduate studies. (Section 5)

1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6

APPENDIX D

Final Survey

By completing this form, I give my consent to participate in this study.	Agree Disagree
Please mark how long you have been in education. (Demographic)	First Year 2+ Years
Please enter your email address if you would like to be included in the drawing for a \$50 Amazon gift card.	
1. I devote time during every unit to teaching reading objectives in the state curriculum for English Language Arts. (Section A)	SD / D / SWD / SWA / A / SA
2. I devote time during every unit to teaching writing objectives in the state curriculum for English Language Arts. (Section A)	SD / D / SWD / SWA / A / SA
3. I devote time during every unit to teaching speaking objectives in the state curriculum for English Language Arts. (Section A)	SD / D / SWD / SWA / A / SA
4. I devote time during every unit to teaching listening objectives in the state curriculum for English Language Arts. (Section A)	SD / D / SWD / SWA / A / SA
5. I devote time each week to teaching reading objectives in the state curriculum for English Language Arts. (Section A)	SD / D / SWD / SWA / A / SA
6. I devote time each week to teaching writing objectives in the state curriculum for English Language Arts. (Section A)	SD / D / SWD / SWA / A / SA
7. I devote time each week to teaching speaking objectives in the state curriculum for English Language Arts. (Section A)	SD / D / SWD / SWA / A / SA
8. I devote time each week to teaching listening objectives in the state curriculum for English Language Arts. (Section A)	SD / D / SWD / SWA / A / SA

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|---|-----------------------------|
| 9. I devote a portion of every class period to teaching reading objectives in the state curriculum for English Language Arts. (Section A) | SD / D / SWD / SWA / A / SA |
| 10. I devote a portion of every class period to teaching writing objectives in the state curriculum for English Language Arts. (Section A) | SD / D / SWD / SWA / A / SA |
| 11. I devote a portion of every class period to teaching speaking objectives in the state curriculum for English Language Arts. (Section A) | SD / D / SWD / SWA / A / SA |
| 12. I devote a portion of every class period to teaching listening objectives in the state curriculum for English Language Arts. (Section A) | SD / D / SWD / SWA / A / SA |
| 13. I provide general instruction on objectives regardless of if they are measured on End of Course exams or not. (Section B) | SD / D / SWD / SWA / A / SA |
| 14. I teach general test taking skills to prepare for the End of Course exam. (Section B) | SD / D / SWD / SWA / A / SA |
| 15. I provide instruction on objectives that may have been determined by looking at the objectives that a variety of standardized tests measure, not just the End of Course exam. (Section B) | SD / D / SWD / SWA / A / SA |
| 16. I provide instruction based on objectives (skills and subskills) that specifically match those on the End of Course exam. (Section B) | SD / D / SWD / SWA / A / SA |
| 17. I provide instruction on specifically matched objectives (skills and subskills) where the practice or instruction follows the same format as the test questions. (Section B) | SD / D / SWD / SWA / A / SA |
| 18. I use a published parallel form of the End of Course exam to prepare students for the End of Course exam. (Section B) | SD / D / SWD / SWA / A / SA |
| 19. Students practice or receive instruction on questions directly found on the End of Course exam. (Section B) | SD / D / SWD / SWA / A / SA |

20. Subject matter covered on the End of Course exam impacts my decision on which objectives should be covered on a regular basis in my classroom. (Section C)	SD / D / SWD / SWA / A / SA
21. Subject matter covered on the End of Course exam impacts the frequency I teach tested objectives. (Section C)	SD / D / SWD / SWA / A / SA
22. I feel pressure for my students to perform at a high level on the End of Course exam. (Section C)	SD / D / SWD / SWA / A / SA
23. There would be consequences (e.g., reprimand from an administrator, negative peer reactions, etc.) for me if my students did not meet a certain standard on the End of Course exam. (Section C)	SD / D / SWD / SWA / A / SA
24. Technology use in my classroom supports the reading and / or writing objectives. (Section D)	SD / D / SWD / SWA / A / SA
25. Technology use in my classroom supports the speaking and / or listening objectives. (Section D)	SD / D / SWD / SWA / A / SA
26. Technology allows students to use speaking and listening skills in a new way. (Section D)	SD / D / SWD / SWA / A / SA
27. I did not feel adequately prepared to teach speaking and listening curriculum when I entered the teaching profession. (Section E)	SD / D / SWD / SWA / A / SA
28. I would cover speaking and listening objectives more frequently if I had been trained on how to teach and assess them. (Section E)	SD / D / SWD / SWA / A / SA
29. Speaking and listening skills were not a part of my teacher education program during my undergraduate studies. (Section E)	SD / D / SWD / SWA / A / SA