

TUCSON UNIFIED

SCHOOL DISTRICT

TO: Researchers
FROM: Dynah Oviedo, Ph.D.
Research Project Manager
RE: Review of Research Requests

Thank you for your interest in conducting research in the Tucson Unified School District (TUSD). The TUSD's governing board policy mandates that our External Research Committee must review all research (including surveys) involving students, parents, or district personnel.

The review process typically takes from 3-4 weeks. However, review time may vary depending on availability of staff. It is your responsibility to submit your proposal enough in advance to avoid problems meeting your deadlines. Send the following to me (see attached): (1) Request to Conduct Research Within the District, (2) Summary of Request to Conduct Research, (3) Terms and Conditions, and (4) Parent Permission form (if applicable). Additionally, include an electronic file of numbers 1 and 2 above by email (dynah.oviedo@tusd1.org). Examples of a Research Proposal, a Summary of Research sheet, and Parent Permission form are attached for your information.

Based on TUSD Board policy, the primary criteria that will be used to evaluate external research requests are as follows:

1. Significance

Preference will be given to studies:

- A. improving academic achievement,
- B. in areas that are of high concern and potential usefulness to the District,
- C. that show promise of contributing to a scientific knowledge base for education, and
- D. that are the university required Thesis or Dissertation for a Master's or Doctoral Degree.

2. Design

- A. Adequacy of conceptual framework, research questions, instrumentation, and data collection and design.
- B. Appropriateness of arrangements to report and explain results of the research to District personnel.
- C. Consideration of the rights and feelings of the subjects involved in the research.
- D. Confidentiality of information pertaining to individual students or staff.
- E. Clarity of plans for participation of District students and staff.

3. Protection of Human Subjects

- A. Adherence to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) regarding family and pupil rights, their privacy and protection.
- B. Appropriate parental consent forms and student assent forms when necessary.

4. Logistics

- A. Minimum disruption of District, school, and classroom operation.
- B. Minimum time required of students and staff.

Make certain that all requested information is provided as incomplete proposals will delay the approval process. You will be notified when the review process is complete.

TUCSON UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
Assessment and Evaluation

REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH WITHIN THE DISTRICT

The following information **must** be provided in full and returned to Assessment and Evaluation **before** any research project, including surveys, can be reviewed, and processed. Label each section clearly with the headings provided below and maintain the same order. Email your proposal including the summary form to dynah.oviedo@tusd1.org

1. **Today's Date**
2. **Full Name**
3. **Complete Mailing Address**
4. **Telephone Number**
5. **E-mail**
6. **Organization or Institution**
7. **Purpose** (thesis, dissertation, etc.)
8. **Student Achievement** (How does your study relate to student achievement, i.e. increase student achievement, prevent school dropout, help schools improve)
9. **Signature of Advisor** (if thesis or dissertation)
10. **Research Project Title**
11. **Purpose of Study**
 - a. Hypothesis(es) of Study (if applicable)
 - b. Question(s) to be answered by research
12. **Theoretical Framework** (not more than 1 page)
13. **Methods/Techniques**
 - a. Research Design/Data Collection
 - b. Method(s) of data analysis (2 pages or less)
 - c. **Number** of subjects and **grade levels** needed
 - d. **Number** and **names** of school sites (or departments) you need to complete study (be specific)
 - e. Describe any "treatment" to be applied to subjects (not more than 1 page)
 - f. Investigators - number, names, and qualifications
 - g. Resources needed
 1. Amount of **time** needed per **week AND** for total project for students, teacher(s), and administrator(s)
 2. Facilities (rooms, etc.) needed
 3. Materials needed
14. **Instruments To Be Used** (e.g. tests, surveys, observation forms, data collection forms). Include evidence of validity and reliability. (**Attach** to your request any survey or questionnaire, data form or unpublished instruments. Also, a general description of any nationally developed standardized instrument must be attached.)
15. **Use of Results**

- a. Feedback to participants (and others)
- b. Publication(s)

16. Benefit of Study to District

17. Legal Requirements

- a. Terms and Conditions - sign and date the enclosed form.
- b. Parent Permission Form - attach form and include:
 - 1. that the project has "been tentatively approved by the Tucson Unified School District."
 - 2. that results will be kept "confidential."
 - 3. the place where parent given consent by **signing** name.
 - 4. the statement as to what parent is consenting to let research do with subject.
 - 5. the phone number where researcher can be contacted if questions.
- c. Teacher Permission Form (if applicable) - approval by teacher is needed if researcher is using classroom time with his/her students.

18. Additional Information (if necessary)

RETURN TO:	Dynah Oviedo, Ph.D. Tucson Unified School District Assessment and Evaluation 102 North Plumer Tucson, AZ 85719 dynah.oviedo@tusd1.org
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SUMMARY OF REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Assessment and Evaluation

Name:

Date:

Position/Title/Institution:

Title of Research:

Purpose of Research:

Hypothesis/Questions:

Methods/Treatment/Instruments:

Number of Students/ Teachers :

(include grade level)

Names of schools:

Time/resources needed:

Additional Comments:

You will need to obtain ACTIVE (signed parental consent for each student) parental consent before having contact with students.

RETURN TO:

Dynah Oviedo, Ph.D.
Tucson Unified School District
Assessment and Evaluation
102 North Plumer
Tucson, AZ 85719
dynah.oviedo@tusd1.org

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

In submitting this request, the researcher agrees to adhere to the following terms and conditions, the violation of which will be grounds for immediate termination of the research project.

1. At least seven days before administering any survey to a student, a copy of the survey and a written consent form will be provided to the student (if the student is an adult or emancipated minor), or in the case of an unemancipated minor, a student's parent or guardian.
2. The researcher will obtain prior written permission (i.e. active consent) from each student (if the student is an adult or emancipated minor), or in the case of an unemancipated minor, a parent or guardian and will advise each subject that participation is voluntary.
3. For studies involving students, parental/guardian consent forms for each student must be kept in a secure location and accessible upon request.
4. The researcher will advise participant of the right to refuse to answer any question, either written or oral. Such a statement will appear on any written instruments and will be made orally before any interview.
5. Electronic recording of any information must be done with full knowledge of the subject and with the permission of the parent or guardian.
6. Only the research project specifically approved by the District will be conducted. The approved methodology will be followed in detail. Any modification of the approved methodology must have the written approval from Assessment and Evaluation.
7. Only the approved researchers may conduct the research. Any additional researchers must be approved in writing by Assessment and Evaluation.
8. Principals will grant final permission for studies conducted at their school site.
9. While conducting the research, the researcher will act at all times in a professional manner and will minimize disruption of the normal instructional process.
10. During the research, the researcher will cooperate fully with District personnel especially as they monitor the progress of the research.
11. The researcher will not design the research to depend on District personnel clerical support or supplies and materials.
12. The researcher will not contact District site administrators or any other District personnel, students, or parents until the research request has been processed and approved.
13. The researcher will adhere to all agreed-upon deadlines and will contact Assessment and Evaluation when research in the District is completed.
14. Reports will not refer to persons or school or the District by name.
15. Any data collected or provided will be kept confidential and will not be shared.
16. One electronic copy of the results of the research will be submitted to Assessment and Evaluation.

I AGREE TO ALL THE ABOVE TERMS AND CONDITIONS.

Signature

Date

EXAMPLE OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL
(Items 9 through 14)

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: READING SKILLS OF LANGUAGE-IMPAIRED CHILDREN

9. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to compare and describe the performances between groups and within groups of children with receptive language impairments, children with expressive language impairments, and children with no language or learning handicaps, on the reading skills of word attack, word identification, word comprehension, and passage comprehension when Performance scale score on the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-Revised (WISC-R) is controlled.

The research questions to be answered are:

1. Does reading performance differ significantly for the three language groups regardless of category of reading skill?
2. Do the three language groups differ significantly from each other on the specific reading skills of word attack, word identification, word comprehension, and passage comprehension?
3. Within each language group, are there significant differences in performance on the four categories of reading skill?

10. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK/RATIONALE

Intricate connections have been postulated between language and reading. Synder (1980) described some of the component processes in reading (decoding, sight word recognition, syntactical comprehension, passage comprehension and recall) and the language skills she considered as prerequisites. Menyuk and Flood (1981) delineated specific reading problems that would be expected to occur depending on specific language deficits. Johnson and Myklebust (1967) have stated that reading requires one to superimpose a system of visual symbols on previously learned language; consequently, a language deficit would interfere with acquisition of reading skills.

The research that has been done has substantiated that many language-impaired children become disabled readers when they reach school age (Aram, Ekelman and Nation, 1984; Strominger, 1983; McGrady, 1964). From fourth grade on, a child is expected to gain a substantial amount of new information by reading the required texts, and often it is at this point that language-impaired children begin to demonstrate problems that pervade all academic areas. However, empirical research concerning the effects of language impairments on reading achievement is sparse, and only one study (McGrady) has correlated specific language deficits (receptive vs. expressive) with specific reading problems. Consequently, based on empirical data, little is known concerning the effect of specific language deficits on reading skills.

11. METHODS/TECHNIQUES

a. Research Design/Data Collection

Language-Impaired Groups. All children in these two groups will have been classified by their districts as having language impairments severe enough to qualify them for placement in a self-contained SLI class. All children who have parental permission and who fit the exclusionary criteria will be tested in random order within each class. Children will be assigned to the Receptive group or the Expressive group based on their performance on the Listening and Speaking composites of the Test of Language Development-Intermediate (Hammill & Newcomer, 1982).

Control Group Controls will be selected from a randomized list of all children within the chosen age range within each school. The first 30 students on the list will be given parent permission forms. The records of those students who return signed forms will be read in randomized order to establish that they do not fit any of the exclusionary criteria. Controls will be tested after the language-impaired children are tested and assigned to groups. In each school, the number of Controls to be tested will equal the number of SLI subjects tested so that Controls will share equal representation of the same school population as the language-impaired children.

b. Methods(s) of data analysis

Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA).

c. Number of subjects and grade levels

Subjects will be selected from schools in the Tucson and Phoenix areas that have intermediate level Severe Language Impaired (SLI) classes. The three groups of children included will be those from SLI classes that have receptive language impairments, those from SLI classes that have expressive impairments, and controls who have no learning or language handicaps. All subjects will be between the ages of 10-0 and 12-11, have English as the predominant home language, will have normal vision and hearing, will have scored at least 85 on the Performance scale of the WISC-R, and will have no history of severe emotional disturbance or gross neurological abnormalities. Controls will have no history of special education. With the exception of Performance scale scores for the Controls, this information is to be taken from each student's confidential and cumulative files. Each group will consist of a maximum of 30 and a minimum of 20 subjects.

d. Number and names of school sites

Hudlow, Tully, and Maldonado Elementary Schools

e. Treatment

Each of the four instruments to be used is highly standardized with clear directions for administration. The instruments are: Test of Language Development-Intermediate (TOLD-I) (Hammill & Newcomer, 1982), Performance scale of the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-Revised (WISC-R PS) (Wechsler, 1974), four subtests from the Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests-Revised (WRMT-R) (Woodcock, in progress), and two reading subtests from the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills, Form 7 (ITBS) (Heironymus, et al., 1983). Testing will follow the standardized procedures.

All subjects will be individually tested on the TOLD-I in the first session (approximately 1/2 hour) and the WRMT-R in the second session (approximately 1 hour). Controls will be given the WISC-R PS (approximately 40 minutes), after the TOLD-I, in the first session. Each language-impaired class will be tested as a group on the subtests of the ITBS (1 1/4 hours). ITBS scores for the Controls will be taken from the records of their April tests. The WISC-R PS will be used only as a covariate and will not be interpreted in the findings.

f. Investigators

Administration of all tests will be conducted by the Project Director and two graduate students in Special Education who are certified Learning Disability Specialists. Both examiners will be trained by the Project Director using videotaped and direct observations of each examiner administering each test. During the research project, all protocols will be double-checked by a second examiner for scoring accuracy.

g. Resources needed

Students: All SLI students eligible according to age and exclusionary criteria, and an equal number of non-handicapped students.

Time: Individual testing will take two sessions, the first approximately 1/2 hour for SLI subjects and 1 1/4 hours for Controls, and the second, approximately 1 hour. A third session will be necessary for each SLI class participating in the study for group administration of the ITBS. The time required to administer the two subtests is approximately 1 1/4 hours.

Testing rooms: One small, quiet, and well-lighted room will be needed for test administration.

Confidential and cumulative folders of SLI students and Controls who have obtained parent permission will need to be made available to the Project Director or her assistant to establish eligibility and to provide WISC-R and ITBS scores.

Lists of students in SLI classes and of non-handicapped students between the ages of 10-0 and 12-11 will need to be made available so that parent permission forms can be sent home.

12. INSTRUMENTS

Tests of Language Development-Intermediate

The TOLD-I is comprised of five subtests: (1) Sentence Combining, (2) Characteristics, (3) Word Ordering, (4) Generals, and (5) Grammatical Comprehension. The test differentiates receptive from expressive language performance based on composite scores. The TOLD-I was standardized on over 800 subtests, ages 8-6 to 12-11, representative of the U.S. population as described in the 1980 Census. Internal consistency and test-retest reliability for the composite quotients were above .90. Criterion validity ranged from .56 to .86. Results of tests conducted on construct validity, content validity, relationship to school achievement, and item validity were acceptable.

Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests-Revised

The WRMT-R is an individually administered test of reading readiness and achievement. The following subtests will be taken from it: (1) Word Attack, (2) Word Identification, (3) Word Comprehension, and (4) Passage Comprehension. The WRMT-R is a revision of the 1973 Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests and is expected to be an improvement in regard to standardization, flexibility of assessment, variety of scores, reliability of individual subtests, and statistical equation with other diagnostic measures. The WRMT-R has been standardized on over 5000 subjects representative of the population of the U.S. as described by the 1980 Census. It has been designed so that reliability coefficients are above .90. Results of validity tests on the 1973 WRMT are above acceptable standards, and the WRMT-R is being designed to improve on these. Dr. Woodcock has offered to make the revised edition available for data collection before publication.

Iowa Tests of Basic Skills

Vocabulary and Reading Comprehension will be the two subtests used from the ITBS. Since the ITBS is the achievement test adopted by the state of Arizona, this review will not site the reliability and validity statistics. Results of all such tests were above acceptable levels and are reported in Hieronymus, A. N., Lindquist, E. F., & Hoover, H. D. (1982). Manual for School Administrators: Iowa Tests of Basic Skills for Form 7/8. Chicago: The Riverside Publishing Company.

Wechsler Intelligence Scales for Children: Performance

The WISC-R is a widely used, individually administered test of cognitive abilities. The Performance scale of the WISC-R is generally accepted as an indication of non-verbal intellectual potential. Since it is the measure used with the SLI subjects, it was selected as the measure to be used with the Controls also. It has been standardized on 2200 subjects representative of the U.S. population as described by the 1980 Census. The split-half reliability coefficient for the entire scale is .90, and ranges from .70 to .85 for the individual subtests. Test-retest reliabilities for subjects of comparable ages to the subjects in the proposed study is .89 for the entire scale and range from .69 to .86 for the individual subtests.

13. USE OF THE RESULTS

The results of this study will be the basis of the Project Director's doctoral dissertation. In addition, a number of articles will be generated for submission to such journals as Journal of Speech and Hearing Research and Journal of Learning Disabilities. Results will be submitted for presentation at the national conference of the Council for Exceptional Children. The information generated by this study is expected to be a valuable addition to the literature documenting the effects of language impairments on reading skills so that preventative and remedial educational programs may be improved.

14. EDUCATIONAL IMPORTANCE

The educational implications of this study are two-fold. First, the prediction of reading difficulties could serve as a guide for early academic intervention. Forewarning that a language-impaired child might have difficulty learning to read, and specific information as to what skills might cause the greatest difficulty, can help the speech/language specialist plan an effective educational program. Second, knowledge about the effects of specific language impairments on reading skills may enhance parental involvement in the developmental learning process. In conjunction with the reading specialist, the speech/language specialist may make specific suggestions to parents concerning activities they can do with their child to facilitate the acquisition of reading skills.

The results of this particular study will provide the SLI teacher with information regarding the receptive and expressive language competency of their students, based on the TOLD-I, and information regarding their performance on the two subtests from the ITBS. Unless the scores of a Control student are extreme, the TOLD-I is not expected to provide necessary information to the regular classroom teacher, but is necessary within the design of this study. SLI teachers and regular classroom teachers will be provided with information concerning the performance of their students on the four subtests on the WRMT-R. WISC-R Performance scale scores will not be shared with the teachers as they are only to be used as a method of controlling for disparate cognitive abilities.

PARENT PERMISSION FORM

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Your child has been invited to participate in a study that will help to further understanding about the relationship between language skills and the ability to learn to read. The study will be conducted by a doctoral candidate at the University of Arizona who is a certified learning disabilities specialist and reading specialist, under the direction of professors in the Departments of Special Education, and Speech and Hearing. Your child's participation in this study will enable us to provide his/her teacher with specific information concerning his/her language skills and reading skills. Except for this purpose, results of all tests will be confidential, and reports of the study will not include the names of any children.

This project has been approved by the school district and the principal. If you are willing to have your child participate in this study, please sign on the line below and return the form to your child's teacher. Your cooperation in this important project will be very much appreciated.

Sincerely,

Lynne E. Jaffe, Ed.S.
Doctoral Candidate

If you have any questions about this project, please feel free to call me at (phone number).

I give my consent:

1. for my child to be individually tested on 2 widely-used tests of reading and language competency, in two testing sessions that will require him/her to be out of the regular classroom for a total of 2 1/2 hours.
2. for my child to take 2 subtests from the state-adopted achievement test if s/he has not done so in April.
3. for the project director to provide my child's teacher with information concerning his/her performance on the tests.

Signed _____

Child's name _____ **Date** _____