



**School Year 2008 – 2009  
Preschool Programs Evaluation Report**

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### Attachments

- Parent Discussion Groups
- Teacher Interviews

# **A Stepping Stone Foundation**

## **Preschool Programs Evaluation Summary**

### ***INTRODUCTION:***

For a second year, A Stepping Stone Foundation (ASSF) contracted Dolores Retana to evaluate its school based preschool programs.

The academic school year 2008 – 2009 presented as a time of change for ASSF:

- The Isaac Preschool Program was faced not only with a new teacher but student mobility at a high rate not experienced before.
- The preschool program at Fowler Elementary School was launched in January 2009.
- The economy impacted programs not only in decreased financial resources but in student mobility.
- Lastly, continued anti-immigrant sentiments resulted in entire families moving back to Mexico as well as families being separated. In the case of family separation, teachers indicate the father, the family's breadwinner, is usually the one apprehended by authorities and deported/detained. Families have been devastated leaving the mothers looking for employment in efforts to support themselves and their young children.

Evaluation strategies implemented for this school year are slightly different from last year:

- Teacher response to the Social Competence Behavior Evaluation (SCBE) for each individual student in their classroom;
- Analysis of students' Get Ready to Read scores;
- Brief conversations with parents from Fowler, Westwood and Granada Preschool Programs.
- Teacher interviews.

### **Social Competence Behavior Evaluation (SCBE)**

The SCBE is the work of Doctors' LaFreniere and Dumas and has been available for community use since 1995.

Information on these tools is available via the following website:

[http://web.ics.purdue.edu/~bberndt/jdumas/scbe\\_manual/](http://web.ics.purdue.edu/~bberndt/jdumas/scbe_manual/)

According to the authors, "The primary objective of the *Social Competence and Behavior Evaluation* (SCBE) is to describe the child's behavior for purposes of

socialization and education, rather than diagnosis. It focuses on the child's adaptation to and functioning within his or her environment--which is particularly relevant to teachers. The SCBE helps teachers design classroom interventions that address both the child's strengths and weaknesses”.

The SCBE is comprised of four summary scales:

- Social competence;
- Externalizing problems;
- Internalizing problems; and
- General Adaptation.

These scales correlate with 8 basic subscales that follow a continuum:

- Depressive – Joyful
- Anxious – Secure
- Angry – Tolerant
- Isolated – Integrated
- Aggressive – Calm
- Egotistical – Prosocial
- Oppositional – Cooperative
- Dependent - Autonomous

Behavior data captured in these four areas are important to an educational setting as it serves as a good predictor for a child’s readiness to attend, follow directions, positively interact with their peers and adapt to a new environment outside of the safety of their home.

The SCBE is an 80 item instrument whereby teachers are asked to respond to the student’s behavior based on a 6 point Likert Scale:

- 1 = Never
- 2 and 3 = Sometimes
- 4 and 5 = Often
- 6 = Always.

The tool was implemented the beginning of the program, midyear and at the end of the school year. In the case of Fowler Preschool, since the program opened at midyear, the tool was implemented at mid year and then again at the end of the school year.

Before introducing the findings, it is important to note that while test for significance is reported for this particular evaluation strategy but in cases where  $N < 30$ , caution must be taken in interpreting the findings. A minimum of 30 respondents are needed for a normal distribution. Nonetheless, the findings are strong and suggest trends in the reported directions.

Furthermore, ASSF defines a full dose as 6 months. Hence, while findings are reported for Fowler Preschool, the reader must know that based on ASSF standards, these students, while benefitting from the program, did not receive a full dose of programming.

In reporting the findings for the SCBE, analysis is reported in the aggregate across composite scales, across gender, schools, and classrooms. “N” in this case is representative of the number of students enrolled in the program or at least the number of SCBE tools completed by the teachers.

- Ms. Kristin Hinkle at Isaac Preschool – 10;
- Ms Jan Milks at Granada Primary – 20;
- Ms. Fran Smith at Westwood Elementary – 19;
- Ms. Janet Castañeda at Westwood Elementary – 14; and
- Ms. Amy Aasen at Fowler Elementary – 11.

This means that findings across schools will account for:

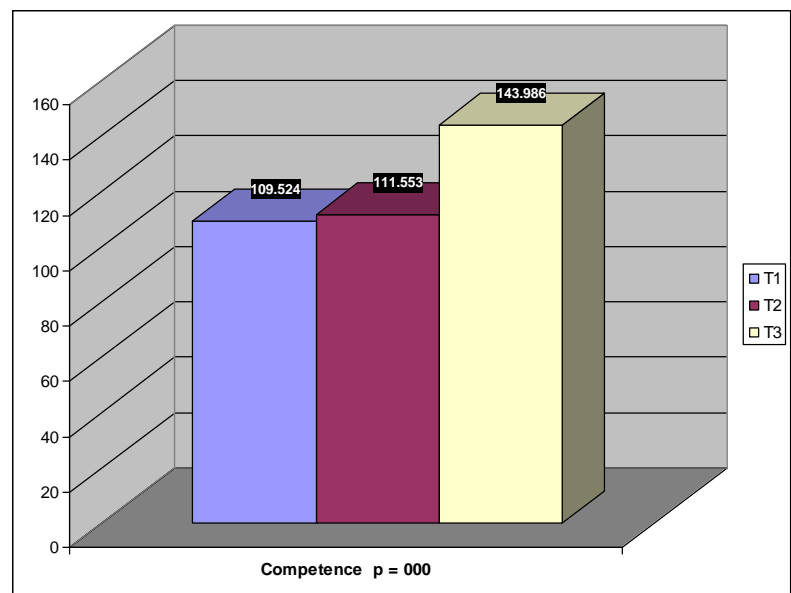
- 10 for Isaac Preschool;
- 20 for Granada Primary;
- 33 for Westwood Elementary; and
- 11 for Fowler Elementary.

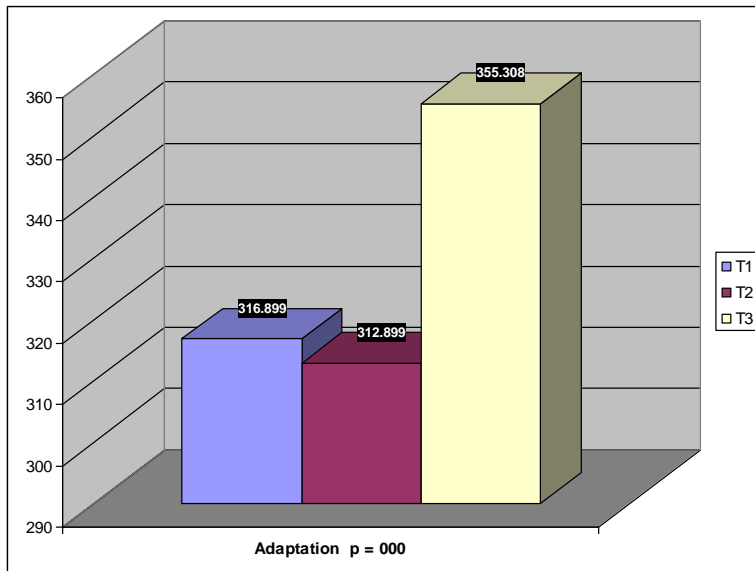
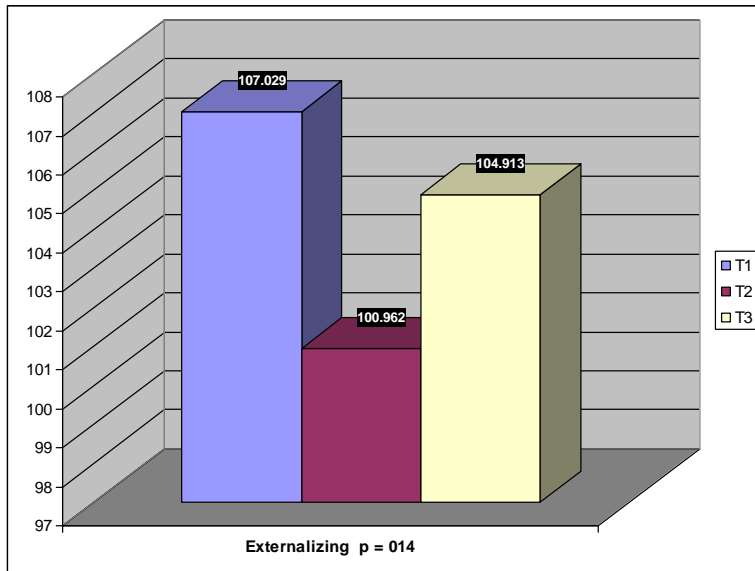
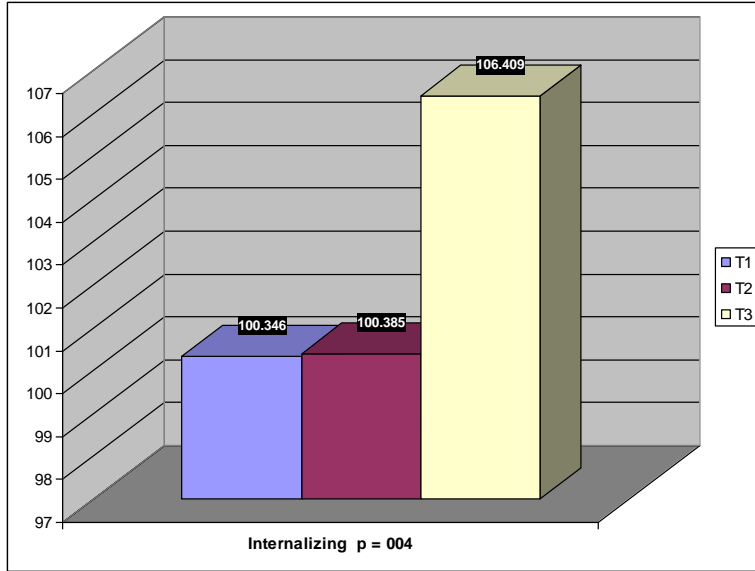
In establishing consistency in the database, the Likert scale was reversed for select responses. Hence, for our purposes, the greater the mean, the better the behavior, be it positive or negative. For example, a child who scores a high mean score at post test for “joy” means the child was found to be more joyful at post test. If a child scored a high mean score for “worry” at post test, this means the child is worrying less than he did at pretest. As previously stated, in the latter example, for consistency in the database, the values were reversed.

## Composite Scales N = 52

A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to test for significance across subscales. Significance is noted when  $p < .05$ . This means that we are 95% confident that the findings are a result of the intervention vs “chance”. While this report provides findings for the 4 major scales, findings for individual subscales are also available.

Across time, significance is noted across all scales and subscales, except for “anxious” where significance is not noted.

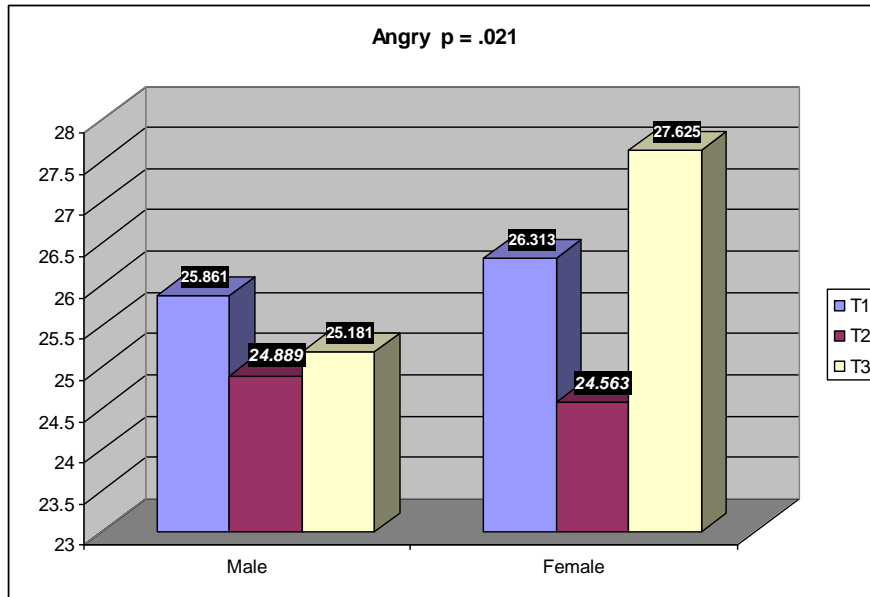




## Across Gender

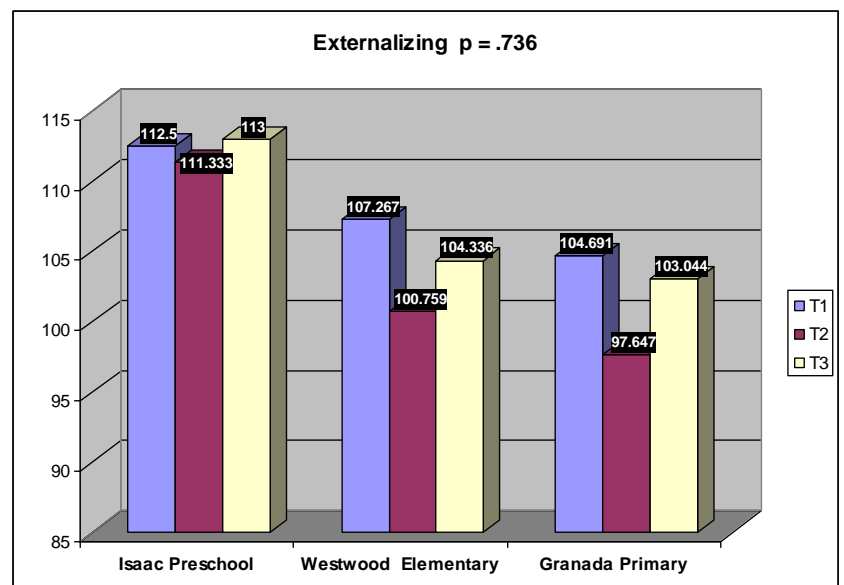
Once again, in testing across gender and across time, a multiple analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used. This sample accounts for 36 boys and 16 girls.

For composite scales and for most subscales, no gender difference is noted except for the angry ( $p = .021$ ). Keeping in mind that the higher the mean, the greater the desired behavior, it appears girls became less angry vs their male counterparts who appear to be more angry at T3.

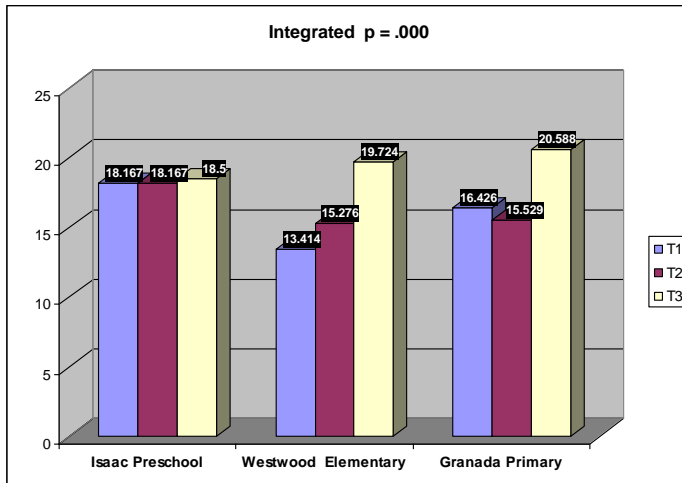
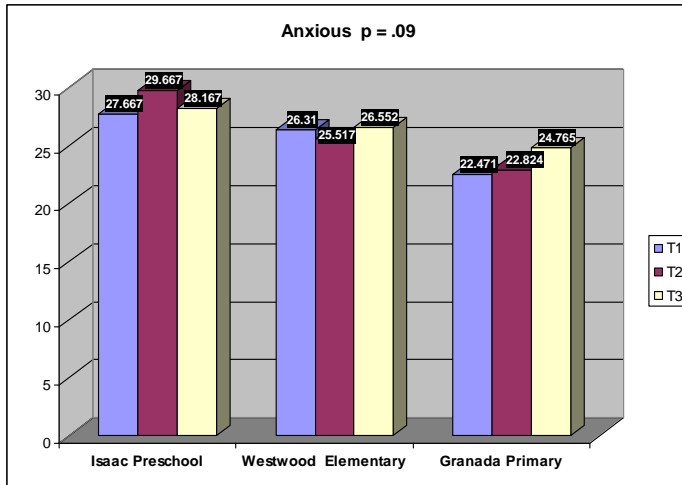
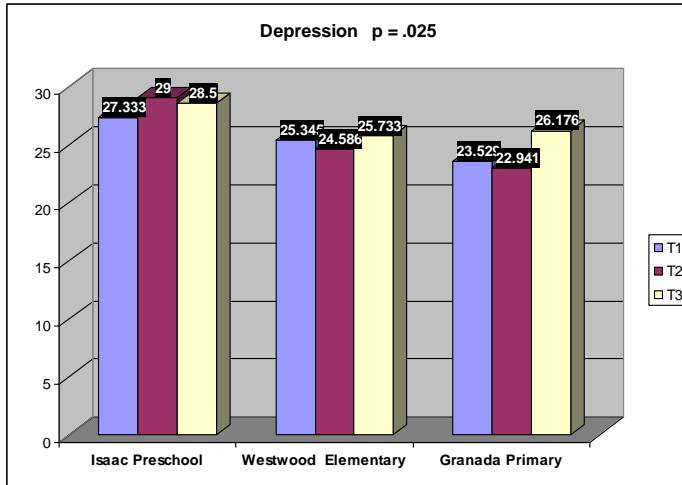


## Across Schools

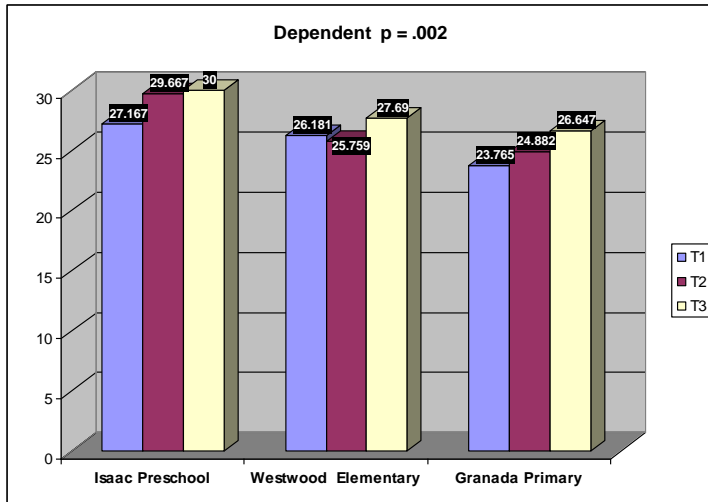
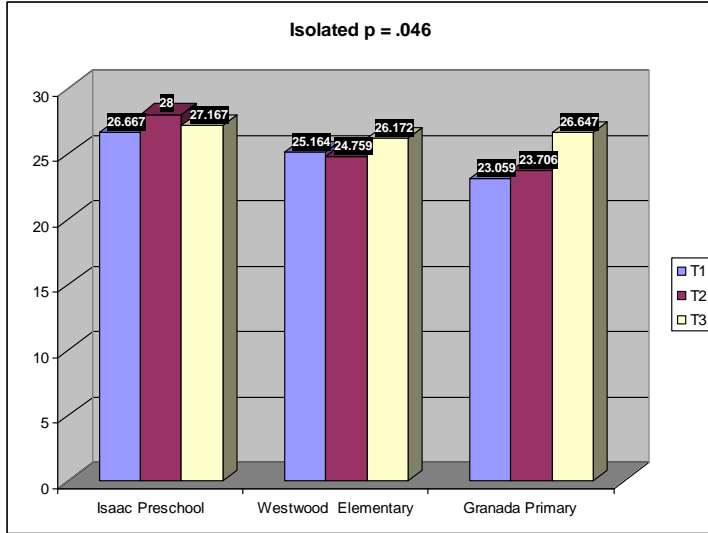
MANOVA was also used also to test across schools and classrooms. Across schools, significance is not noted in subscales: joyful, angry, aggressive, egotistical and oppositional. Findings for the composite subscale "externalizing" is also not found to be significant with  $p = .736$ . However, outside of Isaac Preschool, preschool programs housed at Westwood and Granada Elementary Schools make movement in the desired direction.



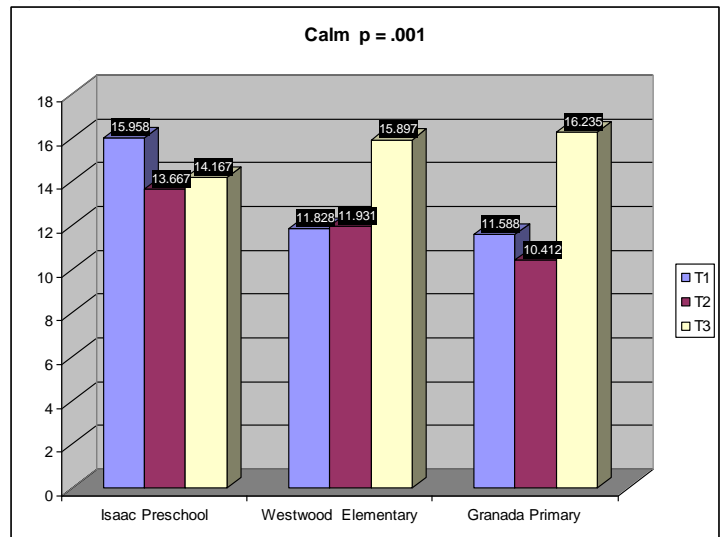
The following subscales suggest that when comparing behaviors from the beginning to the end of the year, Isaac, Westwood and Granada based preschool programs moved in the desired direction

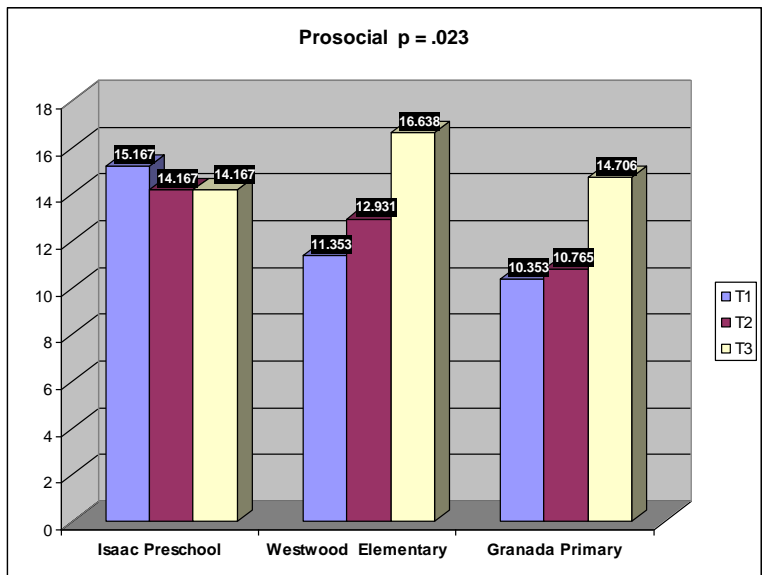
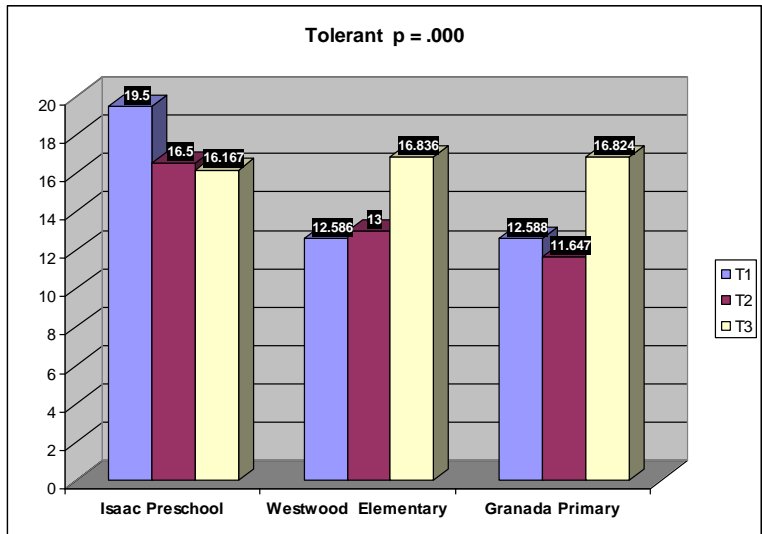
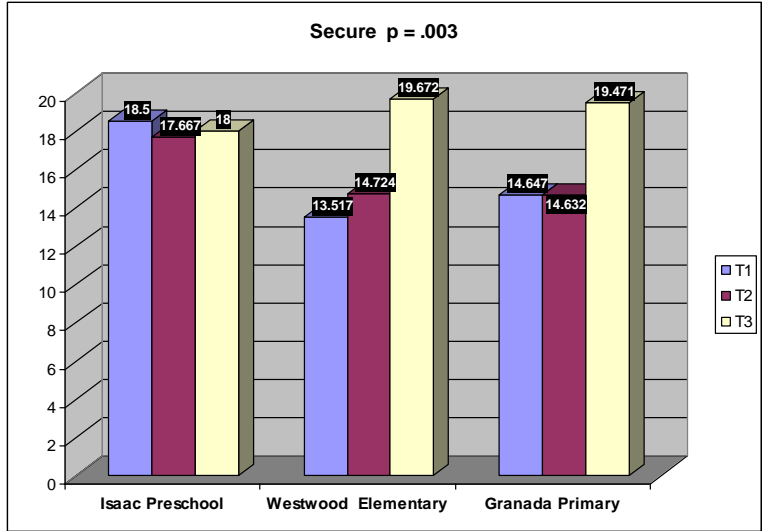


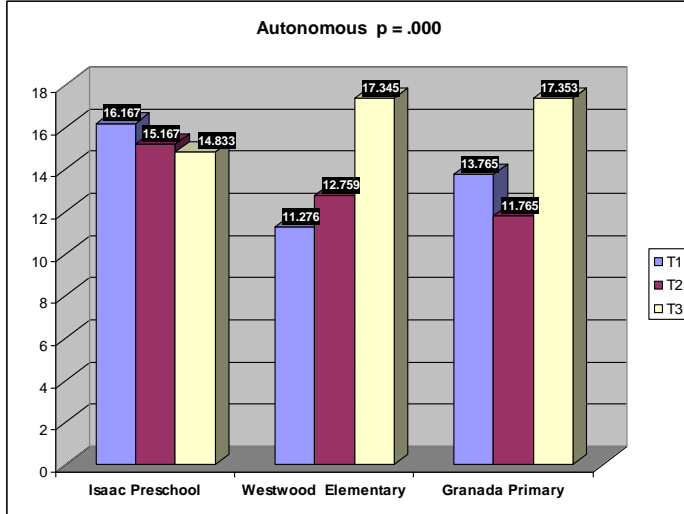
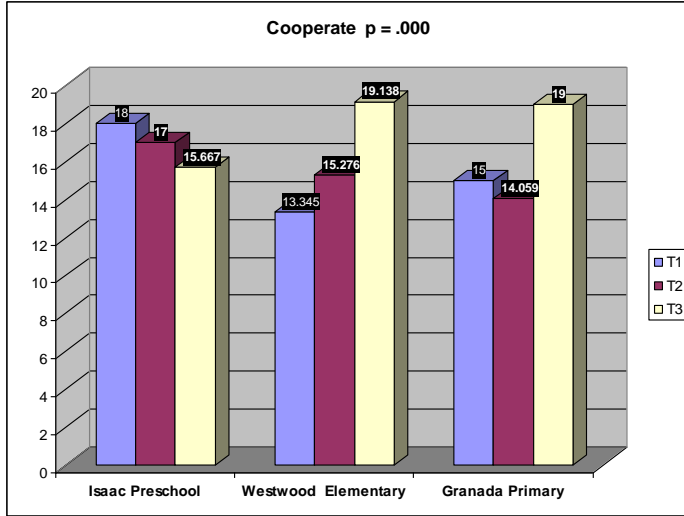




For the following subscales, movement in the right direction is noted in Westwood and Granada based preschool programs but not in the Isaac Preschool Program. As previously mentioned, the Isaac Preschool program experienced great mobility this past year. Also, the teacher assigned to this preschool classroom is an experienced elementary preschool teacher and had never taught preschool before. During her respective interview, she voiced “being on a learning curve” with this young population.

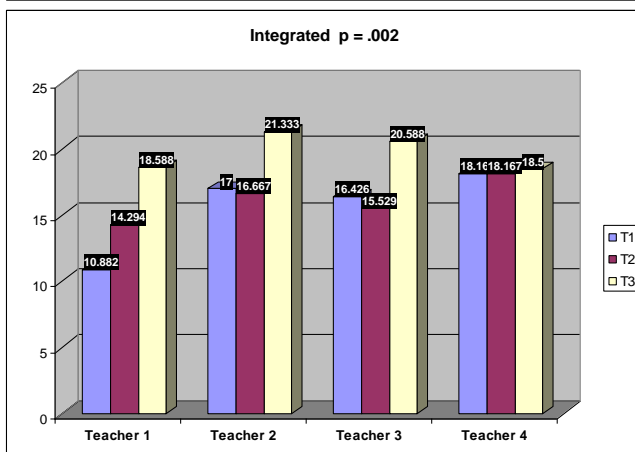
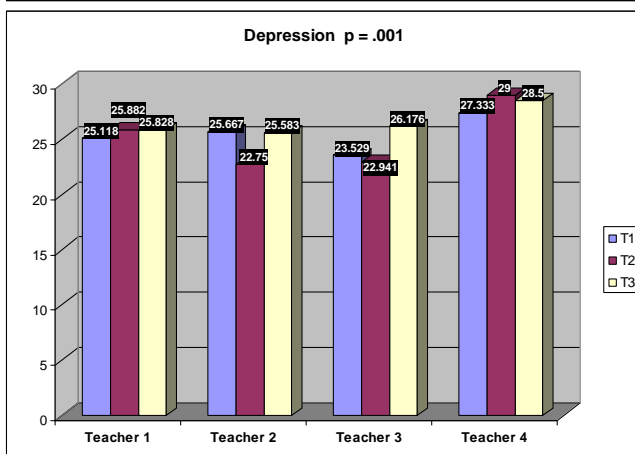
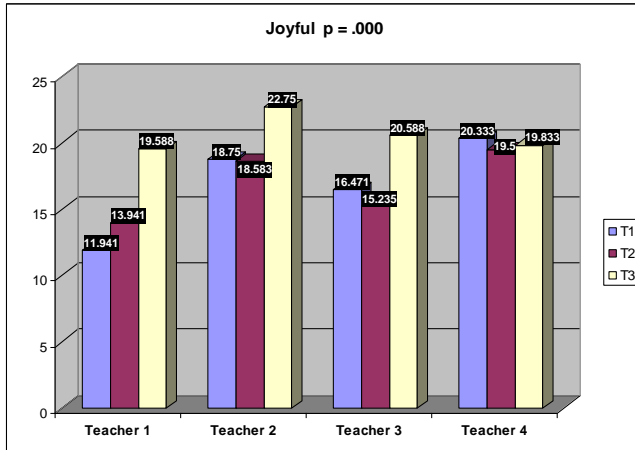


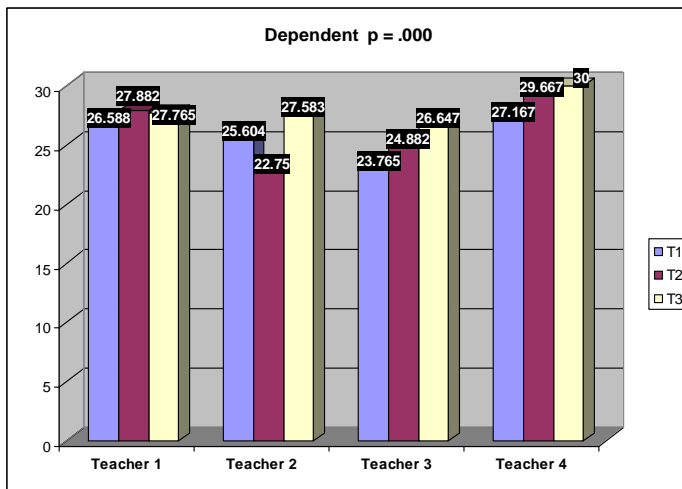
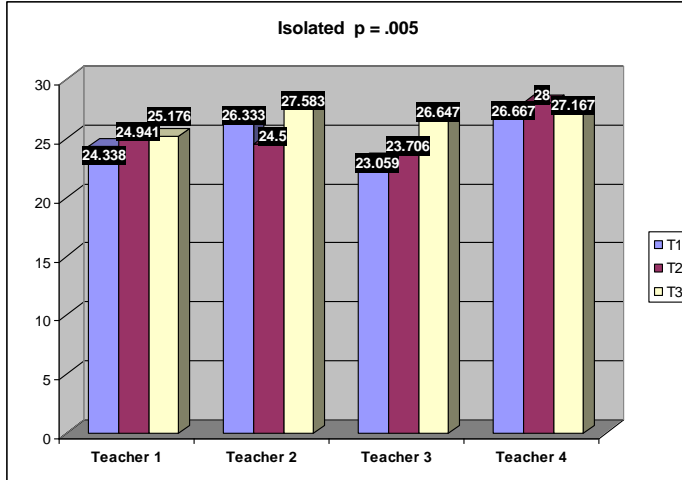




## Across Classrooms

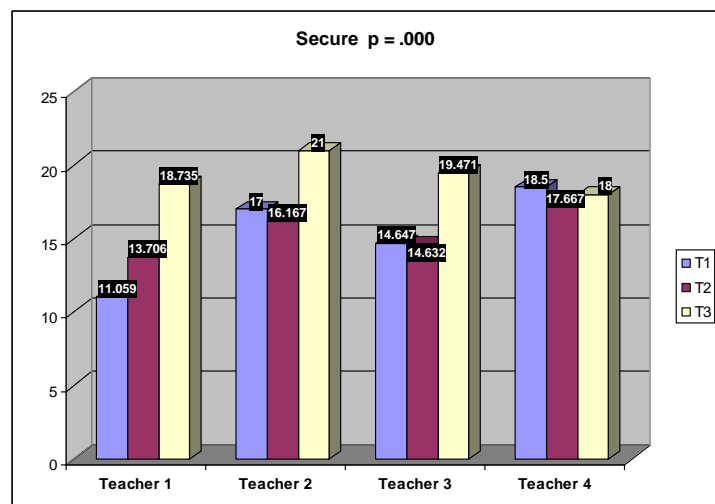
When comparing T1 to T3, significance is noted across all classrooms for the following subscales.

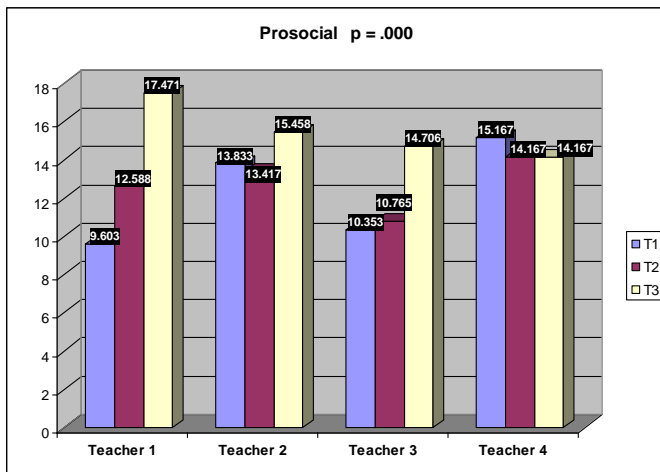
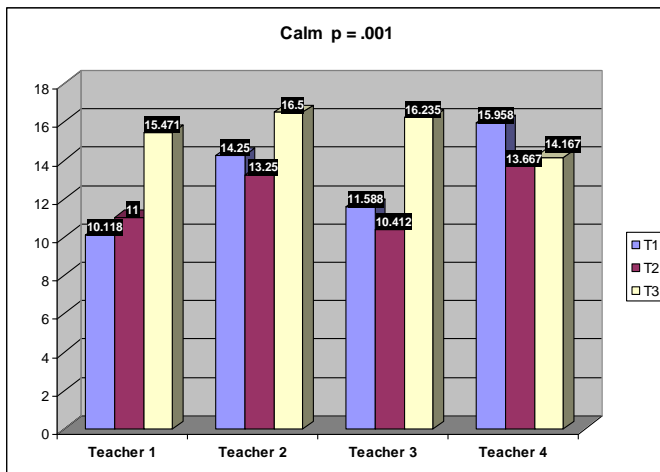
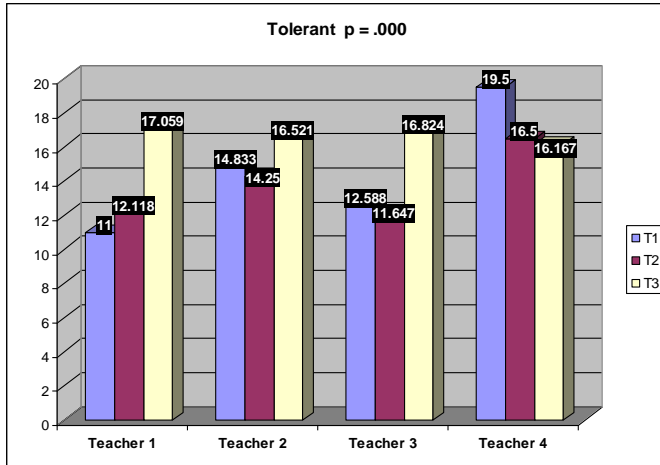


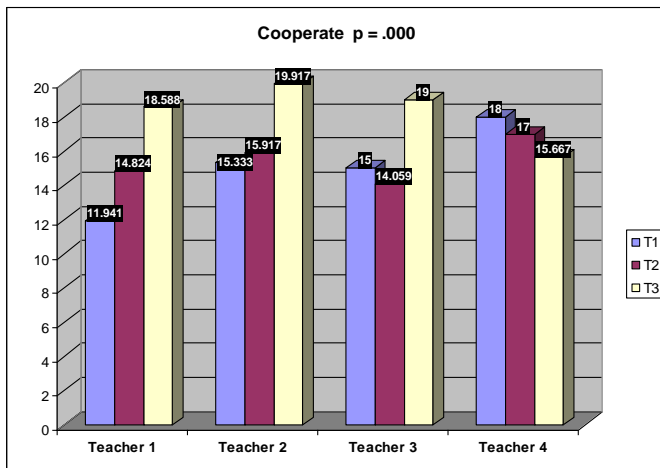
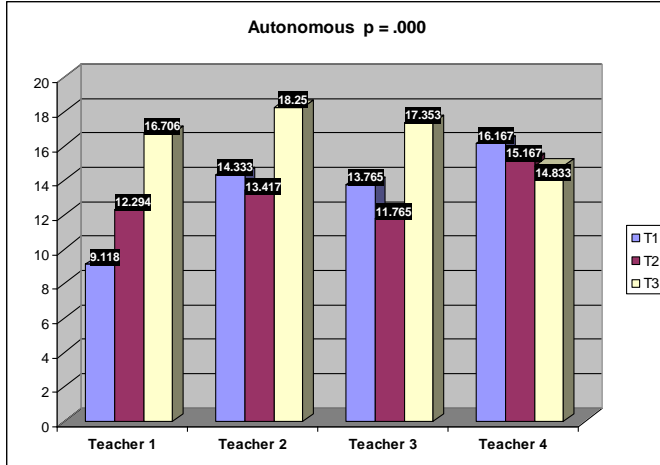


For the following subscales, movement in the undesired direction is noted for at least one teacher.

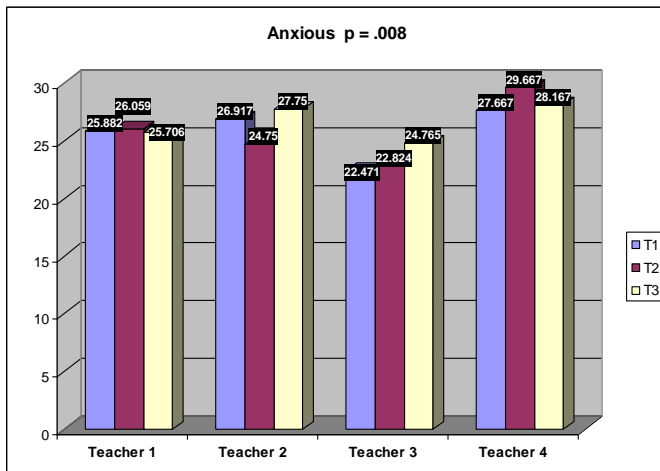
For the subscale “secure”, teacher 4 appears to have moved in the undesired direction by T3.



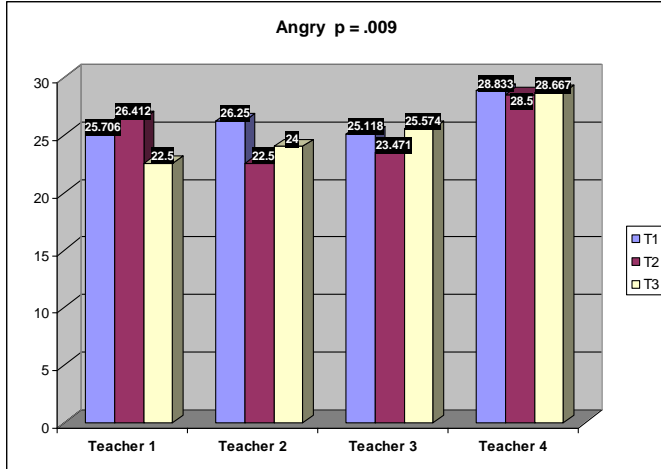




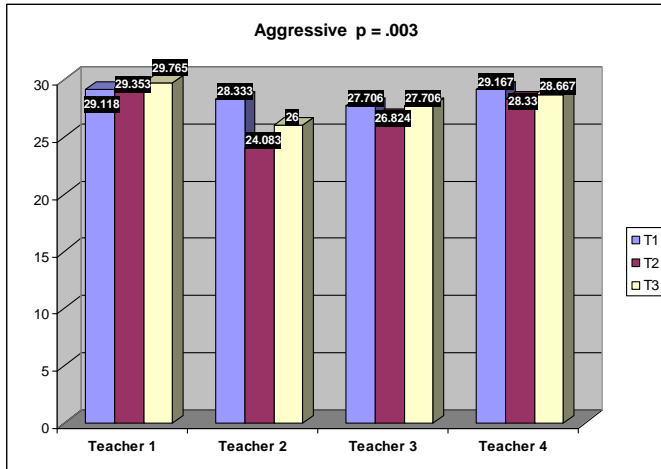
For the following subscale “anxious”, Teacher 1 and Teacher 4 show movement in the undesired direction.



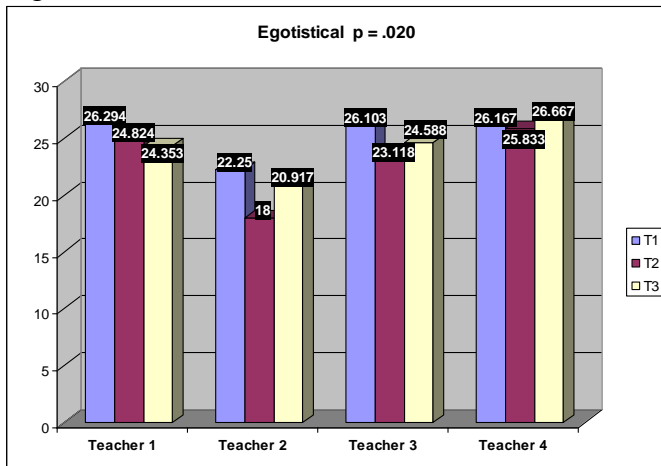
For subscale “angry”, by T3, teachers 1, 2 and 4 show movement in the undesired direction.



Teachers 2 and 4 show movement in the undesired direction for subscale “aggressive.” Teacher 3 showed no change at T3 and teacher 1 shows movement in the desired direction.

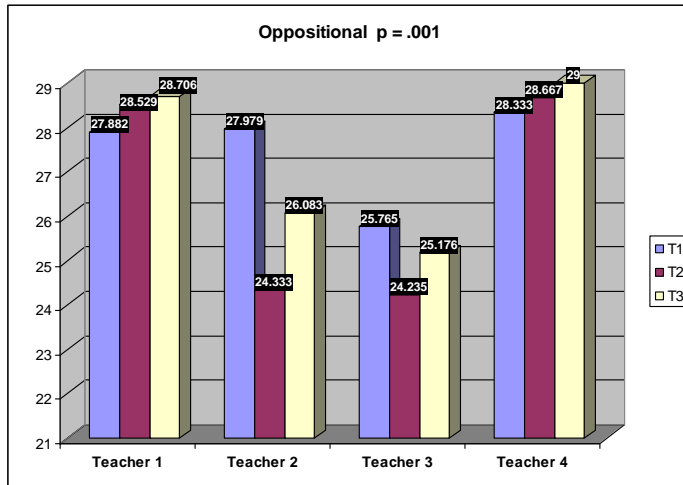


Teachers 1, 2 and 3 show movement in the undesired direction for subscale “egotistical.”



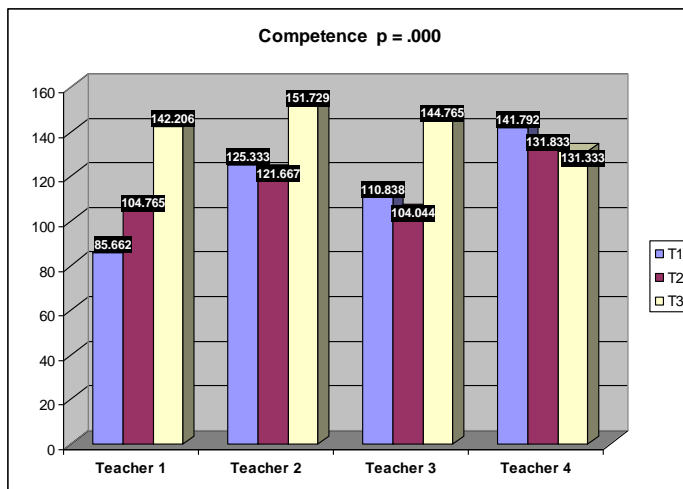


For subscale “oppositional” teachers 2 and 3 show movement in the undesirable direction.

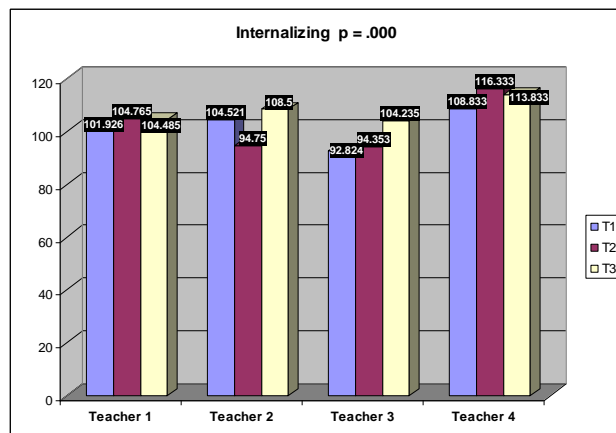


Composite Scales by Teacher:

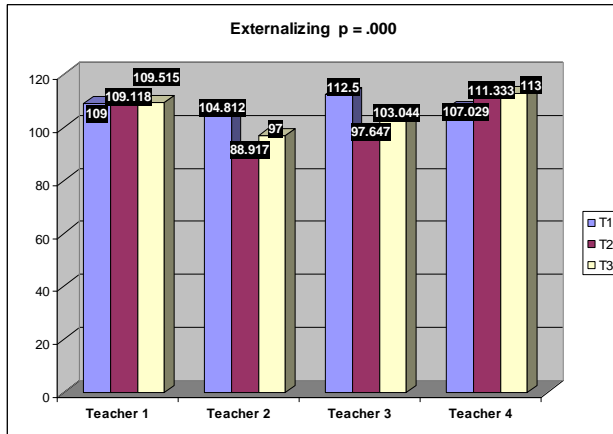
For the composite scale “competence” movement in the undesired direction is noted for teacher 4. The remaining teachers show movement in the desired direction.



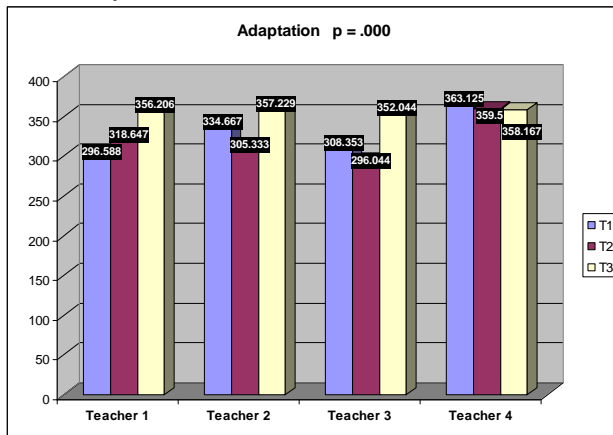
Data suggests all teachers moved in the desired direction for scale “internalizing” behaviors.



Teachers 2 and 3 show movement in the undesired direction for scale “externalizing behaviors.”

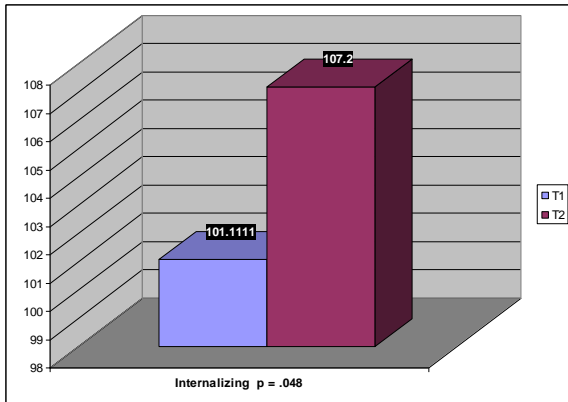
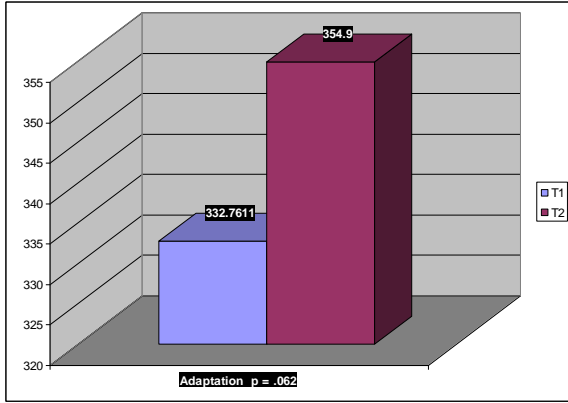
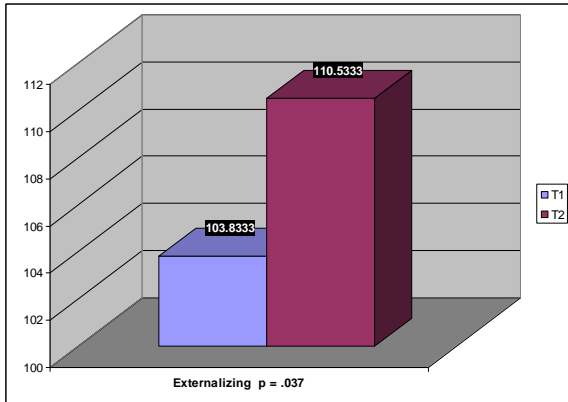
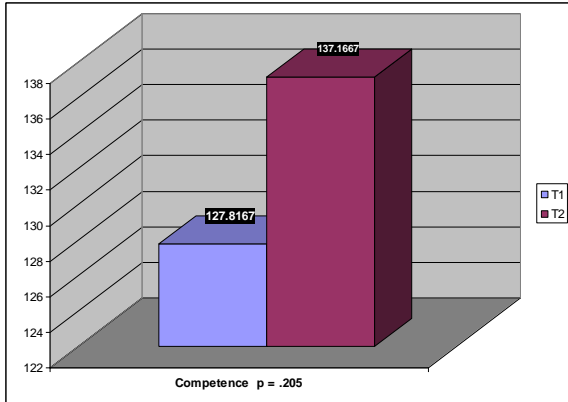


For adaptive behaviors, teacher 4 shows movement in the undesired direction.



### Fowler Elementary School – Preschool Program

As previously mentioned, children enrolled in the Fowler Preschool Program began their attendance in January 2009. While they did not receive a full 6 month dose in classroom, evaluator was asked to analyze their data set, nonetheless. While the number of students enrolled is under 30, our intent in analyzing the data was not to test for significance but to determine if data suggested movement in the desired direction. A paired sample T-test was used to analyze the data. Finding for the four major scales is promising, suggesting movement in the desired direction.



## **Get Ready To Read**

Historically, the Get Ready To Read academic tool has been as a measure to determine the gains preschool children may have (or not) made during the academic year. Children exhibit mastery in this level of academics when they achieve a test score of 20 points.

According to Deanna Stecker, M.A., Applied Educational Psychology: Reading Specialist, “teaching children to read remains at the forefront of both research and controversy.”

[http://www.getreadytoread.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=196&Itemid=451](http://www.getreadytoread.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=196&Itemid=451)

Stecker states the Get Ready to Read screening tool was introduced to ensure “preschool children will have the skills they need to be ready to learn to read when they enter kindergarten.” She adds that recent research “indicates that many reading problems can be prevented by providing children with adequate preparation in literacy instruction while they are three and four years old.”

ASSF goal for GRTR is: Prepare children for success in school: from July 1st 2008 to June 10th, 2009, 80% of the children attending for 6 months or more will improve their composite score by at least 30%, or have achieved a perfect score on the Get Ready to Read test which will be administered by the teacher in August of 2008 and May of 2009 in English.

As with SCBE, teachers were asked to complete the Get Ready to Read at the beginning of the school year, at the beginning of the calendar year and at the end of school. Four of the teachers completed the tool as a pre/post/post. Since the program was launched midyear, the teacher at Fowler completed the tool as a pre/post

The following table provides a summary of the cumulative scores by classroom. As ASSF defines a full dose as 6 months, the table reflects those children who had all three scores.

Change noted was computed based on change noted between pre and a post test and then post and post/post scores.

<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Fall Screen</b>	<b>Spring Screen</b>	<b>Change noted</b>	<b>End of Year</b>	<b>Change noted</b>	<b>End year change noted</b>
<b>Janet Castañeda</b>	108	152	41% increase	195	28%	81%
<b>Fran Smith</b>	141	203	44%	260	28%	84%
<b>Kristin Hinkle</b>	44	136	75%	162	19%	88.60%

Teacher	Fall Screen	Spring Screen	Change noted	End of Year	Change noted	End year change noted
Janice Milks	166	243	46%	285	17%	72%

■ Findings:

- ✓ 84 students enrolled in the program.
- ✓ 60 or 82% remained in the program, at least 6 months (GRTR pre/post data available).
- ✓ Of the 60, 44 or 73% improved their composite scores by at least 30%
- ✓ In aggregate, on average, an 81% improvement is noted (interpret cautiously).

Fowler Preschool Program students were tested at time of enrollment, midyear, and then again at the end of the school year. During this 5 month period of time, the following findings are noted:

- 12 kids were pretested
- 9 were post tested
- 2 had no change in scores
- 7 showed increases at post test
- At post test, an almost 23% increase is noted.

## ***Parent Discussion Groups***

*“My child loves his teacher. His teacher is my teacher.”*

Fowler Elementary School Preschool Program Parent

Three parent brief discussion groups took place with parents from the following ASSF preschool programs: Fowler, Granada and Westwood. A total of 35 parents provided their input.

The following points provide a summary of responses provided by parents:

- Wonderful teachers!
- Comprehensive preschool program. It offers children the opportunity to grow in all areas of development and prepare them to be successful in Kindergarten and grade school;
- GED and ESL instructors received a mix review. Language an issue; teaching strategies for a GED instructor, problematic. Prefers his newspaper. Parents find it difficult to grasp difficult concepts in English when a new language learner.
- The ASSF model provides a wonderful social outlet and opportunity to grow for both parent and child.
- Home visitation great opportunity to work on child’s individual needs.
- 3 year old program will ensure children are ready for Kindergarten.
- Child care is an important component of the program not only because it provides an opportunity to participate in the classroom, attend adult education programs but because it provides and opportunity to learn how to manage children’s behaviors in a more positive way;
- Child care center serves as an educational placement for younger siblings who participate;
- Adult component elevates parents self esteem, self confidence, and teaches them how to advocate on behalf of their children and themselves at multiple levels;

The purpose of these brief discussions was to gauge how parents were feeling and what they were thinking.

Consistent with the previous school year, in the area of parenting, participants indicate have increased knowledge and understanding of:

- child development;
- how children learn’ and
- behavior management.

The classroom teachers are described as:

- role models; and

- teachers.

As for changes they have noted in themselves since the inception of the program:

- they are more organized;
- they are more goal oriented;
- they view themselves as better equipped parents;
- they see themselves as more self confident and their self esteem has increased; and
- their expanded supportive network and new friends have helped them resolve family problems and view their situation more positively.

Parents report their children have progressed in all areas of development. Other areas noted are:

- increased responsibility in their academics and love for school;
- increased social skills; and
- increased academic skills.

Issues that may need attention by ASSF and respective school districts:

- address equity with teachers particularly as to those parents who do not attend the program as contracted;
- consider opportunity for children in child care program to be able to purchase a meal vs the family bringing snacks; and
- consider allowing the children in childcare to spend some time in the playground or at least playing outside.

## ***Teacher Interviews***

As previously mentioned, interviews were conducted with the 4 ASSF teachers. The summary provides a summary of their responses.

1. Teachers are very appreciative to have Paulette Harshberger, ASSF Program Coordinator. They value her experience, efficiency, accessibility and resourcefulness.
2. While valuing the role of the new Program Coordinator, teachers' voice there are still immediate needs that need to be addressed. Recommend exploring ways to facilitate and expedite communication for occasions and issues that are time sensitive.
3. 2 of the teachers were new to early childhood. While experienced elementary school teachers, voiced they were on a "learning curve".
4. Thematic units continue to work and teachers feel good that progress is being made towards identifying curriculum.
5. Teachers voice 3 year olds are different from 4 years olds. Teachers requesting additional training to strengthen their skills in meeting the developmental and academic needs of this younger population

6. Communication has gotten better between teachers, and teachers and ASSF staff. Teachers would like to continue to build upon these gains and continue to strengthen means for communication.
7. Teachers excited that they got most of the things that were on their wish list.
8. Teachers excited about becoming accredited.
9. Given the recession – teachers are happy to be employed!

### ***Impressions and Recommendations:***

1. Behavioral scales and Getting Ready to Read Scores suggest that due to programmatic interventions implemented, preschool children are growing in all areas of development, including children who participated in program at least 5 months.
2. The SCBE subscale findings appear to be indicative of challenges faced this year. However, despite these challenges, composite scores for the scales indicate that the program is as effective for boys as it is for girls. Likewise, composite scores offer similar evidence across teachers and schools.
3. Parents value and are appreciative of all programmatic components.
4. Program strategies effective in impacting skills needed for children to be successful to learn.
5. Parents voice growth in various areas including second language, parenting and academics.
6. Seems bilingual instructors for parents maybe important.
7. Support provided by the Program Director is a great beginning. Teachers would like to see continued growth in this area.