

**A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TEACHERS
AT HIGH AND LOW PERFORMING TITLE I ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS**

by

ERIC JENSEN

to

FIELDING GRADUATE UNIVERSITY

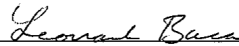
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This dissertation has been accepted for
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**A Descriptive Study Of Differences Between Teachers
At High And Low Performing Title I Elementary Schools**

by

Eric Jensen

Abstract

Nationally, students from poverty have a significantly lower chance of graduating from high school, which reduces their academic and workplace opportunities. The purpose of this study is to better understand and identify the differences (if any) in the staff between low and high performing schools. The theoretical framework comprised an understanding of the three primary influencing agents, public policy, school reform, and classroom teachers. Using high-yield teaching influencers that contribute to student achievement, a survey was developed. The broad study design type was quantitative, using a cross group comparison of convenience samples from a survey questionnaire. The participants comprised 257 teachers from 10 high-poverty elementary schools. Half were low performing (bottom 25% academically) and half were high performing (top 25% in the state). The results show that school climate and meta-cognitive skill building are predictive of greater student achievement outcomes in Title I elementary schools, and socioeconomic status is not. The likelihood that teachers were at a high-performing (vs. low-performing) school was over two and a half times greater when cognitive skills were built and over four times greater where school climate was strongly positive. This study adds to our increasing understanding of potential pathways to realistically close achievement gaps for those from lower socioeconomic status.

Keywords: Title I, high performing, low SES, poverty, teachers, and student achievement.

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