



## ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation:

**URBAN FOURTH AND FIFTH GRADE  
TEACHERS' READING ATTITUDES AND  
EFFICACY BELIEFS: RELATIONSHIPS TO  
READING INSTRUCTION AND TO  
STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND EFFICACY  
BELIEFS**

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Research on children's attitudes toward reading and reader self-efficacy indicates that they both are aspects of reading motivation and relate to achievement in reading. Additional research suggests that teachers' attitudes and beliefs connect to classroom practice, student motivation, and student achievement. Grounded in these conceptual underpinnings, this study focused on relationships between urban elementary teachers' and students' attitudes and efficacy beliefs in reading. Participants included 77 teachers and 183 students from one large urban school district.

Overall, teachers and students reported positive attitudes toward reading. Teachers' also expressed confidence in their ability to provide quality reading instruction and impact student achievement. However, students' were less efficacious in their reading skills and abilities. Results also demonstrated significant relationships between teachers' and students' reading attitudes and efficacy beliefs.

Furthermore, teachers' beliefs varied according to their years of experience, class size, and educational training in reading, and reading habits. Relationships existed

between teachers' attitudes and beliefs and the amount of instructional time spent on various aspects of reading instruction, including comprehension development and reading strategy instruction. Teachers' use of instructional materials, alternative assessment practices, and grouping structures for reading also related to their attitudes and sense of efficacy.

In particular, teachers' efficacy beliefs in reading related to more instructional factors than teachers' attitudes. Teachers believed that they could use reading instruction to make a difference in students' lives and achievement regardless of poor student motivation and other challenges. Teachers in this study maintained a high sense of efficacy with regard to teaching reading. Believing that they could impact student learning, teachers' adopted new instructional practices, sought additional training and education, and worked with parents.

Findings from this study support efforts to provide teachers with positive reading experiences and quality professional development in reading. Given the many challenges urban teachers face on a regular basis, it is necessary to help them feel confident in teaching reading and able to express enjoyment of reading to their students. Helping teachers to develop more positive attitudes and beliefs in reading may have a powerful influence on their instructional decisions and ultimately, on their students' motivation and achievement.

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## DEDICATION

To my parents,  
Gwendolyn and Nathaniel Baccus,  
for their love and support,  
and for the many sacrifices that they made for my education.

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To God be the glory for the things He has done.

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## CHAPTER 1

### *Introduction*

Reading motivation, a multidimensional construct that explains an individual's desire to read, plays a crucial role in literacy development (Cole, 2002; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Pintrich & DeGroot, 1990; Wigfield, 1994, 1997). Motivated readers want to read, arrange opportunities to read, and willingly participate in reading activities (Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, & Mazzoni, 1996; Wigfield, 1994, 1997). Dimensions of reading motivation include attitudes, values, efficacy beliefs, goals, interests, and meaning construction (Cole, 2002). Two dimensions, attitude toward reading and sense of efficacy, relate to the amount of reading that children do and to their reading achievement. Children with positive reading attitudes read more often and have higher reading achievement than children with less positive attitudes (Greaney & Hegarty, 1987; Walberg & Tsai, 1985). Likewise, children with a high sense of self-efficacy in reading are more likely to read for pleasure and to experience success on reading achievement tests than children with a lower sense of efficacy (Henk & Melnick, 1992). Unfortunately, research reveals that children often become less motivated to read and develop negative reading attitudes and beliefs as they progress through elementary school (McKenna, Kear, & Ellsworth, 1995; Wigfield, 1997). At the same time many children in the upper elementary grades struggle with low reading achievement.

What is happening in elementary school that causes children in the upper elementary grades to struggle with both low reading motivation and low achievement? Researchers and educators cite various reasons for negative attitudes and beliefs and poor achievement. These include the perceptions and beliefs of teachers and ineffective

instructional practices (Henk & Melnick, 1995; Irvine, 2002; McKenna et al., 1995; Morrison, Jacobs, & Swinyard 1999). Teachers with positive beliefs about students, subject matter, and their teaching ability may be more effective in using instructional practices that motivate children to learn than teachers with less positive beliefs. In this study, I aimed to build upon the above work by focusing on teachers' reading attitudes and efficacy beliefs and their relationships to both reading instruction, and to children's reading attitudes and efficacy beliefs.

### *Importance of Teachers' Attitudes and Beliefs*

Teacher motivation and engagement relates to student motivation and engagement. In a theoretical model of teacher thinking, Clark and Peterson (1986) stress that teacher beliefs relate to classroom instruction and to student performance and beliefs. Past research supported this claim and demonstrated that teachers' personal theories and beliefs influence how they teach literacy and what they signify as important in the reading process to their students (Allington, 1991; Lehman, Freeman, & Allen, 1994; Palardy, 1998; Richardson, Anders, & Tidwell, 1991). In particular, teachers' attitudes toward reading relate to reading instruction. Teachers with positive attitudes appear to use more recommended instructional practices than teachers with less positive attitudes (Morrison et. al., 1999). If a teacher likes to read and enjoys spending time reading, then he or she may be more inclined to read aloud to students, provide sufficient time for independent reading, and share a variety of books with children. Ultimately, a teacher with a positive reading attitude may help children develop similar feelings about reading and maintain a high motivation to read. On the contrary, a teacher with less positive attitudes may not recognize the value of reading to children and spend little time teaching



reading. Children in this teacher's classroom may struggle with negative attitudes toward reading and be reluctant to engage in reading activities.

Because teachers' attitudes may contribute to their classroom behavior and to their students' attitudes and beliefs, it is important for teachers to exhibit positive feelings about books and reading. However, recent conversations with elementary teachers led me to question the status of teachers' attitudes toward reading. I have spoken with elementary teachers who stated that they do not like to read and do not know what to do to get children motivated to read. Other teachers who claim to love reading revealed that they have little time to engage in reading and therefore, rarely read for pleasure. Past research further presented conflicting portrayals of teachers as readers. It was unclear whether elementary teachers actually liked to read and engaged in reading for pleasure. How can teachers who do not enjoy reading cultivate a love of reading in their students?

Likewise, teachers' sense of efficacy is important. Teacher efficacy represents the confidence that teachers have in their ability to teach and to positively impact student learning. Teachers with a high sense of teacher efficacy are motivated and committed to teaching, expend more effort to help low achieving students, and persevere in stressful situations and conditions, whereas teachers with a low sense of efficacy lack confidence in their ability to raise student achievement, are less committed to teaching and to their students, and are more likely to give up when confronted with difficult situations and struggling students (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Bandura, 1997). A plethora of research highlights the importance of overall teacher efficacy. Nonetheless, very little research attends to teacher efficacy in reading, and therefore the current state of elementary

teachers' sense of efficacy in reading was unknown. This was unfortunate given the differences between high and low efficacious teachers.

Similar to a teacher with a positive attitude toward reading, an elementary teacher who possesses confidence in teaching reading may spend an ample amount of time on reading instruction, make an effort to integrate reading in the content areas, and utilize a variety of instructional practices and materials. On the contrary, a teacher who lacks confidence in his or her ability to teach reading may restrict the amount of time spent on reading instruction and rely on instructional activities and materials that require little interaction between teachers, students, and texts. A teacher with a low sense of efficacy might also invest less time and effort into helping struggling and reluctant readers than a more efficacious teacher.

In addition to teacher efficacy, elementary teachers may struggle with a low sense of reader self-efficacy. Reader self-efficacy refers to the judgments that teachers make about their own ability to perform a specific task and is identical to the self-efficacy that children possess. Teachers may lack confidence in their personal reading skills and abilities. These self-efficacy beliefs may contribute to the development of teacher efficacy and be a factor in instructional decisions.

What are elementary teachers' current reading attitudes and efficacy beliefs, and what background factors relate to more positive reading attitudes and efficacy beliefs in teachers? Evidence of negative attitudes and low efficacy in teachers would underscore the need for better professional development in reading. Furthermore, what is the relationship between teachers' attitudes and beliefs, their reading instructional practices, and their students' attitudes and beliefs? Because research has suggested that teachers'

attitudes and beliefs are important (Clark & Peterson, 1986), I believe it is necessary to identify how critical these factors are in relation to instruction and student motivation.

### *Literacy in the Upper Elementary Grades*

In my study, I concentrated on teachers and students in the fourth and fifth grades because research suggests that a large number of children in the upper elementary grades struggle with challenging reading instruction, declining motivation to read, and low reading achievement (Allington, 2002, McKenna et al, 1995). Beginning in the fourth grade, literacy instruction places a greater number of comprehension burdens and expectations on children than instruction in the early elementary grades. Instruction focuses less on learning how to read and reading for enjoyment, and more on reading for information (Allington, 2002). Fourth grade reading expectations are particularly demanding as children encounter difficult content area textbooks, which often contain abstract concepts and complex vocabulary (Allington, 2002; Chall, 1983; Chall, Jacobs, & Baldwin, 1990). In addition to an increased content area reading load, children contend with substantial pressure to perform well on standardized tests and with teachers who often assert that teaching children how to read is not their responsibility. Upper elementary teachers often stress that teaching children how to read is the duty of teachers in the primary grades (Grosso de Leon, 2002). However, recent data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) emphasized the need for teachers in the upper elementary grades to teach reading. Results from the 2000 NAEP revealed that 37% of fourth graders lack basic reading skills (National Center for Education Statistics, 2003). Unfortunately, children who face reading problems in the fourth grade often continue to struggle in the fifth grade and beyond (Allington, 2002).

*Literacy in Urban Schools*

Teachers and children in urban schools contend with a variety of challenges beyond demanding reading instruction. Low teacher expectations and beliefs, lack of parent support, increased poverty, and school and community violence are among the issues that impact teacher and student motivation in urban environments (Taylor, 2002). Children in these schools, many of whom live in low socioeconomic status communities, experience less academic success than children from other communities, and are more likely to have inexperienced and uncertified teachers (Haycock, 2002; Nieto, 2002). As a result, children in urban schools are at greater risk for low reading achievement than children in other communities. The NAEP (National Center for Education Statistics, 2003) confirms this trend of lower achievement for children in inner city schools than for children from suburban and rural schools. Forty-seven percent of children in inner city schools scored “below basic” compared to 32% of children in suburban schools and 35% of children in rural schools.

Ineffective instructional practices further contribute to the gap in reading performance, as many urban schools concentrate on teaching basic skills in reading rather than advanced skills to children. As children struggle with low reading achievement, teachers may assume that children will benefit best from instruction that emphasizes basic reading skills. However, some experts argue that instruction that solely focuses on basic skills does not adequately prepare children for high-stakes tests. “Students whose education is guided mostly by the basal readers and workbooks compatible with older kinds of tests find themselves at a growing disadvantage when they confront the more challenging expectations of new standards and assessments” (Darling-Hammond, 1998,

p. 115). Teacher burnout and turnover is also high in urban areas, placing responsibility for educating urban students in the hands of several new and inexperienced teachers (Claycomb, 2000). The children in greatest need of instructional attention most likely receive the least amount of support from experienced and confident classroom teachers.

### *Research Questions and Professional Significance*

Based on 1) the value of attitude toward reading and sense of efficacy in understanding children's literacy development, 2) the importance of teacher attitude toward reading and teacher efficacy; 3) evidence of challenging reading instruction, declining reading attitudes and beliefs, and low achievement in the upper elementary grades and 4) the status of children's literacy in urban schools; I developed the following research questions: What are the reading attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs of urban fourth and fifth grade teachers, and what is the relationship between these two factors?

1. What teacher characteristics relate to teachers' reading attitudes and efficacy beliefs in urban schools?
2. What is the relationship between teachers' attitudes and efficacy beliefs and their reading instructional practices in urban schools?
3. What are the reading attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs of urban fourth and fifth grade students?
4. What is the relationship between teachers' reading attitudes and efficacy beliefs and their students' reading attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs in urban schools?

5. How do teachers' experiences teaching reading in urban schools help us understand teachers' and students' reading attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs?

This investigation produced several interesting findings about teachers' attitudes and sense of efficacy and their relationships to instruction and to students' beliefs. First, urban teachers in this study expressed positive attitudes toward reading and high levels of personal teaching efficacy in reading. Teachers liked to read and enjoyed reading for a variety of purposes. This finding corresponded to recent research that suggested that elementary teachers possessed positive reading habits, attitudes, and beliefs (Hill & Beers, 1999; Morrison et al., 1999). In contrast to other research, I focused on the reading attitudes of teachers in inner-city schools. This dissertation also showed that urban teachers believed that they could have a positive impact on children's reading achievement and motivation through reading instruction. According to past research, urban teachers exhibit a high sense of efficacy that allows them to form positive relationships with students and persevere through difficult situations (Payne, 1994; Rushton, 2000). However, researchers focused on teacher efficacy in general, rather than in reading.

Second, this study presented evidence of a positive relationship between teachers' attitudes and efficacy beliefs and students' attitudes and beliefs. Teachers who liked to read and who felt confident in teaching reading were more likely to have students who expressed similar attitudes and levels of efficacy. Although experts theorize connections between teacher and student beliefs, little research offers data to support these assumptions (Clark & Peterson, 1986). Efforts to help the teachers in this study develop

positive attitudes and efficacy beliefs in reading may indirectly relate to an increase in students' reading motivation.

Finally, my dissertation accentuated the importance of personal teacher efficacy in reading in relation to classroom literacy instruction. I found that teachers with a sense of efficacy in teaching reading spent more time teaching comprehension, reading strategies, and vocabulary, and used more authentic children's literature than less efficacious teachers. Overall, teacher efficacy related to more instructional factors than did teacher attitude toward reading. Other research suggested the significance of teacher efficacy in relation to instructional decisions and practices, but little research examined teacher efficacy in reading (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Gibson & Dembo, 1984). How teachers in this study felt about their effectiveness in teaching reading was associated with choices for instructional time, materials, assessment activities, and grouping practices.

### *Overview of Methodology*

In this study, I used survey research methods and interviews to collect data from urban fourth and fifth grade teachers about their reading attitudes, efficacy beliefs, and instructional practices. The following surveys were distributed to fourth and fifth grade teachers in one large urban school district to measure their attitudes, efficacy beliefs, and practices: (a) the Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Assessment (Tulluck-Rhody & Alexander, 1980), (b) the Reading Teaching Efficacy Beliefs Instrument, a modified version of the Science Teaching Efficacy Beliefs Instrument (Riggs & Enoch, 1990), and (c) the Teacher Survey (Baumann, Hoffman, Duffy-Hester, & Ro, 2000), which focuses on reading instruction. In addition, I asked a select group of teachers to administer the

following surveys to their students to measure students' attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs: (a) the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (McKenna & Kear, 1990) and (b) the Reader Self-Perception Scale (Henk & Melnick, 1995). Once the teacher surveys and the student surveys were completed, I interviewed a small number of teachers about their experiences teaching reading in urban schools. The surveys addressed teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and practices, yet they did not offer teachers the opportunity to explain how contextual factors in urban environments affected their beliefs and teaching practices. Interview data provided information about reading instruction and the challenges facing urban teachers and students. As stated earlier, schools in urban areas face a greater number of problems related to poverty than do schools in other communities.

Survey data analysis involved a number of statistical procedures, specifically correlation, analysis of variance, and chi square. Open-ended survey responses and interviews were subjected to qualitative analysis. The strength of this study stems from the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data to understand the relationship between urban teachers' attitudes and beliefs, and both teacher behavior and students' attitudes and beliefs.

### *Assumptions*

A small number of assumptions are associated with this research study. First, I planned the study on the assumption that attitudes and efficacy beliefs are measurable and may be identified using survey methodology. Experts and researchers suggest that attitudes and beliefs can be operationalized and assessed using reliable and valid instruments (Alreck & Settle, 1995; Henk & Melnick, 1995; McKenna & Kear, 1990). To ensure the appropriateness of the instruments, I selected surveys previously reported in



the research literature and also piloted each instrument with a small group of teachers and students. Second, the research design assumed that participating teachers and students responded to surveys and questions honestly. The literature on survey research indicates that some respondents provide answers that they believe are socially desirable, rather than answers that reflect their actual beliefs and actions (Alreck & Settle, 1995). To reduce social desirability, all data was kept confidential and no teacher was asked to provide his or her name on any survey. I was not an employee or associate of the school system, and no consequences existed for teachers and students who participated in the study.

### *Definitions*

1. *Attitude toward reading.* How an individual person feels about reading, engaging in reading activities, and receiving materials for reading (McKenna, 1994; McKenna & Kear, 1990; McKenna et al., 1995; Pintrich & DeGroot, 1990).

2. *Reader self-efficacy.* An individual's beliefs about himself or herself as a reader (Henk & Melnick, 1995). Henk and Melnick (1995) based this conceptualization on Albert Bandura's theory of self-efficacy and suggested that reader self-efficacy beliefs connect to performance, observational comparison, social feedback, and psychological states. Reader self-efficacy is also known as reading efficacy (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997).

3. *Reading motivation.* A multidimensional construct that explains an individual's desire to read and includes readers' beliefs, purposes and reasons for reading, and affective reactions (Pintrich & DeGroot, 1990). According to Cole (2002), readers' beliefs include self-efficacy, attitudes, and values; readers' purposes and reasons for reading include meaning construction, goals, and interests; and readers' affective reactions include self-expression, self-efficacy, and engagement.

4. *Self-efficacy.* "Beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (Bandura (1997, p. 3). Mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and psychological states contribute to the development of self-efficacy judgments (Bandura, 1997).

5. *Teacher efficacy.* The extent to which teachers believe that they have the ability to have a positive impact on student learning (Bandura, 1997; Riggs & Enoch, 1990). Theories of teacher efficacy stem from Bandura's concept of self-efficacy.

### *Summary*

Attitude toward reading and sense of efficacy are important factors in understanding reading motivation and achievement. Through survey research, I examined the state of urban teachers' attitudes and beliefs in relation to their instructional practices and their students' reading attitudes and beliefs. The investigation of these issues has profound implications for professional development and teacher education in reading and the efforts to improve reading achievement for all children. Accordingly, Chapter 2 presents the review of literature, including the theoretical framework upon which the study was grounded; Chapter 3 details the research methodology, and Chapter 4 displays the results. The final chapter, Chapter 5, includes a discussion of the major findings and implications.

## CHAPTER 2

### *Conceptual Framework*

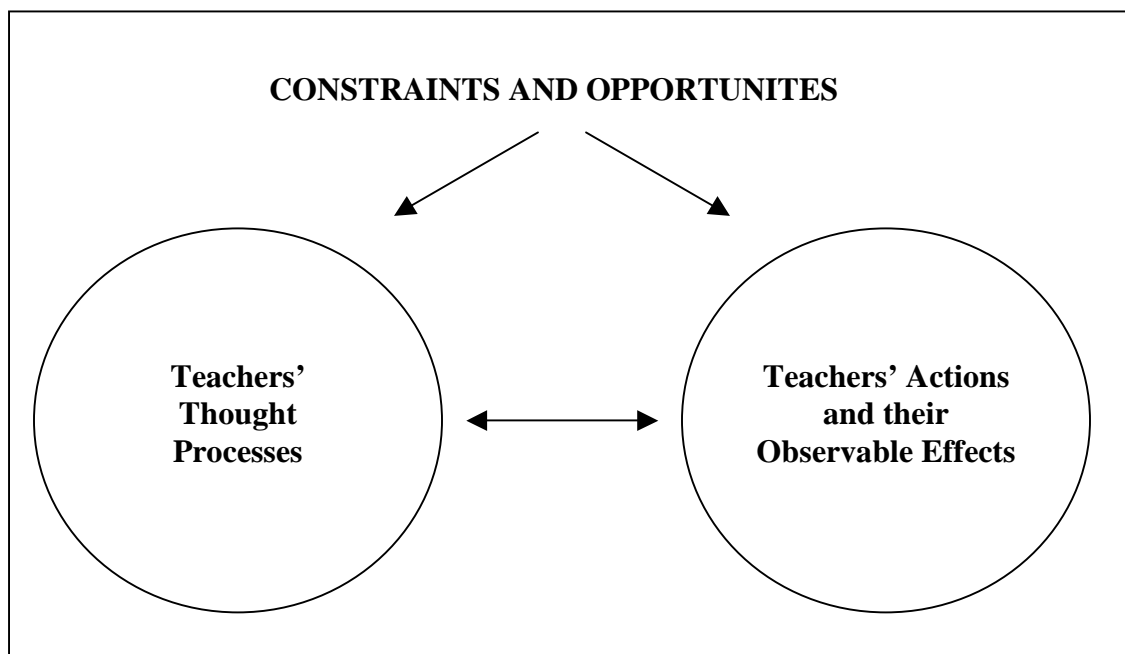
This investigation of teacher and student beliefs in reading adhered to Clark and Peterson's (1986) conceptual model (Figure 1) of teachers' thought processes, which proposes a reciprocal relationship between teachers' actions and thoughts. According to the model, teachers' thought processes represent three domains that include instructional planning, decisions, and beliefs. Instructional planning addresses the preactive and post active phases of teaching (Jackson, 1968) and consists of the thinking, development, and reflection that occur before and after instruction. Teachers' thoughts and decisions correspond to the ideas and judgments that transpire as teachers interact with students, which may result in changes in teacher behavior and instructional plans. The third domain of teachers' thought processes centers on teachers' beliefs and implicit theories of teaching and learning. Teachers hold beliefs about their role in the classroom, their students, subject matter, the curriculum, and the profession and nature of teaching. These theories connect to conceptualizations of practical, professional, and personal knowledge, and are the result of teachers' experiences and knowledge base (Clark & Peterson, 1986). In the literature on teachers' thought processes, the least amount of information concentrated on teachers' beliefs (Clark & Peterson, 1986).

The other half of the theoretical model focuses on teachers' actions and their observable effects which include teachers' and students' classroom behavior and student thinking and achievement. Clark and Peterson suggest that teachers' thought processes and their actions inform one another, and both are further shaped or limited by

environmental constraints and opportunities, such as the curriculum, school environment, educational policies, and other controls. Although the model emphasizes the influence

Figure 1

*Model of teacher thought and action by Clark and Peterson (1986)*



of beliefs on behavior and vice versa, the presence of environmental restrictions and limitations accounts for instances where teachers' beliefs conflict with their actions in the classroom.

Research on teacher knowledge, including research on teachers' beliefs and instructional practices in reading, demonstrates the tenets of the Clark and Peterson (1986) model of teacher thinking and offers support for three separate conclusions: 1) teachers' beliefs influence classroom practice 2) teachers' beliefs are not the only influence on classroom practice and 3) teachers' beliefs are not always consistent with instructional practice (Pajares, 1992). Lehman, Freeman, and Allen (1994) studied the

extent to which teachers' beliefs about literature-based instruction predicted their classroom practices and found congruence between beliefs and behavior. One hundred and ninety-two teachers in grades K-7 completed a researcher-developed questionnaire that assessed teacher perceptions and practices. The majority of teachers believed that literature should be the primary component in the reading program (94%); that teachers should develop their own programs rather than rely on commercialized materials (73%), and that critical thinking skills should be taught during reading instruction (92%). To determine the relationship between beliefs and practices, researchers observed and interviewed a random stratified sample of 10 teachers. Individual classrooms of teachers who stressed the importance of literature in the reading program contained plenty of children's books representing a variety of genres and evidence of literature used throughout the curriculum. Additionally, teachers who emphasized the importance of developing their own reading programs on the questionnaire relied on individual authors, professional books and journals, other teachers, and conferences as their most valuable resources for planning instruction rather than commercial instructional guides and materials. Interviews further indicated that school environment and teaching experience influenced teachers' beliefs and practices.

Similarly, Richardson, Anders, Tidwell, and Lloyd (1991) investigated the relationship between 39 elementary teachers' beliefs and practices in reading comprehension instruction. Participants included fourth, fifth, and sixth grade teachers from six elementary schools in the southwest. Richardson et al. used interviews and classroom observations to collect data about teachers' beliefs and practices. Teachers' reported theories of reading instruction emphasized the importance of activating students'

prior knowledge, reading authentic literature, and teaching vocabulary. After coding interview transcripts and field notes according to the constant comparative method (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), researchers compared teachers reported beliefs with observed instructional practices and found agreement between beliefs and practices related to the use of basal readers (89% agreement), consideration of prior knowledge in instruction (81%), oral and silent reading opportunities and experiences (86%), and vocabulary instruction (80%). In contrast, six of the 39 teachers' expressed beliefs that did not match their instructional practices, and Richardson et al. (1991) completed a case study of one teacher to examine the reasons behind the contradiction. In this instance, the teacher was in a period of transition and in the process of changing her classroom practices to reflect her beliefs. Observations of this teacher at the end of the study reflected more congruence between beliefs and practices than initial observations.

Other studies connect teachers' perceptions to student outcomes in reading. In an examination of 20 teachers and their students, Palardy (1998) found that teachers' beliefs about students related to reading achievement. The investigation focused on differences in teacher expectations for boys and for girls in the first grade. At the beginning of the school year, Palardy identified 10 teachers (Group 1) who believed that boys are less successful in reading than girls and 10 teachers (Group 2) who felt that boys and girls are equally successful in reading. Comparisons of students' standardized test scores at the end of the year revealed differences between the reading achievement of the boys in Group 1 and boys in Group 2. Boys in classrooms headed by teachers who believed that they would be successful in reading scored significantly higher on a standardized reading test ( $M = 92.6$ ) than boys in classrooms headed by teachers with lower expectations ( $M$

=84.3). Likewise, the mean achievement score for boys in Group 1 ( $M = 84.3$ ) was significantly lower than the mean score for girls in Group 1 ( $M = 96.5$ ). The mean scores for boys ( $M = 92.6$ ) and girls ( $M = 92.9$ ) in Group 2 were similar. These findings suggested that the teachers' beliefs about students influenced achievement in reading.

As demonstrated, teacher thinking relates to teacher and student behavior and student outcomes. Understanding teacher beliefs provides important information for researchers and experts seeking to understand differences in achievement and motivation between students in different classrooms. Following the Clark and Peterson model, this study examined the relationship between teachers' reading beliefs, classroom practices, and student beliefs. In particular, I focused on the association between teachers' attitudes toward reading and self-efficacy beliefs, their classroom practices, and their students' attitudes and beliefs. The focus on attitude toward reading and self-efficacy stemmed from research that highlighted the influence of these factors on teacher behavior and student motivation to read (Cole, 2002; Morrison, Swinyard, & Jacobs, 1999; Pintrich & DeGroot, 1990). Accordingly, the following sections describe the theory and noteworthy research on teachers' and students' attitudes toward reading and sense of self-efficacy.

### *Attitude*

The research community has yet to agree on a consistent definition for attitude; however most theoretical models explain the construct in terms of action, feeling, or evaluation (Ajzen, 1989; Liska, 1984; Mathewson, 1994). Rokeach's (1968) characterization of attitude incorporated beliefs, and proposed that attitude predisposed an individual to respond to situations in a preferential manner. According to this definition, attitude may influence certain actions and behaviors. Other researchers define



attitude in relation to an individual's positive or negative feelings or evaluations about issues, persons, and objects (Beck, 1983; Petty & Cacioppo, 1981). The present study follows Ajzen's (1989) suggestion that attitude is "an individual's disposition to respond favorably or unfavorably to an object, person, institution, or event, or to any other discriminable aspect of the individual's world" (p. 241).

Early investigations of attitude classified the concept as a belief or part of a belief system. However later understandings of cognitive development in psychology led to the separation of attitudes and beliefs (Richardson, 1996). Researchers argued that attitudes connected to affective components of development and beliefs related to cognitive aspects (Fishbein, 1967). The exact relationship between attitude and belief remains unclear despite research that indicates that both beliefs and attitudes direct classroom behavior and teacher development (Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992; Richardson, 1996). In addition to influencing motivation and behavior, attitudes vary from positive to negative in terms of intensity and degree, are relatively stable, based on beliefs, are learned, interrelated, and subsist within systems (Cothorn & Collins, 1992). Factors that affect the development of positive and negative attitudes relate to self-concept, gender, socio-economic status, parent and teacher attitudes, home and school environments, interests, achievement, and other experiences (Alexander & Filler, 1976; Cothorn & Collins, 1992). Moreover, researchers and experts identify different types of educational attitudes, including attitude toward learning, attitude toward school, and attitude toward reading (Cothorn & Collins, 1992; McKenna, 1994).

### *Attitude Toward Reading*

Attitude toward reading denotes how an individual typically feels about engaging in the act of reading. The McKenna (McKenna, 1994) model of reading attitude acquisition proposes that attitude toward reading, intention to read, and subjective norms such as cultural, familial, peer, and environmental expectations influence the decision to read. Attitude toward reading depends upon individual purposes for reading, the importance placed upon the reading activity, and the strength of attitude; and attitude relates to beliefs, social structures, and environment. In schools, teacher attitude toward reading can affect teacher behavior and reading instruction (Morrison et al., 1999); and student attitude toward reading can relate to reading behavior, performance, and motivation to read (Alexander & Filler, 1976; Cothorn & Collins, 1992; McKenna et al., 1995). Research offers specific information on the nature of teacher and student attitude toward reading.

### *Research on Teachers' Reading Attitudes*

Studies of teachers' reading habits and attitudes present conflicting portrayals of elementary teachers as readers. Some investigations suggest that most teachers hold positive attitudes toward reading (Cramer & Blachowicz, 1980; Smith, 1989) and spend time reading for personal enjoyment (Searls, 1985; McNinch & Steelmon, 1990; VanLeirsburg & Johns, 1994; Warncke & Powell, 1990), however another body of research indicates that teachers spend very little time reading for personal or professional purposes (Cogan 1975; Cogan & Anderson, 1977; Draper, 2000; Duffey, 1967, 1974; Gray & Troy, 1986; Mour, 1977; Mueller, 1973; Odland & Ilstrup, 1963). The following chronological review of relevant research explores the contrasting findings.

Research from the 1960s offered initial insights into teachers' reading habits. Odland and Ilstrup (1963) studied the reading habits of 343 prospective elementary teachers enrolled in a children's literature course and asked the participants to list the books and magazines that they had read in the past six months. Although 80 % of the respondents read less than one book per month, the researchers concluded that most of the prospective teachers had an interest in reading and often selected popular fiction novels over nonfiction material. However, Odland and Ilstrup expressed further concern about teachers' reading selections and questioned the extent to which teachers who primarily read popular material and rarely read nonfiction could encourage students to become sensitive and selective readers. Although informative, the Odland and Ilstrup study focused on preservice teachers whose attitudes may not have reflected the larger population of teachers.

Results from investigations in the 1970s were similar to findings from the previous decade. Mueller (1973) examined the reading attitudes of 20 graduate students and 21 undergraduate students enrolled in a reading methods course, and found that the students valued reading "mildly in their lives, both professionally and personally" (p. 205). Participants completed a researcher developed questionnaire about their preferred choice of recreational activity, including reading, in a variety of situations. Forty percent of participants marked reading fourth or lower on a list of seven recreational activities that they engaged regularly outside of work and school. Although informative, Mueller's study has several weaknesses, including the small sample size of only 41 participants and the use of an unrefined instrument to collect data. Other investigations during this time

further suggested that teachers engaged in a minimal amount of personal and professional reading however (Cogan & Anderson, 1977; Mour, 1977).

Studies from the 1980's offer two important contributions to the research on teachers' reading attitudes and habits. First, researchers began to report information about inservice teachers in conjunction with preservice teachers, and second, research began to provide contrasting portraits of teachers' reading behaviors. Gray and Troy (1986) investigated the reading habits of 80 elementary education majors at the undergraduate and graduate levels, and found that less than half engaged in reading for enjoyment. Only 29 of the 80 education students indicated that they were reading a book at the time of the study, and of the remaining students that were not currently reading a book only 24% stated that reading was one of their top three leisure activities. The researchers did not ask the respondents if their university course work restricted the amount of time that they had to engage in reading, and if their reading habits changed during school breaks and vacations. Attention to responses to these questions may account for the difference in findings between Gray and Troy and other research conducted in the 1980s.

In contrast to Gray and Troy (1986), Cramer and Blachowicz (1980) used Maring's (1976) Survey on the Impact of Reading to study the personal reading attitudes and habits of preservice teachers, inservice teachers, and graduate students in reading, and found that preservice and inservice teachers held positive attitudes toward reading, and many saw themselves as readers. Fifty percent of practicing teachers reported that they enjoyed reading more than most individuals, and more than 40% considered themselves better readers than most people. However the results also indicated that teachers' reading habits declined as the demands of the teaching profession increased.

More experienced teachers read fewer books per year than less experienced teachers ( $F = 10.29, p < .001$ ). Cramer and Blachowicz's study was significant because it utilized a survey with open ended and forced choice questions, whereas surveys in previous studies did not include any open ended questions, and it was one of the first studies to report information about the survey instrument. Other research supported Cramer and Blachowicz's findings and reported that teachers classified themselves as readers and had moderately positive attitudes toward reading (Searls, 1985; Smith, 1988).

Examinations of teachers' reading habits and attitudes in the 1990s and the new millennium reveal that many teachers do value reading, although they often have limited time to read. McNinch and Steelmon (1990) developed the Reading Status Survey, which asks adults about their reading habits and behaviors, and administered it to 42 teacher education majors at the beginning of a reading methods course. None of the respondents rated themselves as a 'nonreader'. Twenty-four participants considered themselves 'frequent readers' and 18 considered themselves 'occasional readers'. However, analysis of variance revealed a significant difference ( $F = 13.27, p < .001$ ) between the total mean score on the survey for frequent readers ( $M = 37.42, SD = 8.27$ ) and the total mean score for occasional readers ( $M = 27.78, SD = 8.77$ ), with higher scores reported for frequent readers. This finding suggests a difference in recreational reading habits between the two groups. Unfortunately, McNinch and Steelmon do not define 'frequent' and 'occasional' nor offer information about how respondents defined these terms.

Likewise, Warncke and Powell (1990) surveyed select groups of preservice teachers, inservice teachers, and teacher educators and discovered that 89% of the preservice teachers, 100% of the inservice teachers, and 92% of the teacher educators

indicated that they enjoyed reading. Additionally, 71% of all respondents indicated that they borrowed books to read for pleasure and liked to spend time browsing in bookstores. The majority of the respondents across all three groups considered themselves avid readers and stated that they encouraged others to read. However other research emphasizes that while teachers view themselves as readers, they struggle to find adequate time to read at school and at home (Draper, 2000; VanLeirsburg and Johns, 1994). In contrast to other studies, Warncke and Powell's findings implied that inservice teachers and teacher educators engaged in reading for pleasure more often than preservice teachers.

*Research on Teachers' Reading Attitudes and Their Instructional Practices*

Research offers little insight into the possible connection between teachers' reading attitudes and behaviors and their classroom practices. Six hundred twenty-five teachers at the Book and Author Luncheon at the 1993 International Reading Association (IRA) conference in San Antonio, Texas completed a survey about their reading habits and teaching methods (Hill & Beers, 1993). The majority of the respondents rated themselves as avid readers with 60% reporting having read between one and six books within the past year. Respondents further reported "fostering positive attitudes toward reading" and "sharing good literature" as important learning objectives. However the researchers discovered contradiction between what teachers believed was important and what they reported as their actual classroom practices:

While teachers marked "fostering positive attitudes" and "sharing good literature" as their two most important objectives, they are still spending 50% to 70% teaching decoding, comprehension, and vocabulary skills. Thus, there is a

discrepancy between what they think is important and how they actually spend their time. (Hill & Beers, 1993, p. 4).

Since the respondents were at an IRA convention, it is not surprising that teachers acknowledged the importance of promoting reading and sharing literature with children; however the indication that their practices did not reflect these purposes is interesting. Perhaps, external demands, such as state testing programs, have usurped teachers' instructional decisions. Teachers at the IRA convention also conveyed concern over the recommendations to use literature-based and whole language teaching approaches considering the pressure to prepare students for state assessments which center on skills and cognitive aspects of reading. Although this sample was not representative of the general teaching population and there was no indication of what grade levels the teachers taught, the results suggest the necessity of further study into teachers' own attitudes toward reading and their teaching practices.

Additionally, Morrison et al. (1999) studied the extent to which elementary teachers were readers and their use of recommended literacy instructional practices. The national sample consisted of 1874 elementary school teachers representing kindergarten through sixth grade, and the researchers mailed surveys to the teachers' homes. The first portion of the survey asked teachers to describe how often they implemented specific classroom practices, such as reading aloud, using trade books with students, engaging in literature discussions, providing time for students to read independently, and allowing students to choose their own books to read; and the second portion of the survey asked teachers to describe their own reading behaviors and attitudes. Findings revealed that the majority of the respondents read often and enjoyed reading books, and that teachers who

expressed positive attitudes toward reading used more recommended practices than teachers with less positive attitudes ( $F = 32.264, p < .001$ ).

The Morrison et al. study is significant because it points to a possible connection between teachers' reading behaviors and attitudes and their instructional practices. As a result of their findings, Morrison et al. offered the following recommendations: a) teachers should read; b) teachers need time to read; and c) teachers should share literature with students in a variety of ways. Additional research on teachers' reading development and literacy histories support Morrison et al.'s suggestion that a connection exists between teachers' personal reading beliefs and experiences and their instructional decisions (Andrews-Beck & Rycik, 1992; Manna & Misheff, 1987; Roe & Vukelich, 1998; Rummell & Quintero, 1997). Future research can further support these claims and verify actual relationships between teachers' attitudes and their classroom practices, as well as the strength of the association.

#### *Research on Children's Reading Attitudes*

Experts in reading education encourage teachers and parents to help children develop positive attitudes toward reading based on research that reveals relationships between attitude and motivation (Cole, 2002). Greaney and Hegarty (1987) examined the reading attitudes and habits of 127 fifth grade students and discovered a relationship between children's attitudes toward reading and their leisure-time reading activities. Researchers created an 18-item attitude toward reading questionnaire and administered it to participants, who also completed reading skills and verbal reasoning tests and a demographic information form. Additionally, participants completed daily activity diaries for four days in one week. Approximately 18% of the participants did not engage in any



form of recreational reading during the week. A significant correlation between attitude toward reading and amount of book reading ( $r = 0.30, p < .001$ ) indicated that children with positive attitudes read more than children with less positive attitudes. Other research confirms the relationship between attitude and amount of recreational reading (Greaney, 1980).

Greaney and Hegarty (1987) also found a significant relationship between attitude and reading achievement ( $r = .43, p < .001$ ) which implies that children with positive feelings about reading are likely to perform well on reading tests and performance tasks. Additional research highlights this relationship (Holt & O'Tuel, 1989; Russ, 1989; Walberg & Tsai, 1985). Walberg and Tsai (1985) analyzed the reading attitude and achievement scores of 1,459 fourth grade students from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Attitude significantly correlated with reading achievement ( $r = .48, p < .001$ ). Further analysis using regression techniques showed that home environment, sex, ethnicity, and school type accounted for significant portions of the variance for attitude toward reading (17%) and for achievement (37%). The study did not examine the relationship between these factors and quality of instruction or classroom environment, and researchers stressed the need for additional research on these factors. Because attitude and achievement are related, teachers who help students develop positive attitudes may also influence students' reading performance.

Given the suggested importance of attitude in relation to reading motivation and academic performance, it is necessary to understand trends in children's attitudes toward reading. McKenna et al. (1995) provided insight into children's reading attitudes and how they develop in elementary school. The researchers surveyed 18,185 elementary school

children from all parts of the U.S., and noticed that reading attitudes declined as students advanced through elementary school, and that females had more positive attitudes than males. Investigators also discovered that children with high academic achievement had more positive attitudes than children with lower achievement. McKenna et al. used the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERAS) (McKenna & Kear, 1990) to assess attitude toward reading and teacher ratings to gauge student ability. The ERAS distinguishes between recreational reading attitude and academic reading attitude. Researchers found significant main effects for recreational reading and grade level ( $F = 108.9, p < .001$ ) and academic reading attitude and grade level ( $F = 257.7, p < .001$ ). In particular, younger children in the primary grades expressed more positive attitudes than older children in the upper elementary grades. Further analysis demonstrated that poor readers expressed less positive attitudes than more successful readers, and boys held less positive attitudes than girls. Additional research confirms that children's attitudes decline during elementary grades and that girls possess more positive attitudes toward reading than boys (Dwyer & Reed, 1989; Kush and Watkins, 1996; Lazarus & Callahan, 2000; Tunnell, Calder, & Phaup, 1991).

As a result of the investigation, McKenna et al. (1995) recommended that attention to reading instruction throughout elementary school could help sustain positive reading attitudes for all children. Reading assessment expert William Henk (1993) extends this claim and implies that teacher practices, availability of materials, library use, learning climate, and external and internal purposes for reading contribute to the formation of positive reading attitudes and behaviors. In addition to these

recommendations, research highlights specific practices that influence children's attitude toward reading.

Reading instruction that utilizes children's literature positively impacts reading attitude (Bottomley, Truscott, Marinak, Henk, & Melnick, 1998; Morrow, 1983; 1992). Bottomley et al. (1999) compared the effect of three separate literacy instructional approaches – traditional basal, whole language, and literature-based – on the reading attitudes and beliefs of 396 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students. To identify the approach reflected in the participating classrooms, researchers used teacher surveys, teacher interviews, and classroom observations. All participating students completed the ERAS and two reader self-perception scales. Recreational reading attitudes and academic reading attitudes significantly differed among students whose teachers had different instructional orientations. Analyses of variance revealed significant differences between the recreational ( $F = 3.33$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and academic reading attitudes ( $F = 6.36$ ,  $p < .05$ ) of children in classrooms with different instructional approaches. Children in literature-based classrooms possessed more positive attitudes than children in traditional basal classrooms and children in whole language classrooms. Researchers indicated that children may have been responsive to the literature-based program since it reflected a more balanced approach to literacy than the other two orientations.

Likewise, Morrow (1992) studied the impact of a literature-based reading program on the reading attitudes, achievement, and use of literature on second grade children in one school district, and discovered more positive attitudes and higher achievement for children in literature-based classrooms than for children in basal reading programs.

Additionally, metacognitive skills instruction positively influences reading attitudes (Payne & Manning, 1992). Payne and Manning (1992) studied 31 children in two fourth grade classrooms. One classroom instituted a metacognitive reading program and the other classroom used a basal reading program. Students completed a reading attitude inventory and a series of achievement tests in September and again in May. Analysis of covariance revealed a significant main effect for instructional program ( $F = 5.95, p < .02$ ) with children in the basal reading group ( $M = 41.38$ ) reporting less positive attitudes than children in the metacognitive group ( $M = 34.59$ ). Lower scores on the Reading Attitude Inventory reflect more positive attitudes toward reading. Children in the metacognitive group ( $M = 793.85$ ) also outperformed children in the basal group ( $M = 735.45$ ) on the achievement test and demonstrated higher reading comprehension ( $F = 16.78, p < .01$ ). According to other research, learning styles instruction (Braio, Beasley, Dunn, Quinn, & Buchanan, 1997), learner-centered instructional approaches (Maaka & Lipka, 1997), home and school literacy connections (Morrow & Young, 1997), self-selected reading and writing (Holt & O'Tuel, 1989), and teacher read alouds (Herrold, Stanchfield, & Serabian, 1989) promote lasting positive attitudes toward reading.

#### *Research on Teacher Attitude and Student Attitude*

Although experts encourage teachers to serve as reading models for their students, research has yet to demonstrate a connection between teachers' attitudes and students' attitudes. A review of the literature failed to uncover a single study which examined the relationship between teachers' reading attitudes and students' reading attitudes. Because attitude relates to academic performance and amount of recreational reading (Greaney &

Hegarty, 1987), research on how teachers' attitudes relate to students' attitudes can contribute to efforts to increase reading achievement and motivation.

### *Summary*

Past research highlighted the influence of attitude toward reading on classroom practice and reading motivation. However, the status of elementary teachers' attitudes toward reading and the relationship between teacher attitude, instruction, and student attitude remains unclear. Previous investigations presented contradictory findings about teachers' actual reading attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Some research suggested that teachers hold relatively positive attitudes toward reading, and other research indicated that teachers' attitudes are less positive. In addition, reported research primarily focused on preservice teachers' and graduate students' attitudes with few studies providing information about practicing teachers. As a result, the extent to which teachers have served as models of reading for their students is unknown. Finally, data collection and analysis procedures of many studies limited generalizability of findings. The majority of the published research on teachers' attitudes toward reading rarely included data analysis information beyond descriptive statistics. Systematic data collection and advanced analysis procedures yield findings that are more informative and therefore more influential in shaping teacher education and professional development in reading. Educated teachers who are engaged readers may be more successful in motivating children to read than less motivated teachers.

Finally, the research on children's reading motivation revealed that attitudes toward reading decline during elementary school. Children in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades reported less positive reading attitudes than children in the primary grades.

Because this decline may be the result of ineffective reading instruction and greater comprehension demands placed on children in the intermediate grades, experts encouraged teachers to use research-based instructional practices. However, it is unknown how often teachers in the upper elementary grades use recommended literacy practices.

Moreover, attitude toward reading is not the only influence on instruction and student motivation. Teachers' and students' sense of efficacy also contributes to teaching and learning. The next section examines self-efficacy theory and research.

### *Efficacy*

Self-efficacy beliefs, conceptualized by cognitive psychologist Albert Bandura, are "people's beliefs about their capabilities to exercise control over events that affect their lives" (Bandura, 1989, p. 1); and judgments of their competence to perform particular actions or tasks (Bandura, 1997). The concept of self-efficacy concerns an individual's perceptions of and level of confidence in his or her abilities. Bandura's (1997) work on self-efficacy stemmed from social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1997), which addressed the development of capabilities and the regulation of behavior. In social cognitive theory a variety of environmental and personal internal factors, including thought processes and beliefs about one's abilities, interact and determine human actions. Bandura (1977) identified two separate components of self-efficacy theory – outcome expectations and efficacy expectations. Outcome expectancies are beliefs "that a given behavior will lead to certain outcomes" (Bandura, 1977, p. 193) and efficacy expectations are beliefs "that one can successfully execute the behavior required to produce the outcomes" (Bandura, 1977, p. 193).

Self-efficacy beliefs that differ in strength, level, and generality, intermingle with other determinants to govern motivation, thought, and action; and affect behavior by influencing goals, choices, amount of effort extended, and affective responses (Bandura, 1997). As various personal and environmental factors interact, people make judgments about their capabilities and actions. Individuals develop self-efficacy through performance accomplishments, verbal persuasion, psychological states and emotions, and vicarious experiences (Bandura, 1977; 1997). Peers, family, and school factors further shape and influence self-efficacy. These sources and contextual factors emphasize the role of teachers in the development of students' self-efficacy. Bandura (1997) clarified the role of self-efficacy in teaching and learning by delineating three types of efficacy beliefs related to cognitive functioning.

There are three main ways in which efficacy beliefs operate as important contributors to the development of cognitive competencies that govern academic achievement: students' beliefs in their efficacy to master different academic subjects; teachers' beliefs in their personal efficacy to motivate and promote learning in their students; and faculties' collective sense of efficacy that their schools can accomplish significant academic progress. (Bandura, 1997, p. 214).

The present study focused specifically on teachers' perceived efficacy and its' relationship to the development of student self-efficacy and attitude toward reading through literacy instruction. The following section expands upon the nature of teachers' and students' self-efficacy beliefs.

### *Teacher Efficacy*

Perceived teacher efficacy refers to teachers' beliefs about their capabilities to support learning and motivate students (Bandura, 1997). A teacher's sense of efficacy may influence the classroom learning environment and student progress and performance (Bandura, 1993). Bandura (1977, 1997) characterized teacher efficacy in terms of high or low and delineated specific characteristics for each representation.

Bandura believes teachers who have confidence in their own instructional efficacy support the development of students' intrinsic interests, believe all children are teachable, and persevere with students who have difficulty (Evans, 1989).

However, teachers with a low sense of instructional efficacy give up on students easily, criticize failure, and want quick learning results. These teachers also tend to take power away from students and rely heavily on external rewards to motivate them. (Scott, 1996, pp. 206).

Research on teacher efficacy supports distinctions between teachers with a high sense of efficacy and teachers with a low sense of efficacy. In particular, two RAND research studies (Armor, Conroy-Oseguera, Cox, King, McDonnell, Pascal, Pauly, & Zellman, 1976; Berman, McLaughlin, Bass, Pauly, & Zellman, 1977) conducted in the 1970s are credited with uncovering the powerful relationship between positive or high teacher efficacy and student achievement and performance.

### *Research on Teacher Efficacy*

RAND researchers (Armor et al., 1976) investigated reading instruction in 20 inner-city elementary schools participating in a special reading program, and found a strong relationship between teacher efficacy and student progress in reading. Researchers



interviewed principals and reading specialists in schools that reported substantial gains in reading achievement for sixth-grade students, and examined the test scores of sixth-grade students in each school. Armor et al. (1976) also surveyed 81 teachers about classroom atmosphere, program content, and teacher attributes, including sense of efficacy. To measure teacher efficacy Armor et al. asked participating teachers to report their level of agreement with the following two items: “When it comes right down to it, a teacher really can’t do much because most of a student’s motivation and performance depends on his or her home environment”, and “If I try really hard, I can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated students”. Teachers’ responses to these two items strongly related to differences in reading achievement ( $t = 2.54, p < .05$ ). Previous test scores in reading, background factors, and other school experiences also related to student performance.

A second RAND study confirmed the significance of teachers’ sense of efficacy. Berman et al. (1977) suggested that teacher efficacy beliefs strongly predicted the extension and continuation of federally funded educational intervention programs at the end of funding. Investigators collected and analyzed survey data from 100 Title III programs in 20 different states, and found that teacher efficacy related to student progress and other factors. Berman et al. interviewed 100 superintendents and 171 principals, and surveyed 1072 teachers about various factors related to project implementation and continuation including teacher beliefs, school characteristics, and organizational climate. Regression analysis showed significant effects for teacher efficacy and student performance ( $r = .27, p = .01$ ) percent of project goals achieved ( $r = .14, p = .01$ ), amount of teacher change ( $r = .11, p = .05$ ), and continuation of project materials ( $r =$

.08,  $p = .10$ ) and methods ( $r = .14$ ,  $p = .01$ ). Berman et al. used the same two items from the previous RAND study (Armor et al., 1976) to measure teacher efficacy. These two RAND items, along with Bandura's theoretical framework contributed to subsequent research on student outcomes and teacher behaviors related to teachers' efficacy beliefs (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Guskey, 1988; Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, & Hoy, 1998).

Denham and Michael (1981) proposed a model to explain research on teachers' sense of efficacy based on the RAND research studies. The model describes an interactive relationship between antecedent conditions, such as teacher experience, training, and personal and system variables, and consequences, such as teacher behavior and student outcomes. Student outcomes can include attitude toward reading and self-perceptions of ability. Teachers' sense of efficacy consists of cognitive and affective components, and serves as an intervening and mediating variable between the antecedents and the measurable consequences. The Denham and Michael model is important because it assumes that teachers' sense of efficacy is measurable, and that increased teacher efficacy benefits students.

Following Denham and Michael (1981), Ashton and Webb (1982) proposed teacher efficacy as a multidimensional construct with two major dimensions – teaching efficacy and personal efficacy. Teaching efficacy reflects beliefs about the outcomes of teaching in general, and personal efficacy represents beliefs about one's personal ability to teach effectively. Although both dimensions characterize teacher efficacy, teaching efficacy and personal efficacy are two separate and independent dimensions. A teacher can possess a low sense of teaching efficacy and a high sense of personal efficacy simultaneously and vice versa. Ashton and Webb (1986) confirmed the multidimensional

nature of teacher efficacy in an intensive investigation of the impact of teacher efficacy on teacher behavior and student achievement in mathematics and communications. Forty-eight secondary teachers and their students participated in the study, which utilized data from systematic classroom observations and surveys. Researchers used three assessments to measure teacher efficacy including the two RAND items, Efficacy Vignettes, and the Webb efficacy measure. Ashton and Webb created Efficacy Vignettes and the Webb efficacy measure. Efficacy Vignettes are a series of 15 vignettes about teaching, and the Webb efficacy measure is a scale of eight items that assess teacher efficacy. Students completed an achievement test that assessed progress in math and language skills. A stepwise regression analysis revealed that teacher efficacy is strongly related to student achievement. Specifically, personal teaching efficacy accounted for 46% of the variance in language skills achievement, and general teaching efficacy accounted for 24% of the variance in mathematics achievement. Ashton and Webb stated that, “teachers with high efficacy beliefs behave and think differently in the classroom than do teachers with low efficacy beliefs, and...this behavior results in greater student achievement (Ashton & Webb, 1986)” (Anderson, Greene, & Loewen, 1988, p. 148).

Based on Ashton and Webb’s (1982) multidimensional model of teacher efficacy, Gibson and Dembo (1984) developed the Teacher Efficacy Scale to assess teaching efficacy and personal efficacy. The scale assesses overall teacher efficacy and is not specific to the teaching of particular content area subjects. However, its development, structure, and subsequent use influenced the instrument that I selected to measure teacher efficacy in reading in my study. After analyzing teacher efficacy research literature and interviewing teachers, Gibson and Dembo created a questionnaire with 53 sample items.

Researchers piloted the questionnaire with 90 teachers and conducted a principal factor analysis to identify items with poor variability. The resulting scale included 30 items and a Likert response format. Next, Gibson and Dembo administered the scale to 208 teachers during faculty meetings at 13 elementary schools. Factor analysis supported and identified two separate constructs, personal teaching efficacy and general teaching efficacy. Personal teaching efficacy, or personal efficacy, reflected the “belief that one has the skills and abilities to bring about student learning” (Gibson & Dembo, 1984, p. 573); and general teaching efficacy, not specific to the individual, symbolized beliefs about a “teacher’s ability to bring about change.” (p. 574).

Gibson and Dembo (1984) further examined the relationship between responses on the Teacher Efficacy Scale and teachers’ classroom behaviors. From the pool of 208 teachers these researchers selected four high efficacy teachers and four low efficacy teachers based upon responses to the Teacher Efficacy Scale. Researchers observed each teacher in the classroom for approximately eight hours and conducted a series of one-tailed t-tests to determine differences between high and low efficacy teachers. Gibson and Dembo found significant differences between the two groups with respect to the amount of time spent in small group instruction ( $t(6) = 2.23, p < .05$ ), teacher feedback ( $t(6) = 5.17, p < .01$ ), and teacher persistence ( $t(6) = 3.29, p < .01$ ). In comparison to low efficacy teachers, high efficacy teachers spent less time on small group instruction, criticized students less for incorrect responses, praised students more, and experienced more success in leading students to accurate responses. Overall, Gibson and Dembo concluded that teachers with confidence in their ability to teach may be more effective in engaging all students during whole class instruction and attending to individual needs,

and more successful in expressing high expectations for all students through positive feedback. Because researchers based these conclusions on only eight teachers, the impact and generalizability of these results are severely limited.

Additional research (Allinder, 1994, 1995; Soodak & Podell, 1994; Trentham, Silvern, & Brogdon, 1985; Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990; Woolfolk, Rosoff, & Hoy, 1990) utilized the Teacher Efficacy Scale to connect further teacher efficacy to teacher behavior, however very little research focused on teacher efficacy and the teaching of reading.

#### *Research on Teacher Efficacy and Reading Instruction*

Besides the initial RAND study by Armor et al. (1976), I found only one investigation that has examined teacher efficacy and reading instruction. In an investigation of 110 elementary teachers from urban and suburban schools, Soodak and Podell (1994) found that teacher efficacy, specifically personal teaching efficacy, significantly influenced instructional decisions. In addition to completing the Teacher Efficacy Scale (Gibson & Dembo, 1984), participants read a case study and provided instructional recommendations. The case study described a third-grade student with reading and behavior problems. Soodak and Podell classified instructional recommendations into two groups – teacher-based interventions and non-teacher-based interventions. Analysis of variance ( $F = 3.02, p < .05$ ) showed that teachers with a high sense of personal efficacy suggested more teacher-based instructional interventions and assumed more responsibility for helping struggling students than teachers with a lower sense of personal efficacy. Teacher-based suggestions included the use of high-interest materials and peer tutoring, and non-teacher based recommendations centered on testing

low achieving students for special education services. Soodak and Podell's (1994) research implies that personal teaching efficacy may relate to reading instruction, however this relationship has not been confirmed or explored by further research. Since teacher efficacy may influence literacy instruction, it may also connect to student outcomes in reading.

*Research on Teacher Efficacy and Teacher Characteristics*

According to research, particular groups of teachers maintain a higher sense of teacher efficacy than other teachers. In a second study, Soodak and Podell (1997) studied the efficacy beliefs of 626 elementary and secondary teachers in a large metropolitan area using a modified version of the Teacher Efficacy Scale. The sample consisted of 169 preservice teachers and 457 practicing teachers. Two-way analyses of variance identified significant differences in personal efficacy beliefs based on experience ( $F = 15.46, p < .001$ ) and school level ( $F = 14.67, p < .001$ ). Preservice elementary teachers possessed a higher sense of personal efficacy than practicing teachers. Among practicing elementary teachers, those with 1 to 2 years teaching experience reported lower personal efficacy than teachers with more than 3 years of experience. Researchers suggested that although most teachers lose confidence in their ability to teach effectively during the initial years of teaching, many regain their confidence after several years of experience. Furthermore, practicing elementary teachers possessed lower personal efficacy and higher teaching efficacy than secondary teachers. Although elementary teachers felt less confident in their individual effectiveness, their general teaching efficacy was high. Many believed that teachers overall could positively influence student learning.

Similar to Soodak and Podell (1997), Payne (1994) found that experienced teachers possessed higher teacher efficacy than novice teachers. Payne conducted a qualitative and quantitative study of teacher efficacy and teacher importance to African American and Hispanic students in four public junior high schools. Approximately 1,600 students completed the Significant Teacher Survey (Payne, 1988), on which they indicated how they felt about their teachers. [Researchers administered the Teacher Efficacy Scale and a dogmatism scale to 35 of the 83 rated teachers. The dogmatism scale assessed whether teachers' held open or closed belief systems. Additionally, Payne observed and interviewed eight teachers. Analysis demonstrated that two factors accounted for the variance in personal teaching efficacy: teachers' belief systems ( $t = 1.41$ ) and the number of years of teaching experience ( $t = 2.82$ ). In particular, the most efficacious teachers were open-minded and had several years of urban teaching experience. Students also held higher opinions of these teachers than less efficacious teachers.

Other research on teachers uncovers specific factors that contribute to the development of positive teacher efficacy. In a survey study of urban elementary and secondary teachers, Chester and Beaudin (1996) investigated factors related to changes in teacher efficacy. Researchers created a survey to collect data from 173 novice teachers in nine urban school districts in September and again in February. Chester and Beaudin used ordinary least squares regression to examine the change in teacher efficacy beliefs and the relationship between efficacy and school factors. Results revealed that new teachers' sense of efficacy was higher in schools where administrators focused on instruction,

allowed for and encouraged teacher collaboration and interaction, and advocated for the most effective use of instructional resources.

Likewise, Goddard and Goddard (2001) found a positive correlation between teacher efficacy and collective teacher efficacy and concluded that school leadership and organization can assist in the development of teacher efficacy. Goddard and Goddard (2001) surveyed 452 urban elementary teachers using a modified version of the Teacher Efficacy Scale (Gibson & Dembo, 1984) and a new instrument, the Collective Teacher Efficacy Scale (Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2000). As stated earlier, collective teacher efficacy, a component of Bandura's efficacy theory, refers to "the perceptions of teachers in a school that the efforts of the faculty as a whole will have a positive effect on students" (Goddard et al., 2000). A multilevel statistical analysis showed that collective efficacy explained 75% of the variation in teacher efficacy in different schools. Teachers in schools with high collective teacher efficacy maintained a higher sense of efficacy than teachers in schools with low collective efficacy.

Research on factors related to teacher efficacy highlights the influence of school environment and community on teachers' beliefs about their ability to influence student learning

#### *Research on Children's Efficacy Beliefs in Reading*

Similar to teacher efficacy, research supports the development of children's self-efficacy beliefs in reading that contribute to the decision to engage in or avoid reading, the level of effort expended during reading, and comprehension (Henk & Melnick, 1992). The majority of research on reader self-efficacy, or children's self-perceptions of reading, stems from research related to the development of the Reader Self-Perception Scale



(RSPS) by Henk and Melnick (1992, 1993, 1995, 1998). As part of scale construction and validation (see Chapter 3), Henk and Melnick (1992) surveyed 625 students in grades 4, 5, and 6 and collected data about students' attitudes toward reading and achievement. Scores on the RSPS subscales significantly correlated with scores on the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey beyond the .001 level, which signifies a connection between reader self-efficacy and attitude toward reading. Correlations ranged from .28 to .58. Further analysis revealed a moderate relationship between efficacy and achievement with statistically significant moderate correlations between the RSPS and the Stanford Achievement Test ( $r = .39, p < .001$ ) and the Iowa Test of Basic Skills ( $r = .28, p < .001$ ).

Henk and Melnick (1993, 1995, 1998) confirmed original findings in subsequent research and offered further information about reader self-efficacy. Researchers assert that children with high reader self-efficacy view themselves as good readers, have successful and satisfying experiences with reading, and actively pursue comprehension while children with low reader self-efficacy view themselves as poor readers, expend little effort, have few positive reading experiences, and do not derive satisfaction from reading (Henk & Melnick, 1995). Self-perceptions relate to academic achievement, cognitive engagement and performance, and motivation (Bouffard-Bouchard, Parent, Larivee, 1991; Pajares, 1996; Pintrich & DeGroot, 1990; Pintrich, Marx, & Boyle, 1993; Schunk, 1984; Scott, 1996; Skinner, Wellborn, & Connell, 1990).

Similar to attitude, self-efficacy beliefs are context-specific and not rigid personality traits (Pintrich, Marx, & Boyle, 1993); thus teachers can positively or negatively influence reader self-efficacy through instruction. Henk and Melnick (1998)

demonstrated the claim that instruction influences children's sense of reading self-efficacy in a study of 56 fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students in transitional literacy classrooms. Reading instruction in a transitional literacy context reflects a balanced approach to literacy with an integration of traditional skills instruction and more meaningful activities and authentic tasks. Researchers created a 25-item questionnaire based on Bandura's (1977; 1997) self-efficacy framework, and interviewed each participant about his or her self-perceptions. To analyze the data, Henk and Melnick transcribed and coded all interviews into four major categories: public performance, teacher practices, affect, and achievement. Most children (84%) based their self-perceptions on oral reading experiences, specifically their reading fluency and word recognition skills. Almost two-thirds of the students (64%) referred to teacher feedback and call-upon patterns as indicators of their reading ability. Half of the participants also considered affective factors (52%) and academic success in reading (50%) in making personal judgments. Because children's self-perceptions related to past reading performance, selected teacher behaviors, amount and enjoyment of reading, grades, and classroom achievement, Henk and Melnick surmised that teachers can use instructional activities, including verbal feedback, attention to students' progress, and affective states, to develop positive self-efficacy beliefs in children.

Another researcher encouraged teachers to use literature, class discussion, and journaling to influence students' identity construction in reading and writing positively (McCarthy, 2001). After completing case studies of 12 fifth grade readers and writers, McCarthy (2001) found that context, perspective, literacy, and literacy curriculum affected beliefs and perceptions. Data collection occurred from January to May and

consisted of classroom observations, collection of student writings, and teacher, student, and parent interviews. Following data analysis techniques described by Miles and Huberman (1984), McCarthy organized and coded data according to patterns and themes. Of the 12 students, five viewed themselves as high readers, four as average readers, and three as struggling readers. Data revealed that the high readers participated in regular reading and writing activities, had supportive home literacy environments, shared reading and writing experiences with parents, and had strong home-school relationships. In addition, the high readers described themselves as avid readers and were recognized as successful readers by their teacher. Commonalities among the struggling readers included problems with reading and writing at school, less supportive home literacy environments, poor home-school relationships, and fewer opportunities to engage in reading and writing activities. Struggling readers also expressed resistance to literacy activities.

Moreover, the curriculum influences students' perceptions and identities. McCarthy (2001) focused on students' discussion and response to literature and participation in the Reading Renaissance program, which classifies children into color groups according to their reading performance. Judgments of reading ability corresponded to the success ratings from the Reading Renaissance program. Children also based their perceptions of one another's reading ability on participation in literature discussions and participation in other reading activities. McCarthy concluded that literacy played a significant role in the self-efficacy of successful and struggling readers, and that parents, teachers, and peers influenced self-efficacy for all students.

Additional research has indicated that school context, teachers' theoretical orientation to reading, Reading Recovery, reading strategies instruction, grouping practices, task structure, evaluation procedures, motivational strategies, and learning goals can influence students' views of reading and their self-perceptions as readers (Casteel, Isom, & Jordan, 2000; Cohen, McDonnell, & Osborn, 1989; Evans, 1993; Marshall & Weinstein, 1984; Reutzel & Sabey, 1996; Schunk & Swartz, 1991, 1993). *Research on Teacher Efficacy and Student Efficacy.*

Little research exists on the relationship between teacher efficacy and student efficacy. However a study by Anderson, Greene, and Loewen (1988) suggests that teacher efficacy influences student efficacy. Twenty-four elementary school teachers, teaching either grade 3 or 6 and their students completed the efficacy questionnaires and the New Jersey Test of Reasoning Skills (1983). Teachers filled out the Teacher Efficacy Scale (Gibson & Dembo, 1984), and students filled out a four-item efficacy scale developed by the researchers. Students also completed the Canadian Achievement Tests in mathematics and reading and Our Class and Its Work (OCIW, Waxman & Eash, 1983), an assessment of children's perceptions of their teachers' instructional behaviors. Anderson et al. found a significant positive relationship between personal teaching efficacy at the beginning of the school year and student efficacy ( $r = .59, p < .05$ ) and reading achievement ( $r = .76, p < .01$ ) at the third grade level. Researchers further discovered significant relationships between student efficacy at the sixth grade level and personal teaching efficacy at the beginning ( $r = .51, p < .05$ ) and end ( $r = .54, p < .05$ ) of the year. Though the outcomes were statistically significant, changes in teaching assignment reduced the sample, which was already small, and thereby limited the

statistical power of the findings. Besides the Anderson et al. study, I found no other research that examined the relationship between personal teaching efficacy and student efficacy in reading.

### *Summary*

Past research offers insight into Bandura's theory of self-efficacy for teachers and children. In particular, teachers' beliefs about their ability to teach may influence reading instructional decisions and classroom behavior (Soodak & Podell, 1994). However, the research literature lacks strong support for these claims as only a few studies have focused specifically on teacher efficacy and the teaching of reading. A need exists for additional research in these areas. Research on teacher efficacy and literacy instruction may lead to better professional development and higher reading achievement.

Furthermore, research on teacher efficacy indicates that years of experience, personal factors, and school environment contribute to the development of teacher efficacy. Efficacious urban teachers may be more likely to connect with students and persist when confronted with various challenges. However, similar to research on teacher efficacy in reading, little research supports this claim.

Investigations of student efficacy in reading emphasize the importance of this construct in relation to student attitude toward reading and achievement. Reading instruction contributes to the development of self-efficacy, however little is known about how often teachers' engage in recommended practices and if a valid relationship exists between teacher efficacy and student efficacy.

*Teaching and Learning in Urban Schools*

Teachers and students in urban schools contend with a variety of challenges, including high rates of student mobility and teacher turnover, inadequate resources, poor school facilities, and a lack of sufficient resources and funding. These situations can have a detrimental effect on schools and children (Kozol, 1991; Oakes, Franke, Quartz, & Rogers, 2002; Rumberger, 2003). Other problems, including school and community violence, inadequate parent involvement, large class size, unmotivated students, teacher stress, and a lack of sufficient information on effective teaching and discipline strategies for teachers further threaten student achievement (Maxson, Wright, Houck, Lynn, & Fowler, 2000; Tharpe, 1997). These circumstances may also negatively affect teachers' efficacy beliefs and undermine their efforts to instill positive attitudes and beliefs in their students.

In addition, challenges and problems in urban schools and communities contribute to an achievement gap in reading between inner city and suburban students, minority and white students, and poor and affluent students. Recent administration of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) (National Center for Education Statistics, 2003) included reading achievement data for approximately 8,000 fourth grade students from different racial and ethnic groups, different socioeconomic status levels, and different geographic regions across the United States. Thirty-seven percent of fourth graders scored below basic, meaning that they were unable to demonstrate a basic understanding of what they read during the test, and only 32% of students displayed proficient or advanced reading skills.

Beyond these overall statistics, large disparities in achievement existed between inner city students and suburban students and between low socioeconomic status students and middle and high socioeconomic status students. The mean NAEP score for urban students ( $M = 209$ ,  $SE = 1.6$ ) was significantly lower than the mean scores for suburban ( $M = 222$ ,  $SE = 1.8$ ) and rural students ( $M = 218$ ,  $SE = 1.8$ ) (NCES, 2003). Likewise, as the percentage of children eligible for free and reduced lunch in schools increased, achievement scores decreased (NCES, 2003) indicating that poor children, many of whom attend inner city schools, have lower reading achievement than middle-class and wealthy children.

Research shows that children in low socioeconomic school districts have fewer print experiences and opportunities to interact with literature than children in wealthier districts (Duke, 2000). Duke investigated first-grade classrooms in six high socioeconomic status districts and six low socioeconomic status districts and observed reading instruction in a total of 17 classrooms. Each classroom was observed for four days. The researcher collected data about classroom environmental print, the classroom library, and written language activities and conducted a multivariate analysis of data to determine differences between schools. High SES classrooms had significantly more books and magazines ( $M = 33.4$ ) than low SES classrooms ( $M = 17.7$ ), and children in high SES schools had more opportunities to interact with print throughout the school day than children in poorer schools. The types of print children interacted with also differed. Children in high SES classrooms spent more time with extended text, such as novels and longer stories, in contrast to children in low SES classrooms. Furthermore, Duke discovered that children in wealthier schools had more chances to choose reading

material and more time to engage in extended writing activities than children in poorer schools.

These early differences in print experiences correspond to later variations in reading achievement on the NAEP. Children, who have more opportunities to choose their own reading material, interact with different types of text during instruction, and write about what they have read, as well as spend more time on writing overall outperformed students who engaged in these activities less frequently (NCES, 2003). Likewise, students who read more pages for homework, read more books outside of schools, and read more for fun exhibited higher reading achievement than students who read fewer pages and fewer books less often (NCES, 2003). In particular, children who reported reading almost every day for fun ( $M = 223$ ,  $SE = 1.1$ ) scored higher than children who hardly ever read for fun ( $M = 202$ ,  $SE = 2.8$ ). Because reading attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs influence an individual's decision to read and the amount of effort and time a person will spend reading, urban teachers who demonstrate the value of reading and use more research-based instructional practices that develop positive attitudes and beliefs may experience more success raising reading achievement. However, little research offers information on the extent to which urban teachers in low SES schools express personal enjoyment and the value of reading and how often they engage in recommended practices.

Beyond socioeconomic status level other factors contribute to the gap in achievement between students in inner city schools and students in suburban and rural schools. Urban schools often contend with larger student turnover rates, which can affect student performance. Pianta and Early (2001) surveyed 3,595 kindergarten teachers



across the country about student mobility rates and found that student turnover in urban schools was significantly higher than turnover in suburban and rural schools. Twelve percent of children left urban schools after two weeks as compared to 10% of suburban students and 8% of rural students, and 20% of children enrolled in urban schools left after the start of the school year as compared to 15% of suburban children and 13% of rural children. Consequently, NAEP data revealed significantly lower scores for children who changed schools once ( $M = 211$ ), twice ( $M = 199$ ), or three ( $M = 189$ ) times in two years than for students who remained at the same school ( $M = 223$ ) (NCES, 2003). Student turnover can also affect student attendance in school, and the NAEP indicates lower reading achievement for children in schools with large numbers of student absences on an average day than for children in schools with less student absences (NCES, 2003).

These circumstances also contribute to the gap in reading achievement between white students and minority students, many of whom attend inner city schools. Minority students constitute the majority of the student population in 23 of the 25 largest cities in the United States (Delpit, 2003). NAEP data show that the mean scores for black ( $M = 193$ ) and Hispanic ( $M = 197$ ) children were significantly lower than the mean score for white children ( $M = 226$ ) (NCES, 2003). Several experts stress that these achievement differences result from culturally and linguistically biased assessments (English, 2002; Laing & Kamhi, 2003; Willie, 2001), ineffective instructional practices, and from negative and stereotypical beliefs that teachers hold about African American and Latino students (Delpit, 1995; Ferguson, 2003).

Teachers' beliefs about students can be very damaging to classroom instruction and to students' experiences in schools. According to research, many teachers often hold

low expectations for minority students, and these negative perceptions relate to their instructional decisions, teaching practices, and treatment of students (Baron, Tom, & Cooper, 1985; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1978; Ferguson, 2003; Plata, Masten, & Trusty, 1999; Taylor, 1979; Terrill & Mark, 2000). In an examination of beginning teachers' beliefs about culturally and linguistically diverse students, Terrill and Mark (2000) found that most teachers held different expectations for minority students than for white students. Teachers also expressed less safety and comfort when working with African American students than with other students. Similarly, Plata et al. (1999) studied teachers' perceptions and nominations of white and Latino fifth grade students for gifted and talented academic programs. Researchers found that teachers held different perceptions of students, were less likely to recommend Latino students for programs, and that teacher nominations related to student ethnicity.

Likewise, Taylor (1979) examined classroom instruction and teacher behavior and found that teachers provided less feedback and less positive reinforcement to African American students than to white students. Almost 25 years later, Ferguson (2003) studied the literature on teacher beliefs in relation to the black-white achievement gap and discovered that teachers' perceptions of minority students negatively affected instructional learning goals, teaching strategies, teacher energy and effort levels, and choice of classroom resources.

Teachers' perceptions of minority students may stem from inaccurate assumptions prevalent in motivation research, including the supposition that African American students have low expectations for success. In a review of the research literature on African American students and motivation, Graham (1994) discovered that many of these

assumptions were untrue. Past studies showed that African American students have high expectations and maintain positive self-concepts in times of failure. Little evidence supported widespread notions that students held negative self-perceptions. Graham also indicated that motivation and personality scales may be culturally biased and misrepresent minority students' beliefs and feelings. Based on the findings, Graham recommended that motivation research on minority students 1) focus on the individual, 2) incorporate a assortment of affective and cognitive determinants, 3) be responsive to how individuals think and feel when failing academically, 4) acknowledge the interaction between race and social class, 5) address the role of socialization in achievement expectations, and 6) offer information to increase understanding of human behavior in general.

What can be done to help children in urban schools? To offset the effects of low teacher expectations and other problems in urban schools and to reduce the achievement gap, experienced educators and researchers offer a plethora of recommendations. Educator and researcher, Jacqueline Jordan Irvine (2000) highlighted the importance of positive teacher beliefs in counteracting low student achievement.

Teachers who have confidence about their practice are persistent and resilient in the face of obstacles and seemingly overwhelming odds against them. These teachers do not give up on their students. They have confidence in their ability to teach and they believe their students can learn. (p. 250)

Ladson-Billings (1994) encouraged teachers to adopt culturally relevant teaching practices, hold high expectations for all children, use multicultural materials and books, develop children's self-concept and sense of self worth, capitalize on children's

knowledge and experiences, and use cooperative learning techniques. Likewise, Flores (1991) emphasized the importance of believing in minority students, providing them with academic challenges, respecting their culture and family relationships, and improving their self efficacy and image. Finally, other researchers (Achilles & Finn, 2000; Haycock, 2001; Quindlen, 2002) highlighted the importance of parent involvement, additional instruction, increased instructional time, alternative assessments, quality teachers, and a focus on the development of reading skills.

### *This Investigation*

Since teacher thinking and engagement relates to student thinking and engagement, research on teachers' beliefs can provide critical information about student motivation and achievement in reading (Clark & Peterson, 1986). Teachers' beliefs, including attitudes toward reading and sense of self-efficacy can influence instructional practices and students' beliefs (Ashton & Web, 1986; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Morrison et al., 1999). However, past research presents limited and unclear information about elementary teachers' reading attitudes and teacher efficacy beliefs. In addition, little is known about the state of children's reading attitudes and efficacy beliefs in the intermediate grades. Research suggests that student motivation to read declines as children progress through elementary school and that effective reading instruction can reverse this trend, yet insufficient information exists about teachers' use of recommended instructional practices (Henk & Melnick, 1992; 1995; McKenna, 1994; McKenna et al., 1995). Moreover, teachers and students in urban schools contend with a variety of problems and challenges, including low reading achievement in the intermediate grades, which impact teacher and student engagement and motivation. (Duke, 2000; Irvine, 2000;

Pianta & Early, 2001). The circumstances in urban schools reflect the environmental constraints and opportunities described by Clark and Peterson (1986) as influential factors on teacher and student beliefs and actions.

In response to past research, I used survey research methodology to investigate the nature of and the relationship between teachers' beliefs, classroom practices, and student beliefs. The following chapter describes the survey research design, the instruments, and the data collection procedures.

## CHAPTER 3

### *Methodology*

As stated in chapter 1, my research questions included the following:

1. What are the reading attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs of urban fourth and fifth grade teachers and what is the relationship between these two factors?
2. What teacher characteristics relate to teachers' reading attitudes and efficacy beliefs in urban schools?
3. What is the relationship between teachers' attitudes and efficacy beliefs and their reading instructional practices in urban schools?
4. What are the reading attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs of urban fourth and fifth grade students?
5. What is the relationship between teachers' reading attitudes and efficacy beliefs and their students' reading attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs in urban schools?
6. How do teachers' experiences teaching reading in urban schools help us understand teachers' and students' reading attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs?

Because survey research involves the collection of information from a sample of a population in order to understand or describe a larger population of interest and because surveys typically ask people about attitudes, images, decisions, behavior, affiliations, and basic demographic information (Alreck & Settle, 1995), I used survey methodology to

collect data. Versatility, efficiency, and generalizability make surveys advantageous for data collection (Schutt, 2004). According to Jaeger (1988), the following conditions must be present for good survey research to occur: researchers have a desire to learn specific information about a large group of objects, persons, or institutions, the population or group of interest is well defined, investigators are interested in the current conditions of a group, not what would transpire if a change were made, and finally researchers realize that the best way to collect the desired information is to ask individual persons.

Because survey research typically relies on self-reports, it is subject to the limitations of this form of data collection. In particular, in self-reports respondents may knowingly or unknowingly misrepresent their beliefs, feelings, and actions in order to appease their own interests or those of the researcher (Heppner, Kivlighan, & Wampold, 1999; Schunk, 2003). Providing false information allows some individuals to maintain social desirability. According to Fowler (1984), respondents also provide inaccurate information when they do not know the information, are unable to recall or remember specific details, or they do not understand the question being asked.

Although researchers cannot control the extent of these problems in self-reports, they can implement several techniques to encourage respondents to provide accurate information. Protecting the participants' identities, maintaining confidentiality, and fully explaining the procedures and purposes of the research can reduce the inclination to distort personal information. Participants should also have the option to decline participation if they choose to do so at any time (Schutt, 2004). In addition, survey questions should be clear, unambiguous, and uncomplicated. Misinformation stems from loaded and leading questions, double-barreled questions, and inapplicable questions

(Alreck & Settle, 1995; Fowler, 1984). Warwick and Lininger (1975) state that, “cooperation will be highest and distortion lowest when the questionnaire is interesting and when it avoids items which are difficult to answer, time-consuming, embarrassing, or personally threatening” (p. 127). Other errors in survey research can relate to low response rates, poor sampling frames, and unrepresentative samples (Schutt, 2004).

Questionnaires may consist of open or closed response items. For open ended items, respondents provide a written response whereas for closed items, respondents indicate their answers on a scale. The Likert scale which asks respondents to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with particular statements is the most common scale used on attitude surveys (Alreck & Settle, 1995; Weisburg, Krosnick, & Bowen, 1996). Likert scales typically consist of four or five points labeled from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”. Other types of response scales include frequency scales, ordinal scales, forced ranking scales, semantic differential scales, fixed sum scales, and comparative scales.

Rather than asking participants to complete surveys on their own, researchers may use interviews to collect data. Unlike other survey data collection techniques, interviews allow researchers to ask more detailed questions, vary the order in which questions are asked, and probe respondents for additional information or explanations (Schutt, 2004). To protect the value of the data, it is important to control and reduce instances of interviewing error and bias. Interviewing error stems from problems with the selection of interview respondents and from differences in the instructions participants receive at the beginning of the interview, interrogation procedures, and response options (Alreck and Settle, 1995). Researchers may also make mistakes in the recording and interpretation of



respondents' answers. Bias occurs when interviewers emphasize or highlight words or terms in questions and lead respondents to answer questions in a particular way (Schutt, 2004). To counteract the effects of interviewing error and bias, researchers must attend to the selection of respondents to ensure that they are representative of the population being investigated, and to how instructions and questions are presented (Alreck & Settle, 1995; Schutt, 2004).

In this investigation, I collected information about teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and practices, and students' attitudes and beliefs. I distributed questionnaires to a sample of teachers and students. Data generated from the surveys permitted me to answer the research questions and understand the relationships between teacher and student attitudes and beliefs. In addition, three teachers were interviewed about their experiences teaching reading in urban schools and the specific practices they employed to motivate children to read. I adhered to standard and systematic procedures in all stages of the research in order to reduce the possible threats to the quality of the study. In the following sections, I describe how I obtained a representative sample and reliable and valid instruments, and the procedures for data collection and analysis.

### *Sample*

The sample included fourth and fifth grade teachers and students from 25 schools in one large urban school district in the Mid-Atlantic. For the 2002-2003 school year, the school district served a population of approximately 65,000 students, including 41,080 students at the elementary level. Over 84% of the students in the district were African American, 9% were Hispanic, and 5% were white. Less than 2% were from other racial

or ethnic groups. Approximately 60% of students were eligible for the free and reduced meal program.

To assess student development in reading, writing, and mathematics at the elementary level, the school district uses the Stanford 9 Achievement Test (SAT-9). Students are tested in every grade level beginning in grade 3. The mean SAT-9 reading score for fourth grade students in the district was 628.47 which corresponded to the 41<sup>st</sup> percentile rank, and the mean score for fifth grade students was 642.24 which corresponded to the 38<sup>th</sup> percentile rank. According to the school district, there was a steady increase in student performance in reading:

For the past three years, Student Scores have shown steady growth, particularly at the elementary level. Eighty-three schools scored at or above the national average in mathematics and 49 schools scored at or above the national average in reading. Sixty-two schools had combined scores at or above the national level. (DCPS, 2004)

The 101 elementary schools in the school district are divided into three divisions, each spearheaded by an assistant superintendent. Within each division are schools that represent different regions of the city, different student socioeconomic status levels, and varying levels of student performance on standardized tests. This study focused on teachers and students in one division, which consisted of 32 schools located throughout the city. Only schools that included fourth and fifth grades and followed the standard curriculum for the school district participated. Seven schools did not meet my criteria, and I excluded them from the study. Of the remaining 25 schools, 18 had student populations that were over 80% African American and 4 had student populations that

were over 80% African American and Hispanic combined. In 21 schools, at least 80% of the student population was eligible for the free and reduced meal program. Twelve schools had fourth grade SAT-9 mean reading scores above the district mean and 10 had fifth grade mean scores above the district mean. Fourth grade and fifth grade mean scores for six schools were above the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile rank.

### *Teachers and Students*

Seventy-seven teachers and 183 students participated in the study. Among the teachers, 42 were fourth grade teachers, and 35 were fifth grade teachers. The majority of the respondents were female (78%), and the sample included beginning and experienced teachers. The mean years of teaching experience for the entire group was 12 years. Seventy-eight percent identified themselves as African American, 18% as white or European American, and 4% as members of other racial or ethnic groups. Forty-three percent had master's degrees and 5% held specialist certificates or doctoral degrees. Six of the 77 teachers were not certified to teach in the school district. Of the 183 student participants, 74 were in the fourth grade and 109 were in the fifth grade, and more than 50% were female.

Finally, I interviewed three teachers – Teachers A, B, and C, from two schools. It is important to note that these three teachers were fairly new to the teaching profession with less than five years of teaching experience. They are not representative of all teachers in the district. The experiences of other teachers, particularly more experienced teachers and African American female teachers may differ from my sample of interviewed teachers. I interviewed a white female teacher from a wealthy school and two African American male teachers from a much less affluent school. Teacher A was a first

year fourth grade teacher at an affluent school in the district with reading test scores above the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile. The student population was predominantly white and only 5% were eligible for free and reduced lunch. Teacher A was a white female and a participant in the Teach for America program. Teacher B was an African American male in his fifth year of teaching. He taught fifth grade at a school with a student population over 80% African American and over 80% eligible for the free and reduced lunch program. Student test scores in reading were above the 60<sup>th</sup> percentile. At the time of the study, Teacher B was completing his master's degree in education. Teacher C, an African American male, also taught fifth grade at the same school as Teacher B. He was at the end of his third year of teaching in the district and was enrolled in a post baccalaureate certification program at a local college.

### *Instrumentation*

To measure teachers' and students' reading attitudes and efficacy beliefs, and teachers' instructional practices, I used five existing questionnaires. Each survey was previously reported in the research literature with item construction information and reliability and validity data. Schutt (2004) recommends that survey researchers build upon existing questionnaires and instruments by refining and testing questions. In some instances, I modified survey items to make them suitable for this dissertation. To ascertain the appropriateness of the instruments for this investigation, I piloted the surveys with a small group of teachers and students during summer 2002 (see appendix for complete description). Jaeger (1988) encourages survey researchers to conduct pilot studies to identify problems and make revisions, measure the time needed to complete the instruments, and measure the effectiveness of the survey questions before using the

instruments in formal research. Each instrument is discussed separately with information related to development procedures, reliability, and validity.

#### *Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Assessment*

To measure teachers' attitudes toward reading, I selected the Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Assessment (Tullock-Rhody & Alexander, 1980) (see Table 1 for sample items), a 25-item survey with a 5-point Likert response scale. The survey measures the reading attitudes of students in the seventh through twelfth grades, and stems from a belief that attitude toward reading is related to reading achievement and that attitude varies from negative to positive (Tullock-Rhody & Alexander, 1980). I modified two items on the scale because the original wording seemed inappropriate for teachers. I changed "You have a lot of books in your room at home" to "You have a lot of books at home", and "You seldom read except when you have to do a book report" to "You seldom read except when you have to".

In designing the Rhody attitude survey, researchers first selected a Likert scale with the categories "*strongly agree*," "*agree*," "*undecided*," "*disagree*," and "*strongly disagree*." The scale allows respondents to "express degrees of feeling" (Tullock-Rhody & Alexander, 1980, p. 610) about each item. To generate items for the scale, researchers interviewed 144 students in the seventh through twelfth grades about the qualities of people who enjoy reading and of those who dislike reading, and the characteristics of an environment conducive to reading. After analyzing responses and statements, investigators created an initial survey with 33 statements, piloted it with 204 students, and performed an item analysis that identified statements that distinguished between individuals with negative attitudes and those with positive attitudes. The resulting survey

Table 1

*Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Assessment Categories and Sample Items*

<i>Category</i>	<i>Sample Items</i>
General reading	“You feel you have better things to do than read.”
Reading in the library	“You never check out a book from the library.”
Reading in the home	“You have a lot of books at home.”
Other recreational reading items	“You like to share books with your friends.”

contained 25-items classified into five categories: general reading, reading in the library, reading in the home, school-related reading, and other recreational reading. This new survey was piloted with 349 students, and deemed reliable using the test-retest method which produced a reliability coefficient of 0.84.

Because Tullock-Rhody and Alexander (1980) used interview data to create items, they reported that the scale measured exactly what individuals believe and feel about reading. To further validate the survey items, researchers asked 12 teachers to identify five students with positive attitudes and five students with negative attitudes, and administer the survey to these students. An independent t-test revealed a significant difference between the scores of the two groups of students, and demonstrated that the survey distinguished between individuals with positive reading attitudes and those with negative attitudes. Tullock-Rhody and Alexander asserted that the survey may be used to measure and understand attitudes and feelings toward reading.

*Reading Teaching Efficacy Belief Instrument.*

To measure teacher efficacy in reading, I modified the Science Teaching Efficacy Belief Instrument (STEBI) (Riggs & Enoch, 1990) (see Table 2 for sample items). The STEBI is a paper-and-pencil survey based upon Bandura's theory of efficacy with 25 statements about teachers' beliefs about science teaching and learning. I changed the language and terminology in each item (see Table 3 for sample items) to reflect reading instruction and maintained the format, categorization, and scoring procedures of the original survey. A group of five graduate students in education reviewed the modified items and made additional suggestions for word choice and language, and the pilot study confirmed the appropriateness of these modifications.

The STEBI asks respondents to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with each item on a 5-point Likert scale, with the categories of "strongly agree", "agree", "uncertain", "disagree", and "strongly disagree". The items fall into two separate scales: Personal Science Teaching Efficacy Belief Scale (13 items) and the Science Teaching Outcome Expectancy Scale (12 items). These scales represent self-efficacy and outcome expectancy related to elementary teachers' beliefs. The STEBI yields three individual scores, a separate score for each scale and a total score resulting from the sum of both dimensions.

Riggs and Enoch (1990) piloted the STEBI with 331 elementary school teachers, and conducted an intensive item analysis and factor analysis. Final corrected item-total correlations revealed a total scale alpha of 0.92 for the Personal Science Teaching Efficacy Belief scale and 0.77 for the Science Teaching Outcome Expectancy scale.

Table 2

*Science Teaching Efficacy Beliefs Instrument Scales and Sample Items*

<i>Scale</i>	<i>Sample Items</i>
Personal Science	“I am continually finding better ways to teach science.”
Teaching Efficacy Belief Scale	“Even when I try very hard, I don’t teach science as well as I do most subjects.”
Science Teaching Outcome Expectancy Scale	“When the science grades of students improve, it is most often due to their teacher having found a more effective teaching approach.”

These tests identified each scale as valid and appropriate for measuring two distinct dimensions and concepts. To further establish validity, researchers found significant correlations between the personal efficacy subscale and the following factors: years spent teaching ( $r = .14$ ), level of responsibility for science teaching ( $r = .57$ ), time spent teaching science ( $r = .41$ ), use of activity-based science instruction ( $r = .35$ ), self-rating of teaching ( $r = .66$ ), subject preference ( $r = .57$ ), and principal rating ( $r = .31$ ). The outcome expectancy scale significantly correlated with time spent teaching science ( $r = .15$ ), science teaching self-ratings ( $r = .18$ ), and subject preference ( $r = .12$ ). Riggs and Enoch concluded that the STEBI was valuable in helping elementary teachers to explain their beliefs, understand the connection between behavior and beliefs, and improve their teaching and self-efficacy. Subsequent research validated the use of the STEBI to assess teacher efficacy in science (Riggs, 1995; Riggs & Enoch, 1993; Riggs & Jesunathadas, 1993; Watters & Ginn, 1995).



Table 3

*Reading Teaching Efficacy Beliefs Instrument Scales and Sample Items*

<i>Scale</i>	<i>Sample Items</i>
Personal Reading Teaching Efficacy Belief Scale	<p>“I am continually finding better ways to teach reading.”</p> <p>“Even when I try very hard, I don’t teach reading as well as I do most subjects.”</p>
Reading Teaching Outcome Expectancy Scale	<p>“When the reading grades of students improve, it is most often due to their teacher having found a more effective teaching approach.”</p> <p>“If students are underachieving in reading, it is most likely due to ineffective reading teaching.”</p>

The modified instrument that I developed, the Reading Teaching Efficacy Belief Instrument (RTEBI) (see Table 3) contained 25 statements regarding teachers’ beliefs about reading teaching and learning, and asked respondents to indicate their agreement using a 5-point Likert scale identical to the scale on the original science instrument. Scoring procedures for the RTEBI remained the same as the STEBI, and items are classified into two dimensions similar to the ones from the original instrument, the Personal Reading Teaching Efficacy Scale (13 items) and the Reading Teaching Outcome Expectancy Scale (12 items). Because this investigation concentrated on self-efficacy and not outcome expectancy, only the Personal Reading Teaching Efficacy Scale was distributed to participants.

Past research supports the dichotomy between outcome expectancy and personal efficacy in overall teacher efficacy (Ashton & Webb, 1982; Gibson & Dembo, 1984). In many instances, personal teaching efficacy, not outcome expectancy, had the strongest correlation to instructional practices and teacher characteristics (Anderson et al., 1988, Ashton & Webb, 1986; Ghaith & Yaghi, 1997; Goddard & Goddard, 2001; Guskey, 1988; Riggs & Enoch, 1993; Saklofske, Michaluk, & Randhawa, 1988; Soodak & Podell, 1994; Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990). Further information about the appropriateness of the personal efficacy scale in contrast to the outcome expectancy scale is explained in the description of a pilot study in the appendix.

### *Teacher Survey*

The Teacher Survey was developed by Baumann, Hoffman, Duffy-Hester, and Ro (2000) for the National Reading Research Center to collect data about elementary reading instruction in the United States. The survey contains 54 open and close-ended response items classified into the following categories: teacher education and professional development, school and student demographics, teacher beliefs/philosophical orientation, instructional time, instructional materials and libraries, organizing for instruction, accommodating gifted and struggling readers, assessing reading development, home-school connections, overall school and classroom reading program, level-specific questions, and open-ended questions. Level-specific questions are divided into two sections, one for teachers in the primary grades and one for teachers in grades 3-5. The appendix contains a description of items on the survey.

To develop the Teacher Survey, Baumann et al. (2000) used data from two survey studies of elementary reading instruction in the 1960s (Austin & Morrison, 1963;

Morrison, 1963). Data from both studies contributed to the development of an initial list of items which were then modified and updated to reflect current trends and research in reading instruction. Baumann et al. piloted the Teacher Survey with elementary teachers and made revisions before administering the survey to 1,207 educators in a descriptive study of elementary reading instruction in the United States. Specific changes and information from the initial pilot study about reliability and validity are not reported in the research literature. However, the final report of the national study contains summary statistics and cross-tabulations based on the results (see Baumann et al., 2000).

I made three modifications to the Teacher Survey. First, I included a list of definitions (see appendix) for reading terms found on the questionnaire. The purpose of the glossary was to eliminate confusion and misunderstanding of literacy terminology. Alreck and Settle (1995) and Fowler (1984) encourage researchers to use uncomplicated vocabulary or to provide detailed explanations for terms. Second, I added space for general comments at the end so teachers could provide additional information if necessary. Finally, I eliminated intermediate labels on frequency response scales to facilitate coding and reduce confusion over terminology. Experts stress that it is not necessary to use intermediate labels on linear, numeric scales for the following reasons:

First, consensus concerning the meaning of such words as “very” or “slightly” is less likely than for the interpretation of only a series of numbers. Second, the graphic spacing and the common understanding of the equal distance between numbers form a conceptual mapping of the underlying evaluation. Third, with only numbers, there’s no mistake about their being only a single dimension or

continuum. The bulk of the research on this issue indicates that labeling intermediate values is no more effective. (Alreck & Settle, 1995, p. 127)

In this study, I used the Teacher Survey to collect information about teachers' backgrounds, education, and instructional practices in reading.

#### *Elementary Reading Attitude Survey*

Next, I chose the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERAS) (McKenna and Kear, 1990) to measure children's attitudes toward reading. McKenna and Kear developed their survey because of indications that attitude toward reading related to reading performance and because of the lack of reliable measures of reading attitude. The ERAS (see Table 4 for sample items), designed for elementary school children in grades 1 to 6, contains 20 questions that all begin with the phrase, "How do you feel...", and asks children to respond on a modified 4-point Likert scale. The ERAS utilizes a pictorial response scale with four distinct images of the comic strip character, Garfield. Children select the happiest Garfield image if their response is "very happy", the slightly smiling Garfield image for "a little happy", the mildly upset Garfield image for "a little upset", and the very upset Garfield image for "very upset". The pictorial format was used because it was easier for young children to understand than the typical Likert scale.

Furthermore, the survey assesses two separate dimensions: recreational reading attitude (10 items) and academic reading attitude (10 items). Investigators field tested the survey with 18,138 elementary school children, conducted procedures for estimates of reliability and validity, and created norms (see McKenna & Kear, 1990) for each grade level based on raw scores. Internal consistency tests performed for each scale yielded Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.74 to 0.87. For fourth grade students, the

Table 4

*Elementary Reading Attitude Survey Subscales and Sample Items*

<i>Subscale</i>	<i>Sample Items</i>
Academic Reading	<p>“How do you feel when the teacher asks you questions about what you read?”</p> <p>“How do you feel when it’s time for reading class?”</p>
Recreational Reading	<p>“How do you feel when you read a book in school during free time?”</p> <p>“How do you feel about reading for fun at home?”</p>

alpha coefficient was 0.83 for the recreational subscale and the academic subscale, and 0.89 for the total scale.

Researchers established construct validity for each separate subscale with factor analysis and a comparison of students' scores. To validate the recreational subscale, researchers compared the scores of different groups of students at each grade level. Tests revealed significant differences ( $p < .001$ ) between the scores of children with ( $M = 30.0$ ) and without library cards ( $M = 28.9$ ), between children who checked out library books ( $M = 29.2$ ) and children who had not ( $M = 27.3$ ); and between children who watched less than 1 hour of television each night ( $M = 31.5$ ) and those who watched more than 2 hours each night ( $M = 28.6$ ). For the academic subscale, researchers compared the mean scores of children with different reading ability, and found that the mean scores of high ability readers ( $M = 27.7$ ) were significantly higher than the scores of low ability readers ( $M = 27.0$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Significant differences indicated that each scale discriminated between groups of children with positive and negative attitudes toward reading.

The ERAS yields three separate scores, one for Academic Reading, one for Recreational Reading, and a combined total score. Raw scores for each scale range from 10 to 40 and from 20 to 80 for the entire survey, with higher scores representing stronger attitudes toward each dimension of reading. The ERAS was designed for teachers to use informally in the classroom to help them understand children's attitudes and aid in planning reading instruction. Additional research (Bottomley et al., 1999; Kush & Watkins, 1996; Lazarus & Callahan, 2000; McKenna et al., 1995) has demonstrated the use of the ERAS in the assessment of children's attitudes toward reading.

### *Reader Self-Perception Scale*

To measure children's self-efficacy in reading, I selected the Reader Self-Perception Scale (RSPS) (Henk & Melnick, 1995). Henk and Melnick (1992; 1995) created the RSPS based upon Bandura's theory of self-efficacy and Gable's (1986) guidelines for effective scale construction. The RSPS measures how elementary school children feel about themselves as readers. After Henk and Melnick (1992) created operational and conceptual definitions of self-efficacy, three reading education experts developed an initial list of 60 positively stated items to assess the concept. Investigators then asked 35 graduate students in reading to review the items and categorize them into five categories - performance, social feedback, physiological states, observational comparison, and other (see Table 5 for description and sample items). Researchers eliminated or modified items that did not obtain 90% category agreement across reviewers, and the resulting scale contained 48 items.

Henk and Melnick (1992) piloted the new instrument with two fifth-grade classes using a Likert scale that included the following response choices: "strongly agree," "agree," "undecided," "disagree," and "strongly disagree." Outcomes from piloting resulted in the addition of seven items to the scale before researchers piloted the survey again with a larger group of fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students ( $N = 625$ ). To measure reliability and validity, researchers calculated internal consistency estimates and Pearson Product-moment correlations using the pilot data, achievement test scores, and scores on the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (McKenna & Kear, 1990). Reliability estimates for each subscale and for the total scale ranged from 0.74 to 0.87. Further analysis

produced significant correlations at the .001 level between scores on the RSPS and scores on the ERAS (mean  $r = .41$ ), and between scores on the RSPS and scores on the Stanford Achievement Test (mean  $r = .39$ ). These correlations suggested a positive relationship between reader self-efficacy and attitude toward reading and between reader self-efficacy and achievement.

After making additional revisions, including changing “performance” to “progress”, Henk & Melnick (1993, 1995) piloted the instrument again with 1,525 students. The new progress category, a narrower version of the performance category, represents beliefs that an individual holds about his or her reading performance in relation to past performance. The final scale consists of 33 items representative of four dimensions: progress (9 items), observational comparison (6 items), social feedback (9 items), and physiological states (8 items). In addition, one item addresses children’s general perception of themselves as readers. Alpha reliability coefficients for the final scale ranged from .81 to .84, all of which represent acceptable internal consistency.

Scoring procedures involve calculating raw scores for each dimension based on the 5-point Likert scale (5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Undecided, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree) and comparing each score against guidelines (see Table 6) that indicate low, average, and high efficacy for each dimension. Henk and Melnick (1995) created the scoring guidelines based on the calculated mean scores and standard deviations from the pilot study.



Table 5

*Reader Self-Perception Scale Categories and Sample Items*

<i>Category</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Sample Item</i>
Performance	Beliefs about past reading performance, task and effort expenditure, avoidance, and progress	“When I read, I don’t have to try as hard as I used to.”
Observational Comparison	Perceptions that individuals hold about their reading performance when compared to their peers	“I seem to know more words than other kids when I read.”
Social Feedback	How individuals perceive the feedback that they receive from others about their reading performance	“My teacher thinks that my reading is fine.”
Physiological States	Personal feelings about reading.	“Reading makes me feel happy inside.”
General Perception	General items about reading ability	“I think I am a good reader.”

Table 6

*Score Interpretation Guidelines for the Reader Self-Perception Scale Categories*

	Progress	Observational Comparison	Social Feedback	Physiological States
High	44+	26+	38+	37+
Average	39	21	33	31
Low	34	16	27	25

*Procedures for Data Collection*

All data for this study were collected at the end of the school year. After receiving permission from the school district to conduct the investigation, I met with each principal at his or her respective school and explained the purpose of the study and the data collection procedures. At that time, I elicited participation and dispersed teacher survey packets. The assistant superintendent had already informed principals about the study and all were willing to encourage their classroom teachers to participate. I asked each principal to distribute surveys to teachers that met the following criteria: a) full-time elementary teacher, b) taught reading to fourth or fifth grade students, and c) a regular education teacher.

Each teacher survey packet contained an introduction letter with directions, a consent form, the Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Scale, the Reading Teaching Efficacy Beliefs Instrument, the Teacher Survey, and a brief glossary of reading terms.

Copies of the consent forms and the glossary are in the appendix. I developed the glossary based on results from the pilot study using a literacy dictionary (Harris & Hodges, 1995). I coded each survey packet with a number identifying the school. The introduction letter and the consent form informed teachers about the purposes and procedures of the research, and the benefits to participating. In exchange for completing the surveys, each teacher received a bookmark, a mug, and information about multicultural children's literature. Consent forms and directions informed teachers that all information would remain confidential and all surveys would be completed anonymously. No teacher was asked to provide his or her name. I employed these procedures to protect teachers' privacy and encourage them to provide frank and honest responses (Alreck & Settle, 1995). I picked up completed survey packets from principals and teachers at each school.

Subsequently, I asked five principals for permission to survey their students. The assistant superintendent and one elementary school principal from the division helped me to identify five of the 25 participating schools that represented different regions of the city. Four of the five schools had fourth and fifth grade test scores in reading above the district mean and above the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile rank. Student populations in four schools were over 95% African American, and over 80% of students in the same four schools were eligible for the free and reduced meal program.

I delivered Student Survey Packets to principals and teachers at each of the five schools. Each Student Survey Packet contained detailed instructions for administering the surveys, parental permission forms, copies of the ERAS, and copies of the RSPS. I instructed teachers to send home parental permission forms and distribute the survey

packets only to those students who returned the signed forms. To ensure standard administration, I provided teachers with detailed instructions and asked them to have children first complete the ERAS and then the RSPS. I coded each student survey packet with a number identifying the school and the teacher. I picked up completed packets from each school after two weeks.

Both the ERAS and the RSPS, student survey packets included additional questions. I asked children to identify their gender and to indicate whether or not they received supplementary instruction from another teacher. There were also two open-ended questions, "*Do you think your teacher likes to read?*" and "*Why do people read?*" The first question addressed students' perceptions of their teachers as readers, and the second question concentrated on children's understandings of the purposes of reading. According to past research, children in classrooms where teachers employ a variety of recommended practices often have broader conceptions of reading than other children (Borko & Eisenhart, 1986; Wing, 1989).

Similar to the procedures for teachers, no child was asked to provide his or her name on any survey. All surveys were completed anonymously and all information remained confidential. Children who completed the survey packets received bookmarks in exchange for their participation.

Finally, I interviewed three teachers from two of the five schools at the end of the school year. To solicit participation in this phase of the study, I included a separate page in the Student Survey Packets requesting teachers' involvement in a follow-up interview. Ten teachers volunteered to be interviewed and provided their names and home telephone numbers. However, I was only able to contact four teachers successfully and schedule

interviews. Each interview lasted approximately 25 to 40 minutes and occurred at a local public library. One teacher missed her scheduled time, and I was unable to reach her to reschedule the meeting.

I used information from the Teacher Survey to develop an interview guide (see appendix) that helped me to focus the conversations on reading instruction and motivation. I asked teachers about their experiences teaching reading, the challenges that they faced, and the strategies they used to motivate children to read. The interviews helped me to understand the survey responses and the difficulties related to teaching reading in urban schools. Each interview was audio-taped and transcribed for analysis. In exchange for their participation, interviewed teachers received children's books for their classroom libraries.

#### *Procedures for Data Analysis*

Due to the nature of the data and the research questions, I employed both quantitative and qualitative data analysis procedures. Survey data were subjected to statistical analysis, and interview data and written responses to open-ended items on questionnaires were subjected to qualitative analysis techniques. Before data analysis, I scored and coded completed questionnaires and entered all data into the computer. Statistical analysis focused on describing the relationships between factors and involved the computation of a number of measures of association (see Table 7). Correlation

Table 7

*Summary of Data Analysis*

<i>Research Question</i>	<i>Analysis</i>
1. What are the reading attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs of urban fourth and fifth grade teachers and what is the relationship between these two factors?	Means, standard deviations, and percentages to describe teachers' attitudes and beliefs Correlation analysis to measure the strength and direction of the relationship.
2. What teacher characteristics relate to teachers' reading attitudes and efficacy beliefs in urban schools?	Means and standard deviations Correlation analysis for continuous variables T-Tests and ANOVA for categorical variables with attitude and efficacy as the dependent variables
3. What is the relationship between teachers' attitudes and efficacy beliefs and their reading instructional practices in urban schools?	Means and standard deviations Correlation analysis for continuous variables Chi Square tests for categorical variables

Table 7 continued

*Summary of Data Analysis*

<i>Research Question</i>	<i>Analysis</i>
4. What are the reading attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs of urban fourth and fifth grade students?	Means, standard deviations, and percentages to describe students' attitudes and beliefs
5. What is the relationship between teachers' reading attitudes and efficacy beliefs and their students' reading attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs in urban schools?	Chi square analysis to detect the presence of a relationship
6. How do teachers' experiences teaching reading in urban schools help us understand teachers' and students' reading attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs?	Coding and categorization of interview data and open ended survey data, identification of major patterns and themes

analysis was used to measure relationships involving continuous data only, and analysis of variance (ANOVA), t-tests, and chi square tests were used to assess relationships involving categorical data. The following sections summarize the specific analysis techniques that were used to understand the data and answer the research questions.

*Research Question 1*

To answer the first question, “What are the reading attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs of urban fourth and fifth grade teachers and what is the relationship between these two factors?” I used correlation analysis, specifically Pearson Product Moment correlations. According to Alreck and Settle (1995), correlation analysis “measures the direction, degree, and statistical significance of relationships between two continuous variables when no causality is implied” (p. 334). Mean scores and standard deviations from the Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Assessment and the RTEBI were calculated and used to describe teachers’ attitudes toward reading and sense of efficacy. Next, I computed correlations to assess the nature of the relationship between the two factors.

*Research Questions 2 and 3*

The second and third research questions, “What teacher characteristics relate to teachers’ reading attitudes and efficacy beliefs in urban schools?” and “What is the relationship between teachers’ attitudes and efficacy beliefs and their reading instructional practices in urban schools?” involved data collected by the Rhody Secondary Attitude Assessment, the RTEBI, and the Teacher Survey. Only selected items from the Teacher Survey that were relevant to this study and supported by past research described in Chapter 2 were analyzed. Because the Teacher Survey, which reported information about teachers’ backgrounds, characteristics, and instructional practices, includes both continuous and categorical data, statistical analysis involved a number of techniques.

For teacher characteristics, I used Pearson Product Moment correlations to analyze relationships between teachers’ attitudes and beliefs and the following



continuous factors: years of experience and class size. I employed t-tests and analyses of variance for categorical factors, including gender, degree level, race and ethnicity, quality of preparation to teach reading, and reading habits. Dependent variables consisted of teachers' attitudes and efficacy beliefs. To examine relationships between teachers' attitudes and efficacy beliefs and continuous instructional factors, I computed Pearson Product Moment correlations. Continuous instructional factors included instructional time, materials, and assessment practices.

For the one categorical instructional factor – classroom organization – I used contingency tables and the Pearson chi square test statistic to assess relationships. Survey researchers frequently use cross tabulations to measure associations between factors because it is effective, simple to comprehend and interpret, and robust (Alreck & Settle, 1995). I chose to use cross tabulations and chi square rather than ANOVA because my goal for the analysis centered on understanding the relationships between teachers' attitudes and sense of efficacy and classroom grouping practices. Unlike ANOVA and other measures of association, the cross tabulation “doesn't require one variable to be identified as dependent and the other independent” (Alreck & Settle, p. 286). This reason made cross tabulation and chi square the most appropriate procedure to evaluate linkages between teachers' beliefs and classroom organization.

#### *Questions 4 and 5*

Analysis for questions 4 and 5, “What are the reading attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs of urban fourth and fifth grade students?” and “What is the relationship between teachers' reading attitudes and efficacy beliefs and their students' reading attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs in urban schools?” involved correlation analysis and chi square

analysis. First, to obtain information about students' attitudes toward reading and sense of efficacy, I calculated mean scores and standard deviations from the ERAS and the RSPS. I used correlations to assess the relationship between these two factors. Next, to describe the relationship between students' attitudes toward reading and sense of efficacy and teachers' attitudes toward reading and sense of efficacy, I used cross tabulations and the chi square test statistic. These statistical procedures allowed me to understand the nature of the relationship without placing considerable demands on the data by identifying independent and dependent variables.

#### *Question 6*

Finally, I analyzed interviews and written responses to open-ended items on surveys qualitatively to understand the last research question, "How do teachers' experiences teaching reading in urban schools help us understand teachers' and students' reading attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs?" Given the broad nature of this question and the nature of the data, I followed the coding and analysis guidelines specified by Patton (1990) and Miles and Huberman (1994). After familiarizing myself with the data, I generated a list of patterns prevalent in the teachers' responses and coded the data accordingly. Next, I determined the major themes and patterns supported by the coded data. To ensure that my interpretation was valid, I checked the findings against the related research literature on reading instruction, urban education, and reading motivation; and had two former teachers from the school district review the data and my interpretation.

The combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques to understand the research questions offered interesting information about teaching and learning in reading

in urban elementary classrooms and the relationships between teachers' beliefs and practices and students' beliefs.

### *Summary*

As stated at the beginning of the chapter, this study utilized survey research methodology which involves the collection of information from a sample of a population in order to understand or describe a larger population of interest (Alreck & Settle, 1995). I distributed questionnaires to a sample of urban fourth and fifth grade teachers and students and interviewed three teachers about their experiences teaching reading in urban schools. This chapter detailed the sample, the development and selection of the instruments, the data collection procedures, and the procedures for analysis. The research design helped me to understand relationships between teachers' attitudes toward reading and sense of efficacy, their instructional practices in reading, and student motivation to read.

## CHAPTER 4

### *Results*

This chapter, organized according to the six research questions, reports the results. It first describes the status of teachers' attitudes and efficacy beliefs and their relationship to one another, and then details how these two factors relate to teachers' background characteristics and to their instructional practices. Next, this chapter presents information about students' attitudes and sense of efficacy and their relationships to teachers' attitudes and sense of efficacy. Finally, the last section describes the reported challenges teachers face in their efforts to provide quality reading instruction and how these challenges contribute to teacher and student motivation.

#### *Research Question 1*

*What are the reading attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs of urban fourth and fifth grade teachers and what is the relationship between these two factors?*

Of the 100 teacher surveys distributed to 25 schools, 82 were returned, and of these, 77 could be used to generate useful data. Because the study focused on fourth and fifth grade classroom teachers, data from teachers of other grade levels and combined classes were excluded from the analysis. To prepare for analysis, I calculated scores for reading attitude and teacher efficacy from individual responses on the Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Survey (RSRAS) and the Reading Teaching Efficacy Beliefs Instrument (RTEBI), and then entered the data into the computer. Table 8 displays internal consistency results for each instrument.

Table 8

*Internal Consistency for the Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Survey (RSRAS) and the Personal Reading Teaching Efficacy Beliefs Instrument (RTEBI)*

	<i>N of Items</i>	<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>
RSRAS - Attitude	25	.86
Library Subscale	2	.62
Home Subscale	2	.56
Recreational Subscale	5	.62
General Subscale	14	.77
RTEBI - Efficacy	13	.84

N = 77

*Note: The library and home subscales each had only two items, and their internal consistency results represent a correlation between two items.*

Table 9 presents descriptive statistics for the RSRAS (attitude scale) and the RTEBI (efficacy scale). The maximum possible score for the RSRAS is 125, and the maximum possible score for the RTEBI is 65. Overall, teachers in this study expressed positive attitudes toward reading. Mean scores for total attitude, reading in the library, reading in the home, recreational reading, and general reading were quite high showing that teachers reported enjoyment of reading in all areas. The mean score for personal reading teaching efficacy was also rather high revealing that teachers were confident in their ability to teach reading and impact reading achievement.

Teachers' attitude scores differed by grade level (see Table 9 for grade level mean scores for attitude and efficacy). Fourth grade teachers' had higher mean scores for reading attitude and each subcategory and for teaching efficacy than fifth grade.

An independent t-test showed that differences in mean scores between the two grade levels were statistically significant for reading attitude at the .05 level. Fourth grade

Table 9

*Means with Standard Deviations in Parentheses for Teachers' Reading Attitudes and Efficacy Beliefs*

	<i>All Teachers</i> <i>(n = 77)</i>	<i>Fourth Grade</i> <i>(n = 42)</i>	<i>Fifth Grade</i> <i>(n = 35)</i>
Total Attitude (RSRAS)	108.87 (9.93)	111.38 (7.86)	105.86 (11.36)
(Range 25-125)			
Library Subscale	7.91 (1.91)	7.98 (1.79)	7.83 (2.08)
(Range 2-10)			
Home Subscale	8.60 (1.59)	9.02 (1.41)	8.09 (1.67)
(Range 2-10)			
Recreational Subscale	21.70 (2.55)	22.10 (2.30)	21.23 (2.78)
(Range 5-25)			
General Subscale	57.43 (4.90)	58.71 (3.70)	55.89 (5.72)
(Range 14-70)			
Efficacy (RTEBI)	55.26 (6.63)	55.52 (7.24)	54.94 (5.91)
(Range 13-65)			

teachers had higher total attitudes toward reading than fifth grade teachers,  $t(59) = 2.43$ ,  $p < .05$  (two-tailed),  $d = .57$ . Grade level mean scores on the home subscale and the general subscale were also significantly different,  $t(67) = 2.64$ ,  $p < .05$  (two-tailed),  $d = .60$ , and  $t(56) = 2.52$ ,  $p < .05$  (two-tailed),  $d = .59$ , respectively. Fourth grade teachers conveyed more positive attitudes for reading in the home and for reading in general than fifth grade teachers. Differences in mean scores for teacher efficacy by grade level were not significant.

In the investigation of the relationship between teachers' reading attitudes and sense of personal reading teaching efficacy, I used Pearson Product Moment (Pearson PM) correlation analysis. Specific correlations are presented in Table 10. A moderate but

Table 10

*Pearson Product Moment Correlations between Teacher Attitude and Teacher Efficacy*

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Total attitude	1.00					
2. Library subscale	.43**	1.00				
3. Home subscale	.73**	.15	1.00			
4. Recreational subscale	.82**	.29*	.63**	1.00		
5. General subscale	.92**	.21	.62**	.64**	1.00	
6. Efficacy	.34**	.23*	.19	.19	.31**	1.00

\*\*p < .01, \*p < .05

statistically significant relationship existed between total reading attitude and personal reading teaching efficacy indicating that both factors were directly related ( $r = .34, p < .01, n = 77$ ). Teachers with positive attitudes toward reading also tended to have positive efficacy beliefs.

### *Research Question 2*

*What teacher characteristics relate to teachers' reading attitudes and efficacy beliefs in urban schools?*

Items analyzed as teacher characteristics included years of experience, class size, degree level, gender, race and ethnicity, quality of preparation to teach reading, and reading habits. To determine associations between mean attitude and efficacy scores and years of teaching experience and class size, specifically the numbers of regular and special education students, I computed Pearson PM correlations. For gender, an independent t-test identified differences in attitude and efficacy between males and females. Finally, the remaining categorical teacher characteristics – degree level, race and ethnicity, quality of preparation to teach reading, and reading habits – were subjected to analyses of variance (ANOVA). Because of the statistically moderate relationship between teachers' attitude and efficacy mean scores, each construct was analyzed independently. Also, due to the fact that several teachers did not provide responses for every item and low variability among teachers for some factors, the effect of each background factor was evaluated separately. Type 1 error levels were set at .05. Results are summarized below.

Table 11 displays Pearson PM correlations for years of experience ( $M = 11.82, SD = 10.93$ ) and class size, specifically the number of regular education ( $M = 19.08, SD =$



3.73) and special education ( $M = 2.39$ ,  $SD = 1.90$ ) students. Attitude significantly related to class size and efficacy related to years of teaching experience. Specifically, there was an inverse relationship between teachers' reading attitudes and class size, particularly the number of regular education students ( $r = -.24$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $n = 77$ ). Teachers' total and general attitudes increased as the number of regular education students decreased. In contrast to attitude, teacher efficacy related to years of experience ( $r = .51$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $n = 76$ ), indicating that higher levels of efficacy were associated with increased years of teaching experience. Both attitude and efficacy were unrelated to the number of special education students in the classroom.

Analysis of differences in teacher attitude and sense of efficacy according to gender, degree level, race and ethnicity, and quality of preparation to teach reading revealed a number of significant effects. Table 12 displays the means and standard deviations for each factor. For gender, female teachers' mean scores for total attitude, recreational attitude, and general attitude were significantly higher than male teachers' mean scores,  $t(75) = 4.32$ ,  $p < .05$  (two-tailed),  $d = 1.20$ ,  $t(75) = 3.86$ ,  $p < .05$  (two-tailed),  $d = 1.05$ , and  $t(75) = 4.79$ ,  $p < .05$ , (two-tailed),  $d = 1.27$ , respectively.

Similarly, teachers' attitudes varied significantly according to the quality of their preparation to teach reading. On the survey, teachers rated their training in reading as "poor or adequate", "very good", or "exceptional". ANOVA results showed significant differences in total attitude,  $F(2, 67) = 3.24$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .08$ , and general attitude,  $F(2, 67) = 5.37$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .37$ . Multiple comparison procedures suggested that teachers who rated the quality of their preparation to teach reading as "exceptional" reported more

Table 11

*Pearson Product Moment Correlations between Teacher Attitude, Teacher Efficacy, Years of Teaching Experience, and Class Size*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Total attitude	1.00								
2. Library subscale	.43**	1.00							
3. Home subscale	.73**	.15	1.00						
4. Recreational subscale	.82**	.29*	.63**	1.00					
5. General subscale	.92**	.21	.62**	.64**	1.00				
6. Efficacy	.34**	.23*	.19	.19	.31**	1.00			
7. Years of Experience	.09	-.08	.05	.06	.14	.51**	1.00		
8. Number of Regular Education Students	-.24*	.05	-.19	-.17	-.27*	-.09	-.16	1.00	
9. Number of Special Education Students	.09	.02	.07	.09	.06	.05	.10	-.22	1.00

\*\*p < .01, \*p < .05

Table 12

*Means with Standard Deviations in Parentheses for Teachers' Attitudes and Efficacy Beliefs by Teacher Characteristics*

			<i>Library</i>	<i>Home</i>	<i>Recreational</i>	<i>General</i>	
		<i>Overall Attitude</i>	<i>Subscale</i>	<i>Subscale</i>	<i>Subscale</i>	<i>Subscale</i>	<i>Efficacy</i>
	<i>N</i>	<i>(Range 25-125)</i>	<i>(Range 2-10)</i>	<i>(Range 2-10)</i>	<i>(Range 5-25)</i>	<i>(Range 14-70)</i>	<i>(Range 13-65)</i>
Gender							
Male	17	100.59 (8.73)	7.71 (1.80)	8.00 (1.80)	19.76 (2.41)	53.00 (4.73)	53.29 (4.04)
Female	60	111.22 (9.01)	7.97 (1.96)	8.77 (1.50)	22.25 (2.33)	58.68 (4.20)	55.82 (7.13)
Preparation to Teach							
Reading							
Adequate or	19	107.32 (10.25)	7.53 (1.90)	8.53 (1.35	21.11 (2.38)	57.37 (4.44)	52.68 (6.78)
Poor							
Very Good	33	106.76 (10.96)	8.21 (1.87)	8.18 (1.98)	21.36 (2.90)	55.88 (5.37)	56.30 (6.12)
Exceptional	18	113.83 (108.73)	7.72 (2.05)	9.17 (1.04)	22.78 (1.96)	60.39 (3.45)	57.33 (55.59

*Table 12 continued**Means with Standard Deviations in Parentheses for Teachers' Attitudes and Efficacy Beliefs by Teacher Characteristics*

	<i>N</i>	<i>Overall Attitude</i> (Range 25-125)	<i>Library</i> Subscale (Range 2-10)	<i>Home</i> Subscale (Range 2-10)	<i>Recreational</i> Subscale (Range 5-25)	<i>General</i> Subscale (Range 14-70)	<i>Efficacy</i> (Range 13-65)
Degree Level							
Bachelor's	40	108.33 (9.34)	7.83 (1.97)	8.60 (1.53)	21.65 (2.45)	57.18 (4.92)	52.78 (6.93)
Master's	33	109.88 (10.91)	8.30 (1.65)	8.55 (1.77)	21.85 (2.67)	57.73 (5.08)	58.39 (4.57)
Specialist or Doctorate	4	106.00 (8.29)	5.50 (1.92)	9.00 (.00)	21.00 (3.16)	57.50 (4.12)	54.25 (8.73)
Race or Ethnicity							
Black	56	109.27 (10.72)	8.14 (1.88)	8.57 (1.74)	21.52 (2.81)	57.18 (4.92)	57.25 (5.69)
White	13	106.46 (8.27)	7.38 (1.98)	8.38 (1.19)	21.85 (1.77)	56.54 (4.43)	48.08 (5.38)
Other	3	106.67 (6.66)	7.00 (2.65)	8.67 (1.53)	22.33 (.58)	55.33 (2.08)	51.00 (8.89)

positive total and general attitudes than those who rated their preparation as “very good” (see appendix for complete post hoc results).

The omnibus tests for the main effects of degree level and race and ethnicity resulted in significant findings for teacher efficacy,  $F(2, 74) = 7.69$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .17$  and  $F(2, 69) = 14.33$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .29$ , respectively. Teachers with master’s degrees reported greater teacher efficacy than teachers with bachelor’s degrees, and African American teachers’ were more efficacious with regard to teaching reading than White teachers (see appendix for post hoc summary tables). Efficacy was unrelated to gender and the quality of preparation to teach reading.

Only one teacher characteristic – reading habits – produced significant findings for both attitude and efficacy. On the Teacher Survey, teachers reported their reading habits as “occasional”, “frequent”, “very active”, and “avid” (see Table 13 for means and standard deviations). The majority of teachers (65%) indicated that they read daily. ANOVA revealed that reported reading habits significantly related to overall reading attitude,  $F(3, 73) = 14.01$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .36$ , home reading attitude,  $F(3, 73) = 5.10$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .17$ , recreational reading attitude,  $F(3, 73) = 8.82$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .27$  and general reading attitude,  $F(3, 73) = 9.84$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .29$ . Efficacy beliefs were also associated with teachers’ reading habits,  $F(2, 74) = 3.20$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .17$ . It appears that teachers who spend more time reading have more positive attitudes and a higher sense of efficacy toward teaching reading than teachers who read less often. However, the nature of the exact relationship based on means for each category is unknown. As a result of the extremely low sample size for occasional readers ( $n = 4$ ), post hoc test results were inconclusive (see appendix for post hoc test results). A larger sample of occasional

Table 13

*Means with Standard Deviations in Parentheses for Teachers' Attitudes and Efficacy Beliefs by Reading Habits*

		<i>General</i>					
		<i>Library</i>	<i>Home</i>	<i>Recreational</i>	<i>Subscale</i>	<i>Efficacy</i>	
<i>Overall Attitude</i>		<i>Subscale</i>	<i>Subscale</i>	<i>Subscale</i>	<i>(Range 14-</i>	<i>(Range 13-</i>	
<i>N</i>	<i>(Range 25-125)</i>	<i>(Range 2-10)</i>	<i>(Range 2-10)</i>	<i>(Range 5-25)</i>	<i>70)</i>	<i>65)</i>	
<hr/> Reading Habits <hr/>							
Occasional	4	96.25 (10.44)	6.75 (2.22)	6.50 (0.58)	19.75 (2.22)	52.50 (8.35)	49.50 (4.20)
Frequent	23	102.09 (8.51)	7.48 (1.93)	8.13 (1.66)	20.00 (2.41)	54.30 (4.06)	54.78 (4.86)
Very Active	30	111.40 (6.93)	8.23 (1.96)	8.77 (1.14)	22.37 (1.90)	58.57 (3.88)	54.20 (7.96)
Avid	20	115.40 (8.73)	8.15 (1.73)	9.30 (1.78)	23.05 (2.46)	60.30 (3.92)	58.55 (5.35)

readers is needed to identify substantial mean differences between each type of reader. Overall, teachers' attitudes varied significantly according to class size, gender, and the quality of preparation to teach reading while teacher efficacy in reading differed according to years of experience, degree level, and race and ethnicity. Differences in both teacher attitude and teacher efficacy were associated with reported reading habits.

### *Question 3*

*What is the relationship between teachers' attitudes and efficacy beliefs and their reading instructional practices in urban schools?*

As explained in Chapter 3, only items relevant to the research questions were analyzed for their relationship to attitude and efficacy. For reading instruction, the following items were analyzed: instructional time and activities, materials, assessment practices, and classroom organization. In order to reduce the amount of data and the number of analyses, specific items for instructional time, materials, and assessment practices were grouped into broader instructional categories (see Table 14). For instructional time and assessment items, teachers indicated the amount of instructional time dedicated to each instructional activity on a scale of 1-5 with "1" representing little or no time spent on the activity and "5" representing considerable time spent on the activity. Similarly, teachers reported the degree to which they used various instructional materials on a scale of 1 to 5 with "1" representing "never use" and "5" representing "exclusive use". In the recoding process, individual scores for each separate item were summed for a total category score (see Table 14 for the means and standard deviations for each category).

How did fourth and fifth grade teachers report teaching reading? As shown in

Table 14

*Means with Standard Deviations in Parentheses and Descriptions of Instructional Factors*

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Items Included</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean (SD)</i>
Minutes for Reading Instruction		75	65.47 (38.81)
Instructional Time			
Comprehension (Range 6-30)	Comprehension, Critical Reading, Reading in the Content Areas, Reading Aloud to Students, Oral or Written Responses to Literature, Literature Circles or Book Clubs	74	19.42 (2.50)
Processing Text (Range (3-15)	Oral Reading, Silent Reading, Independent Reading	76	9.38 (1.69)
Strategy Instruction (Range 2-10)	Study Skills, Reading Strategies Instruction	76	6.18 (1.29)
Writing (Range (2 – 10)	Process Writing or Writing Workshop, Language Experience Stories or Charts	71	5.78 (1.51)
Technology and Handwriting (Range 2-10)	Handwriting Instruction and Practice, Technological Applications	76	5.13 (1.46)
Word Level Activities (Range 3-15)	Reading Vocabulary, Phonics and Decoding, Spelling	71	9.56 (1.86)



Table 14 continued

*Means with Standard Deviations in Parentheses, and Descriptions of Instructional Factors*

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Items Included</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean (SD)</i>
<b>Instructional Materials</b>			
Basals and Anthologies (Range 3-15)	Single Basal Series, Multiple Basal Series, Literature Anthologies	52	9.13 (2.66)
Media and Technology (Range 2-10)	Computer Hardware and Software Other Media	68	6.06 (2.07)
Workbooks (Range 2-10)	Phonics Workbooks, General Skills Workbooks	71	7.14 (6.52)
Authentic Text (Range 7 – 35)	Fiction Trade Books, Nonfiction Trade Books, Commercial Libraries, Magazines and Newspapers, Big Books, Picture Trade Books, Chapter Trade Books	65	20.69 (5.48)

Table 14 continued

*Means with Standard Deviations in Parentheses and Descriptions of Instructional Factors*

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Items Included</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean (SD)</i>
Assessment Practices			
Conventional or Formal Assessment (Range 3-15)	Group Standardized Reading Tests, Individual Standardized Reading Tests, Basal Reader Program Tests	64	9.05 (2.05)
Informal Assessment (Range 9-45)	Informal Reading Inventories, Running Records, Portfolios, Student Interviews or Conferences, Miscue Analysis, Observational checklists and anecdotal records, Emergent Literacy Surveys, Informal Phonics and Decoding Assessments	58	20.81 (5.18)

Table 14, teachers spent an average of 66 minutes ( $SD = 39$ ) teaching reading each day. Instruction during this time focused on comprehension, oral and silent reading, writing, the use of reading strategies, and vocabulary. Teachers used both basal reading materials and authentic text to teach reading, and they used formal and informal assessment data to plan classroom instruction. To organize students for instruction, teachers used ability groups, flexible groups, and whole class and individualized instruction.

Correlation analysis revealed that teachers' reading attitudes significantly related to instructional time, materials and classroom organization (see Tables 15-16). There was a direct relationship between library reading attitude and reading strategy instruction. Teachers who had higher scores on the library reading subscale spent more time on reading strategy instruction than teachers who had lower scores on the library reading subscale. Also, teachers' attitudes toward general reading were inversely related to instructional time for technology and handwriting. More positive attitudes toward reading were associated with less time spent on practicing handwriting and using technology. Reading attitudes did not relate to time spent on reading instruction and instructional time for comprehension, processing text, writing, and word level activities. Likewise, attitudes were unrelated to teachers' reported use of instructional materials and assessment practices.

On the contrary, instructional time, materials, assessment activities, and classroom organization were all found to be associated with higher personal teaching efficacy in reading. For instructional time, statistically significant correlations existed between teacher efficacy and the following items: daily minutes for reading instruction, time for comprehension instruction, time for processing text, time for reading strategy

instruction, time for technology and time for word level activities (see Table 15 for correlations). Teachers who spent considerable time focusing instruction in these areas reported greater levels of teacher efficacy. The strongest significant correlation existed between teacher efficacy and time spent on reading strategy instruction, which includes time for instruction in study skills as well as reading strategies ( $r = .55, p < .01, n = 76$ ).

Instructional materials and use of media and technology and authentic text directly related to teacher efficacy (see Table 16 for correlations). Increased efficacy scores coincided with repeated use of technology, trade books, nonfiction books, magazines and newspapers, and other authentic text. As indicated in Table 16, there was also a statistically significant moderate correlation between alternative assessment practices and teacher efficacy. Frequent use of alternative assessment practices, such as informal reading inventories, running records, portfolios, and other informal evaluations, to make instructional decisions was associated with elevated levels of efficacy.

Classroom organization, which focused on how teachers primarily grouped their students for reading instruction, related to both attitude and sense of efficacy. On the survey, teachers reported their primary grouping for reading instruction by selecting from the following categories: ability groups, flexible groups, whole class instruction, and other (see Table 17 for means and standard deviations). To determine the relationship between grouping structure and teachers' attitudes, I used the Pearson chi square test statistic. In preparation for the analysis, I recoded individual scores for teachers' reading attitudes and efficacy beliefs into two nominal categories - "Positive" and "Less Positive" – based on the means for each scale and subscale (see Table 19 for means and standard deviations for each scale). Results demonstrated that classroom organization significantly

Table 15

*Pearson Product Moment Correlations between Teacher Attitude, Teacher Efficacy, and Instructional Time*

	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Total attitude (n=77)	.08	.09	-.15	.22	.09	-.21	-.04
2. Library subscale (n=77)	-.03	.05	-.21	.26*	-.04	-.01	.05
3. Home subscale (n=77)	.06	-.06	-.13	.10	.13	-.16	.07
4. Recreational subscale (n=77)	-.03	.06	-.06	.13	.15	-.19	-.14
5. General subscale (n=77)	.10	.05	-.21	.14	-.01	-.26*	-.09
6. Efficacy (n=77)	.35**	.32**	.26*	.55**	.21	.28*	.32**
7. Minutes for Reading Instruction (n=75)	1.00	.21	.17	.27*	-.02	.40**	.29*
8. Time – Comprehension (n=74)		1.00	.49**	.61**	.61**	.41**	.54**
9. Time – Processing Text (n=76)			1.00	.40**	.32**	.46**	.54**
10. Reading Strategy Instruction (n=76)				1.00	.49**	.45**	.52**

\*\*p < .01, \*p < .05

Table 15 continued

*Pearson Product Moment Correlations between Teacher Attitude, Teacher Efficacy, and Instructional Time*

	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
11. Time – Writing (n=71)					1.00	.35**	.46**
12. Time – Technology and Handwriting (n=76)						1.00	.51**
13. Time – Word level activities (n=71)							1.00

\*\*p &lt; .01, \*p &lt; .05

Table 16

*Pearson Product Moment Correlations between Teacher Attitude, Teacher Efficacy, Instructional Materials, and Assessment*

	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Total attitude (n=77)	-.09	-.03	-.20	-.05	.13	.08
2. Library subscale (n=77)	.22	.18	.02	.24	.15	.09
3. Home subscale (n=77)	-.09	-.04	-.18	-.03	.03	.11
4. Recreational subscale (n=77)	-.18	-.05	-.22	-.12	.04	.08
5. General subscale (n=77)	-.14	-.12	-.16	-.13	.13	.02
6. Efficacy (n=77)	.23	.25*	.08	.27*	.24	.42*
7. Materials – Basals and Anthologies (n=51)	1.00	.52**	.18	.69**	.50**	.48**
8. Materials – Media and Technology (n=67)		1.00	.12	.69**	.28	.42**
9. Materials – Workbooks (n=69)			1.00	.16	.23	.42**
10. Materials – Authentic Text (n=64)				1.00	.39**	.48**
11. Assessment – Conventional or Formal (n=63)					1.00	.28*
12. Assessment – Informal (n=57)						1.00

\*\*p < .01, \*p < .05

Table 17

*Means with Standard Deviations in Parentheses for Teachers' Reading Attitudes and Efficacy Beliefs by Classroom*

*Organization*

		<i>Overall</i>		<i>General</i>			
		<i>Attitude</i>	<i>Library</i>	<i>Home</i>	<i>Recreational</i>	<i>Subscale</i>	<i>Efficacy</i>
		<i>(Range 25-</i>	<i>Subscale</i>	<i>Subscale</i>	<i>Subscale</i>	<i>(Range 14-</i>	<i>(Range 13-</i>
<i>N</i>		<i>125)</i>	<i>(Range 2-10)</i>	<i>(Range 2-10)</i>	<i>(Range 5-25)</i>	<i>70)</i>	<i>65)</i>
<hr/>							
Organization for							
Reading Instruction							
Ability Groups	18	106.33 (11.17)	8.22 (1.73)	8.56 (2.06)	21.00 (2.97)	55.50 (4.90)	55.94 (5.09)
Flexible Groups	25	112.00 (8.78)	8.20 (1.98)	8.96 (1.14)	22.44 (2.02)	58.92 (4.39)	57.60 (6.04)
Whole Class	28	108.04 (9.63)	7.25 (1.99)	8.54 (1.29)	21.61 (2.27)	57.68 (4.91)	51.79 (6.93)
Other	4	101.25 (9.98)	9.00 (0.00)	6.25 (2.22)	20.00 (4.69)	52.50 (3.00)	57.25 (4.43)



related to library reading attitude,  $\chi^2(1, N = 77) = 8.04, p < .05$ , home reading attitude,  $\chi^2(1, N = 77) = 12.27, p < .05$ , and general reading attitude,  $\chi^2(1, N = 77) = 10.01, p < .05$ . Sense of reading teaching efficacy also related to classroom organization,  $\chi^2(3, N = 77) = 14.51, p < .05$ . The appendix contains complete results from the chi square analysis. How teachers group their students for reading instruction appears to connect to their feelings about reading and their level of confidence in teaching reading.

In summary, teacher attitude and sense of reading teaching efficacy both connect to facets of classroom reading instruction, including instructional time, materials, assessment, and grouping practices. Teacher efficacy, in particular, appears to relate to more instructional practices than does teacher reading attitude. Efficacious teachers spent more time teaching reading, providing instruction in reading comprehension and reading strategies, using authentic literature, and using alternative assessment activities than less efficacious teachers. How confident teachers' feel in their ability to impact students' reading skills and achievement is an important factor in their instructional decisions and choices. The following section shifts from attention to teachers' attitudes and efficacy beliefs and focuses on students' motivation in reading.

#### *Question 4*

*What are the reading attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs of urban fourth and fifth grade students?*

For the investigation of student attitude and efficacy, fourth and fifth grade students from five schools completed the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERAS) and the Reader Self-Perception Scale (RSPS) ( $n = 183$ ) (see Table 18 for internal consistency and Table 19 for descriptive statistics). Overall, students' mean scores on the

ERAS suggested that their attitudes toward reading were moderately positive meaning that they reported liking and enjoying reading. Mean scores on the RSPS and its'

Table 18

*Internal Consistency of the ERAS and the RSPS*

	N of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
ERAS	20	.91
Recreational Reading Subscale	10	.85
Academic Reading Subscale	10	.86
RSPS	33	.96
Progress Subscale	9	.92
Observational Comparison Subscale	6	.84
Social Feedback Subscale	9	.85
Physiological States Subscale	8	.86

n = 183

subscales were within the average range for reader self-efficacy. To explore relationships between students' attitudes and efficacy beliefs, I used Pearson PM correlation analysis (see Table 20). Scores on the ERAS and its two subscales, recreational reading attitude and academic reading attitude, directly related to the RSPS and each of its five subscales suggesting that positives attitudes toward reading were associated with increased self-efficacy in reading. The strongest relationships existed between overall reading attitude and overall reader self-efficacy ( $r = .45, p < .01, n = 183$ ) and between overall attitude toward reading and scores on the physiological states subscale of the RSPS ( $r = .53, p < .01, n = 183$ ).

Table 19

*Means with Standard Deviations in Parentheses for Students' Attitudes and Efficacy Beliefs*

	<i>All Students</i>	<i>Fourth Grade</i>	<i>Fifth Grade</i>
	<i>n = 183</i>	<i>n = 74</i>	<i>n = 109</i>
Overall Student Attitude (Range 20-80)	64.11 (8.57)	65.72 (8.54)	63.03 (8.46)
Recreational Attitude Subscale (Range 10-40)	32.28 (5.59)	34.04 (6.07)	31.09 (4.93)
Academic Attitude Subscale (Range 10-40)	32.28 (5.23)	32.41 (6.40)	32.19 (4.29)
Overall Reader Self-Efficacy (Range 33-165)	130.56 (20.85)	129.70 (21.74)	131.14 (20.31)
General Perception Subscale (Range 1-5)	4.34 (0.91)	4.26 (1.01)	4.39 (0.83)
Progress Subscale (Range 9-45)	38.78 (6.72)	37.65 (7.35)	39.55 (6.17)
Observational Comparison Subscale (Range 6-30)	21.19 (5.23)	21.35 (5.37)	21.07 (5.15)
Social Feedback Subscale (Range 9-45)	34.24 (6.00)	34.42 (5.91)	34.12 (6.08)
Physiological States Subscale (Range 8-40)	32.05 (6.35)	32.15 (6.72)	31.98 (6.12)
<hr/>			
n = 183			

Analysis of differences by grade level revealed that fourth grade students expressed positive attitudes toward reading. In comparison to students nationwide, fourth grade mean scores on the total attitude and recreational reading attitude were at the 78<sup>th</sup> percentile ranks while the mean score for academic reading attitude was at the 79<sup>th</sup> percentile rank. Percentile ranks for fifth grade students differed slightly. At the fifth grade level, mean scores for total attitude, recreational attitude, and academic attitude were at the 79<sup>th</sup>, 65<sup>th</sup>, and 86<sup>th</sup> percentile ranks, respectively. Fifth grade students reported positive attitudes about reading in general and reading for school purposes when compared to their peers, but felt much less positive about reading for pleasure. For reader self-efficacy, both fourth and fifth grade mean scores were within the average efficacy range when compared to other students.

Similar to results for all surveyed students, fourth grade students' attitudes strongly related to their efficacy beliefs, and fifth grade students' attitudes strongly related to their efficacy beliefs. Tables 21-22 display the correlations. Further analysis demonstrated that fourth grade students reported significantly more positive attitudes toward reading overall and toward reading for pleasure than fifth grade students. In particular, fourth grade mean scores for total reading attitude and recreational reading attitude were higher than fifth grade mean scores,  $t(181) = 2.10, p = .05$  (two-tailed),  $d = .32$ , and  $t(181) = 3.61, p < .05$  (two-tailed),  $d = .53$ , respectively. The pattern was identical for academic reading attitudes, but the differences were not significant. In contrast, fourth grade students had lower mean scores on the RSPS and two of its subscales – general perception and progress – than fifth grade students, yet, as with the academic subscale, none of the differences were statistically significant.

Table 20

*Pearson Product Moment Correlations between Student Attitude and Student Efficacy*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Overall Student Attitude	1.00	.78**	.75**	.45**	.27**	.28**	.27**	.43**	.53**
2. Recreational Attitude Subscale		1.00	.60**	.38**	.23**	.25**	.21**	.34**	.47**
3. Academic Attitude Subscale			1.00	.33**	.18*	.25**	.15*	.29**	.39**
4. Overall Reader Self-Efficacy				1.00	.72**	.84**	.77**	.86**	.85**
5. General Perception Subscale					1.00	.59**	.50**	.64**	.58**
6. Progress Subscale						1.00	.52**	.59**	.63**
7. Observational Comparison Subscale							1.00	.62**	.52**
8. Social Feedback Subscale								1.00	.66**
9. Physiological States Subscale									1.00

\*\*p = .01, \*p = .05

Table 21

*Pearson Product Moment Correlations between Fourth Grade Student Attitude and Student Efficacy*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Overall Student Attitude	1.00	.73**	.71**	.61**	.33**	.47**	.39**	.52**	.67**
2. Recreational Attitude Subscale		1.00	.67**	.53**	.29*	.47**	.30**	.39**	.57**
3. Academic Attitude Subscale			1.00	.32**	.12	.29**	.17	.23*	.35**
4. Overall Reader Self-Efficacy				1.00	.75**	.83**	.74**	.85**	.88**
5. General Perception Subscale					1.00	.59**	.52**	.65**	.63**
6. Progress Subscale						1.00	.43**	.57**	.65**
7. Observational Comparison Subscale							1.00	.60**	.55**
8. Social Feedback Subscale								1.00	.69**
9. Physiological States Subscale									1.00

\*\*p = .01, \*p = .05

Table 22

*Pearson Product Moment Correlations between Fifth Grade Student Attitude and Student Efficacy*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Overall Student Attitude	1.00	.81**	.84**	.35**	.25**	.18	.18	.37**	.43**
2. Recreational Attitude Subscale		1.00	.54**	.30**	.23*	.12	.14	.31**	.40**
3. Academic Attitude Subscale			1.00	.35**	.27**	.21*	.14	.35**	.45**
4. Overall Reader Self-Efficacy				1.00	.70**	.86**	.80**	.87**	.83**
5. General Perception Subscale					1.00	.58**	.50**	.65**	.53**
6. Progress Subscale						1.00	.62**	.63**	.62**
7. Observational Comparison Subscale							1.00	.63**	.49**
8. Social Feedback Subscale								1.00	.63**
9. Physiological States Subscale									1.00

\*\*p = .01, \*p = .05

Additionally, I collected information about students' beliefs about the purposes of reading, their beliefs about teachers' interest in reading, their gender, and whether or not they received additional instruction from another teacher. Students reported that people read for a variety of reasons, including for information and for pleasure (see Table 23). When asked about their teacher's interest in reading, almost all students (92%) indicated that their teacher liked to read.

I used Pearson chi square tests to explore the relationships between gender, additional instruction, reading attitude, and self-efficacy, (see Table 24 for means and standard deviations). To prepare the data for the analysis, I assumed a normal distribution of data and coded students' attitude and efficacy scores into three categories – high, middle, or low– with each category representing approximately 33% of the distribution. Although female students had higher mean scores on all ERAS and RSPS scales, with the exception of the RSPS progress subscale, there were no significant relationships between gender, reading attitude, and reader self-efficacy.

Instruction from another teacher appears to relate to students' sense of self-efficacy in reading. Though only 70 students provided information about whether or not they received additional instruction, there were statistically significant relationships between students' general perceptions of their reading abilities and their self-efficacy beliefs for observational comparison,  $\chi^2(1, N = 70) = 5.87, p < .05$ , and  $\chi^2(2, N = 70) = 15.29, p < .05$ , respectively (see appendix for cross tabulations). It appears that a connection exists between aspects of reader self-efficacy and the type of instruction that students receive during the school year.



Table 23

*Students' Beliefs About the Purposes of Reading*

<i>Purpose</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
For information	47	29%
For pleasure	24	15%
For school or work	12	7%
To improve reading skills	30	18%
For multiple reasons	46	28%
Other	5	3%

N = 164

Table 24

*Reading Attitude and Self-Efficacy Means with Standard Deviations in Parentheses for Students Based on Whether They Receive Additional Instruction*

	Receives Other Instruction	Does Not Receive Other Instruction
ERAS	63.70 (7.68)	63.58 (8.41)
(Range 20-80)		
Recreational Subscale	33.75 (8.40)	32.88 (5.22)
(Range 10-40)		
Academic Subscale	32.95 (8.73)	31.10 (3.90)
(Range 10-40)		
n = 70		

Table 24 continued

*Reading Attitude and Self– Efficacy Means and Standard Deviations for Students Based on Whether They Receive Additional Instruction*

	Receives Other Instruction	Does Not Receive Other Instruction
RSPS (Range 33-165)	123.10 (22.51)	136.42 (14.39)
General Perception Subscale (Range 1-5)	3.80 (4.58)	1.06 (0.58)
Progress Subscale (Range 9-45)	37.90 (7.36)	40.12 (6.24)
Observational Comparison Subscale (Range 6-30)	18.00 (5.70)	22.70 (4.14)
Social Feedback Subscale (Range 9-45)	32.40 (6.37)	35.06 (4.57)
Physiological States Subscale (Range 8-40)	30.90 (6.01)	33.96 (5.31)
n = 70		

In general, students' reported positive attitudes toward reading and moderate levels of reader self-efficacy; and strong relationships existed between both factors and their subscales. Both attitude and efficacy differed by grade level, with fourth grade students expressing more positive attitudes than fifth grade students. Finally, a significant

relationship existed between reader self-efficacy and the type of additional instruction students received from other teachers. Those who don't receive additional instruction had consistently higher self-efficacy than those who received other teaching. The next section reports the analysis of the relationships between students' reading attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs and their teachers' attitudes and beliefs.

### *Question 5*

*What is the relationship between teachers' reading attitudes and efficacy beliefs and their students' reading attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs in urban schools?*

I also examined the student data for connections to teachers' attitudes and efficacy beliefs. Teachers ( $n = 13$ ) of the 183 students completed the teacher attitude and efficacy surveys. Tables 25 to 27 display the distribution of students and teachers across schools and the mean attitude and efficacy scores for the 13 teachers (see Table 19 under the previous section for the mean attitude and efficacy scores for students). To determine the relationship between teachers' and students' reading attitudes and efficacy beliefs, I used Pearson chi square analysis. Before computing the test statistic, I examined scores on each scale – the Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Survey, the Reading Teaching Efficacy Beliefs Instrument, the ERAS, and the RSPS - and categorized them into three groups representing high, average, and low attitudes or sense of efficacy. I also repeated this procedure for each respective subscale on the teacher and student attitude scales and the RSPS. I assumed that scores followed a normal distribution as appropriate with each category – high, average, or low – representing 33.3% of the distribution (see Tables 28 and 29 for the distribution of scores).

Table 25

*Distribution of Fourth Grade Teachers and Students across Schools*

<i>School</i>	<i>Number of Teachers</i>	<i>Number of Students</i>
School 1	0	0
School 2	3	45
School 3	1	11
School 4	1	9
School 5	1	9
Total	6	74

Table 26

*Distribution of Fifth Grade Teachers and Students across Schools*

<i>School</i>	<i>Number of Teachers</i>	<i>Number of Students</i>
School 1	3	52
School 2	1	19
School 3	0	0
School 4	1	16
School 5	2	22
Total	7	109

Table 27

*Means with Standard Deviations in Parentheses for Teachers' Reading Attitudes and Efficacy Beliefs for Research Question 6*

	<i>Means (SD)</i>
Total Attitude (Range 25-125)	109.77 (10.25)
Library Subscale (Range 2-10)	8.54 (1.11)
Home Subscale (Range 2-10)	8.42 (1.84)
Recreational Subscale (Range 5-25)	21.46 (3.17)
General Subscale (Range 14-70)	54.01 (15.18)
Efficacy (Range 13-65)	56.62 (5.78)
N = 13	

Chi square results suggested a connection between how teachers' feel about reading and students' beliefs. In particular, teachers' overall attitude toward reading significantly related to students' recreational reading attitudes,  $\chi^2(4, N = 183) = 10.07, p < .05$ . Attitude subscale scores for teachers linked to students' reading self-perceptions. Both teachers' attitudes toward recreational reading and teachers' general reading attitudes related to students' reported physiological states,  $\chi^2(4, N = 183) = 11.62, p < .05$ , and  $\chi^2(4, N = 183) = 11.04, p < .05$ , respectively. This implies a connection between teachers' attitudes and how students feel when they read. Significant relationships also

Table 28

*Distribution of Attitude and Efficacy Scores for Chi Square Analysis for Research**Question 6*

<i>Student Surveys</i>	<i>Low Range</i>	<i>Medium Range</i>	<i>High Range</i>
Student Attitude	31-61	62-68	69-80
(Possible Range 20-80)			
Recreational Subscale	18-30	31-35	36-65
(Possible Range 10-40)			
Academic Subscale	12-30	31-34	35-65
(Possible Range 10-40)			
Reader Self-Efficacy	33-127	128-142	143-165
(Possible Range 33-165)			
General Perception Subscale	1-4		5
(Possible Range (1-5)			
Progress Subscale	9-37	38-43	44-45
(Possible Range 9-45)			
Observational Comparison	6-18	19-23	24-30
Subscale (Possible Range 6-30)			
Social Feedback Subscale	9-32	33-37	38-45
(Possible Range 9-45)			
Physiological States Subscale	2-10	31-35	36-40
(Possible Range 8-40)			

Table 29

*Distribution of Teacher Attitude and Efficacy Scores for Chi Square Analysis for  
Research Question 6 continued*

<i>Teacher Surveys</i>	<i>Low Range</i>	<i>Medium Range</i>	<i>High Range</i>
Total Attitude (Possible Range 25-125)	89.00-98.00	106.00-110.00	114.00-123.00
Library Subscale (Possible Range 2-10)	6.00-8.00	8.50	9.00-10.00
Home Subscale (Possible Range 2-10)	3.00-8.00		8.75-10.00
Recreational Subscale (Possible Range 5-25)	14.00-21.50	22.00	24.00-25.00
General Subscale (Possible Range 14-70)	50.00-55.00	56.00-60.00	61.00-65.00
Efficacy (Possible Range 13-65)	47.00-52.00	53.00-56.00	60.00-65.00

existed between teachers' attitudes toward reading in the library and students' perceptions of their progress in reading,  $\chi^2(4, N = 183) = 14.72, p < .05$ . Contingency tables for significant chi square statistics are displayed in the appendix.

I further found that teacher efficacy in reading connected to students' overall attitudes toward reading,  $\chi^2(4, N = 183) = 16.27, p < .05$ , recreational reading attitudes,  $\chi^2(4, N = 183) = 15.80, p < .05$ , and physiological states during reading,  $\chi^2(4, N = 183) =$

10.69,  $p < .05$ . These relationships suggest that how confident teachers feel about their ability to teach reading relates to how students feel about reading in general and about reading for pleasure. Furthermore, teacher efficacy connects to the feelings and emotions students experience when they read.

Overall, data indicate the presence of a relationship between aspects of teachers' and students' motivation in reading. Teachers' total attitudes toward reading related to their students' feelings about recreational reading. Similar to results for instructional factors, personal reading teaching efficacy appeared to connect to more student outcomes than did teacher attitude. Teacher efficacy related not only to students' reading attitudes, but to aspects of their reader self-efficacy as well. This concludes the presentation of the results from the quantitative analysis. The next section explores the final research question which relies on interview data and teachers' written responses to survey items.

### *Question 6*

*How do teachers' experiences teaching reading in urban schools help us understand teachers' and students' reading attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs?*

Data generated from open ended survey items from all 77 teachers and teacher interviews from a subset of three teachers were used to answer the last research question. As described in Chapter 3, themes and patterns of behavior were generated from written responses and interview transcripts. These data focus on teachers' experiences teaching reading in urban schools and how these experiences contribute to teaching, learning, and motivation. Teachers shared information about challenges to motivation and to the quality of reading instruction, and their efforts to overcome these problems. It is important to note that the interviewed teachers were young, single individuals with less



than five years of teaching experience. Their experiences may differ from more experienced teachers in the school district. The following sections describe these findings with each section reporting the outcomes from the open ended survey items first followed by the teacher interviews.

### *Challenges to Motivation and Reading Instruction*

*Surveyed Teachers.* According to teachers in this study, various issues undermine the quality of reading instruction in urban schools and seem to affect teaching and learning. In particular, surveyed teachers noted that low motivation and a lack of interest in reading are common problems for teachers and students. For example, in response to the question, “As you continue to work toward improving the quality of your reading instruction, what are your greatest challenges?” one teacher replied, “Getting students to read daily (becoming active readers without being told to read)”. This sentiment was echoed by other teachers, including one who wrote, “Students have very little desire to read. Motivation is a huge challenge”.

Because attitude and efficacy are two aspects of motivation, it is likely that children with low overall reading motivation may possess negative attitudes toward reading and poor reader-self-efficacy. Teachers’ beliefs about students’ low interest in reading may also be related to the variety of other challenges that they believe affect the quality of reading instruction. One teacher wrote that the greatest challenge was, “Students entering my grade/class not being on grade level which has caused them not to be motivated and excited about reading”. In this case, awareness of poor and inadequate reading skills affected interest in reading. Students with below grade level reading skills displayed little enthusiasm and desire to read.

Teachers also stressed frustration with problems related to student discipline, parent involvement, professional development, standardized testing, the range of ability levels of students in the classroom, and a host of other issues. Table 30 depicts the variety of challenges reported by teachers on the Teacher Survey.

Some teachers stressed the combination of numerous challenges prevalent in the student population. According to one teacher the mixture of, “Multiple levels, ESL students, ADHD students, abused students, substance abuse students, etc.” affects the quality of instruction. Likewise, another teacher mentioned that a, “multi-age, multi language, multi-ability setting saddled by poverty in general” impacts teaching and learning. As a result of these multiple issues, some teachers felt overwhelmed. For example, one teacher reported “Students that come to school with so many issues that they become a burden for me to work with”. Teachers who express anxiety with manifold problems may believe that their efforts to provide effective reading instruction are futile.

*Interviewed Teachers.* Interviewed teachers advanced understanding of the breadth and depth of these challenges, specifically poor motivation in reading, students’ diverse ability levels, testing pressures, parent involvement, and other problems. Teacher C emphasized the difficulty of getting students to read:

It’s almost like a punishment for a lot of kids. Go to your room and read a book.

That’s their punishment...They look at reading as like a punishment. It takes a lot to bend them and break them from that. (Teacher C)

In contrast, Teacher B revealed that many of his students were motivated. However, he offered reasons as to why some of his students were unmotivated and information about how this problem affected their behavior:

Table 30

*Summary of Greatest Challenges to Reading Instruction as Reported by Teachers*

<i>Challenges</i>	<i>Examples of Responses</i>
Students' Wide Range of Ability Levels	"The disparity in reading levels within the classroom and trying to address them all without an aide or additional assistance. Our children do not work very well in groups for any extended period so addressing individual needs becomes extremely difficult"
Struggling Readers/Students Not on Grade Level	"Students who struggle in reading"
Low Motivation and Interest in Reading	"Keeping the children motivated and trying to develop a real interest in reading"
Standardized Testing	"Testing constraints. We are expected to put everything on hold to focus on SAT-9"
Materials	"Availability of materials"
Poor Reading Skills and Comprehension	"The students are reading the material but fail to digest the information. It is difficult for them to connect the text to comprehension"
Time for Planning and Professional Development	"Time-planning"
Parental Involvement	"Ensuring the reading efforts at school are supported at home"

Table 30 continued

*Summary of Greatest Challenges to Reading Instruction as Reported by Teachers*

<i>Challenges</i>	<i>Examples of Responses</i>
Discipline	“Students who are unruly, disrespectful and resist following almost all instruction are very disruptive and cause much instruction to be delayed”
ESL Students	“Insufficient vocabulary in English”
Other Issues	“Dealings with today’s child is much different than it was when I first started teaching, today’s child has much baggage that cannot be addressed by the conventional way of teaching”  “Competing reading with multimedia, i.e. videos, DVDs, video games, cable TV, game boys, etc”

Some are motivated, most of them are, others who had difficulty reading in the past weren’t that motivated. Some of them, their hands jump up, they want to read, then you know the ones that wouldn’t raise their hands or put their heads on their desks or just act like they were trying to read and pay attention... (Teacher B)

Poor motivation stemmed from children’s past experience with low reading achievement and performance. As a result, unmotivated children in this class used specific techniques

to limit their participation in reading instruction. Their behavior suggested an awareness of their insufficient reading skills.

Planning instruction for struggling readers as well as for students reading on or above grade level presented another challenge. Teachers offered the following information about the difficulty of working with poor readers:

One of the main things is working in the district you have a lot of kids on different academic levels so I couldn't just make my plans for one level when I have three or four different reading levels. It's really kind of hard because if you do make plans for just one, there are some kids who really will not benefit from it at all. (Teacher B)

They come to me real weak and it's really a task when you have about 10 kids who are on level, and then say another five who are functioning a grade level below, and then you have some that are just, I mean, I don't know how they could get to that point. And it makes you feel sad, but somebody has to step up and help these kids. (Teacher C)

Because of the range in students' reading skills, teachers grappled with planning reading instruction that met the needs of all students, especially the lowest readers. Interestingly, interviewed teachers did not see their attempts to plan effective instruction as pointless. Teacher C's comments suggest that while he felt disheartened by the reality of serious deficiencies in some children's reading skills, he believed that they were capable of developing into better readers, and he was confident that he could positively influence their reading.

Interviewed teachers also felt challenged by testing constraints. The following comments explain their experiences with pressures to increase children's performance on the district's standardized test, the Stanford 9.

I feel pressured, just overall as a school system you're pressured to teach toward the test more than just learning. You're getting them to answer questions; you're teaching them to answer questions as opposed to really learning. I don't like that. You're judged based on the test. I had a student this year who did everything I wanted on her assignments in class and on her homework assignments. Then when it got to the test, she just had a bad day. She'll be promoted which she deserves to be but overall she just didn't have good performance on the test and a lot of your students are judged on that. You're judged on that and a student may have, like I said, had a bad day. And I spoke to the parent and she explained to me that there were some things going on in the home at that time. The mother told me, 'we had a lot of things going on and we came in very late', and I wrote that in one of my notes, she came in and looked dead tired, she put her head on her desk. And throughout the year, during test taking time and other things she was the best student. One of the best out of maybe five and who I counted on to do very well on that test and it didn't show up on the test. (Teacher B)

I really don't have a lot of goals. I just want them to improve first of all. As far as like the Stanford 9, I'm really against that test. I think a lot of times teachers put too much toward the test and neglect the real stuff that they need to survive in this world, and reading is an example. (Teacher C)

As indicated in these responses, teachers feel that the extreme emphasis on raising student performance on standardized tests constrains the quality of reading instruction. Some teachers sacrifice authentic and meaningful teaching and learning in order to prepare students for testing. Teacher B further indicated that he did not believe that standardized test scores accurately represented his effectiveness as a teacher or his students' abilities. Results did not account for problems in the home and community environment that impacted student learning. The importance of testing overshadowed his efforts to help students become better readers.

In general, teachers reported an assortment of challenges that threatened the quality of their literacy instruction. Although lack of interest in reading, poor literacy skills, standardized testing pressure, and other issues can lessen teachers' confidence in their ability to teach reading effectively, interviewed teachers still felt a strong sense of efficacy.

Interestingly, one interviewed teacher, Teacher A, did not experience the same challenges as other urban teachers in the district. While many teachers suggested that student interest in reading was a challenge; Teacher A indicated that all of her students were highly motivated. They frequently read and participated in reading activities.

Teacher A's students did not consider reading assignments a 'punishment'.

My kids in particular are very motivated...They all liked to read. There wasn't just one kid where it was like pulling teeth. We also have this thing where the kids have to read a certain number of books each year. That was easy for them, they were reading like 50-60 books, and the standard for like 5<sup>th</sup> grade was 30 books. I would say in reading they were motivated and they were reading all different

types of books... And the parents were pretty supportive. They were willing to buy what they wanted. We had a wish list program and the parents bought the books for the classroom library. (Teacher A)

Children in Teacher A's classroom were not only excited about reading, they appeared to have access to varied reading materials and parents who were able financially to support the classroom reading program. As reported earlier, other teachers indicated that availability of materials and getting students interested in reading were challenges to the quality of reading instruction and student learning.

These differences in motivation may be related to instructional approaches. However, it seems more feasible that variations stemmed from differences in schools and student populations. Instructionally, Teacher A shared a number of similarities with Teachers B and C. All had a 90 minute daily reading block, incorporated authentic materials into reading instruction, and focused on building students' reading skills and motivation. They differed with respect to their schools and students' backgrounds.

According to Teacher A, School #1 was vastly different from other schools in the district:

Now School #1 is not a typical ... school. The population there is very affluent and not very diverse. But the school district is in such a mess that they just placed us in the school district. I guess you could just say that I lucked out with where I got placed.

Because School #1 was in an affluent section of the city, it had a substantially wealthier population than the other schools. Less than 5% of the children at School #1 are eligible for the free and reduced meal program compared to 80% at School #2, In addition, the



racial make up of the student population was drastically different between schools. Twenty-three percent of the students at School #1 were African American or Latino compared to 100% at School #2.

Finally, unlike other teachers, all students in Teacher A's classroom entered the fourth grade reading on grade level. She stated, "My kids all came reading on grade level or above. I would say there were even some high school reading levels. That's pretty high." Once again, she did not appear to confront the same challenges that other teachers reported tackling on a regular basis. Minority students and their teachers in urban schools in poor communities appear to have different experiences and confront different challenges than their counterparts in other schools in the city.

#### *Overcoming Challenges by Changing Instruction*

*Surveyed Teachers.* To overcome the effects of specific challenges, teachers transformed their instructional practices. Table 31 describes the nature of teachers' changes to reading instruction. In particular, they increased the time spent teaching reading, used children's literature and other authentic reading materials, expanded reading into the content areas, implemented peer tutoring, changed their assessment practices, and adopted other techniques. Most changes occurred because teachers sought to increase student motivation and performance in reading (see Table 32). Teachers also initiated the changes as a result of school district mandates and an attempt to improve standardized test scores.

Interestingly, some instructional transformations occurred as a result of participation in professional development activities and reform programs. As teachers learned new techniques in workshops, seminars, and classes, they modified classroom

instruction. For example, one teacher stated that, “I changed because I learned new methods for teaching reading; they were more cooperative in nature”, and another changed instructional practices after, “Attending workshops during the summer”. These statements suggest that professional development influenced the types of reading experiences teachers planned for their students.

Moreover, teachers reported that instructional changes were beneficial for students (see Table 33). In particular, teachers described improvements in students’ self-esteem, comprehension, writing, and interest in reading. Teachers also benefited from the changes. Responses indicated that as students’ skills and motivation increased, so did teachers’ interest in and comfort level with teaching reading. One teacher wrote, “I have

Table 31  
*Summary of Teachers’ Reported Changes to their Classroom Reading Programs*

<i>Types of Changes</i>	<i>Examples of Responses</i>
Instructional Time	“I now have 3 reading periods a day.”  “Devoting more time to various reading activities is the biggest change I’ve made.”
Instructional Materials	“Use more trade books in my reading program”  “More software...”
Grouping/Cooperative Learning	“Comparing and using peer teaching with a regular student and a special education student”  “Working with small groups within a larger group of students”

Table 31 continued

*Summary of Teachers' Reported Changes to their Classroom Reading Programs*

<i>Types of Changes</i>	<i>Examples of Responses</i>
Assessment	<p>"I've started using more running records and reading inventories to assess my students initial and final reading levels during the school year"</p> <p>"Assess overall progress in reading and writing".</p>
Specific Activities	<p>"I try to use activities which help the students to think about different strategies they can use to help them read better. Examples: Theme writing, use of audiotapes, connecting themes to social studies, multicultural, music, reading aloud"</p>
Specific Activities	<p>"Using a technique where the students use post-its to write or recall certain words as the student reads, to summarize and comprehend a passage."</p>
Adoption of Specific	"SFA [Success for All] program"
Reading Method/Program	"In2Books"

continued to seek out and attend training to enhance my teaching. I also read new literature on the topic”, and another teacher indicated, “Change is always good...I am always reading/attending classes and talking with fellow teachers on reading instruction”. The success of instructional changes encouraged teachers to make a commitment and effort to improve their instructional practices in reading. Teachers believed that they were capable of improving their teaching and raising student performance.

However, not all teachers considered instructional changes beneficial. One teacher responded that the changes were, “Difficult and time consuming”. This teacher seemed to feel burdened by the amount of effort required to change her practice. She offered no further information about the impact on student motivation and learning. Interestingly, this teacher was an anomaly as most teachers suggested that transforming

Table 32

*Summary of Teachers' Reported Reasons for Changing their Instructional Practices*

<i>Reasons for Changes</i>	<i>Examples of Responses</i>
Improve Skills and Strategy Use	<p>“I wanted my students to utilize higher order thinking skills”</p> <p>“To encourage prediction skills”</p>
Increase Motivation and Interest in Reading	<p>“I initiated the change based on student interest. To increase the students reading interest to motivate them to read more”</p> <p>“They were initiated by me because I felt that by devoting more time to reading I might foster more of an understanding and desire for reading”</p>

Table 32 continued

*Summary of Teachers' Reported Reasons for Changing their Instructional Practices*

<i>Reasons for Changes</i>	<i>Examples of Responses</i>
Improve Performance on Tests	<p>"I initiated the change because the majority of my students tested below level in reading"</p> <p>"I changed strategies because 92% of my students not only failed the Stanford 9 test in reading and math, but were reading on a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade level when they entered fifth grade."</p>
School District Mandate or Policy	<p>"This change was initiated by the school system and the reason was administratively decided"</p> <p>"School system initiated the change. They felt whole language was not working. The children were not progressing"</p>
Professional Development	<p>"Attending workshops during the summer"</p> <p>"A workshop that was given to a group of teachers, the change gave the students the opportunity to express their thoughts, concerns, and feelings more than before during reading"</p>

Table 33

*Summary of Teachers' Evaluation of the Success of the Change or Innovation*

<i>How the Change Process is Proceeding</i>	<i>Examples of Responses</i>
Increased Student Motivation and Interest in Reading	<p>“Their level of confidence and self-esteem has broadened. The low achievers are excited about having a peer read and helped them understand stories better.”</p> <p>“Students are more interested in reading and love to read the newspaper”</p>
Improved Students' Reading Skills and Participation	<p>“The students are reading better”</p> <p>“Students are reading for meaning more effectively in order to contribute conversation with peers more meaning instead of just reading words, comprehension is better as a result of the change.”</p>
Improved Teaching and Motivation to Teach Reading	<p>“Change is always good and in order to meet the needs of the children, I am always reading/attending classes and talking with fellow teachers on reading instruction”</p> <p>“I have continued to seek out and attend training to enhance my teaching. I also read new literature on the topic.”</p>
Other Responses	<p>“Progress is being made to some degree being mindful of the fact that this is an ongoing process”</p> <p>“Difficult and time consuming”</p>

classroom practices improved instructional quality and outcomes for students.

To understand further how changing instruction relates to teacher efficacy, I used quantitative techniques to compare the efficacy scores of teachers who reported making major changes with the scores of teachers who did not report altering their practices. I coded individual scores for teachers' attitudes and efficacy beliefs into two categories – positive and less positive – based on the means for each scale and used the Pearson Chi Square test statistic to determine the nature of relationships between attitude, efficacy, and reported implementation of major changes. Results showed a significant relationship between teacher efficacy and whether or not teachers made major changes to classroom reading instruction,  $\chi^2(1, N = 75) = 10.53, p < .05$ . Complete chi square tables and results are included in the appendix. The flexibility and power to make instructional change seemed to connect to teachers' beliefs about their ability to be effective reading teachers.

*Interviewed Teachers.* Interviewed teachers also shared information about modifications to their reading instruction and the impact on student learning and motivation. These teachers reported incorporating more authentic and diverse reading materials in efforts to motivate children to read. For example, although Teacher B primarily used the basal reading series, he recognized that it was not always interesting to students, and as a result, he made an effort to read aloud items from other books and magazines, and then use them to improve students' comprehension.

Sometimes the students aren't interested in the reading series because it's not dealing with something that they deal with everyday. I try to bring relevance to the situation, like read certain times out of magazines about people that they're particularly interested in... That's why sometimes I bring in other stories, you

know, relevant to them, real life. And I do a lot of explaining, and try to bring in items out of magazines, like *Ebony* and *Jet*, that they can deal with and that they'll listen to. Then what I'll do after that is break down what the story is about and how people need to learn how to read and comprehend, it's not all about reading those words, but understanding what you read...

Likewise, Teacher C stressed the value of authentic reading materials, particularly items that students encountered in the community. He reported efforts to use these materials in the classroom.

I can pretty much teach what I want, and a lot of times that makes it easier because a lot of times we may not go through the book, and some people may frown upon that, but I may go and pick up some applications from a restaurant and have them interpret different information...Applications, bus schedules, a lot of stuff that they use in everyday life. It may be visiting hours at the hospital. Things that may be neglected in everyday life and you realize, 'Hey, I've lived in the city all my life and I can't even ride the bus'".

Teacher C selected books and materials that he believed were critical to students' survival. The autonomy to make instructional decisions allowed him to incorporate transportation schedules, employment applications and other items into reading instruction.

Interviewed teachers also employed a number of strategies to increase motivation. Comments below represent teachers' efforts to stimulate an interest in reading.

Um, what I did, I had some awards. I had brought a comprehension book and in this book they had certain little reading awards, certificates that you can Xerox



and copy out and give those out to make them feel good...And also I would call their parents and let them know that they were trying harder in that particular subject, especially if they know they weren't doing that well. I would send home weekly progress reports. I would let the parents know that they are improving, they're trying. (Teacher B)

We have DEAR time where they can actually sit down and read and a lot of times when I do my DEAR time I like for them to see me read because if they see me then they might be like, okay he's reading so it's okay to read. I want them to have a positive outlook because it's almost like a punishment for a lot of kids. Go to your room and read your book. That's their punishment. (Teacher C)

Teachers distributed certificates, communicated with parents, and modeled reading behaviors for children. Encouraging reading was not the only aim of these practices. Teachers also wanted to make students feel better about their reading skills. This directly relates to children's sense of efficacy and self-esteem.

To meet the needs of all students, particularly struggling readers, teachers used a variety of classroom practices. The following response characterizes Teacher B's efforts to provide quality instruction for an academically diverse group of students.

I had to make particular help groups, and I had to place lower reading students who aren't on grade level with students who are a little bit higher than them. And also change as far as homework, at times I wouldn't give some of those lower reading students some of the same items that the other students were getting that were on a higher level. I want all students to feel successful, you know in what they were doing, didn't want to make them feel bad because they didn't

understand certain items, so some of the work was on a fourth grade level for the lower readers to build their self-esteem. Then once I had group assignments and I gave basically the same type of item or assessment or group project, they were all, they were placed in different groups with different reading levels, they were able to have their input in the group (Teacher B)

Teacher B believed that pairing struggling readers with more advanced students and adjusting homework assignments allowed all children to benefit from instruction.

Teacher B also wanted poor readers to feel that they were achieving and progressing in reading. Teacher B believed that children who experienced success with paired reading and modified homework developed confidence in their reading skills, and as a result actively participated in collaborative activities during reading instruction. Apparently, students believed they were capable of making valuable contributions to group assignments.

Overall, interviewed teachers believed that adjustments to their instructional practices benefited students and their teaching quality.

### *Overcoming Challenges with Professional Development*

Beyond altering instruction, interviewed teachers indicated that the combination of a supportive principal and targeted professional development were necessary for overcoming the challenges of teaching reading in urban schools. In particular, the two teachers at School #2 felt that their principal created a culture that allowed them to improve their teaching and meet the needs of their students.

Well, last year we had a reading, it was a professional development class and you got graduate credit for it and it was on the topic of reading. That helped out a lot

and it included some of the history of trying to teach reading and comprehension and how to better teach your lesson plans and it gave you different ideas. Then we had a Houghton-Mifflin, uh, it was Houghton Mifflin, well anyway, it was a woman and she instructed us on how to use your reading series most efficiently in the class. She [principal] actually provided a lot of professional development. And that class, the one I was talking about before, it was a grad class and we actually got credit for that. And we have our staff meetings where we bring in a new item, like on testing, test-taking; give you ideas how to identify students who may have problems. (Teacher B)

The principal is great, I mean whatever I ask for, if I can prove that it will help the kids, then usually I have it...I don't know about the school district, but I know my principal tries to have one or two classes that you can take for reading, ...she usually looks at what areas we are weak in and then, I know my first year we had a reading comprehension course. This year it was another class on classroom management. You have to have management for kids to learn. (Teacher C)

Teachers appreciated the classes, workshops, and support provided by their principal and felt that they were situated in a learning environment. The principal at School #2 offered courses in reading, brought in literacy professionals, and encouraged teachers to share their ideas. Teachers B and C seemed to feel that these activities improved the quality of their instruction and made them better teachers.

Interviewed teachers also sought opportunities for learning outside of the school. Teacher C was pursuing a graduate degree in education, and Teacher B was enrolled in a certification program at a local college.

I've been in a certification program...we have a lot of articles and the instructor brings in things, ideas to class. Just sitting with other teachers, new teachers, and we have a master teacher there. I keep up to date with news, newspapers, and internet and stuff like that. (Teacher B)

Teacher B valued talking to teachers from other schools, reading articles, and learning new information. He made an effort to stay informed about trends and innovative practices. Teacher B believed that these actions had a positive impact on his ability to provide quality reading instruction and overcome challenges.

Teacher A, who was uncertified, also revealed that professional development was critical to success. The bulk of her support stemmed from the Teach for America program which provided her with a mentor teacher and regular opportunities to discuss her experiences with colleagues.

I got into a program called Teach for America...I had a little educational training, but we really come not with a lot of training. I'm not a standard teacher. I have a license to teach for a few years. Basically we are employed by the school district. I had to go through the interview process just like any other teacher, and then I was hired by School #1... I had a mentor who taught for 36 years...meeting once a month so teachers could just talk about how they are doing or dealing with certain things. Luckily, I had Teach for America so I already had those things going on. The support they do provide for you throughout the year does make a big difference. (Teacher A)

Teacher A's comments suggest that she believed the mentoring and professional development provided by the Teach for America program was beneficial. In all, the

support and guidance that teachers receive throughout the school year appears to have a positive impact on teaching and learning.

It is interesting to note that two of the interviewed teachers and several of the surveyed teachers were uncertified. Lack of adequate preparation to teach in general and to teach reading may be an additional challenge for teachers in this study. Effective professional development is critical for all teachers, especially those who lack preparation and training in teaching reading.

#### *Overcoming Challenges with Parental Support*

Low parental involvement was not a substantial threat to any of the interviewed teachers. They felt that most parents were supportive and willing to help their children. Teachers encouraged parents to help their children with reading and often sent home instructional materials. Teacher B offered the following statements in his response to the question, “How supportive are parents?”

Overall, you know supportive. One parent even came up. I let her copy some of my books, pages out of my books so she could take home. Her child actually worked on them and this year it showed up. Last year, he didn't do that well on the standardized testing, but this year he moved up a step. It wasn't at the below average range like it was the year before. He worked hard. I had another parent who attempted to help their child, but it didn't work out too well. They didn't listen to what I had to say. I really don't think that they put that much effort into it, but overall most of the parents that I've talked to or had telephone conversations with were very helpful and they understood that their child needed

and they tried to help them. So overall, yes they were very supportive. (Teacher B)

Teacher B believed parents were supportive and interested in helping their children succeed in reading. Interestingly, his confidence in his ability to provide quality instruction seemed unrelated to parents' actions. When one parent's efforts to help were unsuccessful, Teacher B attributed the failure to the amount of effort that the parent put in to helping the child at home, not to his own actions. Teacher B expressed a high sense of efficacy.

Similarly, Teacher C reported that lack of parental support was not a considerable threat to his ability to provide effective instruction. He stated the following:

Parents are so-so. You have, you know your few that will support, but usually from the teachers' standpoint, it's just us. That's how we do it. If the parents are there, that's great, but we're not going to hold that as to why we can't achieve what we want to achieve. (Teacher C)

Absence of parental support did not lessen Teacher C's efficacy or serve as an excuse for not meeting students' academic needs. He was confident that teachers could have a positive impact on student learning. Once again, teachers were able to maintain a strong sense of efficacy in spite of challenges to teaching and learning.

### *Summary*

Overall, it appears that while various challenges threatened the quality of reading instruction, teachers believed that they were capable of adapting reading instruction to maximize student learning and motivation. Experience, professional development, and the freedom to modify and adapt instruction contributed to teachers' sense of efficacy and

allowed them to plan instruction that cultivated student achievement and motivation in reading. Data from the interviews and open ended survey questions support the findings from the quantitative analysis that most teachers possess a high level of efficacy in teaching reading. Also, efficacy appeared to be a critical factor in helping teachers to overcome challenges to teaching and learning. Teachers felt that they could make a difference with regard to reading motivation and achievement in urban schools. How do these findings relate to one another and to educational theory and past research? The final chapter explores this question in a discussion of the results and reviews implications for educational practice and future research.

## CHAPTER 5

### *Discussion*

As stated in Chapter 1, many children in the fourth and fifth grades struggle with challenging reading instruction, declining motivation to read, and low reading achievement. In addition to these challenges, children in urban schools often confront low teacher expectations and beliefs, lack of parent support, increased poverty, and other issues. As a result, children in urban schools are at greater risk of low reading achievement and motivation. To increase students' reading motivation, some experts suggest that educational reforms attend to teachers' reading attitudes and efficacy beliefs and classroom practices. Past research demonstrated that teachers' attitudes toward reading related to their use of recommended instructional practices, such as reading aloud and comprehension instruction (Morrison et al., 1999). Teachers who like to read may be more willing to devote longer periods of instructional time to reading and more likely to create and use lessons that foster positive attitudes toward reading. However, research on the status of teachers' reading attitudes presented conflicting portrayals of teachers as readers resulting in a lack of clarity about how much elementary teachers enjoyed reading.

Likewise, previous research failed to focus attention on the attitudes of teachers in urban schools, which is unfortunate given the proposition that teachers' beliefs and attitudes relate to students beliefs and attitudes. Clark and Peterson (1986) theorized reciprocal relationships between teachers' thoughts and actions and students' thoughts and behaviors. They further indicated that environmental constraints and opportunities shaped teachers' and students' beliefs and actions. As children in urban schools struggle



with low reading achievement and motivation, they need teachers who dedicate ample time to teaching reading, use research-based practices, and exhibit positive beliefs about reading. However, a lack of research on the reading attitudes of teachers, as well as children, in urban schools indicated a need for the described investigation.

Additionally, research on teacher efficacy is incomplete. Past studies showed that teachers' efficacy beliefs related to their beliefs about students, instructional decisions and strategies, and to their willingness to participate in educational reforms (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Bandura, 1997; Berman et al., 1977; Gibson & Dembo, 1984). Research also revealed that teachers in urban schools often possessed a high sense of efficacy that positively affected their relationships with students and helped them to persist during stressful and challenging occurrences (Payne, 1994; Rushton, 2000). Although important, these past investigations did not focus on teacher efficacy in reading. Most concentrated on efficacy in general or in relation to science or math instruction. Given the benefits of positive teacher efficacy in general and the implied relationships between teacher and student beliefs in the Clark and Peterson (1986) model, I felt it was necessary to explore this set of beliefs in reading.

Accordingly, I investigated urban fourth and fifth grade teacher's reading attitudes and efficacy beliefs and the relationship of these factors to reading instruction and to students' attitudes and sense of efficacy. As presented in Chapter 1, the following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the reading attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs of urban fourth and fifth grade teachers, and what is the relationship between these two factors?

2. What teacher characteristics relate to teachers' reading attitudes and efficacy beliefs in urban schools?
3. What is the relationship between teachers' attitudes and efficacy beliefs and their reading instructional practices in urban schools?
4. What are the reading attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs of urban fourth and fifth grade students?
5. What is the relationship between teachers' reading attitudes and efficacy beliefs and their students' reading attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs in urban schools?
6. How do teachers' experiences teaching reading in urban schools help us understand teachers' and students' reading attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs?

To answer these questions, I used survey research methodology. Fourth and fifth grade teachers from 25 different schools in one urban school district reported information about their attitudes toward reading, sense of efficacy toward teaching reading, and their reading instructional practices. Also, teachers from five of the schools surveyed their students about their attitudes and efficacy beliefs. Teachers completed the Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Survey, the Reading Teaching Efficacy Beliefs Instrument, and the Teacher Survey; and students completed the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey and the Reader Self-Perception Scale. The development and use of each survey has been previously reported in the research literature. Additionally, I interviewed three teachers from two of the schools about their experiences teaching reading in an urban environment. Data analysis consisted primarily of quantitative methods to examine

relationships between factors. Supporting information from interviews and open ended survey items were subjected to qualitative analysis techniques. Chapter 4 of the dissertation presented the results and this final chapter discusses the major findings and their implications for educators and future research.

### *Major Findings*

Urban teachers in this study expressed positive attitudes toward reading and high levels of efficacy. Analysis of the relationship between teacher attitude and teacher efficacy revealed a direct association between the two factors. Teachers with positive attitudes toward reading expressed elevated levels of teacher efficacy in reading. Furthermore, teachers' attitudes and sense of efficacy related to years of teaching experience, gender, race, degree level, reading habits, preparation to teach reading, and class size. For reading instructional factors, both teacher attitude and teacher efficacy were associated with increased use of research-based practices. Efficacy, however, related to a greater number of instructional methods than did teacher attitude.

Similar to teachers, students reported positive reading attitudes revealing that they liked to read. Students exhibited moderate levels of reader self-efficacy suggesting that they did have some doubts about their reading ability. As proposed in the Clark and Peterson (1986) model, students' attitudes and beliefs related to teachers' attitudes and beliefs. Teachers who enjoyed reading and felt confident about teaching reading were more likely to have students who held similar attitudes and beliefs. These relationships appeared to be mediated by instruction as surveyed and interviewed teachers stressed that they believed all children could learn and that reading instruction could be adapted and modified to produce higher reading achievement and motivation for urban students. The

following sections discuss specific findings for teacher attitude and sense of efficacy related to teacher characteristics, reading instruction, students' attitudes and beliefs, and the teaching and learning of reading in urban schools.

### *Teacher Attitude and Teacher Characteristics*

Teacher reading attitude significantly related to grade level, gender, class size, quality of preparation to teach reading, and reading habits. In particular, fourth grade teachers reported enjoying reading more than fifth grade teachers, and female teachers had more positive attitudes than male teachers. Teachers who enjoy reading may gravitate toward teaching grades that spend more time on reading for a variety of purposes rather than just reading for information. According to experts, beginning in the fourth grade reading instruction becomes less focused on reading for pleasure and more concentrated on reading to learn new content area information (Allington, 2002). This emphasis on content area comprehension increases as students move into fifth grade and beyond. I am unsure as to the gender differences in attitude toward reading. Past research on children's attitudes indicated that girls had more positive reading attitudes than boys (Kush & Watkins, 1996; McKenna and Kear, 1990; McKenna et al., 1995) and perhaps these differences persisted into adulthood.

Teachers' attitudes also varied according to class size, specifically, the number of regular education students in their class. Past research showed that urban students and teachers benefited from smaller class sizes (Achilles & Finn, 2000; Nye, Hedges, & Konstantopoulos, 2000). Fewer students in the classroom allowed teachers to spend more time individualizing instruction and working with low achieving students. In this study, fourth and fifth grade teachers with smaller class sizes exhibited more positive attitudes

about reading than teachers in classrooms with more students. Perhaps teachers had more time to spend teaching reading and sharing books with children. Planning for fewer students may also have provided them with more time to engage in personal reading.

In addition, I found a significant relationship between attitude and teachers' ratings of the quality of their teacher education courses in reading. Experts encourage teacher education programs to improve the quality of their reading programs and to help teachers to develop positive reading attitudes and beliefs (Draper, 2000; Gray & Troy, 1986). Teachers who rated their preparation to teach reading as exceptional expressed more positive attitudes than teachers who felt less certain about the quality of their preparation. Teachers who felt positive about reading may have also saw more value in their courses than other teachers. Those who feel knowledgeable about a content area and equipped to teach it may hold more positive attitudes toward that subject matter.

I was not surprised to find that teacher attitude related to reading habits as past research on motivation highlighted this relationship for students (Greaney & Hegarty, 1987) and for teachers (Morrison et al, 1999). Twenty percent of teachers identified themselves as avid readers, 30% as very active readers, 23% as frequent readers, and 4% as occasional readers. Elevated attitudes toward reading were associated with increased reading habits. Teachers who reported enjoying reading spent more time reading a variety of material daily than teachers with less positive attitudes. My findings differed from previous research in that it concentrated on urban teachers. Similar to others, they saw themselves as readers and their reading habits related to their attitudes.

### *Teacher Efficacy and Teacher Characteristics*

Personal efficacy for teaching reading varied according to years of teaching experience, degree level, and race. Previous studies of teacher efficacy indicated that veteran teachers express more confidence in their overall teaching abilities than novice teachers and that African American teachers working in urban schools express higher levels of efficacy than other teachers (Payne, 1994; Soodak and Podell, 1997). My findings resonated with these trends, as experienced teachers were more efficacious than their less experienced peers, and African American teachers' efficacy beliefs were more positive than those of White teachers. Teachers who share common cultural experiences with their students may feel more confident about their ability to influence student reading achievement and motivation (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

Furthermore, the depth and breadth of information provided by graduate programs in education appears to have a positive impact on urban teachers' sense of efficacy. Teachers with masters' degrees reported more confidence in their ability to teach reading effectively than teachers with only bachelor's degrees. This is not surprising given that graduate programs provide teachers with advanced course work and experiences in working with students. Similar to professional development, this extra time appears to benefit teachers' levels of confidence.

### *Teacher Reading Attitude, Sense of Efficacy, and Reading Instruction*

In relation to classroom reading instruction, both attitude and efficacy connected to teachers' use of specific practices. Teacher attitude was a significant factor for instructional time and for classroom organization. Positive teacher attitudes were associated with increased time spent on reading strategy instruction and teachers' use of

flexible groups, ability groups, and whole class activities during reading instruction. Teachers who enjoyed reading might have exerted more time and effort to help students develop reading strategies that would improve their comprehension and enjoyment of various texts. Teachers with positive attitudes toward reading may also have felt more comfortable spending time using different grouping structures in order to maximize student understanding of the material being read. Several researchers recommend that teachers provide instruction in the use of reading strategies across content areas to develop comprehension (Casteel et al., 2000; Marshall & Weinstein, 1984; McCarthey, 2001). Likewise, student grouping practices in reading have been identified as significant aspects of instruction that affect student motivation and achievement. (Elbaum, Vaughn, Hughes, & Moody, 1999; Marshall and Weinstein, 1984). Perhaps teachers in my study believed that they could effectively teach children to use strategies and could utilize varied grouping patterns during reading instruction.

Surprisingly, attitude toward reading did not relate to use of instructional materials and assessment practices as previous research had suggested (Morrison et al, 1999). As detailed in Chapter 2, Morrison et al. (1999) surveyed elementary teachers about their reading attitudes, habits, and instructional practices and found a connection between positive teacher attitudes and use of authentic reading materials, alternative assessment practices, and time spent reading in the classroom. In comparing my research to the Morrison et al. study, I found several differences that may account for the disparity in findings. First, I investigated a small sample of 77 teachers from one urban school district whereas Morrison et al. surveyed over 1800 teachers from across the country. Second, I concentrated on teachers in fourth and fifth grades while Morrison et al.

focused on teachers from kindergarten through sixth grade. Finally, Morrison et al. designed their own brief survey instrument to collect data and I used separate surveys that were designed by other researchers. A large sample of teachers across the elementary school grades and a tailored survey allowed Morrison et al. to identify a greater number of significant relationships between teachers' attitudes and their instructional practices. Attention and modifications to my sample and selected surveys could yield similar findings.

Other possible reasons that teacher attitude did not relate to choice of instructional materials and assessment practices stem from the context. As a result of low student achievement in the school district and other circumstances, the school district may have implemented curricular mandates that limited instructional options. Teachers may have been required to use certain materials and texts for reading instruction and to administer specific assessments. This lack of variation in reading instruction may account for fewer relationships between teachers' attitudes and instructional activities.

Moreover teacher efficacy was associated with more recommended instructional practices than attitude toward reading. Efficacy significantly related to instructional time, materials, assessment practices, and classroom organization. Efficacious teachers spent more time on teaching reading, using information from informal assessments to plan instruction, and teaching lessons on comprehension, reading strategies, critical reading, and vocabulary and word identification than less efficacious teachers. Several experts recommend that teachers use these practices to develop students' reading skills and increase achievement (Henk, 1993; National Reading Panel, 2000; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998; van Gelderen, 1997). Teachers with positive efficacy beliefs also spent



considerable time reading aloud and creating opportunities for children to read, and incorporating technology and authentic reading materials into instruction. All of these practices have been shown to influence positively students' motivation to read as well (Herrold et al., 1989; Holt & O'Tuel; 1989, McCarthy, 2001, Vollands, Topping, & Evans, 1999).

### *Students' Reading Attitudes and Efficacy Beliefs*

Fourth and fifth grade students in this investigation reported positive attitudes toward reading and moderate levels of reader self-efficacy. This means that students enjoyed reading for recreational and academic purposes, but they expressed some concern over their individual reading skills and abilities. Moreover, all aspects of student reading attitude significantly related to reader self-efficacy signifying that students with more positive attitudes toward reading also reported more confidence in their reading skills and abilities than other students. This finding resonates with Henk and Melnick's (1992) earlier identification of a significant relationship between students' attitudes and sense of self-efficacy. As expected, differences in student attitude and efficacy related to grade level, gender, and additional instruction. Several studies support this conclusion for student attitude and reveal that children's feelings about reading become less positive as they progress through elementary school and that girls report enjoying reading more than boys (Kush & Watkins, 1996; McKenna and Kear, 1990; McKenna et al., 1995; Tunnell, Calder, & Phaup, 1991). I found that fourth grade students and female students reported more positive attitudes and efficacy beliefs than fifth grade students and male students.

One aspect of reader self-efficacy – progress – did not follow the expected trend. Apparently, fifth grade students and male students' perception of their growth in reading

performance was significantly higher than fourth grade students and female students' perceptions. Additional study could help to explain this difference. Perhaps males receive more positive feedback about their progress in reading and this information results in higher levels of efficacy with regard to their growth and development in reading.

Urban students' who received additional instruction from another teacher during the school year reported less positive efficacy beliefs than students who only received instruction from their regular classroom teacher. Special teachers, such as reading specialists, resource teachers, and other professionals, spend time working with children who feel less confident about their reading skills than other students.

Further analysis of student data revealed relationships between teachers' and students' attitudes and efficacy beliefs. Teachers' attitudes toward reading connected to students' recreational reading attitudes. Teachers who enjoyed reading and expressed a love of reading to children had students who liked reading for pleasure. Teacher efficacy also significantly related to students' recreational reading attitudes and to aspects of their reader self-efficacy. Teachers who feel that they can make a positive impact on students' reading achievement have students who enjoy reading and hold more positive perceptions of their progress and performance in reading. This coincides with previous research by Anderson et al., 1988, which suggested a relationship between teacher and student efficacy and motivation. It also supports efforts to help teachers develop positive efficacy beliefs in reading order to improve student motivation.

#### *Teaching Reading in Urban Schools and Communities*

Surveyed and interviewed teachers encountered several challenges in their efforts to teach reading to children in urban schools and communities. Uninteresting stories and

books, disruptive students, low reading achievement, standardized testing pressures, and other issues appeared to threaten the quality of reading instruction and student motivation. Teachers expressed concern over the negative impact of these problems on teaching and learning. As one teacher stated, “students come to school with so many issues that they become a burden for me to work with”. Other research demonstrates that teachers and students in urban schools struggle with situations related to increased poverty and poor academic achievement (Irvine, 2000; Nieto, 2002). In the classic text, *Savage Inequalities* Kozol (1991) demonstrated the effect that poverty, inadequate resources, poor facilities, and lack of sufficient funding can have on the education of minority children in urban schools.

However, I found that teachers in this study sought ways to overcome and counteract the possible effects of these challenges. Teachers changed their instructional practices and adopted different instructional materials for the benefit of their students. Teachers incorporated authentic reading materials, paired lower achieving students with higher achieving students, modeled reading for pleasure, participated in professional development activities, and made other adaptations. They believed that their efforts to provide quality reading instruction improved their teaching and contributed to the development of their students’ efficacy, achievement, and interest in reading.

I had to make particular help groups, and I had to place lower reading students who aren’t on grade level with students who are a little bit higher than them. And also change as far as homework, at times I wouldn’t give some of those lower reading students some of the same items that the other students were getting that were on a higher level. I want all students to feel successful, you know in what

they were doing, didn't want to make them feel bad because they didn't understand certain items, so some of the work was on a fourth grade level for the lower readers to build their self-esteem. Then once I had group assignments and I gave basically the same type of item or assessment or group project, they were all, they were placed in different groups with different reading levels, they were able to have their input in the group (Teacher B).

Teachers maintained a strong sense of efficacy in the face of challenges. Teachers also indicated that supportive administrators created an atmosphere that allowed them to develop into better teachers. According to one interviewed teacher, "the principal is great, I mean whatever I ask for, if I can prove that it will help the kids, then usually I have it". Past research emphasizes the benefits of strong instructional leadership, opportunities for teacher collaboration and interaction, and the use of high interest materials, cooperative learning and peer tutoring, alternative assessment practices, and parent involvement for children in urban schools (Achilles & Finn, 2000; Chester & Beaudin, 1996; Goddard & Goddard, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Soodak & Podell, 1994).

Two trends related to teachers' selections of reading materials for students and their expressed purposes for reading surprised me. First, neither surveyed teachers nor interviewed teachers mentioned the use of multicultural literature to teach reading and motivate students. Teachers did not recall or talk about books or reading materials with African American and Latino characters. Educational researchers stress that teachers, particularly those of minority students, need to incorporate multicultural literature that represents students' culture and background in the reading instruction (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Perkins, 2001). In my own teaching and work with African American and Latino

students, I sought out and used reading materials that were culturally diverse and included characters from different racial and ethnic groups. I believed that children needed to see themselves represented in curriculum materials and would identify with characters similar to themselves. However, the teachers that I surveyed and interviewed did not highlight the use of diverse materials. Teachers may be using these materials on a regular basis and not have mentioned them, or teachers may not have a sufficient amount of multicultural books in their classrooms. Additional research can examine urban teachers' use of diverse books and reading materials.

Rather than emphasizing the importance of multicultural literature, interviewed teachers discussed the use of everyday reading materials, and this relates to the second surprising trend. Teachers talked about the importance of having children read text that they would encounter on a regular basis in the city, such as bus schedules and job applications. Although necessary, these materials do not reflect a broad understanding of the purposes of reading. Unless children are exposed to a wide variety of reading materials, they may develop a limited view of literacy and reading. Although teachers indicated a desire to motivate children to read, they mentioned very few high interest books and materials. Rather their choices suggested that the development of functional literacy was a goal for their classroom reading program. Functional literacy reflects "a level of reading and writing sufficient for every day life but not for completely autonomous activity" (Harris & Hodges, 1995, p. 89). Other conceptions of literacy stress the importance of personal enjoyment, fulfillment, knowledge, competence, and liberation. Among the various descriptions of reading and literacy, I am partial to Galda et al (1993) definition of reading as "transacting with a text to create meaning...bringing

meaning to a text in order to create meaning from it” (Harris & Hodges, p. 207), and Freire’s (1970) conception of literacy as “a strategy of liberation that teaches people to read not only the word but the world” (Harris & Hodges, p. 141). Children must be exposed to a variety of reading material and understand the multiple purposes and reasons for reading.

*Differences between Urban Schools.* Interestingly, interviewed teachers in schools in wealthy communities in the city had different experiences than teachers in poor schools. Teachers in schools in rich neighborhoods with mostly white students did not encounter problems with low achievement and motivation to the extent that teachers in schools in poor areas with predominantly African American and Latino students. NAEP data corroborates this finding and stresses that African American and Latino children in poor urban schools experience less academic success than children in different schools (NCES, 2003). Likewise, other experts have expressed concern over the differences between schools in high and low socioeconomic areas and between urban and suburban schools (Haycock, 2002; Taylor, 2002; Nieto, 2002). In spite of these differences, teachers in poor and wealthy schools expressed high levels of efficacy. Efficacious teachers may be more likely to persist and contend with problems than less confident teachers. As stressed by Irvine (2000), teachers must possess a high sense of efficacy if they are to overcome the challenges of teaching in urban schools. The teachers in my study exhibited confidence in their ability to teach reading and their students benefited from these positive beliefs.

### *Limitations and Directions for Future Research*

Methodological issues inherent in this investigation suggest the need for additional research to extend the findings. My findings about teachers' and students' attitudes and beliefs were more positive than information from other research (Graham, 1996). These differences may have stemmed from dissimilarities in survey instruments, samples, or data collection techniques. First, none of the survey instruments in this study were designed to accommodate the context of an urban school or community, nor did I adapt any of the instruments to address these experiences and factors. I was interested in seeing what would transpire when valid and reliable instruments reported in the research literature as appropriate for assessing teachers and students attitudes and beliefs were used with urban school participants. In a future investigation, I would seek out surveys and scales that have been created for and used with students in urban schools, and I would develop instruments to address the urban context in relation to attitudes and beliefs.

Next, due to the small sample size and the characteristics of the sample, this study should be replicated with a larger group of teachers and their students to further advance the significance of the findings. Future investigations should attempt to include sufficient numbers of teachers with positive and negative attitudes and high and low levels of efficacy; and teachers and students from high and low achieving schools. Also, additional research can also examine this relationship at other grade levels. Relationships between teacher and student motivation may be stronger in the primary grades than the upper elementary grades, or vice versa. Attention to the sample in these specific areas would

increase the creditability of the findings and present powerful evidence of the relationship between teacher and student thinking.

Also, to maximize the collection of information from as many students as possible in a short amount of time, I asked teachers to administer the reading attitude and the reader self-efficacy surveys to their students. However, the presence of the teacher in the classroom during survey completion and the collection of the surveys by each teacher may have influenced the results. Children may have reported increased attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs in order to please their classroom teacher. Some teachers might have encouraged children to answer survey items positively rather than to express their true feelings. In future studies, the researcher should administer and collect the data from students without the presence of the classroom teacher. This would reduce the effect that the teacher may have on children's self-reports.

Furthermore, I relied primarily on survey research methods to collect data about reading instruction and teachers' and students' attitudes and efficacy beliefs. Because of the nature of survey research, researchers are often unable to ask follow-up questions and probe participants for further information. To counteract this challenge, I interviewed fourth and fifth grade teachers as part of this study. Interviews provide unique information and offer respondents the opportunity to explain and clarify responses. However, due to limited resources, I only interviewed a small number of teachers for a short period of time, and my sample of interviewed teachers was not representative of the teachers in the school district. All three teachers were fairly new to the teaching profession with less than five years of teaching experience. These realizations limit the strength of the interview findings due to the fact that other teachers might report different



experiences teaching reading in the district and hold different beliefs about urban students. I suggest that future research utilize data from multiple interviews with a larger number of teachers representative of the teacher population in the school district.

In addition to interviews, I recommend that future investigations include classroom observations and other forms of data collection methods. Because this study relied heavily on self-reports, findings are limited by the trustworthiness of the respondents. Participants may have overstated or misrepresented their actual feelings and practices in surveys and interviews. The desire to please the researcher or to avoid embarrassment may have outweighed the need to provide truthful information. However, no teachers or students were asked to identify themselves or provide their names on any survey. I implemented these procedures to protect their identities. Other forms of research, such as classroom observation, can increase the authority of the major findings and offer additional support.

### *Implications for Educators*

Results have specific implications for professional development in reading. First, because efficacious teachers used recommended instructional practices in reading more often than other teachers, efforts to improve the quality of literacy instruction in urban schools should include quality professional development in reading. Workshops, study groups, and similar activities facilitate the development of efficacy and offer educators the opportunity to learn new methods. Also, urban teachers should be provided with time and space to meet with one another and share experiences. Teachers in this study indicated that discussing teaching with their colleagues made them feel supported and self-assured about teaching reading. Other specific professional development activities

should be based on the needs of the students and teachers in each school. Improving teacher efficacy in reading may increase teachers' use of research based instructional practices that improve student motivation and learning.

Another recommendation relates to the hiring and recruitment of efficacious teachers. Because teacher efficacy related to the use of several research-based instructional practices in this study, principals should seek out and hire teachers who believe all children can learn and who feel that they can effectively teach reading and positively impact student achievement. These teachers may exhibit a willingness to experiment with new instructional methods and techniques and be open to participating in professional development activities. Additionally, as African American teachers reported higher levels of efficacy than other teachers, principals in schools with predominantly African American students should increase their efforts to hire minority teachers. Teachers with similar cultural experiences as their students may feel more confident in planning instruction and communicating with parents than teachers from different racial and ethnic groups. To facilitate the hiring of minority teachers, teacher education programs should recruit and prepare more prospective teachers from diverse backgrounds. It is also important that programs to help all teachers develop respect for students from minority backgrounds, strategies for working with diverse groups of students, and positive beliefs about all children. .

Next, this study demonstrated that teacher attitude toward reading also related to teachers' use of recommended literacy practices although to a lesser extent than teacher efficacy. Based on this finding, I recommend that teachers participate in activities, such as book clubs, that improve their attitudes toward reading. Administrators could also

institute a time in the day when everyone reads. This could improve the attitudes of all of the adults in the school at quite a low cost. Principals should encourage reading among teachers as well as students. Similar to efficacy, attention to the development of teachers' attitudes toward reading may coincide with an increase in teachers' use of recommended practices. Because of the significant relationship between teacher attitude and efficacy, development of teachers' attitudes toward reading could correspond to greater levels of confidence in teaching ability.

### *Conclusion*

This dissertation reported an investigation of urban fourth and fifth grade teachers' reading attitudes and sense of teaching efficacy, and the relationship of these two factors to reading instruction and to student motivation. According to the results, urban teachers with positive attitudes and efficacy beliefs use recommended instruction practices, such as comprehension instruction, reading strategy instruction, and informal assessment and evaluation of student learning. Previous research highlights the positive influence of these practices and others on student motivation and achievement in reading. Teachers' attitudes and efficacy beliefs also related to their students' attitudes and beliefs. These relationships may have been mediated by teachers' use of instructional practices that have been proven to positively impact student motivation and achievement in reading. As a result of the findings, this study has valuable implications for teacher education, professional development, and future research. As educational reforms and policies stress the significance of teacher quality and reading achievement, it is important for all students, especially those in urban schools, to have teachers who are motivated, committed, and capable of helping children develop into engaged and skillful readers.

## APPENDIX A

### *Pilot Study*

To ascertain the appropriateness of the instruments for this investigation, I piloted the surveys with a small group of teachers and students during summer 2002. Jaeger (1988) encourages survey researchers to conduct pilot studies to identify problems and make revisions, measure the time needed to complete the instruments, and measure the effectiveness of the survey questions before using the instruments in formal research. Twenty-five teachers enrolled in a reading education course in Maryland completed identical survey packets at the beginning of a regular class period. Each survey packet contained a consent form, the Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Survey, the Reading Teaching Efficacy Belief Instrument, and the Teacher Survey. Teachers spent 20 to 40 minutes completing the surveys. Ten of the 25 survey packets were excluded from analysis because one or more surveys were left blank resulting in 15 usable packets. Reasons for not completing all of the surveys included the fact that some teachers arrived to class late and were unable to finish the entire packet; and several teachers in the class were undergraduate elementary education majors who were unable to complete one or more of the surveys due to inexperience.

Subsequently, four teachers enrolled in the reading course and five pre-service teachers enrolled in an instructional technology course completed think-aloud protocols for each of the three surveys. Each teacher read through the questions and provided feedback about the questions, their responses, and the survey format. Teachers spent 20 to 35 minutes completing individual think-aloud protocols, and sessions were audio-taped

and transcribed. Detailed notes were taken for two think-aloud protocols due to technical difficulties with the audio taping.

Additionally, ten third grade children that I taught in a summer program completed the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey, the Reader Self-Perception Scale, and an additional motivation survey, the Motivation for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ) (Wigfield, Guthrie, & McGough, 1996) over a period of three days. The MRQ, a 54-item survey assesses ten different dimensions of reading motivation. The MRQ is designed for upper elementary and middle school children. Respondents indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with each item on a scale of 1 to 4 representing the following responses, “very different from me”, “a little different from me”, “a little like me”, “a lot like me”. The MRQ is not described in the instrumentation section in this chapter because it proved to be too difficult for the children in the pilot study to complete and therefore is not included as an instrument for the proposed study. Several children misunderstood the intended meanings of important items on the MRQ, so I used only the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey and the Reader Self-Perception Scale to assess children’s motivation to read. The MRQ is more appropriate for older children.

Five of the children also completed think-aloud protocols for each survey. To obtain participation, I gave parents a letter, consent form, and copies of the survey questions, along with a sheet describing things parents could do to encourage reading among their children. I read aloud all survey items to the children as a group during a regular class meeting. Children spent approximately 10 to 15 minutes each completing the attitude survey and the self-perception scale, and spent approximately 30 to 40 minutes completing the motivation survey.

Data analysis consisted of quantitative methods for survey responses and qualitative techniques for think-aloud protocols. All survey responses were entered into the computer and procedures were run to find the mean and standard deviation for numerical responses and the frequency and percentage of demographic and informational data from the Teacher Survey. I also calculated Cronbach's alpha to measure internal consistency for each survey except the Teacher Survey which collected only demographic and categorical data. Because the sample size for the pilot study was very small (N for teachers = 15, N for children = 10), the statistical analysis information is suggestive, but not conclusive. The following sections, organized by survey, describe the results from the pilot study. Pseudonyms are used to protect the privacy of the participating teachers and students.

#### *Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Assessment*

All participating teachers found the Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Assessment easy to understand and appropriate. My initial concerns regarding the appropriateness of the survey items for elementary teachers were invalid. Although the items were designed for secondary students, none of the participants indicated that the statements were unsuitable or irrelevant. Two individuals commented on number eleven, "You seldom read except when you have to do a book report", and suggested that "You seldom read except when you have to" was more appropriate for teachers since students, not teachers, are assigned book reports. Two additional teachers reviewed the modified version and confirmed the appropriateness of the change. Additionally, a participant asked for the definition of the word, "strange" in number 12, "You think people who read a lot are strange". After being told that strange in this instance meant "odd", the

participant did not need further clarification or suggest that the question was improper.

Overall, there were no problems with the language, format, or items in the Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Assessment.

Scores for the Rhody survey range from 25 to 125, with higher scores representing a more positive attitude toward reading. Of the 15 teachers who completed the survey, the lowest score was a 70 and the highest score was 124. A mean score of 98 suggested that teacher participants maintained a fairly positive attitude toward reading. Subscale scores (see Table 1) for reading in the library, reading at home, and other recreational items were also quite positive; however scores for the general reading scale, although not indicative of negative feelings toward reading, were less positive. The reliability test for the entire survey yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.96, and alphas for all subscales ranged from 0.64 to 0.93 (see Table 2).

Table 1

*Pilot Study: Means and Standard Deviations for Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Assessment*

	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Reading in the library category	2	10	8.00	1.93
Reading in the home category	2	10	7.20	2.14
Other recreational reading category	5	25	19.33	3.79
General reading category	14	70	55.47	10.10
Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Assessment Total Score	25	125	98.07	18.03
n = 15				

Table 2

*Pilot Study: Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients for the Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Assessment*

	<i>Alpha</i>
Reading in the library items	0.85
Reading in the home items	0.64
Other recreational reading items	0.84
General reading items	0.93
Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Assessment total items	0.96

*The Reading Teaching Efficacy Beliefs Instrument*

Contrary to the results for the Rhody survey, many teacher participants were displeased with several items on the Reading Teaching Efficacy Belief Instrument, specifically the statements on the Reading Teaching Outcome Expectancy Scale. Most participants felt that the statements on the outcome expectancy scale excluded the important influence that parents have on children's reading achievement. One teacher stated that, "reading achievement can be attributed to more than one factor", and that it was, "difficult to agree [with the items] without thinking about parents". Furthermore, Janie, another participant, indicated that the extent of the teacher's influence on children's reading achievement depends upon the situation, and that she would probably



disagree with most of the items because parents and other factors are not accounted for in the survey. Strong disagreement or agreement with items on the outcome expectancy scale that exclude additional influential factors may misrepresent teachers' actual beliefs.

Likewise, other participants reading the efficacy survey mentioned parental influence as an important factor. After reading number 11, "When a low achieving child progresses in reading, it is usually due to extra attention given by the teacher", one teacher, Dave, responded, "I agree with that. I don't think it's just the teacher, it's the parents too. They could work extra hard with the child." and after number 14, "The teacher is generally responsible for the achievement of students in reading", he stated "Yeah, I agree. It's the teacher and parent, not just the teacher though". Although Dave agreed with both items, his think-aloud protocol revealed further information about his beliefs indicating that his responses were not representative of his actual viewpoint. Similarly, another participant, Betty, felt that the items regarding reading achievement should include information about parents as well as teachers. While participants were dissatisfied with the statements on the outcome expectancy scale, no one indicated comprehension issues or problems with items on the Personal Reading Teaching Efficacy Belief scale.

Subsequently, other problems concerning the efficacy survey arose from the think-aloud protocols, including comments from participants about the language and meaning of several items. Dave felt that item 4, "When the reading grades of students improve, it is most often due to their teacher having found a more effective teaching approach" and item 20, "Effectiveness in reading teaching has little influence on the achievement of students with low motivation" were worded inappropriately, and could

cause confusion. Likewise, another teacher, Caro, stated that number 7, “If students are underachieving in reading and participating in discussions, it is most likely due to ineffective reading teaching”, was worded awkwardly, specifically, the phrase, “reading teaching” was problematic and unclear. Also, some pre-service teachers were unable to answer several questions on the efficacy survey due to a lack of teaching experience.

Reliability tests for the efficacy survey and the two subscales yielded acceptable alphas that ranged from 0.74 to 0.83 (see Table 3). Summary statistics for the RTEBI revealed that the mean score for the outcome expectancy scale was much lower than the mean for the personal efficacy scale. The mean for the outcome expectancy scale was 39 (see Table 4, while the mean for the personal teaching efficacy scale was 52, with 60 and 65 being the highest possible scores for each respective subscale. The overall efficacy summary score for the 15 participants was 91 out of a possible 125.

Table 3

*Pilot Study: Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients for the Reading Teaching Efficacy Beliefs*

*Instrument*

	<i>Alpha</i>
Personal Reading Teaching Efficacy Belief Scale	0.83
Reading Teaching Outcome Expectancy Scale	0.74
Reading Teaching Efficacy Beliefs Instrument	0.82

Table 4

*Pilot Study: Means and Standard Deviations for the Reading Teaching Efficacy Beliefs*

*Instrument*

	Minimum	Maximum	M	SD
Personal Reading Teaching Efficacy Belief Scale	13	65	51.73	5.61
Reading Teaching Outcome Expectancy Scale	12	60	39.37	4.23
Reading Teaching Efficacy Belief Scale Total Score	25	125	91.00	7.81
n = 15				

This suggests that many participants were somewhat confident in their ability to teach reading and influence reading achievement. However, these scores may be inaccurate since agreement or disagreement with some items misrepresented participants' true beliefs.

Due to the problems with the outcome expectancy scale, I decided to use only the personal reading teaching efficacy items. I was primarily interested in teachers' personal beliefs about their individual efficacy, not what their beliefs are about all teachers' sense of efficacy. All items on the outcome expectancy scale ask teachers to indicate their level of agreement with general items, such as "The teacher is generally responsible for the achievement of students in reading"; whereas items on the personal scale focus on individual teachers, for example, "I wonder if I have the skills necessary to teach reading". The personal efficacy items better answer my

research questions about the nature of teachers' personal efficacy by focusing on self-efficacy and teaching. Past research supports the dichotomy between outcome expectancy and personal efficacy in overall teacher efficacy (Ashton & Webb, 1982; Gibson & Dembo, 1984). In many instances, personal teaching efficacy, not outcome expectancy, had the strongest correlation to instructional practices and teacher characteristics (Anderson et al., 1988, Ashton & Webb, 1986; Ghaith & Yaghi, 1997; Goddard & Goddard, 2001; Guskey, 1988; Riggs & Enoch, 1993; Saklofske, Michaluk, & Randhawa, 1988; Soodak & Podell, 1994; Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990).

### *The Teacher Survey*

Think-aloud protocols focusing on the National Reading Research Center's Teacher Survey for elementary reading instruction yielded several worthy recommendations and insights. Three of the five participants that completed the think-aloud protocols felt that the survey was long but also interesting. One teacher commented that the survey requested good information, and that she did not mind filling it out; and another teacher pointed out that the survey was not redundant, the information was interesting, and that she did not have a problem with completing the items. Other comments revealed that some teachers were confused by the categories for the Likert response scales in items 25, 26, and 42, which ask about how often teachers use certain materials and engage in certain practices. Unclear terms included "considerable", "moderate", "little", and "none" for items 25 and 42, and "exclusively", "predominantly", "moderately", "infrequently", and "never" for item 26. One teacher mentioned that teachers may define terms differently, and other teachers recommended that each term be defined and clarified in an effort to help teachers respond with accurate information. To

remedy this ambiguity, I removed the middle labels from the response scale, so that teachers indicated their response on each 5-point scale with two labeled endpoints. The endpoints for items 25 and 42 are “considerable” and “none”, and for item 26, “exclusively” and “never”. Three additional teachers reviewed and confirmed the appropriateness of the changes to the scale.

Another recommendation concerned the last item on the survey which related to major changes or innovations in reading instruction implemented in the classroom. Janie proposed that an example of a major change in reading instruction implemented by a classroom teacher would be helpful because the meaning of a major change or innovation may differ among teachers, and some responses may not be relevant. However, she also cautioned that an example could influence teachers’ responses, and hinder them from describing interesting and important changes and alterations to their classroom reading program. I did not want to discourage teachers from providing information about changes to their reading curriculum that they value, so I did not provide an example of a major change in the Teacher Survey directions.

Finally, two teachers, Betty and Jean, emphasized the importance of defining educational and instructional terms, specifically the vocabulary used to describe instructional perspectives and reading materials. The meanings of “whole language” and “basal reading materials” were unclear to Jean, and she requested further clarification of each term. Likewise Betty wanted additional information about each literacy instructional perspective beyond the simplified definitions in the survey. She suggested that teachers receive a packet of information about the various reading instructional perspectives so that they could have a better understanding of each approach. Betty also indicated that

availability of materials might override the influence of teachers' beliefs on their classroom practice. She stated the following:

Some of these materials may not be available to teachers, not that they don't use them. So in that case some people might be doing this not because it's their philosophy but because it's what's available to them. It might be important to know that.

In response to this situation, Betty proposed that a space for comments be included on the survey so that teachers could explain reasons for their choices. As a result, I planned to include a space for comments and basic definitions of literacy terms on the Teacher Survey.

Results from completed Teacher Surveys revealed interesting information about teachers and classroom reading instruction with respect to teacher preparation, classroom materials, grouping practices, assessment materials, and instructional activities (see Table 5 for a summary of findings). Overall, it appeared that teachers used a variety of instructional materials and activities during reading instruction.

#### *The Elementary Reading Attitude Survey*

Five children completed think-aloud protocols for the ERAS and the RSPS. Children were able to read and understand all of the questions and response categories for the ERAS, except for one item, which only one child found confusing. Number 11 asks children, "How do you feel when the teacher asks you questions about what you read?", and one participant stated, "Eleven is tricky." The child offered no additional information when probed about why the item was puzzling, and continued with the remainder of the think-aloud protocol without any further problems. None of the other child participants

Table 12

*Pilot Study: Summary of Findings for the Teacher Survey*

Findings	
Teacher Education and Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>87% teachers completed 4-year or 5-year B.A. or B.S. certification programs</li> <li>13% rated their preparation to teach reading as good, 80% as adequate, 7% as poor</li> <li>Teachers engaged in a variety of professional development activities</li> <li>13% reported that they were avid readers, 54% were active or frequent readers, and 34% were occasional or infrequent readers</li> </ul>
School and student demographics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers taught students from various economic and racial/ethnic backgrounds</li> <li>Average number of regular education students in each class was 17</li> <li>Average number of special education students in each class was 5</li> <li>20% rated their school facilities as poor or inadequate, 40% as adequate, and 40% as very good or exceptional</li> </ul>
Teacher Beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>93% supported a balanced approach to literacy instruction</li> <li>68% believed phonics should be directly taught to students</li> <li>80% believed children should be immersed in literature</li> </ul>
Instructional Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Average number of minutes for reading instruction each day was 85</li> <li>More than 50% of teachers reported devoting considerable time to comprehension instruction, oral and written response activities, and reading strategy instruction</li> <li>More than 40% of teachers reported devoting little time to handwriting, technology, study skills, and phonics/decoding instruction</li> </ul>

Table 12 continued

*Pilot Study: Summary of Findings for the Teacher Survey*

Findings	
Instructional Materials and Libraries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers used a variety of materials to teach reading, including basals, literature anthologies, and trade books</li> <li>40% used basals for the foundation of the reading program, 33% used trade books as the foundation and supplemented instruction with basals, and 27% used trade books only</li> <li>27% had 51-100 books in their classroom library, 47% had 101-300 books, 20% had over 300 books</li> </ul>
Organizing for Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>67% used ability groupings for reading instruction</li> <li>13% used flexible groupings</li> <li>13% used whole class instruction</li> </ul>
Assessing Reading Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers used a variety of assessments</li> <li>40% relied extensively on alternative assessments and portfolios</li> <li>27% used a mix of conventional and informal assessments</li> <li>13% relied primarily on conventional assessment measures</li> </ul>
Home-School Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>87% encouraged parents to read aloud to children</li> <li>60% send notes home about the reading program</li> <li>73% invite parents to school</li> </ul>
Level-Specific Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>86% of teachers in the third to fifth grades engaged in comprehension strategy instruction three or more times a week</li> <li>86% used literature response activities three or more times a week</li> <li>57% used literature discussion groups three or more times a week</li> <li>29% used reading workshop three or more times a week</li> <li>14% used word identification instruction three or more times a week</li> </ul>
Major Changes or Innovations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>53% made major changes to the reading program during the school year</li> </ul>



indicated a problem with this item, nor any of the other statements, nor the directions and response format.

Mean scores and alpha coefficients for the ERAS are reported in Table 6 and Table 7. The overall mean score ( $M = 62.70$ ) suggests that participants held fairly positive attitudes toward reading. It is important to reiterate that these analyses and the ones for the RSPS were conducted on a small number of children and are suggestive, but not definitive.

#### *The Reader Self-Perception Scale*

Similar to think-aloud protocol results for the ERAS, children had very few problems understanding the RSPS. Think-aloud protocols for four of the five children revealed that all items were clear and that the directions and the response scale were comprehensible. One child, Muni, found four items confusing, and suggested that further clarification was necessary. Muni did not understand numbers 6, 11, 24, and 28, all of which asked her to compare her reading skills or progress in reading to other children or to her earlier achievement. She may have difficulty understanding how to rate her reading skills and achievement to other children using the response scale. Because directions for the RSPS state that adults may read aloud items to students, I read the confusing items aloud to Muni, and she indicated that she understood each item after it was read aloud. There were no other concerns with the RSPS during the think-aloud protocols and the survey administration.

Results from the RSPS provided interesting information about the students' reader self-efficacy beliefs. The mean score (see Table 8) for general perception of reading

Table 6

*Pilot Study: Means and Standard Deviations for Elementary Reading Attitude Survey*

	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Academic Reading subscale	10	40	31.70	5.21
Recreational Reading subscale	10	40	31.00	5.08
Elementary Reading Attitude Survey	20	80	62.70	9.70
n = 10				

Table 7

*Pilot Study: Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients for the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey*

	<i>Alpha</i>
Academic Reading items	0.83
Recreational Reading items	0.81
Elementary Reading Attitude Survey total items	0.90

ability was 4.25 out of 5 which indicated that participants viewed themselves as good readers. A mean score of 39.25 out of 45 on the progress scale, representative of an average perception in this area, suggested that participants believed that they had made some progress in their reading performance. Lower perceptions were held with regard to observational comparison ( $M = 18.00$ ) which implied that participants felt less confident

about their reading ability and performance when compared to other children. Reliability coefficients for the RSPS are reported in Table 9.

Table 8

*Pilot Study: Means and Standard Deviations for the Reader Self-Perception Scale*

	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
General Perception category	1	5	4.25	0.89
Progress category	9	45	39.25	5.42
Observational Comparison category	6	30	18.00	3.70
Social Feedback category	9	45	33.25	6.16
Physiological States category	8	40	32.38	4.34
n = 8				

Table 9

*Pilot Study: Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients for the Reader Self-Perception Scale*

	<i>Alpha</i>
Progress items	0.82
Observational Comparison items	0.62
Social Feedback items	0.89
Physiological States items	0.76
Reader Self-Perception Scale total items	0.90

*Summary*

The pilot study demonstrated the usefulness of the instruments in measuring teachers' and students' reading attitudes, efficacy beliefs, and practices. The Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Assessment and the Teacher Survey needed only minor language and response scale modifications, and participants confirmed the appropriateness of these changes. For the Reading Teaching Efficacy Beliefs Instrument, participants expressed concern with the meaning of outcome expectancy scale items. Teachers communicated that parents, students, and teachers are responsible for reading achievement, not just teachers; and that the outcome expectancy scale misrepresented their beliefs. Agreeing with the items would suggest that teachers alone are responsible for student achievement, and disagreeing with items would indicate that teachers' efforts have little impact on student achievement. As a result of this tension and the nature of the dissertation study, I used only the items on the Personal Reading Teaching Efficacy Scale.

Finally, both the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey and the Reader Self-Perception Scale proved to be effective in measuring children's attitudes toward reading and their reading self-efficacy.

## APPENDIX B

*Teacher and Student Attitude and Efficacy Survey Items**Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Assessment Items*

1. You feel you have better things to do than read. [G]
2. You seldom buy a book. [G]
3. You are willing to tell people that you do not like to read. [G]
4. You have a lot of books at home. [H]
5. You like to read a book whenever you have free time.[R]
6. You get really excited about books you have read. [G]
7. You love to read. [G]
8. You like to read books by well-known authors. [G]
9. You never check out a book from the library. [L]
10. You like to stay home and read. [H]
11. You seldom read except when you have to.
12. You think reading is a waste of time. [G]
13. You think reading is boring. [G]
14. You think people are strange when they read a lot. [G]
15. You like to read to escape from problems. [G]
16. You make fun of people who read a lot. [G]
17. You like to share books with your friends.[R]
18. You would rather someone just tell you information so that you won't have to read to get it.
19. You hate reading. [G]
20. You generally check out a book when you go to the library. [L]
21. It takes you a long time to read a book. [G]
22. You like to broaden your interests through reading. [R]
23. You read a lot. [G]
24. You like to improve your vocabulary so you can use more words.[R]
25. You like to get books for gifts. [R]

L = Reading in the Library Subscale

H = Reading in the Home Subscale

R = Other Recreational Reading Items Subscale

G = General Reading Subscale

Tullock-Rhody, R., & Alexander, J. E. (1980). A scale for assessing attitudes toward reading in secondary schools. Journal of Reading, 23, 609-614.

*Personal Reading Teaching Efficacy Belief Scale Items*

1. I am continually finding better ways to teach reading.
2. Even when I try very hard, I don't teach reading as well as I do most subjects.
3. I know the steps necessary to teach reading concepts effectively.
4. I am not very effective in monitoring reading improvement and reading comprehension.
5. I generally teach reading ineffectively.
6. I understand reading well enough to be effective in teaching reading.
7. I find it difficult to explain and convey to students' the meaning of a text.
8. I am typically able to answer students' reading questions.
9. I wonder if I have the skills necessary to teach reading.
10. Given a choice, I would not invite the principal to evaluate my reading teaching.
11. When a student has difficulty understanding a text, I am usually at a loss for as to how to help the student understand it better.
12. When teaching reading, I usually welcome student questions.
13. I don't know what to do to turn students on to reading.

Adapted from:

Riggs, I., & Knoch, L. (1990). Towards the development of an elementary teacher's science teaching efficacy belief instrument. Science Education, 74, 625-637.

*Elementary Reading Attitude Survey Items*

Recreational Subscale

1. How do you feel when you read a book on a rainy Saturday?
2. How do you feel when you read a book in school during free time?
3. How do you feel about reading for fun at home?
4. How do you feel about getting a book for a present?
5. How do you feel about spending free time reading?
6. How do you feel about starting a new book?
7. How do you feel about reading during summer vacation?
8. How do you feel about reading instead of playing?
9. How do you feel about going to a bookstore?
10. How do you feel about reading different kinds of books?

Academic Subscale

11. How do you feel when the teacher asks you questions about what you read?
12. How do you feel about doing reading workbook pages?
13. How do you feel about reading in school?
14. How do you feel about reading your school books?
15. How do you feel about learning from a book?
16. How do you feel when it's time for reading class?
17. How do you feel about the stories you read in reading class?
18. How do you feel when you read out loud in class?
19. How do you feel about using a dictionary?
20. How do you feel about taking a reading test?

McKenna, M.C., and Kear, D.J. (1990). Measuring attitude toward reading: A new tool for teachers. *The Reading Teacher*, 43, 626-639.

*The Reader Self-Perception Scale Items*

1. I think I am a good reader. [GP]
2. I can tell that my teacher likes to listen to me read. [SF]
3. My teacher thinks my reading is fine. [SF]
4. I read faster than other kids. [OC]
5. I like to read aloud. [PS]
6. When I read, I can figure out words better than other kids. [OC]
7. My classmates like to listen to me read. [SF]
8. I feel good inside when I read. [PS]
9. My classmates think that I read pretty well. [SF]
10. When I read, I don't have to try as hard as I used to. [PR]
11. I seem to know more words than other kids when I read. [OC]
12. People in my family think I am a good reader. [SF]
13. I am getting better at reading. [PR]
14. I understand what I read as well as other kids do. [OC]
15. When I read, I need less help than I used to. [PR]
16. Reading makes me feel happy inside. [PS]
17. My teacher thinks I am good reader. [SF]
18. Reading is easier for me than it used to be. [PR]
19. I read faster than I could before. [PR]
20. I read better than other kids in my class. [OC]
21. I feel calm when I read. [PS]
22. I read more than other kids. [OC]
23. I understand what I read better than I could before. [PR]
24. I can figure out words better than I could before. [PR]
25. I feel comfortable when I read. [PS]
26. I think reading is relaxing. [PS]
27. I read better now than I could before. [PR]
28. When I read, I recognize more words than I used to. [PR]
29. Reading makes me feel good. [PS]
30. Other kids think I'm a good reader. [SF]
31. People in my family think I read pretty well. [SF]
32. I enjoy reading. [PS]
33. People in my family like to listen to me read. [SF]

GP = General Perception Subscale

PR = Progress Subscale

OC = Observational Comparison Subscale

SF = Social Feedback Subscale

PS = Physiological States Subscale

Henk, W. A., & Melnick, S. A. (1995). The Reader Self-Perception Scale (RSPS): A new tool for measuring how children feel about themselves as readers. The Reading Teacher, 48, 470-482.



## APPENDIX C

*Teacher Survey Categories and Description of Questions*

Category	Description
Teacher Education and Professional Development	Information about teachers' gender, race, teaching position, years of experience, level of education and background, professional development activities, and reading habits
School and Student Demographics	The number of students in the school and in the classroom, type of community, condition of school facilities, and students' family socioeconomic status, race, reading achievement level, and native language
Teacher Beliefs/Philosophical Orientation	Items ask about teachers' beliefs toward the teaching and learning of reading and teachers' goals and objectives for reading instruction
Instructional Time	The average number of minutes the teacher spends teaching reading and language arts each day
Instructional Materials and Libraries	Items about the types of materials used to teach reading, the use of basal readers and trade books, and the condition of the school and classroom libraries
Organizing for Instruction	Items about the classroom teaching situation and how the teacher organizes students for reading instruction
Accommodating Gifted and Struggling Readers	Items about accommodations for students identified as gifted or struggling readers

Category	Description
Assessing Reading Development	Items about the teacher's approach to assessment, amount of instructional time spent of assessment, use of assessments to make instructional decisions, types of and preparation for formal assessments
Home-School Connections	Items about teacher-initiated activities to involve parents in their children's literacy learning
Overall School and Classroom Reading Program	Teachers' ratings of school and classroom reading programs
Level-specific questions	Items about the materials, techniques, and activities used to teach reading at the primary level and at the intermediate level
Open-ended questions	Items requesting major changes to classroom reading instruction and barriers to improving the quality of instruction

## APPENDIX D

*Consent Forms***INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHERS**

## Teacher Surveys

<b>Project Title</b>	Urban Fourth and Fifth Grade Teachers' Reading Attitudes and Efficacy Beliefs	
<b>Statement of Age of Subject</b>	I state that I am over 18 years of age, in good physical health, and wish to participate in a program of research being conducted by Ayanna Baccus in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Maryland, College Park.	
<b>Purpose</b>	The purpose of the research is to investigate the relationship between teachers' and students' reading attitudes, efficacy beliefs, and practices. Reading attitudes describe how a person feels about reading and efficacy beliefs are judgments about one's reading ability.	
<b>Procedures</b>	The procedures involve the completion of three questionnaires which ask about reading attitudes, efficacy beliefs, and teaching practices. The three questionnaires are the Rhody Reading Attitude Survey, the Reading Teaching Efficacy Beliefs Instrument, and Teacher Survey. Teachers will need approximately 30 minutes to complete all three surveys.	
<b>Confidentiality</b>	All information collected in this study is confidential and my name will not be identified at any time. Surveys will be completed anonymously. The data provided will be grouped with data others provide for reporting and presentation.	
<b>Risks</b>	There are few expected risks associated with this study. I may become aware of the nature of my reading attitudes and efficacy beliefs and they may change during the study. Time devoted to participation in this study may be better spent on planning, preparation, and teaching. I will not be graded or evaluated based upon responses.	
<b>Benefits, Freedom to Withdraw, and Ability to Ask Questions</b>	The experiment is not designed to help me personally but to help the investigator learn more about teachers' and students' reading beliefs and practices. Participation is voluntary. I am free to ask questions at any time and withdraw participation without penalty.	
<b>Contact Information for Investigators</b>	Ayanna Baccus EDCI 2311 Benjamin Building College Park, MD 20742 301-332-7244 <a href="mailto:baccusa@wam.umd.edu">baccusa@wam.umd.edu</a>	Dr. Marilyn Chambliss Dept. of Curriculum and Instruction 2311 Benjamin Bldg. College Park, MD 20742 301-405-7410 <a href="mailto:mc211@umail.umd.edu">mc211@umail.umd.edu</a>

Name of Subject \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHERS**

## Teacher and Student Surveys

<b>Project Title</b>	Urban Fourth and Fifth Grade Teachers' Reading Attitudes and Efficacy Beliefs	
<b>Statement of Age of Subject</b>	I state that I am over 18 years of age, in good physical health, and wish to participate in a program of research being conducted by Ayanna Baccus in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Maryland, College Park.	
<b>Purpose</b>	The purpose of the research is to investigate the relationship between teachers' and students' reading attitudes, efficacy beliefs, and practices. Reading attitudes describe how a person feels about reading and efficacy beliefs are judgments about one's reading ability.	
<b>Procedures</b>	The procedures involve the completion of three questionnaires which ask about reading attitudes, efficacy beliefs, and teaching practices. The three questionnaires are the Rhody Reading Attitude Survey, the Reading Teaching Efficacy Beliefs Instrument, and Teacher Survey. It will take approximately 30 minutes to complete the three surveys. Teachers will also be asked to have their students complete attitude and efficacy surveys. Students will need approximately 20 minutes to complete the surveys.	
<b>Confidentiality</b>	All information collected in this study is confidential and my name will not be identified at any time. Surveys will be completed anonymously. The data provided will be grouped with data others provide for reporting and presentation.	
<b>Risks</b>	There are few expected risks associated with this study. I may become aware of the nature of my reading attitudes and efficacy beliefs and they may change during the study. Time devoted to participation in this study may be better spent on planning, preparation, and teaching. I will not be graded or evaluated based upon responses.	
<b>Benefits, Freedom to Withdraw, and Ability to Ask Questions</b>	The experiment is not designed to help me personally but to help the investigator learn more about teachers' and students' reading beliefs and practices. Participation is voluntary. I am free to ask questions at any time and withdraw participation without penalty.	
<b>Contact Information for Investigators</b>	Ayanna Baccus EDCI 2311 Benjamin Building College Park, MD 20742 301-332-7244 <a href="mailto:baccusa@wam.umd.edu">baccusa@wam.umd.edu</a>	Dr. Marilyn Chambliss Dept. of Curriculum and Instruction 2311 Benjamin Bldg. College Park, MD 20742 301-405-7410 <a href="mailto:mc211@umail.umd.edu">mc211@umail.umd.edu</a>

Name of Subject \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHERS**

## Teacher Interviews

<b>Project Title</b>	Urban Fourth and Fifth Grade Teachers' Reading Attitudes and Efficacy Beliefs	
<b>Statement of Age of Subject</b>	I state that I am over 18 years of age, in good physical health, and wish to participate in a program of research being conducted by Ayanna Baccus in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Maryland, College Park.	
<b>Purpose</b>	The purpose of the research is to investigate the relationship between teachers' and students' reading attitudes, efficacy beliefs, and practices. Reading attitudes describe how a person feels about reading and efficacy beliefs are judgments about one's reading ability.	
<b>Procedures</b>	The procedures involve participation in a voluntary one hour interview. The interview will focus on the teaching of reading in urban schools.	
<b>Confidentiality</b>	All information collected in this study is confidential and my name will not be identified at any time. Surveys will be completed anonymously. The data provided will be grouped with data others provide for reporting and presentation.	
<b>Risks</b>	There are few expected risks associated with this study. I may become aware of the nature of my reading attitudes and efficacy beliefs and they may change during the study. Time devoted to participation in this study may be better spent on planning, preparation, and teaching. I will not be graded or evaluated based upon responses.	
<b>Benefits, Freedom to Withdraw, and Ability to Ask Questions</b>	The experiment is not designed to help me personally but to help the investigator learn more about teachers' and students' reading beliefs and practices. Participation is voluntary. I am free to ask questions at any time and withdraw participation without penalty.	
<b>Contact Information for Investigators</b>	Ayanna Baccus EDCI 2311 Benjamin Building College Park, MD 20742 301-332-7244 <a href="mailto:baccusa@wam.umd.edu">baccusa@wam.umd.edu</a>	Dr. Marilyn Chambliss Dept. of Curriculum and Instruction 2311 Benjamin Bldg. College Park, MD 20742 301-405-7410 <a href="mailto:mc211@umail.umd.edu">mc211@umail.umd.edu</a>

Name of Subject \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**PARENTAL PERMISSION FORM**

<b>Project Title</b>	Urban Fourth and Fifth Grade Teachers' Reading Attitudes and Efficacy Beliefs	
<b>Statement of Age of Subject</b>	I state that I am over 18 years of age, in good physical health, and wish to participate in a program of research being conducted by Ayanna Baccus in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Maryland, College Park.	
<b>Purpose</b>	The purpose of the research is to investigate the relationship between teachers' and students' reading attitudes, efficacy beliefs, and practices. Reading attitudes describe how a person feels about reading and efficacy beliefs are judgments about one's reading ability.	
<b>Procedures</b>	The procedures involve the completion of two questionnaires and two open-ended questions. The questionnaires will collect information about reading attitudes and efficacy beliefs. Teachers will distribute the surveys and remain in the classroom while the children complete the surveys. Students will need approximately 20 minutes to complete the surveys.	
<b>Confidentiality</b>	Surveys will be completed anonymously. All information is confidential and my name and my child's name will not be identified at any time. The data provided will be grouped with data others provide for reporting and presentation.	
<b>Risks</b>	There are few expected risks associated with this study. Children's reading attitudes and efficacy beliefs may change during the study and become more or less positive. Time will be taken from the school day to complete the survey. Children will not be graded or evaluated based upon responses.	
<b>Benefits, Freedom to Withdraw, and Ability to Ask Questions</b>	The experiment is not designed to help me or my child personally but to help the investigator learn more about survey research and teachers' and students' reading beliefs and practices. Participation is voluntary. I am free to ask questions at any time and withdraw participation without penalty. Each child will receive a bookmark or pencil for their participation.	
<b>Contact Information for Investigators</b>	Ayanna Baccus EDCI 2311 Benjamin Building College Park, MD 20742 301-332-7244 <a href="mailto:baccusa@wam.umd.edu">baccusa@wam.umd.edu</a>	Dr. Marilyn Chambliss Dept. of Curriculum and Instruction 2311 Benjamin Bldg. College Park, MD 20742 301-405-7410 <a href="mailto:mc211@umail.umd.edu">mc211@umail.umd.edu</a>

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Children's Assent Form**

Hello,

This is a study about how teachers and children think and feel about reading. Children will read and fill out surveys that talk about reading. Each child will receive a pencil or bookmark when the surveys are complete. No child will put his or her name on any survey. The surveys will help Miss Baccus to understand what children think about reading.

I agree to participate in the study. I can ask questions about the study or the surveys at any time. I can stop at any time. I am not going to receive a grade for helping with the study.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX E

*Glossary of Literacy Terms*Basal reading program

a collection of student texts and workbooks, teacher's manuals, and supplemental materials for developmental reading and sometimes writing instruction, used chiefly in the elementary and middle school grades

Language arts approach

any way of teaching that emphasizes an integration of several aspects of verbal communication rather – reading, speaking, listening, and writing – than a focus on one component

Literature-based curriculum

a curriculum in which literary works, usually trade books, are the dominant materials for instruction, especially in the language arts

Motivation

the forces within an organism that arouse and direct behavior in one direction or another

Process writing

a writing instruction model that views writing as an ongoing process and in which students follow a given set of procedures for planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing their writing

Readers' workshop

that part of a literature-based reading program in which students engage in reading and responding to trade books, including small-group discussions with the teacher to learn or review key concepts about reading literature

Trade book

commercial books, other than basal readers, that are used for reading instruction

Writer's workshop

a block of school time devoted to student planning, drafting, and editing compositions for publication, often involving peer collaboration

Definitions are from the Literacy Dictionary: The Vocabulary of Reading and Writing (1995) by T.L. Harris & R.E. Hodges (Eds.)



## APPENDIX F

### *Interview Guide*

Background, Education, Interest in Teaching

Years of Teaching Experience

Extent to which teachers can impact student achievement

Goals for Instruction

Time for Reading Instruction and Instructional Activities

What skills are you spending the bulk of your time teaching?

Amount of flexibility in planning instruction

Types of materials? Selection of materials?

How do you know that your instruction has been effective? Assessment?

Student background and preparation, impact on planning/instruction

Level of student motivation, types of activities to keep students motivated

What (other) challenges do you face when teaching reading? How supportive are parents, colleagues, administrators?

What types of professional development in reading does the district provide? How effective is it? Do you do anything else to keep updated on new trends or developments in education?

Ideal reading instruction

How do you feel that administrators and officials can best support classroom teachers with regard to teaching reading in urban areas?

Is there anything else that you would like for me to know about your reading instruction or your students?

## APPENDIX G

*Post Hoc Test Results for Teacher Characteristics**Summary of Tukey's HSD Multiple Comparison Procedure for Total Reading Attitude by Preparation to Teach Reading*

Quality of Preparation to Teach Reading		Mean Difference	Std. Error
Adequate or poor	Very Good	0.56	2.85
	Exceptional	-6.52	3.26
Very Good	Adequate or Poor	-0.56	2.85
	Exceptional	-7.08*	2.90
Exceptional	Adequate or poor	6.52	3.26
	Very Good	7.08*	2.90

\*p &lt; .05

*Summary of Tukey's HSD Multiple Comparison Procedure for General Reading Attitude by Preparation to Teach Reading*

Quality of Preparation to Teach Reading		Mean Difference	Std. Error
Adequate or poor	Very Good	1.49	1.35
	Exceptional	-3.02	1.55
Very Good	Adequate or Poor	-1.49	1.35
	Exceptional	-4.51*	1.38
Exceptional	Adequate or poor	3.02	1.55
	Very Good	4.51*	1.38

\*p &lt; .05

*Summary of Dunnett's T3 Multiple Comparison Procedure for Teacher Efficacy by Library Reading Attitude*

Degree Level		Mean Difference	Std. Error
Bachelor's	Master's	-5.62*	1.35
	Specialist or Doctorate	-1.48	4.50
Master's	Bachelor's	5.62*	1.35
	Specialist or Doctorate	4.14	4.44
Specialist or Doctorate	Bachelor's	1.48	4.50
	Master's	-4.14	4.44

\*p &lt; .05

*Summary of Tukey's HSD Multiple Comparison Procedure for Teacher Efficacy by Race/Ethnicity*

Race/Ethnicity		Mean Difference	Std. Error
Black/African American	White/European American	9.17*	1.77
	Other racial or ethnic group	6.25	3.41
White/European American	Black/African American	-9.17*	1.77
	Other racial or ethnic group	2.92	3.68
Other Racial or Ethnic Group	Black/African American	-6.25	3.41
	White/European American	2.92	3.68

\*p < .05

*Summary of Tukey's HSD Multiple Comparison Procedure for Total Reading Attitude by Reading Habits*

Reading Habits		Mean Difference	Std. Error
Occasional Reader	Frequent Reader	-5.84	4.38
	Very Active Reader	-15.15*	4.30
	Avid Reader	-19.15*	4.42
Frequent Reader	Occasional Reader	5.84	4.38
	Very Active Reader	-9.31*	2.24
	Avid Reader	-13.31*	2.47
Very Active Reader	Occasional Reader	15.15*	4.30
	Frequent Reader	13.31*	2.24
	Avid Reader	-4.00	2.33
Avid Reader	Occasional Reader	19.15*	4.42
	Frequent Reader	13.31*	2.47
	Very Active Reader	4.00	2.33

\*p < .05

*Summary of Tukey's HSD Multiple Comparison Procedure for Home Reading Attitude by Reading Habits*

Reading Habits		Mean Difference	Std. Error
Occasional Reader	Frequent Reader	-1.63	0.80
	Very Active Reader	-2.27*	0.77
	Avid Reader	-2.80*	0.81
Frequent Reader	Occasional Reader	1.63	0.80
	Very Active Reader	-0.64	0.41
	Avid Reader	-1.17	0.45
Very Active Reader	Occasional Reader	2.27*	0.79
	Frequent Reader	0.64	0.41
	Avid Reader	-0.53	0.43
Avid Reader	Occasional Reader	2.80*	0.81
	Frequent Reader	1.17	0.45
	Very Active Reader	0.53	0.43

\*p < .05

*Summary of Tukey's HSD Multiple Comparison Procedure for Recreational Reading Attitude by Reading Habits*

Reading Habits		Mean Difference	Std. Error
Occasional Reader	Frequent Reader	-0.25	1.21
	Very Active Reader	-2.62	1.19
	Avid Reader	-3.30*	1.22
Frequent Reader	Occasional Reader	0.25	1.21
	Very Active Reader	-2.37	0.62
	Avid Reader	-3.05*	0.68
Very Active Reader	Occasional Reader	2.62	1.19
	Frequent Reader	2.37	0.62
	Avid Reader	-0.68	0.64
Avid Reader	Occasional Reader	3.30*	1.22
	Frequent Reader	3.05*	0.68
	Very Active Reader	0.68	0.64

\*p < .05

*Summary of Tukey's HSD Multiple Comparison Procedure for General Reading Attitude by Reading Habits*

Reading Habits		Mean Difference	Std. Error
Occasional Reader	Frequent Reader	-1.80	2.29
	Very Active Reader	-6.07*	2.25
	Avid Reader	-7.80*	2.31
Frequent Reader	Occasional Reader	1.80	2.29
	Very Active Reader	-4.26*	1.17
	Avid Reader	-6.00*	1.29
Very Active Reader	Occasional Reader	6.07*	2.25
	Frequent Reader	4.26*	1.17
	Avid Reader	-1.73	1.21
Avid Reader	Occasional Reader	7.80*	2.31
	Frequent Reader	6.00*	1.29
	Very Active Reader	1.73	1.21

\*p < .05

*Summary of Tukey's HSD Multiple Comparison Procedure for Teacher Efficacy by Reading Habits*

Reading Habits		Mean Difference	Std. Error
Occasional Reader	Frequent Reader	-5.28	2.33
	Very Active Reader	-4.70	2.56
	Avid Reader	-9.05	2.42
Frequent Reader	Occasional Reader	5.28	2.33
	Very Active Reader	0.58	1.77
	Avid Reader	-3.77	1.57
Very Active Reader	Occasional Reader	4.70	2.56
	Frequent Reader	-0.58	1.77
	Avid Reader	-4.35	1.88
Avid Reader	Occasional Reader	9.05	2.42
	Frequent Reader	3.77	1.57
	Very Active Reader	4.35	1.88

\*p < .05

## APPENDIX H

*Cross Tabulations and Chi Square Analysis for Classroom Organization**Classroom Organization and Total Reading Attitude*

		Total Reading Attitude		Total
		Less Positive	Positive	
Classroom Organization	Ability Groups	11	7	18
	Flexible Groups	7	18	25
	Whole Class	10	18	28
	Other	3	1	4
Total		31	44	75

$$\chi^2 = 6.97, df = 3, p > .05$$

*Classroom Organization and Library Reading Attitude*

		Total Reading Attitude		Total
		Less Positive	Positive	
Classroom Organization	Ability Groups	3	7	10
	Flexible Groups	6	5	11
	Whole Class	15	3	18
Total		24	15	39

$$\chi^2 = 8.04, df = 2, p < .05$$

*Classroom Organization and Home Reading Attitude*

		Total Reading Attitude		Total
		Less Positive	Positive	
Classroom Organization	Ability Groups	5	13	18
	Flexible Groups	4	21	25
	Whole Class	11	17	28
	Other	4	0	4
Total		24	51	75

$$\chi^2 = 12.27, df = 3, p < .05$$

*Classroom Organization and Recreational Reading Attitude*

		Total Reading Attitude		Total
		Less Positive	Positive	
Classroom Organization	Ability Groups	10	8	18
	Flexible Groups	6	19	25
	Whole Class	12	16	28
	Other	2	2	4
Total		30	45	75

$\chi^2 = 4.74$ , df = 3, p > .05

*Classroom Organization and General Reading Attitude*

		Total Reading Attitude		Total
		Less Positive	Positive	
Classroom Organization	Ability Groups	10	8	18
	Flexible Groups	8	17	25
	Whole Class	8	20	28
	Other	4	0	4
Total		30	45	75

$\chi^2 = 10.01$ , df = 3, p < .05

*Classroom Organization and Teacher Efficacy*

		Total Reading Attitude		Total
		Less Positive	Positive	
Classroom Organization	Ability Groups	7	11	18
	Flexible Groups	5	20	25
	Whole Class	20	8	28
	Other	2	2	4
Total		34	41	75

$\chi^2 = 14.51$ , df = 3, p < .05

## APPENDIX I

*Significant Cross Tabulations and Chi Square Results for Additional Instruction and Students' Efficacy Beliefs*

*Additional Instruction and Students' Efficacy Beliefs: General Perception*

		General Perception Subscale		
		Low	High	Total
Receives Other	Yes	14	6	20
Instruction	No	19	31	50
Total		33	37	70

$\chi^2 = 5.87, df = 1, p < .05$

*Additional Instruction and Students' Efficacy Beliefs: Observational Comparison*

		Observational Comparison Subscale			
		Low	Middle	High	Total
Receives Other	Yes	12	5	3	20
Instruction	No	7	26	17	50
Total		19	31	20	70

$\chi^2 = 15.29, df = 2, p < .05$



## APPENDIX J

*Cross Tabulations and Chi Square Analysis for Teacher and Student Attitudes and Efficacy Beliefs*

*Teachers' Total Reading Attitude and Students' Recreational Reading Attitude*

		Students' Recreational Reading Attitude			
		Low	Middle	High	Total
Teachers' Total	Low	25	16	11	52
Reading Attitude	Middle	18	30	20	68
	High	20	18	25	63
Total		63	64	56	183

$$\chi^2 = 10.07, df = 4, p < .05$$

*Teachers' Library Reading Attitude and Students' Reader Self-Perception Progress Subscale*

		Students' Reader Self-Perception Progress Subscale			
		Low	Middle	High	Total
Teachers' Library	Low	12	6	20	41
Reading Attitude	Middle	32	53	34	119
	High	12	4	7	23
Total		56	66	61	183

$$\chi^2 = 14.72, df = 4, p < .05$$

*Teachers' Recreational Reading Attitude and Students' Reader Self-Perception Physiological States Subscale*

		Students' Reader Self-Perception Physiological States Subscale			
		Low	Middle	High	Total
Teachers' Recreational	Low	20	22	10	52
Reading Attitude	Middle	30	26	32	88
	High	17	21	5	43
Total		67	69	47	183

$$\chi^2 = 11.62, df = 4, p < .05$$

*Teachers' General Reading Attitude and Students' Reader Self-Perception Social Feedback Subscale*

		Students' Reader Self-Perception Social Feedback Subscale			Total
		Low	Middle	High	
Teachers' General Reading Attitude	Low	29	27	16	72
	Middle	21	21	26	68
	High	17	21	5	43
Total		67	69	47	183

$\chi^2 = 11.04$ ,  $df = 4$ ,  $p < .05$

*Teachers' Efficacy Beliefs and Students' Total Reading Attitudes*

		Students' Total Reading Attitudes			Total
		Low	Middle	High	
Teachers' Efficacy Beliefs	Low	27	18	31	76
	Middle	24	37	13	74
	High	12	8	13	33
Total		63	63	57	183

$\chi^2 = 16.27$ ,  $df = 4$ ,  $p < .05$

*Teachers' Efficacy Beliefs and Students' Recreational Reading Attitudes*

		Students' Recreational Reading Attitudes			Total
		Low	Middle	High	
Teachers' Efficacy Beliefs	Low	22	24	30	76
	Middle	30	33	11	74
	High	11	7	15	33
Total		63	64	56	183

$\chi^2 = 15.80$ ,  $df = 4$ ,  $p < .05$

*Teachers' Efficacy Beliefs and Students' Reader Self-Perception Physiological States Subscale*

		Students' Reader Self-Perception Physiological States Subscale			
		Low	Middle	High	Total
Teachers' Efficacy Beliefs	Low	28	21	27	76
	Middle	30	30	14	74
	High	9	18	6	33
Total		67	69	47	183

$\chi^2 = 10.69$ ,  $df = 4$ ,  $p < .05$

## APPENDIX K

*Cross Tabulations and Chi Square Results for Major Changes to Instruction and Teacher Efficacy*

		Teacher Efficacy		
		Less Positive	Positive	Total
Made Major Changes	Yes	8	27	35
to Reading Instruction	No	24	16	40
Total		32	43	75

$\chi^2 = 10.53$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .05$

## APPENDIX L

*Interview Transcripts*

Teacher A  
July 2003

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself and what lead you to teaching, and how you got to School A?

I (Inaudible) and then I got into a program called Teach for America. I don't know if you're familiar with that, but it takes recent college graduates to teach for a few years in a certain area, either urban or rural. We have like no, I mean I had a little educational training, but we really come not with a lot of training. I'm not a standard teacher. I have a license to teach for a few years. Basically we are employed by the school district. I had to go through the interview process just like any other teacher, and then I was hired by School #1. Now School #1 is not a typical Teach for America school. The population there is very affluent and not very diverse, but the school district is in such a mess that they just placed us in the school district. I guess you could just say that I lucked out with where I got placed. The principal had had experience with Teach for America before and hired a few people from there.

2. Approximately how much time each day do you spend teaching reading or did you spend teaching reading?

Usually it's a 90 minute block but that also includes language arts and stuff, but it's 90 minutes, which is really good because reading/language arts is really hard.

3. What types of things are student doing during that block of time?

A lot, well the first semester we did straight from the reading textbook which had things like teacher read aloud, individual stories within the text book that they would read, different kinds of questions, comprehension questions, critical thinking questions and also vocabulary and language arts. The second semester or second half of the year, we did trade books, stuff like, *Sounder*, *Incredible Journey*, books like that. Every kid got their own novel. We'd read it together as a class, sometimes I would assign it for homework. Then we would do follow up work, usually chapter by chapter, comprehension questions obviously and other activities associated with what they had read. The kids definitely enjoyed that much more. The whole atmosphere was much different when we did trade books. I wish we could have done it for the whole year, but it's good to have structure at the beginning with the textbook and the curriculum. It's also great because a lot of the books we read had movies that we could watch after we read the book. Reading the book and then seeing the movie and comparing the two and also I read aloud books throughout the year, and one that we read was *The Giver*, and we actually went and saw the play too.

4. And what types of skills do you hope the students develop in reading by the end of the year?

Um, making connections, obviously comprehension skills, and reading, but like reading everyday materials, like a travel brochure. I found that kids at School #1 weren't exposed to reading everyday, like reading a newspaper. Not just reading out of a textbook. I think it's important to read all forms of things. Um, definitely comprehension, making generalizations, also like finding a deeper meaning, we do stuff with figurative language and they really seem to enjoy that too, taking a closer look at what the author has to say, and the purpose of writing and who their writing to, the audience.

5. Do you feel that you have enough time to accomplish everything that you want to do during in reading?

There's no way, everything that they want you to, that they require.

6. What do you spend the bulk of your time focusing on in reading and in general?

Reading, its definitely like the different reading skills, predicting, inferring, and also the reading aspect of the test, I would have to say reading is probably the main thing that we do (inaudible), finding the main idea, cause and effect, and other stuff with in our textbook.

7. Do you have a lot of flexibility when it comes to like planning your lessons and activities that you want to do?

Yes, yes, at least at School #1. Like the trade books, we didn't stick to the reading curriculum. I definitely don't feel confined or whatever.

10. How do you know that your instruction has been effective?

Well we do a lot of, with the reading text book comes a lot of assessments, simple reading tests after individual stories that focus on all the different aspects of reading. Then I made my own tests for the trade books. I also used stuff that the other teacher gave me, work that went along with the books. I also gave another reading assessment (inaudible).

11. To what extent as a whole do you feel teachers can impact student achievement in general?

Oh, 100%. I definitely feel that teachers, not just teachers it takes a lot from the child and parents, but the teacher for sure, and you have the environment (inaudible).

12. Have you noticed with your students that they picked up a book that you were reading aloud?

Yes, I also found that like they were getting excited about what we were going to read and extending reading, like doing maps and things. For instance we read a story about Germany and I brought in a map of Germany and we talked about Germany and I felt that that made a big difference. It's definitely better when they have the right background and context for the story. If they can connect to the story then it's better, the reading, and making the kids think about the story and how they would react if they were in that position.

13. How motivated are your students to read and to learn in general?

I would say very motivated in general, my kids in particular are very motivated. .

14. Do you do anything in the classroom to keep them motivated or are they able to sustain that motivation?

There are definitely some that aren't, but I would say overall the motivation was high, but there were a few that were like, 'I don't like school' stuff like that (inaudible). I would say that everyone, they all liked to read. There wasn't just one kid where it was like pulling teeth. We also have this thing where the kids have to read a certain number of books each year. That was easy for them, they were reading like 50-60 books, and the standard for like 5<sup>th</sup> grade was 30 books. I would say in reading they were motivated and they were reading all different types of books. Now the boys really wanted to look at comics and stuff like that. That was pretty disappointing to me, but that's what they wanted. And the parents were pretty supportive. They were willing to buy what they wanted. We had a wish list program and the parents bought the books for the classroom library.

15. What types of professional development does your school district or principal give you?

You really have to seek it out yourself. Although being in Teach for America we do meet once a month with other people and teachers. I get that from them, not from the school district or my principal. They do offer some things, but you really have to go find it. It's pretty frustrating.

16. What do you find the most challenging thing about teaching reading in the district?

Um, assessing the reading, sometimes I felt like, I get that they got the main idea of the story, but the parts, I mean, did they really understand the story or was it my constant questioning throughout the story, would they have understood it if I hadn't questioned them. I worry about what they would do if they had read it on their own. So I think assessing the reading is definitely difficult. (Inaudible) And my kids all came reading on grade level or above. I would say there were even some high school reading levels. That's pretty high.

17. If you could create your own ideal reading block, what would you include?

I would definitely include trade books, I would also include nonfiction. I think that that is something that is important that we didn't do enough of this year. Nonfiction is really good (inaudible). And if we really got involved with what's really happening, real life and reality.

18. Now that you are at the end of your first year to teaching, how do you feel the school district could best support new classroom teachers in reading?

I think having a mentor teacher is good. I had a mentor who taught for 36 years, but definitely emphasizing the mentor teacher program. Also, doing things like meeting once a month so teachers could just talk about how they are doing or dealing with certain things. Luckily I had Teach for America so I already had those things going on. The support they do provide for you throughout the year does make a big difference.

19. Is there anything else that you would like for me to know about your reading instruction or your students?

As a first year teacher, I learned a lot, but there's nothing better than seeing a kid enjoying what they're reading, the satisfaction that they're getting from it. And I read an article about teaching reading in the fourth grade called "The Fourth Grade Sponge", I think and it was in *American Educator*. It was about how during fourth grade, test scores drop and how exposure to words and things can really make a difference in their reading. It was a really great article and it criticized like all of the reading curriculums and told what was wrong with them and really there's nothing out there that's suitable. It was really interesting.



Teacher B  
July 2003

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself, where you went to school, and what lead you to teaching.

Well, I attended [college name] in Sociology and I felt that there was a need for male role models in the schools in [city name]. And I am a product of the school system in [city name] and I felt that I should give back to my community.

2. How did you end up at School B?

How did I end up at School B, well I applied through the system, downtown, and, and then I was sent to School B with Mrs. C. (principal).

3. How long have you been teaching fifth grade?

I am going into my third year.

4. Specifically in reading, what do you believe children in the fifth grade need to be able to do in reading in order to be ready for the sixth grade?

Well, they need to have very good reading comprehension skills. Reading comprehension skills is a problem in the school system, I think, overall. They have to have a good background in reading first, as far as phonics, the pronunciation and such. Then you get to the comprehension, you have to read to understand, not just to read the words.

5. How much time do you spend teaching reading each day?

Each day, depending on the week, we have testing skills and most of that deals with reading comprehension and takes about 30 to 45 minutes of that, and then you have the regular reading block, about 90 minutes. Of that 90 minutes, maybe about 40 to 45 of just reading comprehension

6. Okay, and what other types of things are students doing during that time?

Well, you're learning vocabulary. During the total 90 minutes or?

Yes, during the total time?

During the total 90 minutes, you're learning reading comprehension skills such as monitor and clarify, basically just trying to gather strategies on how to read to understand and then answer questions. You also have vocabulary and you're going over grammatical skills, such as punctuation, and writing assessments.

7. Do you feel that during those 90 minutes you have enough time to accomplish everything that you plan to do?

If you have a structured lesson, you can accomplish a lot in 90 minutes, when you use just a little time for discipline problems. If you can get a good 90 minutes of student learning, that's great.

8. How much flexibility do you have when planning your reading lesson, are you pretty much able to teach what you want to teach?

I am pretty much flexible, as long as it deals with their reading series, as something relevant to the skills that their doing for that time.

9. What types of materials do you use to teach reading?

You have your regular reading series, you also have transparencies, your charts, your graphs, your teacher read-alongs where you, a lot of times I like to read to the students and then ask questions to make sure they're comprehending and everyone's paying attention.

10. And when you read aloud to them do you select a novel to read or do you stick with the reading series?

Reading series, or other items that I come across, you know that I feel are more interesting to the students, sometimes the students aren't interested in the reading series because it's not dealing with something that they deal with everyday. I try to bring relevance to the situation, like read certain items out of magazines about people that they're particularly interested in.

11. How do you know that your instruction has been effective?

Um, it's effective, there's the question and answer period, and also you have smaller sessions just to check the comprehension, depending upon what you're doing, check the comprehension of the students to see who understands and who is paying attention to what you have read or what you said throughout the time that you are teaching. They are facing multiple choice tests, then reading assessments, so you can see pretty much if you're successful with those particular skills that you've taught over maybe a week's period.

12. How prepared were your students when they entered your class from last year?

In reading, um, most of them were prepared; others I had to work with a lot harder this year, some of them weren't quite where they should be. Others were a little slow but you know, and some were pretty lazy, but they pretty much had a good idea of what reading comprehension was on a fifth grade level.

13. And how did this impact you're planning?

Planning, I had to make particular groups, help groups, and I had to place lower reading students who aren't on grade level with students who are little bit higher than them. And also change, as far as homework, at times I wouldn't give some of those lower reading students some of the same items that other students were getting that were on a higher level. I want all students to feel successful, you know, in what they were doing. I didn't want to make them feel bad because they didn't understand certain items, so some of the work was on a fourth grade level for the lower readers to build their self-esteem. Then once I had group assignments and I gave basically the same type of item, or assessment or group project, they were all, they were placed in different groups with different reading levels, they were able to have their input in the group and for the final project in the group or assignment.

14. How motivated are your students to read?

Some are motivated, most of them are, others who had difficulty reading in the past weren't that motivated. Some of them, their hands jump up, they want to read, then you know the ones that wouldn't raise their hands or put their heads on their desks or just act like they were trying to read and pay attention. They were more geared toward mathematics.

15. You mentioned that you tried to give them things that they could feel successful with, what types of other things do you do to keep them motivated?

Um, what I did, I had some awards. I had bought a comprehension book, and in this book they had certain little reading awards, certificates that you can Xerox and copy and give those out to make them feel good. And again, especially the homework, I wouldn't give them the same type of homework that others get. Some of my better readers, you know, if I gave them an assignment, it may have been multiple choice. But for the others it would be open ended questions for the lower readers so they would have to put something down on paper as opposed to just putting down A, B, C or D. You couldn't just pick something and move on, you actually had to put something down and write it out. And also I would call their parents and let them know that they were trying harder in that particular subject, especially if they know that they weren't doing that well. I would send home weekly progress reports. I would let the parents know that they are improving, they're trying.

16. And how supportive were the parents in general?

Overall, you know supportive. One parent even came up. I let her copy some of my books, pages out of my books so she could take home. Her child actually worked on them, and this year it showed up. Last year, he didn't do that well on the standardized testing, but this year he moved up a step. It wasn't at the below average range like it was the year before. He worked hard. I had another parent who attempted to help their child, but, ahhhhh; it didn't work out too well. They really didn't listen to what I had to say. I

really don't think that they put that much effort into it, but overall most of the parents that I've talked to or had telephone conversations with were very helpful and they understood that their child needed and they tried to help them. So overall, yes they were very supportive.

17. What challenges do you face when you are teaching reading?

Well, you have your discipline, but some of the other challenges are that the stories that are part of the reading series are just not interesting. That's why sometimes I bring in other stories, you know, relevant to them, real life. And I do a lot of explaining, and try to bring in items out of magazines, like *Ebony* and *Jet*, that they can deal with and that they'll listen to. Then what I'll do after that is break down what the story is about and how people need to learn how to read and comprehend, it's not all about reading those words, but understanding what you read, you have to sign contracts, and applications and so forth. So, to answer your question, the reading series, some of them are just not interesting.

18. What type of professional development does the school district provide or your principal and how effective is it?

Well, last year we had a reading, it was a professional development class and you got graduate credit for it and it was on the topic of reading. That helped out a lot and it included some of the history of trying to teach reading and comprehension and how to better teach your lesson plans and it gave you different ideas. Then we had a Houghton-Mifflin, uh, it was Houghton Mifflin, well anyway, it was a woman and she instructed us on how to use your reading series most efficiently in the class. She actually provided a lot of professional development. And that class, the one I was talking about before, it was a grad class and we actually got credit for that. And we have our staff meetings where we bring in a new item, like on testing, test-taking; give you ideas how to identify students who may have problems.

19. Do you do anything else to stay updated on different trends or reforms that are going on; it doesn't just have to be in reading?

Me, well this past year, I've been in a certification program at Trinity College, we have a lot of articles and the instructor brings a lot of things, ideas to class. Just sitting with other teachers, new teachers, and we have a master teacher there. I keep up to date with news, newspapers, and internet, stuff like that.

20. If you had all of the time, and the materials, what would your ideal reading lesson look like?

Assuming that everyone can read?

Yes.

Well, we could start off with comprehension, everybody can read and they can comprehend, and I would try to bring more relevance to their lives as far as bring in an employment guide or employment circular and then we could have them fill out applications, look at contracts. I would try to bring more relevance to what their reading, more than just reading a story, passages, and just answering a couple of questions. Something that they can use and identify because you hear them say, How am I going to use this in real life, and you show them how what you're learning in the classroom transfers to real life.

21. How much pressure do you feel to try to focus on testing?

I feel pressured, just overall as a school system you're pressured to teach toward the test more than just learning. You're getting them to answer questions; you're teaching them to answer questions as opposed to really learning. I don't like that. You're judged based on the test. I had a student this year who did everything I wanted on her assignments, in class and on her homework assignments, then when it got to the test, she just had a bad day. She'll be promoted which she deserves to be but overall she just didn't have good performance on the test and a lot of your students are judged on that. You're judged on that and a student may have, like I said, had a bad day. And I spoke to the parents, and she explained to me that there were some things going on in the home at that time. The mother told me, we had a lot of things going on and we came in very late, and I wrote that in one of my notes, she came in and looked dead tired, she put her head on her desk and throughout the year, during test taking time and other things she was the best student. One of the best out of maybe five and who I counted on to do very well on that test and it didn't show up on the test.

22. How do you feel that school administrators and school system officials can best support classroom teachers with regard to teaching reading?

I can say for my school that we basically have a lot of resources as far as books and materials. I hear other teachers say that they don't have books, but from my personal standpoint, my school has a lot of supplies a lot of materials that teachers can use to try to help the students.

23. Is there anything else that you would like for me to know about your reading instruction or your students?

No, I can just say that I tried my best and I hope that all students read.

Teacher C  
July 2003

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself, where you went to school, and what lead you to teaching, and how you got to School #2?

(Inaudible) that led me to Mrs. C. and School #2 and what I think is one of the best schools.

2. How long have you been at School #2?

This will be my third year.

3. How much time do you spend each day teaching reading?

We have a 90 minute reading block but actually I spend a lot more time than that because of social studies and math, reading is in everything. Every subject has reading in it.

4. And what types of things are students doing during that time?

We have DEAR time where they can actually sit down and read, and a lot of times when I do my DEAR time I like for them to see me read because if they see me then they might be like, okay he's reading so it's okay to read. I want them to have a positive outlook because it's almost like a punishment for a lot of kids. Go to your room and read your book. That's their punishment.

5. Do you feel that you have enough time to accomplish everything that you plan to do during that reading block?

A lot of times I go over, but I do my planning so I can just carry it over to the next day. It takes a lot, a lot of planning. Without planning it just falls apart because you can go off on something longer than you need to and then neglect the main things that you really need to focus on.

6. What do you hope that your students will accomplish in reading by the end of the school year? What kinds of goals do you have for reading?

I really don't have a lot of goals. I just want them to improve first of all, as far as like the Stanford 9, I'm really against that test. I think a lot of times teachers put too much toward the test and neglect the real stuff that they need to survive in this world, and reading is an example.

7. What do you spend the bulk of your time on when you're teaching reading?

Comprehension would be the major thing because vocabulary is really not that hard to teach. Once they understand the rules of the language, it's not that hard, but with comprehension, they have to know that not only do they have to read this but they have to understand it and interpret it as well.

10. Definitely. How much flexibility do you have when it comes to planning your reading lessons? Are you pretty much able to teach what you want to teach?

Yes. I can pretty much teach what I want and a lot of times that makes it easier because a lot of times we may not go through the book and some people may frown upon that but I may go and pick up some applications from a restaurant and have them interpret different information.

11. What types of materials do you use? You mentioned those restaurant applications.

Applications, bus schedules, a lot of stuff that they use in everyday life, it may be visiting hours at the hospital. Things that may be neglected in everyday life and you realize, 'hey I've lived in the city all my life and I can't even ride the bus'.

12. How do you know that your instruction has been effective?

The best way for me is when you look at a child and you know where he was when you started with him and then at the end you see that progress and that he's moving along. I mean that test really doesn't show me a lot; it's at a certain time in the year. They could get the test right and not learn a thing.

13. Besides the test, do you use any other types of assessments?

I use different types of assessments, but if they don't always get it right, I'm not going to hold that against them. I mean, if you can read the story and explain it to me, then that shows me that you understood. A lot of kids have trouble with the test so you have to incorporate different things, and it's really hard if you don't know how.

14. How prepared were your students when they entered your classroom last year?

Not really what you would expect because a lot of them get a lot of leeway and then when they come to my classroom it's like, 'Oh my god we never had someone make us work' and I try to teach them that you won't have nothing without hard work. The only way that you will have something is if you work hard and practice, whether it be basketball, or reading, your academics, or anything.

15. How did their preparation impact your planning?

One of the main things is working in the district you have a lot of kids on different academic levels so I couldn't just make my plans for one level when I have three

for four different reading levels. It's really kind of hard because if you do make plans for just one, then there are some kids who really will not benefit from it at all. (Inaudible).

16. How motivated are your students when it comes to reading?

They look at reading as like a punishment. It takes a lot to bend them and break them from that. Sometimes I may write a contract and put certain words in it and it will say that you have to work for the rest of your life for free and if they sign it, I'll sit down and have a talk with them. You have to understand what you are reading. Somebody could take everything you own just like that. I do that a lot, put anything down on paper and try to get them to sign it and if they do it, I'm like, 'I could really take you to court', just so that they could understand how the real world really works.

17. What challenges do you face when you teach reading?

One of the main things is they come to me real weak and it's really a task when you have about 10 kids who are on level, and then say another five who are functioning a grade level below, and then you have some that are just, I mean I don't know how they could get to that point. And it makes you feel sad, but somebody has to step up and help these kids.

18. How supportive are the parents, and other teachers, and your principal?

The principal is great, I mean whatever I ask for, if I can prove that it will help the kids, then usually I have it. Parents are so-so. You have, you know your few that will support, but usually from the teachers' standpoint, it's just us. That's how we do it. If the parents are there, that's great, but we're not going to hold that as to why we can't achieve what we want to achieve.

19. What types of professional development does the school district provide?

I don't know about the school district, but I know my principal tries to have one or two classes that you can take for reading, but at the same time, I'm working on my master's at Trinity.

20. The classes that your principal pays for are they pretty good at keeping you up to date on new trends?

Very, I mean she usually looks at what areas we are weak in and then, I know my first year we had a reading comprehension course. This year it was another class on classroom management. You have to have management for kids to learn.

21. If you had all of the resources and all of the time, what would your ideal reading lesson look like?



With all of the time and resources we could really do anything. I like to get active with my kids; it could be a puppet show. I'm more of the type to do whatever it takes, if it takes me to go outside to get you're to learn, then we'll go outside. It would have to be very very flexible. I probably would break the class sizes down just a little bit. Uh, and I would make it fun. That's one of the things that I see, I look at the older teachers and they don't make it fun, and if learning is not going to be fun who wants to do it. I don't really want to teach all day if it's going to be boring. I would just try to make it as fun as possible.

22. How do you feel that administrators and school officials can best support classroom teachers with regard to teaching reading?

Actually, as a new teacher, they just throw you in there and that's not necessarily a bad thing to do. There's a lot of things that you learn in the classroom that you just don't learn elsewhere. I look at some of my peers that I go to school with and if they were put in the situations that I have been in, hmm, it's just learning on the job.

23. Is there anything else that you would like for me to know about your reading instruction or your students?

I basically think all kids have the ability to learn how to read, you just have to sometimes fulfill their basic needs. I fill a lot of their basic needs by just being that male role model. Once I can do that and show that I am going to support them, it makes it a lot easier.

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