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Tami McClain
tamimcclain1@gmail.com

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**SELF-EFFICACY SUPPORTS OF THIRD GRADE READING TEACHERS
IN THE HIGHEST READING PERFORMING SCHOOLS IN GEORGIA**

This is to certify that I have examined this copy of the doctoral dissertation by

Tami S. McClain

and have found that it is complete and satisfactory in all respects,
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Cherie Gaines 9/30/2021

Committee Chair Date

[Signature] 9/30/2021

Committee Member Date

Chesica Cave 9/30/21

Committee Member Date

Christopher Stitt 9/30/2021

EdD Director Date

Teresa A. Dickell 9/30/2021

Dean, School of Education Date

**SELF-EFFICACY SUPPORTS OF THIRD GRADE READING
TEACHERS IN THE HIGHEST READING PERFORMING SCHOOLS IN
GEORGIA**

Dissertation

**Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education
in the Carter and Moyers School of Education
at Lincoln Memorial University**

by

Tami S. McClain

October 2021

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Dedication

This dissertation is first dedicated to my husband Kelly for all of the support you have given me throughout this journey. I thank you for never once complaining while I spent countless hours working away and your putting all your plans on hold. I will forever be grateful for your letting me fulfill my dream. Next, I would like to thank my daughters, Lauren and Emi, for all of their encouraging words and working their lives around my schedule while I wrote this dissertation. You two girls are the light of my life, and I appreciate all you sacrificed so I could finally achieve my dream. I want to offer up a special thank you to my parents, Tommy and Sarah Silvers, who always encouraged me to always treat each child like I wanted someone to treat my own. Thank you for encouraging me not just to reach for my dream but to be the best person, the best Mom, and the best teacher I could be. I wish you both were here to see my dream come true. Lastly, I dedicate this to my grandchildren, Victoria, Tucker, and Walker, because I want each of you to be the best person you can be. I want you to know anything is possible if you want it enough.

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I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Dr. Cherie Gaines for her patience and guidance throughout this journey. Her constant questions of *why* led me down paths I did not want to take but I am glad I took. Thank you so much for your patience with me. I am eternally grateful for you. Thank you to Dr. Kristy Hutson and Dr. Chessica Cave for all of your support in helping me clarify and add more detail. I am grateful for your expert guidance and help.

Abstract

Students needed to be able to read in elementary school to be successful in school and in life. Meanwhile, teachers graduated from teacher preparation colleges and not able to teach reading once they were in their own classrooms. Teachers who developed self-efficacy in the teaching of reading were the best teachers to teach reading. The purpose of this qualitative interpretive study was to determine third grade reading teachers' perceptions of how school leaders, professional development, and instructional coaching supported the development of self-efficacy in reading instruction. I conducted this study in three schools in a school district with the highest reading scores in the state of Georgia. Teachers indicated supports from professional development, instructional coaches, and school leaders helped them to develop self-efficacy. These teachers additionally stated modeling of new strategies was the most impactful source of developing self-efficacy.

Table of Contents

CHAPTER	PAGE
Chapter I: Introduction	1
Statement of the Problem	3
Research Questions	7
Theoretical Framework	8
Significance of the Study.....	10
Description of the Terms	11
Organization of the Study.....	13
Chapter II: Review of the Literature	16
History of Reading	16
Struggles from Low Reading Ability	18
Student Self-Efficacy.....	21
Self-Efficacy of Teachers	27
Preservice Teacher Preparation for Reading Instruction.....	30
Providing Teacher Support.....	36
Summary of Review of the Literature	46
Chapter III: Methodology.....	48
Research Design	48
Role of the Researcher.....	49

Participants of the Study.....	50
Data Collection.....	52
Methods of Analysis.....	54
Trustworthiness of the Data.....	54
Limitations and Delimitations	56
Assumptions of the Study.....	57
Summary of Methodology.....	57
Chapter IV: Analyses and Results	59
Data Analysis.....	59
Research Questions	60
Summary of Results	67
Chapter V: Discussion of the Study	68
Implications for Practice.....	69
Recommendations for Further Research	70
Conclusions of the Study.....	71
References	72
Appendix A Questionnaire.....	86
Appendix B District Permission Request Letter	88
Appendix C Principal Permission Request Letter	91
Appendix D Teacher Consent Request Letter	93

List of Figures

Figure	Page
Figure 1 Coding for School Leaders' Support of Reading Teachers	61
Figure 2 Coding for Instructional Coaches' Support of Reading Teachers	63
Figure 3 Coding for Professional Development Support of Reading Teachers	65
Figure 4 Coding for Teachers' Perceptions of Supports that Helped.....	66

Chapter I: Introduction

Books have the power to transform lives by encouraging imagination, prompting critical thinking, and developing empathy (Capotosto et al., 2017; Cowell, 2018). Cowell (2018) stated when students succeeded in reading, the students developed the skills needed to be successful in school, later in the workforce, and most importantly throughout their adult lives. The main communication tool for all of life was the ability to read, as reading was the window of knowledge (Blazer & Kraft, 2017).

Leidig et al. (2018) stated acquiring good reading skills was one of the main objectives of elementary school, and as soon as students gained proficiency in this area, children *read* in every subject in school. Teachers encouraged self-regulated, silent, sustained reading once students master the main objectives of reading comprehension, which typically happened in third grade (Capotosto et al., 2017). Since learning to read was critical to children's futures, it was important that children develop early reading skills (Hairston, 2011). Capotosto et al. (2017) and Leidig et al. (2018) contended during the first three years of elementary school, students learned to decode letters and words into sentences, which teachers called *learning to read*. When students acquired the competency to derive meaning and extract information from text, this was *reading to learn*.

Copeland and Martin (2016) explained reading development was critical because children who could not read faced a future of educational, social, and economic limits. Bos et al. (2001), Cunningham et al. (2004), and Hurford et al. (2016) concluded, however, teachers did not have the basic knowledge required to teach children how to read. Moats (2020), Bos et al. (2001), and Binks-Cantrell

et al. (2012) suggested the lack of the ability to teach reading related to the lack of basic understanding of the concepts needed to teach reading skills, which suggested a cause of reading failure was related to poor teacher preparation. Furthermore, Bos et al. (2001) reported 53% of preservice teachers were unable to correctly answer nearly half of the test items that assessed their knowledge of language structure. Darling-Hammond (2000) stated there was a direct relationship between the teachers' knowledge and skills, effective reading instruction, and student outcomes. Regardless of the teacher's knowledge of teaching reading, a child's teacher had an influence on the academic growth of a child, more than any other single factor, including families, neighborhoods, and schools (Darling-Hammond, 2001).

Even though learning to read was important, preservice teachers had not been taught how to teach students to read (Alderman & Beyeler, 2008; Binks-Cantrell et al., 2012; Cunningham et al., 2004; Durgunoglu & Hughes, 2010; Goldman, 2012; Hurford et al., 2016; Joshi et al., 2009). Durgunoglu and Hughes (2010) found preservice teachers were confident they could teach children to read, but once they became teachers, they realized they lacked the knowledge needed to teach reading. Durgunoglu and Hughes found self-efficacy was related to work performance. Teachers who had high self-efficacy persisted at complicated tasks and put in sufficient effort to produce successful outcomes, whereas teachers with low self-efficacy were likely to give up prematurely (Durgunoglu & Hughes, 2010). Lee and Jonson-Reid (2015) found teachers who had developed self-efficacy had a positive impact on reading. Support from school leaders, professional development (PD), and instructional coaching were

three ways to help teachers develop self-efficacy in teaching reading (Baez-Hernandez, 2019; Bebas, 2016; Berebitsky & Salloum, 2017; Bradshaw et al., 2018; Bray-Clark & Bates, 2003; Conroy et al., 2019; Davis-Kean et al., 2008; Duyar et al., 2013; Epstein & Willhite, 2015; Gibbons & Cobb, 2017; Jamil et al., 2012; Johnson, 2016).

Statement of the Problem

Alnahdi (2015) stated the ability to read was one of the most critical requirements for academic success. Ko and Hughes (2015) also concurred reading was essential for success in early grades, and reading was a process that could be taught. Students needed to have a strong foundation in reading to progress adequately from grade level to grade level (Hairston, 2011). Hairston (2011) stated reading skills and the ability to read must be present for students to have equal opportunity to access the general curriculum.

Alnahdi (2015) suggested students who did not have the ability to read well were less successful in school since reading was required for almost every subject in school. Students who did not have the ability to read well struggled with reading content in their other classes in school and did not succeed in those classes. When students were not successful in elementary and secondary schools, this made college and vocational schools very hard to access for those struggling readers (Alnahdi, 2015). Students who were below grade level in reading needed teachers with high self-efficacy in teaching reading (Baez-Hernandez, 2019; Bebas, 2016; Berebitsky & Salloum, 2017; Bradshaw et al., 2018; Bray-Clark & Bates, 2003; Cunningham et al., 2004; Davis-Kean et al., 2008; Williams, 2012).

Additionally, Bray-Clark and Bates (2003) stated teachers needed coaching and PD that addressed the genuine needs of the classroom, made better teachers, and improved student outcomes. Bray-Clark and Bates (2003) also stated the following:

Consequently, teacher effectiveness is largely dependent on personal agency, or how teachers define task, employ strategies, view the possibility of success, and ultimately solve the problems and challenges they face. It is this concept of personal agency—the capacity of teachers to be self-organizing, self-reflective, self-regulating and proactive in their behavior—that underlies the importance of self-efficacy as a critical component in teacher effectiveness. The link between personal agency and a teacher’s efficacy beliefs lies in personal experience and a teacher’s ability to reflect on that experience and make decisions about future courses of action. (p. 14)

According to Lee and Jonson-Reid (2015), students needed teachers who had developed self-efficacy in teaching reading to help students achieve the reading required to graduate high school and the reading level needed to succeed in life. Kolawole and Jire-Alao (2015) and Leader-Janssen and Rankin-Erickson (2013) claimed teacher preparation programs did not adequately teach preservice teachers how to teach reading to the students. Additionally, Moats (2020) and Ko and Hughes (2015) agreed preservice teachers were not prepared to teach reading and suggested support of school leaders, instructional coaching, and PD were critical to help teachers build self-efficacy to teach reading effectively.

The National Reading Panel (2004) stated more information was needed on ways to teach teachers how to use proven reading strategies that produced positive results because there was not an assessment to judge how well the teachers taught reading or what reading components preservice teachers knew. Stotsky (2006) stated reading instructional knowledge was assessed by all of the testing accreditation agencies, such as National Evaluation Systems, Educational Testing Service, and National Board Certification, but the test of teacher accreditation was comprised of subject-matter tests and not on a test of teaching reading skills.

Leader-Janssen and Rankin-Erickson (2013) concluded, “Teachers must possess in-depth knowledge of the content, an awareness of the learning needs of their students, and a large repertoire of instructional methods to be successful teachers” (p. 205). Ko and Hughes (2015) acknowledged teachers needed improved teacher preparation to support teachers on how to teach reading. Furthermore, Moats (2020) agreed teacher preparation programs and widely used curricula in teacher preparation programs did not teach preservice teachers how to teach reading.

Researchers agreed explicit teaching of reading was critical, and support from school leaders, PD, and coaching were needed to help reading teachers develop self-efficacy, so teachers could explicitly teach reading and therefore, improve the teaching of reading (Baez-Hernandez, 2019; Bebas, 2016; Berebitsky & Salloum, 2017; Blazer & Kraft, 2017; Bradshaw et al., 2018; Bray-Clark & Bates, 2003; Conroy et al., 2019; Davis-Kean et al., 2008; Duyar et al., 2013; Epstein & Willhite, 2015; Gibbons & Cobb, 2017; Jamil et al., 2012; Johnson,

2016; Moats, 2020) . Additionally, Gersten et al. (2001) stated teachers needed support from school leaders, PD, and coaching to plan and implement the lessons that improved reading instruction. When instructional coaches helped to plan and implement lessons that improved reading, this, in turn, helped teachers develop self-efficacy. Furthermore, Ko and Hughes (2015) stated school leaders, PD, and reading instructional coaches needed to have a more active role in monitoring the delivery of strategies necessary for the instruction of teachers to teach reading. Importantly, Bray-Clark and Bates (2003) argued teacher effectiveness should be explicitly taught during PD and coaching. Teachers who were taught how to be effective at teaching reading developed self-efficacy. Teachers who were self-organizing, self-reflective, self-regulating, and proactive in their teaching also developed self-efficacy (Bray-Clark & Bates, 2003).

According to Bandura (1977), self-efficacy was an individual's belief in their capability "to organize and execute the course of action required to manage prospective situations" (p. 2). Self-efficacy was a task-specific belief that regulated one's effort, choice, and persistence when faced with an obstacle (Bray-Clark & Bates, 2003). The self-efficacy of a teacher had predictive power across a range of behaviors and tasks, and, more importantly, the self-efficacy was tied to motivation (Bray-Clark & Bates, 2003). Bray-Clark and Bates also reported ongoing training and teacher learning developed self-efficacy. Teachers who had positive self-efficacy were more likely to transfer skills learned and implement new techniques learned through PD and coaching (Bray-Clark & Bates, 2003). Bray-Clark and Bates (2003) suggested positive teacher self-efficacy had an important implication for the overall effectiveness of the

school, and positive teacher self-efficacy was a factor among a school's climate, professional culture, and educational effectiveness. The purpose of this qualitative interpretive study was to determine third grade reading teachers' perceptions of how school leaders, PD, and instructional coaching supported the development of self-efficacy in reading instruction.

Research Questions

In this study, I wanted to know third grade teachers' perceptions of school leaders, PD, and instructional coaching related to the teachers' self-efficacy in the teaching of reading. The only way to answer that question was to ask the teachers themselves.

Research Question 1

According to third grade teachers in the top three highest reading scoring schools in Georgia, how do school leaders provide supports to develop teachers' self-efficacy in teaching reading?

Research Question 2

According to third grade teachers in the top three highest reading scoring schools in Georgia, how do instructional coaches provide supports to develop teacher self-efficacy in teaching reading?

Research Question 3

According to third grade teachers in the top three highest reading scoring schools in Georgia, how does professional development provide supports to develop teachers' self-efficacy in teaching reading?

Research Question 4

What are teachers' perceptions of needed supports from school leaders, instructional coaches, and professional development to build teacher self-efficacy in reading?

Theoretical Framework

Bandura (1971), in *social learning theory*, suggested behavior was learned from the environment through the process of observational learning. People noticed the actions of others around them and rewards for those actions and wanted to imitate those actions to be rewarded. In 1977, Bandura expanded on social learning theory and coined the term *self-efficacy* (Bandura, 1977).

Self-efficacy was based on Bandura's social cognitive theory and depended on the individual's perception of their ability for successful outcomes (Bandura, 1977). Bandura stated all individuals were competent and capable of being successful if given the opportunity to obtain mastery experiences, the modeling of behaviors, and the support needed to be successful. Self-efficacy was a person's belief they could succeed in a particular situation (Bandura, 1986). Academic self-efficacy was formed by performances, persuasion from others, positive experiences, and physiological reaction. Bandura (1977), Blazer and Kraft (2017), and Gersten et al. (2001) concluded teachers who received support from school leaders, PD, and instructional coaching developed self-efficacy and, in turn, had students who achieved higher on standardized testing (Shidler, 2009). The exact definition of self-efficacy, according to Bandura (1977), was an individual's belief in their capability "to organize and execute the course of action required to manage prospective situations" (p. 2). Bandura (1982) believed

self-efficacy was most malleable in early learning, and, therefore, the first years of teaching were critical to the long-term development of teacher efficacy. The belief one had in their own ability to succeed played a role in how they thought, acted, and felt about his place in the world. Bandura (1977) found self-efficacy had an impact on the psychological state, especially related to behaviors and motivation. Self-efficacy determined how challenges, tasks, and goals were approached and met. Self-efficacy beliefs of teachers who delivered reading instruction correlated to student success on reading assessments (Shidler, 2009). Corkett et al. (2011) stated self-efficacy of a teacher was related to the self-efficacy of a student.

According to Shidler (2009), building self-efficacy in teachers should take place in explicit instruction; the most effective way to build self-efficacy was to provide instructional sessions or PD. Corkett et al. (2011) also stated teachers were the single most important influence on a child's reading development. Corkett et al. (2011) concluded students' reading comprehension was not only influenced by their cognitive ability but also by non-intellectual variables such as the students' beliefs they were capable. The way students felt, thought, and behaved in academic situations was influenced by the confidence in their own abilities, and it was through their interpretation of their performance that they developed self-efficacy (Corkett et al., 2011).

Teacher self-efficacy was important to teaching reading. Blazer and Kraft (2017) stated schools needed to focus on enhancing teachers' self-efficacy to improve the students' self-efficacy. In this study, I used Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy as a framework for this research due to the teacher's self-efficacy

leading to student self-efficacy in reading. The supports of PD, instructional coaching, and the school leaders gave to teachers led to the development of the teachers' self-efficacy, which, in turn, led teachers to be successful reading teachers (Hallam et al., 2015).

Significance of the Study

Mather et al. (2001) stated preservice teachers had an insufficient grasp of spoken and written language and were unable to teach reading to children. In 2010, Durrance, a Southern Regional Education Board Policy analyst, surveyed 2,200 preservice teachers about how much their teacher preparation programs focused on essential components of reading instruction and found 25% reported any kind of focus on reading instruction (2017). Hurford et al. (2016) stated, "Learning to read is arguably one of the most complicated and important skills in which humans engage. Academic and career success are dependent on proficient reading skills" (p. 885). Hurford et al. (2016) went on to state 65% of fourth graders read at the below proficient level, and 32% of fourth graders read below basic level. Bos et al. (2001) stated teachers lacked the basic knowledge required to teach reading because preservice teachers were not taught *how* to teach reading. Joshi et al. (2009) concluded quality reading instruction in kindergarten through third grade was imperative to prevent reading failure.

Alnahdi (2015), Mather et al. (2001), Leidig et al. (2018), and Ko and Hughes (2015) proposed students' inability to read led to academic problems in higher grades when the text was more complex. Furthermore, Leidig et al. (2018) stated students who were poor at reading by the end of the third grade continued to fall further behind academically. Additionally, Kolawole and Jire-Alao (2015),

Leader-Janssen and Rankin-Erickson (2013), and Ko and Hughes (2015) implied teacher education programs needed help on how to teach preservice teachers to teach reading. Gersten et al. (2001), Ko and Hughes (2015), and Bray-Clark and Bates (2003) stated teachers needed to have positive self-efficacy. The best ways to develop positive self-efficacy of teachers was through the school leaders, instructional coaching, and PD (Baez-Hernandez, 2019; Bebas, 2016; Berebitsky & Salloum, 2017; Blazer & Kraft, 2017; Bradshaw et al., 2018; Bray-Clark & Bates, 2003; Conroy et al., 2019; Davis-Kean et al., 2008; Duyar et al., 2013; Epstein & Willhite, 2015; Gibbons & Cobb, 2017; Jamil et al., 2012; Johnson, 2016; Moats, 2020).

I wanted to find out the best way increase the number of students reading and experiencing success in life. I chose to do a study of third grade teachers who taught at the top three performing elementary schools in the Georgia because that was the first grade that reading was assessed in Georgia. I chose schools from the results of the Georgia Milestones Assessment, which provided information on achievement and readiness for students' next level of learning. All three schools had over 80% of their students reading at or above grade level.

Description of the Terms

In this section, I included specific terms used in this study. The terms related to the parameters of this study only.

Instructional Coaching

Instructional coaching was instruction by a colleague, who had been trained on how to teach teachers, as a form of job-embedded support and was content focused. Instructional coaches supported teachers' development of

high-quality instructional practices in teaching reading (Gibbons & Cobb, 2017).

The coach was highly accomplished by proven success in their classroom or trained in the teaching of reading and was based in a single school. Instructional coaches supported teachers by engaging them in activities on content, how students learned those ideas, and instructional methods that supported student learning.

Professional Development

According to Bebas (2016), PD was the instruction that developed the best teachers in the building. PD was in-house training by the district on a wide variety of specialized training or advanced professional learning intended to help administrators, teachers, and educators improve professional knowledge, competence, skills, and effectiveness (Bray-Clark & Bates, 2003). Bebas (2016) and Bray-Clark and Bates (2016) described PD as the school leaders providing extra classes or speakers to help promote the skill of teaching reading to develop self-efficacy for the reading teachers in the building.

Reading

Reading was the ability to use, understand, evaluate, and engage in written text to participate in society, achieve one's goals, and develop knowledge and potential (Mraz et al., 2016). Reading meant being able to read well enough to fill out job applications, read a prescription label, fulfill the reading requirements of a job, read a book for enjoyment, and read a book to a child or help with homework (Goldman, 2012).

School Leaders

School leaders were responsible for the daily instructional leadership and managerial operation in the school building (Duyar et al., 2013). School leaders were responsible for the environment of teacher learning and support, so the teachers could develop self-efficacy in reading. In this study, *school leaders* included the principal and assistant principal at the school.

Supports

For the purpose of this study, I defined supports as anything provided by PD, instructional coaches, and school leaders to help the teacher develop self-efficacy in teaching reading. This included providing workshops, books, and coverage of classes during PD. Supports also included physical and monetary resources to supply teachers with items the teachers needed to teach reading effectively.

Teacher Self-Efficacy

Teacher self-efficacy was the teachers' belief they had the ability to effectively carry out the task well enough to influence important academic outcomes (Barni et al., 2019).

Organization of the Study

In Chapter I, I introduced the importance of reading. Blazer and Kraft (2017), Capotosto et al. (2017), and Cowell (2018) concluded the ability to read was critical. Copeland and Martin (2016) stated children who did not learn to read faced limitations throughout their whole life. I then described the Statement of the Problem. Alnahdi (2015), Hairston (2011), Leidig et al. (2018), and Mather et al. (2001) concurred reading was important because the inability to read led children

to struggle in their classes, the children sometimes dropped out of school, and sometimes had trouble filling out a job application. Baez-Hernandez (2019), Bebas (2016), Berebitsky and Salloum (2017), Bradshaw et al. (2018), Bray-Clark and Bates (2003), Cunningham et al. (2004) Davis-Kean et al. (2008), and Williams (2012) proposed students who were behind in reading needed teachers who had self-efficacy in their ability to teach reading to succeed.

Teachers needed support from school leaders, support from PD, and support from instructional coaches to build self-efficacy to teach reading (Baez-Hernandez, 2019; Bebas, 2016; Berebitsky & Salloum, 2017; Blazer & Kraft, 2017; Bradshaw et al., 2018; Bray-Clark, 2003; Conroy et al., 2019; Davis-Kean et al., 2008; Duyar et al., 2013; Epstein & Willhite, 2015; Gibbons & Cobb, 2017; Jamil et al., 2012; Johnson, 2016; Moats, 2020).

I then included the research questions that guided this study. In the Significance of the Study, I introduced researchers who stated one of the reasons teachers needed to build self-efficacy in teaching reading was because teacher preparation programs did not give implicit instruction about how to teach reading; therefore, preservice teachers graduated college without knowing how to teach reading. Finally, I provided Description of Terms essential for this study.

In Chapter II, I presented the Review of Literature. In the history of the literature, I described the history of reading and the people's struggles with low reading skills in the United States. I then discussed the importance of student self-efficacy followed by teacher self-efficacy. Researchers suggested self-efficacy could be strengthened if provided support, which I discussed as PD, instructional coaching, and school leaders. In Chapter III, I discussed the role of

the researcher in a qualitative research and the participants of the study. In data collection, I explained the questionnaire used to gather data. Then I explained the method of analyzation of the data and explained how trustworthiness was maintained. I discussed the limitations, delimitations, and assumptions of the study. In Chapter IV, I presented the findings from the data collection. I then explained the analysis of the data, answered the research questions, and provided a summary. In Chapter V, I discussed the study and the implications of the study. Finally, I gave recommendations for further research and conclusions from the study.

Chapter II: Review of the Literature

In this chapter, I provided readers a comprehensive review of literature on the belief of self-efficacy facilitating the role of reading. The review of literature began with a record of how reading evolved in education. After presenting the historical context and the exploration process for this chapter, a review of literature related to self-efficacy followed. It was imperative to gain knowledge of self-efficacy to achieve a complete understanding of how self-efficacy had a direct influence on student achievement and was, therefore, a responsibility of not only the classroom teacher but also the school leaders.

I presented a review of literature on the school leader, highlighting the history of the school leaders, challenges faced by school leaders, and the role the school leader played in teachers' self-efficacy. Subsequently, I provided novice teacher self-efficacy literature that illustrated how the lack of real-life experiences and specific coursework in instructional strategies, including reading, affected teacher competency, which resulted in an increased need for school leaders to support novice teachers in reading instruction. Collectively, the review of the literature provided research on self-efficacy, school leaders, instructional coaching, and PD necessary to develop the expertise of teachers in reading instruction when teachers began without specific college preparation in this area.

History of Reading

According to Vincent (2003), written communication dated back to 3500 B.C. when few people learned to read and write; those people held public performances such as plays and displayed their skill. Books were expensive and rare, but the invention of the printing press in the 15th century made printed books

more common (Kaestle, 1985), and books became more widely available. When the settlers from Europe came to the United States and founded the first colony at Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607, religious sects, such as the Puritans and the Protestants, encouraged and placed a high value on reading, especially reading the Bible. When the new people came to America, their children were used to going to school in England, so the parents demanded school in the newly formed country (Vincent, 2003). Reading then became a primary goal in the United States public education system (Kaestle, 1985).

Kaestle (1985) explained around the 1800s there was an expansion to develop the western portion of the United States. People moved to new territories where there was no law and order nor schools. The Industrial Revolution, around 1850, led to the advancement of reading because paper production reduced the cost of books, making them more accessible to everyone who could already read, but the Industrial Revolution also led young children away from reading because children worked in the factories. The Industrial Revolution led to new jobs in the cities instead of jobs in the rural areas. Young adults began to move into the cities for better jobs with more pay (History Channel, 2020).

Even as young as eight, children took jobs to help support their families due to the high cost of living in the city. Employers hired children over adults because children could be paid less to work more hours since there were no labor laws that prevented children from working. The ability to read was not needed in factories, so children no longer attended school; they worked all day (Kaestle, 1985). Education was no longer highly regarded, and high rates of illiteracy began to emerge, as survival was more important than reading. Immigrants came to the

United States for job opportunities (Kaestle, 1985). The United States Government saw what was happening in the factories. People were concerned with immigrants coming to the United States, so the Compulsory Education Law was enacted in 1852 (Kaestle, 1985). The Compulsory Education Law required all children, including immigrant children, to attend school at the age of six. It was not until the early 1900s that most of the states required school-aged children to attend school (Hall, 1994). Children were sent to school on a daily basis, and there was an emphasis on teaching basic reading and math (Hall, 1994).

Struggles from Low Reading Ability

The Partnership for Reading (2003) suggested poor reading and writing skills were the biggest contributors to students dropping out of school. In addition, Joshi et al. (2009) reported at least half of the adolescents with histories of substance abuse or criminal records had reading problems. The RAND Reading Study Group (2001), The Partnership for Reading (2003), and The National Reading Panel (2004) found lack of reading achievement was an obstacle for students when finding a good job and being successful in life. According to Copeland and Martin (2016), the lack of reading ability led to setbacks in the job market and correlated to lower median earnings and higher unemployment rates. Students who failed to acquire reading in childhood faced a future with educational, social, and economic limits (Copeland & Martin, 2016).

Leidig et al. (2018) stated students who were poor at reading by the end of the third grade continued to fall further behind academically than their peers. According to Hurford et al. (2016), 32% of fourth graders read at a level below basic, and 65% read below the proficient level in the Midwestern United States.

According to Leidig et al. (2018), the task of learning to read was a challenge, and approximately 10% of all students in the United States had a low level of text understanding at the end of their elementary education.

According to the 2019 United States National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), students scored lower on both the fourth grade and eighth grade National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Scores for fourth grade students tested in 2017 and 2019 increased in only one state. There was no change in scores for 34 states. The scores decreased for fourth grade students in 17 states. The 2019 scores for eighth grades were lower than the 2017 scores for eighth graders. Only one state scored higher in 2019 than in 2017. Twenty states scored the same in 2019 as they did in 2017. Unfortunately, 31 states scored lower on the NAEP in 2019 than they did on the NAEP in 2017 (Nations Report Card, 2021).

Leidig et al. (2018) and Joshi et al. (2009) stated students who had difficulties achieving reading success were at a high risk of dropping out of school. Alnahdi (2015) and Leidig et al. (2018) proposed students with reading disabilities struggled and ended up not graduating from high school, which led these students to low paying jobs. Alnahdi (2015) stated students with low reading rates were prohibited from having a normal standard of life, and those students were handicapped when they went to find vocational colleges or vocational jobs.

The NCES (2019) stated 43 million adults possessed low reading skills in 2016. These adults were considered functionally illiterate in English, meaning unable to successfully determine the meaning of sentences, read relatively short

texts to locate a single piece of information, or complete simple forms (NCES, 2019). Based on data from 2016, roughly 30 million of the 40 million adults who were illiterate were born and raised in the United States (NCES, 2019). Four out of five adults in the United States had reading skills sufficient to complete a reading task in 2016.

According to Wood (2010), lack of reading ability was a setback in the job market and correlated with lower median earnings and higher unemployment. Wood further stated people with low reading were in the lowest measured wage group and worked full time but still earned less than \$200 per week. Weak readers had trouble filling out job applications, which led to lower paying jobs (Wood, 2010). Furthermore, Cree et al. (2012) stated people who could not read earned 30%-42% less than workers who could read. Low readers did not have the reading skills to undertake vocational training to improve earning capacity (Wood, 2010). Cree et al. (2012) also stated the income of illiterates stayed the same throughout their working life, but literate employees' incomes increased at least three times over their earnings at the beginning of their career.

In addition, businesses lost money due to spending on correcting errors or lost customers because of poor communication skills of employees who had low reading skills (Wood, 2010). Employees who could not read well had problems with co-workers due to issues that arose from miscommunication and misunderstanding (Wood, 2010). The workers with low reading also suffered health issues, such as obesity, depression, substance abuse, crime, poverty, and teenage pregnancy. Wood (2010) further stated a person who had low reading skills had limited ability to access, understand, and apply health-related

information, which resulted in poor household health, poor personal health, bad hygiene, and poor nutrition. Levine and Marcus (2007) stated illiteracy endangered people who could not read well enough to read the directions on their prescriptions or how to prepare for a medical test. People who could not read avoided outpatient doctors' offices, outpatient clinics, and regular doctor offices due to intimidation of filling out forms and tended to use emergency rooms, since someone else asked questions and filled out the forms (Marcus, 2006).

Student Self-Efficacy

Academic self-efficacy was important in predicting educational success in children (Bandura, 1986; Lee & Jonson-Reid, 2015). Lee and Jonson-Reid applied Bandura's concept of self-efficacy in academic settings and stated academic self-efficacy was formed by actual performances, experiences, persuasion from others, and physiological reaction. Self-efficacy then influenced the choices students made, the effort students expended on an activity, and the persistence students showed when confronted with obstacles, which ultimately affected academic achievement (Lee & Jonson-Reid, 2015).

In addition, Margolis and McCabe (2006) stated low self-efficacy led to motivational problems in students. Constantine et al. (2019) and Margolis and McCabe proposed low student self-efficacy beliefs handicapped academic achievement, which then created self-fulfilling prophecies of learned helplessness and failure. Students with low self-efficacy believed they could not succeed and did not fully attempt to do the tasks given to them or gave up too quickly (Margolis & McCabe, 2006).

Leiw et al. (2008) conducted a three-year study with 733 children linking self-regulatory processes, self-efficacy, and achievement. The longitudinal study consisted of 53% males and 47% females from three school districts (one urban, two small cities) in central and southwest Texas. The students consisted of 37% White Hispanic, 34% White non-Hispanic, 23% African American, and 4% Asian or Pacific Islander, and 2% Other. The students were low achieving students who scored below the median on state-approved, district-administered measures of reading. The children in the Leiw et al. (2008) study provided self-reports of their academic self-efficacy belief, which indicated intelligence quotient (IQ) was not correlated with academic self-efficacy beliefs. The results also indicated adaptive effort at first grade contributed to positive academic self-efficacy beliefs at second grade and contributed to reading self-efficacy two years later. Leiw et al. (2008) concluded the findings were consistent with the belief that early self-regulatory beliefs and skills appeared to foster both school-related confidence and competence in the early grades. Leiw et al. (2008) stated teachers and parents needed to praise effort and persistence since self-efficacy included learning how to succeed and how to persevere when success was not imminent.

Schunk and Pajares (2002) stated when students engaged in school activities, they were affected by their personal and situational influence. The personal influence was where the student processed information about their self-efficacy to complete the task. Situational influence was the rewards or positive feedback given by the teacher. Students who took longer to complete the task, were unable to complete the task, or completed the task slowly did not have

lower self-efficacy; these students believed they could perform the task exerting more effort and trying a more effective strategy.

Academic self-efficacy influenced students' understanding of education, career, and life decisions-making (Kim & Cho, 2014). Kim and Cho (2014) stated a strong academic self-efficacy allowed students to have higher career goals, and students expected more success in life. Positive beliefs students had about their academic success helped students develop a positive self-image and led to increased self-efficacy. Strong academic self-efficacy led students to develop higher expectations, which led them to set goals for their career and life (Kim, 2014).

Constantine et al. (2019) stated self-efficacy came from four factors: mastery experiences in task performance, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological reactions or state. The information students inferred from these factors was the judgment students made about their ability to succeed (Margolis & McCabe, 2006). The first factor was mastery experiences in task performance. Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) stated mastery experiences were the most powerful factor of self-efficacy information. Mastery experiences occurred when learners had an opportunity to perform a task or applied knowledge in a new way (Constantine et al., 2019). When learners successfully completed the task, they had a positive mastery experience, and then their self-efficacy grew. Positive mastery experiences improved overall student achievement (Constantine et al., 2019; Schunk, 1995). Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) stated the performance completed successfully raised the efficacy belief. Students who experienced, or

expected to experience, a failed task experienced lower self-efficacy, which led to expected failure in future performances.

Constantine et al. (2019) identified vicarious experiences as the second factor that developed self-efficacy in students. Vicarious experiences occurred when a student witnessed a peer perform a task (Margolis & McCabe, 2006). When students watched peers who performed the task successfully and explained what they were doing as they performed the task, the observation helped the observer develop self-efficacy. The closer the observer identified with the peers modeling the task, the stronger the impact on self-efficacy (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998).

Third, self-efficacy was influenced by the verbal persuasion presented to the learner (Constantine et al., 2019; Margolis & McCabe, 2006). Verbal persuasion occurred when someone the learner held in high regard commented, either negatively or positively, on the learner's ability to perform a task or apply knowledge (Constantine et al., 2019; Margolis & McCabe, 2006).

Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) stated verbal persuasion could have been a pep talk or a positive comment related to the task at hand. The inverse was also true; if someone the student held in high regard made a negative comment, then the negative comment would lower student self-efficacy. Positive persuasion contributed to successful task performance, repeated attempts at completing a task, and new task initiated (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998), which boosted students' self-efficacy. Negative comments from a person the student held in high regard made the students feel the completion of the task was not possible or was not worth the effort (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998).

Physiological reaction—the way students felt before, during, and after a task—was the fourth factor that influenced students’ self-efficacy. Students in a positive learning environment were encouraged to support one another. This developed positive self-efficacy and positively impacted their achievement (Constantine et al., 2019; Schunk, 1995).

Margolis and McCabe (2006) suggested ways to build self-efficacy in students included creating tasks that were not overly simple nor too hard for struggling learners. Simple tasks bored and embarrassed the students: however, students who were given a task they deemed too difficult or impossible gave up on the task (Margolis & McCabe, 2006). Tasks that were too difficult proved frustrating to the students, and students felt they were being made to fail. Tasks given to students needed to be slightly above their independent level but not too difficult. Gradually increasing the difficulty of the task, with students making incremental improvements, gave the students the feeling of success. Teachers then gave moderately challenging tasks to struggling students, and the students experienced positive task performance (Constantine et al., 2019; Margolis & McCabe, 2006).

Verbal persuasion was a way to build student self-efficacy. Students needed to be told they could do the task. Margolis and McCabe (2006) suggested students succeeded if they tried, persisted, and used strategies they had learned. Self-efficacy was influenced by social persuasions presented to the learner (Constantine et al., 2019). Mather et al. (2001) also declared early intervention from teachers with high self-efficacy was imperative since poor readers often did not catch up and continued to struggle with reading throughout school.

Furthermore, Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) conducted a study with 105 fourth grade and fifth grade students in a mid-Atlantic state in which students completed a survey regarding their beliefs in their self-efficacy; parents of the students completed a log of how long and what the students read each night. Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) reported students with high self-efficacy read nearly three times as much (an average of 30 minutes a day) than children with low self-efficacy (an average of 10 minutes a day). Additionally, Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) found students with high self-efficacy also read a broader range of books and books that were more in-depth.

According to Margolis and McCabe (2006), social scientists and researchers stated teachers needed to instruct students on different strategies to build reading skills and when to use those specific strategies. Teachers identified one or two critical reading strategies, such as decoding words or finding known words in unknown words, and taught struggling students those strategies until the students knew which strategy to use and when to use that strategy (Constantine et al., 2019). When reading strategies were introduced to struggling readers, the strategy overload created confusion and reduced the chance of practice (Constantine et al., 2019). Teachers explained to the students what the strategy was and what it did to help them. Students practiced the strategy until confidence was gained. Students who were taught these strategies developed self-efficacy and experienced increased academic achievement.

Klem and Connell (2004) stated students needed two things from teachers. The first thing students needed from teachers was to know the teacher actually knew them and actually cared about them. The second thing students needed from

teachers was to feel like the students could make important decisions for themselves. Students believed in themselves more once the teachers supplied these two things.

Students with low self-efficacy created self-fulfilling prophecies of failure (Margolis & McCabe, 2006). Teachers needed to develop self-efficacy in students, so students did not give up so quickly when they did not have success. In contrast, students who had high self-efficacy believed they were competent at reading and, therefore, were more likely to want to read and engage in reading, as self-efficacy was a motivator for students to be successful readers (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). Teachers with high self-efficacy motivated students to develop self-efficacy.

Self-Efficacy of Teachers

Yost (2006) stated successful teachers needed the necessary tools for challenges they encountered. Teachers who felt confident in their ability to manage and problem solve developed self-efficacy (Yost, 2006). Teachers who had greater self-efficacy had students who performed better on standardized achievement tests than students who did not develop self-efficacy (Muijs & Reynolds, 2015; Rowan et al., 2002).

According to Bandura (1977), self-efficacy was an individual's belief in their ability to execute the behaviors necessary to produce a specific performance. You et al. (2016) stated this self-perception, or belief in one's ability to organize and achieve academic tasks, included the confidence to control one's motivation and social environment. Bandura (1991) stated efficacy beliefs influenced individuals' choices and the courses of action individuals pursued. According to

Pajares (1996), people only engaged in tasks in which they felt confident and competent and avoided tasks in which they did not feel confident and competent.

Furthermore, a teacher's success in a task depended on how the teachers defined the task, what strategies were employed, the possibility of success, and the ability to solve the problems and challenges (Bray-Clark & Bates, 2003; Knoblauch & Hoy, 2008). Shidler (2009) stated when a teacher provided effective instruction within content areas, students experienced achievement, and the teacher then developed self-efficacy in the ability to teach the content.

Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) and Rowan et al. (2002) stated positive attitudes of teachers toward teaching related to greater self-efficacy in both teachers and students.

Teacher self-efficacy included teacher confidence in collaboration skills, classroom management, and instruction (Epstein & Willhite, 2015; Knoblauch & Hoy, 2008). Kent and Giles (2017) stated teachers' beliefs in themselves directly correlated to how well a student performed on academic tasks and had a strong connection to the teachers' overall impact. Teachers with high self-efficacy spent more time and effort on the success of their students and were willing to try new strategies. These teachers also continued working with students until the students succeeded (Knoblauch & Hoy, 2008). This positively affected student learning (Bray-Clark & Bates, 2003; Rowan et al., 2002; Sharp et al., 2016). Bray-Clark and Bates (2003) stated teachers with high self-efficacy felt more challenged but less threatened by stressful conditions than teachers with low self-efficacy.

Teachers who had high self-efficacy examined a failed lesson and worked to change the lesson for the better, while teachers with low self-efficacy blamed

students' academic struggles on the students' low ability, lack of motivation, character deficiencies, and poor home environments (Shidler, 2009). Teachers' ability to self-organize, self-regulate, self-reflect, and be proactive in their behavior underlay the importance of self-efficacy as the critical component in teacher success (Bray-Clark & Bates, 2003). Bebas (2016), Bray-Clark and Bates (2003), Shidler (2009), Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998), and Yoo (2016) stated teachers who believed the students could be successful in the classroom devoted more effort and time to teaching that student. This concentrated effort led to teaching reading more clearly (Bray-Clark & Bates, 2003). McKim et al. (2017) stated self-efficacy was an essential element to teacher quality and students' learning. Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) stated teachers who expressed self-efficacy in their ability to teach unmotivated or difficult children saw growth for those students. Teachers who had confidence and believed they could get through to even the most difficult student overcame the factors that made learning difficult for the students (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998).

Furthermore, Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) found teacher self-efficacy positively impacted student achievement and performance. The percentage of project goals achieved was higher for students who had teachers who had developed self-efficacy. Ashton and Webb (1986) administered a survey to teachers in four secondary schools in a southeastern town. The student population was equal in socio-economic and racial distribution in the four schools. There were 49 teachers who answered the survey (42 females, nine male) between ages 25-35. The results indicated teachers with high self-efficacy beliefs on the survey had higher student scores on the Metropolitan Achievement Test.

Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) simultaneously found teachers with positive self-efficacy attended to students' individual needs and responded to the students in a positive, accepting, and supporting style that encouraged students.

According to Joshi et al. (2009), preservice teachers and classroom teachers did not receive adequate instruction on how to teach reading. Hurford et al. (2016) stated it was imperative that preservice teachers and classroom teachers possessed the skills and knowledge needed to teach reading. Preservice teachers' lack of knowledge was related to their lack of training (Hurford et al., 2016). Hurford et al. (2016) and Joshi et al. (2009) agreed preservice teachers and classroom teachers who had just one additional course in reading instruction for children demonstrated more content knowledge and self-efficacy in teaching reading than teachers who did not receive any additional training.

Preservice Teacher Preparation for Reading Instruction

According to Crim et al. (2008), the foundation of all learning was entrenched in the development of reading abilities and language, and teachers needed a basic understanding of the reading process to teach reading. The early stage of phonological awareness formed the foundation of learning since the reading skills developed in early childhood were linked to future reading success (Copeland & Martin, 2016; Crim et al., 2008; Muijs & Reynolds, 2015; National Reading Panel, 2004; Reutzel et al., 2001; Sharp et al., 2016).

Cunningham et al. (2004), Copeland and Martin (2016), Goldman (2012), Hurford et al. (2016), Joshi et al. (2009), Ko and Hughes (2015), Leidig et al. (2018), Stotsky (2006), and Moats (2020) suggested learning to read was one of the most complicated and important skills in which students engaged. Academic

and career success were dependent on proficient reading skills (Hurford et al., 2016). Lee and Jonson-Reid (2015) stated reading ability in early grades was critical for later success in school and beyond, and reading formed the foundation for other domains of academic achievement. Children who failed to read well in the early grades usually did poorly in subsequent grades (Lee & Jonson-Reid, 2015).

Mather et al. (2001) surveyed 252 preservice teachers who engaged in student teaching at a southwestern university and 286 in-service teachers employed as kindergarten through third grade teachers in metropolitan and rural elementary schools in the southwest United States about the teachers' perceptions of explicit and implicit early reading and spelling instruction and linguistic knowledge (Mather et al., 2001). Fifty-three percent of the preservice teachers and 60% of the in-service teachers were unable to correctly answer half of the questions about knowledge of language structure for teaching reading. Furthermore, the in-service teachers reported poor phonological awareness contributed to early reading failure; however, two-thirds of the participants could not define phonological awareness (Mather et al., 2001).

Mather et al. (2001) proposed between 1980 and 2000, there were advances in reading strategies (e.g., being aware of phonemes, decoding, segmenting words) that helped to understand the cognitive bases of reading, but these had not had an impact on teacher preparation. Preservice teachers had minimal grasp of language structure and were unable to teach children to read. Some students experienced difficulty and needed explicit and intense instruction on how to read and how to know what strategy to use to improve reading. This

was more instruction than the teachers knew how to give (Warner et al., 2017; Washburn & Mulcahy, 2014).

Crim et al. (2008) surveyed 64 randomly selected preservice early childhood educators from urban, suburban, and rural communities in southeast Texas to learn about the early childhood educators' background knowledge in phonemic awareness (i.e., the ability to identify and manipulate individual sounds in spoken words). In this study, much like Mather et al.'s (2001), preservice early childhood teachers had difficulty identifying the basic skills related to beginning reading instruction (Crim et al., 2008), with only 25% of the preservice teachers correctly identifying the basic skills of beginning reading instruction.

Subsequently, Joshi et al. (2009) administered a survey of reading acquisition to 78 college and university professors from approximately 30 different universities from the southwestern United States. The professors' teaching experience ranged from 3-20 years, with 68 professors having doctoral degrees and the other 10 working on doctoral degrees. Joshi et al. (2009) discovered professors who taught reading to preservice teachers were not fully aware of how to teach reading. Professors of preservice teachers overestimated their knowledge of teaching reading and did not understand what they knew and what they did not know (Joshi et al., 2009).

College professors of preservice teachers were responsible for building teacher knowledge and awareness of basic reading concepts (Reutzel et al., 2001; Spear-Swerling & Brucker, 2004; Warner et al., 2017). According to Berkely et al. (2016), Joshi et al. (2009), Copeland and Martin (2016), and Leidig et al. (2018), teachers needed knowledge of how to teach reading because there was a

shift away from reading instruction textbooks. Young (2014) stated teachers had to add phonological awareness to their own lessons if they were not provided in an educationally published reading program (Young, 2014). Berkely et al. (2016), Warner et al. (2017), and Washburn and Mulcahy (2014) stated preservice teachers had not been given explicit instruction on how to teach reading when they began in the classroom and did not know what needed to be taught for successful reading lessons. Preservice teachers also lacked time to practice and apply the knowledge they had of such concepts in an authentic context since student teaching was brief (Berkely et al., 2016); Reutzler et al., 2001).

Sharp et al. (2016) conducted a study with 70 preservice elementary school students (4 males and 66 females), including a high number being nontraditional students, meaning they had not entered college the year after they graduated high school, who enrolled in the teaching preparation program at a large teaching university in the Midwestern part of the United States. The researchers paired preservice teachers with skilled cooperating teachers who modeled instruction first and then gradually turned the classroom over to the preservice teachers (Sharp et al., 2016). The preservice teachers were given a questionnaire about their attitudes and content knowledge and a questionnaire that consisted of 20 multiple choice questions that measured teacher knowledge. Preservice teachers received the questionnaires three times: at the end of their last class in the junior college year, the end of their first semester of the senior college year, and after the preservice teachers had completed their student teaching. The results showed preservice teachers' self-efficacy increased their ability to teach reading when paired with a skilled cooperating teacher who modeled reading

instruction. (Sharp et al., 2016). Sharp et al. suggested preservice teachers' self-efficacy increased due to being exposed to readers who struggled and observed the skilled teacher practice different strategies. Efficacy and knowledge were both shaped through the experiences preservice teachers had in their teacher education program, according to Sharp et al. (2016). Positive experiences of teaching reading maintained and enhanced preservice teachers' positive self-efficacy.

According to Sharp et al. (2016), teachers' knowledge affected teachers' success; preservice teachers' self-efficacy increased their ability to teach reading. Muijs and Reynolds (2015) reported teacher subject knowledge also influenced teacher effectiveness. Teachers needed in-depth knowledge of content and a large repertoire of effective instructional methods (e.g., phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension) to be successful teachers (Leader-Janssen & Rankin-Erickson, 2013; Sharp et al., 2016). Crim et al. (2008) stated early, accurate, and consistent instruction in the area of phonological awareness, the ability to recognize and manipulate the spoken parts of words, impacted early reading skills.

According to Cunningham et al. (2004) and Reutzel et al. (2001), schools that produced high student reading and writing achievement scores were the schools that had knowledgeable teachers. Regardless of socioeconomic status or commercial reading programs, academic growth was impacted more by knowledgeable teacher instruction than any other factor, including families or neighborhoods (Reutzel et al., 2001). Leader-Janssen and Rankin-Erickson (2013) declared teachers needed to complete teacher training programs highly prepared

to teach reading, and they needed to be strong teachers of reading because of the reading demands of our society and the diverse needs of our nation's children.

The researchers conducted research at a large mid-western university, and all preservice teachers who had completed a Reading Language Arts methods course were invited to participate in the study (Leader-Janssen & Rankin-Erickson, 2013). Twenty-one students participated in the 16-week reading study with a practicum and one-on-one tutoring in an on-campus clinic designed to teach preservice teachers instructional reading strategies for working with first grade through fifth grade students reading at least one year below grade level.

The researchers conducted interviews of preservice teachers in which those 21 participants were able to identify the basic components of effective reading instructions. The preservice teachers named the components but could not explain the components of reading instruction (Leader-Janssen & Rankin-Erikson, 2013). Leader-Janssen and Rankin-Erikson suggested preservice teachers did not apply what they had learned because they did not have students to apply the knowledge, and by the time they graduated and got a teaching job, they had forgotten most of what was learned. The researchers suggested preservice teachers needed useful resources, support, and clear goals, which led to comfort and confidence in their teaching abilities (Leader-Janssen & Rankin-Erikson, 2013). One important observation from the study stated the importance and usefulness of resources, the support given, clear goals, and ample practice led to such comfort and confidence. The preservice teachers reflected on the entire experience at the end of the tutoring, and a final theme emerged: reading course or reading clinic practicum increased overall self-efficacy for teaching reading.

The preservice teachers credited knowing how to teach reading to increased comfort with teaching methods that resulted from practice, feedback, and support they received.

Mather et al. (2001) declared few preservice teachers had enough competence in reading instruction to teach students how to read. Preservice teachers lacked the knowledge to teach students to read when they left college. Effective teacher preparation programs and PD programs were necessary, so failure to read did not occur (Mather et al., 2001). Lyons (1999) stated, “Major efforts must be undertaken to ensure colleges of education develop preparation programs to foster the necessary content and pedagogical expertise at both preservice and in-service levels” (p. 8).

Leader-Janssen and Rankin-Erickson (2013) stated the diverse needs of students required preservice teachers leave their training programs as highly effective teachers of reading. A high level of support and guidance were needed for preservice teachers to increase their self-efficacy (Leader-Janssen & Rankin-Erikson, 2013). Teachers, even experienced teachers, had difficulty with the formal knowledge of teaching reading; instructional coaches provided intensive instruction to gain explicit knowledge of how to teach reading.

Providing Teacher Support

PD created by school leaders and instructional coaches helped teachers feel supported and confident (Bray-Clark & Bates, 2003). When a teacher gained confidence in their ability to teach, their self-efficacy grew, and the teacher had the belief they could successfully teach reading (Bray-Clark & Bates, 2003). Watson (2006) stated there was a positive relationship between teacher support

and teacher self-efficacy. The importance placed on continued teacher support pushed school leaders to design models of PD and instructional coaching to build self-efficacy in teachers and, in turn, students (Bray-Clark & Bates, 2003). Self-efficacy constructs provided schools, staff development planners, and instructional coaches with the tools needed to create teaching training that was effective, improved teacher outcomes, and enhanced student performance (Bray-Clark & Bates, 2003). Teachers who had support through PD and instructional coaching had higher self-efficacy, which led to higher student achievement (Knoblauch & Hoy, 2008; Watson, 2006). Teachers who were provided support in the knowledge of the reading process closed the gap between students who succeeded in reading and those who struggled in reading.

Professional Development

Bray-Clark and Bates (2003), Yost (2006), Epstein and Willhite (2015), and Bebas (2016) proposed PD for new teachers or preservice teachers helped to develop self-efficacy in teachers. PD was “structured professional learning that results in a change in teacher practices and improvements in student learning outcomes” (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017, p. 5). PD focused on teaching strategies, incorporated active learning, supported collaboration, and used models of effective practice (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Bray-Clark and Bates (2003) stated PD developed self-efficacy, improved teacher effectiveness, and enhanced student achievement (Bray-Clark & Bates, 2003). Sharp et al. (2016) declared there was an increase in confidence in teachers who attended PD, which led to a strong predictor of successful teacher and positive self-efficacy. Yoo (2016) also stated PD had a positive effect on teacher self-efficacy.

Epstein and Willhite (2015) conducted a study that addressed self-efficacy among mentor teachers during the first year of implementation of an Early Childhood PD program in a mid-sized Midwestern community with 395 children in preschool through fifth grade. Fourteen preservice teachers applied to the PD school and were matched with a mentor teacher. The mentor teachers and the preservice teachers felt PD strengthened their teaching.

Bebas (2016) conducted research about the effects of a PD on graduates of an early education program at a small public University in Massachusetts with approximately 5,500 students. Bebas (2016) interviewed 40 graduates of the elementary education program to learn about the PD program, which was designed for participants to work together and to offer one another support. The PD program allowed the kindergarten through fifth grade preservice teachers to share ideas, reflect together on what worked and did not work in the classroom, and get suggestions and support from others. Bebas (2016) claimed preservice teachers in the study identified collaboration as an integral part of the program that increased their teacher self-efficacy. Participants in the PD program stated support from their colleagues, a strong sense of preparedness, and confidence in their teaching ability were reasons they developed teacher self-efficacy (Bebas, 2016). The graduates of the PD stated they referred to what they learned in the program when they were unsure of how to handle a situation in their classroom (Epstein & Willhite, 2015). Epstein and Willhite (2015) stated students of the PD had a slightly higher performance during their preservice training than traditional campus-based field experiences. According to Epstein and Willhite (2015), the PD teachers grew stronger over time, and during their first year of teaching, the

PD candidates performed better than their peers who completed a traditional field experience. Students of teachers who attended PD achieved higher reading scores than their peers on achievement testing than students of teachers who did not attend PD (Epstein & Willhite, 2015).

Pan and Franklin (2011) stated PD improved content knowledge and teaching knowledge. Teachers expressed PD schools increased their efficacy through practical experiences, learning experiences, and collaborative opportunities (Bebas, 2016). Collaboration with other teachers was vital to the teachers in the PD (Bray-Clark & Bates, 2003).

Bebas (2016) also stated teachers who participated in PD connected teacher self-efficacy to the teaching profession in two different ways. Teachers claimed positive self-efficacy and teacher efficacy promoted the enjoyment of the job as a teacher. The teachers also connected these positive feelings to their job, enjoyed teaching, and stayed in the job longer (Bebas, 2016). This positive feeling trickled down to the students and increased positive student performance, which contributed to teacher self-efficacy.

Effective PD “ensure[d] personalized, ongoing, job-embedded activities that are available to all staff (including paraprofessionals), a part of a broader school improvement plans, collaborative and data-driven, developed with educator input, and regularly evaluated” (Johnson, 2016, p. 37). In the Every Student Succeeds Act (2015), legislators stated PD needed to change from scientifically-based to evidence-based. Instructional coaching met the need for PD mandated in Every Student Succeeds Act.

Instructional Coaching

Robbins (1991), Shidler (2009), Sookhai and Budworth (2010), Johnson (2016), Mraz et al. (2016), Gibbons and Cobb (2017), and Baez-Hernandez (2019) stated teachers felt alone in their classroom even though they were with other teachers and students every day. Teachers did not observe other teachers in their classrooms or working collaboratively due to teachers being in their own individual classrooms, and coaching offered a way around the isolation (Robbins, 1991). Instructional coaches interacted with teachers freely, addressed the curriculum and instruction, observed and taught each other, planned together, and solved problems together (Robbins, 1991; Williamson, 2016). Robbins (1991) stated, “Coaching is a confidential process through which two or more professional colleagues work together to reflect on current practices; expand, refine, and build new skills; share ideas; teach one another; conduct classroom research; or solve problems in the workplace” (p. 9). Williamson (2016) stated instructional coaches worked one-on-one with teachers on an identified need, and coaches helped to develop ways to help teachers reflect on and improve their teaching. Furthermore, coaching was designed to help teachers transfer what was learned, whether from a PD class or observed in another classroom, to their classrooms (Robbins, 1991). Coaching was focused on improving teaching and was associated with collaboration (Robbins, 1991; Williamson, 2016).

Darling-Hammond (2000), Darling-Hammond et al. (2001), and Archer (2002) stated teachers mattered more to the achievement of students than any other aspect of school. A strong relationship between student achievement and teacher quality was why instructional coaching was important

(Darling-Hammond, 2000; Darling-Hammond et al., 2001). The school's focus was student learning and growth, and schools looked for opportunities that increased student achievement (Johnson, 2016). Schools embraced instructional coaching because instructional coaching was an on-site instructional support for teachers instead of the traditional one-day or two-day workshops where schools brought professionals into the school from outside (Johnson, 2016). Shidler (2009) stated the best instructional coaching engaged the teacher and the coach for one to two hours per week or at least every other week. The instructional coach interacted with the teacher in the classroom, and the conversations were focused on specific goals to increase student performance (Shidler, 2009).

Instructional coaches were highly accomplished teachers based in a single school, multiple schools, or district central offices and supported the instructional improvement of teachers (Bean & DeFord, 2012; Gibbons & Cobb, 2017).

Johnson (2016) stated instructional coaches were expected to model lessons and assist teachers with instructional processes, and because of this, instructional coaches must be excellent teachers. Mraz et al. (2016) stated effective instructional coaches needed to possess extensive pedagogical knowledge as well as knowledge of how to apply theoretical knowledge to instructional practices.

According to Mraz et al. (2016), instructional coaching emerged from educational reform that linked teacher evaluation to students' successful test scores in reading. Instructional coaches' responsibilities were to support teachers, provide instructional guidance, and conduct PD workshops (Prezyna et al., 2017). Instructional coaches knew how to teach reading, suggested ideas, and found strategies and materials to help teachers help students (Prezyna et al., 2017). One

responsibility of instructional coaches was the analysis of the assessment data for the entire school (Prezyna et al., 2017), as the role was data-focused since instructional coaches collaborated with school leaders about the reading data and accountability.

Gibbons and Cobb (2017) stated high quality coaching must be intensive and ongoing. Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) stated only in situations where teachers were observed and coached could teachers reflect on their practice and improve their teaching. When instructional coaches observed and then reflected on the lesson with the teacher, the teacher then gained information about their strengths and weakness and found ways to improve (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998).

The most successful coaching model for teaching and building self-efficacy was to watch other admired, credible, and productive teachers (Shidler, 2009). Watching successful teachers built confidence and self-efficacy for teachers. The observer realized the teaching task was manageable because the observer had witnessed it happen. After observing a productive teacher, the observing teacher developed the personal resources to teach successfully. The observing teacher took the instruction of the credible teacher back to his classroom and implemented what was observed and learned in his teaching.

Strickland and Riley-Ayers (2006) stated effective PD occurred on-site and in close proximity to every classroom. Teachers engaged after coaching at each school and then practicing what they observed. The repeated and guided practice of new skills allowed teachers to move through the learning process at their own pace (Shidler, 2009). Baez-Hernandez (2019) noted when teachers

reflected on their teaching experience through instructional coaching, they developed self-efficacy because an instructional coach modeled what needed to be taught, and the teacher related to the success.

Instructional coaches had to be respectful of classroom teachers, the teachers' professionalism, and the teachers' ability to make decisions that were the best for their students (Knight, 2007). The instructional coach appreciated teacher uniqueness and differences, was free of judgement of other teachers, and ensured the classroom teacher understood the instructional coach was a partner, not out to tell the school leaders each individual teacher's weakness. Johnson (2016) explained instructional coaches expressed their confidence and belief in the teachers, invested in the teachers, and expected the best from the teachers.

According to Knight (2006), instructional coaches empowered the teachers through collaborative partnerships to incorporate research-based instructional methods in the classroom. Instructional coaches accelerated learning, created conditions where teachers grew professionally, and closed the achievement gap for all students by building the instructional capacity of teachers (Bean & DeFord, 2012; Mraz et al., 2016). Instructional coaches participated in instructional planning and assisted with the assessment of students while observing, teaching, demonstrating, and talking to teachers about instruction (Bean & DeFord, 2012).

School Leaders

Yost (2006), Shidler (2009), Sookhai and Budworth (2010), Johnson (2016), Mraz et al. (2016), Gibbons and Cobb (2017), Prezyrna et al. (2017), Bradshaw et al. (2018), and Baez-Hernandez (2019) proposed school leaders were

responsible for the academic performance of the school. Sookhai and Budworth (2010) stated school leaders must be aware of the training objectives and the content of the instructional coaches' presentation. School leaders ensured teaching strategies that the instructional coach introduced were implemented (Sookhai & Budworth, 2010). A necessary skill to be an effective school leader was the ability to provide positive leadership and provide essential instructional coaches to support the teachers and give feedback to the teachers (Lewis & Jones, 2019). Prezyna et al. (2017) stated school leaders were essential to define the instructional coach's role and boundaries, which developed trust between the instructional coach, school leaders, and teachers. Since the school's performance was the main responsibility of school leaders, school leaders needed to effectively implement PD and instructional coaching (Baez-Hernandez, 2019).

Lewis and Jones (2019) stated schools needed to understand and facilitate professional coaching relationships with teachers. Lowenhaupt (2014) proposed school leaders bridged instructional coaching, the needs of teachers, and needs of the students and provided support to the teachers to produce better results for the students. School leaders received a good return on their PD investment because teacher self-efficacy, student achievement, and overall school performance improved (Baez-Hernandez, 2019). Moreover, Sookhai and Budworth (2010) stated participation with school leaders in effective development classes increased teacher self-efficacy.

Furthermore, Johnson (2016) stated effective PD was vital to school improvement, and the school leaders and the instructional coaches were needed to make sure the PD was correctly implemented. School leaders were responsible for

supervising instructional coaches and the relationship between instructional coaches and teachers (Johnson, 2016). School leaders needed to make sure instructional coaches and teachers knew the school vision (Johnson, 2016). School leaders needed to know how to lead, support, and build instructional coaches who could help the teachers learn collaboratively and improve teacher and student learning (Johnson, 2016). Gibbons and Cobb (2017) stated school leaders guided decisions on how instructional coaches should focus their efforts to support the school's academic instruction. Additionally, school leaders who used instructional coaches saw instructional coaches lead the school to succeed, the teachers to succeed, and ultimately the students to succeed (Johnson, 2016).

Prezyna et al. (2017) conducted research on school leaders in eight urban, suburban, and rural elementary schools (six public schools and two charter schools) in western New York, with varied configurations from pre-kindergarten through eighth grade. School leaders, teachers, and instructional coaches ($N = 171$) participated in the study. Prezyna et al. (2017) found school leaders were essential in defining the instructional coaches' roles, and a clearly defined role by the school leader led to greater instructional coach satisfaction and perceptions of effectiveness, as well as greater teacher compliance.

Greater teacher compliance with the task, however, did not affect attitudes toward the instructional coaches' role (Prezyna et al., 2017). School leaders needed to define the instructional coaches' roles to avoid role conflict or role ambiguity for instructional coaches. Instructional coaches served as a resource to teachers. Prezyna et al. (2017) concluded school leaders needed to assume

responsibility to define and communicate the instructional coaches' roles within the school to fortify academic success.

Summary of Review of the Literature

I reviewed and presented literature that explained the history of reading and the importance of reading. The history of reading began when the Puritans came into the new country of the United States believed in the importance of reading (Goldman, 2012; Mraz et al., 2016). The struggles of low reading were the next topic I presented. The struggles of the inability to read or write had negative repercussions, such as setbacks in the job market, lower earnings, and higher unemployment rates (Copeland & Martin, 2016). In 2016, NCES stated 43 million adults had low reading skills. The next topic centered on the student's self-efficacy. Student self-efficacy played a role in students' inability to read and write. Margolis and McCabe (2006), Lee-Jonson-Reid (2015), and Constantine et al. (2019) all stated students who believed they did not have reading skills never developed those skills. In 2008, Leiw et al. conducted a three-year study and found IQ was not related to academic success, but self-efficacy was related to academic success. Self-efficacy of teachers was presented next.

Self-efficacy of the students' teachers played a role in the development of the students' self-efficacy (Bray-Clark & Bates, 2003; Kent & Giles, 2017; Sharp et al., 2016). Teacher education programs did not adequately prepare teachers for teaching reading (Crim et al., 2008; Joshi et al., 2009). Bray-Clark and Bates (2003), Yost (2006), Watson (2006), Epstein and Willhite (2015), and Bebas (2016) concluded PD, instructional coaching, and school leaders helped teachers develop the self-efficacy needed to teach reading. In Chapter III, I described the

methodology I used to determine third grade reading teachers' perceptions of how school leaders, PD, and instructional coaching supported the development of self-efficacy in reading instruction..

Chapter III: Methodology

Alnahdi (2015), Hairston (2011), and Ko and Hughes (2015) explained the ability to read was one of the most important factors for success. Researchers agreed support from effective school leaders was needed to build teachers' self-efficacy to teach reading (Duyar et al., 2013; Johnson, 2016; Lowenhaupt, 2014; Munguia, 2017). Reading teachers also needed PD to build self-efficacy (Baez-Hernandez, 2019; Bebas, 2016; Bray-Clark & Bates, 2003; Epstein & Willhite, 2015; Leader-Janssen & Rankin-Erickson, 2013; McKim & Velez, 2017; Pan & Franklin, 2011; Yoo, 2016). The third support to build self-efficacy in reading teachers was instructional coaches (Bradshaw et al., 2018; Gibbons & Cobb, 2017; Mraz et al., 2016; Prezyna et al., 2017; Sharp et al., 2016; Shidler, 2009). The purpose of this qualitative interpretive study was to determine third grade reading teachers' perceptions of how school leaders, PD, and instructional coaching supported the development of self-efficacy in reading instruction.

Research Design

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), qualitative researchers were interested in how the people they studied interpreted the experiences they had, how people constructed their worlds, and what meaning people attributed to their experiences. Creswell (2007) stated qualitative research should be conducted in the natural setting where the phenomenon took place, as the researcher was the key instrument of data collection. Patton (1999) and Wiersma and Jurs (2008) suggested the qualitative researcher had the responsibility to think about problems, decide how to solve the problem in the field, and then monitor the effects. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) stated qualitative researchers used data to

gain information, and the information gained helped make informed decisions. Qualitative research used data to focus on not just what happened but how it happened (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Creswell (2007) and Wiersma and Jurs (2008) stated, in a basic interpretive study, the researcher reported the meaning of the participants' responses. In an interpretive study, the researcher was interested in understanding how the participants made meaning of a situation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Since I wanted to know how teachers made meaning of their situations or experiences, the qualitative interpretive study was best.

Role of the Researcher

According to Creswell (2007), Merriam and Tisdell (2016), and Wiersma and Jurs (2008), the role of the researcher was to gather data. My role in this study was to determine what questions would best answer my research questions. I used those questions on a Google Form I distributed to teachers of third grade reading to find out what supports the teachers received from PD, instructional coaches, and school leaders that helped them develop self-efficacy in teaching reading.

At the time of this study, I previously taught reading to elementary school students and reading to high school students who read on an elementary level. I wanted to know the best way to teach these students to read; children were most successful in reading when school leaders (Duyar et al., 2013; Johnson, 2016; Lowenhaupt, 2014; Munguia, 2017), PD (Baez-Hernandez, 2019; Bebas, 2016; Bray-Clark & Bates, 2003; Epstein & Willhite, 2015; Leader-Janssen & Rankin-Erickson, 2013; McKim & Velez, 2017; Pan & Franklin, 2011; Yoo, 2016) and instructional coaches (Bradshaw et al., 2018; Gibbons & Cobb, 2017; Mraz et al., 2016; Prezyrna et al., 2017; Sharp et al., 2016; Shidler, 2009)

supported the reading teachers and helped the reading teachers develop self-efficacy in the teaching of reading. Since I taught students to read, I needed to be aware of potential bias and take steps to mitigate that bias. According to Merriam and Tisdale (2016), bias occurred when a researcher misled, intentionally or unintentionally, the research being carried out. One way I mitigated bias was to make sure the survey questions were written to not lead the participant to believe there was only one correct answer. I also mitigated bias by not wording questions that led the participants to give me a biased answer or the answer I expected. This was verified when the pilot interviews were completed.

Participants of the Study

Creswell (2007) stated the participants must have the perspective that provided responses to the research questions. I chose third grade reading teachers from the school district that had the highest reading scores on standardized assessments for the state of Georgia for the 2018-2019 school year to participate in this study of self-efficacy of reading teachers. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) stated the participants in a qualitative interpretive study were nonrandom, purposeful, and small. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) explained purposeful sampling was to “select a sample from which the most can be learned” (p. 96) to best inform the researcher and enhance understanding. I used the 2018-2019 data because no standardized assessments were given for the 2019-2020 school year due to extended school closure because of Coronavirus (COVID-19).

To find these participants, I looked at third grade testing data from the Georgia Department of Education website to determine which schools had the highest reading scores on standardized assessments. I narrowed my choices to the

districts with the highest percentage of students reading at or above level. The first district was a non-profit independent school, meaning the school was funded privately, with only one elementary school. Independent private schools were funded by the tuition parents paid instead of state funds and had high parent participation and involvement. I felt participants from an independent private school would give a different perspective than participants from a public school; therefore, I chose not to survey the school. The next two districts had similar scores in reading. One of the districts had seven elementary schools, but when I looked at the individual school scores of all seven elementary schools, only 34%-49% of third grade students were reading at or above grade level at each school. The district with the same score in reading had 21 elementary schools in the district, and all of the schools, except three, had over 60% of students reading at or above grade level. The top three schools in the district had the highest percentages (over 82%) of the students reading at or above grade level. Those three schools were listed as the top performing schools on the Georgia Department of Education website. I chose this district, Berry School District (BSD) (pseudonym), to conduct my research.

I purposefully chose those three schools with the highest percentage of students reading at or above grade level to conduct the research to determine what supports those reading teachers received from school leaders, PD, and instructional coaches. From these schools, I chose third grade reading teachers in BSD in Georgia because, in the state of Georgia, students took their first formal reading assessment in third grade. I determined the following criteria for teacher participants: third grade teachers of reading who held a valid Georgia Teaching

Certification and worked in the three top scoring schools in Georgia. There were 28 teachers who taught third grade at these three schools. Fifteen teachers responded, and I was able to use 12 of those because three were not teaching at the schools during the 2018-2019 school year. I maintained confidentiality of their responses when the questionnaire was returned. The questionnaire was returned to me as the teachers completed them; I did not know who returned the questionnaire or which school was represented.

Data Collection

I started my research trying to find the best reading program to teach students to read. After reading the literature, I discovered it was not a reading program that helped students learn to read but rather supports the reading teacher received that made reading instruction effective. I wanted to know what supports teachers thought helped them develop self-efficacy in teaching reading.

I obtained the reading scores of every school district in the state of Georgia from the Georgia Department of Education website. Third grade was the first standardized reading test for schools in Georgia, so I examined the third grade reading scores and identified the top three districts with the highest reading scores. I then developed the questions for the study (see Appendix A) based on the literature that stated PD, instructional coaches, and school leaders developed teacher self-efficacy. I spent time reviewing the literature to develop the questions, and I worded the questions to answer my research questions. I piloted the questions at two elementary school in my district using second grade teachers to see if any adjustments needed to be made to the questions. There was no identifying information on the form returned to me. Using suggestions from the

pilot study (e.g., guaranteeing the responses were confidential), I created an online questionnaire through Google Forms for teachers to provide responses about the support they received from the PD, instructional coaches, and school leaders. I used open-ended questions so the participants could answer based on their experience, knowledge, and background (Creswell, 2007; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; United States Department of Health and Human Services, 2018).

Harris and Brown (2010) and Michaelidou and Dibb (2006) stated questionnaires permitted participants to elaborate on their responses, and participants could think about and give a thorough answer. Harris and Brown (2010) found participants wanted to add information after the interview was over, so questionnaires were preferred since nothing could be amended by participants after submission. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) and the United States Department of Health and Human Services (2018) stated online questionnaires were useful tools when geography prohibited interviews. I chose to do questionnaires instead of interviews due to a national pandemic of an infectious, highly contagious disease COVID-19. COVID-19 led to schools being closed or not open to any visitors in the school.

Before I collected data, I requested permission from BSD to conduct my study (see Appendix B). After I received approval from BSD, I requested permission from the principals (see Appendix C) at each of the elementary schools in my study; I also asked these principals to provide a list of teachers who taught third grade reading in their school. Once I received permission from the principals, I requested and received approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Lincoln Memorial University. After IRB approval, I emailed 28 teachers

with an explanation of my study, an implied consent statement, and a direct link to my Google Form (see Appendix D).

I gave my participants two weeks to answer and return the questionnaire. After the two weeks, I printed the responses of 12 participants. I then read the responses five times and collected data until the point of saturation. Saturation occurred when continued data collection produced no new information (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Methods of Analysis

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) stated, “Data analysis is the process of making sense out of the data” (p. 202) to find the answers to the research questions. After data collection was completed, I read and re-read the returned questionnaires. I added notes and developed common themes I thought might be relevant or had the potential to answer the research questions. After marking the questionnaires, I organized and managed the data by the coding process.

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), coding meant developing a shorthand, usually a word or short phrase, so specific pieces of data could be retrieved easily when needed. First, I open coded the data by marking any comments relevant to my study. I took words and phrases that were important to my research and made a list of them. Next, I completed axial coding, in which I consolidated information from open coding. I then used axial coding to develop themes. I used the themes and created sentences to answer the research questions.

Trustworthiness of the Data

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) stated the extent that research could be replicated was called reliability. In qualitative studies, *validity* and *reliability* were

replaced by trustworthiness (Morrow, 2005; Shenton, 2004). Trustworthiness was determined by *dependability*, *credibility*, *transferability*, and *confirmability* (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Dependability in interpretive research was reached if two researchers used the same evidence and arrived at the same conclusion. As the only researcher in this study, I reached dependability by including teachers at three different schools, asked the same questions, and received similar responses.

Interpretive qualitative research must have credibility and transferability (Morrow, 2005; Shenton, 2004). Credibility happened when I reported the results of the research using the view of the participants. I conducted the research ethically, and I made sure I reported responses truthfully and accurately (Morrow, 2005; Shenton, 2004). Transferability was how well the results of the qualitative research could be transferred to another setting. The data were interpreted with credibility and described accurately, so another researcher could transfer the results of the findings to a different context (Morrow, 2005; Shenton, 2004).

Confirmability in qualitative research was the ability to for the results to be corroborated by others (Morrow, 2005). I ensured confirmability by checking and rechecking the data throughout the study. Trustworthiness was ensured when pilot questionnaires were used to test the research questions. Saturation and triangulation of the data also helped with reliability and validity. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), triangulation was comparing and cross-checking the data collected. I compared and cross-checked the data from all participants, and I also double checked my coding to ensure effectiveness.

Limitations and Delimitations

Simon (2011) explained limitations as things that could affect the overall results of the research but were out of the researcher's control. One limitation in this study was the COVID-19 pandemic. The participants could not be observed teaching reading classes due to COVID-19 and visitors not being allowed in the building. Since participants could not be interviewed due to extended school closures, I used a questionnaire instead of interviews. Some teachers were teaching both in-person students and virtual students, so they may not have had the time to answer the questionnaire due to the additional time needed to prepare for class. Teachers may have not answered questionnaires due to fear of retaliation if they inadvertently said something negative about the school or the school leaders, even though I stated the questionnaires were confidential (Michaelidou & Dibb, 2006). I explained by using Google Forms, the responses were returned to me confidentially, and I did not know who answered.

Delimitations narrowed this study and were chosen by the researcher (Simon, 2011). I chose the top three schools where students had the highest rate of reading at or above grade level. One delimitation was teachers of kindergarten, first grade, and second grade helped develop the reading skills of the third grade students who took the Georgia Milestones in third grade. Third grade teachers were chosen for this study because this was the first grade tested for reading using any standardized assessment. The standardized test did not take into account reading ability or instruction in other grades. Another delimitation is the use of questionnaires over interviews. Participants could not ask questions for

clarification, nor could I ask for clarification of their responses. I tried to mitigate this by the accurate wording of my questions and reading responses carefully.

Assumptions of the Study

Simon (2011) stated an assumption was something accepted as plausible by those who read a research paper. One assumption I had was all participants who answered the questionnaire had training on the best practice of teaching reading. Another assumption I made was teachers in third grade in these schools received support from PD, instructional coaches, and school leaders. Some of the teachers who were new to the schools or new to teaching reading might not have had these supports in their previous schools or positions. The third assumption I made was all of the teachers received the email and knew how to follow the link to answer the questions.

Summary of Methodology

The purpose of this qualitative interpretive study was to determine third grade reading teachers' perceptions of how school leaders, PD and instructional coaching supported the development of self-efficacy in reading instruction. In this chapter, I discussed the methods used to collect the data for my qualitative research. The research design was a qualitative interpretive study. I discussed my role as the researcher, the biases I could have had, and how I mitigated those potential biases. I established the participants of the study as third grade teachers in schools with students who had the highest reading scores on the third grade Georgia Milestones standardized assessment of the 2018-2019 school year. I examined the data collection process using questionnaires and coding to analyze the data. I then discussed the trustworthiness, limitations, delimitations, and

assumptions of this study. In the next chapter, Chapter IV, I presented the data collected in this study.

Chapter IV: Analyses and Results

Researchers suggested teachers with self-efficacy in reading instruction had students who scored high on reading assessments (Ko & Hughes, 2015; Kolawole & Jire-Alao, 2015; Leader-Jenssen & Rankin-Erickson, 2013; Lee & Johnson-Reid, 2016; Moats, 2020). The purpose of this qualitative interpretive study was to determine third grade reading teachers' perceptions of how school leaders, PD, and instructional coaching supported the development of self-efficacy in reading instruction. Twelve third grade teachers of reading, who held a valid Georgia Teaching Certification, worked in the three top scoring schools in Georgia, and taught at the schools during the 2018-2019 school year participated in the study.

Data Analysis

In qualitative research data analysis, I used research-based strategies to make sense of the data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I used a questionnaire I developed and sent to the teachers who taught reading to third grade students in the three highest reading performing schools in the state of Georgia. I read through each response as I received it and continued reading responses until I reached saturation. I asked the teachers how many years they had taught reading to third grade students at the school they were teaching at the time of the study. Participants had to be teaching third grade at these schools during the school year that the school was one of the highest reading score schools; otherwise, I did not include their responses in my findings. I did not report teachers' years of experience teaching third grade reading because that information may have helped

identify some of the teachers in the schools; since I had promised confidentiality, I chose not to include that information.

Research Questions

I developed research questions for this study to determine what supports reading teachers perceived as building their self-efficacy. After receiving the responses to the questionnaires, I analyzed the data from the teachers by coding to determine themes related to the following research questions.

Research Question 1

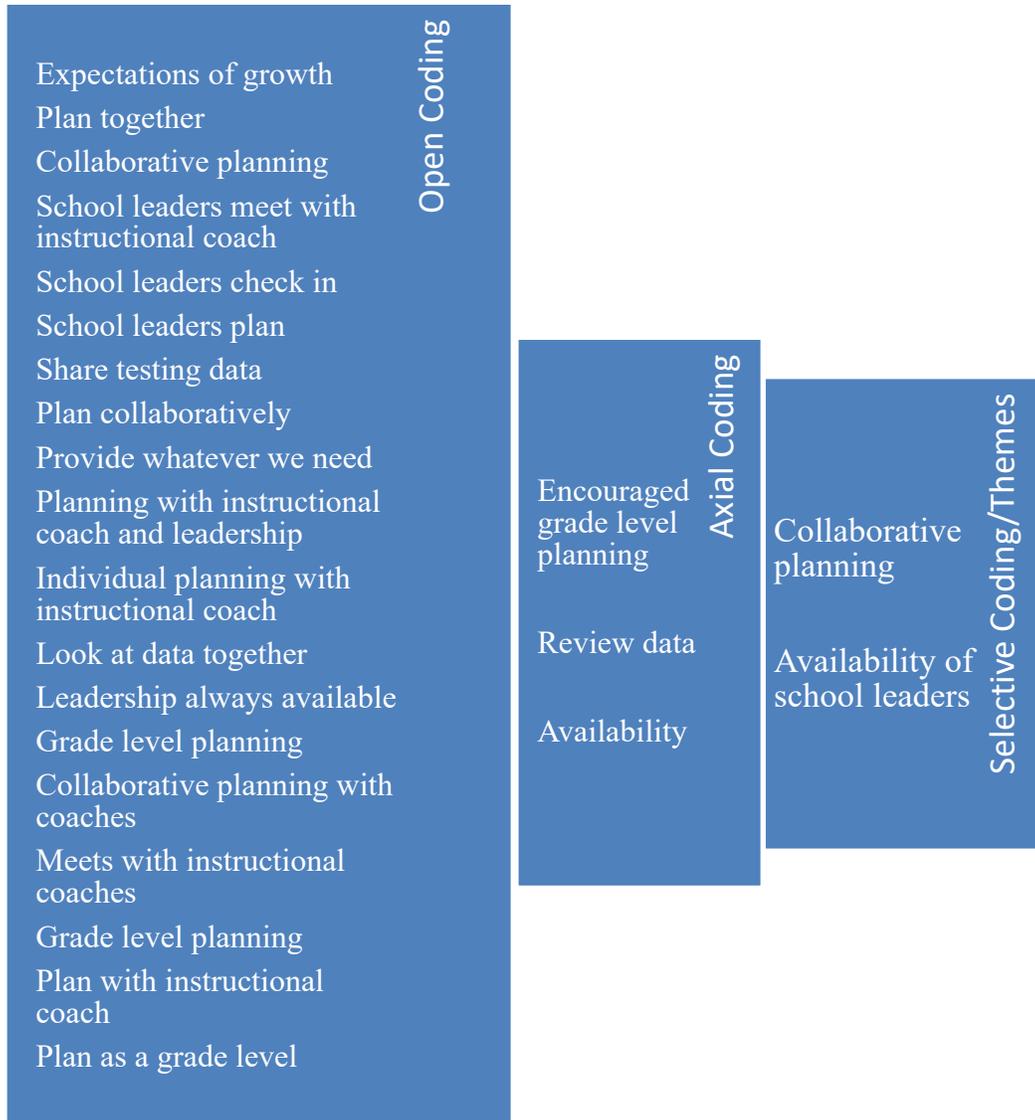
According to third grade teachers in the top three highest reading scoring schools in Georgia, how do school leaders provide supports to develop teachers' self-efficacy in teaching reading?

I read through the responses from the questionnaire that pertained to this research question several times. After analyzing each questionnaire, I started coding the responses. I started with open coding, where I broke data into distinct parts and codes and labeled the parts (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I then conducted axial coding and identified three axial codes. I organized the open codes of *plan together, collaborative planning, school leaders meet with instructional coach, school leaders plan, plan collaboratively, plan with instructional coach and leadership, individual planning with instructional coach, level planning, collaborative planning with coaches, grade level planning, plan with instructional coach, and plan as a grade level* into the axial code of *encouraged grade level planning*. I combined *shared testing data, look at data together, and expectation of growth* into the axial code of review data. I developed the third axial code *availability from leadership is always available, school leaders plan, and school*

leaders check in with us. From the axial coding, I developed two broad themes of collaborative planning and availability of school leaders (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Coding for School Leaders' Support of Reading Teachers



The majority of the teachers (58%) responded their school leaders encouraged collaborative planning with the instructional coach. P2 stated,

“School leaders were also in the planning meetings with the instructional coach, so there was dialogue about what worked and what did not work, and everyone could voice their opinion.” P5 stated the school leader knew what was supposed to be taught during a reading lesson, “which was helpful for school leaders during observations.”

Under the theme of *availability of school leaders*, three participants responded their school leader was available to the teachers. P4 stated they did not have to go through the instructional coach to talk to the school leader; they could approach the school leader with any questions, and the school leader would help the teacher. Three participants stated the school leaders reviewed the data with the teachers under the theme of *collaborative planning*. P8 also stated the instructional coach was always present when the data were discussed, “which guides our next steps.” The theme of school leaders always being available was explained when P3 specifically mentioned someone came and covered their class while they went to observe the instructional coach model a lesson in another classroom. P3 stated, “Watching the lesson being modeled is the best way to learn.” When school leaders covered classes when teachers observed other teachers, teachers felt supported by their school leaders.

Research Question 2

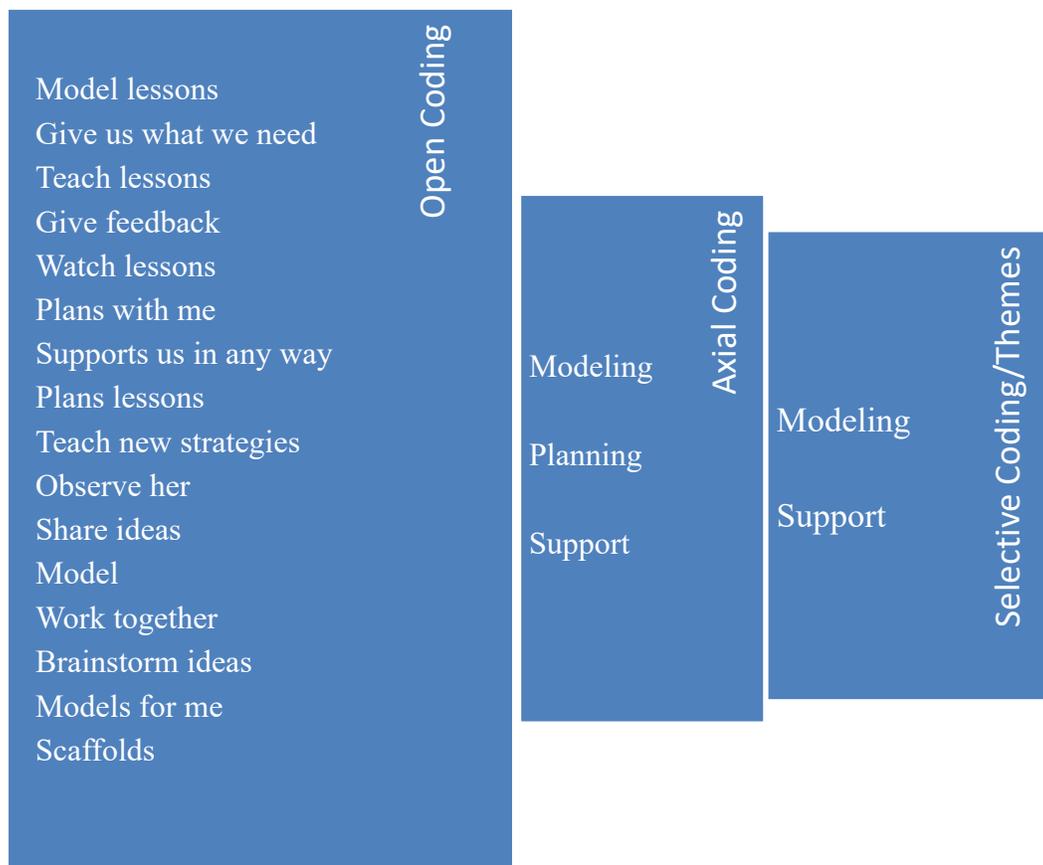
According to third grade teachers in the top three highest reading scoring schools in Georgia, how do instructional coaches provide supports to develop teacher self-efficacy in teaching reading?

As in Research Question 1, for Research Question 2 I read through the responses from the questionnaire that pertained to this research question several

times. I then conducted axial coding and identified three axial codes. I organized the open codes of *model the lesson*, *teach new strategies*, *observe her modeling*, and *scaffolding* into the axial code of *modeling*. I combined *planning lessons*, *gives*, *feedback*, *observes me*, and *meets with me* into the axial code *planning*. I combined *support*, *helps me understand*, and *provides resources* in the axial code *support*. From the axial coding, I developed two broad themes of *modeling* and *support* (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

Coding for Instructional Coaches' Support of Reading Teachers



A majority of the teachers (84%) responded the instructional coach modeled reading lessons for the reading teacher. One participant stated the

instructional coach always came in and modeled a lesson anytime new strategies were taught. Participants stated the instructional coach gave them support while the teacher taught a reading lesson. P6 stated the instructional coach observed a reading a lesson and then “brainstorm[ed]” ideas to help a struggling student. One participant stated the instructional coach planned the reading lesson with them. P2 stated, “When I plan lessons with the instructional coach, I feel confident teaching the lesson.”

Research Question 3

According to third grade teachers in the top three highest reading scoring schools in Georgia, how does professional development provide supports to develop teachers’ self-efficacy in teaching reading?

As in Research Question 1 and Research Question 2, I read through the responses from the questionnaire that pertained to this research question several times. After analyzing each questionnaire, I started coding the responses with open coding. I found the open codes of *model*, *show me*, *guide me*, and *helps implement* and devised the axial code of *modeling what was taught in PD*. I then took *cutting edge*, *more strategies*, *frequent PD*, and *taught new strategies* and identified the axial code of *introduce new strategies*. I then combined *scaffolding*, *guide me*, *supports me*, and *helps implement* into the axial code of *support to implement new strategies*. From there I took the axial codes and came up with three themes of *model*, *new strategies*, and *support* (see Figure 3).

Figure 3

Coding for Professional Development Support of Reading Teachers



Forty-two percent (42%) of the participants stated strategies needed to be modeled in PD after a new strategy was introduced. Two felt they needed support while they tried to implement the new strategy. P5 stated, “I need to watch something new several times to really understand what I am supposed to be doing.”

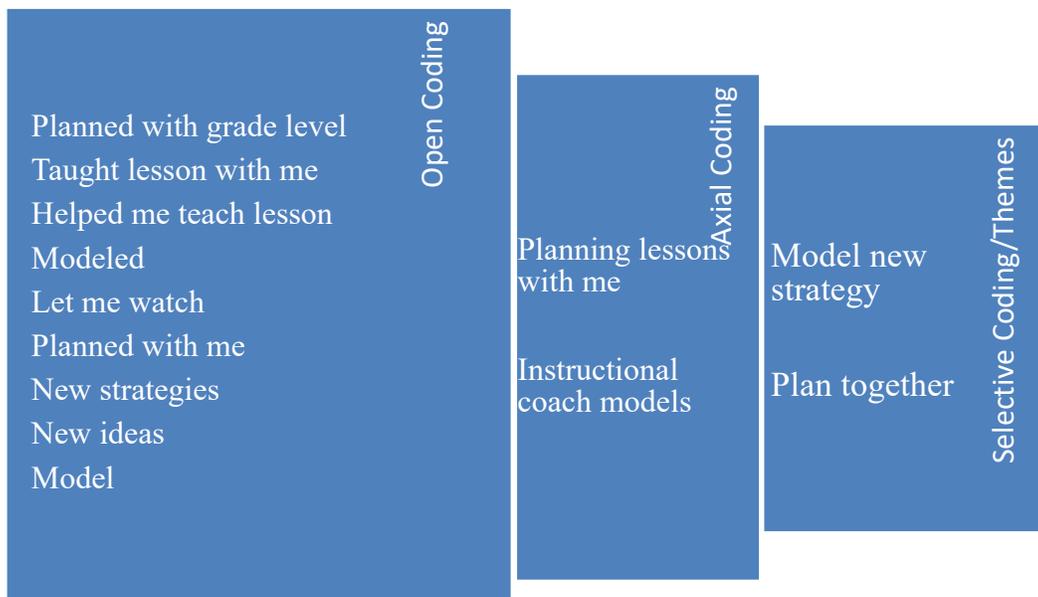
Research Question 4

What are teachers’ perceptions of needed supports from school leaders, instructional coaches, and professional development to build teacher self-efficacy in reading?

Again, I took the responses from the questionnaire that pertained to this research question and read through them several times. After analyzing each questionnaire, I started open coding. I took the open codes of *planned, plans with me, plans with grade level, and plan with instructional coach* and identified the axial code of *planning lessons with me*. I then took the open codes of *modeling, teaches me, guides me, and models new strategy* and identified the axial code of *instructional coach models*. I then grouped those axial codes and came up with themes of *modeling new strategies* and *plan together* (see Figure 4).

Figure 4

Coding for Teachers' Perceptions of Supports that Helped



The participants stated PD needed to be modeled after a new strategy was introduced. The participants also indicated they needed time to plan together with

their instructional coach to implement the new reading strategy so they could feel confident and develop self-efficacy teaching the new reading strategy.

Participants (44%) felt the instructional coach needed to model the new reading strategy for them. P12 stated the instructional coach came into the classroom and taught lessons when new reading strategies were introduced. P10 stated, “The instructional coach helps to plan lessons and also models the new reading strategy.”

Summary of Results

The purpose of this qualitative interpretive study was to determine third grade reading teachers’ perceptions of how school leaders, PD, and instructional coaching supported the development of self-efficacy in reading instruction. I analyzed the data from questionnaires to answer my four research questions. Participants reported school leaders encouraged collaborative planning, provided resources, reviewed data with teachers, and were present. Participants reported the reading lessons needed to be planned together, and the instructional coaches needed to support the teacher during the lesson. When a new strategy was introduced, the participants reported the new strategy needed to be modeled and supported. Finally, the teachers needed time to plan together with the instructional coach about how to implement the new reading strategy, and school leaders needed to be available. In Chapter V, I presented implications of the importance of the research, especially to elementary schools. I also made recommendations for future studies based on the data collected in this study.

Chapter V: Discussion of the Study

Researchers suggested reading unlocked the means to pursue knowledge (Alnahdi, 2015; Joshi et al., 2009; Leidig et al., 2018; NCES, 2019). The inability to read kept people from pursuing their life goals and led to a life dependent on public assistance (Wood, 2010). Children needed teachers with a strong sense of self-efficacy to teach reading (Baez-Hernandez, 2019; Bebas, 2016; Berebitsky & Salloum, 2017; Bradshaw et al., 2018; Bray-Clark & Bates, 2003; Cunningham et al., 2004; Davis-Kean et al., 2008; Williams, 2012). Children also needed teachers who knew how to effectively teach, yet teacher preparation schools were not preparing teachers how to teach reading (Hurford et al., 2016). Researchers suggested teachers with self-efficacy were the most effective teachers (Pajares, 2016; Yost, 2006; You et al., 2015).

Teachers recognized when a new reading strategy was introduced, it needed to be modeled for the teacher. Whether the new reading strategy was introduced by the instructional coach or by PD, modeling how to effectively teach the new strategy was the best method for teachers to learn how to teach the new strategy and build their self-efficacy in teaching that new strategy. Teachers indicated the need to plan together with their instructional coaches. Reading teachers stated they developed self-efficacy when instructional coaches or school leaders helped them plan the reading lesson using new strategies. Planning about how to implement the lessons with the PD presenter helped to build the teachers' self-efficacy. Teachers needed PD to teach them strategies for teaching reading, instructional coaches to model strategies in classrooms, and time for instructional coaches and classroom teachers to plan together. Teachers ultimately needed

support from PD, instructional coaches, and school leaders to enhance self-efficacy in the area of reading.

Implications for Practice

According to Blazer and Kraft (2017), teacher self-efficacy is important in teaching reading to students. The support of PD, instructional coaches, and school leaders help teachers develop self-efficacy, which is especially important to elementary schools because that is where beginning reading is taught. Since PD plays a role in helping to develop their self-efficacy, teachers need that PD, specifically in teaching reading strategies, with the presenter not only explaining but also modeling the new reading strategy. School districts should provide time in their PD to allow for modeling the new strategy and for teachers to observe and practice the new strategy.

Instructional coaching develops self-efficacy because instructional coaches model strategies for the reading teachers. Teachers learn more when an instructional coach models the lesson, watches the participant teach a lesson, and then provides feedback. School districts should ensure PD is modeled, especially by instructional coaches, and fully supported by school leaders so new strategies are effective. Additionally, schools should have a formal procedure to ensure teachers are receiving effective feedback specific to the new strategies from the instructional coaches.

School leaders also play a role in developing self-efficacy in reading teachers. School leaders should develop the master schedule for each school to include regular collaborative planning time between the instructional coaches and the reading teachers before any other class schedules are made. Acknowledging

school leaders play multiple roles in schools, they should also firmly schedule time to check in and provide support to teachers in the classrooms, especially in those where teachers are providing initial reading instruction.

Recommendations for Further Research

To develop the research on reading teachers' perceptions of how school leaders, PD, and instructional coaching support the development of self-efficacy in reading teachers, future researchers should expand this research by asking reading teachers what school leaders and instructional coaches could do specifically to better support the teachers. Further, as I used questionnaires for this research, future researchers should conduct face-to-face interviews with teachers to allow the participants to expand on their responses, to ask clarifying questions, and to provide additional information. The results of that study should be combined with this study to provide an enhanced picture of teachers' perceptions of support of their reading self-efficacy.

Future researchers should also use lower reading performing schools in the state of Georgia to repeat this study. This would provide a bigger picture of the influence of PD, instructional coaches, and school leaders' support as related to reading teachers' self-efficacy. Researchers should also isolate each factor examined in this study—PD, instructional coaches, and school leaders—to examine more fully the influence of each of these factors to determine teachers' perceptions of which targeted support helps improve reading scores and teachers' self-efficacy.

Conclusions of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine third grade reading teachers' perceptions of how school leaders, PD, and instructional coaching supported the development of self-efficacy in reading instruction. I conducted the study in three of the top reading performing schools in the state of Georgia. In this qualitative interpretive study, 12 third grade reading teachers indicated specific needs for support.

To develop self-efficacy in teaching reading, teachers need supports from PD, instructional coaches, and school leaders. Teachers need new strategies presented and modeled to them to make those strategies successful. Not only is modeling needed, but also instructional coaches need to help the teachers with planning of the lessons for the new strategy. School leaders can help by providing the time for modeling and planning to take place.

School leaders are obligated to their community and stakeholders to provide all students with the best education they can get so all students can become productive citizens of the community or society. The best education that a school can give a student is the ability to read successfully. The information from this study will enable districts to support the new teachers, and even experienced teachers, who do not receive effective prior instruction about how to teach reading. School leaders and instructional coaches should develop PD to help their teachers to be better reading teachers for students. Once the teachers develop self-efficacy in effectively teaching reading, and more children will be able to use reading skills to have better lives.

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Appendix A
Questionnaire

The purpose of this study is to determine your perceptions of how school leaders, professional development, and instructional coaching support you in your reading instruction. Please only use this school and your time at this school as a reference when answering these questions.

1. How many years have you been teaching third grade reading at this specific school?
2. Describe how professional development has supported you in your instructional strategies in your reading instruction.
3. Describe how professional development has supported you in modeling of effective practices in your reading instruction.
4. Describe how professional development has improved your teaching of reading.
5. Describe how your instructional coach addresses the curriculum and instruction in your reading instruction.
6. Describe how your instructional coach plans with you for the teaching of reading.
7. Describe how your instructional coach helps you solve problems for the teaching of reading.
8. Describe how your school leadership ensures the teaching strategies that professional development introduce is implemented.
9. Describe how your school leadership ensures that teaching strategies that instructional coaches introduce is implemented.
10. Describe how your school leadership develops a positive relationship between you and the instructional coach.

Appendix B

District Permission Request Letter

Superintendent of Schools
XXX School District
Street Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Superintendent,

As a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Education degree at Lincoln Memorial University, I am collecting data related to teachers' self-efficacy in the area of teaching reading. The purpose of this study is to determine how school leaders, professional development, and instructional coaches help the teachers develop self-efficacy so they can better teach reading. I would like permission to contact the principals of XXXXX Elementary School, XXXXX Elementary School, and XXXXX Elementary School to ask for principals' permission to send a web-based questionnaire utilizing Google forms to all third grade teachers in the three buildings. I understand that I will need your permission, permission from the three principals, and consent from the teachers/participants. The web-based questionnaire includes the following questions:

1. What kind of opportunities in the school have you been provided to support your teaching of reading?
2. Who is responsible for arranging those opportunities (not names, positions)?
3. Who in your school supports you with your needs for teaching reading (not names, positions)?
4. What training is available for you regarding teaching reading?
5. Is there anything you need to help you in teaching reading, and if so, what is that need?

I understand I cannot identify staff members, schools, nor the district participation in any draft or final report of my study. In addition, I agree to provide the district a copy of my completed dissertation upon request.

If you have any questions about the district's rights, or if you feel the district has been placed at risk, you may contact Dr. Kay Paris, Chair of the Human Subjects Committee, Institutional Review Board at 423-869-6834.

If you will grant permission for me to conduct and study in your district, please sign below and return via email.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Tami S. McClain
tami.mcclain@lmunet.edu
706-260-1373

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Cherie Gaines
Associate Professor and Chairperson at Lincoln Memorial University

Cherie.gaines@lmunet.edu

IRB Chair: Dr. Kay Paris
Chair of the Institutional Review Board
kay.paris@lmunet.edu

By signing below, you are providing permission for me to contact principals at
XXX Elementary School, XXX Elementary School, and XXX Elementary School
for their further permission to conduct this study. Please sign and return to me at
tami.mcclain@lmunet.edu

Superintendent Signature

Date

Typed Name

Date

Appendix C

Principal Permission Request Letter

Principal Name
XXX Elementary School
Street Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Principals,

Your district superintendent granted permission to conduct research (see attached) with grade 3 teachers as a component of *Supports to Develop Self-efficacy of Grade 3 Reading Teachers in the Highest Reading Performing Schools in Georgia*. The purpose of this study is to determine what supports third grade reading teachers get from school leaders, professional development, and instructional coaches that help the teacher develop self-efficacy in teaching reading.

The purpose of this letter is to ask permission to send a questionnaire to all third grade teachers who teach third grade reading in your school for data collection purpose to support the research of the study. Questionnaires will be conducted by me, Tami McClain, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Lincoln Memorial University. The process will include sending the questionnaire to the teachers in your school. Teachers who volunteer to participate will do so without harm or impact on their current or future professional standing. Teachers will be asked to complete a five question electronic questionnaire through Google forms about what supports school leaders, professional development, and instructions coaches give to the teachers that help develop their self-efficacy in teaching reading. With the data collected, this study may help better prepare teachers to teach reading. As a result, students, teachers, and administrators may benefit from the results of the data. Questionnaires will be completed in accordance with each participant's availability. Responses will be confidential without any identifying characteristics.

Thank you in advance for considering this research. I will follow up with a telephone call next week and would be happy to answer any questions or concerns that you may have at this time. If you feel you need more information, you may contact me at tami.mcclain@lmunet.edu, Dr. Kay Paris, Chair of the Human Subjects Committee, Institutional Review Board at 423-869-6323, Dr. Cherie Gaines, Associate Professor and Chairperson at Lincoln Memorial University at Cherie.gaines@lmunet.edu. Please sign and return the permission form to Tami McClain, Doctoral Candidate at Lincoln Memorial University, at tami.mcclain@lmunet.edu.

Sincerely,

tami.mcclain@lmunet.edu

Appendix D
Teacher Consent Request Letter

Researcher: Tami McClain

EdD Candidate at Lincoln Memorial University

tami.mcclain@lmunet.edu

706-260-1373

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Cherie Gaines

Professor and Chairperson at Lincoln Memorial University

Cherie.Gaines@lmunet.edu

Dear 3rd Grade Teacher,

I am requesting your participation in the research entitled *Supports to Develop Self-efficacy of Grade 3 Reading Teachers in the Highest Reading Performing Schools in Georgia*. I have received district and school permission to conduct this study. This study is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Lincoln Memorial University, where I am currently enrolled. Your participation will be valuable to me due to your knowledge and expertise in this subject area. Participation in this study is voluntary. Please read the information below and contact me via email or cell phone number listed above with any questions you may have before deciding to participate.

The purpose of my research study is to explore the supports given to you by your school leaders, professional development, and instructional coaches to build your self-efficacy in teaching reading. With your help, this study may help schools better prepare their teachers to teach reading. As a result, students, teachers, and administrators may benefit from the results of the data.

You are eligible to participate in this study if you are (a) certified and licensed by the State of Georgia, (b) are a third grade classroom teacher, or (c) teach reading to third grade students.

This study includes four questions to be completed electronically through Google Forms and will require approximately 10-15 minutes of your time. You may refuse to answer any question or discontinue your involvement at any time without penalty. If at any time you discontinue the questionnaire, your results will be discarded. Your responses will be kept confidential, and data will be stored in secure computer files and in a secure storage location in hard-copy. Any report of this research that is made available to the public will not include your name or any other individual information by which you could be identified. Your decision to participate will not affect your current or future relationship with Lincoln Memorial University.

To prepare for this study, I am asking that you consider your role as a classroom teacher or a reading teacher and share those experiences to the best of your knowledge.

This research has been approved by the Lincoln Memorial University's Institutional Review Board. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you may contact Dr. Kay Paris, Chair of the Human Subjects Committee, Institutional Review Board at 423-869-6323. Additional contact information is available at www.lmunet.edu/administration/office-of-research-grants-and-sponsored-programs-orgsp/institutional-review-board-irb

By moving forward and completing the questionnaire linked in this email, you are agreeing that you work as a third grade reading teacher in the state of Georgia and give your consent to participate in this study.

Thank you for your consideration to participate in my study.

Tami McClain

INSERT LINK HERE