READING AND THE ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL: IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

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The purpose of this study was to analyze elementary school principals' sense of self-efficacy as leaders of reading instruction in their elementary schools. The researcher used an electronic survey to gather data to examine the self-efficacy beliefs of principals in their role as instructional leaders of reading education. The Tri-State Area School Study Council aided the researcher in identifying a sample group of 80 elementary school principals to participate in this study.

The researcher developed two research questions that guided his study. One research question was designed to identify the perceived rating of elementary school principals' personal leadership efficacy as reading education leaders. The second question sought to learn how elementary school principals rated their self-efficacy, from various backgrounds and various schools, pertaining to their role as reading instructional leaders in their schools.

The results of the study demonstrated that experience as a principal and teacher did not correlate with the perceived self-efficacy of principals. Rather, experience as a reading teacher correlated with the principals that rated themselves highly efficacious. Support from teachers, superintendents, central office, and parents proved to be significant factors in the principals' self-perception of efficacy. The results of the study also revealed that a majority of the elementary school principal respondents did not find their principal preparation program helpful in preparing

them to be instructional leaders of reading instruction. An analysis of the data also indicated that female principals rated themselves more efficacious than male principals.

These results support the need to further examine elementary school principal certification policies to better prepare elementary principals to lead reading instruction. Elementary school principals are responsible for supervising and evaluating reading teachers to enhance their reading instruction. This study suggests that some elementary school principals may not be prepared for this role.

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PREFACE

My dissertation is dedicated to my father, Michael J. Lucas. He has instilled in me the importance of family, religion, and education. His dedication to our family will inspire me for years to come.

I need to thank several individuals for my success at the University of Pittsburgh. First, I need to express thanks to my former advisor, Dr. Mary Margaret Kerr. Dr. Kerr has helped me to improve as an educator, writer, and leader. Her encouragement and advice motivated me through the doctoral program. I also need to thank my current advisor, Dr. Charlene Trovato. At various times throughout my years at the University of Pittsburgh, Dr. Trovato's wisdom, support, and guidance pushed me to succeed through many challenges. Another former member of the University of Pittsburgh, Dr. Daniel May, has been a solid source of inspiration, guidance, and encouragement in my eight years at the university. I greatly appreciate his friendship and support.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Elementary school principals are expected to be instructional leaders. As instructional leaders, elementary school principals are responsible for supervising and evaluating teachers to enhance their instruction. This study examines self-perceptions of elementary school principals' effectiveness as instructional leaders of reading. This study will analyze elementary school principals' role as leader of reading instruction and the variables and factors that influence their self-efficacy judgments.

This introduction will unpack current trends in principal preparation programs to explore the training that principals are currently receiving. Then this researcher will review the literature that supports the importance of the content area of reading because it usually serves as the cornerstone of elementary school curriculum.

1.1 OVERVIEW OF THE ISSUES

In principal preparation programs, *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) is the basis of the majority of instructor's activities, discussions, syllabi, and focus area within the administrative preparation program curriculum. This major national reform movement has changed how school systems operate. NCLB dominates educational discourse in principal preparation programs.

In addition to NCLB training, the university principal preparation curriculum is designed for students to meet specific leadership standards created by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium, which are referred as the ISLLC standards. The ISLLC standards are national standards or expectations set for educational leaders that many states and universities have adopted as norms of competency for administrative leaders to meet before educational leaders are certified or considered competent. Data analysis, school management, communication, and theory courses on leadership are the fundamental principles that guide the educational experience and training for principals.

NCLB places a great emphasis on school reform. One major claim of this legislation is that it will improve reading instruction in all schools in the United States so that every student is a proficient or skilled reader by 2014. NCLB also places a great emphasis on accountability and student progress in reading for schools and school administrators. The ISLLC standards recommend that educational leaders be effective communicators, managers, leaders, supervisors, and community advocates. Interestingly, these national standards fail to mention anything about the knowledge of reading. Perhaps that is the reason educational administrative students preparing to be elementary principals are not required or recommended to take any reading courses or participate in reading training when preparing to become elementary certified principals.

Reading is one of the essential focuses of NCLB and reading is directly connected to student success in other content areas. Current university principal preparation programs and state certification requirements are not consistent with the current national reform movements stated in NCLB in regards to reading. The requirements also fail to match specific professional recommendations and research indicating the need for the principal to understand reading.

In light of this discrepancy, it is the intention of this dissertation to examine the implications of the lack of reading knowledge requirements for principals to receive their principal certification. The research will include an investigation of the elementary school principal's role in reading instruction as instructional leader, which supervises and evaluates reading teachers. In addition, this study will review what many national and global educators recommend and report on the school principal's need in comprehending the art and science of reading instruction. Finally, the researcher developed a survey to analyze elementary school principals through specific professional reading standards to measure their self-efficacy as instructional leaders of reading instruction.

1.2 READING

Prior to reviewing literature on the principal's need to understand reading instruction, it would be beneficial to review "reading" in general, because in every walk of life, reading comprehension is an essential element to the success or failure of one's career. The importance of reading (as in the three R's, with reading being first) is taught as early as preschool. Primary grades spend the greatest percentage of their instructional time devoted to reading skills. Students who do not read well are doomed to failure, since reading is the primary building block of education. The importance of reading is rarely questioned in today's society.

Reading can also act as a vehicle for change, since having success in literacy ensures success in other subject areas and success ultimately in an occupation (Booth & Rowswell, 2002; Lyon, 2002, 2003). Snow, Burns, and Griffin (1998) stated, "Reading is essential to success in

our society. The ability to read is highly valued and important for social and economic advancement" (p. 17). The Learning First Alliance (1998) reported in their action paper, "Every educator, parent, and child knows that reading is the most important skill taught in elementary school" (p.52). The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL, 2006) reported that "Literacy is often referred to as the cornerstone of education and the building block for success." It is the school principal's obligation to ensure that his or her teachers are doing what is required to effectuate this standard. Therefore, it may seem practical for an elementary principal to have some knowledge of the cornerstone of education.

In no place is the focus more apparent than the current trends in national legislation. The U.S. government report entitled "A Guide to Education and No Child Left Behind" (2004) stated:

> Reading opens doors to children who otherwise would struggle through school, lacking the skills to succeed and grow. Literacy is a vital skill for a successful student. Children who learn to read well early in life are more likely to be engaged in school and experience academic success. A deficiency in reading skills impacts achievement in all other areas of education (p.1).

This report also demonstrated America's devotion to the importance of reading through increased fiscal spending on reading in 2004 by "1.4 billion, including 1.1 billion for Reading First program, 132 million for Early Reading programs, and 100 million for Striving Readers program." These statistics reveal the U.S. government's dedication to the reading cause.

In addition to financial support of these principles, NCLB demands "scientifically based reading research" in every reading classroom. The National Reading Panel (2000) identified very specific instructional strategies that were scientifically proven to help students read best. An elementary principal would need to hold teachers accountable to this specific type of reading instruction. All principals and schools are also held to the challenging NCLB goal of each child

reading at grade level by third grade (United States Department of Education, 2001). One would believe that an administrator would need adequate training to meet these demands and therefore universities would make this training an integral part of their principal training curriculum.

However, the knowledge of literacy is omitted from elementary principal training programs in the United States. Elementary school principals (the instructional leaders) are not required to demonstrate knowledge of reading instruction when fulfilling current requirements for principal certification.

The research above indicates that reading is one of the most important content areas in elementary school. The findings above also demonstrate that No Child Left Behind demands that elementary students increase their reading skills. Yet, elementary school principal programs are not training principals in an area that many agree to be the most important for students to learn. The following literature review will identify what researchers and professionals are reporting on what principals should know about reading in their role as instructional leader.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 IRA STANDARDS FOR READING PROFESSIONALS

The International Reading Association (IRA) is a professional association for reading instruction that has researched reading for over 50 years. They defined and revised specific standards for reading professionals (IRA, 2004). The IRA (2004) recommended professional educators to meet specific standards of reading instruction, after the completion of a preparation program. These standards were developed for paraprofessional candidates, classroom teacher candidates, reading specialist/literacy coach candidates, and administrator candidates. The IRA (2004) reported that these standards were created for university preparation programs, the evaluation of personnel or school programs, and for accreditation of training programs. These standards identify what professionals (including principals) need to know about reading. The standards can help produce competent reading professionals (IRA, 2004). The IRA (2004) five standards for reading professionals are organized in the following categories:

1. Foundational Knowledge;
2. Instructional Strategies and Curriculum Materials;
3. Assessment, Diagnosis, and Evaluation;
4. Creating a Literature Environment;

5. Professional Development.

The IRA (2004) claims that each of the standards were developed from "…research syntheses that summarize a large number of studies related to particular research questions" (p.4). These specific standards were reported in a detailed matrix that describes each element for each professional including the principal.

The IRA also printed a picture as a tetrahedron to visualize how the five standards for reading professionals operate. The figure below was developed by the IRA (2004):

Figure 2.1 IRA Tetrahedron

The picture above displays professional development as the base and foundation for a child centered literate environment. The use of instructional practices, assessment, diagnosis, and evaluation, and foundational knowledge rest on the professional development. These four components together form a literate environment for schools (IRA, 2004).

Each section of the literature review will conclude with a connection between the research and the IRA (2004) standards. The literature review will attempt to connect the specific five standards created by the IRA with current research on the principal and reading. This review of literature will be analyzed through the lens of the IRA Standards for Reading Professionals (IRA, 2004).

2.2 SUPERVISING AND EVALUATING TEACHERS AS THE INSTRUCTIONAL LEADER

Current educational researchers characterize the school principal as the educational instructional leader (Black, 2000; Bottoms & O'Neill, 2001; Elmore, 1999; Fullan, 1988; Lashway, 2002; Murphy & Hallinger, 1987; and Smith & Andrews, 1989). Bottoms and O'Neill (2001) have used titles and phrases to redefine the modern principal or instructional leader as the "chief learning officer" who bears "ultimate responsibility for success or failure of the enterprise." Elmore (1999) claimed, "…the job of administrative leaders is primarily about enhancing the skills and knowledge of people in the organization…holding individuals accountable for their contributions to the collective result" (p. 15). The responsibilities of the principal have developed into a focus on serving as the instructional leader (Smith & Andrews, 1989).

The role of the principal as instructional leader has vastly evolved through a priority shift for administrators, from managers to leaders (Fullan, 1988; Lashway, 2002). Their claims were consistent with the theory that the prioritizing of the many micro tasks is what determines the effectiveness of the principal today. The importance of the principal assuming the role of instructional leader is well researched, documented, and validated. Although many educational researchers have defined or written about the characteristics of the instructional leader (Black, 2000; Bottoms & O'Neill, 2001; Elmore, 1999; Fullan, 1988; Hallinger & Murphy, 1987; Lashway, 2002; Smith & Andrews, 1989), none of the researchers addressed the specific skills needed to be a leader of literacy. These scholars would agree that the primary purpose of the principal is to serve as the instructional leader for his or her school. These scholars have written broad definitions and similar descriptions of the instructional leader, but they have not included any references to the knowledge of reading instruction in their definition of instructional leader.

Their definitions may omit reading knowledge, but their definitions of instructional leader consistently involve teacher supervision and evaluation. The research for this study is grounded in the instructional leader's role and responsibility to supervise and evaluate teachers**.** At the elementary level, the elementary principal essentially serves as the instructional leader and resource for the elementary reading teachers. According to the researchers above, if an elementary principal is to be successful in the role of instructional leader, the principal will need to effectively supervise and evaluate the teachers. One may assume that the elementary principal (instructional leader) would be knowledgeable in the field of reading, the cornerstone of the elementary curricula (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985).

A clear definition of instructional leadership would be necessary to fully understand the principal's responsibilities as instructional leader. Hallinger and Murphy (1987) defined the role of instructional leader as someone who achieves three domains:

1. Defining the school mission - Leading the staff in developing school-wide goals and communicating them to the entire school community;
2. Managing the instructional program - Through evaluating and supervising staff, in developing and implementing curriculum and instruction through closely monitoring student progress;
3. Promoting the school learning climate - Monitoring the norms and attitudes of staff and students. Maintaining high visibility to communicate priorities and model expectations.

As noted above, this study will focus on Hallinger and Murphy's (1987) second domain, managing the instructional program and evaluating and supervising teachers. Smith and Andrews (1989) also defined the roles of instructional leadership for the principal and identified the specific area of supervision and evaluation as well. They identified four critical areas that are paraphrased below from their 1989 study:

1. Resource provider - Understanding the resources and training a teacher needs to improve the instruction;
2. Instructional resource - Possessing knowledge and skill in curriculum and instruction matters to provide teachers with ways to enhance and expand their instructional strategies;
3. Being a skilled communicator – Providing frequent feedback about instruction and motivates teachers to try new strategies.
4. Being a visionary that has visible presence - Frequently visiting classrooms, discussing instruction and actively participating in staff development.

Smith and Andrews (1989) claim that instructional leaders are viewed as "possessing knowledge and skill in curriculum and instructional matters…" Their second critical area of instructional

leadership is specifically what this study is analyzing. Do principals "possess knowledge and skill in curriculum and instructional matters" to supervise and evaluate reading teachers?

Teacher supervision and evaluation are not new topics of educational research. Some early writing on teacher supervision correlates to today's role of evaluating and supervising teachers. Scott (1924) wrote the following about supervising teachers:

> One of the main functions of supervision is to help the teacher to modify, substitute for, and add to her stock of methods and principles of teaching. The supervisor must bring to the aid of the teacher who is having difficulty the benefits of his broader knowledge and experience" (p. 63). The supervisor should insure the use of right methods and good technique and especially should guard against the habituation of wrong methods and poor technique (p. 67).

This "broader knowledge and experience" should help the classroom teacher enhance teaching strategies.

Over thirty years ago, Goldhammer (1969) reported on the act of teacher supervision through a means of helping teachers develop and improve their teaching skills through the clinical supervision model. Even in 1969, the notion of teacher reflection and professional development were the primary purpose in the supervision process for principals to collaborate with teachers to improve instruction. Cogan (1973) also supported the practice of helping teachers learn new effective teaching practices through the principal's use of the supervision process. Acheson and Gall (1987) refined the clinical process to three steps: a planning conference, classroom observation, and a feedback conference, which are still typically used today (Aseltine, Faryniarz & Rigazio-DiGilio, 2006). Supervision and evaluation models have evolved over the years to new models, "such as action research, peer coaching, walk-throughs, and lesson study" (p.1) as well as performance-based evaluations (Aseltine, Faryniarz and Rigazio-DiGilio, 2006) and portfolios (Zepeda, 2002). All supervision and evaluation models

still seem to have the goal to improve teacher instruction. Each of these models also requires a supervisor to facilitate and guide the evaluation and supervision process.

Many researchers after Goldhammer have claimed the purpose of teacher supervision is to improve classroom practice, enhance instruction, provide useful feedback to teachers, and ultimately benefit student learning (Brandt, 1997; Brundage, 1996; Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Gainey, 1990; Manatt, 1997; Sergiovanni, 1975; Zepeda, 2002). Holland and Garman (2001) also reported on the legal authority of the principal to supervise, evaluate and rate teacher performance. One could assume the principal given this legal responsibility would need knowledge of the instruction he or she is rating.

The researchers above have supported the notion of the knowledgeable and experienced principal helping or guiding the teacher to enhance his or her instructional skills through the supervision process. This section described the principal as the instruction leader who will enhance the teacher's instructional skills through supervising and evaluating teachers.

Supervising and evaluating teachers is one of the many responsibilities of the principal as the instructional leader. In evaluating and supervising reading teachers, this role could require various IRA (2004) standards. Specifically, the knowledge of standard (2) Instructional Practices and Materials, would help a principal with the responsibilities identified from the researchers above. The IRA (2004) specifically recommended that the administrator would have knowledge to evaluate, support, and coach teachers' use of a wide range of instructional practices and curriculum materials that are research-based (IRA, 2004). The researchers above reported similar recommendations in regards to helping teachers improve their instruction. In analyzing this specific role of instructional leadership, it may seem logical for the principal to have an effect on the reading achievement of students.

2.3 THE PRINCIPAL'S EFFECT ON STUDENT READING KNOWLEDGE

The principal's effect on student reading knowledge can vary from school to school through differing needs, various staffing roles, and diverse responsibilities for the principal. Specifically, the principal's effect on reading achievement is well documented in underprivileged schools. Moat's (1999) study claimed that when students from the normally high-risk population (economically disadvantaged minorities) were placed in schools with "effective principals" and "well-supported teachers," they learned to read as well as their more privileged counterparts.

Zipperer, Worley, Sisson, and Said (2002) also stressed the important relationship between the principal and reading success: "In many cases, the success or failure of the reading program in a school hangs upon the principal's understanding of and support for the program" (p.3). Five schools with successful reading programs were described by Denton, Foorman, and Mathes (2003). "When a teacher needs assistance, the principal often goes into the classroom to provide coaching and model instructional approaches. The principal provides what they need to succeed" (p. 259). This assistance, leadership, and success in reading instruction would require the principal to have prior knowledge in the reading process.

Some writers have emphasized the importance of the principal's voice in leading literacy initiatives. Schools with successful reading programs have evidence of strong, committed principals who guide teachers and staff to follow a specific literacy agenda promoting reading (Booth & Rowsell, 2002). Principal directed professional development increases quality instruction by teachers when there is shared leadership responsibility for reading instruction. The primary factor in facilitating positive literacy changes in schools is the literacy leader who creates an environment that supports innovation and collaboration to distribute the leadership by

enabling all to feel like participating professionals (Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001). Mackey, Pitcher, and Decman (2006) also did a study on the principal factor. They analyzed the principal's influence on reading programs through analyzing test data. Through their study, they identified three specific areas that enable elementary principals to positively influence reading achievement. The three areas include the following:

> (1) the principal's vision of the reading program, (2) the educational background the principal brings with her/him; and (3) how the principal defines and applies her/his role as an instructional leader within the school. (p.52)

Like the 2006 study above, studies have proven that by serving as the instructional leader, principals can influence student achievement specifically in reading and other content areas. Instructional leaders can also influence instruction in many indirect ways (Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003). Hallinger, Bickman, and Davis (1996) conducted a study to measure the effects of the principal on reading achievement in 87 U.S. schools. The results demonstrated that the learning environment created by the principal does affect reading gains made by students. Based on their findings, elementary principals who were perceived as strong instructional leaders by the teachers indirectly promoted the learning environment and increased student achievement in their elementary schools. While the principal's direct influence is difficult to prove, the many indirect influences positively affect student achievement. Interestingly, when they analyzed personal characteristics of principals, they noted an interesting variable with the number of prior years of teaching and the possible correlation to the effectiveness of the principal.

Hallinger, Bickman and Davis (1996) also noted research supporting female elementary school principals tend to be more of an instructional leader than male principals. Interestingly, others have also noted gender as a factor. Adkison (1981) reported, "There is evidence that

female principals are more likely than their male counterparts to involve themselves in instructional supervision, to exhibit democratic leadership style, to be concerned with students, and to seek community involvement" (p. 317). Hallinger and Murphy (1985a) studied ten elementary principals and their behaviors as an instructional leader. They stated the following about personality variables among the principals, "The personal variable that discriminates best between the two groups is gender" (p. 234). They also cited other studies supporting their findings that female administrators tend to be more active instructional leaders. Researchers have consistently noted a difference among gender when analyzing principal effectiveness.

The significance of a principal's gender was also reported in Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, and Lee's (1982) research. They reported that the principal's gender was one of the first characteristics of a principal that will influence their management behavior. The principal's experience and training were other influential factors they noted. They conclude with reporting that the

> "…principal's management behavior has both direct and indirect effects on student learning. But, unfortunately, current research and practice have not identified clear relationships between what a principal does and the concrete learning experiences children have in school" p. 54.

Murphy, Elliott, Goldring, and Porter (2006) also reported how leadership style is greatly influenced by a leader's experience. They identified four major conditions that shape leadership behaviors, "(a) the previous experiences of a leader, (b) the knowledge base the leader amasses over time (c) the types of personal characteristics a leader brings to the job and (d) the set of values and beliefs that help define a leader" (p. 2). This research also supports the notion of a principal's knowledge and experience in reading instruction would influence their leadership participation as the instructional leader.

In addition to the influence of a principal's gender and experience on their leadership behavior, researchers have also analyzed the effects on a principal's decision-making. Coburn (2005) cited research identifying that the principal's decision-making can directly or indirectly influence reading instruction in schools. A principal's knowledge of reading instruction would determine the contributions he or she shares with teachers and the school's policies. Her study suggested that principal preparation programs should focus on content knowledge, specific resources, comprehensive strategies, and effective approaches to teaching children to read. Having this knowledge applied to specific content areas would enhance instruction in addition to the principal's daily decisions concerning how children best learn specific content.

As noted above, strong leadership of principals in literacy has been evident in successful reading programs (Booth & Rowsell, 2002; McEwan, 2001). However, it is important to note some researchers have indicated that the literacy leader or reading expert in a school does not necessarily have to be the principal. Hallinger and Murphy (1985) analyzed reading achievement in several elementary schools over three years in similar California schools identified as having highly effective reading programs. Earlier research and analysis claimed that strong instructional leadership through coordinating curricula is essential for effective reading programs in elementary schools, but the school instructional leadership does not necessarily have to be the principal. Other qualified staff members can take this leadership role.

> Instructional leadership as embodied in the function of curricular coordination is essential to successful school programs, but it does not necessarily have to be provided by the principal. Instructional leadership can thrive in an environment in which the principal supports teachers who have the expertise and willingness to assume these responsibilities. (p.41)

Nevertheless, a principal who is not proficient in reading instruction has the duty (or obligation) to implement a program whereby an effective literacy leader is assigned. Cobb (2005) acknowledged alternate literacy leaders as well. Cobb reported that the principal was the leader of the school who serves as the change agent. Cobb also claimed that a reading specialist or skilled reading teacher could function as the literacy leader in a school. Sanacore (1997) suggested that a principal needs to delegate the instructional leadership and literacy initiative to other staff members if he or she is uncomfortable with this leadership role in learning. Whether effective leadership is accomplished by the principal or a delegated agent is unimportant. What matters is the end result. Whoever takes on the responsibility of leading and teacher training will need reading knowledge. The principal's role in reading leadership will be determined by his or her level of prior reading knowledge.

With the need for the literacy training in the elementary schools well established, a principal is left with the task of finding practical ways to initiate change in his or her school. Researchers continue to provide suggestions for principals to improve a school's literacy program. McEwan (2001) made the following recommendations to principals:

1. Focus on changing what you can change.
2. Teach the students who can't read how to read.
3. Teach every student how to read to learn.
4. Motivate all students to read more books, to read increasingly challenging books, and to be accountable for what they read.
5. Create a reading culture in your school (p. 141).

McEwan also suggested developing teacher leaders, establishing clear instructional goals, and creating an environment conducive to learning to read. Still, the principal's knowledge and presence in the reading classroom are vital to the improvement of reading instruction.

Other researchers identified additional skills and characteristics principals display in schools with successful reading programs. Crawford and Torgesen (2006) studied 10 Florida Reading First elementary schools that had successful outcomes in reading. They identified seven common traits among the schools. The first trait they identify is strong leadership. They claimed the strong leader had extensive knowledge of "children, reading programs, data, schedules, and teachers' needs" (p. 3). In addition, they reported that the strong leader's understanding of data would help the leader organize schedules and meet the needs of his/her staff. Knapp, Copland, Swinnerton, and Monpas-Huber (2006) also reported on the importance of leaders using data to make data-informed decisions. They stressed that much of the responsibility can fall on the principal and can vary depending on the school, resources and the principal's interests and skills. "But given that the responsibility of interpreting and using assessment data to guide school improvement in such high-stakes environments tended to fall primarily on the principal, data use in these schools depended on the interests and skills of the individual cast in this role" (p. 26). Wixson and Yochum (2004) also expressed the importance of a supportive principal and teachers being able to use reading data to promote positive change in reading performance. They said, "The high-reform-effort schools typically had a supportive principal and one strong and respected teacher leader who made sure that teachers looked at the data linking students' reading growth to classroom reading practices" (p. 237).

Research has identified specific characteristics of successful reading programs. Many findings like the ones above identify the reading knowledgeable principal as the first and most

important factor in a successful program. Several studies concluded that the principals could influence reading achievement directly or indirectly. The research also identified specific characteristics and consistencies in principals of successful reading programs. Gender, experience, and training were three consistent characteristics researchers noted. The research identified consistent leadership behaviors, such as analyzing reading data, creating a positive literacy environment, and displaying strong leadership qualities. It could be difficult for a principal lacking reading knowledge to display these leadership behaviors. The IRA (2004) standard (1) "Foundational Knowledge in Reading," aligned with the research on principal knowledge above. The IRA (2004) requires administrators to be able to demonstrate and explain the five main components of reading instruction. This standard also requires the administrator to have a foundational knowledge of reading research. Having this knowledge would enable the principal to take on more leadership roles in reading and help create a "literate environment" standard (4) (IRA, 2004). The research above also promoted principals using data to make decisions. The principals using data to plan and evaluate programs also correlates with the IRA (2004) standard (3).

The research above indicates that a principal's knowledge will influence his or her performance. The IRA (2004) clearly claims the principal needs to understand reading instruction. This claim can be strengthened through reviewing what other researchers are saying about the principal's knowledge of the content of reading.

2.4 PRINCIPAL CONTENT KNOWLEDGE

While the requirement for principals to be versed in reading education has been endorsed by many in the education field, solid evidence and research is unclear about the principal's direct impact from specific content knowledge since few studies have been conducted (Stein & Nelson, 2003). Murphy (2004) also reported that the role of the principal in promoting learning in a specific content area remains unexplored. However, Stein and Nelson provided two recommendations for school leaders:

> We have suggested that all administrators have solid mastery of at least one subject (and the learning and teaching of it) and that they develop expertise in other subjects by "postholing," that is, conducting in-depth explorations of an important but bounded slice of the subject, how it is learned, and how it is taught....But where administrators' knowledge is thin, the development of working groups, networks, or teams that are deliberately comprised in such a way that the requisite knowledge is held by others in the group would be an alternate way to ensure that the necessary expertise was available… (p.443).

In Stein and D'Amico's (2000) study on subject-matter reform in elementary schools, they argued "…the need for administrators to possess subject-matter-specific knowledge in order to successfully guide and support reform" (p. 2). They also claimed that the knowledge of the content of literacy is difficult and different from other contents because it is framed around the knowledge of language, literature, and composition. They claimed the complexity of the discipline would require a foundational knowledge more so than other subjects when leading a reform effort. They reported the following:

> Just as teachers have not participated in a community of learners, it will be difficult for administrators to grasp what kinds of knowledge and experiences are essential for their teachers if they themselves have not experienced what it means to know and think in mathematical or literate ways (p.46).

These suggestions and findings would be valuable to out-of-field principals (principals with little to no elementary reading teaching experience). The suggestions and findings may also help principals supervise various content teachers.

On the other hand, some educators believe there is a common misconception that principals have the tools to be instructional leaders, because they were once teachers. Hallinger and Murphy (1987) stated, "Unfortunately, preparation as a teacher does not ensure that a prospective principal is capable of analyzing another's teaching, helping teachers improve classroom instruction or developing, coordinating, and implementing curriculum" (p. 55). Whether former teachers or not, principals should be capable of coordinating curricula to ensure that students are receiving appropriate instruction. In order to accomplish this, an elementary teacher would need to understand what appropriate reading instruction looks like.

Scholars have addressed what principals should understand to supervise the instruction of teachers. For example, Bottoms and O'Neill (2001) recommended that future school leaders possess a deeper knowledge of best instructional practices and content fields in addition to being "well-versed" in curriculum and instructional methods. Murphy (2004) also wrote about the principal's knowledge. Murphy said the following:

> Principals in high-achieving schools have more knowledge about technical core operations (curriculum and instruction) than their less effective colleagues. Effective principals translate this knowledge into active involvement with the specification, alignment, and coordination of curricular programs (p. 31).

However, the discussion about a principal's knowledge of reading is not a new recommendation in his or her role of supervising and evaluating teachers. Years ago, Gist (1926) reported "It is necessary for the principal to be familiar with the modern viewpoint of teaching reading before

he can adequately supervise and improve the quality of his school" (p. 50). In 1968, Bowles wrote the following about content and principals at the elementary level:

> The content of the subjects is a matter of great concern to the elementary school administrator. He guides in-service study; helps select teaching materials; participates in the selection of staff to teach the subjects; guides evaluation of the program; explains the program to parents and other lay citizens; and performs numerous other activities, which are dictated by the content of the subjects. (p. 28).

Current researchers maintain similar views on the principal's role in reading instruction by asserting that the principal must assist teachers in helping students become effective readers. Furthermore, the principal is a guide, an expert who can demonstrate and provide resources and ensure that teachers are using effective strategies in reading and other content areas (Bottoms, 2003). According to Bottoms, educational leaders do not have to be experts in the curriculum but need to guide teachers so that students are receiving knowledge and skills needed to achieve state and national standards. Additionally, the principal must be able to recognize how effectively teachers are using instructional strategies. Bottoms and O'Neill (2001) claimed to support requirements for the principal to have a deep understanding of the content fields, instructional methods, and be well-versed in national, state, and local standards that the students need to meet. They also said leaders need to have a thorough understanding of school and classroom practices that promote student learning and school leaders should be able to provide support to teachers in need of assistance with instructional practices. Bottoms (2003) commented specifically about literacy:

> Leaders must understand literacy. Reading, writing and speaking are 'learning tools that are essential across the curriculum in academic courses…. Leaders should be able to recognize whether teachers are advancing students' literacy skills and requiring students to use these skills to learn all courses (p. 29).

Lyon & Chhabra (2004) tried to simplify what one needs to know about reading. They stated that teachers and administrators should be able to answer two questions about reading instruction. The questions are: (1) How does reading develop and (2) how can we prevent reading failure? They claimed the answers to these two questions on reading were the "minimum" an administrator should know about reading.

Other studies have also reported the importance of educational administrators understanding subject matter in school reform. Spillane and Jennings (1997) studied the success of district reform efforts in literacy instruction. Their findings indicated a need for consistent district policy alignment for teachers to consistently adjust their instruction. Their study also highlighted the importance of understanding a specific subject matter to successfully analyze and understand if instructional reform is actually occurring in the classroom. Burch and Spillane (2003) reported research on school administrators' subject matter. They claimed a leader's specific subject knowledge greatly influences his or her involvement and leadership role. They also noted a significant difference in the understanding of different contents and leadership activity. They stated the following about the difference in content knowledge:

> "We found that leadership activity in mathematics was different from leadership in literacy. Subject-matter norms influenced how principals, assistant principals, and curriculum coordinators led instructional reform and their placement of expertise for these reforms (p. 533).

Several of the researchers above concluded that principals need to understand reading instruction. Some opinions slightly varied, but all of the researchers indicated a concern and a need for instructional leaders to understand the subject area they are supervising. The researchers also claimed that what the principal understands about a subject would influence how he or she leads. The research indicates that principal actions (reform efforts, curriculum

decisions, teacher evaluations, etc.) would be greatly influenced by the principal's knowledge of the topic. These findings support that elementary principals benefit from the understanding of reading and correlate completely with all of the IRA (2004) standards for an administrator. Both the research on the content of reading for principals and the IRA clearly require the principal to understand reading instruction to serve effectively as the instructional leader of reading instruction.

2.5 PRINCIPAL AS LEADER OF READING INSTRUCTION TO UNPREPARED READING TEACHERS

Another indication that principals need to be capable of providing professional development for teachers is that research claims reading teachers are not well prepared to teach reading and require training from the instructional leader. Consequently, if the reading teacher is not qualified or trained in current reading best practices, then the principal, in the role of instructional leader, would be expected to assist and enhance the teacher's instructional reading strategies.

Researchers like Lyon (2002) indicate that elementary teachers lack essential reading training and strategies, which would require guidance and assistance from a qualified instructional leader. Lyon studied students and their teachers in the Head Start program. He claimed that teachers that received proper training in reading instruction were significantly more successful in helping students develop reading skills. The responsibility of staff feedback, staff development, and supervision of poorly trained reading teachers would require the instructional

leader to be knowledgeable in the field of reading and have basic knowledge of best methods of reading instruction. In most cases, the principal would need to generate this guidance.

The principal's guidance has been supported and suggested by reading organizations. Since teacher preparation and training in reading instruction and research-based strategies directly relate to the acquisition of students' reading ability, several important conclusions for effective reading instruction can be drawn. Many sources claim that teachers can be trained in the current scientifically research-based instructional practices and methods if provided with quality resources and, most importantly, effective leadership (National Reading Panel, 2000; The Partnership for Reading, 2000). Donnelly (2000) stated that many teachers fail to comprehend how students learn to read and believes these teachers are the root of problem readers. Furthermore, Snow et al. (1998) wrote, "Most reading problems can be prevented"(p. 13).

Snow et al. (1998) provided evidence that a variety of poor teaching practices by reading teachers in schools can place many children at risk for poor reading achievement. Fortunately, she also provided evidence that a variety of positive practices can help improve the reading of struggling students when the teachers understand these effective reading practices. Teacher expertise has been proven a factor in student learning (Sanders & Rivers, 1996). Sanders' and Rivers' study on effective and ineffective teachers concluded that instruction and teacher expertise matters. Their study declared that the teacher's instructional skills, or lack of skills, could affect up to at least two years of learning for students. These studies definitively underscore the need for teacher competence in the area of reading. If the teachers are not skilled in teaching reading, the principal (if properly trained) could intervene and provide appropriate guidance and intervention.

Perhaps this is the root of the problem. If elementary school teachers are not proficient in reading instruction, the principal, who in most cases began his or her career as an elementary teacher, would not be qualified to assist in a leadership role. Associations and researchers have agreed with this concern of poorly trained reading teachers. The Learning First Alliance (June 1998) claimed that there was too little training provided for elementary teachers, since most receive only one or two reading courses in their teacher preparation program (Lyon, 1997). The Alliance also reported strong claims that teachers are not prepared to use the best scientifically proven reading instructional strategies. Hence, it recommends providing increased training and experiences to elementary teachers on research-based reading strategies. Moats (1999) reported that some teacher preparation programs are under the assumption that if teachers can read well, they can teach reading well. This is not necessarily true. "Teaching reading is the job of an expert….Moreover, teaching reading requires considerable knowledge and skill, acquired over several years through focused study and supervised practice" (p. 11). Moats also claimed that there are no rules or standards for licensed teachers that assure the public that they have mastered the knowledge base and acquired the necessary skills to be effective reading teachers. Therefore, when a teacher lacks adequate training and experience in reading instruction, the elementary principal must serve as the resource and support for the novice to improve reading instruction (Booth & Rowsell, 2002). Though an elementary principal should be adequately prepared to support a teacher's implementation of reading strategies, the teaching of reading may need to be improved in teacher preparation programs.

Further evidence of the need for improving teacher preparation programs is found in the study conducted by Walsh, Glaser, and Wilcox (2006). Unfortunately, the findings reported that some certified elementary teachers may not even be required to demonstrate any reading

instruction experience or knowledge to be certified to teach reading. The current extensive study through the National Council of Teacher Quality (Walsh, Glaser, & Wilcox, 2006) analyzed a randomly selected sample of 72 education schools, reviewing text readings, reading course content, and syllabi. Only 15 % of the sample education schools were shown to provide future teachers with minimal exposure to the science of teaching reading. The study claimed, "Given the strength of the scientific research for reading instruction, there is genuine cause for concern that only one in seven educational schools appear to be teaching elementary teacher candidates the science of reading" (p. 43). They reported that many teachers of reading courses continue to espouse approaches to reading that are outdated and not scientifically recommended. "About 20% of all states still have no requirement ensuring that new teachers know the current science of reading instruction, whether in a licensing test, reading standard, or undergraduate coursework" (p. 43). Based on the findings, the council recommended that state and federal agencies need more demands and standards for teacher preparation schools to follow in requiring the science of reading instruction. The council highly recommended a stand alone test to demonstrate reading instructional knowledge for certification. It is troublesome that the council commended only two states (Maryland and Florida) for requiring a minimum of 12 credit hours in reading instruction course work for elementary teacher certification.

Current studies and research related to new teachers and their knowledge about reading instruction raise concerns about teachers' qualifications and their need for support from a knowledgeable instructional leader. Since numerous educational researchers and authors have identified a major concern related to teacher preparation in reading instruction, the instructional leader or principal would ultimately be responsible for assisting and supporting these new teachers.

The IRA (2004) standard (2) "Instructional Strategies and Curriculum Materials" would require principals to have the skills to coach and train teachers that require extra help and support in best reading instructional practices. Both the IRA and the researchers above view the principal as a resource for a struggling reading teacher. A principal would need to understand reading instruction to help teachers improve their reading instruction. It may seem logical to review the elementary principal certification requirements in reading since the research above claimed that teachers need more reading training in their teacher certification preparation courses.

2.6 PRINCIPAL CERTIFICATION

The findings on the deficiencies of teacher preparation programs will serve as a framework from which to examine the current principal certification process. Bottoms, O'Neil, Fry, and Hill (2003) offered the following view about the principal certification process. "Certification, as it exists today, is not proof of quality" (p. 2). The problem with certification can be directly attributed to the failure of state certification practices and university preparation programs, which are not providing the requisite skills to ensure the success of the leaders. The authors recommend redesigning the curriculum and requirements for school leaders by reducing the theory topics in order to increase focus on practice and prioritizing training designed to increase student achievement. In 1994, the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) was developed by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) to develop the standards for school leaders (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996). Currently, the ISLLC has developed national leadership standards that have been implemented and modeled as

state norms for principal licensing in many state education departments and principal preparation programs (Gupton, 1998). These standards have been adopted by over 30 states to shape their licensure process, professional development, evaluation of principals, and preparation in schools (Murphy, 2002). Interestingly, ISLLC has not stated anything about reading or the knowledge of reading instruction and literacy in their standards or recommendations for principals.

The Education Commission of the States posted an analysis of all 50 state educational administrator license requirements from state department websites. A review of this report (Anthes, 2004) revealed that none of the 50 states required any demonstration of knowledge or training in literacy. Likewise, a review of the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) Manual on the Preparation and Certification of Educational Personnel (2000) also failed to demonstrate any requirement for principals to have knowledge of reading instruction.

Additionally, Adams and Copeland (2005) examined licensure content for principals in all 50 states plus the District of Columbia. Their in-depth study concluded that, "Licensing requirements are unbalanced across states and misaligned with today's ambitions for school leaders….In the latter case, state licensing policies fail to specify *any* knowledge and skill requirements for school principals" (p. 1).

Lastly, Levine (2005) conducted an extensive four year study on administration preparation programs in schools of education throughout the country using a large random sampling to gather the data. His findings were as follows: "This study found the overall quality of educational administration programs in the United States to be poor. The majority of programs range from inadequate to appalling, even at some of the country's leading universities" (p. 23). Surprisingly, Levine's review of courses typically taken by students preparing to be

administrators failed to mention any courses related to reading, literacy, or any content area in principal preparation programs. Reading and literacy courses are not a part of the typical educational leadership preparation curriculum.

Principal certification policy and requirements outline and guide university preparation curriculum for principals. Several of the studies concluded that there is a need for reform and improvement in the principal preparation process. This review also identified the void of reading preparation courses in principal preparation programs.

The current principal training programs and policy requirements for principal certification do not reflect any of the IRA (2004) standards for administrators. The IRA requires five specific areas of reading knowledge for administrators. Current principal certification policy requires no understanding of reading instruction and does not require any training of reading for principals. Since certification requirements determine what principals must learn, it seems logical to analyze how research and association recommendations align with current practice.

2.7 WHAT PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS ARE SAYING ABOUT PRINCIPALS AND READING

The studies reported above begs the question, what are professional organizations saying about principals and their knowledge of reading instruction? Many professional educational associations at a global, national, and state level have taken formal positions and stated firm opinions about the principal's need to understand reading instruction. Several of these associations have been writing about this topic for years. The National Association of

Elementary School Principals (NAESP), established in 1921, is one of the largest principal organizations (representing more than 30,000 elementary and middle school principals) that examines the role of the principal in reading education (NAESP, 2006a).

The NAESP endorsed an extensive report, "*What Principals Need to Know about Teaching Reading,"* outlining the principal's knowledge of effective literacy instruction in the classroom (Shellard & Protheroe, 2001). In the report, Shellard and Protheroe (2001) said that a critical step in building a cogent reading program is having a principal who is "knowledgeable about the critical elements of effective reading programs" (p.12). When a principal has reading knowledge, he or she can gather and implement quality reading resources to assist staff in becoming productive reading teachers. Furthermore, the principal can educate the staff on effective reading strategies and provide needed training when necessary.

> Principals should be viewed as instructional leaders, or as individuals to whom teachers can turn for instructional guidance and support. In order to conduct effective observations that provide constructive feedback for the teacher and to fulfill their role as instructional leaders, principals must have an understanding of how children learn to read (p.58).

In a view towards achieving this objective, there are definitive recommendations for principals and their understanding of reading from the NAESP's mission statement and goals for reading instruction, as follows:

- "A balanced approach to literacy instruction includes a variety of research-based best practices and ongoing assessment" (p.20).
- The principal understands what "researched-based best practices" looks like in reading.
- The principal provides teacher feedback and training to enhance reading instruction.

More specifically, the NAESP (2006c) sets forth specialized recommendations for elementary and middle school principal preparation.

> NAESP strongly recommends that persons entering the principalship have at least five years of successful elementary and/or middle school teaching experience. Training programs or certification components should require a master's degree, with academic preparation focusing on those administrative competencies that have been identified and validated through research (p 12).

Also, concerning elementary principals and their need to comprehend the structure of reading instruction, Carbo (2005) composed an article for the NAESP. She said, "Although most principals don't teach reading, it's critical that they know how reading should be taught, especially in the primary grades" (p. 1). Without a prior comprehension of reading instruction, principals would struggle in leading a reading initiative. The NAESP has consistently maintained a formal position that principals must understand reading instruction to effectively lead their teaching staffs.

In addition to the NAESP, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP, established in 1916) articulated the secondary principal's requisite to understand the reading process through their position statement on adolescent literacy (NASSP, 2006b). "A student who cannot read with comprehension is severely limited in his or her capacity to learn in any academic subject. The issue of adolescent literacy is, therefore, central to the success of any middle and high school reform effort" (p. 1). They base this on reading is essential in every content area. The NASSP (2006a) reported that it is the "national voice for middle level and high school principals, assistant principals, and aspiring school leaders from across the United States and more than 45 countries around the world" (p. 1). The NASSP's (2006b) position statement on adolescent literacy also offered major recommendations including the following:

> Encourage principals to invest themselves in all aspects of planning and sustaining a school wide literacy program. This includes forming a literacy

> leadership team, creating a collaborative learning environment, developing a school wide plan to address the professional development needs of teachers, and developing their own capacity around the issue (p.1).

Contrary to recommendations of these national associations, current Pennsylvania principal K-12 certification requirements (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2001) do not specifically require any elementary teaching experience. Certified principals hired at elementary schools are not required to have any elementary experience, elementary course work, or to demonstrate any understanding of reading instruction in Pennsylvania (PDE, 2001).

Facilitating a literacy leadership team, ensuring an effective school reading environment, and addressing professional development in reading would be difficult for any principal who lacks prior experience in reading content. Yet no requirements, prerequisites, or assessments holding principals accountable for understanding reading instruction exist in the United States.

Although the primary focus of this dissertation has been on elementary education, the NASSP's view on high school reform also addressed literacy issues and the need for the principal to assume a leading role in high school reform efforts by publishing guidelines for the principal including the following: (NASSP's (2006c) Breaking Ranks II: Strategies for Leading High School Reform)

- Increased academic rigor that reflects the integration of curriculum, instruction, and assessment
- Personalized instruction and learning that is based on the academic needs of individual students
- School-wide initiatives to improve reading and writing literacy skills
- Targeted strategies to raise achievement scores of low-performing students to grade level proficiency

- Multiple assessments that are aligned with state standards and include performance-based measures to provide schools with individual student data to improve teaching
- Collaborative, inclusive leadership and the strategic use of data
- Improved subject area competency and content pedagogy of current and incoming faculty. Technical assistance provided to high schools identified as "in need of improvement" (p 1).

Without question, if the principal lacks a reading background, several of the above recommendations would be difficult to achieve. The strategies above would require a general knowledge of reading instruction.

NASSP (2005) also created a resource for school leaders to establish a "culture of literacy" in their schools. "...the role played by the principal is key to determining success or failure of the program" (p. 7). The principal must be involved in all aspects of the planning and structure of the literacy program. Reading-knowledgeable principals can better evaluate and provide specific feedback to teachers to ensure best literacy practices are being implemented in the classrooms. The principal is the literacy leader who needs to put all of the many elements of an effective reading program together. "Like a coach or conductor, the principal must skillfully put the elements together in order to accomplish the ultimate goal – increased student achievement through improved literacy opportunities" (p. 7). "The principal's knowledge base must be extensive enough to provide suggestions for improvement when the classroom teacher is seeking help" (p. 9).

Riggs and Serafin (1998), also NASSP writers, discussed the principal's role in guiding high school teachers' reading instruction. "The instructional leader must initiate and guide the school staff through the necessary innovations" (p.2). Taking on the challenge of secondary

students with reading problems and non-readers requires the principal to understand the reading process. "The principal as the instructional leader has the challenge of reconciling this dilemma" (p. 2). Hence, these two major professional principal associations, the NAESP and the NASSP, are quite consistent in proclaiming the principal's active role in reading instruction.

A third organization espousing similar recommendations is the National Governors Association (NGA, 2005). Founded in 1908, the NGA endorsed a guide to adolescent literacy. Similar to the NASSP, it addresses the principal's knowledge of adolescent reading instruction. "Aspiring principals also need high-quality, research-based, school-embedded training in adolescent literacy strategies" (p. 21).

The NGA Center for Best Practice (2006) advocates the principal's role of leadership in literacy success. "Principals and other school leaders must be involved in and supportive of school-wide literacy efforts to ensure the focus on literacy is valued and integrated with any other school improvement initiatives" (p. 4). The center additionally commented on principal certification in a report entitled, "Becoming a Nation of Readers" (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985). It states the following:

> Instructional leadership in reading entails a considerable amount of specialized knowledge and experience. Yet there are still states that certify people as elementary school principals who have neither training nor experience as elementary teachers, who have never coped with a child having trouble learning to read (p. 112-113).

The report also claimed that elementary schools that were exceptional in teaching reading had strong instructional leaders.

A fourth organization, as mentioned earlier, the International Reading Association (IRA) is a professional association for reading instruction that has researched reading for over 50 years. The IRA (2007) recommends "Principals (K-12) have a minimum of six credit hours in reading

and related language arts." Gaining this knowledge will enable the administrator to competently "support reading professionals as they plan, implement, and evaluate effective reading instruction." Despite these various recommendations from professional organizations; however, none of the 50 states, to date, has established a reading credit or training requirement for the elementary principal certification program. The IRA (2004) also developed the five reading standards described earlier.

Cobb (2005) authored an article for the IRA regarding principals sharing leadership while working as a literacy team member to improve reading instruction in schools. This team would be composed of reading specialists, literacy coaches, teachers, and the administrator. Cobb specifically stated, "Principals are vital to the literacy team. They play a critical role in organizing and facilitating shared leadership" (p. 2). Consequently, a principal who lacks training and/or experience in literacy programs would be ineffectual in leading a literacy team since a successful facilitator would need knowledge in the topic at hand.

A fifth professional organization, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), has also stated formal positions on reading instruction. Founded in 1943, the ASCD is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization claiming to represent 175,000 educators from more than 135 countries. ASCD (1998) believes that legislative bodies and regulatory agencies should permit teachers and principals to use their professional judgment and experience with students and families to make decisions about reading instruction in schools. Further, ASCD advises the school decision makers to "use practices that are supported by reliable research findings." A principal would need to acquire "professional judgment and experience" with reading to formulate appropriate decisions regarding reading instruction under the ASCD's position. Unfortunately, many associations and organizations, such as the ASCD, assume that

elementary principals have a prior reading knowledge base enabling sound decision making to occur. Yet how can one guarantee that a principal possesses the requisite knowledge base when no such certification requirement exists?

Another organization, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC, 1998), which claims to be the largest organization working for young children, states that school administrators' "roles are critical in establishing a supportive climate for sound, developmentally appropriate teaching practices" (p.1). School decision makers are identified as major factors in determining adequate resources for high quality, early childhood education. Thus, a principal must understand "appropriate teaching practices" in reading instruction, based on the NAEYC's position statement.

Additionally, the Children's Literacy Initiative (CLI), founded in 1988, is a reading professional development organization that strives to enhance reading instruction for pre-kindergarten to third grade. It is a non-profit organization that claims to be funded by federal and state grants (Early Reading First and Reading First) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (Head Start). CLI (2006) avers that its "work has been studied and validated by distinguished university researchers, including Dr. Richard Allington, Anne McGill-Franzen, Barbara Heyns, Susan Neuman, and Virginia Walter," who are published reading researchers. CLI (2000) believes that "Almost all principals have received training in the areas of leadership and management. However, most have received little or no training in the field of content knowledge in literacy instruction." CLI has identified nine categories of content knowledge that they believe to be essential for a principal to be a successful literacy instructional leader:

1. School Culture – Principals need to understand the significance of entrenched philosophical and instructional habits that constitute a culture in a school – and his or her own power to change that culture.

2. Craft Leaders – Principals need to know the thinkers and practitioners in the field of literacy instruction who provide fresh ideas and useful models.

3. Children's Literature – In order to create a community of readers, principals must actively read not only professional literature but also quality children's literature.

4. Instructional Models – As the primary filter for new programs, principals must be familiar with a wide range of current instructional models.

5. Curricula – The challenge for the principal is to know his or her district's mandated curriculum and make sure teachers are able to deliver it.

6. Options for Organizing Time and Space – As the key decision-maker for the use of time and space, principals must be aware of how the use of time and space affects instruction.

7. Assessment/Content Standards – Principals need to know how best to use assessment data based on relevant content standards with teacher, school communities, and parents.

8. Special Interventions – Principals need to take a close look at how support is delivered to struggling students and how this support is organized.

9. Knowledge and Research – Principals need to know where to find models, data, and organizations that do useful research and then can serve as allies to answer questions of what works and why (p. 1).

These nine areas are noted as essential for principals; however, none is achievable if the principal fails to comprehend the framework of reading instruction. Associations, such as CLI, are

identifying critical areas of reading knowledge for principals, yet elementary principals lacking reading and/or elementary experience are leading, supervising, and evaluating reading instruction in elementary schools today.

Some organizations offer a more hands-on approach to a principal's participation in reading instruction. For example, in 1997, the U.S. Department of Education published an article about "simple things" a principal could do to help all children read. One suggestion was to establish a family literacy program. The article suggested that the principal conducts parent meetings to discuss ways to be effective reading tutors and how to inform parents about effective methods to teach reading at home to children. Providing parents and teachers with effective reading strategies would be a challenge for any principal who lacks a reading background. To share knowledge and information on a topic, one obviously needs to understand the information. A principal lacking reading knowledge could not educate parents on the topic.

The formation of a school literacy team, composed of school and community stakeholders, is advocated by the Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators (OAESA), the Foundation to Advance Childhood Education (FACE), and the Ohio Department of Education (ODE, 2006). In their guide for principals, they wrote "A principal's most important contribution to fostering high quality professional development is building an effective school-wide literacy plan that is "owned" by the entire school and the entire district" (p. III-2). The principal's role encompasses reflecting and assessing conditions for literacy in the building, measuring student progress in reading, identifying effective reading instructional qualities, and providing extensive feedback in reading classroom observation. These tasks would be problematic without prior reading knowledge. OAESA writer, Browning (2002), wrote the following:

> Considering the indisputable importance of effective literacy instruction and the obvious significance of instructional leadership, it stands to reason that developing the role of the principal as a literacy leader would be vital to not only the improvement of literacy instruction and reading proficiency in schools but also to all classroom instruction (p. 5).

The concept of the principal's role in classroom observations is also identified in a 2004 article penned by the Partnership for Reading. "School administrators have a critical leadership role to play in helping students become better readers"(p.1). The article suggested that administrators should ensure that their teachers are supported with effective reading materials and are well trained in using scientifically-based instruction methods. Additionally, the principal should provide effective feedback to teachers following classroom observations, which would enable them to improve their reading instruction. However, the ultimate success of such feedback would be dependent upon the principal's expertise in reading.

Strong recommendations for effective professional development in reading instruction have been proposed by the Learning First Alliance (LFA), which is composed of 12 large and nationally well-respected and established professional organizations representing more than 10 million Americans invested to improve public education. The LFA (2000) wrote that "None is more central to reading success for all children than ensuring that all students are taught to read by teachers who have been well prepared to understand and apply the research base" (p.5). The LFA, like other educational associations, recommended strong instructional leadership and expressed the importance of the school district leaders in helping teachers develop into successful reading teachers.

> Vocal and visible commitment from district and building administrators is necessary to support improvement of reading instruction district wide. The superintendent and other district leaders can set and hold to the agenda for a reading initiative and provide firm guidance on fundamental issues of instruction (p.10).

The leader or principal will need reading knowledge to help train, develop, and support the teachers and reading programs. The needed guidance and confident planning cannot occur if leaders are short of reading knowledge.

National education-affiliated associations such as the NASSP and other educational leaders frequently reference the importance of principals imparting effective, professional feedback to teachers in order to improve instruction. For example, the Pennsylvania Association of Elementary and Secondary School Principals (PAESSP) printed a position paper (2003) stating "…it is important that school principals be qualified to both assist teachers in the development of improved classroom skills and to evaluate teacher performance in ways that provide effective feedback and direction for improvement" (p. 2). Ingersoll and Kralil (2004) indicated that novice teachers rely on the principal for guidance and support. Wood (2005) concurred that principals play a major role in the success of novice teachers by effectively guiding and supporting teachers in their instructional role. Wood additionally concluded that principals, as instructional leaders, need to provide various types of feedback including comments on specific content knowledge. Sanacore (1997) reported the need for the principal to be the "key player" in successful reading programs by being the educational leader with current knowledge regarding best instructional reading practices. This type of leader positively contributes reading knowledge to faculty as well as the entire school community. "Informed principals also inspire the faculty…" (p.2). She further pointed out that leaders with reading knowledge are capable of presenting explicit feedback in lesson observations that enables teachers to advance reading instruction. Rauch and Sanacore's (1984) annotated bibliography on reading leadership suggests "Positive leadership in reading-related matters is considered important, since a reading-oriented school increases students' chances of success in subject area"

(p. 388). A definitive need for the principal to understand and be knowledgeable of the reading process has been clearly established by the researches cited in this section.

The following list reviews the professional educational organizations/association cited above that support the need for principals to understand reading instruction:

The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP)
National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)
National Governors Association (NGA)
The NGA Center for Best Practice (NGA)
International Reading Association (IRA)
Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD)
National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
Children's Literacy Initiative (CLI)
U.S. Department of Education (USDE)
Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators (OAESA)
Foundation to Advance Childhood Education (FACE)
Ohio Department of Education (ODE)
Learning First Alliance (LFA)
Pennsylvania Association of Elementary and Secondary School Principals (PAESSP)

These professional educational organizations identified clear expectations, standards, and/or recommendations for principals to understand reading instruction. The IRA (2004) standards for administrators would be supported by the research of the various organizations above. Each finding or claim reported by these professional organizations can be matched with a specific IRA standard. The research above supports and aligns with the IRA standards for administrators. Yet the understanding of reading knowledge is not a required competency for principals in the U.S.

2.8 CONCLUSION

The national ISLLC standards were adopted by many states and universities as a basis of competency for school leaders. Both these standards and the Pennsylvania standards mention nothing about reading instruction knowledge. The current requirements leave schools open to hiring elementary principals that have little to no reading knowledge, making it challenging to move schools forward though the demands of NCLB.

Recently in Pennsylvania and many other states, certification for principals has changed from the traditional offering of elementary and secondary principal certificates to just a K-12 certificate (PDE, 2001). Successful candidates are now certified K-12 after completion of the state mandated requirements. The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) clearly defines four eligibility requirements for a candidate seeking a K-12 principal certificate:

1. Completion of an approved graduate program.
2. Evidence of five years of satisfactory professional school experience.
3. Satisfactory achievements on assessments prescribed by the PDE.
4. Meeting all requirements provided by law.

Being "highly qualified" should signify competency in the field in which one will lead and supervise. A broad K-12 certificate may not provide enough specialization for school leadership in Pennsylvania and nationally. LeTendre and Roberts (2005) researched principal certification in the United States and reported that, "Most states (29 out of the 49 states that require certification for school principals) offer a unified K-12 certification rather than a segmented one that splits certification into at least two divisions, such as elementary principal and secondary principal" (p. 9). Thus, a role conflict can be created when classroom teachers may be more knowledgeable about the reading process than their instructional leader. This

conflict is directly connected to the lack of training and minimal certification requirements, since licensing effects the quality of the principal/instructional leader.

These facts have led to various questions, such as what do principals need to know about reading instruction? Our current certification requirements do not stipulate the subject of reading as a principal's responsibility. Another question raised is what do current elementary principals know about reading instruction? Perhaps reading instruction is not an important subject for principals to learn.

As discussed earlier, Lyon and Chhabra (2004) stated that teachers and administrators should be able to answer two questions about reading instruction. The questions are: How does reading develop and how can we prevent reading failure? They described the following answers below:

1. How does reading develop?

Lyon and Chhabra (2004) claimed that learning to read is a lengthy process that begins well before children start school. Young, proficient readers usually come from a home environment of many early literacy and communication interactions. Poor readers tend to have few interactions with reading during their preschool age. The gap between low and advanced readers at this early age is still quite significant, and research indicates children from low-income homes are significantly behind students of high-income homes. Students of low-income homes tend to display gaps in vocabulary knowledge from fewer language interactions. Young children need to develop phonemic awareness, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension. The National Reading Panel (2000) endorsed these five reading strategies.

2. How can we prevent reading failure?

Lyon and Chhabra (2004) suggested that at risk children need to be identified early and given "systematic" and "intensive instruction" in the five major reading areas. With effective reading instruction based on scientific research, these students can improve their reading abilities. Lyon and Chhabra (2004) claimed this information on reading was the "minimum" an administrator should know about reading. With minimal requirements for reading knowledge, how can anyone assume principals understand this reading foundational knowledge?

Throughout the literature review, references and connections were made to the IRA (2004) standards for administrators for reading. The literature from the cited professional organizations and researchers support the IRA requirements for administrators. The reported research findings about the principal's need to understand reading confirm and duplicate the expectations of the IRA standards. Since the majority of the cited research supports the IRA standards for administrators, the standards will be used as a basis to study principals.

This researcher planned to analyze the self-efficacy of principals in their role as instructional leader of reading education. Principal self-efficacy determines how confidently a principal makes judgments and decisions that will directly or indirectly impact the learning environment. Therefore, a principal's sense of self-efficacy is an area of interest since it can help predict the effectiveness of a principal. Oplatka (2004) claimed that experienced principals have more self-efficacy regarding instructional leadership, making them more knowledgeable and confident in making decisions based on effective instruction. His report would support the need to raise a principal's self-efficacy. In a similar research study, Osterman and Sullivan (1996) studied new principals in urban schools. They reported that more efficacious principals seemed to better problem solve, were more motivated, more aware of problems, and accomplished more goals. In contrast, principals with low efficacy were consistently less confident in their ability to

succeed and were not as successful in problem solving or reaching goals. When challenged they look to blame others and are unable to adapt or seek assistance.

Like Osrterman's and Sullivan's (1996) findings, Lyons and Murohy (1994) reported, "Principals high in self-efficacy are more likely to attribute student achievement results to their own ability and amount of effort exerted" (p.17). They also claimed that self-efficacy should be an important variable when hiring principals.

A solid definition of self-efficacy would be necessary to analyze this variable. Bandura (1997) defines self-efficacy as "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses required to produce given attainments" (p.3). A person's self-efficacy influences their course of action and behaviors when meeting an obstacle or challenge and serves as a predictor of behavior that drives an individual to accomplish a goal.

Many researchers have studied teacher and student self-efficacy (Giskey, 1987; Guarino, & Smith, 2003; Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993; Pajares, 1996; Parker, Tschannen-Moran, Hoy & Hoy, 1998; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007; Sorrells, Schaller, & Yang, 2004; Ware & Kitsantas, 2007). These researchers have identified many connections between self-efficacy and success in the academic setting. Other researchers have identified a teachers' self-efficacy is directly linked to student achievement in the classroom (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). Teachers that believe they have a strong perception of self-efficacy seem to display enthusiasm, more motivation, and confidence, which positively influences the instruction their students receive.

Principal self-efficacy is an extension of studies on teacher and student self-efficacy. Some of the earliest measurements of principals' self-efficacy were done by Hillman (1986). Others who have also studied principal efficacy (Dimmock & Hattie, 1996; Imants & DeBradbander, 1996; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005). Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2005)

studied principal's behaviors and motivation by analyzing the principal's sense of efficacy. They reported that a principal's sense of self-efficacy determines the effectiveness of school leaders. The survey they used for the study was called the Tschannen-Moran and Gareis Principal Self-efficacy Survey (TMG-PSES). Their findings identified specific variables that contribute or hinder a principal's sense of self-efficacy. They measured the principal's perception of their skills in instructional leadership, school management, and moral leadership. These researchers identified a connection between the principal's sense of self-efficacy and positive teacher and student achievement.

Principal self-efficacy has not been studied as extensively as teacher and student efficacy (Lehman, 2007; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005). The literature above seems to indicate a further need to study the principal's sense of self-efficacy. Therefore, this researcher attempted to analyze the elementary school principal's sense of self-efficacy as the leader of reading instruction in their elementary school.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM AND PRIOR FINDINGS THAT SERVE AS THE BASIS FOR THIS STUDY

As discribed in the literature review, the International Reading Association (2004) developed specific standards for reading administrators. These standards identify criteria that administrators should meet to succeed in their role as a "reading professional." Much of the research in the literature review supports these IRA (2004) Standards for Reading Professionals (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985; ASCD, 1998; Booth & Rowsell, 2002; Browning, 2002; Cobb, 2005; Coburn, 2005; CLI, 2006; IRA, 2006; LFA, 1998, 2000; McEwan, 2001; NAESP, 2006a; NAEYC, 1998; NGA, 2005; Sanacore, 1997; Shellard & Protheroe, 2001). Yet the Pennsylvania Department of Education, university preparation programs, and other state educational departments do not specify reading training as a requirement for principals (Anthes, 2004; PDE, 2001) and seem to be moving in a different direction than the respected authorities on reading and instructional leadership. Despite the overwhelming recommendations by the IRA's five domains of reading instruction (foundational knowledge, instructional strategies and curriculum materials, assessment, diagnosis and evaluation, creating a literature environment, and professional development) and the various researchers that support the IRA

recommendations for administrators, Pennsylvania standards for principal program approval omit literacy knowledge as a requirement for principals. The principals as the instructional leader could potentially be responsible for supervising and evaluating reading teachers, providing professional development, supervising the reading curriculum, and making instructional decisions in the reading program without any prior knowledge of reading instruction.

In an effort to better understand the ramifications of this phenomenon, this researcher delved into what the many published educators recommend about the school principal's needs in comprehending the art and science of reading instruction. This study explored how current elementary school principals in Pennsylvania viewed their training, background, and their beliefs about reading instruction knowledge through the IRA (2004) Standards for Reading Professionals. This study explored how variables relate to a principal's self-efficacy for leading and supervising reading instruction.

Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004) developed a survey to analyze the principal's perceptions of their instructional leadership, moral leadership, and school management capabilities. Their survey instrument was called the Tschannen-Moran and Gareis Principal Self-efficacy Survey (TMG-PSES). Due to their promising results, their survey instrument was used to serve as a successful model for the development of a scale to further assess and analyze an elementary school principal's self-efficacy for reading education leadership. Their findings indicated a strong correlation between specific variables and a principal's sense of self-efficacy. The authors also indicated that their instrument has no copyright restrictions if the survey is used for scholarly research (Tschannen-Moran and Gareis, 2004).

3.2 THE STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

At present, principals can and have been able to supervise and evaluate reading teachers without necessarily having any formal training in the practice of reading instruction.

3.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The researcher attempted to address the following research questions:

1. What is the perceived rating of elementary school principals' personal leadership efficacy as reading education leaders?

2. How efficacious do elementary school principals, from various backgrounds and various schools, feel about serving as the reading education leader in their elementary school?

3.4 METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this dissertation is divided into two parts: 1) the development and validation of a survey to measure reading education leadership efficacy and, 2) the examination of the extent to which personal factors as well as principals' assessments of key resources and supports in their school contexts contribute to their self-efficacy judgments for leading a reading education program.

3.4.1 Development of the RELES (Reading Education Leadership Efficacy Survey)

This researcher developed a measurement instrument to study elementary school principals. The instrument is called the Reading Education Leadership Efficacy Survey (RELES). The instrument was designed to measure elementary school principals' self-perceived capability to perform the cognitive and behavioral functions necessary to produce desired outcomes in the area of reading education for the school he or she leads. RELES is 11 items in length (items 1-11) and is hypothesized to be unidimensional. All items are positively connotated (See Appendix B). This survey was modeled after Tschannennen-Moran's and Gareis' (2004) TMG-PSES (The survey used in their study of principal's self-efficacy).

Following RELES, six of the questions (items 12-17) were extracted from Tschannennen-Moran's and Gareis'(2004) study and were included to measure general instructional leadership self-efficacy. Tschannennen-Moran and Gareis gave researchers permission to use their survey for educational purposes. Tschannennen-Moran's and Gareis' six instructional leadership questions will be used to compare and correlate the principal responses from their study to the RELES. This will demonstrate a measure of convergent validity. Questions 18 through 28 are rating questions similar to the variables measured in the TMG-PSES. These rating questions had been deemed significant in Tschannennen-Moran's and Gareis' study and were used to draw several conclusions about principals' self-efficacy.

Bandura (1997) recommends creating self-efficacy items that assess the range of behaviors necessary to succeed at a given task in a given context. He further recommends that efficacy measures should examine both level and strength of efficacy beliefs. A range of reading education leadership tasks that vary in degree of difficulty were included. For example, it may be considered more difficult to explain phonemic awareness (item two) compared to supporting a

staff in designing reading curriculum (item eight). The strength of efficacy beliefs was assessed along a continuum. Like TMG-PSES, the RELES questionnaire consisted of Likert-type response items in the form of statements and have a nine-point scale. Since the answers were likely to be negatively skewed, the scale was large to pick up the subtle differences in subjects beliefs and attitudes.

The directions of the questionnaire, like the TMG-PSES, asked the principal to: "Please respond to each of the questions by considering the combination of your current ability, resources, and opportunity to do each of the following in your present position." The stem of the first 17 items was: "In your current role as principal, to what extent can you…" The 9-point scale is anchored at: 1 = None at All, 3 = Very Little, 5 = Some Degree, 7 = Quite a Bit, and 9 = A Great Deal. Sample items include: "In your current role as principal, to what extent can you…"

- provide reading teachers with specific feedback on their reading instruction?
- interpret reading scores from state-wide assessments?
- encourage and facilitate collaboration and dialogue about reading between professional personnel?

Table 3.1 and 3.2 provide the framework to develop the survey questions. The framework in table 3.1 identifies the IRA (2004) standards aligned with research to support the standard. Each survey item is connected to a standard and research.

Table 3.1 Survey Framework

IRA (2004) STANDARDS FOR ADMINISTRATORS	LITERATURE TO SUPPORT THE IRA STANDARD	SURVEY QUESTIONS
1. Foundational Knowledge 1.1 Knows basic learning theory. They recognize well-grounded applications of fundamental knowledge in the classroom. 1.2 Know general patterns in the history of reading, reading research, methods, and materials. 1.3 Articulate developmental aspects of oral language and its relationship to reading and writing. They can also summarize the developmental progression of reading. 1.4 Explain how the components (phonemic awareness word identification and phonics vocabulary and background knowledge, fluency, comprehension strategies and motivation) are integrated during fluent reading. They can articulate the research that grounds their practice.	Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985; ASCD, 1998; Booth & Rowsell, 2002; Bottoms, 2003; Browning, 2002; Carbo,2005; CLI, 2006; Cobb, 2005; Coburn, 2005; LFA, 1998; Lyon & Chhabra, 2004; McEwan, 2001; NAESP, 2006a, 2006c; NAEYC, 1998; NGA, 2005; Riggs & Serafin,1998; Sanacore, 1997; Shellard & Protheroe, 2001; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001; Zipperer, Worley, Sisson, & Said, 2002.	1. describe general patterns in the history of reading research and methods? 2. explain the importance of phonemic awareness?

Table 3.1 Continued

2. Instructional Strategies and Curriculum Materials 2.1 Evaluate, support, and coach teachers' use of instrumental grouping options for specific purposes based on their appropriateness for those purposes and for accommodating cultural and linguistic differences among their students. 2.2 Evaluate, support, and coach teachers' use of a wide range of instructional practices, approaches, and methods, including technology-based practices for specific purposes based on their appropriateness for those purposes and for accommodating developmental, cultural and linguistic differences among their students. They ensure that teachers' selections are supported by an evidence-based rationale. 2.3 Evaluate, support, and coach teachers' use of a wide range of curriculum materials for specific purposes based on their appropriateness for those purposes and for accommodating developmental, cultural, and linguistic differences among their students. They ensure that teachers' selections are supported by an evidence-based rationale.	ASCD, 1998; Booth & Rowswell, 2002; Bottoms, 2003; Bowles, 1968; Carbo, 2005; Denton, Foorman, & Mathes, 2003; Elmore, 1999; Gist, 1996; NAESP, 2006c; NASSP, 2005; National Reading Panel, 2000; Partnership for Reading, 2000; Scott, 1924; Shellard & Protheroe, 2001; Zipperer, Worley, Sisson, & Said, 2002.	3. evaluate, support, and coach teachers to use a wide range of reading instructional practices, approaches, and methods? 4. provide instructional coaching and guidance to enhance the reading instruction? 5. review the reading curricula with teachers to ensure that students are receiving appropriate reading instruction?
3. Assessment, Diagnosis, and Evaluation 3.1 Understand the role of assessment on the delivery of excellent reading instruction. Working with reading professionals, they can develop appropriate building and district wide assessment plans. 3.2 Know the range of students' reading performance in the building or under their control	CLI, 2000; Crawford and Torgesen, 2006; Knapp, Copeland, Swinnerton, & Monpas-Huner, 2006; NASSP, 2006c; Wixson & Yochum, 2004.	6. use assessment to ensure the delivery of excellent reading instruction? 7. review reading data with the teachers to identify needs and concerns in reading?

Table 3.1 Continued

and know how this range relates to the broader student population. They provide support for an effective assessment plan. 3.3 Support professional uses of assessment data. 3.4 Communicate assessment information to various audiences for accountability. They understand how assessment should be used for instructional purposes and demonstrate the ability to use it for the benefit of student growth and development. They can articulate to the public what makes up an effective assessment plan.		
4. Creating a Literate Environment 4.1 Support the professional staff in designing curriculum based on students' interest, reading abilities and cultural and linguistic backgrounds. They can articulate the research that grounds their practice. 4.2 Support the professional staff in selecting books, technology-based information and non-print materials representing multiple levels, broad interests, and cultural and linguistic backgrounds. They can articulate the research that grounds their practice. 4.3 Participate and support the professional staff in modeling reading and writing enthusiastically as valued lifelong activities. 4.4 Support the professional staff in designing intrinsic and extrinsic motivational programs	Booth & Rowsell, 2002; CLI, 2000; Coburn, 2005; McEwan, 2001; NASSP , 2005, 2006b; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001.	8. support the professional staff in designing reading curriculum? 9. participate and support the professional staff in modeling reading and writing enthusiastically as valued lifelong activities?

Table 3.1 Continued

5. Professional Development 5.1 Ensure that there is an ethical learning context for reading instruction that respects students, families, teachers, colleagues, and communities. 5.2 Support teachers and reading specialists to develop their professional knowledge, skills, and disposition. They provide information about opportunities for teachers and reading specialists to engage in professional development. 5.3 Encourage and facilitate collaboration and dialogue between professional personnel. 5.4 Provide opportunities for school staff to attend professional development programs. They bring consultants to school and district level for sustained professional development.	Booth & Rowsell, 2002; Bowles 1968; Browning, 2002; CLI, 2000; LFA, 2000; NASSP, 2006b; ODE, 2006; U.S. Department of Education, 1997.	10. encourage and facilitate collaboration and dialogue about reading between professional personnel? 11. provide professional development in reading instruction?

Table 3.1 above displays the IRA (2004) standards for administrators in the left column. The center column displays the literature that supports the IRA domain. The right column identifies the specific survey item that aligns to the research and IRA domain.

Table 3.2 Additional Survey Framework Questions

LITERATURE TO SUPPORT ADDITIONAL SURVEY QUESTIONS	SURVEY QUESTIONS
Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004, 2005. Instructional leadership questions from their principal questionnaire.	12. facilitate student learning in your school? 13. generate enthusiasm for a shared vision for the school? 14. manage change in your school? 15. create a positive learning environment in your school? 16. raise student achievement on standardized tests? 17. motivate teachers?
Hallinger, Bickman & Davis, 1996; Sierman Smith, 2007; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004, 2005. Additional variables.	18. Rate the quality of your school's library. 19. Rate the quality of your school's classrooms. 20. Rate the quality of your school's. textbooks. 21. Rate your support in reading from the superintendent. 22. Rate your support in reading from central office. 23. Rate your support in reading from teachers. 24. Rate your support in reading from reading specialists. 25. Rate your support in reading from the literacy coach. 26. Rate your support in reading from the parents. 27. How useful was your principal preparation program in readying you to be the instructional leader of reading? 28. How do you perceive the quality of your principal preparation program in readying you to be an instructional leader of reading?

Table 3.2 displays the framework for the additional questions in the survey. The left column identifies literature that is aligned with the survey items in the right column. Table 3.2 identifies the instructional leadership questions from Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004, 2005).

The table also identifies additional variable questions modeled from studies done by Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004, 2005), Sierman Smith (2007) and Hallinger, Bickman and Davis (1996).

3.4.2 Description of Scores to be Provided

Since the construct of reading education leadership efficacy was hypothesized to be unidimensional and its items are all positively connotated, a single summated score was provided from the RELES without need to reverse code items.

Collecting these data marked the first instance a researcher had examined the construct of reading education leadership efficacy. It attempted to answer the question: What is the perceived rating of principals' personal leadership efficacy as reading education leaders?

3.4.3 Reliability Evidence

The internal consistency of the RELES was measured from a pilot study with ten school principals. The principals of Moon Area School District (a large suburban school district in close geographic location to the researcher) participated in this pilot group. Both elementary school principals and assistant principals participated in the survey. The pilot study determined the extent to which item responses correlate with each other and with the total test score. The items correlate highly with each other (Cronbach's Alpha: .960).

All 11 RELES items functioned properly [(Corrected Item-Total Correlation was more than .20) see Table 3.3 below].

Table 3.3 Corrected Item to Total Correlation and Alpha if Deleted for the 11 Pilot Tested Items

Item	Corrected Item Total Correlation	α if deleted	Deleted?
describe general patterns in the history of reading research and methods?	.524	.960	No
articulate developmental aspects of oral language and its relationship to reading and writing?	.591	.960	Yes
inform parents how to teach their children to improve their reading skills?	.742	.958	Yes
summarize the developmental progression of reading?	.637	.959	Yes
explain the importance of phonemic awareness?	.537	.962	No
evaluate, support, and coach teachers to use a wide range of reading instructional practices, approaches, and methods?	.528	.961	No
ensure that teachers' selections of reading materials are supported by an evidence-based rationale?	.726	.958	Yes
provide instructional coaching and guidance to enhance the reading instruction of teachers?	.876	.956	No
model best reading instructional strategies?	.604	.961	Yes
review the reading curricula with teachers to ensure that students are receiving appropriate reading instruction?	.964	.954	No
provide reading teachers with specific feedback on their reading instruction?	.831	.956	Yes
use assessment to ensure the delivery of excellent reading instruction?	.906	.955	No
communicate reading assessment information to	.897	.956	Yes

Table 3.3 Continued

various audiences for accountability?			
review reading data with the teachers to identify needs and concerns in reading?	.846	.956	No
interpret PSSA Reading Scores for your elementary building?	.881	.955	Yes
support the professional staff in designing reading curriculum?	.941	.955	No
participate and support the professional staff in modeling reading and writing enthusiastically as valued lifelong activities?	.871	.957	No
encourage and facilitate collaboration and dialogue about reading between professional personnel?	.880	.956	No
provide professional development in reading instruction?	.656	.959	No

Table 3.3 displays each item and its corrected item to total correlation and the scale's change in Cronbach's Alpha if the item is deleted. The corrected item to total correlation describes the correlation between each item and the sum of all items. Before calculating the correlation between the item and the scale, the item was extracted from the scale.

(Cronbach's Alpha if deleted) describes the overall change in reliability of the entire scale when each item is deleted. Typically, if the value of the alpha when the item is deleted is higher than when the item is included on a scale, the scale's developer will consider deleting the item to improve the overall reliability of the scale. Since, the Cronbach's Alpha of all items if deleted was not substantially different than the overall alpha of .96 (no item was less than .950), decisions about item deletion were not made based on this criterion.

3.4.4 Content Validity

The items of the RELES were created using the five reading standard strands set by the IRA (2004), which included foundational knowledge, instructional strategies and curriculum models, assessment, diagnosis, and evaluation, creating a literate environment, and professional development. Using questions that reflect the standards set by this organization helped to ensure that the entire construct of reading education leadership efficacy was addressed.

Additional efforts were made by the researcher to increase the content validity further. The pilot study findings were also used to ensure that the RELES measured reading education leadership efficacy and not another construct. The pilot group of elementary school principals also indicated whether or not items were clear, meaningful, taken as a whole, and fully cover the construct. Each item was rated on a four point Likert scale (from Not Essential, Somewhat Essential, Essential, Absolutely Essential) by the respondents. The initial 19 survey items were based on the IRA (2004) Standards for Reading Professionals. The pilot participants shared comments, provided feedback, and gave suggestions to improve the original 19 items. Eight items were removed from the survey after the researcher analyzed the results (see Table 3.4 below).

Table 3.4 Percentage Essential or Absolutely Essential to RELES Pilot Items

Item	% Essential or Ab. Essential	Deleted?
describe general patterns in the history of reading research and methods?	50%	No
articulate developmental aspects of oral language and its relationship to reading and writing?	30%	Yes
inform parents how to teach their children to improve their reading skills?	30%	Yes
summarize the developmental progression of reading?	30%	Yes
explain the importance of phonemic awareness?	80%	No
evaluate, support, and coach teachers to use a wide range of reading instructional practices, approaches, and methods?	70%	No
ensure that teachers' selections of reading materials are supported by an evidence-based rationale?	40%	Yes
provide instructional coaching and guidance to enhance the reading instruction of teachers?	50%	No
model best reading instructional strategies?	40%	Yes
review the reading curricula with teachers to ensure that students are receiving appropriate reading instruction?	60%	No
provide reading teachers with specific feedback on their reading instruction?	40%	Yes
use assessment to ensure the delivery of excellent reading instruction?	60%	No
communicate reading assessment information to various audiences for accountability?	40%	Yes
review reading data with the teachers to identify needs and concerns in reading?	70%	No
1interpret PSSA Reading Scores for your elementary building?	40%	Yes
support the professional staff in designing reading curriculum?	60%	No
participate and support the professional staff in modeling reading and writing enthusiastically as valued lifelong	60%	No

Table 3.4 Continued

activities?		
encourage and facilitate collaboration and dialogue about reading between professional personnel?	80%	No
provide professional development in reading instruction?	70%	No

Table 3.4 above indicates the percentage of respondents in the pilot group that indicated "essential" or "absolutely essential" for each item. Items that had less than 50% of respondents responding that the item was "essential" or "absolutely essential" were deleted.

3.4.5 External Structure Evidence

The relationship of the RELES to the "Efficacy for Instructional Leadership" section of the TM-PSES was measured. Tschannennen-Moran's and Gareis's (2005) instructional leadership questions were measured in questions 12 through 17. This examination was conducted to explore the convergent validity of the RELES to the TM-PSES. In other terms, we can be more confident that the RELES measures Reading Education Leadership Efficacy if it and the TM-PSES section on instructional leadership correlate highly.

3.4.6 Variables to be Studied

In addition to the creation, validation and initial score collection of reading education leadership efficacy, this dissertation explored the question, "How efficacious do elementary school principals, from various backgrounds and various schools, feel about serving as the reading education leader in their schools?" The following factors were examined:

- *demographic*

- *academic preparation*
- *school context*
- *external and interpersonal support*

3.4.7 Demographic

Participants were asked to respond to questions about their gender (Male or Female), Ethnicity (American Indian, Asian or Pacific Islander, Black, Hispanic, Multiracial, White), and years of experience as an administrator and teacher.

3.4.8 Academic Preparation

Two items (questions 27 and 28) used by Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2005) were adapted to assess the perceived quality of the principal's leadership/administration certification preparation program for the specific component of reading education leadership. The item to measure reading education leadership preparation quality used a five-point Likert scale anchored at: 1 = Lowest quality and 5 = Highest quality. It read, "How do you perceive the quality of your principal preparation program in readying you to be an instructional leader of reading?" The item to measure reading education leadership preparation utility used a four-point Likert scale anchored at: 1 = Not useful at all, 2= Somewhat useful, 3 = Very Useful, 4 = Extremely useful. It read, "How useful was your principal preparation program in readying you to be the instructional leader of reading?" Both of these questions required the participant to rate their training.

3.4.9 School Context

The principals were asked to select their school's setting (urban, suburban, rural) and school enrollment (0-100, 100-200, 200-300,400-500, 600-700, 700 or more). The principals were also asked to provide the percentage of students qualifying for free and reduced lunches.

3.4.10 External and Interpersonal Support

The principals were asked to rate the quality of the school's library, classrooms, and textbooks. These items used a five-point Likert scale anchored at: 1 = Lowest Quality and 5 = Highest Quality. The principals were also asked to rate the quality of support from the superintendent, central office, teachers, reading specialists, literacy coach, and parents. These items used a five-point Likert scale anchored at: 1 = Not at all supportive and 5 = Very supportive.

3.4.11 Target Population

Current elementary school principals in the State of Pennsylvania whose school district is affiliated with the Tri-State Area School Study Council were the target population of this survey. There are approximately 300 elementary school principals that belong to a school affiliated with Tri-State. The Tri-Sate Study Council is a professional organization that consists of over 100 school districts, intermediate units, vocational-technical schools, dioceses, colleges, and private schools. This professional organization is affiliated with the University of Pittsburgh and is mostly funded through district membership fees. This organization's mission is to improve the

quality of educational opportunities for children and youth by strengthening school organization and administration.

3.4.12 Sampling Frame

An e-mail including the electronic survey link was sent from the Tri-State Area School Study Council to each superintendent/director affiliated with Tri-State. The Tri-State Council used their superintendent/director e-mailing database. The database included 140 superintendents/directors. Through analyzing the affiliated school districts' websites, it was estimated that there were approximately 300 elementary school principals that work in the school districts affiliated with Tri-State. The exact number of possible survey participants was estimated by the researcher because of the unknown number of superintendents and directors that chose to forward the e-mail/survey to their elementary school principals. Since historic response rate of principals to mail surveys is 25-30% (Sierman Smith, 2007; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004, 2005), it was expected that between 75 and 90 principals would eventually participate in the study. Eighty elementary school principals participated in this study.

All of the survey respondents remained anonymous. Identification of participants from the distribution, receipt, and responses of the survey were unlikely and unintentional. It was expected that the sample would include elementary school principals with a range of experiences and preparations in relation to reading education. Demographic information of the principals was unknown when the survey was distributed.

3.4.13 Distribution

The researcher considered specific research procedures and methodologies in gathering the data and determining an analysis for this study. It was determined that a self-administered electronic questionnaire meets the time demands of the sample. Busy principals could access the survey and did not need to physically return a completed survey. The self-administered questionnaire is gathering acceptance in becoming a popular, convenient, quick, and accurate method of gathering valid information from subjects (Dillman, 2000).

The e-mailed invitation message introduced the survey, the survey's intent, confidentiality, use of the results, and the background of the researcher. The opening message asked the superintendent/director to consider forwarding the e-mail to their elementary school principals. At the end of the message, potential participants were asked to follow a web link to the survey (Appendix A). One hundred forty superintendents/directors were e-mailed by Tri-State on March 24, 2008. To increase the response rate, a second follow-up e-mail was sent by Tri-State to each superintendent/director on April 4, 2008. Since the survey was anonymous, the second e-mail was sent to all respondents regardless of whether or not an individual participant had indeed forwarded the survey to their elementary school principals. The electronic survey was posted and maintained on a surveymonkey.com© website. The survey participants had the option to receive an e-mailed summary of the study results by completing the summary return section at the end of the survey.

3.4.14 Limitations to the Study

The researcher hoped for a well-defined construct with a high overall coefficient alpha. If the researcher could not find at least a small number of items (between 6-8) that sufficiently represented the construct of reading education leadership efficacy, then the researcher would not be sure of the relation of RELES to the variables. The analysis revealed that the questions were sufficient.

Since the survey respondents were anonymous, the researcher could not determine the test retest reliability of RELES. The correlation between participants' initial composite score on RELES and a subsequent composite score of RELES indicated the degree to which RELES was a stable construct. Without test retest information, it must be presumed that the RELES scores of participants do not change from one day or one month to the next. RELES must be considered stable in order for the relationship between RELES and other variables to have meaning.

Another limit to this study is the small sample frame. There were not enough participants from various subgroups because Pennsylvania does not offer a large diverse population of principal subgroups. In addition to the small sample frame, the researcher developed a time efficient survey for principal convenience. The researcher assumed that a lengthy survey would decrease the response rate of busy elementary school principals. Therefore, the researcher did not ask many questions addressing many different variables, since the length of the survey was limited.

While the survey was not long, estimation of RELES is strong. Since the construct is very specific, it did not require many questions to cover the entire construct. Results from the pilot study and alignment of the survey questions with IRA (2004) ensured internal consistency and content validity.

Another limitation to this study is due to the small sample size that limits the generalizing of the responses. This researcher is cautioning the reader that the data from this study was limited to a small group of elementary school principals in Western Pennsylvania. Further research studies would need to be done to increase the generalizing of the findings.

3.4.15 Analysis of the Data

Once the data from the surveys were collected, poorly worded questions were sought using both the corrected item-to-total-correlation and the Cronbach's alpha if the item is deleted. Given the degree to which the items correlated with each other in the pilot (see Table 3.3), it was not expected that any items would need to be deleted. The items that represented RELES were finalized and an overall alpha was found. The overall alpha was .957 for all questions. The external validity of RELES was tested by correlating summated RELES scores with summated scores of the six items (questions 12-17) from TM-PSES that ask about instructional leadership. The researcher hoped to find a medium positive correlation of .3 or higher to support the construct validity of RELES.

Using the RELES composite score of each participant as a proxy of his or her reading education leadership efficacy, correlations between it and the various groups of variables were examined. Correlations between participants' RELES scores and participants' demographics, academic preparation, school context, and external and interpersonal support were analyzed and displayed in correlation matrices. Significant correlations at the $p < .05$ or $p < .01$ were flagged.

In particular, the researcher examined the correlation of demographic variables: race, gender, and years experience to the RELES. The ability to test correlations of ethnicity subgroups depended on the number of participants in the various subgroups. The researcher

used one-way ANOVA to test the difference in means between the various ethnic subgroups that have large numbers of participants ($n > 25$).

Other variables were analyzed as well. The researcher examined the correlation of RELES to the quality of school's library, classroom, and textbooks through looking at summated RELES vs. the item score for each of these specific variables. The researcher also correlated the RELES to the quality of interpersonal support such as the superintendent, central office, teachers, reading specialists, literacy coach, and parents. School size was also examined through the correlation of student population by looking at summated RELES vs. population. The researcher used one-way ANOVA to test RELES means between school types (urban, rural and suburban).

The final analysis of the data included the correlations of RELES with utility and perceived quality of academic program/principal program by looking at summated RELES vs. each specific item.

4.0 RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The two research questions described in chapter 3 were as follows:

1. What is the perceived rating of elementary school principals' personal leadership efficacy as reading education leaders?
2. How efficacious do elementary school principals, from various backgrounds and various schools, feel about serving as the reading education leader in their elementary school?

The researcher chose the two research questions after a very thorough review of the research on elementary principals, instructional leadership, and reading instruction. The 80 participants responded to questions on their self-efficacy beliefs about themselves as instructional leaders of reading instruction. The research findings will be presented as they align with the research question (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Survey Items and Research Questions

Research Question	Survey Items
What is the perceived rating of elementary school principals' personal leadership efficacy as reading education leaders?	Items 1 through 11
How efficacious do elementary school principals, from various backgrounds and various schools, feel about serving as the reading education leader in their building?	Items 18-26 and items A-E

4.1.1 Reading Educational Leadership Efficacy Survey (RELES) Final Development

After survey responses were collected, the first step in analyzing the data was to complete the development of RELES. The construct of reading education leadership efficacy was hypothesized to be unidimensional. Indeed, internal consistency of all 11 items was determined to be .957 using Cronbach's Alpha. As with the pilot data, the 11 items performed well. If any of the items were to be deleted, the Cronbach's Alpha would stay above .95 (see table 4.2). This means that there were no items that were measuring something differently than RELES.

The relationship of the RELES to the "Efficacy for Instructional Leadership" section of the TM-PSES (Tschannennen-Moran's and Gareis' (2004) survey used in their study of principal's self-efficacy) was measured to explore the convergent validity of the RELES to the TM-PSES (survey questions 12-17). There was a significant positive relationship between Reading Education Leadership Efficacy and the "Efficacy for Instructional Leadership" section of the TM-PSES, $r = .781$, $t(78) = 10.97$, $p < .001$. In other words, RELES was measuring something similar to the more general "Efficacy for Instructional Leadership."

Table 4.2 Corrected Item to Total Correlation and Alpha if Deleted for the 11 Pilot Tested Items

Item	Corrected Item to Total Correlation if deleted	α if deleted
1. describe general patterns in the history of reading research and methods?	.651	.958
2. explain the importance of phonemic awareness?	.737	.954
3. evaluate, support, and coach teachers to use a wide range of reading instructional practices, approaches, and methods?	.878	.949
4. provide instructional coaching and guidance to enhance the reading instruction of teachers?	.779	.953
5. review the reading curricula with teachers to ensure that students are receiving appropriate reading instruction?	.866	.950
6. use assessment to ensure the delivery of excellent reading instruction?	.875	.950
7. review reading data with the teachers to identify needs and concerns in reading?	.830	.952
8. support the professional staff in designing reading curriculum?	.792	.953
9. participate and support the professional staff in modeling reading and writing enthusiastically as valued lifelong activities?	.812	.952
10. encourage and facilitate collaboration and dialogue about reading between professional personnel?	.832	.951
11. provide professional development in reading instruction?	.771	.954

4.2 RESEARCH QUESTION #1: What Is the Perceived Rating of Elementary School Principals' Personal Leadership Efficacy as Reading Education Leaders?

Figure 4.1 below displays the overall score distribution for the participants. The possible score range was 11 to 99. The mean score was 78.95 with a standard deviation of 15.00. This equates to an average response of 7 (quite a bit) or 8 on the 9 point scale. The score distribution was negatively skewed (see figure 4.1). Therefore, as is shown in figure 4.1 below, with the exception of a few outlying principals with a low RELES score, principals in this sample had a high degree of self-efficacy.

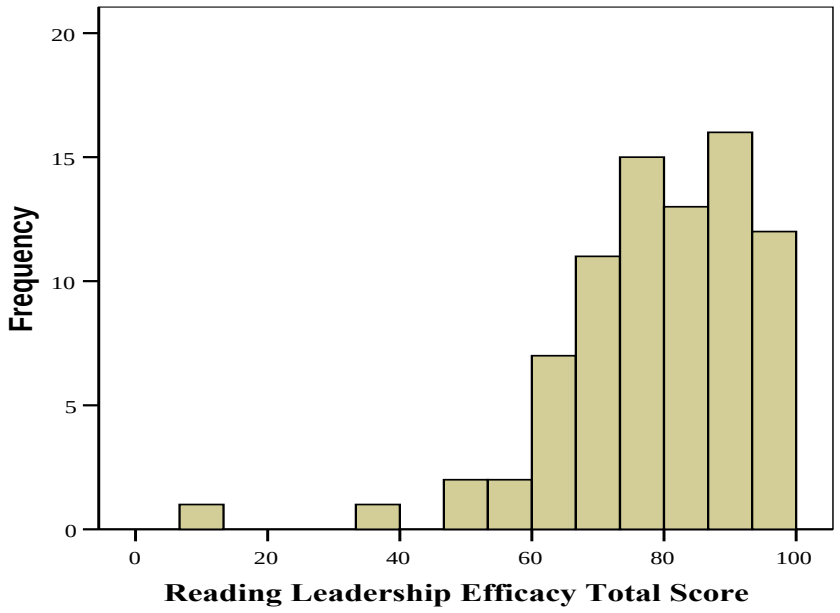

Figure 4.1 Score Distribution of Total RELES Scores (n = 80)

Table 4.3 below displays the mean response on each item. The response ranged from a low of 6.04 for item one which was "Describe general patterns in the history of reading research and methods?" to a high of 7.55 for item six "Use assessment to ensure the delivery of excellent reading instruction."

Table 4.3 Mean Response for Each RELES Question (n = 80)

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Q1. describe general patterns in the history of reading research and methods?	6.04	1.810	80
Q2. explain the importance of phonemic awareness?	7.53	1.449	80
Q3. evaluate, support, and coach teachers to use a wide range of reading instructional practices, approaches, and methods?	6.98	1.684	80
Q4. provide instructional coaching and guidance to enhance the reading instruction of teachers?	6.76	1.788	80
Q5. review the reading curricula with teachers to ensure that students are receiving appropriate reading instruction?	7.25	1.547	80
Q6. use assessment to ensure the delivery of excellent reading instruction?	7.55	1.550	80
Q7. review reading data with the teachers to identify needs and concerns in reading?	7.79	1.438	80
Q8. support the professional staff in designing reading curriculum?	7.30	1.672	80
Q9. participate and support the professional staff in modeling reading and writing enthusiastically as valued lifelong activities?	7.21	1.581	80
Q10. encourage and facilitate collaboration and dialogue about reading between professional personnel?	7.41	1.573	80
Q11. provide professional development in reading instruction?	7.14	1.826	80

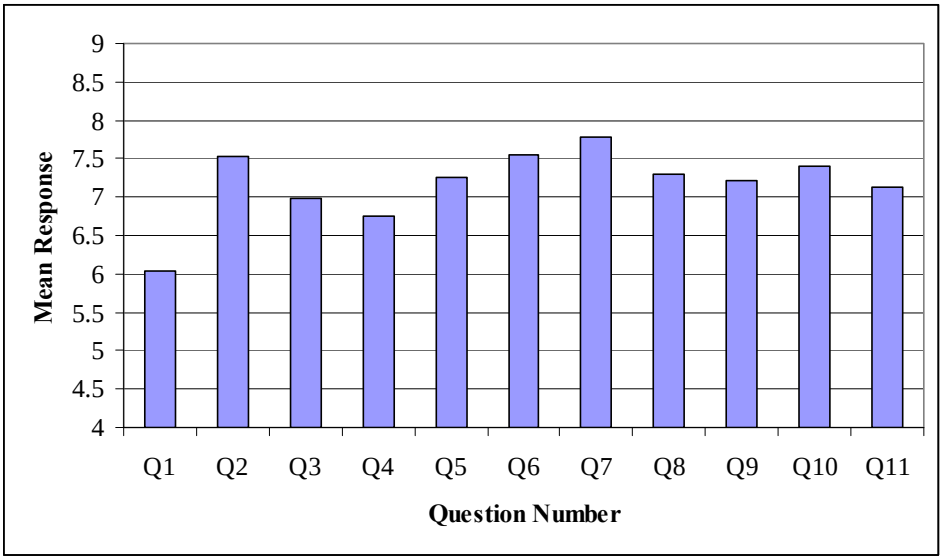

Figure 4.2 Mean Response Ratings for Each RELES Question (n = 80)

Figure 4.2 graphically displays the data from table 4.3 in a chart form.

Table 4.4 RELES Score Distribution Percentages by Question.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11
None At All: 1	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	2.5
2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.3	0.0	0.0	1.3
Very Little: 3	8.8	0.0	1.3	3.8	1.3	1.3	0.0	1.3	2.5	1.3	2.5
4	5.0	0.0	3.8	5.0	1.3	2.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.3	1.3
Some Degree: 5	26.3	6.3	15.0	16.3	8.8	2.5	6.3	8.8	8.8	6.3	6.5
6	1.3	13.8	13.8	12.5	13.8	11.3	10.0	13.8	15.0	13.8	11.3
Quite A Bit: 7	18.8	25.0	21.3	20.0	23.8	23.8	12.5	23.8	23.8	23.8	27.6
8	6.3	21.3	22.5	23.8	27.5	23.8	31.3	20.0	26.3	21.3	22.5
A Great Deal: 9	13.8	32.5	21.3	17.5	22.5	33.8	38.8	30.0	22.5	31.3	25.0

Q1. describe general patterns in the history of reading research and methods?
Q2. explain the importance of phonemic awareness?
Q3. evaluate, support, and coach teachers to use a wide range of reading instructional practices, approaches, and methods?
Q4. provide instructional coaching and guidance to enhance the reading instruction of teachers?
Q5. review the reading curricula with teachers to ensure that students are receiving appropriate reading instruction?
Q6. use assessment to ensure the delivery of excellent reading instruction?
Q7. review reading data with the teachers to identify needs and concerns in reading?
Q8. support the professional staff in designing reading curriculum?
Q9. participate and support the professional staff in modeling reading and writing enthusiastically as valued lifelong activities?
Q10. encourage and facilitate collaboration and dialogue about reading between professional personnel?
Q11. provide professional development in reading instruction?

Table 4.4 above shows the distribution percentage of all eleven questions. The data in the table also display the negative distribution from the high score.

4.3 RESEARCH QUESTION #2: How Efficacious Do Elementary School Principals, from Various Backgrounds and Various Schools, Feel About Serving as the Reading Education Leader in Their Elementary School?

In order to investigate the relationship between demographic, academic preparation, school context, and external and internal support variables, a step-wise regression model was constructed for Reading Education Leadership Efficacy. Step-wise regression is a type of multiple regression that attempts to determine the best equation to predict an outcome. The most highly correlated variable to the dependent variable is added to the equation first. Variables are added as long as they contribute to the prediction, above and beyond what the previous variables contributed. It explores the effect of adding a new variable on others that are already in the equation. At each step the variables in the equation are reexamined to make sure the variables entered at previous steps should remain in the equation.

One internal support indicator (perceived support for reading from central office) and two demographic indicators (gender and number of years teaching reading) entered significantly in the step-wise regression model for RELES. Perceived support for reading from central office entered significantly on the first step (B = 7.47, $t = 4.10$, $p < .001$) and accounted for 23% of the variance. Gender (interpreted as "being a female") entered significantly on the second step (B = 11.27, $t = 3.63$, $p = .001$) and accounted for an additional 14% of the variance. Number of years teaching reading entered significantly on the third step (B = 1.25, $t = 3.45$, $p = .001$) and accounted for an additional 11% of the variance. Using these three variables, the regression model equation ($df = 3$, $F = 16.99$, $p < .001$) explains 46% of variability in RELES scores.

In addition to measuring participant scores on RELES, data related to demographic characteristics, schools' context, and external and internal support were collected. The description of those data and how they relate to RELES are presented below.

4.3.1 Demographic Characteristics

The demographic information included the following: years of experience as a teacher and principal, gender, classification, and student school population.

- Of the 80 elementary school principal respondents, 43 (53.8%) were male and 36 were female (45.0%) (See Table 4.8).
- Ninety-two percent of the respondents identified themselves as white (n = 74), 2.5% as black (n = 2), and 5.2% declined to answer (n = 4) (See Table 4.9).
- When asked about classification of their school: 3 (3.8%) selected urban, 40 (50.0%) selected suburban, and 37(46.3%) identified their school as rural.
- The student population of the elementary schools was divided in five subgroups.

  1. 3 (3.8%) had 0-200 students enrolled in their elementary school.
  2. 24 (30.0%) had 201-400 students.
  3. 28 (35.0%) had 401-600 students.
  4. 22 (27.5%) had 601-800 students.
  5. 3 (3.8%) had 801 or more students.

- Years of teaching experience: (See Table 4.7)

  1. 17 (21.5%) had between four and six years.
  2. 26 (32.9%) had between seven and eleven years.
  3. 36 (45.6%) had twelve or more years.

- Years of reading experience: (See Table 4.7)

    1. 19 (23.7%) had reported no experience.

    2. 18 (22.6%) had between two and six years.

    3. 21(26.3%) had between seven and eleven years.

    4. 22 (27.4%) had over twelve years.

- Years of experience as a principal: (See Table 4.7)

    1. 32 (42.2%) had between one and six years.

    2. 19 (23.9%) had between seven and eleven years.

    3. 29 (36.3%) had over twelve years.

Table 4.5 Years Experience in Various Positions of the Sample (n = 80)

Years Experience	As a Teacher of any Subject (%)	As a Teacher of Reading (%)	As a Principal (%)
1	0 (0.0)	19 (23.8)	1 (1.3)
2	0 (0.0)	2 (2.5)	3 (3.8)
3	0 (0.0)	3 (3.8)	1 (1.3)
4	1 (1.3)	1 (1.3)	6 (7.5)
5	2 (2.5)	3 (3.8)	13 (16.3)
6	14 (17.5)	9 (11.3)	8 (10.0)
7	6 (7.5)	3 (3.8)	3 (3.8)
8	7 (8.8)	6 (7.5)	6 (7.5)
9	5 (6.3)	5 (6.3)	5 (6.3)
10	3 (3.8)	3 (3.8)	2 (2.5)
11	5 (6.3)	4 (5.0)	3 (3.8)
12 or more	36 (45.0)	22 (27.5)	29 (36.3)

Table 4.5 above displays the principals' years of experience as a teacher, reading teacher, and principal.

Table 4.6 Gender of the Sample (n = 80)

Gender	n	%
Male	43	53.8
Female	36	45.0
Missing	1	1.3

Table 4.6 identifies the number and percentage of males and female participants.

Table 4.7 Cross-tabulation of Number of Years of Teaching and Gender

		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Number of years of teaching.	4	1	0	1
	5	0	2	2
	6	8	6	14
	7	4	2	6
	8	3	4	7
	9	3	2	5
	10	2	1	3
	11	1	4	5
	12 or more	20	15	35
Total		42	36	78

Table 4.7 above demonstrates that the number of years teaching for males (mean = 9.57, std. error = .409) and females (mean = 9.56, std. error = .435) in the sample was nearly equal.

Table 4.8 Cross-tabulation of Number of Years of Teaching Reading and Gender

		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Number of years of teaching reading.	1	10	9	19
	2	1	1	2
	3	3	0	3
	4	1	0	1
	5	1	2	3
	6	5	4	9
	7	3	0	3
	8	2	4	6
	9	3	2	5
	10	1	2	3
	11	1	3	4
	12 or more	12	9	21
Total		43	36	79

Table 4.8 shows that the average number of years teaching reading for males (mean = 6.60, std. error = .664) and females (mean = 7.11, std. error = .726) were nearly equal.

Table 4.9 Cross-tabulation of Number of Years as a Principal and Gender

		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Number of years as a principal.	1	0	1	1
	2	0	3	3
	3	1	0	1
	4	3	3	6
	5	4	9	13
	6	4	4	8
	7	1	2	3
	8	6	0	6
	9	3	2	5
	10	1	1	2
	11	2	1	3
	12 or more	18	10	28
Total		43	36	79

Table 4.9 demonstrates that the average number of years as a principal for male (mean = 8.98, std. error = .472) and females (mean = 7.25, std. error = .603) in the sample was nearly equal.

Table 4.10 Correlation between Gender and Reading Education Leadership Efficacy

		Reading Leadership Efficacy Total Score (11-99)
Gender	Pearson Correlation	.280(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.012
	N	79

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

There was a significant positive relationship between being female and Reading Education Leadership Efficacy (RELE), $r = .280$, $t(78) = 2.56$, $p = .012$. The relationship between ethnicity and RELE could not be examined because the sample was ethnically homogenous. 73 of the 80 respondents identified themselves as white.

Table 4.11 Ethnicity of the Sample (n = 80)

Ethnicity	n	%
Black	2	2.5
White	74	92.5
Declined to Answer	4	5.2

Table 4.11 displays the ethnicity distribution of the sample.

Table 4.12 Ethnicity by Gender Cross Tabulation (n = 80)

Ethnicity	Gender	Total

Ethnicity		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
	Black	0	2	2
	White	40	33	73
	Decline to Answer	2	1	3
Total		42	36	78

The cross-tabulation above displays the gender and ethnicity of the participants.

Table 4.13 Correlations between Years Experience in Various Roles and Reading Education Leadership Efficacy

		Reading Leadership Efficacy Total Score
Number of years of teaching	Pearson Correlation	.077
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.501
	N	79
Number of years of teaching reading	Pearson Correlation	.413(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	80
Number of years as a principal	Pearson Correlation	.040
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.728
	N	80

* * Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.13 above demonstrates there was a significant positive relationship between number of years teaching reading and Reading Education Leadership Efficacy, $r = .413$, $t(78) = 3.98$, $p <$

.001. No correlation was found between number of years teaching in general and RELE or number of years as a principal and RELE.

4.3.2 School Context

External and Interpersonal Support

Table 4.14 Responses to "Rate the Quality of Your School's..." (n = 80)

Response	Library (%)	Classrooms %	Textbooks %)
Lowest Quality: 1	2 (2.5)	1 (1.3)	1 (1.3)
2	3 (3.8)	2 (2.5)	1 (1.3)
3	24 (30.0)	12 (15.2)	9 (11.3)
4	36 (45.0)	43 (54.4)	45 (56.3)
Highest Quality: 5	15 (18.8)	21 (26.6)	23 (28.8)
Missing	0 (0.0)	1 (1.3)	1 (1.3)

Table 4.14 displays the ratings of perceived support the principals recorded. The principals rated these supports highly.

Table 4.15 Mean Response Ratings of Library, Classroom, and Textbook Quality on a Five Point Scale

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Library	80	1	5	3.74	.896
Classrooms	79	1	5	4.03	.800
Textbooks	79	1	5	4.11	.751

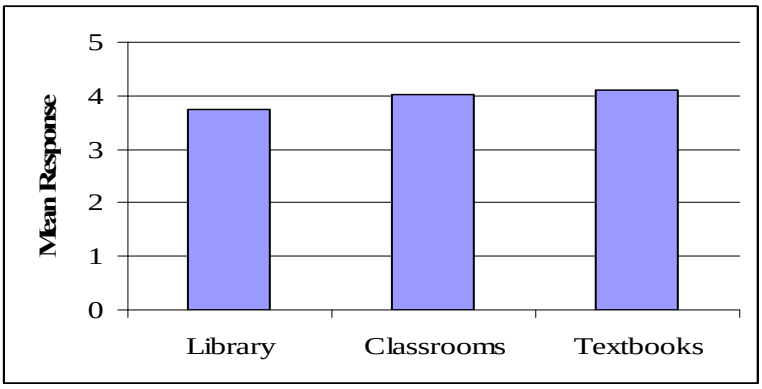

Figure 4.3 Mean Response Ratings of Library, Classroom, and Textbook Quality on a Five Point Scale.

The table and chart above display the principal responses towards the library, classroom, and textbooks. The chart displays that the principals were satisfied with these three factors in their elementary school.

Table 4.16 Reponses to "Rate Your Support in Reading from the Following Resources…"

	Super-intendent %	Central Office %	Teachers %	Reading Specialists %	Literacy Coaches %	Parents %
Not at all supportive: 1	3 (3.8)	1 (1.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4 (5.0)	0 (0.0)
2	2 (2.5)	5 (6.3)	0 (0.0)	2 (2.5)	2 (2.5)	4 (5.0)
3	6 (7.5)	6 (7.5)	3 (3.8)	4 (5.0)	7 (8.8)	28 (35.0)
4	19 (23.8)	20 (25.0)	37 (50.0)	17 (21.3)	14 (17.5)	26 (33.3)
Very Supportive : 5	50 (62.5)	46 (57.5)	40 (46.3)	57 (71.3)	33 (41.3)	20 (25.0)
Missing	0 (0.0)	2 (2.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	20 (25.0)	2 (2.5)

Table 4.16 above displays the perceived support the principals indicated for the various resources in their schools. Percentages and exact numbers were recorded.

Table 4.17 Mean Response Ratings of Superintendent, Central Office, Teacher, Reading Specialist, Literacy Coaches, and Parent Support on a Five Point Scale

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Superintendent	80	1	5	4.39	1.000
Central Office	78	1	5	4.35	.965
Teachers	80	3	5	4.46	.572
Reading Specialists	80	2	5	4.61	.703
Literacy Coaches	60	1	5	4.17	1.181
Parents	78	2	5	3.79	.888

Table 4.17 displays the mean response ratings for each resource.

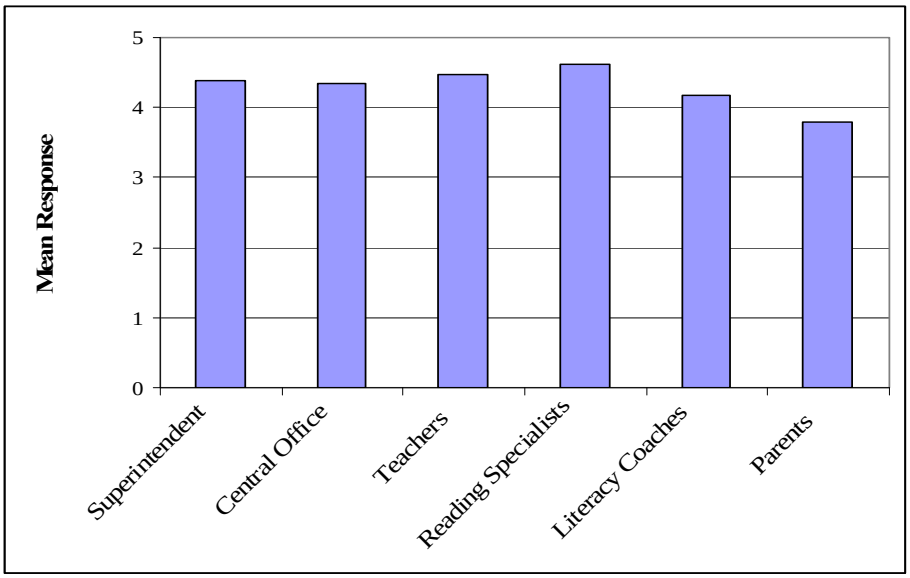

Figure 4.4 Mean Response Ratings of Superintendent, Central Office, Teacher, Reading Specialist, Literacy Coaches, and Parent Support on a Five Point Scale

Table 4.18 Correlations between Superintendent, Central Office, Teacher, Reading Specialist, Literacy Coaches, and Parent Support and Reading Education Leadership Efficacy

		Reading Leadership Efficacy Total Score (11-99)
Library	Pearson Correlation	.152
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.178
	N	80
Classrooms	Pearson Correlation	.170
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.134
	N	79
Textbooks	Pearson Correlation	-.039
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.732
	N	79

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The table above indicates that no correlation was found between perceived library quality and RELE, perceived classroom quality and RELE, or perceived textbook quality and RELE.

Table 4.19 Correlations between Interpersonal Support and Reading Education Leadership Efficacy

		Reading Leadership Efficacy Total Score (11-99)
Superintendent	Pearson Correlation	.279(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.012
	N	80
Central Office	Pearson Correlation	.335(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003
	N	78
Teachers	Pearson Correlation	.297(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007
	N	80
Reading Specialists	Pearson Correlation	.431(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	80
Literacy Coaches	Pearson Correlation	.435(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
	N	60
Parents	Pearson Correlation	.328(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003
	N	78

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.19 identifies the following:

- There was a significant positive relationship between perceived superintendent support and Reading Education Leadership Efficacy (r = .279, $t(78)$ = 2.55, p = .012.)
- There was a significant positive relationship between perceived central office support and Reading Education Leadership Efficacy (r = .335, $t(76)$ = 3.08, p = .003.)
- There was a significant positive relationship between perceived teacher support and Reading Education Leadership Efficacy (r = .297, $t(78)$ = 2.73, p = .007.)

- There was a significant positive relationship between perceived reading specialist support and Reading Education Leadership Efficacy ($r = .431$, $t(78) = 4.31$, $p < .001$).
- There was a significant positive relationship between perceived literacy coaches support and Reading Education Leadership Efficacy ($r = .435$, $t(58) = 3.65$, $p = .012$).
- There was a significant positive relationship between perceived parent support and Reading Education Leadership Efficacy ($r = .328$, $t(76) = 3.01$, $p = .003$).

4.3.3 School Context Elementary Setting

School context was considered an area of interest by this researcher.

Table 4.20 School setting type (n = 80)

Response	n	%
Urban	3	3.8
Suburban	40	50.0
Rural	37	46.3

Table 4.21 Student Population of Schools Lead by Sample Principals (n = 80)

Response	n	%
1-200 students	3	3.8
201-400 students	24	30.0
401-600 students	28	35.0
601-800 students	22	27.5
800 or more students	3	3.8

Table 4.22 Student population by classification and size of sample principals (n = 80).

Elementary Classification	1-200 students	201-400 students	401-600 students	601-800 students	800 or more	Total
Urban	0	2	1	0	0	3
Suburban	0	12	16	10	2	40
Rural	3	10	11	12	1	37
Total	3	24	28	22	3	80

An independent samples t-test was performed on RELES summated scores as a function of either suburban or rural school classification. Urban schools were not included in the analysis because there were too few respondents who worked in urban schools (n = 3). The assumption of homogeneity of variance was met. The assumption of normality was met for both groups. There was no significant difference on the suburban group RELE scores (M = 81.85, SD = 11.18) and the rural RELE scores (M = 77.36, SD = 14.37, $t(74) = 1.525$, $p = .131$).

A one-way between subjects analysis of variance was performed on RELE summated scores as a function of school size. There were three levels of school size that were examined (201-400 students, 401-600 students, and 601-800 students). Schools with "200 or fewer students" and schools with "more than 800 students" were not analyzed because there were not enough principals at schools with those sizes to fairly compare. There was no significant difference on RELES among the levels of school size (F (2, 71) = .478, p = .622).

Table 4.23 The Mean and Standard Deviation of the RELES Scores for Each Level of School Size

School Size	Means	SD
1 201-400	80.75	2.66
2 401-600	78.04	2.23
3 601-800	81.14	2.67

4.3.4 Principal Preparation

Table 4.24 How Useful Was Your Principal Preparation Program in Readying You to be the Instructional Leader of Reading? (n = 80)

Response	N	%
Not useful at all: 1	16	20.0
Somewhat useful: 2	52	65.0
Very useful: 3	8	10.0
Extremely useful: 4	4	5.0

Table 4.25 Mean Response Ratings of Perceived Usefulness of Principal Preparation Program in Readying the Principal to be the Instructional Leader of Reading on a Four Point Scale (n = 80)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
How useful was your principal preparation program in readying you to be the instructional leader of reading?	80	1	4	2.00	.712

Table 4.26 How Do You Perceive the Quality of Your Principal Preparation Program in Readying You to be an Instructional Leader of Reading? (n = 80)

Response	n	%
Lowest Quality: 1	10	12.5
2	32	40.0
3	24	30.0
4	11	13.8
Highest Quality: 5	3	3.8

Table 4.27 Mean Response Ratings of Perceived Principal Preparation Program Quality in Readying the Principal to be the Instructional Leader of Reading on a Four Point Scale (n = 80)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
How do you perceive the quality of your principal preparation program in readying you to be an instructional leader of reading?	80	1	5	2.56	1.004

Table 4.28 Correlations between Perceived Principal Preparation Program Usefulness and Quality and Reading Education Leadership Efficacy (n = 80)

		Reading Leadership Efficacy Total Score (11-99)
How useful was your principal preparation program in readying you to be the instructional leader of reading?	Pearson Correlation	.325(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003
	N	80
How do you perceive the quality of your principal preparation program in readying you to be an instructional leader of reading?	Pearson Correlation	.248(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.027
	N	80

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.28 above indicates several findings:

- There was a significant positive relationship between perceived principal preparation usefulness and Reading Education Leadership Efficacy ($r = .325$, $t(78) = 3.02$, $p = .003$).
- There was a significant positive relationship between perceived principal preparation quality and Reading Education Leadership Efficacy ($r = .248$, $t(78) = 2.25$, $p = .027$.)

4.4 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

Chapter four presented the results of the study of elementary school principal self-efficacy in reading instruction. The chapter was organized to present the survey data for both research questions. In the analysis of this data, five major findings were discovered.

1. The data revealed that the elementary school principals perceive themselves as efficacious in serving as the leader of reading instruction**.**

2. Female elementary school principals rated themselves as more efficacious than male participants.

3. Perceived support from the superintendent, central office personnel, teachers, reading specialists, literacy coaches, and parents was highly correlated with the principals that had a positive perception of their self-efficacy.

4. Elementary school principals rated their principal preparation program as somewhat useful in readying them to be a reading instructional leader. The principals rated the quality of their preparation program as low in regards to reading instructional leadership training.

5. Experiences as a reading teacher correlated with principals that perceived themselves as more efficacious. Experience as a principal or teacher was not significant.

The final chapter will include a discussion and implications for the five major findings. The chapter will also include recommendations for further study.

5.0 DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This final chapter includes three sections: discussion; findings and implications; and recommendation for further study.

5.1 DISCUSSION

The focus of this study was to analyze the self-efficacy of elementary school principals in their role as instructional leaders of reading education. The principals' self-perceptions were analyzed to explore how efficacious instructional leaders were in their principal role. The researcher developed the following research questions as the focus of the study:

1. What is the perceived rating of elementary school principals' personal leadership efficacy as reading education leaders?
2. How efficacious do elementary school principals, from various backgrounds and various schools, feel about serving as the reading education leader in their elementary school?

An electronic survey was used to collect the data needed in this study on principals. The researcher used literature on reading instruction, teacher supervision, instructional leadership, and principal preparation to create survey questions. The researcher also followed specific professional standards created by the International Reading Association (2004) to measure the principals' perceived self-efficacy of various areas of reading knowledge. The findings and implications were structured through the IRA Standards.

The findings in the literature revealed that reading is a vital skill for elementary students to master to be successful. Many researchers agreed that reading is the most important content area for students to learn and for teachers to teach. Many experts and researchers claimed that elementary school principals should understand reading instruction to effectively lead reading programs. As the instructional leader, one would expect the principal to be able to enhance the instruction of reading teachers when supervising and evaluating their instruction. This would clearly require a knowledge base of reading instruction to adequately lead in this content area.

This research study was the first noted study of elementary school principal efficacy in reading instruction. The literature presented in this dissertation and the data collected from the survey would support the need for elementary school principals to understand reading instruction. The description of the five findings below correlate with the literature and IRA (2004) Standards for Reading Professionals that supports the need for elementary school principals to understand reading instruction.

5.2 FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

5.2.1 Efficacious Elementary School Principals

Researchers have claimed that efficacious principals attribute to student achievement (Lyons & Murphy, 1994; Osrterman & Sullivan, 1996). The data from the surveys indicated that the elementary school principal respondents perceive themselves as efficacious in various fields of reading instruction. Interestingly, a majority of the principals surveyed felt confident in their reading knowledge and abilities as leaders. Even principals who had minimal experience teaching reading experience were still rating themselves as having favorable self-perception of their abilities in reading instruction. The principals indicated that they were comfortable in applying the IRA Standards for Reading Professionals in their role as instructional leader of reading. Other researches that have studied principal efficacy (Dimmock & Hattie, 1996; Imants & DeBradbander, 1996; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005) would claim that these participants or "efficacious principals" are highly effective principals due to their positive self-perception of their abilities. These researchers also claim that principal self-efficacy should be an important quality to consider when hiring principals. The literature would support hiring elementary schools principal that are confident in their ability to lead reading instruction.

The principals rating themselves highly efficacious can elicit several conclusions. Perhaps these elementary school principals are learning about reading instruction in other ways since they rated their principal preparation as poor in preparing them to be the instructional leader of reading instruction. School district and intermediate units could be providing effective professional development in reading for school leaders. Another theory is that principals are educating themselves on reading through literature and recent journals. A third theory would be

that the elementary principals are over confident and were not quite accurate in their responses. Another study with a different principal sample may help to clarify the perceived efficacy.

5.2.2 Female Elementary School Principals Rated Themselves More Efficacious Than Males

Some researchers have claimed that female principals tend to be better instructional leaders than male principals (Adkison, 1981; Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, & Lee, 1982; Hallinger, Bickman and Davis, 1996; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985a). The gender data from this study matched the literature on principal gender. Female elementary school principals rated themselves more efficacious than their male respondents in instructional leadership. Interestingly, male and female years of experience as teachers and administrators were relatively equal but females perceived themselves to be more efficacious. The literature would support the theory that males tend to perceive themselves as managerial figures and less as instructional leaders. This gender gap would require further study to enhance the validity of the RELES findings.

5.2.3 Perceived Support and Reading Education Leadership Efficacy

There was a significant positive relationship between perceived support from the superintendent, central office, teachers, reading specialists, literacy coaches, parents, and Reading Education Leadership Efficacy. This data indicate that when a principal has the perception that he/she is supported, their perception of their abilities increases.

When principals feel supported by others, they feel more confident in their abilities. Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2005) also analyzed perceived support when they studied

principal efficacy. This study had similar findings. Superintendents need to review how they support their principals in various areas. The data indicate that reading specialists, literacy coaches, parents, and teachers are all important factors in the self-perception of the principal's abilities. This data suggests that support or the perception of support is an important factor in how elementary school principals see themselves.

5.2.4 Quality of Principal Preparation

On a four point rating scale, the average rating of the 80 elementary school principals was two in the usefulness of their principal preparation program in readying them to be the instructional leader of reading. The principal respondents rated the quality of their preparation as an average 2.5 out of five when it comes to the quality of their principal preparation program in readying them to be the instructional leader of reading. Overall, these findings generally align to recent research on principal preparation programs (Adams & Copeland, 2005; Bottoms, O'Neil, Fry, & Hill, 2003; Levine, 2005) which were rated poor in preparing principals for their position as instructional leader.

These findings and the literature indicate that elementary school principal preparation programs should consider reviewing and rethinking the content of their instructional leadership courses and experiences. The data from this study would suggest that universities should consider reading an important content area to cover in their elementary school principal preparation program curricula. The principals surveyed clearly identified that the quality and usefulness of their principal preparation programs were in question pertaining to readying them to lead in reading education.

The data also showed a significant positive relationship between perceived principal preparation usefulness/quality and Reading Education Leadership Efficacy. The principals rating themselves highly efficacious tended to rate their preparation programs higher in quality and usefulness than less efficacious principals. This could indicate a relationship between efficacious principals and the quality of their preparation experience. These data add more validity to the importance of preparation programs and their long-term effect on the principals' self-perception of their abilities in reading and other areas.

Elementary school students spend a majority of their time on reading instruction (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985; Booth, & Rowsell, 2002). Clearly, the majority of the curriculum and instruction time is dedicated to reading at the elementary level. A well prepared elementary instructional leader should feel confident leading the development of reading curriculum and instruction, supervising reading teachers, and providing targeted opportunities for teacher growth and development (ASCD, 1998; Booth & Rowswell, 2002; Bottoms, 2003; Bowles, 1968; Carbo, 2005; Denton, Foorman, & Mathes, 2003; Elmore, 1999; Gist, 1996; NAESP, 2006c; NASSP, 2005; National Reading Panel, 2000; Partnership for Reading, 2000; Scott, 1924; Shellard & Protheroe, 2001; Zipperer, Worley, Sisson, & Said, 2002). It seems that university preparation programs do not find reading an important area of study. Reading is not included in any elementary principal preparation curricula (Anthes, 2004; NASDTEC, 2000).

5.2.5 Reading Experience Matters/Years as an Administrator Did Not

Much of the literature review would support the need for principals to understand reading instruction (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985; ASCD, 1998; Booth & Rowsell, 2002;

Browning, 2002; Cobb, 2005; Coburn, 2005; CLI, 2006; IRA, 2006; LFA, 1998, 2000; McEwan, 2001; NAESP, 2006a; NAEYC, 1998; NGA, 2005; Sanacore, 1997; Shellard & Protheroe, 2001). The IRA (2007) recommends that administrators have a minimum of six credit hours in reading and/or language arts. This study demonstrated that there was a strong correlation between efficacious principals and experience as a reading teacher. In other terms, principals who had some reading experience felt more confident in their reading leadership.

This study demonstrated that principals with teaching reading experience were clearly more efficacious in their self-perception as leaders of reading. The surveyed elementary school principals who indicated some teaching reading experience rated themselves more efficacious in reading knowledge than those principals without reading experience. Interestingly, experience as principals did not correlate with the efficacy of principals pertaining to reading knowledge. These finding suggest that principal experience does not necessarily mean one understands reading instruction or feels more comfortable leading in reading. The data from the surveys suggest that reading experience will increase the comfort and confidence of elementary school principals leading reading instruction. These findings support the need of elementary school principals to have a background or experience in reading instruction to confidently lead reading programs. One may simplify these findings to make the case that leaders need to understand what they are leading.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

The following recommendations were established from this study:

1. This study revealed that a majority of the elementary school principals are confident in their abilities to provide instructional coaching and guidance to teachers about reading. The data from the surveys demonstrated that the elementary school principals were confident in leading as reading instructional leaders. However, the study did not analyze what the principals actually know about reading. Further study on the actual reading knowledge of principals that rate themselves as efficacious would add clarification to their self-confidence. For example, it would be interesting to learn if the elementary principals understand different reading strategies, phonemic awareness activities, or effective comprehension strategies that teachers could use in the classroom. Probing into what principals understand about reading instruction may provide valuable data as to how principals can contribute to their elementary schools.

2. Another study may specifically focus on principal preparation and their reading instruction knowledge. The principals may have confidence as leaders of instruction, but another study could explore what they actually know about reading to help identify needs for redesigning principal preparation programming.

3. Elementary school principal interviews would be helpful. Interviews would glean additional information that was not obtainable from the electronic survey. Specific questions about what the elementary school principals actually know about reading instruction could be more easily identified in an interview. An interview would also gather more detail and clarify the data collected in this survey study.

4. A larger diverse sample group may enhance the data to provide more generalizing. A sample drawn from broader geographic locations and varied educational backgrounds might provide a

study to view data at a wider spectrum. Ethnicity and gender could also be further explored in a larger sample.

APPENDIX A: RECRUITMENT E-MAIL

Dear Principal:

The purpose of this e-mail is to ask for your participation in my dissertation research study involving elementary school principals in Pennsylvania. You have been identified as an elementary school principal in a district affiliated with the Tri-State Area School Study Council. Dr. Sean Hughes, of the University of Pittsburgh, gave me permission to e-mail and survey these administrators.

As a current elementary school principal, I realize your time is valuable and greatly appreciate your interest thus far. My dissertation research study is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Charlene Trovato and the University of Pittsburgh. The study will investigate elementary school principals' beliefs in serving as the instructional leader for reading education.

I am asking you to click on the link below and take my brief on-line survey. You need not provide any contact information as all respondents' answers are recorded and reported confidentially. The survey completion requires approximate 4 minutes of your time. I am graciously asking you to complete the survey within seven (7) days. Your participation will provide the most important source of information needed for my study.

I am the only person analyzing and recording the data and agree to maintain confidentiality. I will not identify any participants or institutions.

Please contact me if you have questions or concerns about this study. Completing the survey acts as your agreement to participate. The results of the study will be provided to participants in an executive summary upon request. Thank you in advance for your consideration in participating in my study.

Just click on the website to begin!

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=9xsefIL01jK4aiqA_2baxElg_3d_3d

Sincerely,

Michael Lucas

APPENDIX B: SURVEY

Directions for questions 1-17: Please indicate your opinion about each of the questions below by marking any one of the nine responses in the columns on the right side. The scale responses ranges from "None at all" (1) to "A Great Deal"(9), with "Some Degree" (5) representing the mid-point between low and high extremes. You may choose any of the nine possible responses, since each represents a degree on the continuum.

Please respond to each of the questions by considering the combination of your current ability, resources, and opportunity to do each of the following in your present position.

"In your current role as principal, to what extent can you..."

	1 None At All	2	3 Very Little	4	5 Some Degree	6	7 Quite A Bit	8	9 A Great Deal
1. describe general patterns in the history of reading research and methods?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
2. explain the importance of phonemic awareness?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
3. evaluate, support, and coach teachers to use a wide range of reading instructional practices, approaches, and methods?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
4. provide instructional coaching and guidance to enhance the reading instruction of teachers?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
5. review the reading curricula with teachers to ensure that students are receiving appropriate reading instruction?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
6. use assessment to ensure the delivery of excellent reading instruction?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
7. review reading data with the teachers to identify needs and concerns in reading?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
8. support the professional staff in designing reading curriculum?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
9. participate and support the professional staff in modeling reading and writing enthusiastically as valued lifelong activities?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
10. encourage and facilitate collaboration and dialogue about reading between professional personnel?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

11. provide professional development in reading instruction?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
12. facilitate student learning in your school?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
13. generate enthusiasm for a shared vision for the school?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
14. manage change in your school?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
15. create a positive learning environment in your school?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
16. raise student achievement on standardized tests?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
17. motivate teachers?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Rate the quality of your school's...

	1 Lowest Quality	2	3	4	5 Highest Quality
18. library.	○	○	○	○	○
19. classrooms.	○	○	○	○	○
20. textbooks.	○	○	○	○	○

Rate your support in reading from the following resources:

	1 Not at all supportive	2	3	4	5 Very supportive
21. superintendent	○	○	○	○	○
22. central office	○	○	○	○	○
23. teachers	○	○	○	○	○
24. reading specialists	○	○	○	○	○
25. literacy coach	○	○	○	○	○
26. parents	○	○	○	○	○

27. How useful was your principal preparation program in readying you to be the instructional leader of reading?

- ○ 1 Not useful at all
- ○ 2 Somewhat useful
- ○ 3 Very useful
- ○ 4 Extremely useful

28. How do you perceive the quality of your principal preparation program in readying you to be an instructional leader of reading?

- ○ 1 Lowest quality
- ○ 2
- ○ 3
- ○ 4
- ○ 5 Highest quality

A. Please select your years of teaching and administration experience.

	Years
Number of years of teaching.	
Number of years of teaching reading.	
Number of years as a principal.	

B. Please record your gender.

- ◯ Female
- ◯ Male

C. Please identify your ethnicity below.

- ◯ American Indian
- ◯ Asian or Pacific Islander
- ◯ Black
- ◯ Hispanic
- ◯ Multicultural
- ◯ White
- ◯ Other
- ◯ Decline to answer

D. Select your elementary school's classification.

- ◯ urban
- ◯ suburban
- ◯ rural

E. Select your school's student population.

- ◯ 0-200
- ◯ 200-400
- ◯ 400-600
- ◯ 600-800
- ◯ over 800

F. What is the approximate percentage of your elementary students regularly receiving free or reduced-priced lunch? Please enter the approximate percentage.

Thank you for taking this survey. Please record your e-mail address, if you are interested in having the results of this study e-mailed to you.

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