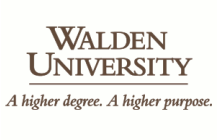

2017

Preschool Teachers' Views of Literacy Instruction

Michelle Kimmy
Walden University

Walden University

College of Education

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Michelle Kimmy

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee
Dr. Kathryn Swetnam, Committee Chairperson, Education Faculty
Dr. Crissie Jameson, Committee Member, Education Faculty
Dr. Nyaradzo Mvududu, University Reviewer, Education Faculty

Chief Academic Officer
Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University
2017

Abstract

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by

Michelle Kimmy

MA, Edinboro University of Pennsylvania, 2010

BS, Edinboro University of Pennsylvania, 1999

Proposal Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

December 2017

Abstract

Students in Pennsylvania are falling behind in reading proficiency. Early literacy skills are the foundation for future reading success and students who have not learned to read proficiently by the end of 3rd grade have an increased chance of failing to achieve academic success. The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to investigate the relationship between preschool teachers' perceived self-efficacy for literacy instruction and preschool literacy assessment scores of students at local private preschool classrooms. The research question focused on the relationship between preschool teacher self-efficacy for literacy instruction and student literacy achievement. Bandura's self-efficacy theory served as the theoretical foundation of the study. Preschool teachers' (n = 31) perceived levels of self-efficacy for early literacy instruction was measured using the Komlodi Assessment for Self-efficacy (KASE) survey. A Pearson correlation analysis of the KASE survey data along with preschool student literacy assessment scores from the Teaching Strategies GOLD preschool assessment was completed to determine whether a relationship exists. The results, however, revealed no significant correlation between teacher self-efficacy and student literacy achievement. The findings suggested that the preschool teachers perceived themselves as effective in both literacy instruction and knowledge of literacy concepts, but less efficacious in their ability to diagnose and provide successful interventions to students struggling with literacy. Recommendations include offering professional development opportunities to strengthen the skills where preschool teachers feel less effective. A focus on professional development and support for teachers may promote social change as students achieve higher early literacy proficiency and become successful members of society.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my husband, Ryan, who provided me with the time and support to continue on this journey.

Acknowledgments

Completion of this dissertation would not have been possible without the support of my family and doctoral committee. First, I would like to thank my husband Ryan and son Max for providing encouragement, support, and the time to dedicate to this process! I would like to thank my parents for their continuous support and example of dedication and perseverance. An enormous thank you to my amazing doctoral committee! Dr. Kathryn Swetnam and Dr. Crissie Jameson are wonderful mentors, extremely knowledgeable, and were committed to helping me reach the end of this journey! A special thank you to Dr. Swetnam, my doctoral chair, who guided me through this process. I cannot express enough how much she has helped me! She continuously encouraged and supported me through every step of the process and I am truly thankful for having the opportunity to work with her.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Early childhood is the most important time in a child's life. Preschool education affects children's future development regarding health, happiness, and learning achievement not only at school, but also in life (Bauchmüller, Gørtz, & Würtz Rasmussen, 2014; Claessens & Garrett, 2014; Weikart, 2016). Further, as Hyson and Tomlinson (2014) stated, the positive effects of preschool are long-lasting and benefit all children, regardless of ethnicity or socioeconomic status. Reutzel (2015) indicated that early literacy development is the most important stage of literacy development and found that when children are prepared with a strong foundation of early literacy skills, they will have future reading success. Attending preschool provides opportunities for children to develop early literacy skills and positively influences future reading proficiencies (Cebolla-Boado, Radl, & Salazar, 2016; LeParo & Pianta, 2000). Preschool is a crucial time for children and pre-k teachers are charged with preparing young children with the early literacy skills needed for future reading success. Teachers are required to assess young children's early literacy skills according to state standards and show progress of skills. This study examined the views of local preschool teachers regarding their self-efficacy for literacy instruction.

Self-efficacy, in the field of education, is defined as the belief that one can have an effect on the academic performance of others (Bandura, 1977). A teacher's self-efficacy is related to their teaching effectiveness, as well as the academic performance of their students (Klassen & Tze, 2014; Zee & Koomen, 2016). Subsequently, literacy skills are crucial to overall academic achievement as delineated in numerous studies which

have demonstrated the importance of reading and literacy proficiency attributing to student success (see Cooper, Moore, Powers, Cleveland, & Greenberg, 2014; Horbec, 2012; Jenkins & Demaray, 2015). This study examined the research previously conducted regarding self-efficacy of early childhood teachers, specifically in the area of literacy instruction. Preschool teachers need to be confident in their ability to help students to build a strong foundation of language and literacy skills in order to produce students that are proficient readers. In addition, given that literacy skills are crucial for overall academic success, increasing the number of proficient readers will help students to achieve in the classroom. In this chapter, a background of literacy issues, the importance of early literacy, and connections to teacher self-efficacy are discussed.

Background to the Problem

According to the United States Department of Education (USDoE, 2015), the reading proficiency scores for the nation have decreased in the past year. Furthermore, in Pennsylvania 59% of fourth graders are not able to read proficiently (United States Department of Education [USDoE], 2015). Quality early education can help close the achievement gap and improve student achievement (Duncan & Magnuson, 2013). Early literacy skills learned in preschool build the foundation for future reading success (National Early Literacy Panel [NELP], 2008; Reutzel, 2015). Preschool education plays a crucial part in promoting literacy and preventing future reading difficulties (Brown, 2014). Preschool curriculum now seeks to prepare children with literacy skills that originally were taught in kindergarten resulting in a "push-down effect" (Henderson, 2014, p. 28) that is felt by preschool teachers. Preschool teachers experience added

pressure to help students meet academic achievements such as early literacy skills (Hall-Kenyon, Bullough, MacKay, & Marshall, 2014). Bandura (1997) hypothesized that students learn much more from teachers with high self-efficacy. Teacher self-efficacy is linked to teacher motivation and student achievement, specifically in a preschool setting (Klassen & Tze, 2014; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001; Zee & Koomen, 2016). The level of self-efficacy a teacher possesses will guide how much that teacher will persist in efforts to achieve a specific goal (Bandura, 1997). Therefore, preschool teachers' self-efficacy for literacy instruction may have an effect on the early literacy skill proficiency of preschool students. This study on preschool teacher self-efficacy may determine how best to assist preschool teachers in increasing their self-efficacy to help increase the early literacy skill proficiency of preschool students.

Problem Statement

The problem that was investigated is that early education teachers often have low self-efficacy when teaching literacy in the pre-k classroom. Levels of teacher efficacy may be linked to low student academic achievement (Zee & Koomen, 2016). Klassen and Tze (2014) established that a relationship existed between teacher self-efficacy and the achievement levels of students. Further, Guo, McDonald Connor, Yang, Roehring, and Morrison (2012) determined that teachers with higher levels of self-efficacy in teaching literacy had students with stronger literacy skills in an elementary school setting. These studies revealed a connection between teacher self-efficacy and student achievement.

Although teacher self-efficacy is related to student achievement (Klassen & Tze, 2014; Mojavezzi & Tamiz, 2012; Zee & Koomen, 2016), more research needs to be done on the topic, particularly in regard to the relationship between preschool teachers' self-efficacy and student literacy achievement because early literacy skills are important in helping children become competent readers (Hall-Kenyon et al., 2014; Kang, 2008). There are numerous studies that address teacher self-efficacy in a K-12 setting, but there is limited research conducted in a preschool setting (Dunekacke, Jenßen & Blömeke, 2015; Hall-Kenyon et al., 2014; Zee & Koomen, 2016). Further, although there are some studies that focus on the connection between self-efficacy and literacy achievement, most of the studies found were conducted in a K-12 setting (Cantrell, Almasi, Carter, & Rintamaa, 2013; Guo et al., 2012; Varghese, Garwood, Bratsch-Hines, & Vernon-Feagans, 2016). Studies that were conducted in a preschool setting were on topics which included behavior management, math, and special education (Bullock, Coplan, & Bosacki, 2015; Guo, Dynia, Pelatti, & Justice, 2014; Oppermann, Anders, & Hachfeld, 2016). The current research study focused on the relationship between preschool teachers' self-efficacy and student literacy achievement in the early educational environment. Because teacher self-efficacy is linked to student achievement in literacy and there are connections between teacher self-efficacy and topics such as math, inclusion, and behavior management, it was plausible that there may be a relationship between teacher self-efficacy and student early literacy achievement. The findings of this study offer insight into the field of reading and literacy leadership. Learning more about the relationship between preschool teachers' self-efficacy and student literacy

achievement may help teachers feel more effective in their instruction and lead to increased proficiency of students.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to investigate the relationship between preschool teachers' perceived self-efficacy for literacy instruction and preschool literacy assessment scores of students at local private preschool classrooms. This correlative study included the variables of teacher perceived self-efficacy for early literacy instruction and preschool student literacy assessment scores. The focus of this exploration of teachers' perceptions was to understand teacher self-efficacy of literacy knowledge, literacy instruction, and diagnosis of early literacy difficulties. The results of this study may lead to changes in literacy practices for the preschool teachers, as well as professional development opportunities provided to them. A review of literature determined that there was research regarding teacher self-efficacy within the K-12 setting, but little research at the preschool level that correlated teachers' perceived self-efficacy with literacy instruction. Of the preschool studies conducted, teacher self-efficacy was mostly focused on mathematics, behavior management, or science. There appears to be a gap in literature regarding preschool teacher self-efficacy for early literacy instruction.

Research Question and Hypotheses

This study sought to answer the following question:

How does teachers' perceived self-efficacy as measured by scores on the Komlodi Assessment of Preschool Teacher Self-efficacy (KASE) survey relate to student

literacy test scores as measured by the Teaching Strategies GOLD literacy assessment for students in local private preschool programs?

H_0: Preschool teachers' perceived self-efficacy as measured by scores on the KASE survey does not relate to student literacy scores as measured by the Teaching Strategies GOLD literacy assessment for students in local private preschool programs.

H_1: Preschool teachers' perceived self-efficacy as measured by scores on KASE survey does relate to student literacy scores as measured by the Teaching Strategies GOLD literacy assessment for student in local private preschool programs.

Theoretical Foundation

The framework for this study was Bandura's self-efficacy paradigm, part of the social cognitive theory. The self-efficacy hypothesis pertains to a person's confidence in their ability to implement behaviors required to perform specific tasks. Bandura's model of self-efficacy suggests that capable functioning in a given situation requires not only the necessary skills and knowledge but personal beliefs of efficacy to be successful. Bandura (1997) stated that personal beliefs about efficacy were more influential than an individual's real capabilities for completing a specific task.

Bandura (1997) suggested that there are four overall sources of efficacy: "verbal persuasion, vicarious experiences, physiological arousal, and mastery experiences" (p. 79). Mastery experiences are most likely to impact the efficacy of a person. Self-efficacy beliefs serve as a basis for motivation, happiness, and personal achievement. Because of this, Bandura postulated that unless one believes that his or her actions can produce the desired result, they are less inclined to act or to persist when challenges arise.

As a result, a teacher with low self-efficacy for literacy instruction may have less motivation and persistence in teaching literacy skills to struggling students, even if he or she actually had the knowledge and skills available to teach the literacy concepts. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) and Bandura (1997) alluded that beliefs of self-efficacy can become self-fulfilling prophesies, confirming either belief or doubt of ability.

One of the earliest discussions of teacher self-efficacy began with studies conducted by the RAND Corporation. In these studies, teacher efficacy was defined as "the extent to which the teacher believes he or she has the capacity to affect student performance" (Berman, McLaughlin, Bass, Pauly, & Zellman 1977, p. 137). In the second of the RAND studies, researchers found that teachers' sense of self-efficacy positively affected student achievement whether or not teachers continued federally funded programs after the program had ended (Berman et al., 1977). Recent research findings have also determined the self-efficacy construct to be a factor influencing student achievement in the classroom (see Klassen & Tze, 2014; Mojavezzi & Tamiz, 2012; Zee & Koomen, 2016). Further, Bandura (1997) stated that a teacher's sense of efficacy is particularly influential on young children and concluded that teachers' perceived self-efficacy for their instruction is a stronger predictor of the academic achievements of younger students than older students. This theory of self-efficacy allows for insight into the connection between preschool teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy and instructional decisions as addressed in the problem statement. The research question was informed by self-efficacy theory in that its purpose was to understand how preschool

teachers perceive their efficacy in helping students achieve early literacy growth in the preschool classroom.

Nature of the Study

The nature of this research study was a quantitative correlational study. In determining which research method to use, a quantitative approach was deemed as appropriate because two variables were compared to determine if a relationship existed between them. One characteristic of nonexperimental quantitative research is to relate variables using statistical analysis and determine if there is a relationship between the variables (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010). The goal of this research was to investigate the predictive relationship between teachers' perceived self-efficacy for teaching early literacy and student literacy achievement scores.

The sample was 36 certified preschool teachers in private preschool classrooms. Homogeneous purposive sampling was used to select participants for the study. Homogeneous purposive sampling is used when the researcher aims to determine the characteristics of a particular group of people (Tongco, 2008). Purposive sampling was specifically chosen because of the limited number of certified preschool teachers in the local area and because these teachers were able to answer the research question of this study. Purposive sampling is used when the researcher needs informed participants that are willing and able to provide the information necessary to participate in the study (Tongco, 2008).

Data were collected through completion of a survey by teachers and the literacy assessment scores of preschool students. A letter of cooperation was signed by the private

preschool program administration to ensure that access would be granted to conduct this study. Before the study began, I sent a letter to each possible participant stating the purpose of the study and requesting their assistance in completing the KASE survey. At the beginning of the study, I attended a faculty meeting at each program. During the meeting, I provided information about the purpose of the study and distributed invitations to participate, along with a hard copy of the survey and instructions on how to complete it online. Teachers had the option to participate by completing either the hard copy or online version. Self-addressed and stamped return envelopes were provided to ensure the confidentiality of responses.

The survey utilized was a revised version of the KASE instrument developed by Komlodi (2007) to research teachers' perceived self-efficacy for a study on variables affecting their self-efficacy for literacy instruction. The revised survey used a Likert scale including these choices: "strongly agree," "agree," "neutral," disagree," and strongly disagree." Data addressing teachers' perceived self-efficacy for teaching early literacy skills, knowledge of early literacy skills, and diagnosis of literacy difficulties were investigated using this KASE survey regarding preschool teachers' self-efficacy for early literacy instruction.

The results of this survey were analyzed to look at the relationship between teachers' self-efficacy ratings and literacy skills test scores of the students. Preschool student literacy assessment scores were obtained from the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment (Berke et al., 2013). Data were analyzed using SPSS statistical software. Keeping the focus on how preschool teachers perceive their effectiveness on student early

literacy achievement was consistent with Bandura's perceived self-efficacy paradigm. Further concepts to be developed through the use of the survey included teachers' instructional literacy ability, their knowledge about literacy, and the ability to diagnose literacy difficulties in children. The nature of the study and methodology are explained more fully in Chapter 3.

Definitions

The following terms are used in this study.

Certified teacher: In Pennsylvania, certified teachers complete an approved teacher education program, meet minimum state testing requirements, and obtain a Bachelor's degree (Pennsylvania Department of Education, n.d.b.).

*Keystone STARS: "*Keystone STARS is a quality rating system that promotes quality improvement in early learning and development programs and school-age child care. A Keystone STARS designation informs parents that their children are in a safe, respectful environment in which they are learning new things every day to support their current and future successes in school and in life." (Pennsylvania Department of Education, n.d.a.).

Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts: Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts is a state-funded program that offers quality preschool to eligible children in Pennsylvania.

Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment System: This is an observational assessment system that teachers use to assess students from birth through kindergarten in areas including "social emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, mathematics,

science and technology, social studies, the arts, and English language acquisition" (Berke et al., 2013).

Assumptions

The following assumptions are associated with this study:

The participants of this study will answer all survey questions honestly.

- The participants have the basic knowledge of early literacy necessary to answer the questions with informed answers.
- The participants are qualified to teach in early childhood classrooms based on the Pennsylvania Department of Education's (PDoE) certification guidelines.
- Literacy skills are taught on a daily basis in a developmentally appropriate manner to meet individual student needs.

Scope and Delimitations

The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to investigate the relationship between preschool teachers' perceived self-efficacy for literacy instruction and preschool literacy assessment scores of students at local private preschool classrooms. Bandura's (1977) paradigm of self-efficacy was the foundation from which perceived self-efficacy was derived. The construct of self-efficacy was chosen because the purpose of the study was to determine if student outcome is affected by teacher beliefs. This study included certified preschool teachers in northwest Pennsylvania, specifically preschool teachers in private preschool programs. In the state of Pennsylvania, public preschool is not mandated, thus limiting the number of preschool teachers in public preschool programs. As such, this study was bounded by instructors in

private preschool programs. Only preschool teachers with early childhood certification were used in the study. This sample of participants was chosen to represent the larger population of preschool teachers in the local area that have met the requirements as set forth by the PDoE as certified to instruct preschool students. Random sampling may mean including preschool staff that have not obtained teaching certification because many preschool programs do not require their teachers to have teacher training. Certified teachers would have been provided the literacy training necessary to complete the KASE survey.

Also, even though the Teaching Strategies GOLD (Berke et al., 2013) assessment is a comprehensive assessment, encompassing seven areas of development, only literacy assessment scores from the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment were used for student assessment data. A quantitative design was chosen rather than a qualitative design because the aim of the study is to determine if there is a relationship between preschool teacher perceived self-efficacy and early literacy skill acquisition of preschool students. A qualitative study would not provide the data necessary to determine if a relationship exists. The findings from this study may be generalizable to other certified teachers with early childhood certification in the state of Pennsylvania.

Limitations

There are several limitations to the extensity of this study. The participants completed the KASE survey at one point in time; therefore, the data is limited to that specific point in time. The survey used in this study is limited to the Likert scale and there is no provision for comments or explanation of answers. An open ended comment

box was added to the KASE survey to provide participants with an opportunity for elaboration. Further, participants may have inadvertently answered survey questions incorrectly (according to what they truly believe) due to misinterpretation of the question. Bias was limited in this study because the survey questions did not permit participants to demonstrate preference regarding any of the concepts in the questionnaire.

Purposive sampling was used in this study, which limited the ability to generalize to the greater population outside of this local area. The objective of purposive sampling is to focus on the traits of a particular group of people (Tongco, 2008). Purposive sampling was used in this case because of limited participants in the local area who would have the ability to participate in the study. A final limitation of this study is that it utilized a correlational design, and only two variables were obtained; the generalizability of the findings is limited.

Significance

The findings of this study may contribute to discovering a possible relationship between preschool teachers' perceived self-efficacy for literacy instruction and early literacy skill assessment scores of preschool students. In local private preschool programs, preschool teachers were asked to rate their perceived self-efficacy according to statements on the KASE survey. Administrators within the preschool programs may find the results of the study helpful and utilize the findings to aid in preparing targeted professional development opportunities in early literacy instruction focused on meeting the needs of preschool students.

Preschool student literacy assessment data obtained from the Teaching Strategies GOLD (Berke et al., 2013) assessment were also analyzed to determine whether there was a relationship between teacher perceived self-efficacy and student early literacy proficiency. The Teaching Strategies GOLD literacy assessment includes data on prereading and prewriting skills, as well as speaking and listening skills. Based on the students' abilities, teachers rated them on individual early literacy skills. The information gained from analyzing student scores in relation to teacher efficacy may be helpful in further developing professional development opportunities for teachers. Further, administrators at these private preschool settings may be able to utilize the data to determine future curriculum decisions.

A result of preschool children lacking proficient early literacy skills may not only be an effect in a formal school setting, but also have a lasting effect on their future reading success (Sparks, Patton, & Murdoch, 2014). Learning to read is clearly associated with success in other academic areas and leading a successful life (Cooper et al.; Reutzel, 2015). Further, children who do not learn to read proficiently by the end of third grade are less likely to achieve future reading success (USDoE, 2015).

A better understanding of the perceived self-efficacy of preschool teachers for early literacy instruction can contribute to positive social change. There is a relationship between teacher self-efficacy and student achievement (Klassen & Tze, 2014; Mojavezzi & Tamiz, 2012; Zee & Koomen, 2016). Because of this relationship, the findings of this study can provide information to help increase preschool teachers self-efficacy for early

literacy instruction, which can in turn increase the early literacy skill proficiency of preschool students.

Summary

The research presented in Chapter 1 indicated the association between teacher self-efficacy and student achievement. Also presented was the importance of early literacy skill acquisition in building a solid foundation for future reading success. There is a need for preschool teachers to have high self-efficacy for early literacy instruction. The problem is that there are limited research studies performed in a preschool setting focused on literacy instruction and the self-efficacy of instructors. As a result of this limited research, this study aimed to fill this gap in practice and provide insight into preschool teachers' perceived self-efficacy for early literacy instruction. The purpose of this quantitative study was to find ways to help preschool teachers feel more effective in their literacy instruction. The findings can be useful to preschool teachers and administration in that focused topics for professional development may be determined.

Chapter 2 includes a detailed review of literature on topics related to the theory of self-efficacy and how it relates to student achievement in literacy. Chapter 3 introduces the methodology of the study, focusing on design, population, and instrumentation. Chapter 4 presents an analysis of the data gathered related to the research question. Chapter 5 provides conclusions and recommendations for further research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to investigate the relationship between preschool teachers' perceived self-efficacy for literacy instruction and preschool literacy assessment scores of students at local private preschool classrooms. The problem to be investigated was that early education teachers often have low self-efficacy when teaching literacy in the pre-k classroom. The literature indicated that the perceived self-efficacy of teachers is produced by previous "performance experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal" (Bandura, 1977, p. 195). Literature also suggested that teacher self-efficacy is related to student achievement (Klassen & Tze, 2014; Zee & Koomen, 2016).

In this chapter, I begin with an explanation of the literature search strategy. The theoretical framework, Bandura's theory of self-efficacy, is then discussed, specifically related to teacher self-efficacy. This is followed by research on the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and student achievement. Early literacy research and the connection to future academic success are also discussed.

Literature Search Strategy

Multiple databases were used in the search strategy: Academic Search Complete, Education Research Complete, ERIC, Education Source, and Google Scholar. I used the following search terms: *teacher self-efficacy*, *student achievement*, *early literacy*, *academic achievement*, *perceived self-efficacy*, *literacy achievement*, and *preschool teacher*. The search terms were combined in several ways to find the most relevant information for my study. Although current peer-reviewed journal articles were targeted,

I also included books, seminal articles, and archived material including data and information from government websites citing educational data. This information is used to support current data and explain previous research. To reach saturation in the current literature on perceived teacher self-efficacy for early literacy instruction, I continue literature searches, scholarly reading, and synthesis of material.

Theoretical Foundation

Personal beliefs contribute to one's effectiveness. Bandura (1997) defined self-efficacy as "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the course of action required to produce given attainments" (p. 3). In other words, self-efficacy is the internal thoughts and beliefs one has about his or her ability to perform a specific task, in this case, teaching reading.

Teacher Efficacy: A Theoretical Framework

A majority of educational researchers attribute the idea of teachers' perceived self-efficacy to Bandura's theoretical framework of self-efficacy, which is part of the social cognitive theory. Social cognitive theory suggests two types of expectations: Outcome expectation and efficacy expectations. Outcome expectancy is the belief that a certain behavior will result in specific results. Efficacy expectation is the belief that a person can successfully produce a specific outcome by performing a certain behavior. Therefore, it can be concluded that individuals are aware that their behaviors influence outcomes, but negative outlooks on the outcomes can also affect the results. The depth of belief that people place in their own effectiveness is not only likely to affect how much

effort they will put into a task, but also the amount of time they will continue the behavior if challenges arise (Bandura, 1997).

Self-efficacy is an individual's feelings about his or her capabilities to produce specific behaviors that affect events in their lives (Bandura, 1994). Self-efficacy has to do with self-perception of capability rather than actual ability and individuals frequently misjudge their actual capabilities which may result in affecting their outcomes (Bandura, 1994; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Bandura (1997) stated that a competency will only be effective if it is implemented well. Confusing uncertainty can easily take precedence over a strong skill set. Bandura (1997) stated that self-efficacy beliefs are comprised from four foundational sources of information, including mastery experiences, which provide an indication of a person's ability. Other sources of information are vicarious experiences that provide a comparison of ability, verbal persuasion which acts as social guidance, and physiological states that people use to rate their level of ability.

Mastery experiences can be related to teachers' experiences in regard to accomplishments and failures. Vicarious experiences refer to the observation of others' accomplishments and failures. For example, when a teacher observes a model teacher performing well, the observer increases their own efficacy.

Social or verbal persuasion derives from activities such as discussions, professional development, and feedback from a supervisor, peer, or interaction with students. The excitement of children, which is one of the forms of social persuasion provided by students, was a positive source of information in developing teachers' self-efficacy (Vieluf, Kunter, & van de Vijver, 2013).

The four sources by which teachers may judge their efficacy: "verbal persuasion, vicarious experiences, physiological arousal, and mastery experiences" (p. 79), help them to decide if they believe they have the ability to successfully complete specific tasks. Zee and Koomen (2016) discovered that teachers with increased levels of self-efficacy approach difficult situations as challenges to conquer rather than as risks to be avoided. The cyclical foundation of teacher self-efficacy denotes that a low level of efficacy leads to an equally low level of effort and perseverance. This decline in performance results in lower efficacy. Teacher efficacy is both situation-specific and subject-specific, meaning that while self-efficacy may be low for literacy instruction, there is a probability that it may be high for another subject (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Educators whose levels of self-efficacy are higher in a content area are more likely to dedicate more time to that area and set higher goals for students (Derosier & Soslau, 2014).

Teacher self-efficacy research in the classroom. Teacher self-efficacy can be explained as a teacher's judgement of his or her abilities to effect student outcomes (Tshannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Several studies have been done regarding teacher efficacy in the classroom; however, much of this research has been in primary and secondary grades (see Holzberger, Philipp, & Kunter, 2014; Schiefele & Schaffner; 2015; Vieluf et al., 2013) or in the contexts of classroom management, math, or science (see Bullock et al., 2015; Hull, Booker, & Näslund-Hadley, 2016; Oppermann et al., 2016; Sandholtz & Ringstaff, 2014). There is limited research about teacher self-efficacy for early literacy instruction in an early childhood setting, specifically preschool. There are, however, research studies completed in elementary school settings. Abernathy-Dyer,

Ortlieb, and Cheek (2013) measured four first-grade teachers' self-efficacy beliefs to assess their relationship with literacy and reading instructional practices. Abernathy-Dyer et al. (2013) discovered that self-efficacy beliefs of each of the teachers directly affected their instructional practices. For example, one teacher who was rated very high in self-efficacy followed the reading curriculum and was not afraid to implement new strategies and ideas. Likewise, Holzberger et al. (2013) found teacher self-efficacy was linked to instructional quality in a study of secondary math teachers. Teacher self-efficacy was measured by both the teachers themselves and their students. Researchers determined a correlation between teacher self-efficacy beliefs and their instructional quality, specifically in the area of increased individual student learning support (Holzberger et al., 2013). Holzberger et al. (2014) also determined that teacher self-efficacy is linked to the educational process that teachers participate in while developing instruction, such as creating lessons and activities based on individual needs of students that are aligned with the developmental continuum.

Epstein and Willhite (2015) explored the self-efficacy of 14 preschool through fourth grade teachers in relationship to their ability to impact student learning. An outcome of this study was that all of the teacher responses included self-efficacy as important and directly linked to student outcomes. One kindergarten teacher stated that she greatly influenced student beliefs of how well they achieve academically. Similarly, teacher self-efficacy, along with interests and master goals, were determined to be important factors in student outcomes. Schiefele and Schaffner (2015) found that teacher

self-efficacy and interests were predictive of instructional decisions. This information supports the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and instructional competency.

Not all research supported the connection between teacher self-efficacy, instruction, and student achievement. Guo et al. (2014) found that although early childhood special education teachers had high self-efficacy, it was not related to student outcomes. The researchers also determined that in classrooms where teachers had low self-efficacy, but included a lot of high-quality material and instructional support, students had higher levels of academic achievement. In these studies, self-efficacy was not directly related to student academic success.

Research Methodology

After deliberating various methodological designs, a quantitative method was chosen as the most appropriate approach for this study because it seeks to obtain information about preschool teacher perceived self-efficacy in relation to student achievement. I considered other options before deciding to use the quantitative research approach. However, by using a quantitative design, I was able to measure data and generalize results to the population. Also, by conducting a quantitative study, I was able to examine the relationship between preschool teacher self-efficacy and preschool student literacy skill achievement, based on the numerical data. When using a quantitative design, results are presented in numerical form in contrast to a qualitative design where data are presented in words that are then developed into themes. Qualitative research is used when the researcher aims to provide data from the viewpoint of participants, therefore, providing rich descriptive detail. Findings from qualitative research are not

conclusive and cannot be used to make generalizations concerning a larger population (Creswell, 2012).

Although a qualitative design would allow the researcher to describe feelings and experiences of teachers, it would not represent a large number, but only denote a small number of non-representative cases. Through the use of the KASE survey, I was able to determine the level of teacher perceived self-efficacy in relation to preschool student literacy assessment scores. In order to generalize to a larger population, a quantitative method is the best option to do this.

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts and Variables

This section introduces the concepts of teacher knowledge of literacy, teacher literacy instruction, and diagnosis of literacy difficulties. Teacher knowledge is defined as early childhood teacher knowledge of literacy concepts, such as phonemic awareness. Teacher literacy instruction is defined as pedagogical early childhood teacher literacy instructional strategies. Diagnosis of literacy difficulties is defined as early childhood teacher ability to determine literacy skill development issues among students.

Teacher Knowledge of Literacy

Researchers' findings demonstrate the importance of knowledgeable teachers and the influence that teachers have on students' success in school is related to a child's ability to learn to read (Cash, Cabell, Hamre, DeCoster, & Pianta, 2015; Cunningham & O'Donnell, 2015; Guo, Sawyer, Justice, & Kaderavek, 2013; Ottley et al., 2015; Piasta, 2014; Roskos & Neuman, 2014). Teachers play a crucial role in whether or not children learn to read. Above all other variables, teacher expertise accounts for more increases in

student achievement in reading (Cunningham & O'Donnell, 2015). Ottley et al. (2015) found that student academic achievement in literacy increased when teachers were more knowledgeable of the content they were teaching and when teachers were familiar with foundational literacy skills. Similarly, Lerner and Lonigan (2016) concluded that in early childhood classrooms where time was spent directly teaching phonemic awareness and letter identification and teachers exhibited competency in the knowledge of early literacy pedagogy, students performed significantly higher on early literacy assessments. On the contrary, in classrooms with less knowledgeable teachers and similar amounts of time spent directly teaching phonemic awareness and letter identification, students performed significantly lower on early literacy assessments.

Without proper knowledge of how children learn and how to effectively deliver developmentally appropriate early literacy instruction, teachers may not be fully prepared to teach these essential early literacy skills to children in early childhood classrooms (Baker, Tichovolsky, Kupersmidt, & Voegler-Lee, 2015; Varghese et al., 2016). Cunningham and O'Donnell (2015) reiterated the significance of knowledgeable teachers and suggested that teachers must recognize the connection between early literacy skill content knowledge and the development of early literacy skills. The authors specifically identified vocabulary, spelling, phonics, phonological awareness, and phonemic awareness as critical knowledge for teachers to possess in order to effectively teach literacy skills.

Further, as noted by Vesay and Gischlar, 2013, teachers need to be knowledgeable of foundational concepts such as phonemic awareness and phonics, in

order for their instruction to be successful. The authors suggested that early childhood educators require knowledge of the five basic components of beginning reading: phonemic awareness, alphabetic principle, fluency with text, comprehension, and vocabulary, as delineated by the National Reading Panel (National Reading Panel, 2000) in relationship to early literacy acquisition. Despite what has been suggested by researchers as important for teachers to know about early literacy skills, teachers may lack this knowledge. Schacter, Spear, Piasta, Justice, and Logan (2016) discovered that early childhood educators with higher levels of literacy content knowledge devoted more time to literacy instruction in the classroom due to a better understanding of the material; nevertheless, the 222 early childhood educators in their study averaged 65% correct for knowledge of literacy and pedagogy of literacy.

A component of a teacher's knowledge of literacy in early childhood is the importance of knowing which books to read to children and how to integrate instructional activities into the experience. In a study of preschool teachers, Guo et al. (2013) found that instructional decisions about the types of early literacy activities and books read aloud were dependent on the teachers' level of early literacy skills knowledge. Specifically, in a quantitative study Guo et al. (2013) measured the level of education and teacher self-efficacy in the following areas: literacy environment and early literacy skill knowledge. The knowledge of teachers was found to be correlated with student literacy gains. Teachers who were more knowledgeable of early literacy skills tended to choose activities and books with more explicit instruction and higher-level vocabulary. Thus, the

knowledge of teachers in the domain of early literacy skills impacted both instructional decisions and the level of student literacy acquisition in the classroom.

Literacy knowledge of early childhood educators not only effects student literacy skill achievement, but also teacher instructional decisions. The role and context of teacher knowledge was found to be significant for reading instruction in primary grades. Griffith, Bauml, and Barksdale (2015) discovered that teachers made in-the-moment decisions based on their expertise and knowledge, resulting in increased literacy gains for students. Similarly, Cash et al. (2015) examined the knowledge and beliefs of prekindergarten teachers in relationship to children's language and literacy development. The study consisted of two parts during which teachers participated in a 14-week college-level course on language and literacy development of children in the initial part of the study. Teachers completed a questionnaire after Phase 1 of the study. Next, in the second stage of the study, teachers participated in a web-mediated coaching consultancy program. Using a mixed-methods research design, Cash et al. (2015) found that teacher knowledge of oral language development predicted children's advances in expressive language and that teacher literacy knowledge predicted children's print knowledge gains. Teachers' perceptions were determined as not predictive of children's literacy skill development, but rather their actual knowledge of early literacy skills. Hall, Toland, Grisham-Brown, and Graham (2014) conducted a similar study of Head Start preschool teachers and examined their knowledge of book reading activities and nonbook reading activities. Teachers struggled when incorporating literacy lessons during book reading activities. Counting syllables, identifying prefixes and suffixes, and phoneme matching

were difficult for the teachers. Teachers also incorporated more vocabulary instruction than code-related instruction during the book reading activities (Hall et al., 2014). Teacher knowledge of literacy is a crucial component in the ability to effectively teach literacy skills in a preschool setting.

Preschool Teacher Literacy Instruction

The seminal research of the National Early Literacy Panel (2008) emphasized that teachers can facilitate children's development of early literacy skills by implementing evidence-based instruction. Evidence-based instruction, teaching strategies that are developed based on developmental theories and scientific research, result in consistent and positive effects on children's literacy skills development (Brown, 2014). Two themes that emerged during the literature review are literacy instruction strategies and teacher training and professional development.

Literacy instruction strategies. One form of broadly recognized evidence-based instruction is explicit instruction. Literacy skills can be taught explicitly or implicitly. Explicit instruction includes giving direct and clear explanations and examples of the literacy skill and, in contrast, implicit instruction focuses on exposing children to literacy enriched experiences through which children can acquire new literacy skills such as letter knowledge and vocabulary (Zhang et al., 2015). Because not every student in the classroom may be at a similar level of conceptual understanding, some children miss the learning opportunities provided within implicit instruction (Girard, Girolametto, Weitzman, & Greenberg, 2013). Implicit teaching through language exposure and print-

rich environments may not effectively promote the early literacy skills for children who are at-risk (Xu, Chin, Reed, Hutchinson, 2014).

Implicit instruction, according to research findings, is only effective if combined with explicit instruction (Piasta, 2016). In a study conducted by McGinty, Justice, Piasta, Kaderavek, and Fan (2012), 59 preschool teachers utilized explicit print instruction with their students. The researchers measured preschool student outcomes as a result of this explicit print instruction, along with the literacy environment, such as environmental print and high-quality teacher-student interactions. Findings from this study indicated that explicit literacy instruction was required for students to attain literacy skill achievement (McGinty et al., 2012).

Explicit teaching, as demonstrated by research findings, confirm a consistent positive impact on children's code and meaning-related literacy skills, including reading for meaning and phonological awareness skills (Foorman, Breier, & Fletcher, 2003; NELP, 2008; Xu et al., 2014). A few common code-related skills include phonemic and phonological awareness, letter-sound knowledge, and print knowledge that provides a foundation for children's reading development (Brown, 2014; Zhang, Diamond, & Powell, 2015 Xu et al. (2014) discovered that children who were taught with explicit, systematic instruction made significant gains in oral language, skills, phonological awareness, print awareness, and alphabet knowledge.

Zhang et al. (2015) implemented a study that focused on large-group circle time and teaching literacy skills to preschool children from low-income families. In previous years, these classrooms did not include direct instruction of literacy skills activities

during circle time. During the study the children received direct, explicit instruction of letter-sound correspondence, introduction of vocabulary used in read-alouds, and phonological awareness. The results from this study indicated that the children's exposure to these concepts improved the students' skills in vocabulary and phonological awareness.

Suggate's (2016) meta-analysis of long-term effects of literacy intervention reported that explicit literacy intervention and instruction in early childhood classrooms produced increased achievement in comprehension and phonemic awareness. These skills were also found more likely to transfer to broader literacy concepts. Further, it was reiterated by the Center for Response to Intervention in Early Childhood (CRITEC) that the roots of literacy development begin in early childhood (CRITEC, n.d.). CRITEC determined that with strategies and techniques used in tiered support, such as Response to Intervention (RTI), to students in an early childhood setting that literacy skill acquisition could significantly be increased (Greenwood et al., 2015).

In early childhood, literacy instruction has many dimensions. Scull, Nolan, and Raban (2013) examined one early childhood instructional strategy, Green's 3 Dimensional Literacy Educational Model. The 3-D Literacy Education Model, which includes cultural, operational, and critical components, can be utilized by preschool teachers as an explicit teaching framework for their literacy instruction. Scull et al. (2013) determined that with the combination of all aspects of the 3-D Model, preschool teachers created multi-dimensional literacy environments and lessons that positively impacted students and increased literacy achievement.

Teacher experience and training. Perceptions, interests, and professional development experiences have an effect on preschool teacher literacy instruction as well. In a study conducted by Giles and Tunks (2015), teacher perceptions of literacy acquisition were investigated. Seventy-six preschool through second grade teachers completed a survey on their thoughts of literacy acquisition in the early childhood classroom and responses were based on the themes of the survey, reading readiness and emergent literacy concepts. The results were examined and it was presented that there was a substantial difference in the responses of teachers with 6-10 years of experience with those teachers with more than 21 years' of teaching experience. Giles and Tunks attributed this difference to the years in which these teachers received their training. For example, the teachers with over 21 years' experience received their initial teacher training during a time when an emergent literacy perspective was the prominent view of literacy instruction, whereas teachers with 6-10 years' experience had a perspective supporting reading readiness.

Teacher experience and professional development is also linked to the literacy instruction and pedagogy of early childhood educators. In a study on the relationship between preschool teachers' exposure to professional development and student literacy skill achievement, a significant connection was discovered (Lane, Prokop, Johnson, Podhajski, & Nathan, 2014). Lane et al. (2014) investigated the effect that an early literacy training program, called Building Blocks for Literacy, had on the 27 Head Start teachers in this study. The participants were separated into groups; one was provided training and live mentoring, one received training and distance mentoring, and one group

received no training on the early literacy program. The findings indicated that all of the students in the preschool program acquired expected development of early literacy skills; however, the groups of students whose teachers received early literacy mentoring, either in person or through distance learning, demonstrated significantly larger gains in early literacy skills (Lane et al., 2014). The group whose teachers received training and face to face mentoring decreased the number of students labeled at risk for reading difficulties from 38% to 2% and the group whose teachers received training and online mentoring decreased their at risk student numbers from 50% to 2% (Lane et al., 2014). The authors also stated that children who attend preschools and have early childhood educators trained in how to effectively teach early literacy skills develop increased literacy skills. The professional development and educational training that the early childhood educators received assisted the teachers in providing effective early literacy instruction.

Professional development is a vital component for teachers to improve instructional practices. Cunningham, Etter, Platas, Wheeler, and Campbell (2015) examined the effects of a teacher study group professional development model in a study which included 19 preschool teachers and 101 preschool students. Teachers met during the course of the study with a facilitator highly knowledgeable in emergent literacy development and studied content and instructional strategies. Also during this time, literacy assessment data were obtained from the children in the study. At the end of the end of the 3-year study, it was discovered that teachers made significant gains in their emergent literacy knowledge in both content and pedagogy. The students in this study demonstrated significant gains in their phonological awareness skills and even succeeded

the expected outcomes, based on national norms. This information validates the importance of quality professional development and knowledge of teachers in connection to student literacy achievement.

Diagnosis of Literacy Difficulties

Teachers need to be able to support the literacy skill acquisition of typically functioning students as well as possess the ability to recognize when children are having difficulties in acquiring literacy skills. Early literacy skills, the foundational skills for future literacy development, represent the beginning of the developmental reading continuum, beginning with emergent reader and ending with fluency. Linder, Ramey, and Zambak (2013) suggested that the literacy skills children acquired prior to beginning formal schooling are predictive of later academic achievement in literacy. Children who are exposed to quality early literacy experiences are more likely to make academic gains in reading (LeParo & Pianta, 2000; Cooper et al., 2014). However, the opposite is also true; children who lack quality early literacy experiences are likely to continue to be struggling readers. To establish this connection, a study conducted by Cooper et al. (2014) reported a significant association between students who performed low in reading in kindergarten and continued to have low reading performance in fifth grade. Many of the literacy skills required for becoming a successful reader are based on developing foundational early literacy skills. Children who begin formal schooling with a strong foundation of early literacy skills have an increased chance for academic success (Linder, Ramey, & Zambak, 2013).

Emergent literacy opportunities and experiences are crucial for children. Foundational literacy skills such as phonological awareness and print knowledge are connected to later reading proficiency (Foorman et al., 2003; Wilson, Dickinson, & Rowe, 2013). Although some children show significant signs for delays in literacy proficiency, there is evidence that if these weak areas are identified during early childhood, there is a possibility to remediate the delays, as well as prevent or reduce later reading problems (Fricke, Bowyer-Crane, Haley, Hulme, & Snowling, 2013). Thus, it is important for early childhood educators to have the ability to recognize and diagnose literacy difficulties of students. The research that has been completed regarding the ability for early childhood educators to diagnose literacy difficulties focuses on the themes of Response to Intervention (RTI) and Response to Instruction, as well as teacher practice and perceptions.

RtI and response to instruction. RtI is a three-tiered model developed to ensure students receive instruction based on needs. RtI refers to the model of instruction and response to instruction refers to the specific type of intervention instruction that students receive in the second tier of the model. The first tier of RtI consists of fundamental literacy instruction and aligns to basic language arts and reading curriculum. The second tier allows for strategic interventions, such as those delivered through response to instruction, in which students are provided with increased direct instruction at their individual reading level. In Tier 3 of RtI, students receive more intense intervention such as longer daily instruction or pullout of the general education classroom (Hudson & McKenzie, 2016). Response to instruction techniques are used in early childhood

classrooms where preschool children are identified as at risk for being delayed in early literacy skill acquisition. In a study on the results of Response to instruction in a preschool setting, Lonigan and Phillips (2015) found that preschool children who received targeted, direct instruction of literacy skills in small groups made significant increases in their literacy skills. It was discovered in one study of 93 preschool children who received either just Tier 1 instruction or limited Tier 2 instruction, there was minimal effect on student literacy skills. In a second study consisting of 183 preschool children who received limited Tier 2 instruction or Tier 2 instruction with targeted, code-focused instruction, that the targeted, code-focused instruction allowed that group of children to make significant gains in their literacy skill acquisition (Lonigan & Phillips, 2015). For example, children's scores in print knowledge increased from 14.96 to 22.02 after receiving the targeted Tier 2 instruction during the study.

Similarly, Kruse, Spencer, Olszewski, and Goldstein (2015) studied nine preschool-aged children and the effect of their inclusion in a phonological awareness (PA) intervention, as part of Tier 2 instruction in a RtI model. Participants were provided with small group PA and alphabet knowledge instruction. Kruse et al. (2015) found that all of the students made significant gains in literacy skills, including first sound fluency, word parts fluency, rhyming, phonemic awareness, and print knowledge. Most significant were the students' gains in first sound fluency, which increased from a mean score of 0.7 at pretest to 18.6 at posttest. Results of this study help to confirm the stance that RtI does in fact support teachers in assisting students who may have literacy

difficulties. Further, by implementing RtI, teachers are able to help diagnose possible literacy difficulties of students.

Teacher practice and perceptions. Teacher beliefs about best practices and student achievement as well as the instructional practices they utilize are related to student literacy achievement as well as the ability to diagnose literacy difficulties (Baker, et al., 2015; Varghese et al., 2016). In a study of 760 preschoolers and 123 preschool teachers, teachers' perceptions of students' literacy skills were assessed, in addition to the actual literacy skills of the students (Baker et al., 2015). The literacy skills of 124 students were significantly overestimated by their teachers, with a large discrepancy in teacher perception of skills and actual literacy scores (1 and 2 standard deviations above the mean). The teachers in this study overestimated the literacy skills for female students and well-behaved students and underestimated the literacy skill level for several male students, along with students who had behavioral challenges. This study demonstrated that teacher misperceptions may interfere with identifying and helping students with possible literacy difficulties to obtain the support needed to achieve academic literacy skills.

Similarly, Carta et al. (2015) conducted a study of 659 preschool students to determine the effect universal screeners have to help identify children for higher tiers of instructional support in the preschool classroom. Three different universal screening measures were used to determine which was most effective in identifying literacy difficulties in preschool children. Researchers revealed that screeners with picture naming and sound identification components provided the most significant information

for teachers in identifying children with literacy difficulties in early educational classrooms. Thus, effective universal screening tools are required to help preschool teachers identify and support children with literacy difficulties.

Allington (2013) found that key strategies have been upheld as effective in teaching struggling readers, yet in most classrooms these effective strategies are not being used. For example, targeted intervention in literacy skills by reading specialists was determined to be effective techniques to improve the reading achievement of students, but in most classrooms, struggling readers work with paraprofessionals in the classroom (Allington, 2013). While data are available to help guide educational decisions, such as literacy interventions and focus on early literacy in education, there is evidence that the United States is still lacking in student literacy skill achievement. Merry (2013) determined that the school in the United States trail behind other countries in reading skills and proficiency. Specifically, there is a large reading achievement gap of .4 standard deviation between United States and Canada and that the gap begins at ages 4-5, before formal schooling even begins. This information supports the stance that preschool teachers need to be able to diagnose literacy difficulties and be able to effectively teach literacy skills to students in their classrooms.

Summary and Conclusions

Teacher self-efficacy is a construct of the Bandura's sociocultural theory and can be summarized as a teacher's belief regarding the effect they have on student outcomes. Teacher self-efficacy was a component in several research studies in the field of education; however, most of this research concentrated on primary and secondary

classrooms or dealt with classroom management, math, or science contexts. Because teacher self-efficacy has been suggested by researchers to be related to student literacy achievement, it is clear that a study regarding teacher self-efficacy for early literacy instruction in the preschool classroom is warranted. This study helps to fill a gap in research about practice regarding reading and literacy in the preschool classroom, as well as assists literacy leaders to support preschool teachers in their literacy instruction.

Several recurrent themes emerged during the review of literature. The theme of professional development and teacher training included findings stating that students made significantly greater academic gains in literacy when their teachers received consistent and ongoing professional development in the form of coaching or mentoring. Another theme that developed was that of explicit instruction in literacy skills producing more substantial literacy skill achievement for early childhood students than implicit literacy instruction.

This literature review encompassed the crucial components required for early literacy instruction including literacy knowledge of early childhood teachers, teacher early literacy instruction and diagnosis of literacy difficulties, which are also aligned to the KASE survey that was used in this study to measure teacher self-efficacy for early literacy instruction. Specifically, the concepts of teacher professional development for literacy instruction, instructional practices, the use of response to instructional techniques within the RtI model, and teacher experience were discussed.

This review of literature revealed that although there were studies regarding teacher self-efficacy, most of the research focused outside of the preschool classroom

and/or in contexts other than literacy instruction. Further, the studies that were completed in early childhood settings in the area of literacy instruction provided findings to suggest that teacher self-efficacy not only affects student literacy achievement, but also instructional decisions and the literacy environment as well. Best practices in literacy instruction with struggling readers were also discussed in the frameworks of response to instruction and RtI. These programs offer supports to struggling readers and have been proposed as successful in helping to increase emergent literacy skills during such a crucial time of reading and literacy development.

Though this review of literature revealed several aspects of teacher self-efficacy in relation to early literacy skills instruction, other areas were not covered in the research. One issue that was not discussed was that of preschool teacher self-efficacy for literacy instruction specifically. Little is known regarding how preschool teacher self-efficacy for literacy instruction relates to preschool student literacy achievement specifically. Also, it is not known how preschool teacher self-efficacy for literacy instruction relates to preschool teacher self-efficacy for math or science instruction, for example.

Section 3 describes the study in terms of research design and rationale and methodology including setting, sampling and sampling procedures, as well as procedures for recruitment, participation, and data collection. I also discuss the survey instrument and data analysis plan, as well as threats to validity and ethical procedures.

Chapter 3: Research Method

In this quantitative study, I investigated the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and student academic achievement as reported on the Teaching Strategies GOLD (Berke et al., 2013) literacy preschool assessment. Chapter 3 describes the rationale for the quantitative research model utilized in this study. The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to investigate the relationship between preschool teachers' perceived self-efficacy for literacy instruction and preschool literacy assessment scores of students in local private preschool classrooms. This chapter contains a description of the methodology that was used to conduct the study including an explanation of the setting for the study, research design, and rationale. An explanation of the sample selection is provided that delineates procedures for recruitment and participation as well as the data collection procedure. Instrumentation and operationalization of constructs are explained along with the data analysis methods and threats to validity. I conclude with a discussion of ethical procedures.

Research Design and Rationale

A nonexperimental correlation design was chosen because the goal of this study was to determine if a relationship exists between two variables. A nonexperimental correlation design is used to analyze two or more variables when the independent variable is not manipulated (Lodico et al., 2010). This study compared survey results of preschool teachers with student literacy data using a correlation research design. The survey used in the study was chosen because it aligns with the research question and helped to determine the perceived self-efficacy of participants. Questions on the survey

relate directly to self-efficacy regarding literacy knowledge, literacy instruction, and ability to diagnose literacy difficulties. Answers for each survey question are in a Likert-style format and allowed participants to choose the most appropriate response. Participant responses from this survey helped to answer the research question of this study: How does teachers' perceived self-efficacy as measured by scores on the KASE survey relate to student literacy test scores as measured by the Teaching Strategies GOLD literacy assessment for students in local private preschool programs? The following hypothesis was tested:

H_0: Preschool teachers' perceived self-efficacy as measured by scores on the KASE survey does not relate to student literacy scores as measured by the Teaching Strategies GOLD literacy assessment for students in local private preschool programs.

H_1: Preschool teachers' perceived self-efficacy as measured by scores on the KASE survey does relate to student literacy scores as measured by the Teaching Strategies GOLD literacy assessment for student in local private preschool programs.

The correlational research design allowed for the use of statistical techniques to identify a relationship, if any, between the survey results (i.e., the teachers' ratings of the various subscales from the KASE) and Teaching Strategies GOLD (Berke et al., 2013) preschool literacy assessment data. A correlational design is used when the researcher aims to determine if a relationship exists between two or more variables (Lodico et al., 2010). The independent variable for this study was teachers' perceived self-efficacy for early literacy instruction as determined from the KASE survey. The dependent variable for this study was preschool student literacy assessment scores obtained from the

Teaching Strategies GOLD (Berke et al., 2013) assessment. The correlational research design helped to answer the research question. Further, in quantitative research, when numerical data is obtained, the correlational design has been shown as an effective method to analyze the relationships between variables through statistical procedures (Creswell, 2012). Surveys are an appropriate data collection instrument to obtain information during research that involves people (Fink, 2003). Surveys are a common instrument used in quantitative research to identify relationships between the variables (Yilmaz, 2013).

Methodology

Setting

The setting for this study was private preschool programs located in northwestern Pennsylvania. Two organizations that have multiple preschool classrooms were utilized. One organization, Program A, has 26 preschool classrooms located in multiple buildings in urban and suburban areas. The other organization, Program B, has 10 preschool classrooms located in two buildings in a suburban area. Each program has obtained a Keystone STARS 4 rating, which is the highest quality level as determined by the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL). Programs are evaluated using a rating scale ranging from one to four on the following: Academic standards, training and professional development, assistance, resources, and support (Pennsylvania Department of Education, n.d.a). Programs that have been rewarded with a Star 4 rating have met the requirements as set forth by OCDEL and are deemed a quality program in the state of Pennsylvania.

Population Selection

For the purpose of this study, 36 certified preschool teachers in private preschool programs in the local area of northwestern Pennsylvania represented the population. Certified teachers are teachers who have met the qualifications as set forth by the PDoE. To become a certified teacher in the state of Pennsylvania, one must have completed an approved teacher certification program and have passed all required teacher certification assessments (Pennsylvania Department of Education, n.d.b). Purposive sampling was chosen as the best method in determining participants due to the limited availability of certified preschool teachers in the local area. In the state of Pennsylvania, preschool is not mandatory or publicly funded; therefore, limiting the potential number of certified preschool teachers necessary for this study. Using purposive sampling allowed for knowledgeable and experienced teachers participating in the study to help answer the research question.

Sampling and Sampling Procedures

This study utilized homogeneous purposive sampling, meaning that participants are chosen based on similar characteristics (Singh, 2007). The sample included certified preschool teachers located in northwestern Pennsylvania. Homogeneous purposive sampling is used when the researcher wants to obtain information from a group of people with similar characteristics. Further, homogeneous purposive sampling is used when the research question pertains specifically to the precise group of participants (Singh, 2007).

Because certified preschool teachers from quality preschool programs were selected as the sample frame for this study, a search was conducted to determine possible

participants. By conducting a provider search, I was able to locate preschool programs with a Keystone STAR 4 rating. In the local county, there are 51 preschool programs, but only 19 of them are rated at STAR 4. Because most of the STAR 4 programs are also Pre-K Counts programs, I was able to determine which programs also had certified preschool teachers. Pre-K Counts is a program funded by the state of Pennsylvania to provide quality preschool to children based on family income and one requirement of this program is that the teachers must be certified (Pennsylvania Department of Education, n.d.c.). The two largest programs were contacted for possible participation in this study, which is how the sample was determined. According to Creswell (2012), an educational researcher needs approximately 30 participants to conduct a correlational study that relates variables. Therefore, because of the limited number of subjects in this population who met the inclusion conditions for this study, random sampling would not be a feasible procedure. The sample for this study included all people who met the criteria for this study.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Prior to the study, I obtained permission from program administrators to conduct research within the preschool programs. Program A has 26 preschool classrooms and each one has a certified lead teacher. Program B has 10 preschool certified teachers in each classroom. The program directors of these sites granted permission to survey each of these teachers and to obtain literacy assessment scores of students in their classrooms. A list of names and emails of teachers was also obtained from the preschool program directors to contact for possible participation in this study. After receiving approval from

the Walden University Institutional Review Board, I visited each site and delivered packets to the teachers that include an invitation and consent letter asking for their participation in the study as well as information explaining how their input would be utilized in the study. The electronic link to the online survey was also provided in the packet, as well as a hard copy of the survey to provide each participant with two options. Instructions were included on how to complete both the online and hard copy survey, as well as how to submit student literacy assessment data.

Using the online survey, teachers uploaded a list of student literacy assessment scores after completing survey questions. A mean score for each class was calculated. Teachers and their corresponding student mean score were assigned a letter of the alphabet. For example, Class A's scores corresponded with Teacher A's scores. Additionally, literacy assessment data could have also been submitted via hard copy in pre-stamped and addressed envelopes to me, which were also included in each packet. Teachers were directed to omit student names on the list of literacy scores to ensure confidentiality. The surveys completed by means of the electronic link were stored online. Hard copies of completed surveys and literacy assessment data were stored in a locked file cabinet in my home.

Two weeks after delivering the packets, I emailed those participants who had yet to respond reminding them to complete and return the survey and assessment data. After receiving each participant's survey, I sent a thank you email.

Instrumentation and Operationalization of Constructs

An existing survey instrument was utilized to collect data on the perceived self-efficacy of preschool teachers in this study, the KASE. Permission was granted from Komlodi to use the survey in my study, including the right to revise (Appendix A). The KASE (Appendix B) was developed by Komlodi (2007) to measure the perceived self-efficacy of 100 preschool teachers in the Southwestern United States. Komlodi completed two pilot tests on the KASE survey during the study. Multivariate correlational methods were used in creating the instrument and sequential regression was used to identify possible predictor variables (Komlodi, 2007). A coefficient alpha is a reliability indicator of test reliability (Cortina, 1993). Komlodi's survey had an overall coefficient alpha of .986.

After reading Komlodi's results and recommendations for future research, and communalities among survey questions, I revised the survey to align with the specific research question of this study (Appendix C). In order to improve this study's efficiency, I conducted a pilot study of the revised KASE survey with two certified early childhood teachers. Further, the two pilot participants were not associated with either Program A or Program B. These childhood educators completed the survey and provided feedback on the clarity of instructions and statements. The comments obtained from the pilot participants were used to revise the survey to improve the instructions and statements to make them comprehensible and clear to study participants. Data obtained from the pilot participants were not included with the data gathered during the study. There are 50 questions on the survey that are categorized into knowledge of literacy, literacy

instruction, and diagnosis of literacy difficulties. Subscores from each category of the survey were obtained and used to determine if specific areas of perceived self-efficacy are stronger than others. The 5-point Likert-style response scale includes the ratings "strongly disagree", "disagree", "neutral", "agree", and "strongly agree". The survey also contained demographic information including number of years teaching, level of education, age, and gender. Demographic information provided insight into commonalities of the participants and data for additional research.

To collect data on preschool student literacy achievement, the Teaching Strategies GOLD (Berke et al., 2013) Preschool Assessment was utilized. Teaching Strategies GOLD, which was developed by the company, Teaching Strategies, LLC in 2011, consists of 38 objectives that guide assessment in areas of development and learning including: "social/emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, mathematics, science and technology, social studies, the arts, and English language acquisition" (Teaching Strategies, 2016, para. 3). Lead preschool teachers give the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment to the preschool students in their classroom three times each school year, in the fall, winter, and spring. For the purpose of this study, data from the areas of language and literacy were obtained. The authors of Teaching Strategies GOLD consist of a group of education experts who based the assessment on current research as well as state and national curriculum standards (Teaching Strategies, 2016). Concurrent validity has been established within Teaching Strategies GOLD.

Data Analysis

Data were collected and then analyzed to answer the following research question: How does teachers' perceived self-efficacy as measured by scores on the Komlodi Assessment of Preschool Teacher Self-efficacy (KASE) survey relate to student literacy test scores as measured by the Teaching Strategies GOLD (Berke et al., 2013) literacy assessment for students in local private preschool programs?

Data were collected and screened for missing information, accuracy, and possible outliers. I manually entered the hard copy survey data as well as the data obtained from the surveys completed by the electronic link into the SPSS program to merge the data. To test the hypotheses, a linear correlation coefficient was used to measure the strength between two quantitative variables in a sample (Triola, 2012). In performing a correlation analysis, I was able to statistically describe the existent relationship between variables.

Threats to Validity

Threats to the external validity may include specificity of variables (Lodico, et al., 2010). Because this study took place within specific preschool programs with a specific population, the generalizability was limited. To address this issue, a valid and reliable testing instrument was chosen. Also, a target population typical to the local area is being utilized.

Threats to the internal validity of this study may include maturation and attrition (Lodico et al., 2010). Maturation, meaning the possible differences in early literacy pedagogy or training, may alter the survey responses of a group of participants. Attrition

may occur if any of the participants leave their position as preschool teacher during the study. The threat of maturation among participants was addressed in the population selection. All participants were certified teachers with similar educational backgrounds. Attrition was addressed within the time frame given for participants to complete and return surveys.

Ethical Procedures

In order to ensure that ethical procedures were met and the rights of participants protected, participants were not contacted and the study did not begin until my proposal had been approved by the Walden University Institutional Review Board. I took the National Institute of Health's course: Protecting Human Participants training and received a certification of completion, certification number 1640679. Written permission had been granted from Komlodi to utilize the KASE survey to measure teacher self-efficacy. Written permission had also been granted from two preschool programs allowing me to contact possible participants and obtain student literacy data. Participation in this study was voluntary. Also, I am not employed by either of the two preschool programs, which eliminated any possible supervisory issues with the sample in the study.

Survey results have been stored on a locked computer upon completion, which assured confidentiality. Results are presented in aggregate form to further protect the confidentiality of participants. Participants were made aware of their confidential responses in the invitation to participate letter. Any data obtained will be stored in a locked file cabinet for 5 years and then destroyed.

Summary

This section included a description and rationale for the study design, sampling procedure, population, data collection and analysis plan, threats to validity, and ethical considerations. Data were collected using the KASE survey to obtain information concerning participant perceived self-efficacy for early literacy instruction along with literacy assessment scores from the Teaching Strategies GOLD (Berke et al., 2013) preschool assessment. A linear correlation coefficient statistical test was utilized to test the hypothesis. Chapter 4 includes a discussion of study procedures and results. The results helped to determine whether a relationship between the perceived self-efficacy of preschool teachers and literacy scores of preschool students existed.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this quantitative study was to investigate the relationship between perceived self-efficacy of preschool teachers and student academic achievement as reported on the Teaching Strategies GOLD (Berke et al., 2013) literacy preschool assessment. A nonexperimental correlation design was chosen to address the following research question: How does teachers' perceived self-efficacy as measured by scores on the KASE survey relate to student literacy test scores as measured by the Teaching Strategies GOLD literacy assessment for students in local private preschool programs?

H_0: Preschool teachers' perceived self-efficacy as measured by scores on the KASE survey does not relate to student literacy scores as measured by the Teaching Strategies GOLD literacy assessment for students in local private preschool programs.

H_1: Preschool teachers' perceived self-efficacy as measured by scores on KASE survey does relate to student literacy scores as measured by the Teaching Strategies GOLD literacy assessment for student in local private preschool programs.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an explanation of the data collection process along with a discussion of results of the analysis using descriptive statistics. A summary of the data collection and results is also provided.

Data Collection

The settings for this study were preschool classrooms with a 3 or 4 Keystone Star rating. At the beginning of this study, 36 preschool educators were asked to participate and a total of 31 participants responded. The final response rate was 86% with 31 of 36 teachers submitting completed surveys and assessment data. The time frame for

recruitment and data collection consisted of the following procedures. The teachers were provided 3 weeks to submit the survey and assessment data. A reminder email was sent to all participants at the beginning of the third week. Participants completed the KASE survey and submitted early literacy scores as obtained from the Teaching Strategies GOLD (Berke et al., 2013) Preschool Assessment. Teachers had the option of participating in either an online or hard copy format of the survey. Twenty-five participants chose to submit completed surveys and assessment data via hard copy, and six participants chose to submit their surveys through an electronic online version to the survey. One hundred percent of the preschool teachers were Caucasian females, with English being their first language. The sample population represented the larger population of certified preschool teachers working in Keystone Star 3 or 4 rated programs in Northwest Pennsylvania.

Results

Demographics

Thirty one teachers responded to the survey for this study. Educators with the most experience teaching in a preschool setting ranged in age between 31-40 years old. Less than 4% of these teachers ranged between to 18-20 years old and 38.7% ranged in age between 21-30 years old. Over half of the teachers held a bachelor's degree, while the remainder of the population had either an associate or master's degree. None of the educators held a doctoral level degree.

Almost 84% of these educators were experienced teachers with up to a decade of classroom teaching experience. Forty-two percent had beginning classroom teaching

experience between zero and 5 years and 41.9% of the teachers had 6-10 years' experience. However, these educators had varied teaching practice in the preschool setting. The highest number of years' experience among the sample was reported as 6-10 years. Participants with 16 or more years in this study represented less than 10% of the sample. Almost 30% of educators have beginning preschool teaching experience, having between 2-5 years in the preschool classroom (Table 1).

Table 1

Summary of Demographic Information for Preschool Teachers

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Total years teaching experience		
0-1	6	19.4%
2-5	7	22.6%
6-10	13	41.9%
11-15	2	6.5%
16 or more	3	9.7%
Years' experience teaching preschool		
0-1	4	12.9%
2-5	9	29%
6-10	15	48.4%
11-15	0	0%
16 or more	3	9.7%
Age		
18-20	1	3.2%
21-30	12	38.7%
31-40	18	58.1%
41 +	0	0%
Highest educational level		
High School Diploma	0	0%
Associate Degree	6	19.4%
Bachelor's Degree	19	61.3%
Master's Degree	6	19.4%
Doctoral Degree	0	0%

Survey

The revised KASE survey utilized in this study consisted of 50 statements that participants answered by determining the best response for each statement based on a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5. A score of 1 meant that they strongly disagreed with the statement and a 5 meant that they strongly agreed with the statement. The survey was divided into sections including Instruction of Literacy, Knowledge of Literacy, and Diagnosis of Literacy Difficulties.

Subscales of the survey were created and mean scores were computed for each section of the survey. Items concerning instructional literacy, such as the ability to design and present lessons that teach phonemic awareness, were combined into a subscale using a mean computation to create a subscale titled instructional literacy and included 26 items. Survey components concerning knowledge of literacy that included the ability to explain the difference between phonemic awareness and phonological awareness were combined into a subscale using a mean computation to create a subscale titled knowledge of literacy and included 18 items. Items regarding diagnosis of literacy difficulties, such as the capability to diagnose the reasons why a student may be having a hard time writing their name, were combined into a subscale using a mean computation to create a subscale titled diagnosis of literacy difficulties and included 6 items. Survey data were analyzed using SPSS and descriptive statistics shown in Table 2 demonstrate information obtained from the results. According to the survey results, Diagnosis of Literacy Difficulties exhibited the lowest mean score indicating that participants felt mostly neutral about the statements. Also in this section, the minimum score of 2.67 was

located, indicating disagreement with the statement and minimal self-efficacy for participants in this area. The highest mean score on the survey was in the Instruction of Literacy section and was 4.81 (Table 2).

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for Survey

	Instruction of Literacy	Knowledge of Literacy	Diagnosis of Literacy Difficulties
Mean	4.09	3.93	3.42
Median	4.00	3.94	3.33
Std. deviation	.27	.31	.477
Minimum	3.69	3.33	2.67
Maximum	4.81	4.67	4.17

A Pearson correlation analysis of participant responses to survey statements was completed using SPSS. Each of the subscales of the survey was found to be significantly correlated to each other, attesting to the validity and reliability of the survey (Table 3).

Table 3

Survey Correlations

	Instruction of Literacy Mean	Knowledge of Literacy Mean	Diagnosis of Literacy Difficulties Mean
Instruction of Literacy Mean	1	.84**	.50**
Knowledge of Literacy Mean	.84**	1	.52**
Diagnosis of Literacy Difficulties Mean	.50**	.52**	1

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

Demographic and survey data were analyzed using Spearman's rho to determine correlation (see Table 4). A relationship was discovered between participant educational level and the subscale diagnosis of literacy difficulties and was significant at the .40 level. No other statistically significant correlation was found among other demographic information as related to survey data.

Table 4

Demographic and Survey Data

	Instruction of Literacy Mean	Knowledge of Literacy Mean	Diagnosis of Literacy Difficulties
Highest educational degree	.33	.20	.40*
Years of total teaching experience	.07	.20	.07
Years of preschool level teaching	.02	.11	.03
age	.19	.21	.18

* correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)

Assessment Results

Participants submitted student literacy assessments scores obtained from the Teaching Strategies GOLD (Berke et al., 2013) Preschool Assessment System. This assessment is given to preschool students three times a year to assess skills in the following early learning domains: literacy, math, social studies, science and technology, the arts, physical, social emotional, cognitive, language, and English language acquisition. The assessments used in this study included 12 items in the area of literacy that included print concepts and phonemic awareness and eight items in the area of language, such as following directions and engaging in conversations. Each assessment item was scored by the teachers on a scale from 0 to 9. According to assessment results,

the mean score for students in both literacy and language was 4.99 (see Table 5). The mean of the literacy scores was 4.65 and the mean of the language score was 6.19. The greatest variance among the scores was in the literacy section, in which scores ranged from 3.60 to 6.43.

Table 5

Literacy Assessment Results

	Mean literacy and language scores	Mean literacy scores	Mean language scores
N	31	31	31
Mean	4.99	4.65	6.19
Median	5.10	4.36	6.03
Mode	4.91	4.30	5.67
Std. Deviation	.449	.58	.52
Minimum	4.41	3.88	5.32
Maximum	6.27	6.43	7.92

To address the research question, I conducted a Pearson correlation analysis. The results are shown in Table 6. No significant correlation was found between preschool teacher self-efficacy as measured by the KASE survey and student literacy assessment scores as measured by the Teaching Strategies GOLD (Berke et al., 2013) literacy assessment.

Table 6

Correlations Between Survey Results and Assessment Scores

		Instruction of Literacy Mean	Knowledge of Literacy Mean	Diagnosis of Literacy Difficulties Mean
Literacy Assessment Scores	Pearson Correlation	.181	.008	.072
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.330	.967	.700
	Covariance	.029	.001	.020
	N	31	31	31
Language Assessment Scores	Pearson Correlation	.267	-.014	-.189
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.147	.939	.309
	Covariance	.038	.002	-.047
	N	31	31	31
Assessment Mean	Pearson Correlation	.248	.004	-.037
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.179	.984	.842
	Covariance	.030	.001	-.008
	N	31	31	31

Summary

The purpose of this nonexperimental quantitative correlational study was to investigate the relationship between perceived self-efficacy of preschool teachers and literacy assessment scores of preschool students. The results of the correlation analysis indicated the survey results had no correlation with the literacy assessment scores. With this result, there was insufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis. Chapter 5 includes further explanation of the results presented in this chapter.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

In this quantitative correlational study, I examined the self-efficacy of preschool teachers for early literacy skill instruction. The purpose of the study was to investigate preschool teachers' self-efficacy for early literacy instruction as related to preschool student literacy assessment scores. Analyzing this relationship between teacher self-efficacy and student assessment scores was important because student academic achievement has been linked to teacher self-efficacy (Guo et al., 2012; Klassen & Tze, 2014; Zee & Koomen, 2016).

The research question guiding this study allowed me to determine whether there was a relationship between preschool teacher self-efficacy for literacy instruction and preschool student literacy assessment scores. This chapter includes an interpretation of the findings along with limitations of the study. Also included are recommendations and implications based on the findings of the study.

Interpretation of the Findings

This study sought to fill the gap in research pertaining to preschool teacher self-efficacy for literacy instruction and student literacy achievement. The KASE survey was administered and compared to student assessment scores to determine if a relationship existed between them. Data gathered in this way are analyzed by conducting a Pearson correlation coefficient analysis because the goal is to determine the strength of relationship between variables (Mukaka, 2012).

Participant responses to the KASE survey were broken down into subscaled information including the areas of instruction of literacy, knowledge of literacy, and

diagnosis of literacy difficulties. The instruction of literacy subscale included lesson planning and implementation of literacy activities. The knowledge of literacy section encompassed the ability to define and explain terminology related to literacy. The diagnosis of literacy difficulties section was comprised of the capability to identify learning issues as well as explain the nature of the literacy challenges. Mean scores from the survey demonstrated that participants had higher self-efficacy in the areas of instruction of literacy (3.98) and knowledge of literacy (4.10). The lowest mean score was discovered in the area of diagnosis of literacy difficulties (3.42). Subscaled average means were correlated at the .01 level among each other. Instruction of literacy and knowledge of literacy had a correlation of .842, instruction of literacy and diagnosis of literacy difficulties was correlated at .497, and knowledge of literacy and diagnosis of literacy difficulties had a correlation of .522. Preschool student literacy assessment scores were analyzed and class mean scores for the areas of language and literacy were determined. The survey data and student assessment data were then analyzed to find relationships among the data.

Overall, the research results demonstrated that student early literacy assessment scores were not significantly related to preschool teacher self-efficacy for early literacy skill instruction. However, research results also demonstrated that preschool teachers had high self-efficacy for the areas of instruction of literacy and knowledge of literacy and that educational level was related to the area of diagnosis of literacy difficulties.

Descriptive statistics for teachers revealed that the lowest area of self-efficacy was in the area of diagnosing literacy difficulties and a significant correlation was found

between the highest educational level of participants and the survey subscale diagnosis of literacy difficulties. This indicates that teachers with a higher degree were more likely to feel efficacious about diagnosing literacy difficulties in their students. This is an important finding because teacher misconceptions of student achievement have been linked to students not receiving the literacy intervention necessary to make progress in early literacy skill acquisition (Baker, et al., 2015; Varghese et al., 2016).

Teacher Self-efficacy for Literacy Instruction

Early childhood educators develop lesson plans and activities to implement daily with students, which include literacy concepts. Lessons presented by teachers are purposeful and meant to increase student literacy skills. Teacher self-efficacy in the area of literacy instruction relates to the level a teacher feels they can plan and deliver effective literacy lessons that will impact student literacy academic achievement (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001).

According to results from the KASE survey, teachers perceived themselves to be most effective in encouraging students to talk to each other (Table 7). Teachers also felt confident in their ability to start discussions with students about material read together. Conversely, teachers felt least effective in their ability to create lessons aimed at teaching specific phonemic awareness skills. These findings indicate that teachers feel they can successfully involve students in activities to strengthen vocabulary, yet feel less successful in their ability to provide the same opportunities for phonemic awareness. It is important to note that all mean scores range between “neutral” and “agree,” indicating there was minimal difference among responses. Further, the lack of statistical

significance in the correlation analysis may have been affected by the low variability among the responses. Based upon the self-efficacy construct, teachers believe positively in their ability to create and execute literacy skill instruction. However, teachers felt less efficacious in their ability to target phonemic awareness skills in their instruction. This result may be attributed to the fact that the words "phonemic awareness" are in the survey statements; teachers may not have full understanding of what phonemic awareness is and therefore chose an answer that did not truly represent their perception.

Table 7

Instruction of Literacy Average Mean Scores

Highest Average Mean Scores		Lowest Average Mean Score	
Statement	Mean Score	Statement	Mean Score
# 17: I can get my students to talk to each other.	4.65	# 23: I can create my own lessons aimed at teaching skills from each area categorized under phonemic awareness.	3.71
# 11: I can start discussions with my students about books, newspapers etc. that we have read aloud together.	4.42	# 10: I can create my own lessons for a student having trouble with 2 or more areas of phonemic awareness.	3.84

Teacher Self-efficacy for Literacy Knowledge

Teachers must be knowledgeable of the components of literacy in order to effectively teach the skills to their students. The area of the survey regarding literacy knowledge was composed of understanding literacy concepts, including the ability to explain and define terminology such as phonemic awareness and phonological awareness. Self-efficacy in the area of literacy knowledge means that teachers feel capable of their understanding of literacy theory and information. According to the

KASE survey, teachers felt most assured in their knowledge of concepts of print; however, they felt less assured in their ability to pinpoint specific areas of concepts of print a student may be struggling with and explain the issue to a reading specialist or speech professional (Table 8). These findings show that concepts of print is an area that teachers feel very knowledgeable of, but lack efficacy in their ability to provide targeted instruction to students who may be struggling with a specific component of concepts of print, or diagnose which specific area the student is struggling with and discuss this issue with a reading specialist. Teachers also demonstrated low self-efficacy in their ability to name all of the areas categorized under phonemic awareness. This may have been due to misunderstandings of phonemic awareness and phonological awareness or lack of experience in deciphering between the two terms. As represented in the instruction of literacy results, there is minimal difference between high and low mean scores because they ranged in the "neutral" to "agree" choices. The mean scores for knowledge of literacy were slightly lower for participants according to the survey, suggesting that teachers perceived themselves as less adequate regarding their knowledge of literacy concepts than their ability to deliver effective literacy instruction.

Table 8

Knowledge of Literacy Average Mean Scores

Highest Average Mean Scores		Lowest Average Mean Score	
Statement	Mean Score	Statement	Mean Score
# 27: I can teach my students the concepts of print while we are reading together.	4.38	# 36: I can name all of the areas categorized under phonemic awareness.	3.55
# 29: I can explain what is meant by the term "concepts of print".	4.29	# 28: I can tell when a student is having trouble learning some of the concepts of print and explain what the problem is to my Reading Specialist or Speech Professional.	3.58

Teacher Self-efficacy for Diagnosis of Literacy Difficulties

Diagnosis of literacy difficulties is the area of the survey that included items related to learning problems that teachers may encounter with the children they teach. These statements involved teachers identifying problems as well as explaining the nature of the problems. Results from the KASE survey demonstrated that teachers perceived themselves as most effective in determining a student's letter sound difficulties by analyzing the child's invented spelling (see Table 9). Teachers also felt effective in their ability to explain to a parent why their child may be having a hard time writing their name. On the other hand, teachers demonstrated lower self-efficacy in their ability to diagnose the reasons why a child may be having difficulty learning to write their name and explaining why a student is unable to learn and retain a particular letter sound. These particular findings show that teachers feel effective in communicating academic issues with parents, yet lack efficacy in their ability to diagnose literacy challenges. It is

especially important to mention that the mean scores among the highest and lowest for the subscale of diagnosis of literacy difficulties are only minimally different. All of the mean scores were in the "neutral" range. This area of the survey was notably lower than the other sections of instruction of literacy and knowledge of literacy. Based upon the survey results, teachers perceive themselves to be more effective in their ability to plan and implement literacy lessons than diagnose literacy difficulties observed among students. Also, teachers feel that they have adequate knowledge of literacy. According to the self-efficacy construct, teachers believe their knowledge and pedagogy of literacy are effective in the classroom and can influence their students' literacy skill learning.

Table 9

Diagnosis of Literacy Difficulties Average Mean Scores

Highest Average Mean Scores		Lowest Average Mean Score	
Statement	Mean Score	Statement	Mean Score
# 45: I can see when children are having a hard time figuring out what sounds each letter makes by looking at the invented spellings in their writing.	3.58	# 49: I can diagnose the reasons why a student is having a hard time learning to write his/her name.	3.16
# 48: I can explain to a parent why their child may be having a hard time learning to write his/her name.	3.55	# 50: I can tell you the reason why a student is having a hard time learning a particular letter sound.	3.26

Student Assessment Scores

Teaching Strategies GOLD (Berke et al., 2013) preschool assessment is utilized in preschool Program A and Program B to assess student proficiency in early childhood learning domains. For this study, preschool teachers submitted student results for the

literacy and language components of the assessment. Student assessment scores were higher in the area of language acquisition, which relates positively to elevated teacher responses for self-efficacy in language instruction. Similarly, student scores for concepts of print skills were high, which matched participant responses for ability to instruct, as well as teacher knowledge of concepts of print ideas. Student literacy skill scores were lowest in the areas of phonemic awareness skills (see Table 10). This finding aligns with teacher responses regarding ability to instruct, as well as knowledge of phonemic awareness.

Table 10

Student Assessment Scores

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Literacy assessment objectives			
Notices and discriminates rhyme	3.88	6.87	5.43
Notices and discriminates alliteration	3.16	6.87	4.58
Notices and discriminates smaller and smaller units of sound	2.10	6.14	4.07
Identifies and names letters	3.81	8.67	4.69
Uses letter-sound knowledge	2.21	7.00	3.40
Uses and appreciates books	4.00	7.64	5.12
Uses print concepts	2.27	7.00	4.55
Interacts during read alouds and book conversations	4.00	6.73	4.97
Uses emergent reading skills	2.80	6.29	4.52
Retells stories	3.43	7.07	5.01
Writes name	3.73	7.33	5.08
Writes to convey meaning	1.20	5.21	3.98
Language assessment objectives			
Comprehends language	5.31	8.50	6.37
follows directions	5.50	7.86	6.18
Uses expanding vocabulary	4.80	8.50	5.94
Speaks clearly	5.58	8.57	6.39
Uses conventional grammar	4.12	8.21	6.20
Tells about another time or place	4.12	6.58	5.56
Engages in conversations	6.09	8.21	6.89
Uses social rules of language	4.12	7.57	5.95

The hypothesis for this study was that preschool teachers' perceived self-efficacy as measured by scores on KASE survey would relate to student literacy scores as measured by the Teaching Strategies GOLD (Berke et al., 2013) literacy assessment for student in Program A and Program B. However, rejection of the alternative hypothesis does not indicate that the results do not have further implications. In respect to this study's findings, the fact that so many participants stated low self-efficacy for diagnosing literacy difficulties provides an opportunity for positive social change at the educational and administration levels. More specifically, this finding could possibly help to provide early literacy screening and intervention services by literacy specialists to help students reach literacy skill achievement at this crucial time in learning. Overall, the findings from this study demonstrate that more research is needed in order to sufficiently address the research gap related to preschool teacher self-efficacy and literacy achievement of preschool students. The results from this study provide valuable insight into the existing relationship between teacher self-efficacy and student literacy achievement, as well as understanding into what areas provide challenges to teachers.

Limitations of the Study

Researchers must consider any possible limitations, or weaknesses in methodology and/or procedures, when conducting and analyzing a study. One limitation to this study is the fact that the data were self-reported. There could be biased responses on the part of the respondents. The sample size also provided a potential limitation. Initially, 36 teachers were asked to participate, however, 31 sets of data were collected at the end of the study, just above the number required to conduct the study (Creswell,

2012). One final limitation related to the ability to generalize the results to a larger population. Because this study utilized purposive sampling and was conducted in northwest Pennsylvania, the results have minimal generalization to other populations.

Recommendations

The results of this study are relevant to early childhood educators and administrators as well as early childhood preservice teacher educators. The analysis results provide educators and administrators with insights into the importance of teacher self-efficacy as related to student academic achievement. Specifically, the results of this study provide valuable information regarding areas of professional development needed to support teachers in raising their knowledge and self-efficacy for literacy instruction.

Local Preschool Program Recommendations

Participants of this study were preschool teachers employed at either Program A or Program B. Both programs are private preschools located in northwest Pennsylvania. Based upon survey results, these teachers generally lacked knowledge in phonemic awareness and felt less effective in their ability to provide interventions for students who exhibited literacy difficulties. Further, while teachers perceived themselves to be effective in literacy instruction and overall literacy knowledge, they rated themselves as less effective in explaining literacy issues to specialists. Some recommended actions for the local preschool programs are as follows:

1. Provide professional development focused on literacy terminology, specifically phonemic awareness, and the importance of the skills in early childhood education.

2. Provide professional development focused on phonemic awareness strategies and activities to use in the classroom with students.
3. Seek the services of a reading specialist to assist teachers to determine students that require additional support and in which specific areas of early literacy.
4. Offer professional development by a reading specialist focused on providing appropriate interventions to correct and increase literacy proficiency for students with literacy difficulties.

Future Recommendations

The overall findings of this study, considering the limitations and connection to literature, including Bandura's (1994) self-efficacy theory, provide multiple opportunities for future research. This statement is particularly significant because there is a gap in literature regarding the relationship between preschool teacher self-efficacy for literacy instruction and preschool student literacy achievement. Future studies examining preschool teacher self-efficacy for literacy instruction would be very beneficial to support and expand existing literature.

Further qualitative research on this topic would also prove to be beneficial. The findings of this research provided questions and opportunities for further development of themes such as educational level of teachers in relation to their ability to effectively teach early literacy skills. Diagnosis of literacy difficulties is an area that also deserves further research. The ability to diagnose student literacy difficulties may help to provide interventions necessary for children to achieve proficient literacy skills. Finally, because

this study was limited by sample size, further research with a larger sample size would be helpful in narrowing the gap in literature.

Implications

Regarding this study's impact on social change, the findings indicated that participants lacked self-efficacy in the area of diagnosis of literacy difficulties. This information provides opportunity for positive social change at the administration level in that those early childhood leadership roles may advocate for literacy specialists at the preschool level to help properly diagnose and provide interventions if needed to preschool students. Another avenue for positive social change is that teachers and administrators may attend professional development to become more knowledgeable and confident in diagnosing literacy difficulties in students. Ultimately, these changes could improve the literacy proficiency of preschool students and their future reading success.

Implications for Social Change at the Local Level

The findings of this study are relevant to all early childhood educators and administrators. Directors and other administrators of Programs A and B can use this information to plan professional specifically designed to meet the needs of their teachers. Based on the findings of this study, teachers would benefit from training on the concept of phonemic awareness. Because teachers rated low in self-efficacy for items related to phonemic awareness and student literacy assessment scores were also lower in items categorized under phonemic awareness, training would prove beneficial. Knowledge of phonemic awareness would increase teacher understanding and in turn enhance their self-efficacy for instruction of phonemic awareness skills.

Additionally, teachers rated lowest on the survey results in the area of diagnosing literacy difficulties. Although educators may have felt knowledgeable and effective in their literacy instruction in certain areas, such as concepts of print and language, they perceived themselves to be less effective in their ability to diagnose and explain literacy learning issues. Preschool program administrators would benefit from consulting with a reading specialist to support teachers in addressing student literacy issues and providing appropriate interventions. However, because education funding may be an issue, hiring consultants and specialists may not be feasible. Regardless, preschool students would benefit immensely from appropriate interventions and support to overcome any possible early literacy difficulties.

The findings of this study are also relevant to educators of preservice teachers in early childhood education programs. Preservice teacher educators would benefit from discovering the importance of teachers self-efficacy and the role it plays in affecting student academic achievement. Further, knowing that early childhood educators feel less than adequate in their understanding and pedagogy of phonemic awareness, one of the most crucial early literacy skills (Vesay and Gischlar, 2013), may encourage preservice teacher educators to enhance or alter coursework and experiences.

Implications for Social Change at a Broader Level

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between teacher self-efficacy as it relates to student early literacy achievement. The importance of the findings determined from this study provides insight regarding the connection between teacher self-efficacy and student academic achievement. Preschool is a crucial time in a

child's education (Bauchmüller, Gørtz, & Würtz Rasmussen, 2014; Claessens & Garrett, 2014; Weikart, 2016) and acquiring early literacy skills during this time are critical to future reading success (National Early Literacy Panel [NELP], 2008; Reutzel, 2015). Because teacher self-efficacy is linked to student academic achievement (Klassen & Tze, 2014; Zee & Koomen, 2016) it is important for early childhood educators to receive the training and support needed to enhance their self-efficacy for literacy instruction. Increasing the self-efficacy for literacy instruction of preschool teachers in northwest Pennsylvania and nationally, is one way that can address the lack of reading proficiency both locally and at the national level (USDoE, 2015). One student at a time, early childhood teachers can instill the knowledge and love of reading in children. This small number of local children impacted can turn into a large number of successful readers.

Conclusion

This correlational quantitative research study utilized the KASE survey to answer the following research question: How does teachers' perceived self-efficacy as measured by scores on the Komlodi Assessment of Preschool Teacher Self-efficacy (KASE) survey relate to student literacy test scores as measured by the Teaching Strategies GOLD (Berke et al., 2013) literacy assessment for students in local private preschool programs? Survey results were analyzed along with student literacy assessment scores to determine if a relationship existed.

Overall, results from a correlation analysis utilizing SPSS demonstrated insufficient evidence to accept the alternative hypothesis, which stated that preschool teachers' perceived self-efficacy as measured by scores on KASE survey relates to

student literacy scores as measured by the Teaching Strategies GOLD (Berke et al., 2013) literacy assessment for student in local private preschool programs. However, the outcomes from the survey revealed that preschool teacher self-efficacy lacked in the area of diagnosis of literacy difficulties, which is important because foundational literacy skills are learned during this critical time in a child's education. Being able to diagnose literacy challenges and provide necessary interventions during this time is important for future reading success. Because early literacy skill acquisition is essential for future reading proficiency (National Early Literacy Panel [NELP], 2008; Reutzel, 2015), it is crucial that early childhood educators have the required education and support services to help their students build the foundation for reading and academic achievement. By equipping children with the essential early literacy skills during such a critical time in their lives, teachers will be able to develop more proficient readers. These efforts will not only improve students' lives, but also provide social equity for struggling readers.

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Appendix A: Approval to Utilize KASE Instrument

From: Candace D Komlodi <canaa00002@gatewaycc.edu>
Sent: Saturday, May 14, 2016 8:30 AM
To: Michelle Kimmy
Subject: Re: permission to use questionnaire

Hi Michelle,
I am so happy to hear that interest and research regarding early literacy learning continues. I apologize for the delay in my response. This week was final exam and commencement week at my college.
I give my permission for you to use the questionnaire if the following requests are met:
1. Please cite the source appropriately.
2. If you make any adaptations to the question, please include a copy of the original questionnaire in your appendix and identify it as such.
3. Please keep me up to date on your findings and email me a copy of your final dissertation. (I'm excited to see what you find.)
I wish you the best of luck as you continue to embark on this journey. Feel free to contact me if I can be of assistance.
Dr. Candace Komlodi
GateWay Community College
Phoenix, AZ
Reading Faculty
Faculty Professional Developer
602-286-8736
Komlodi@gatewaycc.edu

Appendix B: Komlodi Assessment of Preschool Teacher Self-Efficacy (KASE)

This questionnaire is designed to help gain a better understanding of the skills that may create difficulties for preschool teachers in literacy instruction.

Please rate how certain you are that you can currently perform the skill listed in each question by selecting a number between 0 and 100. The more certain you are that you can successfully perform the skill listed, the higher the number. A zero rating would indicate that you cannot perform the skill at all. A 100 would indicate that you are highly certain you can perform the skill.

0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
cannot do at all					moderately can do					highly certain can do

Please answer all of the questions. There are no right or wrong answers. Your answers will be kept strictly confidential and will be reported only as group data.

1. I can teach lessons that require children to use receptive language skills.
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

2. I can create my own lessons to teach students that letters can not be turned or flipped and remain the same letter. 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

3. When I have children who do not seem to tie sounds to letters in their invented spelling, I can come up with special activities to help them improve. 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

4. I can create my own lessons that help students improve their spelling by using invented spelling. 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

5. I can teach my students the concepts of print while we are reading together.
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

6. If a specific technique is given to me by a Reading Specialist or Speech Professional, I can use the technique to help an individual student improve their phonological awareness.
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

7. I can present lessons that increase the number of letter sounds a student can recognize.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

8. I can present lessons that teach students to write their names.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

9. I can explain what is meant by the term “invented spelling.”

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

10. I can explain to a Speech Professional what problems a student has with understanding verbal instructions.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

11. I can tell you the reason why a student is having a hard time learning particular letter names.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

12. If I have a student who is having a hard time learning to write their name, I can create my own special activities to help that student with whatever letters they are having trouble writing.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

13. I can tell when a student is having trouble learning some of the concepts of print and explain what the problem is to my Reading Specialist or Speech Professional.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

14. I can explain what is meant by the term “concepts of print.”

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

15. I can explain the difference between expressive and receptive oral language skills.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

16. I can teach my students the concepts of print while we are doing other activities.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

17. I can give students the opportunity to use oral language skills by having them tell stories to the class. 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

18. I can tell if individual students are having a hard time learning early reading skills as a result of poor phonological awareness.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

19. I can teach lessons that improve the speed of my student’s letter identification.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

20. I can see when children are having a hard time figuring out what sounds each letter makes by looking at the invented spellings in their writing.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

21. I can explain why it is important for students to practice writing their name.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

22. I can evaluate my students to be sure they can express themselves with language.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

23. I can create my own lessons for a student having trouble with 2 or more areas of phonemic awareness.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

24. I can create my own techniques to use with students who have poor phonological awareness that are specially designed to help them improve these skills.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

25. If a Speech Professional gives me special directions on how to work with a student who has trouble understanding verbal instructions, I can help the student improve.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

26. If a Reading Specialist or Speech Professional gives me invented spelling activities, I can use them to help students improve their spelling.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

27. I can create my own techniques for helping a student who has trouble speaking.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

28. I can teach my student's the concepts of print using lessons that I designed especially for that reason.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

29. I can explain the difference between phonological awareness and phonemic awareness.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

30. I can evaluate students to determine their level of phonemic awareness.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

31. I can create my own techniques for helping a student who can not understand verbal directions.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

32. I can explain the nature of a child's oral language problem to their parents.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

33. I can define what "Rapid Automatic Naming " is.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

34. I can get students to verbally summarize materials we have read together.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

35. I can present lessons that increase the number of letters a student can name.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

36. I can present lessons to my students that point out how words sound the same or different.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

37. I can provide directions and explanations in an oral format without demonstrating the activity.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

38. I can present lessons that teach phonemic awareness.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

39. I can present lessons to my students that improve their phonological awareness.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

40. I can evaluate my student's on how many letter sounds they can name.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

41. I can design my own lessons that increase the number of letters a student can name.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

42. I can give students the opportunity to practice oral language skills by having an individual conversation with them.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

43. I can have students try to write their own stories using invented spellings.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

44. If I have a student who is having trouble learning the concepts of print, I can create my own activities to help him/her.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

45. I can evaluate students on how much their writing is improving.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

46. I can name all of the areas categorized under phonemic awareness.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

47. I can create my own lessons for a student who is having a hard time learning letter names to help the child learn more easily.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

48. If a Reading Specialist or Speech Professional gave me specific lessons for a student who can not write their name, I can use those lessons to help that student improve.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

49. I can identify the concepts which are considered oral language skills.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

50. I understand and can explain the concepts included in phonological awareness.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

51. I can start discussions with my students about the books, newspapers etc. that we have read aloud together.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

52. I can create my own lessons to teach expressive language skills.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

53. I can explain to a parent why their child may be having a hard time learning to write his/her name.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

54. I can diagnose the reasons why a student is having a hard time learning to write his/her name.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

55. I can explain to a Speech Professional what problems a student has with speaking.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

56. I can get my students to talk to each other.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

57. I can teach lessons that point out that there are specific sounds used in English.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

58. I can determine which areas of phonemic awareness a student is having difficulty performing.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

59. If a Reading Specialist or Speech Professional gives me lessons for helping a child with phonemic awareness problems, I can do these things in my class to help them improve.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

60. I can evaluate my students to be sure they can understand oral directions or commands.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

61. I can design my own lessons that increase the number of letter sounds a student can recognize.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

62. I can explain the concepts related to using invented spelling.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

63. I can create special lessons to help students improve how fast they can name their letters.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

64. I can figure out the meaning of the invented spelling my students use.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

65. I can present lessons that help students improve their spelling by having them use invented spelling.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

66. I can create my own lessons that teach students to write their names.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

67. I can evaluate my students' early writing to determine how well they are learning the sounds of each letter.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

68. I can explain what concepts are considered alphabet knowledge.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

69. I can tell you what phonemic awareness is.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

70. I can identify a student who is having a hard time learning letter names.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

71. I can identify a student who is having a hard time learning letter sounds.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

72. I can evaluate my students on their level of phonological awareness.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

73. I can list many of the major concepts of print.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

74. If a Speech Professional gives me special directions on how to work with a student who has trouble speaking, I can help the student improve.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

75. I can create my own lessons which give students strategies for remembering a particular letter sound.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

76. I can create my own lessons aimed at teaching skills from each area categorized under phonemic awareness.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

77. I can assess students to decide how fast they can name the letters.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

78. I can create my own lessons to teach students that letter order in words is important.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

79. I can determine if a student understands the connections between spoken and written words.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

80. I can evaluate my students' ability to identify specific sounds found in English.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

81. I can present a lesson that teaches students that some sounds are made by only one letter, while other sounds are made by several letters together (ex. Ch).

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

82. I can design my own lessons to improve the phonological awareness of my students.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

83. I can design my own lessons that teach children how the symbols that represent letters differ from the symbols that represent punctuation.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

84. I can evaluate my student on what concepts of print they understand and on what concepts of print are still unfamiliar to them.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

85. I can create my own lessons which give students strategies for remembering a particular letter name.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

86. I can evaluate my student on how many letters they can name.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

87. I can create my own lessons and activities for a student having trouble with phonemic awareness.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

88. I can identify many of the areas categorized under phonemic awareness.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

89. I can ask my students questions during read aloud which gives them the opportunity to present their answer aloud to the class.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

90. If a Reading Specialist or Speech Professional gives me lessons to help a student who is having trouble learning letter sounds, I can use those lessons in my class to help the student improve.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

91. I can create my own lessons that teach students that some sounds are made by only one letter, while other sounds are made by several letter together (ex. Ch).

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

92. If the Reading Specialist or Speech Professional gives me activities to help a student who is having trouble understanding some of the main concepts of print, I can use those activities to help that student.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

93. I can explain to a parent what they can be doing at home to help their children learn the concepts of print.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

94. I can tell you the reason why a student is having a hard time learning a particular letter sound.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

95. I know the 44 phonemes found in English.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

96. If a Reading Specialist or Speech professional gives me lessons to help a student who is having trouble learning letter names, I can use those lessons in my class to help the student improve.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

97. I can create my own lessons to teach students that there are specific sounds used in English.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

98. I can create my own lessons for students who are having a hard time learning letter sounds.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

99. I can tell you what phonological awareness is.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

100. I can create my own lessons to teach receptive language skills.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

Appendix C: Revised Komlodi Assessment

This questionnaire is designed to help gain a better understanding of the skills that may create difficulties for preschool teachers in literacy instruction.

Please rate how certain you are that you can currently perform the skill listed in each question by selecting a number between 1 and 5. The more certain you are that you can successfully perform the skill listed, the higher the number. A 1 rating would indicate that you feel less confident that you could perform the skill with children. A 5 would indicate that you are highly certain you can perform the skill most of the time with most of the children.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

Please respond to the following statements by indicating the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement. There are no correct or incorrect answers. Your answers will be kept strictly confidential and will be reported only as anonymous data.

		1	2	3	4	5
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Instruction of Literacy						
1	I can teach lessons that require children to use receptive language skills.					
2	If I have a student who is having a hard time learning to write their name, I can create my own special activities to help that student with whatever letters they are having trouble writing.					
3	I can present lessons that increase the number of letter sounds a student can recognize.					
4	I can present lessons that teach students to write their names.					
5	I can present lessons that increase the number of letters a student can name.					
6	I can teach my students the concepts of print while					

	we are doing other activities.					
7	I can give students the opportunity to use oral language skills by having them tell stories to the class.					
8	I can design and present lessons to my students that point out how words sound the same or different.					
9	I can evaluate my students to be sure they can express themselves with language.					
10	I can create my own lessons for a student having trouble with 2 or more areas of phonemic awareness.					
11	I can start discussions with my students about books, newspapers etc. that we have read aloud together.					
12	I can create my own techniques for helping a student who cannot understand verbal directions.					
13	I can get students to verbally summarize materials we have read together.					
14	I can create my own lessons for students who are having a hard time learning letter sounds.					
15	I can design and present lessons that teach phonemic awareness.					
16	I can evaluate students on how much their writing is improving.					
17	I can get my students to talk to each other.					
18	I can design my own lessons that increase the number of letter sounds a student can recognize.					
19	I can create my own lessons to teach expressive language skills.					
20	I can teach lessons that point out that there are specific sounds used in English.					
21	I can create my own lessons that teach students to write their names.					
22	I can create my own lessons which give students strategies for remembering a particular letter sound.					
23	I can create my own lessons aimed at teaching skills from each area categorized under phonemic awareness.					
24	I can present a lesson that teaches students that					

	some sounds are made by only one letter, while other sounds are made by several letters together (ex. ch).					
25	I can design my own lessons to improve the phonological awareness of my students.					
26	I can evaluate my students on what concepts of print they understand and on what concepts of print are still unfamiliar to them.					

Knowledge of Literacy

Please respond to the following statements by indicating the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement.

		1	2	3	4	5
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
27	I can teach my students the concepts of print while we are reading together.					
28	I can tell when a student is having trouble learning some of the concepts of print and explain what the problem is to my Reading Specialist or Speech Professional.					
29	I can explain what is meant by the term “concepts of print”.					
30	I can explain the difference between phonological awareness and phonemic awareness.					
31	I can evaluate students to determine their level of phonemic awareness.					
32	I can explain the difference between expressive and receptive oral language skills.					
33	I can explain why it is important for students to practice writing their name.					
34	I understand and can explain the concepts included in phonological awareness.					
35	I can create my own techniques to use with students who have poor phonological awareness that are specially designed to help them improve these skills.					
36	I can name all of the areas categorized under					

	phonemic awareness.					
37	I can determine which areas of phonemic awareness a student is having difficulty performing.					
38	I can evaluate my students to be sure they can understand oral directions or commands.					
39	I can identify the concepts which are considered oral language skills.					
40	I can explain the concepts related to using invented spelling.					
41	I can identify a student who is having a hard time learning letter names or letter sounds.					
42	I can evaluate my student on their level of phonological awareness.					
43	I can list many of the major concepts of print.					
44	I can create my own lessons and activities for a student having trouble with phonemic awareness.					

Diagnosis of Literacy Difficulties

Please respond to the following statements by indicating the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement.

	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
45	I can see when children are having a hard time figuring out what sounds each letter makes by looking at the invented spellings in their writing.					
46	I can explain the nature of a child's oral language problem to their parents.					
47	I can tell if individual students are having a hard time learning early reading skills as a result of poor phonological awareness.					
48	I can explain to a parent why their child may be having a hard time learning to write his/her name.					
49	I can diagnose the reasons why a student is having a hard time learning to write his/her name.					
50	I can tell you the reason why a student is having a hard time learning a particular letter sound.					

51	**Please provide further information for any answers that may need elaboration.**

The survey questions listed will help to answer the following research question:

How does teachers' perceived self-efficacy as measured by scores on the Komlodi Assessment of Preschool Teacher Self-efficacy (KASE) survey relate to student literacy test scores as measured by the Teaching Strategies GOLD literacy assessment for students in local private preschool programs?

Specifically, the perceived self-efficacy can be categorized into the following areas, as delineated in the KASE survey: instruction for literacy, knowledge of literacy, and diagnosis of literacy difficulties.