A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG GRADE FOURS' READER SELF-PERCEPTIONS, READING ABILITY, PARENTAL SELF-EFFICACY, PARENTAL ROLE CONSTRUCTION, CHILD DEVELOPMENT BELIEFS, AND GENDER

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A Study of the Relationships Among Grade Fours' Reader Self-Perceptions, Reading Ability, Parental Self-Efficacy, Parental Role Construction, Child Development Beliefs, and Gender

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Abstract

This study investigated the relationships among mothers' and fathers' child development beliefs, role construction, self-efficacy, and grade four children's reader self-perceptions (self-concept, social feedback, physiological states, observational comparisons, and progress), reading achievement (comprehension and vocabulary) and gender. The study consisted of 67 children and 81 parents who had been involved in a literacy project for one year. The study was conducted in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Five surveys were used in this study: Reader Self-perception Scale (RSPS) (Henk & Melnick, 1995), Gates and MacGinitie Reading Test (Gates and MacGinitie, 1992), Questionnaire for Parents (Oldford-Matchim and Singh, 2002), Parents' Child Development Beliefs (Oldford-Matchim and Singh, 2002), and the Parental Role Construction Survey (Oldford-Matchim and Singh, 2002). The Pearson-Product - Moment Method and ANOVA were used to determine relationships in the data and to identify significant differences in scores.

Significant positive relationships were found between aspects of children's reader self-perceptions (observational comparisons, progress, physiological states, and total scores) and aspects of children's reading achievement (comprehension scores and vocabulary scores) and children's gender. Boys' reader self-perceptions (observational comparisons, progress, physiological states, and total self-perception scores) were found to be significantly related to boys' reading achievement. Significant relationships for girls' reader self-perceptions and girls' reading achievement were not found to exist. Girls had significantly higher self-perceptions of physiological states, social feedback,

total self-perception scores, and self-concept than boys. No significant differences existed between boys' and girls' reading achievement scores.

A significant positive relationship was found to exist between fathers' self-efficacy and girls' self-perceptions of progress. No significant relationships were found to exist between mothers' and fathers' self-efficacy and children's reading achievement.

Significant positive and negative relationships were found to exist between mothers' and fathers' parental child development beliefs and children's reading achievement. The one significant negative correlation that existed was between a fathers' child development belief and children's comprehension scores. Significant positive relationships were found to exist between mothers' child development beliefs and aspects of girls' and boys' reading achievement, as well as fathers' child development beliefs and girls' aspects of reading achievement. A variety of significant positive relationships were also found to exist between mothers' and fathers' child development beliefs and aspects of girls' and boys' reader self-perceptions.

Significant differences were found between mothers' and father's self-efficacy; a child development belief stating that children learn to read better when parents and teachers respect their curiosity and questions about stories, print and reading; and between boys' and girls' perceptions of physiological states, social feedback, total self-perceptions scores and general self-concept.

This study has revealed that parents' child development beliefs, parental role construction, parental self-efficacy, children's reading achievement, children's self-perceptions of reading and gender are related. This study has provided an understanding of the variables that are related to children's reading achievement. It has also revealed

important information concerning the impact parents' beliefs, roles and self-efficacy has on their children's reading achievement and how their children perceive their own reading ability.

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my son, Eugene John Phillips.

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Chapter I

An Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Research in the area of parental influence on children's success in school has revealed that parents are the first teachers and the home is the first school (Bandura, 1997; Morrow, 1995). Various studies have indicated that parents' involvement with their children's education generally benefits children's learning and school success (Chavkin, 1993: Eccles & Harold, 1993; Epstein, 1983, 1991, 1994, as cited in Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). According to Bandura the very early school years in a child's life are deemed important formative years for their cognitive development; therefore, parents who read to their children at that time have helped benefit children's cognitive self-perceptions.

A resilient sense of efficacy can enable students to do extraordinary things by productive use of their skills in the face of overwhelming obstacles (White, 1982). Perceived self-efficacy is an important contributor to performance accomplishments, whatever the underlying skills might be. Therefore, children who achieve success in their pursuits believe they can exercise some control over their learning and mastery of coursework (Bandura, 1996).

Parents play an important role in the lives of young children (Morrow & Paratore, 1993). A study of parental beliefs , parental efficacy and parental role construction in relation to children's self-perceptions and reading ability is warranted since they have such an influence on children. Consequently, it would be important to consider and analyze the factors that are linked to children's self-perceptions and reading abilities. Studies have shown that parental beliefs have been related to children's self-perceptions as readers as well as to their reading ability (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara & Pastorelli, 1996; Wagner & Philips, 1992).

The decision to become involved with educational activities in the home may suggest a sense of parental self-efficacy (Hoover-Dempsey, 1992). Further, since efficacy promoting influences may not necessarily flow in one direction, according to Bradley, Caldwell & Elardo, (1979), children's efficacy beliefs may have just as important an effect on parental efficacy as parental efficacy has on children's beliefs. Few studies, however, have been conducted on the relationships among parental efficacy, children's sense of efficacy and their academic achievement (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, Lynch, 2002; Murphey, 1992; Wagner & Phillips, 1992). Therefore, to gain a better understanding of children's achievements and success in school particularly in reading, it is imperative that further research be carried out on the impact the roles of significant others have on the academic achievement of children.

Few studies have examined the role of parents and children's gender in relation to parents' beliefs for their children's reading achievement. Also, little research has been carried out in the area of young children's self-perceptions. The research literature has indicated that parents who value the role of effort more than the role of intelligence in children's reading development have children with higher reader self-perceptions and higher reading achievement (Bandura, 1997; Alden, 1986; Collins, 1982; McAuley, Duncan, & McElroy, 1989).

Background to the Study

Research in the area of Family Literacy has shown the important role significant others play in the lives of young children by helping them form positive beliefs and values. These beliefs and values help form children's self-concepts. According to Hattie (1992) young children's self-concepts need to be nurtured by engaging in trusting relationships. Therefore, it makes intuitive sense to use strategies and interventions to enhance children's self-concept since

self-concept appears so influential in learning.

The Significant Others as Reading Teachers (SORT) program developed at Memorial University of Newfoundland's Education Faculty is a family literacy program initiated by Dr. Joan Oldford-Matchim in 1994. The project was implemented in a rural community in Newfoundland that provided the framework supporting and encouraging parents' involvement in their children's reading on a daily basis. According to Oldford-Matchim (1992), the premise of SORT is based on research findings which show that children experience success in reading when significant others engage with them in reading activities for an extended period of time.

Few research studies have been conducted on the relationships between mothers' and fathers' child development beliefs, role construction, self-efficacy, children's reader self-perceptions and children's reading ability and gender. In particular, few studies have been carried out examining the relationships among parental efficacy and children's academic achievement (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). Studies by Bandura et al., (1996) and Zimmerman, Bandura & Martinez-Pons, (1992) have revealed positive relationships among parental efficacy, children's self-perceptions, and children's academic achievement.

The ability to read has a direct effect on a child's economic future since a strong tie exists between poverty and illiteracy (Morrow & Paratore, 1992). The ability to read well, therefore, provides opportunities for job success and personal fulfillment (National Academy of Education, 1985). Bearing all this in mind, it is of paramount importance that children be provided every opportunity to achieve at reading. Parents are a vital component in the development of young children's ability to read and so should be educated in the importance of the effects their beliefs and values about reading and education have on their children's reading progress.

Purpose of the Study

This study was an investigation of the relationships among mothers' and fathers' child development beliefs, role construction, self-efficacy, and grade four children's self-perceptions as readers, reading achievement, and gender. The grade 4 students and their parents had participated in the SORT family literacy project during their kindergarten year.

The following questions were addressed in this study:

1. Are there differences in mothers' and fathers' parental self-efficacy for helping their children learn to read?

2. Does a relationship exist between mothers' and fathers' self-efficacy and their children's reader self-perceptions (self-concept, social feedback, physiological states, progress, observational comparisons, and total score)?

3. Is there a relationship between mothers' and fathers' parental self-efficacy and children's reading achievement (vocabulary and comprehension)?

4. Is there a relationship between mothers' and fathers' child development beliefs and children's reader self-perceptions (self-concept, social feedback, physiological states, progress, observational comparisons, and total score)?

5. Is there a relationship between mothers' and fathers' child development beliefs and children's reading achievement (vocabulary and comprehension scores)?

6. Is there a relationship between mother's and fathers' parental role construction and children's reader self-perceptions (self-concept, social feedback, physiological states, progress, observational comparisons, and total score)?

7. Is there a relationship between mother's and fathers' parental role construction and children's reading achievement (vocabulary and comprehension scores)?

8. Are there differences in how fathers and mothers construct their parental role?

9. Are there gender differences in the child development beliefs of parents?

10. Do boys and girls differ in their reading achievement (vocabulary and comprehension scores)?

11. Are there gender differences in children's reader self-perceptions (self-concept, social feedback, physiological states, progress, observational comparisons, and total score)?

Definitions of Key Terminology

Definitions of key terminology used throughout this thesis are presented to provide a clearer understanding of the concepts being explored and an understanding of what the researcher is investigating.

Significant Others: those people important in an individual's life whose reactions and interactions indicate whether he/she is liked or disliked, accepted or rejected, successful or unsuccessful, worthy or unworthy. Perceptions that are formed from the opinions of significant others influence the child's self-concept (Saracho, 1980).

Significant Others as Reading Teachers (SORT): an intervention program to involve significant others in the early reading development of children. This program engages the child and the significant other in meaningful literacy activities (Oldford-Matchim, 1992).

Self-efficacy: individuals' beliefs about their ability to exercise and maintain some level of control over events which affect their lives (Bandura, 1986).

Social cognitive theory: human functioning is explained in terms of triadic reciprocality in which behaviour, cognition, and other personal factors, and environmental events all operate as interacting determinants of each other (Bandura, 1986)

Parents' achievement-related beliefs: these beliefs are based on major theoretical models, such as attribution theory (Weiner, 1985), expectancy-value theory (Eccles et al., 1983) and the self-efficacy approach (Bandura, 1986, 1989), in which parental expectancies for success and perceptions of ability on different tasks plays a prominent role in their motivation to perform these tasks (Wigfield & Eccles, 1992).

Parental Involvement: the dedication of resources by the parent to the child's reading activities. (Grolnick & Slowiacek, 1994).

Reader Self-perception Scale (RSPS): a tool measuring how children think about themselves as readers. it is based on the self-efficacy model in which individuals take four basic factors into account when estimating their capabilities as a reader: performance (redefined as progress), observational comparison, social feedback, and physiological states (Henk & Melnick, 1995).

Progress: the first category in the reader self-efficacy model, redefined from performance. It refers to how one's perceptions of present reading performance compares with past performance (Henk & Melnick, 1995).

Observational Comparison: the second category in the reader self-efficacy model. It refers to how a child perceives her or his reading performance in comparison with the performance of classmates (Henk & Melnick, 1995).

Social Feedback: the third category in the reading self-efficacy model. it includes direct or indirect input about reading from teachers, classmates, and people in the child's family (Henk & Melnick, 1995).

Physiological States: the fourth category in the reader self-efficacy model. It includes the internal feelings a child experiences during reading (Henk & Melnick, 1995).

Reader Self-concept: the evaluation of "self as reader" (Valencia, 1990). Reader self-perception, a social learning theory, is used interchangeably with reader self-concept. Question number 1 is meant to be a question of the self-concept i.e., Do you think you are a good reader? That is the fifth dimension of the Reader Self-perception Scale.

Roles: sets of expectations held by groups for the behaviour of individual members.

Parents' Role Construction: parents' beliefs about the actions they should undertake for and with their children, developed as a function of their membership in varied family, community, and school groups or sets of behaviours characteristic of individuals within a group.

Parental Child Development Beliefs: beliefs parents possess about the qualities they should nurture in their children, beliefs about the ways children learn, including beliefs about the mechanisms responsible for children's competence, and beliefs about the importance of developing conforming behaviour, specifically in relation to reading.

Parent Efficacy: parents' beliefs about their ability to influence their child's developmental and educational outcomes in reading, about their specific effectiveness in influencing the child's school learning, and about their own influence relative to that of peers and child's teacher (Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Brissie, 1992)

Significance of the Study

According to Becher (1984) and Epstein (1990), parents play an important role in children's cognitive development, therefore, their role in children's reading achievement must be analyzed. Limited research has been carried out in the specific area of parents' efficacy beliefs related to helping children succeed in school (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). Factors instrumental in the early acquisition of children's self-perceptions have received scant empirical attention. Parents, who are the initial source of ability feedback for most children, would provide an obvious focus for research (Wagner & Phillips, 1992).

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador (1990) has claimed that reading achievement is low in the province, thus a need to continue literacy intervention programs in this province exists. According to Cook (1988), reading permeates the entire school curriculum. Bearing that in mind, it is quite necessary to examine children's reading achievements and related factors because of their relationship to academic success. From an early age, children learn from their significant others how proficient they are in activities (Quandt & Selznick, 1984), therefore; studying the role parents' play in children's reading achievement is a necessary procedure. The consequences of parents' beliefs for children's reading attainment is important for parents to understand. Based on the work of Miller (1995), parents form their beliefs early in their child's school career and those beliefs guide later thinking and behaviour.

Researchers and teachers need to understand the importance of the relationships among parents' reading beliefs, children's self-perceptions and their reading ability to help magnify student's achievements. Information from a study such as this one may have implications for classroom teachers. Results may provide information for teachers about the factors that contribute to strong reader self-concepts, e.g., social feedback, and their impact upon children's views of themselves as readers at the grade four level. Research from this study will help enhance the literature concerning children's reading ability and the research on the self-concept of children and their parents.

Further, there are implications for the significant others, namely parents/guardians. Increased awareness of children's self-concepts and parents' self-concepts may be beneficial to parents of children in elementary school so that they can better contribute to their child's learning to read and to the development of intervention programs to enhance parents' and children's self-efficacy.

Gender may also be a factor in children's reading abilities and self-perceptions of reading because different cultures may approve and validate reading as a more important activity for either boys or girls. Moreover, gender may also be a factor in parents' role construction, child development beliefs and self-efficacy; mothers and fathers may hold different beliefs about their roles as parents and different views on their children's reading ability.

Limitations of the Study

The study has several limitations:

1) There are many factors in children's background experiences which influence their

self-concepts, and these are not measured (Vereen, 1980).

2) This study involved grade four children who were involved in a literacy project in a rural area for approximately one year. The results of this study may not be generalizable to all grade four children in rural areas or any other population.

3) Parents involved in the study were of lower- to upper-middle socio-economic status and had been involved with a family literacy project with their children for a school year. Hence, their self-efficacy may have been different than those parents who had not participated in the reading program, since parental efficacy has been shown to relate to parental involvement (Hoover-Dempsey, 1992). The parental self-efficacy scores may or may not be generalizable to other parents of similar socio-economic class who have not participated in such a project.

Organization of the Thesis

Chapter 1 has provided the introduction to the study, statement of the problem, purposes of the study, definitions of key terminology, and significance and limitations of the study. Chapter 2 will cover a review of the relevant literature. Chapter 3 will present the details of the research design and methodology of the research analysis. Chapter 4 will present the analysis of data. Chapter 5 will cover the summary of the study, conclusions, educational implications, and suggestions for further research.

Chapter II

Review of Related Literature

Introduction

This literature review explores the relationships among parents' reading beliefs (self-efficacy and achievement-related beliefs), parental role construction, parents' child development beliefs, children's reading self-perceptions, children's reading achievement, and gender of parents and children. The terms academic self-concept and children's self-efficacy for achievement will be used interchangeably in this literature review, because the term self-concept includes feelings and beliefs about one's abilities (Byrne, 1984).

Bandura's social cognitive theory provides the framework for this research. Within the social cognitive theory lies the multifaceted causal structure that addressed both the development of competence and regulation of action. Social cognitive theory postulates people are neither driven by inner forces nor automatically shaped and controlled by external stimuli. According to Bandura (1986) "human functioning is explained in terms of a model of triadic reciprocality in which behaviour, cognition and other personal factors, and environmental events all operate as interacting determinants of each other" (p.18). A pivotal role of social cognitive theory is perceived self-efficacy. Bandura (1997) claims that beliefs of personal efficacy regulated motivation by shaping aspirations and the outcomes expected for one's efforts.

Self-efficacy Theory

Self-efficacy theory derives from Bandura's social cognitive theory. Social cognitive

theory centers on an individual's belief about his or her ability to exercise and maintain some level of control over events which affect his or her life (Bandura, 1986). Four main sources of information have been identified upon which people base their self-efficacy beliefs. They are performance, observational comparison, social feedback, and physiological states (Bandura, 1986).

The most powerful sources of personal information which lead to greater expectations of mastery and success are performance accomplishments or experiences of personal mastery (Bandura, 1977 and Gorrell, 1990). Earlier theorization and research support this as well. According to Purkey (1970), strong self-concept is attributed to successful experiences and self-concept is linked to previous achievements (Bloom, 1976). According to Hocko (1993), learners who experience success are more likely to continue to experience success. Henk and Melnick (1995) redefined the performance construct as progress and in this specific construct of reading defines progress as one's present reading performance compared with past performance.

The second construct is observational comparison. This part of the model has suggested that when people observe others performing tasks successfully, they raise their own expectations of personal success on the same task. According to Bandura (1977), how a person rates his or her own performance relative to another person's has an impact on his or her self-efficacy. Wagner (1983), as well, claims that one contributor to the development of self-concept is comparison with others. This idea was directly applied by Henk and Melnick to the reader self-concept and so a child's reader self-perception is seen as influenced by perceptions of his or her reading performance in comparison to the performance of classmates.

A third construct in the self-efficacy model that has been included in self-concept models

for decades is social feedback. Evaluations from culture and family impacts on the development and change in self-concept (Rogers, 1951). Henk and Melnick (1995) defined social feedback as the direct or indirect feedback about reading from teachers, classmates and people in the child's social network and family. The weakest impact on self-efficacy in comparison to other sources of self-efficacy is praise and encouragement from significant individuals toward students (Bandura, 1977). Studies have revealed that as children grew older, feedback about ability, and not effort, have more influence on self-concept (Schunk, 1983a; Schunk, 1984; Schunk & Gunn, 1985; Schunk & Rice, 1984).

Emotional arousal is the fourth element of the self-efficacy model (Bandura, 1977). When a person is not coping well in a situation, the emotional arousal serves as an indicator. When internal messages are received, they may inhibit performance attempts because individuals tend to associate anxiety and stress as signs of incapacities. According to Bandura (1977), children who experience negative feelings, or feelings of stress and anxiety while reading, interpret these signs as personal incapacities and begin to devalue themselves as readers. Physiological states refer to the internal feelings children experience while reading as defined by Henk and Melnick (1995).

Parents' Self-efficacy, Children's Self-perceptions, and Academic Achievement

The construct of parents' self-efficacy also derives from Bandura's work on personal self-efficacy, and states that parents as individuals will exercise and maintain some level of control over events that affect their lives. Self-efficacy theory applied to parental behaviour suggests that parents will first think of their actions in advance. Parents choose behavioural goals for themselves in anticipation and so will plan actions designed to achieve these goals.

Bandura (1989a) stated,

> *the stronger the individual's self-efficacy beliefs, the higher the goals they will set for themselves, and the higher is their commitment to meeting those goals. Individuals low in self-efficacy tend to believe that they cannot cope with difficulties in a given domain. They tend to avoid situations in that area, slacken their efforts or stop trying altogether.* (p.18)

When Bandura's self-efficacy theory is applied to parental sense of efficacy for helping children succeed in school, it suggests that parents with a high sense of efficacy for helping their child succeed have a tendency to view themselves as capable in that area, and so are likely to believe their involvement will make a positive difference for their children.

Parents' efficacy beliefs are defined by Eccles and Harold (1993) as being comprised of three variables: "1) parents' confidence that they can help their children with school work; 2) parents' views of their competence as their children progress to higher grades; and 3) parents' beliefs that they can influence the school through school governance (p.20)." Their study on parental efficacy showed that parents' efficacy was positively related to mothers' involvement in mathematics and reading education and mastery and achievement beliefs were strongly related to parental involvement in education.

Research has been carried out to study the perceptions and attitudes of parents. Hess et al. (1984) focused on specific perceptions of parents, such as parents' help and encouragement, teachers' help, child ability, and luck. They found that parental attributions to luck were negatively linked to elementary school readiness and later elementary achievement. Stevenson et al. (1990) studied American and Chinese parents' attitudes toward elementary children's

mathematics performance. American parents were pleased with their children's mathematics achievements, although the American scores were lower than those of the Chinese children. The findings led Stevenson et al. to speculate that Americans low standards for achievement were responsible for their satisfaction with less then optimal performance. It was suggested that the American parents' low standards paired with positive attitudes toward the children's work discouraged the children from investing more effort in improved achievement.

Bandura and Wood (1989) tested the idea that conceptions of ability affect thought processes and performance attainments through the self-efficacy mechanism. Students perceived efficacy fell as they encountered problems when they viewed ability as reflecting inherent intellectual aptitude. It was also reported that such students had an eventual progressive decline in their performance. On the other hand, students who achieved higher attainments viewed ability as a skill to be developed and practiced. According to Wigfield and Eccles (1992), it is important that parents manifest efficacy in behaviours specifically focused on helping young children solve problems in school, since parents' beliefs of achievement may be a stronger influence on young children's rather than older children's beliefs of achievement (Wigfield and Eccles, 1992). Parents would seem more likely to doubt their own ability to have an impact on children's learning when they have a low sense of efficacy. Hence, parents would tend to become less involved in their children's schooling when they have low self-efficacy (Hoover – Dempsey, 1992).

Stevenson et al. (1983) and Entwisle (1987) found that significant others play an important role in the formation of self-concepts in boys and girls. The influence of parents and parents' expectations for their children was stronger for females than it was for males in regard

to academic self-concepts and attitudes (Stevenson et. al. 1983; and Entwisle, 1987). The researchers suggest that females tend to conform to the perceptions of their abilities from the expectations placed on them by their parents, more so than did males.

In 1996 Oldford-Matchim, in her research, found a significant difference between how boys and girls perceived their families' and classmates' feelings about their reading. Specifically, boys perceived the feedback from their families more positively than from their classmates. The girls, did not reveal any differences in their perceptions of significant others' feedback in regard to their reading. Moreover, the study revealed a significant difference between how girls and boys perceived their classmates regard of their reading. Girls perceived their classmates' regard for their reading ability more positively than did the boys (Oldford-Matchim, 1996).

According to Gross, Fogg, and Tucker (1995), parents quickly stopped promotive efforts as they encounter difficulties and fell back on negative authority when trying to manage problems with their children when they were plagued by doubts about their parenting capabilities. On the other hand, parents who had a high sense of parental efficacy selected and constructed environments conducive to their children's development. Those parents also served as strong advocates on their children's behalf in transactions with school and other social systems (Elder and Ardelt, 1992; Elder, Eccles, Ardelt and Lord, 1993). Therefore, parents' actions for helping improve their children's academic achievement, were affected by their beliefs.

There are many different forms of parental involvement. According to Hoover-Dempsey et, al., (1992) volunteering at the school may be related to parental efficacy. The decision to volunteer requires some sense that one has the required effective skills to be used. 'Efficacy

increases the likelihood that a parent will act on his or her knowledge (or seek more information when available sources are sufficient)' (Hoover-Dempsey et. al., 1992, p.291). Bandura (1997), also claimed that parents who got to know their children's teachers usually had a higher sense of efficacy than parents who were less involved with their children's teachers.

Jones and White (2000) examined whether family context and type of school-related activities parents practiced affected first to third grade children's language and mathematics achievement. They found that achievement was related to family size, number of adult caregivers, and parents' educational level. Parents who engaged in learning activities at home had children who were more likely than others to obtain high language achievement scores.

Parental Role Construction, Children's Reading Achievement and Children's Self-perceptions

Sets of expectations held by groups for the behaviour of individuals are considered to be roles. Interactions between individuals and their groups over time and varying degrees of stability and change over time define the role process (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). The following three aspects of the role process have been implicated in role stability and change: 1) structurally given demands, or the group's expectations and norms for an individual member's behaviour; 2) personal role conceptions, or an individual member's ideas about what he or she is supposed to do as a group member; and 3) role behaviour, or the actual behaviours of individual group members, which usually conform to, but may at times violate, the expectations of the group (Harrison & Minor, 1978, drawing on Levinson, 1959). According to Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997), when the group's expectations match an individual's expectations for personal behaviour, roles tend to be stable and there is consonance. On the other hand, when the

group's expectations do not match the individual's expectations or the individual's behaviours, dissonance occurs, which tends to create changes in roles and role expectations.

The basic principles of role theory, when applied to parental involvement in their children's education, seem to suggest that parental groups, such as family and the workplace, will hold expectations about appropriate parental role behaviours. When parental roles are consistent among groups concerning the behaviours they are supposed to perform, they will receive consistent environmental pressure and support for performing those behaviours (Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler, 1997). However, if parents belong to groups where there are little to no expectations of parental involvement in children's education, parents seem less inclined to become actively involved. Further, parental role expectations may also vary according to the gender of the parent. For example, mothers often experience stronger expectations for day-to-day involvement in children's schooling, whereas fathers, may feel stronger expectations to involve themselves in their children's athletic tasks or assuming the role of disciplinarian (Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler, 1997).

A study investigating the relations among family factors, parental involvement in children's learning activities within and outside a family literacy program, and children's outcomes related to literacy, numeracy, social skills, and behaviour problems revealed the following results (Bryant, Peisner-Feinberg, & Miller-Johnson, 2000): parents who were most involved with their children in activities at home and in the community were more likely to include mothers with higher levels of education; a family's involvement in activities with their children at home and in the community was significantly positively related to children's vocabulary scores on a reading test; and parents who reported more literacy involvement in

activities that included their child had children whom teachers rated more highly on social skills (Bryant et. al., 2000).

A study by Stelios (1999) of parental attributions on the influence of children's academic achievement found that parents who believed their own role was important for their children's academic achievement tended to be controlling and keen in developing their child's interests. Also, the parental attributions of the child's achievement to the child's own effort was positively related to the child's actual achievement results. Stelios (1999) concluded that a line of influence existed between parental attribution style, the type and degree of parental involvement and the child's actual academic achievement.

Parents' Child Development Beliefs, Children's Self-perceptions, and Children's Academic Achievement

Research in the areas of developmental psychology and parent-school relationships has identified relationships between parental beliefs, values, goals and a variety of parental behaviours pertinent to children's development (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Goodnow, 1984; Lightfoot, 1978, Miller, 1988). The assumption made by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler is that parents' beliefs about children's development exerts an influence on the parenting role they and those significant to them envision for themselves.

Studies in parental beliefs and school performance have also been carried out. The following results were found in studies by Okagaki and Sternberg (1993) and Schaefer and Edgerston (1985). Parental beliefs pertaining to the importance of developing conformity, obedience and good behaviour have shown to be related to poorer school outcomes, whereas, beliefs in the importance of personal responsibility and self-respect have been related to better

school performance (Okagaki & Sternberg, 1993; Schaefer & Edgerston, 1985).

Various studies have revealed relationships between parents' beliefs of traditional aims and goals and poor school achievement, poor classroom behaviour, and lower task orientation. Those same student outcomes have also been linked with family desire for privacy, i.e., teachers should not need information from the home. Beliefs by parents in independent thinking, personal responsibility, and valuing children's development and self-respect have been linked to stronger academic performance (Schaefer & Edgerston, 1985 and Brody & Stoneman, 1992).

McGillicuddy-DeLisi (1992) examined parents' ideas about the mechanisms responsible for children's personal and social competence and reported that the ways children develop competence was either through attribution explanations or constructivist explanations. Attribution explanations involve developing competence through active consideration of ideas about the causes of their performance. Constructivist explanations would include developing competence through active construction of ideas and explanations for events. McGillicuddy-DeLisi (1992) also found that parents' belief that gender differences are responsible for competence development in children was linked to lower child achievement levels in mathematics and composite test scores. Furthermore, parents' beliefs were found to persevere even when available information offered evidence to the contrary. Similarly, Goodnow, (1988) and Parsons, Adler, & Kaczala, (1982) found that parents' beliefs are consistent and suggested that beliefs are often "received knowledge" from the culture (p. 296, Goodnow, 1988), that persist over time independent of variations in experience.

A study by Peet and Melson (1991) involved beliefs about child development and children's abilities to complete tasks with difficulty or with ease. A survey entitled Beliefs About Development Questionnaire was used to assess parents' general beliefs regarding the nature of children and how they change over time. Children's vocabulary was assessed using the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test. When detailed analysis was carried out to determine relations according to gender, the findings indicated that mothers and fathers did not differ significantly in generalized beliefs about development. However, when patterns of association were analyzed, many associations differed depending on the sex of the parents. Another study by Peet (1995) compared parental

perceptions of the use of internal information such as intuitions, religious beliefs, and personal childhood experiences to use of external sources for information about their child's development. Results showed that internal sources were used more frequently and were construed as more useful for information on children's social development than for information on motor and cognitive development.

Studies have revealed that parents' beliefs about their children's achievement play a crucial role in children's perceptions of academic competence and academic achievement (Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler, 1997, Okagaki and Sternberg, 1993; and Wigfield and Eccles, 1992). If parents believe that unstable and controllable factors, such as effort, are responsible for children's poor performance they are more likely to involve themselves and persist until children experience success (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). When their children experienced academic difficulties, such parents would push their children to put forth more effort. Conversely, parents may choose not to get involved, if they attribute a child's poor performance to stable or internal factors such as the child has a low ability and ability is perceived as a fixed quantity.

According to Eccles (1983, 1984, 1993, as cited in Aunola, Nurmi, Neimi, Lerkkanen, and Rasku-Puttonen, 2002), parents' beliefs in their offsprings' abilities are a major determinant of children's self- and task-related beliefs, which then influence their academic performance. There is indirect support for the concepts that parental beliefs have been found to be associated with children's intrinsic motivations to learn, self-perceptions of ability, and expectations of success (Entwisle & Baker, 1983; Frome & Eccles, 1998) and that such achievement-related beliefs have been shown to predict children's school performance (Chapman & Tunmer, 1997). Aunola et al. (2002) found

in their study that the kinds of beliefs mothers and fathers had about their children's general school competence at the beginning of primary school seemed to predict the kinds of achievement strategies their children deployed. Those achievement strategies then contributed to their children's reading performance. The results, therefore, support the understanding that parents may foster the development of task-focused behaviours and self-efficacy beliefs among their children by having high expectations and perceptions of their competencies at school. Likewise, those parents who have low confidence in their children's abilities to perform well at school seem to predict the use of task-avoidant strategies (Aunola et al., 2002).

Tacit Theories of Intelligence

Individuals tend to hold either an entity theory or an incremental theory of intelligence (Henderson and Dweck, 1990). An entity theory assumes that intelligence is fixed and not easily changed, while an incremental theory of intelligence assumes that intelligence is malleable and subject to change, most notably through effort and persistence. According to Bandura (1997), parents with a low sense of efficacy would be likely to view intelligence as a fixed trait, therefore their effort would not be considered vital for helping improve children's achievement. Parents who viewed intelligence as a trait that was changeable had a high sense of efficacy (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997), people who regarded themselves as highly efficacious ascribed their failures to insufficient effort. People who regarded themselves as inefficacious attributed their failures to low ability (Alden, 1986; Collins, 1982; McAuley, Duncan & McElroy, 1989; Silver, Mitchell, & Gist, 1989). Theories of intelligence and the role of attribution have been shown to relate to parents' sense of efficacy for helping their children succeed in

school.

Influence of Significant Others (Peers and Teachers)

Peer influence

Peer relations have a strong effect on the way children see themselves in the world. Children who are usually successful in peer relationships felt loved and worthwhile (Felker, 1974). Children with positive self-concepts were more likely to enjoy high status with their peers than children who had low self-concepts (Richmond and White, 1971). The roles of peers determined much of what behaviour the child assumed; owing to the similarity in age children could identify with their peers and peers became models (Homze, 1962).

Poor peer relations contribute to low self-concept, while strong peer relations contribute to high self-concept and so the relationship between peer relations and self-concept appear cyclical. Children who have successful peer interactions and enjoyed social encounters perceived themselves as competent and confident and received acceptance from their peers (Henderson and Long, 1971; McCandless et al., 1961). Those children believed that people, whom they like, reciprocated their feelings and they enjoyed high peer status (Simon and Bernstein, 1971).

Research in the area of peer influences on achievement has revealed that children's aspirations are similar to those of their peers. A child may choose not to work hard in school just to be accepted by the group who does not value achievement. Further, other studies have shown that children who were intelligent tended to be more popular, while slow-learning children tended to be less popular (Cambell, 1967; Green, 1970). Children who were low achievers in a school were more likely to be among the least

accepted children in the classrooms (McMichael, 1980). Boys, who were both poor readers and lacked social skills, tended to be accepted only by other boys with similar social problems (McMichael, 1980).

A study by Oldford-Matchim (1998) of grade one students revealed a significant difference in how girls and boys perceived their classmates' estimates of their reading. It was found that girls perceived their classmates' regard for their reading ability more positively than did boys. According to Bandura (1997), the influence of peers may be less significant in determining young children's self-perceptions than older children's self-perceptions.

Teacher Influence

Conflicting results exist among the relationships between children's self-concepts of teachers and children's age and gender. A study by Elaugh and Harlow (1973) and Samuel (1977) are examples of two studies revealing differing results. Elaugh and Harlow (1973) found that males received more attention from the teacher than did females which resulted in lowered self-concepts for females. In Samuel's (1977) study it was found that more females than males perceived reactions from their teachers to be positive.

Studies by O'Sullivan(1992) and Oldford-Matchim (1998) found that teachers considered their female students to be better readers and found reading easier than males. Further, they found that teachers felt more capable of helping male students improve in reading. Despite teachers' beliefs that females were higher achievers in reading than were males, teachers' self-efficacy beliefs were higher for boys' achievement than for girls' reading achievement. Teachers' beliefs about levels of children's achievement, therefore

may be an important factor in understanding teachers' self-efficacy beliefs.

According to Bandura (1997), teachers' feedback would be more important than peers' influences and feedback in the formation of young children's self-perceptions of ability. A teacher's sense of efficacy was likely to be especially influential on young students because the children's capabilities were still relatively informal. When those young students evaluate their own capabilities, they make little use of social comparison information. Therefore, teachers' feedback would be considered more important in the formation of young children's self-perceptions of ability than expectations and feedback from peers (Bandura, 1997). Dillabough's (1990) study revealed teacher expectations may have been more influential on young children's achievement than have been parental expectations. A study by Zimmerman and Martinez-Pons (1990) revealed differing results. It was found that children's source of assistance for their progress shifted from parents to teachers in high school (Zimmerman and Martinez-Pons, 1990). Parents, therefore were more important sources for younger children to rely on for evaluations of their progress than were teachers.

Reader Self-Perceptions

Children who demonstrate superior reading ability read frequently (Anderson et al., 1988; Foertsch, 1992). Children who have made positive associations with reading tend to read more often, with greater intensity and for longer periods of time. On the other hand, children who have had negative associations with reading read very little or avoid reading all together (Henk and Melnick, 1995). A high priority for teachers would be motivating students to read and creating an interest in reading among students, since reading is such an integral part of education and so much of a child's academic success

rests on his or her ability to read well (O'Flavehan et al., 1992).

Harter (1981) found that positive self-perceptions promote achievement-oriented behaviour, unlike low self-perceptions that lead to decreased motivation. A study by Brown (1992) revealed relationships among self-concept, reading attitude and reading comprehension. It was found that children's reader self-concept and total academic achievement were related to overall reading comprehension. Oldford-Matchim (1996) found similar results in a study of self-concept and reading ability in kindergarten children. Results indicated that the more children liked being read to, the more knowledge they have of the alphabet; the more competent they are in understanding and interpreting stories; and the more capable they are in obtaining meaning from environmental print and symbols.

Judgments about one's ability to achieve affected actual achievement through influence on an individual's choice of activities, task avoidance, effort expenditure and goal persistence (Bandura & Schunk, 1981). According to Schunk (1982, 1983, 1983a) and Zimmerman and Ringle (1981), performance in all aspects of life could be motivated or inhibited by self-perceptions. Similarly, " how an individual feels about him or herself as a reader could clearly influence whether reading would be sought or avoided, the amount of effort that would occur during reading, and how persistently comprehension would be pursued" (Henk and Melnick, 1995, p. 472).

In the academic area of reading it has been found that reading success has been linked to self-concept. Children will attempt more difficult material, enjoy reading and be apt to read more widely, if they develop strong positive self-concepts as readers (Quandt & Selznick, 1984). The Matthew Effect, a phenomenon existing in the reading literature,

is known as increased reading comprehension due to time spent reading. An analogy of this is " the rich becoming richer and poor becoming poorer" (Stanovich, 1980). Hence, children with positive feelings and beliefs will read more, and, therefore will likely improve in reading ability. A study by Thomas (1984) specifically looked at the concept of self as reader and not at a global self-concept. Thomas researched one hundred sixth grade students' performances on reading comprehension, and views of self as reader. She found a significant relationship existing between how good readers viewed their ability and their actual reading ability.

Reader Self-perceptions and Gender

Research studies on gender and reader self-perceptions have revealed differing results. Studies by Entwisle and Baker (1983) and Stevenson and Newman (1986) revealed that females held higher expectations for their reading performance and more positive attitudes toward reading than did boys. A possible explanation given for the results was that female students generally scored better marks than did boys (Entwisle, 1983).

Newfoundland studies on reader self-perceptions and gender indicated no differences. Byrne (1993), Legge (1994), Whiteway (1995), and Pink (1996) found no significant differences between reader self-concepts of boys and girls. In a study of grade six children, Byrne (1993) found no differences in children's reader self-concept when gender was examined. Whiteway (1995) studied three grade five classes in urban Newfoundland and did not find differences in reader self-concept according to gender. Pink's (1996) study also demonstrated no differences in self-concept when gender was studied in high ability grade four, five, and six students. However, two studies by

O'Sullivan (1992) and Brown (1992) found that girls' reader self-concepts were higher than that of boys'. According to the research, when there were differences found in self-concepts according to gender, it tended to be in favor of girls.

Children's believed capability and career endeavors

For many students efficacy beliefs influenced career aspirations. Bandura indicated that beliefs influence aspirations and strength of goal commitments (Bandura, 1996). Beliefs also influenced motivations and perseverance in the face of difficulties and setbacks, resilience to adversity, quality of analytic thinking, causal attributions for successes and failures, and vulnerability to stress and depression. According to Betz & Hackett, (1986) and Lent, Brown, & Hackett (1994), the stronger students' efficacy beliefs were, the better they prepared themselves educationally for different career paths, and success in their academic coursework.

Children's Reading Development

Important aspects of reading development are acquiring skills specific to reading and prior conceptual and linguistic knowledge. The process involved in learning to read is the acquisition of a few specific skills and the use of many other abilities that are common to a variety of cognitive processes. The phases of development in learning to read words according to Firth (1985) are: logographic, alphabetic, and orthographic. Logographic, the first phase, is the use of nonphonemic visual, contextual or graphic features to read words. The alphabetic phase involves the use of grapheme-phoneme relations to process correspondences between the spellings of words and their pronunciations. Orthographic involves the use of spelling patterns and the ability to recognize words.

Further, research dealing with reading development and socio-economic status has shown that some reading behaviours develop among children in all socio-economic classes. According to Durkin (1966, 70,72,74), many environments, including those which are impoverished, contain enough print, such as billboards, graffiti, and advertisements, to fascinate preschoolers and foster their attempts at reading. Some researchers however, based their findings on middle and upper-middle class background (Goodman, 1980, and Mason, 1984).

Logographic Phase

During this phase of reading development, visual symbols represent words or morphemes, not phonemes. Beginning readers select and remember morphonemic visual characteristics instead of letter-sound correspondences to read words. Those readers in the logographic phase may learn to read a word by remembering the shape of one of its letters or its logos such as the MacDonald's golden arches logo. Visual cue reading is also logographic word reading, according to Ehri and Wilce (1985, 1987a, 1987b). Logographic readers learn to read words using visual cues which is known as paired-associate learning (Gough and Hillenger, 1980; Gough, Juel and Roper, 1983, cited in Ehri, 1994).

Alphabetic Phase

When children stop attending primarily to pictures and begin attempting to read print the shift from logographic reading to alphabetic reading is taking place. A rudimentary form of alphabetic reading is phonetic cue reading. This type of reading explains how novice beginners can use alphabetic cues to read words by sight. Knowledge of letter names and sounds and having skills in phonetic segmentations are

strategies used by phonetic cue readers.

When readers can phonologically recode written words into pronunciations the alphabetic phase is underway (Ehri, 1994). Research in phonological recoding revealed influences of Piagetian concrete operativity (Tunmer, Herriman, and Nesdale, 1988). Tunmer et. al (1988), claimed that Piagetian concrete operativity was influential in children's acquisition of low-level phonemic and syntactic awareness skills. Results suggested that some minimal level of phonological awareness was necessary for children to use letter-name knowledge to acquire phonological recoding skill.

Orthographic Phase

Readers have the grapheme-phoneme correspondences and orthographic knowledge to read words at the orthographic phase. According to Ehri (1994), this phase replaces the alphabetic phase as readers consolidated grapheme-phoneme patterns that recurred across words they have learned to read. Knowledge of the orthographic structure emerged from the competence in alphabetic phase reading (Massaro, Jastrzembski, and Lucas, 1981). Orthographic-phase readers, when reading unfamiliar words, were thought to divide letter strings into root words, affixes, and syllables, convert these to pronunciations, and then blend them to derive a recognizable word.

Reading and Metacognition

Metacognition suggests that the reader can choose skills and strategies that are appropriate for the demands of the reading task. Metacognition refers to an awareness of our own cognitive processes of knowing about what we know. In other words, metacognition is thinking about thinking (Flavell, 1976).

A specific type of metacognition is known as metacomprehension.

Metacomprehension is the knowledge and control over thinking and learning activities as it relates to reading. According to Baker and Brown (1984), there are two phenomena of metacomprehension. They are one's thinking about cognition, which is the conscious access one has of one's own cognitive operations. The other is one's conscious attempts in regulating cognition, meaning self-regulatory mechanisms such as checking, planning, monitoring, testing, revisiting, and evaluating.

The following is a list, suggested by Baker and Brown (1984), of reading strategies that result in comprehension: 1) clarifying the purposes of reading; 2) identifying the important aspects of a message; 3) focusing attention on the major content rather than trivia; 4) monitoring ongoing activities to determine whether comprehension is occurring; 5) engaging in self-questioning; and 6) taking corrective action when failures in comprehension are detected (p.4-5). Since readers must exercise some self-awareness and self-control of cognitive activities during reading, most characterizations of reading include skills and activities which are metacognitive.

Carr, Borkowski, and Maxwell (1991) studied the influence of metacognitive and motivational factors in the reading performance of underachievers. They found that self-concept, beliefs in the utility of effort, reading awareness, and reading performance were higher in achievers than underachievers.

Pressley, Borkowski, and Schneider (1987) developed a model of metacognition. The model has its basis on the argurment that successful strategy use enhances self-concept and attributional beliefs, as well as the acquisition of new strategies. Specific strategy knowledge is related to general strategy knowledge in their model meaning knowing the use of a strategy requires effort and that well chosen strategies result in good

performance. Therefore, metacognition knowledge about strategies combined with motivational beliefs influences performance (Pressley et. al., 1987).

Children's Reading Ability and Gender

Dwyer (1973) explained gender differences in relation to reading achievement in four ways:

1. the differential rate or level of maturation (meaning girls mature at a faster rate then boys);
2. content of basal readers;
3. the negative treatment of boys by female teachers;
4. the differential cultural expectations for the male role.

In a comprehensive study by Wallberg and Tsai (1985), gender was found to be significantly correlated with achievement and attitude. The females in the study performed better than males and expressed more interest in reading. In recent research, girls were found to achieve higher in reading than did boys (Cloer & Pearman, 1992; Oldford-Matchim, 1998; Ostling, 1992). In a longitudinal study carried out by Cloer and Pearman (1992) on students ages nine, thirteen and seventeen, research revealed that girls outperformed boys in each of six reading assignments. Results indicated the gap between girls and boys was the same in 1990 as it was in 1971. A Canadian report entitled School Achievement Indicators Program – SAIP, reported that reading assessments of thirteen and sixteen year-olds showed that females had higher levels of reading achievment than did males for both age groups (Council of Ministries of Education, 1999).

Ostling (1992) reviewed the results of a report on the reading achievement of girls from preschool to secondary school. Results indicated that girls perform better on reading

tasks than boys from elementary school to high school. Oldford-Matchim (1996) also found that girls possessed more knowledge of the alphabet than did boys at the end of the kindergarten year.

Research studies carried out in Newfoundland have revealed differing results. Studies by Legge (1994), Byrne (1993), and Pink (1996), found no significant relationships between children's reading achievement and their gender in grades two through six. Those results, however, do not corroborate the large-scale findings of Newfoundland children in the Canadian Test of Basic Skills (CTBS). Results from 1989, 1991, 1993 showed that females were more successful in reading than were males (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1991, 1993, 1996). As well, females were found to have more success in reading than did males on the CTBS scores for grade twelve students in 1998 (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1998). O'Sullivan (1992) in a Newfoundland study found that girls scored higher than boys on standardized reading tests in grade's three, six and nine.

Chapter III

Design and Methodology

This study investigated the relationships among parents' reading beliefs (self-efficacy and achievement-related beliefs), children's self-perceptions as readers, parental role construction, parental child development beliefs and children's reading ability. The relationship of parents' gender and children's gender was also studied.

Sample

The study was conducted with a total of 67 fourth-grade students in a rural area in Newfoundland. A total of 81 parents (31 fathers and 50 mothers) participated in the study and completed questionnaires about their beliefs about reading, child development beliefs and parental role construction. For some students, both parents participated; for other students, just one parent was involved. The student sample included girls and boys. The socio-economic status of the region varied, ranging from lower- to upper-middle class.

The children in the study were involved in a family literacy project, SORT (Significant Others as Reading Teachers) initiated by the Education Faculty of Memorial University of Newfoundland in association with the school in their community. The project's role was to encourage significant others' involvement in children's reading development. The project provided the parents/guardians with the necessary knowledge to help their children become better readers.

Instruments

Two instruments were used to measure the student sample. The Reader Self-Perception Scale (RSPS) was used to measure how children feel about themselves as readers (including self-concept, social feedback, progress, physiological states, and observational comparisons). The Gates and MacGinitie Reading Test was used to determine the students' reading ability (including vocabulary and comprehension).

Three questionnaires were administered to the parents. The first instrument was a Parental Self-efficacy Questionnaire that measured parents' beliefs about their sense of efficacy to help their children with their reading and their achievement-related beliefs. A second instrument was used to determine parents' child development beliefs such as the influence of peers on their children's learning to read. The third instrument was used to measure parents' role construction which included the expectations believed to be placed on them by specific members of the community such as the minister/priest and the principal and/or school.

The Reader Self-Perception Scale (RSPS)

The RSPS scale was used to measure how children felt about themselves as readers. The scale includes aspects of performance, observational comparison, social feedback, and physiological states. Progress (P), the redefined form of performance (Henk & Melnick, 1995), involves how one perceives present reading performance in comparison to past performance. Observational comparison (OC), the second source of reader self-perception, measures how a child perceives reading performance compared to the performance of classmates. The third source of reader self-perception is social

feedback (SF) which includes the direct or indirect input about reading from teachers, family and classmates. Physiological States (PS), the fourth source includes the internal feelings the child experiences during reading (Henk & Melnick, 1995). A question pertaining to children's reader self-concept (SC) is also asked on the RSPS scale and was used to measure students' thoughts about themselves as readers. A total score (TS) was also calculated.

The RSPS consists of one general item and 32 subsequent items that represent the four scales (progress, observational comparison, social feedback, and physiological states). The general item consists of a question that prompts the children to think about their reading ability (Do you think you are a good reader?). The other 32 questions deal with overall reading ability as well as perceived feelings of reading ability.

Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the reliability of the Reader Self-perception Scale (Table 1). The Cronbach alpha statistic was developed to measure the internal consistency of attitude scales (Cronbach, 1951).

Table 1. Reliability Analysis of Reader Self-perception Scale (RSPS)

Instrument	Alpha	Standardized Alpha
Reader Self-perception Scale (RSPS)	.78	.89

Gates and MacGinitie Reading Test

The Gates and MacGinitie Reading Test (1992) was used to measure reading

ability (comprehension and vocabulary) of grade four students in this study. Vocabulary and comprehension scores were tabulated and used to correlate with reader self-perceptions (social feedback, physiological states, progress, observational comparison, question 1, and a total score), child development beliefs of parents, parental self-efficacy, and parental role construction. The test used to measure the reliability of this achievement test was Cronbach's alpha. This method was used to measure all scales in this study. Results of the reliability can be found in Table 2.

Table 2. Reliability Analysis of Gates and MacGinitie Reading Test

Instrument	Alpha	Standardized Alpha
Gates and MacGinitie Reading Test	.89	.89

Questionnaire for Parents

The first questionnaire used with the parents in this study, the Questionnaire for Parents (Oldford-Matchim & Singh, 2002) was intended to measure parents' reading beliefs. The instrument consists of 18 statements and involved four related categories. Those categories include: self-efficacy, parental involvement, achievement-related beliefs, and parents' expectations for their children's reading success. In previous research those four categories were found to significantly relate to children's self-perceptions and children's academic achievement (Wigfield & Eccles, 1992; O'Sullivan & Joy, 1994; Hoover-Dempsey et. al., 1992, 1997; Reynolds, Mavrogenes, Bezuczko,

Hagemann ,1996)

Responses on the questionnaire were scored based on the same Likert scale system as the RSPS (SA = Strongly Agree which equaled 5 points, A = Agree which equaled 4 points, U = Undecided which equaled 3 points, D = Disagree which equaled 2 points and SD = Strongly Disagree which equaled 1 point). The Questionnaire contains sentences which are brief statements regarding parental reading beliefs. It was designed to demonstrate the higher the parental self-efficacy and involvement with children's reading and expectations for achievement in reading, the higher the score. The instrument was also designed to show that parents who believe that achievement is based on effort in learning rather than intelligence received a higher score than those who place a higher value on intelligence rather then effort.

Seven statements were used in the analysis while 11 were omitted from the analysis because the responses had no variance and therefore were not correlating to any other statements in the questionnaire. Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the reliability of the test and the results are found in Table 3.

Table 3. Reliability Analysis of Questionnaire for Parents – total Parental Self-efficacy

Instrument	Alpha	Standardized Alpha
Questionnaire for Parents	.75	.81

The second questionnaire, Child Development Beliefs (Oldford-Matchim & Singh, 2002) survey, administered to parents in the study was used to measure the

parents' child development beliefs. Fourteen statements are included in the survey that focus on how parents believe a child's reading ability develops, how parents view intelligence, and the impact parents and teachers have on children's reading development. The questions more specifically asked the parents to rate their beliefs from 1 – 5, with 1, being they do not believe the statement at all and 5, meaning they believe the statement considerably.

To determine the reliability of the Child Development Beliefs questionnaire, the researcher used Cronbach's alpha. The results of the analysis are found in Table 4.

Table 4. Reliability Analysis of Child Development Beliefs

Instrument	Alpha	Standardized Alpha
Child Development Beliefs	.65	.67

The third questionnaire administered to parents was called the Parental Role Construction (Oldford-Matchim & Singh, 2002) survey. The scoring of this instrument followed the same Likert scale format as the RSPS and the questionnaire for parents on parental self-efficacy, a score of 5 meant the respondent strongly agreed with the statement and a score of 1 meant the respondent strongly disagreed. Seventeen statements were provided in all with the intent to measure how parents felt about their role as a parent in relation to their child's reading development and expectations placed on them

by various members of the community and the school. The reliability of that questionnaire can be found in Table 5.

Table 5. Reliability Analysis of Parent Role Construction

Instrument	Alpha	Standardized Alpha
Parent Role Construction	.81	.80

Procedure

Permission had been obtained from the Ethics Review Committee of Memorial University of Newfoundland as part of the SORT program (Appendix A) to conduct this study. The instruments were administered in the following manner.

Reader Self-perception Scale (RSPS)

The RSPS was administered to the grade four students by the facilitator of the SORT program in that rural school. The purpose of the questionnaire was explained to the students before it was administered. An emphasis was placed on students being as honest as possible when answering the questions and that there were no wrong or right answers. To help students understand the answering device, an example was given. Each question was read carefully and explained so that they knew what they had to do. Completion time for the survey was 15-20 minutes approximately.

Gates and MacGinitie Reading Test

The facilitator of the SORT program administered the Gates and MacGinitie Reading Test Level D4, Form 3, for Grade 4 to the grade four students in a classroom setting. Two separate testing times were given, one for the vocabulary portion of the test and another time for the comprehension portion. Before administration of the test, the test was explained. The vocabulary part of the test took approximately 30 minutes to administer while the comprehension portion of the test took approximately 40 minutes. All testing and scoring procedures were carried out as suggested in the Gates and MacGinitie Reading Test teacher's manual.

Parental Questionnaire, Parental Child Development Beliefs, and Parental Role Construction

The three surveys for parents were completed in approximately 30 minutes. The surveys were sent home to the parents by their children (when applicable). The Parental Questionnaire, Parental Child Development Beliefs survey, and Parental Role Construction survey, found in Appendices B, C, and D respectively, were provided to parents to complete independently of their spouse, so that gender differences could be accounted for. Parents were asked to return the completed surveys, in sealed envelopes, to the classroom teacher after a period of one week.

Chapter IV

Analysis of the Data

Chapter 4 describes an analysis of the data collected in the study to determine if the research questions have been supported. Descriptive statistics were computed to describe the responses given on the instruments by parents and children. ANOVA's were used to determine significant differences in the means of parents' and children's responses on the surveys when the gender of parents and children were being studied. The Pearson-Product-Moment Method was used to examine the relationships among measures of reading ability and reader self-perceptions and gender, total parental self-efficacy, overall role construction of the parents and children development of parents and parents gender. The alpha level used to determine significance was .05. Tables are used to report the findings from which the data are then examined and their significance interpreted.

Research Design

The chosen research design is correlational, an interest in associative impact is the intent. The sample chosen is not a random selection and there is no control group. This study investigates the association of children's reader self-perceptions, reading ability, children's gender, parental self-efficacy, parental role construction, parents' child development beliefs and parents' gender. Zedeck and Keppel (1989) consider correlational designs to be traditionally used for the study of correlations "present and existing in nature." Furthermore, relationship studies are conducted in an attempt to gain insight into factors and variables that are related to complex variables such as

academic achievement, motivation and self-concept (Gay, 1996).

Advantages of Correlational Design

There are several advantages to using a correlational design. Included are the following:

- Variables such as sex, race, age, social class, and personality traits cannot be manipulated, therefore, correlational design is called for.
- Some processes are long-term or evolve over time and it would be impossible and/or unethical to restrict subjects to a laboratory for the duration of the study.
- The correlational design is used to clarify, suggest, refine, or amplify experimental findings.

The Reader Self-Perception Scale provided six scores (self-concept, social feedback, observational comparison, physiological states, progress, and a total score). The Gates and MacGinitie Reading Test provided two scores (comprehension and vocabulary). The Parental Self-efficacy Questionnaire provided a total score. The Parental Role Construction Survey provided an overall role construction score. The Child Development Beliefs Survey provided 14 scores. Together with gender, the scores were used to compute a Pearson Product Moment correlation.

Limitations to the Study

Limitations to this study would include the following:

1. There are many factors in children's backgrounds of experience which influence their self-concepts and are not measured (Vereen, 1980).

2. Various instruments used in the investigation are not standardized. A Cronbach Alpha is provided for each. Scores from those surveys must be analyzed bearing this in mind.

3. This study was performed with grade four children in a rural community who had been

involved in a literacy project for approximately one year. The results from the study are not generalizable to other grade four students.

Children's Reading Achievement and Children's Reader Self-Perceptions

To determine if significant relationships existed between reading ability and reader self-perceptions, variables from the reading tests were correlated with variables from the reader self-perception scale using the Pearson-Product-Moment Method. The following significant relationships were found between reading achievement and reader self-perceptions: comprehension scores were related to social feedback, observational comparisons, progress, physiological states, and the total scores. Vocabulary scores were related to observational comparisons, progress, physiological states, and the total scores. Results can be found in Table 6:1.

Table 6:1. Correlational Analysis of Reading Achievement and Reader Self-Perceptions

	SF	OC	P	PS	TS	SC
C	.317**	.339**	.434**	.328**	.438**	.166
V	.182	.494**	.374**	.276*	.409**	.216

Note: C = Comprehension Scores, V = Vocabulary Scores, SF = social feedback, OC = observational comparison, P = progress, PS = physiological states, TS = total scores, SC = self-concept., *p<.05 **p<.01

Children's Reading Achievement, Children's Reader Self-Perceptions and Gender

Significant differences appear to exist between boys' and girls' reader self-perceptions. A one-way ANOVA was performed to determine if gender differences existed in children's reader self-perceptions. Boys' and girls' physiological states scores, social feedback scores, total self-perceptions scores, and the general perception score were all found to be significantly different. Differences between the other aspects of reader self-perception such as progress and

physiological states were not found to be significant. Descriptive statistics can be found in Table 6:2

A one-way ANOVA was carried out to determine if significant differences existed between boys' and girls' reading scores on the Gates and MacGinitie Reading Tests. No significant differences were found.

Table 6:2. Descriptive Statistics - Children's Reader Self-Perceptions Reading Achievement and Gender.

	Girls		Boys	
	M	SD	M	SD
PS	36.9	4.7	32.5	9.3
P	43.2	3.7	41.4	4.5
OC	24.5	3.3	22.7	4.6
SF	40.5	3.3	36.6	5.4
TS	149.7	10.2	137.8	17.2
SC	4.6	.53	4.2	.69
C	28.86	9.38	26.03	10.78
V	26.27	8.73	22.90	10.36

Note: M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, PS = physiological states, P = Progress, OC = Observational Comparisons, SF = social feedback, TS = total scores, SC = self-concept., C = Comprehension, V= Vocabulary

The means and standard deviations are shown in Table 6:2. The analysis of variance did not reveal a significant difference between boys' and girls' observational comparisons, $F(1,66) = 3.477$, $p > .05$, boys' and girls' progress scores, $F(1,66) = 3.147$, $p > .05$, boys' and girls' comprehension scores, $F(1,66) = 1.323$, $p > .05$, and boys' and girls' vocabulary scores, $F(1,66) = 2.087$, $p > .05$. The analysis of variance revealed significant differences between boys' and girls' physiological states, $F(1, 66) = 10.838$, $p < .05$, social feedback, $F(1,66) = 12.891$, $p < .05$, total self-perceptions scores, $F(1,66) = 12.371$, $p < .05$, and reader self-concept, $F(1,66) = 6.466$, $p < .05$.

The Pearson-Product-Moment Method was used to determine if relationships existed between children's reader self-perceptions and reading ability when broken down by gender. Significant relationships were found to exist among the following variables. Significant relationships were found to exist between boys' reader self-perceptions (physiological states, progress scores, observational comparisons, and social feedback) and comprehension scores on the reading achievement instrument. Further, the boys' reader self-perceptions, including physiological states, progress, observational comparisons, and self-concept were found to be significantly related with the vocabulary scores on the reading achievement (see Table 6:3). When girls' reader self-perceptions and girls' reading ability were analyzed it was found that no significant relationships existed in the study of self-perceptions of reading, reading ability and girls' gender.

Table 6:3. Correlational Analysis of Boys' Reader Self-perceptions and Boys' Reading Achievement

	SF	OC	P	PS	TS	SC
C	.520**	.552**	.558**	.473**	.638**	.341
V	.293	.654**	.539**	.415*	.585**	.490**

Note: C = Comprehension Scores, V = Vocabulary Scores, SF = social feedback, OC = observational comparison,
P = progress, PS = physiological states, TS = total scores, SC = self-concept., *p<.05 **p<.01

Children's Reading Achievement, Parental Role Construction, and Children's and Parents' Gender

A correlational analysis was carried out with results from the Gates and MacGinitie Reading Test and the Parental Role Construction questionnaire. Results from the data analysis revealed no significant correlations between the total parental role construction scores and children's reading ability. No significant relationships were found to exist when either the gender of children or parents was a factor in the correlational analysis.

Children's Reading Achievement, Parental Self-efficacy, Children's and Parent's Gender

No significant relationships were found to exist between mothers' and fathers' total parental self-efficacy and children's reading ability when broken down by parents' gender. Further, there were no significant relationships between children's reading ability, when broken down by gender and parental self-efficacy of mothers and fathers.

Children's Reading Achievement, Parental Child Development Beliefs, Children's and Parents' Gender

A correlational analysis was carried out on children's reading ability scores and mothers' child development beliefs. Reading ability for children was determined by the Gates and MacGinitie reading achievement test comprising of two scores, one score for vocabulary and one score for comprehension. The mothers' child development beliefs were determined by scores from each statement on the child development beliefs' questionnaire. Significant relationships were found between the following child development statements and scores from the reading test: child development belief statement 10, "children need to visit the community library for materials" was found to be significantly related to vocabulary scores; child development belief statement 13 "a child's intelligence is open to development from the environment" was found to be significantly related to comprehension and vocabulary scores; and child development belief statement 14 "a child possesses many kinds of intelligences, eg. musical, mathematical, verbal" was found to be significantly related to vocabulary scores. Statements 10 and 14 were not found to be significantly related to comprehension scores on the reading achievement test. Results can be found in Table 7:1.

Table 7:1. Correlational Analysis of Children's Reading Achievement and Mothers' Child Development Beliefs

	Statement 10	Statement 13	Statement 14
	Children need to visit the community library for reading materials.	**A child's intelligence is open to development from the environment.**	**A child possesses many kinds of intelligences.**
C	.266	.386**	.209
V	.312*	.419**	.329*

Note: C = Comprehension Scores, V = Vocabulary Scores, *p<.05 **p<.01

The same format was used to determine significant relationships between fathers' child development beliefs and children's reading ability. A significant negative relationship was found to exist between statement number 5 on the child development beliefs questionnaire "children need parents to assist them with reading" and comprehension scores on the Gates and MacGinitie Reading Test. Results can be found in Table 7:2.

Table 7:2. Correlational Analysis of Children's Reading Achievement and Fathers' Child Development Beliefs

	Statement 5. Children need parents to assist them with reading
C	-.432*
V	-.266

Note: C = Comprehension Scores, F = Fathers, *p<.05 **p<.01

The following significant results were found for girls' reading ability and mothers' child development beliefs: comprehension scores and vocabulary scores and statement 10, "children need to visit the community library for reading materials." For girls and fathers the following relationships were significant: vocabulary scores and statement 10, "children need to visit the community library for reading materials." Results can be found in Table 7:3.

Table 7:3. Correlational Analysis of Girls' Reading Achievement and Mothers' and Fathers' Child Development Beliefs

	M Statement 10 Children need to visit the community library for reading materials.	F Statement 10 Children need to visit the community library for reading materials.
C	.414*	.434
V	.426*	.494*

Note: C = Comprehension Scores, V = Vocabulary Scores, M = Mothers, F = Fathers, *p<.05, **p<.01

For boys' reading ability and mothers' child development beliefs the following

significant relationships were found: comprehension scores and statement 3, " parents can influence their children in learning to read"; and vocabulary scores and statement 13, " a child's intelligence open to development from the environment." Boy's comprehension scores and vocabulary scores were found to be significantly related to statement 14, "a child possesses many kinds of intelligence e.g. musical, mathematical, verbal." Results can be found in Table 7:4. Significant relationships were not found between boy's vocabulary scores or boy's comprehension scores and mothers' child development belief that a child's intelligence is open to development from the environment. No significant relationships were found to exist between boys and fathers in this particular analysis.

Table 7:4. Correlational Analysis of Boys' Reading Achievement and Mothers' Child Development Beliefs

	Statement 3 Parents can influence their children in learning to read	Statement 13 A child's intelligence is open to development from the environment.	Statement 14 A child possesses many kinds of intelligences
C	.461*	.344	.589**
V	.116	.463*	.562**

Note: C = Comprehension Scores, V = Vocabulary Scores, *p<.05, **p<.01

Children's Reader Self-perceptions, Parental Role Construction and Children's and Parents' Gender.

Significant relationships were found to exist between girls' and boys' reader self-perceptions and mothers' parental role construction. Girls' progress scores and mothers' parental role construction scores resulted in a negative correlation. Boys' observational comparisons scores were found to be significantly related to mothers' parental role

construction. There were no significant relationships found between fathers' parental role construction and boys' and girls' self-perceptions of reading (see Table 8:1).

Table 8:1. Correlational Analysis of Girls' and Boys' Reader Self-perceptions and Mothers' Overall Parental Role Construction

	PRC
PS (g)	-.048
PS (b)	.124
P (g)	-.359*
P (b)	.437
OC (g)	.103
OC (b)	.470*
SF (g)	.126
SF (b)	.298
TS (g)	-.066
TS (b)	.407
SC (g)	.194
SC (b)	.230

Note: g = girls, b = boys, PRC = Parental Role Construction, P = progress, SF = social feedback, OC = observational comparison, PS = physiological states, TS = total scores, SC = self-concept., *p<.05 **p<.01

Children's Reader Self-perceptions, Parental Role Construction, and Parent's Gender

A significant relationship was found to exist between observational comparisons of children based on results of the Reader Self-perception Scale and parental role construction scores for mothers. No significant results were found for aspects of children's reader self-perceptions and fathers' parental role construction (see Table 8:2).

Table 8:2. Correlational Analysis of Children's Reader Self-perceptions and Mothers' Overall Parental Role Construction

	PRC
PS	.038
P	.036
OC	.286*
SF	.217
TS	.208
SC	.209

Note: g = girls, b = boys, PRC = Parental Role Construction, P = progress, SF = social feedback, OC = observational comparison, PS = physiological states, TS = total scores, SC = self-concept., *p<.05 **p<.01.

Children's Reader Self-perceptions and Parental Self-efficacy, and Children's and Parents' Gender

Using the Pearson-Product-Moment Method to analyze the data involving children's reader self-perceptions and parental self-efficacy, one significant relationship was found to exist between girls and fathers. The girls' scores for progress on the reader self-perception survey and fathers' self-efficacy scores were found to be significantly related (see Table 9:1).

Table 9:1. Correlational Analysis of Girls' Reader Self-perceptions and Fathers' Parental Self-Efficacy

	PSE
PS	.449
P	.531*
OC	.317
SF	.196
TS	.445
SC	.179

Note: P = Progress, F = Fathers, PSE = Parental Self-Efficacy, *p< .05, **p< .01

Children's Reader Self-perceptions, Parental Child Development Beliefs, and Parents' Gender

Unlike the other two parent questionnaires, parental self-efficacy and parental role construction, the researcher did not use a total score to determine relationships between children's reader self-perceptions and parents' child development beliefs. Since the beliefs were so specific and different from each other, the researcher used each of the 14 statements from the survey and correlated those with aspects of children's reader self-perceptions (social feedback, physiological states, observational comparisons, progress and self-concept measured by question 1).

The Pearson-Product-Moment Method was used to determine if significant relationships existed between reader self-perceptions and parents' child development

beliefs. The following significant relationships were found between Statement 11, "children need to limit the time spent watching television in order to learn to read" and social feedback, physiological states, and the total reader self-perception score. Children's self-perceptions of observational comparison, progress and their overall self-concept were not found to be significantly related to statement 11 (see Table 10:1).

Table 10:1. Correlational Analysis of Children's Reader Self-perceptions and Parental Child Development Beliefs

	Statement 11 Children need to limit the time spent watching television in order to learn to read well.
PS	.279**
P	.248
SF	.513**
OC	.042
TS	.377**
SC	-.038

Note: SF = social feedback, OC = observational comparison, P = progress, PS = physiological states, TS = total scores, SC = self-concept., *p<.05 **p<.01

The correlational analysis of reader self-perceptions of children, parents' child development beliefs and parents' gender revealed the following results. Significant relationships among mothers' beliefs and children's self-perceptions of reading were found to exist. Significant relationships were found between, statement 3, mothers' child development belief that parents can influence their children in learning to read well, and children's self-perceptions of progress, social feedback and total self-perceptions score. A significant relationship was found between, statement 5, children need parents to assist

them with reading and children's self-perceptions of physiological states. A significant relationship was found between children's observational comparisons' scores and mothers' belief that children learn to read better when parents and teachers respect their curiosity and questions about stories, print and reading. Significant relationships were found between progress scores and statement 8, mothers' belief that children need someone to read to them and their belief that a child's intelligence is open to development from the environment, statement 13.

Significant relationships were found between mothers' belief that a child possesses many kinds of intelligences (musical, mathematical, verbal), statement 14, and the following self-perceptions of readers: observational comparisons, progress, physiological states, social feedback, total scores, and self-concept (see Table 11:1).

Table 11:1. Correlational Analysis of Children's Reader Self-perceptions and Mothers' Child Development Beliefs

	Statement 3 Parents can influence their children to learn to read well.	Statement 5 Children need parents to assist them with reading.	Statement 7 Children learn to read better when parents and teachers respect their curiosity...	Statement 8 Children need someone to read to them.	Statement 13 A child's intelligence is open to development from the environment	Statement 14 A child possesses many kinds of intelligences
OC	.097	.001	.447**	.-006	.199	.471**
P	.321*	-.096	.271	.502**	.398**	.398**
PS	.214	.292*	.073	.012	.106	.398**
SF	.438*	.202	.183	.175	.187	.502**
TS	.335*	.138	.274	.204	.273	.564**
SC	.059	-.054	.179	.001	.240	.461**

Note: OC = Observational Comparisons, PS = Physiological States, P = Progress, SF = Social Feedback, TS = Total Scores (17 items), SC = Self-concept, *p<. 05, **p<. 01

An analysis of fathers' child development beliefs and children's reader self-perceptions revealed a significant relationship between fathers' belief that a child's intelligence is open to development from the environment, statement 13, and children's social feedback scores for reading (see Table 11:2).

Table 11:2. Correlational Analysis of Children's Reader Self-perceptions and Fathers' Child Development Beliefs

	Statement 13 A child's intelligence is open to development from the environment.
PS	.224
P	.243
SF	.433*
OC	.339
TS	.360
SC	.269

Note: OC = Observational Comparisons, PS = Physiological States, P = Progress, SF = Social Feedback, TS = Total Scores (17 items), SC = Self-concept, *p<. 05, **p<. 01

Children's Reader Self-perceptions, Parental Child Development Beliefs, Children's, and Parents' Gender

To determine relationships between boys' and girls' reader self-perceptions and mothers' and fathers' child development beliefs, a correlational analysis was used. The following relationships were found between girls' reader self-perceptions and mothers' child development beliefs. Mothers' belief that children need parents to assist then with reading, statement 5, and girls' self-perceptions of physiological states while reading was found to be positively significantly related. The relationship between mothers' belief that children learn to read better when parents and teachers respect their curiosity and

questions about stories, print and reading, statement 7, and girls' perceptions of observational comparisons was found to be significant. Mothers' belief that children need someone to read to them, statement 8, and girls' self-perceptions of progress was found to be significantly related. Mothers' belief that children need to visit the community library for reading materials, statement 10, was related significantly to girls' self-perceptions of observational comparisons and, lastly, mothers' belief that a child's intelligence is open to development from the environment, statement 13, was found to be related significantly to girls' perceptions of progress in reading (see Table 11:3).

Significant relationships were found for girls' reader self-perceptions and fathers' child development beliefs. Fathers' belief that children learn to read better when parents and teachers respect their curiosity and questions about stories, print and reading, statement 7 was found to be related significantly to girls' observational comparisons of reading. Fathers' belief that children need someone to read to them, statement 8, was also found to be related significantly to girls' perceptions of observational comparisons. Fathers' belief that a child's intelligence is open to development from the environment, statement 13, and girls' self-perceptions of physiological states, social feedback, total scores, and self-concept as a reader were also found to be significantly related.

Table 11:3. Correlational Analysis of Girls' Reader Self-perceptions and Mothers' Child Development Beliefs

	Statement 5 Children need parents to assist them with reading.	Statement 7 Children learn to read better when parent and teachers respect their curiosity and questions about stories...	Statement 8 Children need someone to read to them	Statement 10 Children need to visit the community library for reading materials.	Statement 13 A child's intelligence is open to development from the environment.
PS	.506**	.030	-.019	.028	.003
P	-.073	.179	.531**	.128	.457*
SF	.307	.328	.098	.275	.233
OC	.056	.558**	-.019	.403*	.307
TS	.320	.362	.098	.286	.354
SC	-.014	.152	-.039	.082	.233

Note: OC = Observational Comparisons, PS = Physiological States, P = Progress, SF = Social Feedback, TS = Total Scores (17 items), SC = Self-concept, *p<. 05, **p<. 01

Fathers' belief that a child possesses many kinds of intelligences, eg. Musical, mathematical, verbal, in statement 14, and girls' self-perceptions of physiological states while reading, social feedback, total scores, and self-concept as reader were found to be related significantly (Table 11:4).

Table 11:4 Correlational Analysis of Girls' Reader Self-perceptions and Fathers' Child Development Beliefs

	Statement 7 Children learn to read better when parent and teachers respect their curiosity and questions about stories…	Statement 8 Children need someone to read to them.	Statement 13 A child's intelligence is open to development from the environment.	Statement 14 A child possesses many kinds of intelligences e.g. musical, mathematical, verbal.
OC	.554*	.559*	.381	.431
P	.444	.344	.460	.477
PS	.256	.178	.485*	.518*
SF	.175	.098	.511*	.499*
TS	.423	.338	.573*	.590*
SC	.314	.022	.498*	.650**

Note: OC = Observational Comparisons, PS = Physiological States, P = Progress, SF = Social Feedback, TS = Total Scores (17 items), SC = Self-concept, *p<. 05, **p<. 01

Correlational analyses were also carried out on boys' reader self-perceptions and mothers' and fathers' child development beliefs. Significant relationships were found between aspects of mothers' child development and boys' reader self-perceptions. There were no significant relationships found to exist between fathers' child development beliefs and boys' reader self-perceptions. The significant relationships found in the analysis were: mothers' belief that parents can influence their children in learning to read well, statement 3, and boys' self-perceptions of progress, social feedback, and total scores; mothers' belief that children learn to read better when parents and teachers respect their curiosity and questions about stories, print, and reading, statement 7, and boys' self-perceptions progress while reading; mothers' belief that children need someone to read to them, statement 8, and boys' progress scores and social feedback

scores; and mothers' belief that a child possesses many kinds of intelligences, eg., Musical, mathematical, verbal, as contained in statement 14, and boys' self-perceptions physiological states, progress, observational comparisons, social feedback scores, total scores, and self-concept as reader (see Table 11:5).

Table 11:5. Correlational Analysis of Boys' Reader Self-perceptions and Mothers' Child Development Beliefs

	Statement 3 Parents can influence their children in learn to read	Statement 7 Children learn to read better when parent and teachers respect their curiosity and questions about stories...	Statement 8 Children need someone to read to them.	Statement 14 A child possesses many kinds of intelligences e.g. musical, mathematical, verbal.
OC	-.017	.338	.031	.682**
P	.626**	.645**	.529*	.609**
PS	.417	.343	.321	.758**
SF	.639**	.272	.507*	.668**
TS	.489*	.436	.436	.805**
SC	.147	.391	.087	.685**

Note: OC = Observational Comparisons, PS = Physiological States, P = Progress, SF = Social Feedback, TS = Total Scores (17 items), SC = Self-concept, *p<. 05, **p<. 01

Parental Child Development Beliefs and Parent's Gender

A one-way ANOVA was carried out to determine differences in mothers' and fathers' child development beliefs. Statement 7 on the Child Development questionnaire was found to be significantly different. Statement 7, stated, *Children learn to read better when parents and teachers respect their curiosity and questions about stories, print and reading.* Means and standard deviations of mothers' and fathers' child development belief represented in statement 7 can be found in Table 12. The analysis of variance

revealed a significant difference, $F(1, 81) = 6.246$, $p < .05$.

Table 12. Descriptive Statistics Means and Standard Deviations of Statement 7 for Mothers and Fathers

	Mothers		Fathers	
	M	SD	M	SD
Statement 7				
Children learn to read better when parents and teachers respect their curiosity and questions about stories, print and reading	4.9	(.33)	4.6	(.54)

Note: M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

Parental Self-efficacy and Parent's Gender

A one-way ANOVA was performed to determine a difference between mothers' and fathers' total parental self-efficacy scores. A significant difference was found to exist. The analysis reveals mothers' total self-efficacy scores to be significantly higher than those of the fathers'. Table 13 contains the means and standard deviations of mothers' and fathers' parental self-efficacy scores. The analysis of variance revealed a significant difference, $F(1, 81) = 13.850$, $p < .05$.

Table 13. Descriptive Statistics Means and Standard Deviations of Mothers' and Fathers' total Parental Self-efficacy Scores.

	Mothers		Fathers	
	M	SD	M	SD
Parental Self-efficacy	31.5	(2.23)	29.6	(3.07)

Note: M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

Parental Role Construction and Parents' Gender

A one-way ANOVA was performed to determine if a significant difference existed between mothers' and fathers' parental role construction scores. A significant difference was not found. The means and standard deviations are shown in Table 14. The analysis of variance did not reveal a significant difference, $F(1, 81) = 1.102$, $p > .05$.

Table 14. Descriptive Statistics Means and Standard Deviations of Mothers' and Fathers' Parental Role Construction Scores.

	Mothers		Fathers	
	M	SD	M	SD
Parental Role Construction	65.2	(6.31)	63.5	(7.17)

Note: M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

Summary of Findings

The following is a list of the positive significant findings found in the study:

1. Children's self-perceptions of social feedback and their comprehension scores.
2. Children's self-perceptions of observational comparisons and their comprehension scores and vocabulary scores separately.
3. Children's self-perceptions of progress and their comprehension and vocabulary scores separately.
4. Children's self-perceptions of physiological states and their comprehension and vocabulary scores separately.
5. Children's total self-perceptions scores and their comprehension and vocabulary scores separately.
6. Boys' self-perceptions of social feedback and boys' comprehension scores.
7. Boys' self-perceptions of observational comparisons and boys' comprehension and vocabulary scores.
8. Boys' self-perceptions of progress and boys' comprehension and vocabulary scores separately.
9. Boys' self-perceptions of physiological states and boys' comprehension and vocabulary scores separately.
10. Boys' total self-perception scores and comprehension and vocabulary scores separately.
11. Boys' reader self-perceptions (self-concept - question 1) and vocabulary scores.
12. Parents' child development beliefs (statement 12 – A child's intelligence is fixed at birth.) and children's comprehension and vocabulary scores separately.

13. Mothers' child development belief (statement 13 – A child's intelligence is open to development from the environment.) and comprehension and vocabulary scores separately.

14. Mothers' child development beliefs (statements 10 – Children need to visit the community library for reading materials, statement 13 – A child's intelligence is open to development from the environment , and 14 - A child possesses many kinds of intelligences (e.g. musical, mathematical, verbal) and vocabulary scores.

15. Mothers' child development beliefs (statement 10– Children need to visit the community library for reading materials) and girls' comprehension scores.

16. Fathers' child development beliefs (statement 10 – Children need to visit the community library for reading materials) and girls' vocabulary scores.

17. Mothers' child development beliefs (statements 3 – Parents can influence children in learning to read, and 14- A child possesses many kinds of intelligences (e.g. musical, mathematical, verbal) and boys' comprehension scores.

18. Mothers' child development beliefs (statements 13 – A child's intelligence is open to development from the environment and, 14 - A child possesses many kinds of intelligences (e.g. musical, mathematical, verbal) and boys' vocabulary scores.

19. Mothers' parental role construction and children's reader self-perceptions of observational comparisons.

20. Mothers' parental role construction and girls' reader self-perceptions of observational comparisons.

21. Fathers' parental self-efficacy and girls' reader self-perceptions of progress.

22. Parents' child development beliefs (statement 11 – Children need to limit the time

spent in watching television in order to learn to read well) and children's self-perceptions of physiological states.

23. Parents' child development beliefs (statement 11 - Children need to limit the time spent in watching television in order to learn to read well) and children's self-perceptions of progress.

24. Parents' child development beliefs (statement 11- Children need to limit the time spent in watching television in order to learn to read well) and children's reader self-perceptions of social feedback.

25. Parents' child development beliefs (statement 11 – Children need to limit the time spent in watching television in order to learn to read well) and children's total reader self-perceptions (question 1).

26. Mothers' child development beliefs (statements 3 – parents can influence their children in learning to read, 8 – Children need someone to read to them, 13 A child's intelligence is open to development from the environment, and 14- A child possesses many kinds of intelligences (e.g. musical, mathematical, verbal) and children's self-perceptions of progress.

27. Mothers' child development beliefs (statement 7 – Children learn to read better when parents and teachers respect their curiosity and questions about stories, print, and reading) and children's reader self-perceptions of observational comparisons.

28. Mothers' child development beliefs (statements 5 – Children need parents to assist them with reading and 14 – A child possesses many kinds of intelligences e.g. musical, mathematical, verbal) and children's self-perceptions of physiological states.

29. Mothers' child development beliefs (statements 3 – Parents can influence their

children in learning to read and 14 -A child possesses many kinds of intelligences e.g. musical, mathematical, verbal) and children's self-perceptions of social feedback.

30. Mothers' child development beliefs (statements 3 – Parents can influence their children in learning to read and 14 -A child possesses many kinds of intelligences e.g. musical, mathematical, verbal) and children's total reader self-perceptions.

31. Mothers' child development beliefs (statement 14 - A child possesses many kinds of intelligences e.g. musical, mathematical, verbal) and children's reader self-perceptions (question 1).

32. Father's child development beliefs (statement 13- A child's intelligence is open to development from the environment) and children's self-perceptions of social feedback.

33. Mothers' child development beliefs (statements 7 – Children learn to read better when parents and teachers respect their curiosity and questions about stories, print and reading and 10 – Children need to visit the community library for reading materials) and girls' self-perceptions of observational comparisons.

34. Mothers' child development beliefs (statements 8 – Children need someone to read to them and 13 - A child's intelligence is open to development from the environment) and girls' self-perceptions of progress.

35. Mothers' child development beliefs (statement 5 – Children need parents to assist them reading) and girls' self-perceptions of physiological states.

36. Father's child development beliefs (statement 7 -Children learn to read better when parents and teachers respect their curiosity and questions about stories, print and reading) and girls' self-perceptions of observational comparisons.

37. Fathers' child development beliefs (statement 8 - Children need someone to read to them) and girls' self-perceptions of observational comparisons.

38. Fathers' child development beliefs (statements 13 - A child's intelligence is open to development from the environment and 14 - A child possesses many kinds of intelligences e.g. musical, mathematical, verbal) and girls' self-perceptions of physiological states, social feedback, total scores, and question 1.

39. Mothers' child development beliefs (statement 3 – Parents can influence their children in learning to read, 7 - Children learn to read better when parents and teachers respect their curiosity and questions about stories, print and reading, 8 - Children need someone to read to them, 14- A child possesses many kinds of intelligences e.g. musical, mathematical, verbal) and boys' self-perceptions of progress.

40. Mothers' child development beliefs (statements 3– Parents can influence their children in learning to read, 8 - Children need someone to read to them, 14- A child possesses many kinds of intelligences e.g. musical, mathematical, verbal) and boys' self-perceptions of social feedback.

41. Mothers' child development beliefs (statements 3– Parents can influence their children in learning to read, 8 - Children need someone to read to them, 14- A child possesses many kinds of intelligences e.g. musical, mathematical, verbal) and boys' total reader self-perceptions.

42. Mothers' child development beliefs (statement 14 - A child possesses many kinds of intelligences e.g. musical, mathematical, verbal) and boys' reader self-perceptions of observational comparisons.

The following are negatively significant relationships:

1. Fathers' child development beliefs (statement 5 - Children need parents to assist them with reading) was negatively correlated with children's comprehension scores.
2. Mothers' parental role construction negatively correlated with girls' reader self-perceptions of progress.

The following is a list of significant differences found as a result of the ANOVA analyses.

1. Mothers' and Fathers' child development beliefs
2. Mothers' and Fathers' self-efficacy.
3. Boys' and girls' perceptions of physiological states.
4. Boys' and girls' social feedback perceptions.
5. Boys' and girls' total self-perception scores.
6. Boys' and girls' general self-concepts (question 1).

Chapter V

Summary, Findings and Conclusions, Discussion, Educational Implications, and Recommendations for Further Research.

Introduction

Chapter 5 presents a summary and discussion of the findings revealed by the statistical analysis of data collected during the investigation. Educational implications have been drawn from the findings and recommendations have been outlined for further research.

Summary

A general indication in the research literature shows positive relationships among parents' self-efficacy, children's perceptions of reading and children's reading ability. Parents who value the role that effort plays in children's reading development more than the role of intelligence had children with higher reader self-perceptions and achievements in reading (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Henderson & Dweck, 1990; and Stevenson et al., 1990). Parents who have a sense that they are capable of helping children with their reading education can influence children to perceive their own ability to read positively, and their resultant reading ability.

When examining the reader self-perceptions of boys and girls in the literature, girls were found to have higher self-perceptions than boys. Research literature was also indicated that children with high self-perceptions of reading had higher achievement levels in reading (Henk &

Melnick, 1995, and Quandt & Selznick, 1984). Girls were often found to have higher reading achievement scores (Ostling, 1992; Oldford-Matchim, 1998 and Entwisle and Baker, 1983).

Few studies have been carried out examining the specific relationships between parents' beliefs and children's self-perceptions of academic achievement and reading. Likewise, few studies have examined the parental role in relation to parental beliefs for their children's academic achievement in reading and children's gender.

Findings and Conclusions

Children's Reader Self-perceptions, Reading Achievement and Gender

Children's reader self-perceptions and reading achievement were found to be related significantly in this study and is supported by previous studies (e.g. Bandura, et. at., 1996; Grolnick and Sloiaczek, 1990, and Lynch, 2002). Children's self- perceptions of observational comparisons, progress, physiological states, and their total scores were all found to be related to comprehension and vocabulary scores on the reading achievement test. Observational comparison is defined as how a child perceives her or his reading performance in comparison with the performance of classmates (Henk & Melnick, 1995). Progress is defined as how one's perceptions of present reading performance compares with past performance while physiological states is defined as the internal feelings the child experiences during reading (Henk & Melnick, 1995).

Observational comparisons, progress, physiological states and total reader self-perception scores were related to comprehension, i.e., how well a child understands what he or she is reading in a given passage and vocabulary, i.e., word knowledge a child has. Social feedback scores were found to be significantly related to comprehension scores only. Social feedback scores referred to a child's direct or indirect input about reading from teachers, classmates, and people in the child's

family (Henk & Melnick, 1995). The present study reveals that how children perceive their performance in reading is related to their overall reading achievement. Similar findings were found by Lynch (2002), who revealed a significant relationship between self-perceptions of progress and reading achievement.

When gender was examined in the relationship between children's reader self-perceptions and their reading achievement, it was found that boys' reader self-perceptions were found to be significantly related to their reading achievement. Boys' self-perceptions of observational comparisons, progress, physiological states, and total self-perception scores were found to be significantly related to boys' reading achievement. Therefore, how boys view their performance in comparison to others, their own progress, how they feel when they read and their overall self-perceptions of reading were significantly related to their reading achievement.

Boys' perception of social feedback was related to their comprehension scores only and their self-concept as indicated by their responses to question 1 (Do you think you are a good reader?) was related to vocabulary scores only. This further demonstrates boys' perceptions of reading relating to reading achievement. They think that others judge their comprehension while they seem to judge vocabulary. As well, the feedback they receive from significant others relate to their self-concepts as readers. According to Pink (1996) and Stevenson and Norman (1986), reading for the purpose of enjoyment may result in more reading practice. Hence, attitudes toward reading become more differentiated between boys and girls as they progress through school because boys, with less positive attitudes toward reading, may not necessarily choose to read as often as girls.

Children's Reader Self-perceptions

Girls showed higher mean scores than did boys on all measures of the scale for reader self-perceptions. Significant differences were found between boys' and girls' perceptions of physiological states, social feedback, total self-perception scores and their self-concept as indicated by responses to question 1 (Do you think you are a good reader?) in favor of girls. Physiological states measured the internal feelings children experienced while reading. Emotionally girls felt better as readers. These findings support other studies such as Brown's (1992) who found that boys had less positive reading attitudes than did girls. A study by Byrne (1993) revealed differences in grade six students' attitudes toward reading in favor of girls.

Social feedback is a total measure of children's perceptions of feedback from parents, teachers, and peers. Girls' scores of self-perceptions of social feedback were found to be significantly higher than boys' scores therefore, the girls appear to perceive more positive feedback about reading from significant others, primarily family, teachers and peers, than do boys. In Lynch's study (2002), she found that girls had significantly higher perceptions of social feedback and physiological states than did boys.

Overall self-perception scores and self-concept measured by responses given to question 1 (Do you think you are a good reader?) were also found to be significantly higher for girls than for boys. Total self-perception scores included a combination of all scores including progress, social feedback, observational comparisons, physiological states, and self-concept. Girls' overall self-perceptions were found to be significantly higher than those of boys' according to test results. These findings support the studies carried out by Brown (1992) and O'Sullivan (1992).

Children's Reading Achievement

Girls' reading achievement mean scores were found to be higher than boys' scores; however, there were no significant differences between the comprehension scores and vocabulary scores according to gender. These findings support other studies carried out in Newfoundland (Legge, 1994; Byrne, 1993; Pink, 1996; and Whiteway, 1995. Those studies covered grades two through six. Performance differences in reading often favored girls rather than boys (Ostling, 1992; and O'Sullivan, 1992) however, that was not found in this study. Further, results provided by CTBS scoring revealed females having more success with reading achievement than did boys in Newfoundland and Labrador (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1991, 1993, 1996, 1998).

Parental Self-efficacy, Children's Reader Self-perceptions, Parents' and Children's Gender

The relationship between parent's self-efficacy and children's reader self-perceptions was found to be significant. Bandura (1997) and Zimmerman (1992) found positive relationships between parental self-efficacy and reader self-perceptions of children. The positive significant relationship, however, existed between fathers' parental self-efficacy and girls self-perceptions of progress. That relationship was the only significant relationship to be found. Therefore, these results suggest that fathers believed positively about their ability to help improve children's reading achievement when girls had stronger perceptions they were improving their reading performance compared with past performance in reading.

Parental Self-efficacy, Children's Reading Achievement, Parents' and Children's Gender

There were no significant relationships found to exist between parental self-efficacy and

children's reading achievement. When gender was examined in the relationship between the two no significant relationships were found to exist. O'Sullivan (1992) found no significant differences in parents' self-efficacy and children's reading achievement. Furthermore, O'Sullivan did not find a difference between parents' self-efficacy for boys' or girls' reading achievements.

Child Development Beliefs, Children's Reader Self-perceptions, Parent's and children's Gender.

Significant relationships were found to exist between parents' child development beliefs and children's reader self-perceptions. Statement 11, "children need to limit their time spent in watching television in order to learn well", was positively related to children's perceptions of their physiological states while reading, progress in reading, social feedback about their reading, and total self-perception as reader scores. Parents who had strong beliefs that television time should be limited had children who had positive feelings while reading, felt they were progressing well in their reading abilities and had positive feedback from others about their reading and overall more positive perceptions of themselves as readers.

When the analysis was broken down by parent's gender, more significant relationships were found to exist between mothers' child development beliefs and children's reader self-perceptions than for fathers' beliefs and children's perceptions. More specifically, mother's beliefs that parents can influence their children in learning to read, that a child's intelligence is open to development from the environment, and that a child possesses many kinds of intelligences, e.g., musical, mathematical, verbal were significantly positively related to children's perceptions of their reading progress. These results support findings made by Grolnick, Ryan, and Deci (1991),

where maternal involvement was positively associated with children's perceived competence. When mothers strongly believed a child's intelligence was open to development from the environment and that a child possesses many kinds of intelligences, the children felt more positively about their reading improvement in the present. This finding supports claims made by Bandura (1997).

Mothers' beliefs that children learn to read better when parents and teachers respect their curiosity and questions about stories, print and reading was significantly related to children's perceptions of observational comparisons. Mothers who believed that children learn to read better when parents and teachers respect their curiosity about reading have children who feel positive about their own reading ability in comparison with their classmates.

Positive significant relationships were found between mothers' belief that children need parents to assist them with reading and the belief that a child possesses many kinds of intelligences and children's perceptions of physiological states. Mothers believing that parents should assist their children with reading and believing that children have different types of intelligence were related to children having positive feelings while reading.

Mothers' beliefs that parents can influence their children in learning to read, and the belief that a child possesses many kinds of intelligences were significantly related to perceptions of social feedback by children. The more mothers believed that they can influence their children in learning to read well and that children possess many kinds of intelligences, the stronger children perceive the social feedback from others about their reading ability. Further, mothers' beliefs that a child possesses many kinds of intelligences was also significantly related to children's overall reader self-perception scores and reader self-concept. Overall, the more mothers believed strongly

that a child has many kinds of intelligences, the more positively children perceived their reading ability.

For fathers' beliefs about child development and children's reader self-perceptions, only one significant relationship was found to exist. The positive significant relationship was found to exist between fathers' belief that "a child's intelligence is open to development from the environment" and children's self-perceptions of social feedback. The more strongly the father believed a child's intelligence was open to development from the child's environment, the more positively children perceived feedback from others about their reading ability.

When examining relationships between mothers' and fathers' beliefs about child development and boys' and girls' reader self-perceptions, the majority of significant relationships were found to exist between mothers and boys. Mothers' beliefs that children learn to read better when parents and teachers respect their curiosity and questions about stories, print and reading, and/or the belief that children need to visit the community library for reading materials, was positively related to girls' perceptions of observational comparisons. The more strongly mothers believed children learned to read better when their questions about reading are respected by parents and teachers and that visiting the library is important, the more positively girls perceived their reading ability in comparison to their classmates.

Mothers' beliefs that children need someone to read to them, and their belief that children's intelligence is open to development from the environment were positively related to girls' perceptions of reading progress. The more positively mothers believed children needed someone to read to them and that children's intelligence is open to development, the more positively girls felt about their improvement in reading ability.

Mothers' belief that children need parents to assist them with reading was related positively to girls' perceptions of physiological states. The stronger mothers believed that parents should assist children with reading, the more positively girls felt about reading.

Significant positive relationships were also found to exist between fathers' beliefs and girls' reader self-perceptions. There were no significant relationships found to exist between fathers' beliefs and boys' reader self-perceptions. Fathers' belief that children learn to read better when parents and teachers respect their curiosity and questions about stories, print and reading was related to girls' perceptions of observational comparisons. The more fathers believed children learned to read better when children's curiosity about reading was respected, the more positively girls felt about their reading ability in comparison to their classmates.

Fathers' child development belief that children need someone to read to them was also positively significantly related to girls' perceptions of observational comparisons. The more strongly fathers believed children needed someone to read to them, the more positively girls felt about their reading ability in comparison to their classmates.

Fathers' belief that a child's intelligence is open to development from the environment and their belief that a child possesses many kinds of intelligences, e.g., musical, mathematical, verbal, was significantly related to girls' perceptions of physiological states, social feedback, and reader self-concept as measured by question 1 (Do you think you are a good reader?) and overall reader self-perception scores. Therefore, the more favourably fathers believed a child's intelligence was open to development from the environment and that children have many kinds of intelligences, the more favorably girls perceived their reading ability in comparison to their classmates, the social feedback from others, their general reading ability and their overall self-perceptions of reading.

As stated earlier, most of the positive correlations found to exist when looking at the relationships between child development beliefs and children's reader self-perceptions and when parents' and children's gender were taken into consideration, were between mothers and boys. Mothers' beliefs that parents can influence their children in learning to read, that children learn to read better when parents and teachers respect their curiosity and questions about stories, print and reading, that children need someone to read to them, and that children possess many kinds of intelligences (musical, mathematical, verbal) were found to be significantly related to boys' perceptions of progress. Therefore, when mothers strongly believe that parents can influence children's reading development, respect children's reading curiosity, recognize the need for children to be read to, and that a child possesses many kinds of intelligences, then the stronger boys' perceived their improvements in reading.

Mother's beliefs that parents can influence their children in learning to read, that children need someone to read to them, and that a child possesses many kinds of intelligences (musical, mathematical, verbal) were found to be significantly related to boys' perceptions of social feedback about reading. The more positively mothers' believed that they can influence their children's reading development, recognize the need for children to have someone read to them, and believe that children possess many kinds of intelligences, the more positively boys felt about feedback from others about their reading ability.

The same three child development beliefs as stated above were found to be related to boys' total reader self-perceptions scores. Hence, mothers who believed strongly that they can influence their child's reading development, and recognize that children need someone to read to them, and believe that children possess many kinds of intelligences, the more positively boys felt about their

total self-perceptions about their reading ability.

Mothers' belief that a child possesses many kinds of intelligences (musical, mathematical, verbal) was significantly related to boys' perceptions of observational comparisons. The stronger mothers believed that a child possesses many kinds of intelligences, the stronger boys felt about their reading in comparison to their classmates. The findings support claims made by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997); Okagaki and Sternberg (1993); and Wigfeild and Eccles (1992),that if parents believe that unstable and controllable factors, such as effort, are responsible for children's poor performance they are more likely to involve themselves and persist until children experience success.

Parental Role Construction, Children's Reader Self-perceptions, Parents' Gender and Children's Gender.

No significant relationships were found to exist overall between parents' role construction and children's self-perceptions of reading. When examining for gender, significant relationships were found to exist between mothers' parental role construction and children's perceptions of reading. More specifically, the positive significant relationship was found between mothers' parental role construction and children's self-perceptions of observational comparisons. The more strongly mothers felt her role as a parent was influential in children's reading ability, the more strongly girls felt about their reading ability in comparison to their classmates. According to Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997), when parental roles are consistent among groups concerning the behaviours they are supposed to perform, parents receive consistent environmental pressure and support for performing those behaviours.

When examining parents' and children's gender, two significant relationships were found, one positive, the other negative. Mother's parental role construction was found to be positively related to girls' self-perceptions of progress. Girls whose mothers felt more positively in influencing children's reading ability, felt more positively about their reading improvement. The negative relationship was found to exist between mothers' parental role construction and girls' perceptions of observational comparison. When girls felt more negatively about their reading ability in comparison to their classmates, mothers felt more positively that they could help. The findings support claims by Stelios (1999), that parents who believed their own role was important for their children's academic achievement tended to be controlling and keen in developing their child's interests. As well, a line of influence exists between parental attribution style, the type and degree of parental involvement and the child's actual achievement (Stelios, 1999).

Parental Child Development Beliefs, Children's Reading Achievement, Parents' Gender and Children's Gender.

Significant relationships were found to exist between parental child development beliefs and children's reading ability. Past studies have found linkages between stronger academic performance and parents' beliefs in independent thinking, personal responsibility, and valuing children's development of self-respect (Schaefer & Edgerton, 1985; Brody & Stoneman, 1992).

When examining relationships for parents' gender and children's reading ability, the following significant relationships were found. Mothers' belief that a child's intelligence is open to development from the environment was related to higher performance in children's comprehension and vocabulary scores. The more positively mothers felt that children's intelligence was open to development the better were children's comprehension skills and vocabulary knowledge.

Mothers' beliefs that children need to visit the community library for reading materials, that a child's intelligence is open to development from the environment, and/or that a child possesses many kinds of intelligences (musical, mathematical, verbal) were found to be significantly related to children's vocabulary scores. Mothers who felt positively about children needing to visit the community library, who more often recognized that a child's intelligence is open to development from the environment, and/or that a child possesses many kinds of intelligences, was related to children's being more highly skilled in the area of vocabulary.

A negative relationship was found to exist between fathers' child development beliefs that children need parents to assist them with reading and children's comprehension scores. The better children's comprehension scores, the less fathers believed that parents need to assist children with reading.

When examining for relationships between parents' gender and children's gender in relation to parents' beliefs about child development and children's reading ability, the following significant relationships were found. Mothers' belief that children need to visit the community library for reading materials, was found to be related to girls' comprehension scores. The more strongly mothers believed children need to visit the library, the higher were girls' comprehension scores.

Fathers' belief that children need to visit the community library for reading materials was significantly related to girls' vocabulary scores. Fathers who believed strongly in visiting the community was related to girls' achieving higher vocabulary scores. The more fathers believed in the importance of visiting the library, the better were the girls' vocabulary skills.

Mothers' child development beliefs that parents can influence children in learning to read and that a child possesses many kinds of intelligences (e.g. musical, mathematical, verbal) were significantly related to boys' comprehension scores. The stronger mothers believed that parents are influential in children's learning to read and that children possess many types of intelligences, the stronger were the boys' comprehension abilities. Further, mothers' beliefs that a child's intelligence is open to development from the environment and that children possess many kinds of intelligences was found to be related to boys' vocabulary scores. In summary, the more mothers believed that a child's intelligence was not a fixed entity but open to development and/or that there are many kinds of intelligences, the better were boys' vocabulary knowledge.

Conclusion

What parents believe about parenting is related to their own parenting and to virtually every aspect of children's developmental accomplishments (Irving and McGillicuddy-De Lisi, 2002, p.485)

Based on the results of this study, relationships were found to exist between children's reader self-perceptions, children's reading ability, child development beliefs, parental role construction, and parental self-efficacy. Parents' and children's gender were also studied because they are crucial for understanding the relationships among the above variables. Many positive relationships were found in the analysis as well as two negative ones. The first negative relationship existed between mothers' parental role construction and daughters' perceptions of observational comparison. The other negative relationship existed between fathers' beliefs that they need to assist their children with reading and children's comprehension scores. When children are reading well, mothers and fathers believe they do not have the same parental role and need to

assist children with their reading. There were no significant relationships found between parental role construction and children's reading ability, even when broken down by gender.

Parental child development beliefs were related to many aspects of reader self-perceptions and reading achievement. Statements concerning parents' beliefs about intelligence were significantly related to children's perceptions of progress, physiological states and overall self-perceptions of reading and were also significantly related to children's comprehension and vocabulary scores. When broken down by gender, significant relationships were found to exist between mothers and daughters, mothers and sons, and fathers and daughters. Based on the results, parental beliefs about children's development are strongly related to children's perceptions of reading and their overall reading ability. However, there were no significant relationships between fathers and sons in this study. It is probable that fathers may believe their impact as a parent may involve encouraging their sons to take part in recreational activities and mothers are responsible for their sons' educational and academic needs.

Only one significant relationship was found between fathers' parental self-efficacy and girls' perceptions of progress. No other relationships were found between parental self-efficacy and children's reader self-perceptions or between parental self-efficacy and children's reading achievement when broken down by parents' and children's gender.

Significant relationships were found between overall parental role construction and children's reader self-perceptions only when broken down by parents' gender and children, and parents' and children's gender. Mothers' parental role construction was related to children's perceptions of observational comparisons and girls' perceptions of progress. A negative relationship was found between mothers' parental role construction and girls' perceptions of

observational comparisons. Therefore, mothers' role as a parent would be seen as an important factor in children's perceptions of reading and, in particular, for girls. Mothers may see their role as a parent being influential to children's reading and girls' progress, however, their influence is negatively related to how girls perceive themselves in comparison to their classmates.

Children's perceptions of reading were related to their scores on the reading achievement test. Children's perceptions of themselves as reader overall and in the specific aspects of observational comparisons, progress, and physiological states, were found to be positively related to their reading comprehension and vocabulary scores. These findings exemplify the importance of young children's perceptions of reading in relation to their reading achievement. Girls were also found to have significantly higher self-perceptions of reading than did boys. However, boys' reading self-perceptions particularly in the specific aspects of observational comparisons, progress, physiological states, and total self-perceptions were significantly related to their reading achievement and their perceptions of social feedback of their reading were related to their vocabulary achievement in reading scores. Girls' self-perceptions and reading achievement were not found to be significantly related. Girls reading achievement scores were higher than those of boys but not significantly. These findings were similar to others found in Newfoundland studies.

Educational Implications

This study has a number of implications for teachers, administrators, parents, and students:

1. Girls' perceptions for reading (physiological states, social feedback, total self-perceptions scores, and reader self-concept as indicated by question 1 (Do you think you are a good reader?) were found to be higher than that of boys' perceptions of reading. According to Henk and Melnick (1992), if boys perceived social feedback about their reading less often

then did girls, they may choose to read less often then girls. In this study, boys' perceptions of how reading makes them feel internally were lower than girls' were. This may also indicate why boys would want to read less often. Boys did not think of themselves as good at reading as girls perceived themselves to be, nor did boys have as high a perception of themselves as readers overall. It would be important for teachers to be aware of these differences, and provide encouraging feedback, especially since so much feedback comes from teachers. Parents would also need to be aware of this since they too provide so much input at home.

2. It is important that children maintain high self-perceptions of their reading, since children's perceptions of their reading were significantly related to their reading achievement. Children's perceptions of observational comparisons, progress, physiological states, and total self-perception scores were significantly related to their comprehension and vocabulary scores. Teachers can encourage positive perceptions by providing opportunities for students to review and evaluate their own progress in the form of portfolios, and thus, creating reflective readers. Teachers and parents can also work on children's perceptions of how they feel when they read and how they perceive their reading ability in comparison to their classmates and help foster positive feelings and attitudes about reading.

3. Significant relationships were found between boys' reader self-perceptions (including physiological states, progress, observational comparisons, total self-perceptions, social feedback, and do you think you are a good reader?) and boys' reading achievement. Teachers and parents should be aware of this so that they can encourage and foster positive self-perceptions in boys among peers, as well as provide positive role models, since they have so many relationships to reading achievement based on results in this study.

4. Fathers' parental self-efficacy beliefs were related to girls' perceptions of progress. It is important that fathers maintain strong beliefs in their ability to help daughters achieve in reading. Further, fathers' child development beliefs and girls' self-perceptions of themselves as readers were significant. Since, fathers play an important role in girls' perceptions of themselves as readers, it is important for them to be involved and feel confident so that they can encourage their daughters and provide them with positive feedback and support.

5. Mothers' child development beliefs were found to be significantly related to boys' self-perceptions of reading (social feedback, progress and total scores). Mothers' beliefs about intelligence being subject to change and open to development from the environment appear to have an influential impact on their sons' reading perceptions. Therefore, it is important that mothers become aware of the positive influence of those beliefs, so that they can help boys build more positive self-perceptions, since boys' reading perceptions were found to be lower overall than those of girls.

6. Mothers' and fathers' beliefs concerning intelligence, that intelligence is open to development from the environment, that a child possesses many kinds of intelligence, and that intelligence is not fixed at birth were related to children's self-perceptions of reading. These results would suggest that parents who believe in multiple intelligences and that those intelligences are malleable, are open to development from the environment can foster children's reading overall through effort and perseverance. Positive relationships between those beliefs and children's perceptions would indicate that parents need to continue to foster and encourage children's positive attitudes and the role of effort as a means to achieving positive perceptions about their reading ability. Further, parents' child

development beliefs that intelligence is not fixed at birth and children's reading achievement (comprehension and vocabulary scores) were significantly related. The role of effort might mediate between children's beliefs and their achievement, since effort has often led to increased performance (Wood & Bandura, 1989). This implies that parents who believe the role of effort should not be underestimated can affect children's reading achievement.

7. Mothers' parental role construction was also significantly related to children's reader self-perceptions (observational comparisons) and girls' reader self-perceptions (progress). Parental roles would include expectations the parents would feel is placed on them by significant others in the community such as teachers, priests or principals. Mothers therefore felt positively about expectations placed on them in relation to supporting their children's reading and this was related to how children perceived their reading ability in comparison to others and how girls feel they are reading now as compared to the past. Therefore, when mothers feel they are being supported positively by others it positively impacts on the perceptions of their children's reading ability.

8. Owing to the findings concerning parental self-efficacy and parental role construction, parents must have or develop a strong sense of efficacy for helping children succeed in school and a personal role construction that calls for active involvement in their children's education (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). Parents with a moderate-to-low parental role construction and parental self-efficacy for involvement in their children's schooling would greatly benefit from effective community and school efforts to enhance parental role and efficacy. Such efforts might include: parents and teachers working as a group to define the parental role; teachers spending more time with parents during the work day creating

mutually constructed sets of expectations for the role of parents with regard to children's schooling (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997).

Recommendations for Further Research

1. Significant differences were found between girls' and boys' reader self-perceptions (physiological states, social feedback, total self-perceptions, and reader self-concept (Do you think you are a good reader?). It would be interesting to examine whether boys' and girls' perceptions of reading continue to differ on the developmental spectrum as they enter adolescence and to examine the relationships between boys' perceptions of reading and reading achievement.
2. It would be beneficial to examine the changing parental beliefs of mothers and fathers as it related to children's self-perceptions and reading ability as they progress through school. A longitudinal study would contribute to the examination of the significance parents' beliefs have on children' reading and perceptions of reading as presented in this study.
3. It would be interesting to carry out a similar study in an urban setting, since the results of this study were based on subjects from a rural center. It would be interesting to investigate whether the relationships among parents' child development beliefs, parental role construction, parental self-efficacy, children's reading perceptions, and children's reading ability are similar in different settings.
4. A more in-depth look at the impact parental role constructions have on children's self-perceptions of reading and children's reading ability should be carried out. Taking each question from the survey and correlating it with children's perceptions and children's

reading ability scores would provide information on the influence particular aspects of parents' roles have on children's reading development. It would also be beneficial to look more closely at what the parent thinks his or her role should be in their child's reading development, specifically, how parents develop responsibility for their children's reading.

5. Further research should be carried out on the influence mothers and fathers have on children's self-perceptions. From the results in this study many relationships were found between mothers and sons and fathers and daughters. It would be interesting to see if this trend continues into adolescence and further.

6. It would be important to study parents' beliefs about intelligence more closely. Since high self-efficacy is related to positive beliefs about the role of effort it would be beneficial to see how parents form their beliefs about intelligence and what they feel constitutes intelligence. It would also help parents' awareness of emotional intelligence and other views of intelligence, such as musical and interpersonal intelligences, as postulated by Howard Gardner (1983) in his book Frames of Mind.

7. This study was carried out with subjects who were involved in a literacy project. It would be interesting to conduct a study with people who were not involved in a literacy project. This would provide information on the role the intervention program may have played in the research findings of this study.

8. Few empirical studies have been carried out to examine the relationships between parents' child development beliefs, parents' role construction, parental self-efficacy, children's self-perceptions of reading, and children's reading achievement, therefore it is important to continue doing so. Furthermore, there were two significantly negative findings in this study. Mother's overall parental role construction score and girls' perceptions of

observational comparison was found to be negatively related and a fathers' child development belief, that it is important to assist children in reading and children's comprehension scores was also found to be significantly negatively related. It would be beneficial to further study why those negative correlations occurred and if those trends would continue.

9. Parental involvement in children's reading and academic success overall and parents' sense of efficacy should be examined, since parents play such a significant part in their children's academic success. Specifically, further research could involve studying how relationships between various sources of efficacy (direct experience, vicarious experience, persuasion, and emotional arousal) contribute to parental efficacy in the domain of helping children succeed in school (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997).

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APPENDIX A

A certificate of approval confirming that the protocol and procedures of the *research conform to Memorial University's guidelines for research involving human* subjects was approved as part of the overall ethical approval of the Significant Others as Reading Teachers Project [SORT (1994)] by the Faculty Committee for the Ethical Review of Research Involving Human Subjects.

Questionnaire for Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

Name: _____

- Parents' names are required to explore relationships between parents' responses and their children's responses. Only the researcher will have access to the identification of the subjects used in this study. Parents' and students' names will be coded with numbers in this study and at no time will names be revealed. This study has received approval from the Faculty of Education's Ethics Review Committee at Memorial University. Thank-you in advance for your cooperation in this study.

- Please answer each question keeping in mind how **you** feel as a parent without consulting with another family member. It is important that you complete this questionnaire independent of your spouse (if applicable) so that the relationship of gender, to parents' beliefs for helping improve their children's reading achievement, can be examined.

- Circle the letters that show how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

  Use the following:

  SA = Strongly Agree
  A = Agree
  U = Undecided
  D = Disagree
  SD = Strongly Disagree

1. Children are good readers because they have a natural ability.

   SA A U D SD

2. By reading to my child, I can help my child become a better reader.

   SA A U D SD

3. Children who perform well in school have the 'brains' for the work.

SA A U D SD

4. I expect my child to be as good at reading as other school subjects.

SA A U D SD

5. I can overcome difficulties my child experiences with reading.

SA A U D SD

6. I pay close attention to the teacher's opinion of how well my child is reading.

SA A U D SD

7. It is not important what I expect of my child in reading.

SA A U D SD

8. I read to my child more often than most parents.

SA A U D SD

9. If my child encounters difficulty with reading, it is because he/she did not give enough effort.

SA A U D SD

10. I expect my child to be a good reader.

SA A U D SD

11. My child listens to my suggestions for his or her reading.

SA A U D SD

12. I have little effect on my child's interest in reading.

SA A U D SD

13. My child does not know what I expect of him/her in reading.

SA A U D SD

14. I think I can help my child become a better reader.

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15. My child and I seldom find time to read together.

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16. Intelligence is a more important factor than effort for a child to become a good reader.

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17. I often tell my child about the benefits of being a good reader.

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18. As a parent/guardian, I am important in affecting my child's reading development.

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PARENT ROLE CONSTRUCTION

Assign a number 1-5 as indicated in the chart to show how you feel about each item.

1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Undecided	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree

_____ 1. I expect to help my child learn to read.

_____ 2. It is important for me to know how my child is progressing in reading.

_____ 3. I believe that parents and teachers are partners in helping children learn to read.

_____ 4. I expect to work hard to help my child with reading.

_____ 5. I believe the home is responsible for children's learning to read.

_____ 6. I believe reading is best left to teachers.

_____ 7. I believed that SORT would help me to be more confident in my ability to help my child learn to read.

_____ 8. My priest (minister) and church expected me to be involved with helping my child learn to read.

_____ 9. The teachers expected me to be involved in helping my child learn to read.

_____ 10. The principal expected me to be involved in helping my child learn to read.

_____ 11. Ms. Power, the Literacy Coordinator, expected me to be involved in helping my child learn to read.

_____ 12. As a parent I need to understand my child's school and teachers.

_____ 13. I send my child to school and hope for the best when it comes to reading.

_____ 14. It is more important for mothers to learn how to help children learn to read than for fathers.

_____ 15. My child expected me to be involved in SORT.

_____ 16. My friends expected me to be involved in SORT.

_____ 17. My spouse expected me to be involved in SORT.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT BELIEFS

In the blank provided, place a number 1-5 to show what you believe about the statement.

1 Not At All	2 Maybe A Little	3 Somewhat	4 Moderately	5 Considerably

_____ 1. Teachers need information from home to help children learn to read.

_____ 2. Girls learn to read more easily than do boys.

_____ 3. Parents can influence their children in learning to read.

_____ 4. A child's friends can influence children in learning to read.

_____ 5. Children need parents to assist them with reading.

_____ 6. Children need encouragement in order to learn to read well.

_____ 7. Children learn to read better when parents and teachers respect their curiosity and questions about stories, print and reading.

_____ 8. Children need someone to read to them.

_____ 9. Children need reading materials in the home.

_____ 10. Children need to visit the community library for reading materials.

_____ 11. Children need to limit the time spent in watching television in order to learn to read well.

_____ 12. A child's intelligence is fixed at birth.

_____ 13. A child's intelligence is open to development from the environment.

_____ 14. A child possesses many kinds of intelligences (e.g. musical, mathematical, verbal).