Parents' Perceptions of Boys' Low Reading Proficiency Rate: A Basic Qualitative Study

by

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Abstract

Research over the past decade has shown a growing number of fourth- and fifth-grade boys struggled with reading and comprehending text. The escalating number of upper elementary learners struggled with reading and experienced a lack of motivation when reading proficiencies regressed. Although many studies provided literature concerning parental involvement of children's early developmental grades, not enough information was found concerning parents' perceptions of sons struggling with reading in upper elementary grades. This research study was conducted to address the gap in literature and increase awareness of learning from the viewpoints of parents of struggling readers. Theoretical lenses were applied to learning from parents' perceptions centered on Vygotsky's social constructivist learning theory and Mezirow's transformational learning theory. The basic qualitative study explored questions to advance learning based on parental viewpoints of fourth- and fifth-grade sons struggling with reading two to three grades below proficiency. In addition, parents' views on learning and implementing intervention reading activities at home were explored. Data were collected and triangulated from 15 purposefully selected parents of sons at risk for reading failure. Questionnaires, observational fieldnotes, and recorded interviews documented on a digital voice recorder, transcribed using Otter Voice Meeting Notes were used. NVivo software was used to analyze the data and uncovered themes and trends through the coding process. Key results of the study addressed parental concerns about reading. Parents exposed insights relating to boys' low reading abilities and revealed confidence to conduct reading interventions for boys at home. Recommendations included parental participation in learning reading activities. Implications for positive social change framed the design into a local to global infrastructure toward educating parents.

Dedication

I wish to dedicate the dissertation to the parent participants' who took part in the study. Without you the research would not have taken place. I dedicate this dissertation to the parents, teachers, guidance counselors, social workers, and administrators who work hard to make reading manageable, and most of all meaningful for our upper elementary boys at risk for reading. The world is genuinely a better place when we all work together.

To all the students I have had the privilege of teaching the foundations of literature, I dedicate this heartfelt proclamation to you: Read to cultivate your creative mind, mentally, spiritually, and productively.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

An increasing number of school-age students struggle with reading in the upper elementary grades. Many students experience a reading deficit and lack of motivation when reading abilities decline (Collins & Wolter, 2017). One way of measuring student reading abilities is through traditional and alternative assessments. Students are diverse learners, and a variety of quality assessments depict an accurate picture of where students are academically (Dixson & Worrell, 2016). As students advanced from prekindergarten through elementary school, students experienced formative and summative assessments, including school, district, and state-mandated tests. Parents were informed about the different types of student assessments administered and were notified of the child's overall performance on the tests given throughout the school year. As the students moved on to the upper elementary grades, district- and state-mandated assessment results revealed some fourth- and fifth-grade students, many of whom are boys, were reading two to three grades below the reading level (Fiester, 2010). According to National Center for Education Statistics (2015), 64% of fourth-grade boys in the United States struggled with reading and scored below proficiency in reading.

Perkins and Green (2018) stated students going into fourth grade, without possessing reading comprehension skills, have become a national concern. Upon the start of each school year, a growing number of boys entering the fourth grade are struggling with the ability to read efficiently (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015). The first issue explored in the study was recognizing the need to explore and learn from parents' viewpoints of raising fourth- and fifth-grade boys reading two to three grades below proficiency. Studying and learning from

parents' perceptions of having confidence to learn and implement reading intervention activities at home, which could help raise reading scores in boys, was the second issue.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2015), fewer than 40% of fourth-grade students read at or above proficiency on state-mandated standardized tests. The potential benefits of further study offered meaningful insights for parents, teachers, and administration into learning from the viewpoints of parents with boys reading below proficiency, as limited research was available. Providing additional information could have a positive effect on changing parents' views. Through encouragement, parents may have the courage to engage in understanding the academic reading deficiencies of boys and have the self-confidence to learn and partake in assisting the child at home (Brooks, as cited in Nordlof, 2014). By implementing academic resources, the reading proficiency of boys could increase. Addressed in Chapter 1 are a statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, research questions, definitions of terms, and delimitations.

Background of the Study

According to the New Jersey School Department of Education (NJDOE, 2018), 51% of boys in fourth grade and 35% of boys in fifth grade are reading at a low proficiency rate. Early identification of students with reading problems aids in preventing students from reaching the upper elementary grades as nonreaders or at-risk readers. Prescreening for young students helps students from becoming at risk and falling further behind (Mellard, 2017). Shapiro (2019) noted the importance of identifying academic changes in students. Recognizing academic problems at an early age is a result of administering assessments, screening, and progress monitoring. The

process provides an understanding of student academic levels. Students with reading difficulties have the opportunity to participate in intervention services designed to help prevent and shrink a significant gap in years between grade levels or avoid students from failing (Mellard, 2017).

Parental responsiveness in early childhood development influences student achievement (Gerzel-Short, 2018). Crosby, Rasinski, Padak, and Yildirim (2015) explored parental involvement in children's literacy. The study took place over three years and focused on the early literacy achievement of kindergarten and first-grade children and the effectiveness and sustainability of a school-based program for parents. Parents were asked to complete an assigned lesson with the child two times per week for 29 weeks, for a total of 58 lessons. In addition, parents kept a weekly log to record the days the lesson was implemented. The results of the study revealed parents remained engaged with the implementation and completion of the early literacy program, which had a positive experience on the students' reading achievement. The study illustrated how parental involvement in the child's first developmental years had constructive meaning on the child's literacy expansion (Crosby et al., 2015).

In another study, Hayes, Berthelsen, Nicholson, and Walker (2018) explored the sociodemographic factors connected to parental involvement and reading. Parents of children age 2 to 6 spent time reading to the child and were engaged in other academic activities at home during the child's early developmental years. Higher levels of parental involvement with the child at age 2 showed enhanced learning outcomes for the child at age 6. The study results showed parent involvement and responsiveness in the home helped develop positive learning outcomes for the child. Conversely, the study reported the family's socioeconomic disadvantage

and being a male child were linked with a decrease in parental involvement and in the level of reading and other activities completed at home with the child (Hayes et al., 2018). The decrease in parental responsiveness negatively affected the child's learning outcomes over some time. Mellard (2017) argued students at risk for failure at an early age struggle to keep up with others in the class, and the struggle continues from preschool through high school.

When the child shows difficulty learning the necessary skills or is at risk, parents become anxious and apprehension sets in (Klotz & Canter, 2019). Some parents find intervention services for the child; conversely, parents living in high-poverty situations are not aware of such programs and educational materials necessary to provide a healthy foundation for the child (Layton, 2015). Shapiro (2019) added when students receive immediate interventions early, students reach a successful reading proficiency level. Hence, a parent's actions to address the academic problems of the at-risk child influence the child's academic achievement.

Some parents of fourth-grade boys do not become fully involved in the child's educational schooling because of low self-confidence to help the child, which negatively affects the child's behavior and literacy development (Terlitsky & Wilkins, 2015). As the child continues to fall behind, parents become frustrated with the child's inability to read (Caissie, Gaudet, & Godin, 2017). The Nation's Report Card (as cited in McFarland et al., 2018) reported the reading achievement levels of fourth-grade boys across the nation were lower in 2017 compared to the 10th and 25th percentile scores in 2015. Wambiri and Ndani (2015) studied the effects of children receiving early reading support from parents in the developmental years and

found the support had a positive effect on the children's higher level of reading achievement in later years.

Children who do not receive an early introduction to reading have a difficult time keeping up academically (Wanzek, Wexler, Vaughn, & Ciullo, 2010). By middle school, some children are retained, are unmotivated, and have lost interest in school (Fiester, 2010). These struggling learners shun reading-related tasks, which develops into poor behavior patterns, leading to a lack of motivation and negative skill development (Orkin, May, & Wolf, 2017). Students not reading by the end of third grade are more likely to drop out of school without a high school diploma, and the percentage of low-income students increases (Campbell, Bowman-Perrott, Burke, & Sallese, 2019; Wahr, 2018). Furthermore, statistics show a connection between these nonreaders and the likelihood of being on welfare or incarcerated (Packhem, 2017).

In another study, McLaughlin and Smink (2010) found student academic reading scores plummeted during the summer months for low-income students compared to more affluent peers because of the lack of resources to support the students' educational needs. The key findings showed by the end of fifth grade, these students read approximately three grades below grade level and struggled to keep up with peers (McLaughlin & Smink, 2010). As a result of the summer reading slide, the loss may affect student motivation to stay in school or attend college (Fiester, 2010).

In an opposing study, Kim et al. (2016) studied low-income students taking part in a summer reading intervention program designed to help improve students' reading skills. Kim et al. found 80% of fourth-grade students, whose parents were in the low-income range, were not

proficient on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) test compared to the middle-income students. The study showed when parents' income increased, as did the number of students in programs during the summer months, academic reading abilities increased and improved. Reluctant at first, parents became confident and involved in the home reading initiative. Parents learned to encourage and take part in reading activities with children at home, which increased children's exposure to books, thereby increasing children's comprehension of reading and literacy skills. The study aligned with Vygotsky's (1930) social constructivist learning theory of understanding parents' world. Furthermore, the study aligned with parents' own realities and Mezirow's transformational learning theory of understanding parents' interpretations, perceptions of learning new belief systems, and changing viewpoints and habits of the mind (McComish & Parsons, 2013; Mezirow, 1997).

In another study, by Caissie et al. (2017), mothers receiving help with parental skills, regardless of level of education and socioeconomic level, were able to help the child, which improved the child's academic success in school. Conversely, in a study by Petrone (2016), parental involvement varied across diverse cultures. Latino parents' approach to supporting the child in school was demonstrated through a different course of action, which was making sure the child was well taken care of at home so the child would perform well in school, as opposed to the parents attending school functions (Petrone, 2016). The actions on the part of the Latino parents were linked to a disconnect between school personnel and parents of the Latino culture, causing school personnel to infer Latino parents do not support the child or are not interested in the child's learning at school. The key points in the study noted the magnitude of being aware of

and understanding cultural diversities and viewpoints of parental involvement across cultures (Khalifa, Gooden, & Davis, 2016).

Other factors and barriers contribute to parental nonengagement in schools, preventing parents from participating in the child's academic achievement at school and home. When factors and barriers are addressed, and an understanding and recognition of parents' leveling abilities increase, the parents' self-confidence increases, which could increase student achievement (Ingraham et al., 2016). Research has shown when parental involvement increases, the achievement gap for at-risk readers decreases (Ingraham et al., 2016). Putting a Response to Intervention (RTI) reading program in place, constructed to support student academic outcomes, could help students falling behind academically (Dunn, 2018; Wingate, Postlewaite, Mena, Neely-Barnes, & Elswick, 2018). Parents could help implement the intervention program at home to help the struggling reader (Sink & Ockerman, 2016). When given the tools needed to learn and apply a reading intervention program at home, parents become self-confident and parental involvement, effectiveness, and academic achievement increase for the child (Ingraham et al., 2016).

Statement of the Problem

The problem was parents' attitudes were unknown regarding parental perceptions of upper elementary boys reading two to three grades below grade level and the level of confidence the boys' parents has to learn and provide reading intervention at home for the boys (Caissie et al., 2017). Parents' perceptions of self-confidence to learn and implement RTI activities at home were uncertain, making research necessary to explore parents' understanding of fourth- and fifth-

grade boys with reading difficulties and to explore parents' confidence (Caissie et al., 2017). National Center for Education Statistics: The National Center for Education Statistics (2015) reported an increase in the number of boys struggling to read being promoted to the fourth grade. Children with both literacy and behavior difficulties are more likely to have increased risk of poor educational outcomes (Terlitsky & Wilkins, 2015). As a way to increase knowledge and fill a gap in the research literature, parental perceptions and confidence were explored.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the basic qualitative study was to explore parental perceptions of upper elementary boys reading two to three grades below grade level and the level of confidence the boys' parents have to learn and provide reading intervention at home for the boys (Caissie et al., 2017), which may help raise reading scores for boys. Herman and Reinke (2017) stated for students struggling with academic and behavior issues, parental involvement is crucial to keep foreseeable long-term damaging outcomes at bay, which Packhem (2017) described as dropping out of high school, not attending college, winding up on welfare, or ending up in jail. The present study delved into the research questions with an urban PreK–5 school. The study's findings contributed to a body of knowledge on parental perceptions of learning how to overcome learning challenges and implementing reading activities at home.

Significance of the Study

The study was necessary to explore parents' perceptions and viewpoints on the reading struggles of fourth- and fifth-grade boys. Considering the parents' views of fifth-grade boys being promoted to middle school, regardless of the boys' reading deficiencies, was necessary.

The data, which were coded, interpreted, and formulated into an informative research report, were a valuable resource tool made available for parents of children reading below proficiency. If the study were not carried out, some parents may consider the parent's level of education is inadequate to aid or assist the child with academic activities at home (Caissie et al., 2017). The study contributed to and advanced knowledge by offering information of parents' viewpoints and perceptions of rearing fourth- and fifth-grade boys struggling with reading. Literature regarding learning from parents' beliefs about the level of self-confidence to learn and conduct RTI activities at home was limited. As a result of the basic qualitative research design, all stakeholders of the school have an understanding of the perceptions of parents of fourth- and fifth-grade boys with low reading proficiency, as these struggling or nonreaders were being promoted to middle school, which affected learning development and motivation (Orkin et al., 2017). The results of the research were shared with parents, educators, administrators, support staff in the school, and supervisors in the district (Ward, Comer, & Stone, 2018).

Research Questions

Effectively investigating the problem required selecting noteworthy literature focused on specific questions to guide the study (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). Hammarberg, Kirkman, and de Lacey (2016) maintained qualitative questions are used to answer specific questions to learn significance and perceptions from the viewpoint of participants. Research questions are designed and structured to shape, guide, explore, and address problems in a study. The following research questions guided the study:

Research Question 1: What were parents' perceptions on why fourth- and fifth-grade boys scored on a lower reading proficiency level when compared to classmates scoring on or above the reading proficiency level?

Research Question 2: How confident were parents to learn and implement Response to Intervention (RTI) supplemental activities at home to effectively assist with raising low reading proficiency scores of fourth- and fifth-grade boys?

The open-ended research questions were aligned with the basic qualitative research design (see Appendix F).

Theoretical Framework

The study explored parental perceptions of upper elementary boys reading two to three grades below grade level and the level of confidence the boys' parents' have to learn and provide reading intervention at home for the boys (Caissie et al., 2017). Vygotsky's (1930) social constructivist learning theory and Mezirow's transformational learning theory were used to develop the theoretical framework (McComish & Parsons, 2013; Mezirow, 1997). The theoretical framework provided a foundation for the study and the development of the research questions (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). The research questions connected with Vygotsky's social constructivist learning theory of gaining insight on parents' perceptions of understanding and learning from the child's academic struggles. Additionally, the research questions connected to Mezirow's transformational learning theory by examining the interpretations and perceptions of parents having enough confidence to learn and utilize an intervention program to help the child at home.

Definitions of Terms

The definitions of terms provide an understanding of key concepts. The definitions present concise information for terms used in the study. Defining important terms differentiates and enhances the understanding of the concepts exclusive to the research.

Achievement levels: Performance standards to explain what students should know and be able to do. Results of the performance standards were presented as percentages of students scoring on one of four achievement levels: Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced (NAEP, 2019).

At-risk students: Students academically performing below proficiency and in danger of failing (Simmons et al., 2008).

Fourth- and fifth-grade boys: Male students advancing to the level classified as upper elementary (Wanzek, Wexler, Vaughn, & Ciullo, 2010).

Parental implementation: Parent practices to assist the child with assignments at home (Orkin et al., 2017).

Parental participation: A parent's active contribution toward the child's academic and behavioral needs characterized by a commitment of involvement (Herman & Reinke, 2017)

Parental perceptions: Parents' viewpoints and thoughts about sons' inability to read on grade level (Creswell, 2003, 2013).

Response to Intervention (RTI): A three-tiered reading program constructed to provide in-depth, concentrated instruction to students struggling in reading and performing below grade level (Gerzel-Short, 2018; Zirkel, 2018).

Struggling readers: Students with a lack of reading comprehension skills and abilities (Perkins & Green, 2018).

Summer reading slide: A lack of ongoing academic learning skills during the summer months, which causes many students to fall behind in academic achievement and results in students losing more than two months of reading achievement (McLaughlin & Smink, 2010).

Transformational learning: The evolution of a person understanding the potential in oneself, being motivated and inspired to change, brings about a confidence in oneself, producing a change in one's belief and lifestyle (Amanchukwu, Stanley, & Ololube, 2015).

Zone of proximal development (ZPD): A variety of activities a learner assumes independently and how much the learner accomplishes when guided by someone with an enhanced understanding of the world, which results in discovering more about the world and one's surroundings (Brooks, as cited in Nordlof, 2014). In the ZPD, a student is capable of doing something independently and performs better when taught by a more experienced person (Danish, Saleh, Andrade, & Bryan, 2017).

Assumptions

Assumptions in the study are overtly connected to the study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015). Without underlying assumptions in a research study, the research problem would not exist as the premise is the foundation on which the study stands (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015). Assuming the findings gathered provided pertinent information to contribute to current knowledge concerning parent's perceptions of upper elementary boys struggling to read and understanding parents' confidence to provide intervention activities at home, data collected from the research offered

transferable information to conduct future studies (Cope, 2014). Another assumption was the interview questions were appropriate and necessary for gathering information on parents' perceptions of boys reading below grade level.

Scope and Delimitations

Delimitations are the factors which reduce the scope and describe the boundaries of a qualitative study (Daniel, 2019). Daniel (2019) maintained delimitations or boundaries of the research are areas of the study over which the researcher has control. Parents' perceptions of boys' low reading proficiency was the focus. The study was narrowed to interviewing a range of 15 to 20 parents of fourth- and fifth-grade boys attending an elementary school in an urban neighborhood. Fifteen parents of boys reading two to three grades below proficiency were chosen to participate in the interview process. The study covered a time frame of three weeks, and interviews were conducted in a private study room of the local library. Daniel stated researchers should articulate the delimitations of the research to attain transferability. The potential effect on the transferability of the results in the study had meaning for other parents not participating in the study, and one may understand and relate to the findings with one's own experiences (Cope, 2014).

Limitations

Limitations or potential weaknesses are present in the qualitative study. Booth, Glenton, Lewin, Munthe-Kaas, and Noyes (2019) stated the limitations in a study bring about concerns but are out of the control of the researcher. The study conducted clarifies how to deal with the limitations to refrain from affecting the outcome of the study. Regarding the design-related, basic

qualitative research design, limitations on transferability in the study refer to the research questions which guided the study. The research questions focused on understanding the significance and viewpoints of the participants. The accounts of real-life situations and the parents' worldviews were used to attain transferability and to assist in bridging the gap between the research and the participants (Daniel, 2019). The research study was limited to adhering to the following restrictions: the participants were parents of fourth- and fifth-grade boys struggling to read, the research took place in an urban neighborhood, and the research study targeted one school in the school district.

The study was conducted in the school where the fourth- and fifth-grade boys attended. Many of the boys' parents did not attend Back to School Night or take part in parent events. Some parents of the boys in the fourth- and fifth-grade classes were not selected to take part in the interview segment of the study, in an effort to eliminate complex bias. The selection process supported an understanding the potential participants were not associated with the research in any way. While the research was conducted, ethical procedures were carried out when managing the study. Biases could not influence any of the study's interactions and were purposely eliminated. Leedy and Ormrod (2015) asserted the importance of being honest and disclosing biases for others to realistically evaluate the value of the study. Other limitations which were addressed were a poor interpretation of the data and insufficiently organizing the data into appropriate themes for the study, which could have resulted in misunderstood information.

Chapter Summary

The study explored parents' beliefs as to why many fourth- and fifth-grade boys are struggling readers and explored parents' thoughts regarding confidence to gain knowledge of and practice intervention methods at home for the boys. A basic qualitative study of parents' perceptions was conducted. Interviews and data analysis provided an in-depth look at parents' viewpoints and self-confidence (Creswell, 2003, 2013). The research design and theoretical framework of the study is described in the next chapter. A review of literature outlines research studies on parents' perceptions of children struggling to read, the dilemma of struggling readers, benefits of RTI, and parents' comfort level with the idea of learning how to help with homework or implement RTI activities for children at home.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The problem was 51% of boys in fourth grade and 35% of boys in fifth grade were reading below grade level at a low proficiency rate (NJDOE, 2018). Viewpoints were uncertain as to whether parents were confident to implement RTI activities at home to help raise reading levels. The background of the problem was an increasing number of boys entering fourth and fifth grade struggling with reading (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015). Parents' attitudes were unknown, making research necessary to understand parents' perceptions of boys with reading difficulties and parents' confidence to implement RTI (Caissie et al., 2017). The purpose of the basic qualitative study was to explore parents' perceptions of fourth- and fifth-grade boys reading two to three grades below grade level and the level of confidence the boys' parents have to learn and provide reading intervention at home for the boys (Caissie et al., 2017).

The chapter includes a description of the theoretical framework of the basic qualitative study by connecting the concepts and the roles of social constructivist learning theory and transformational learning theory to develop the study (Nordlof, 2014). A summation of parental perceptions of upper elementary boys' low reading proficiency and the level of parent self-confidence to provide reading intervention at home, the underlying crux of the literature review, is presented in the research (Caissie et al., 2017). The importance, pros, and cons of RTI was explored. Finally, the literature review was used to summarize the findings from the literature and reiterates the need to conduct the basic qualitative study.

Literature Search Strategy

To make sure suitable and dependable resources were found, locating theoretical and empirical articles and other sources, key vocabulary words, phrases, and questions were used. Search engines utilized throughout the study were Bing and Google Scholar, which provided various scholarly articles. The databases used were Child Development and Adolescent Studies, Academic Search Complete, Education Source, Education Database, and ERIC. The databases located full texts and peer-reviewed articles which responded to the open-ended research questions to comprehend parents' views on sons not being able to read on grade level (Creswell, 2003, 2013). In addition, the following keywords, phrases, and questions regarding parental perceptions were placed in the search bar of the search engines to find articles related to the study: *parental involvement*, *perceptions of parents on response to intervention (RTI)*, *boys' struggles with reading*, *struggling readers*, *upper elementary boys and reading*, *perceptions of parents regarding reading and boys*, *the relationship between low socioeconomic status and reading*, *confidence of parents to implement a reading program at home*, *home-based reading interventions*, *summer reading slide*, *low reading proficiency levels of boys*, *upper elementary students with low proficient reading rates*, *fourth and fifth-grade boys and reading*, *parent partnership with the school*, *perceptions of parents' schooling background*, *parental implementation of providing reading help at home*, *parent knowledge about reading*, and *parent attitude toward reading*. The use of relevant scholarly articles and books provided material for the study and aided in identifying gaps in current knowledge concerning parents' viewpoints on

boys reading below grade level and parents' thoughts on learning and providing home intervention (Caissie et al., 2017).

Theoretical Framework

Vygotsky's social constructivist learning theory and Mezirow's transformational learning theory were used to develop the theoretical framework. The theoretical framework provided organization and support for the establishment of the study, the problem statement and purpose, the importance of the study, and the research questions (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). Grant and Osanloo (2014) postulated the framework offer a supporting foundation for the literature review, research methods, and data analysis. Furthermore, a theoretical perspective is an essential resource for the study and reinforces the structure of the research (Nordlof, 2014).

Social Constructivist Learning Theory

The social constructivist learning theory is an active process of learning and understanding the world or the world's realities. The study followed an analytic approach to identifying how individuals understand the world and the realities. Brooks (as cited in Nordlof, 2014) stated Vygotsky's theory includes a famous model called the zone of proximal development (ZPD). ZPD points to the variety of activities a child accomplishes alone and how much more the child achieves when guided by someone with an enhanced understanding of the world, learning more about the world and one's surroundings. Danish et al. (2017) defined Vygotsky's ZPD theory as a student capable of doing something independently can perform better when taught by a more experienced person. The ZPD theory provided a model for parents to observe and build on boys' understanding while modifying interventions at home (Nordlof,

2014). Ultimately, Vygotsky's theory provided a twofold overview of (a) gaining insight on parents' perceptions of learning and comprehending how parents understand the reality of boys' low reading levels and (b) acquiring an understanding of whether parents have enough confidence to help boys perform better in reading at home, supporting Vygotsky's ZPD, which indicates the child achieves more when guided by the parents' home-based RTI program.

Mezirow's Transformational Learning Theory

Mezirow's (1991) transformational learning theory (McComish & Parsons, 2013; Mezirow, 1997, 1998), is linked to understanding and interpreting the confidence of parents to learn and practice effective RTI methods at home with upper elementary boys. Mezirow (as cited in McComish & Parsons, 2013) believed learning is a progression of transformation based on the person's perspective, with three phases: adjustments in the perception of self, modification of belief structures, and alterations in the routine of a way of life. Mezirow believed learning transformations transpires in one of four ways: expand existing belief systems, learn new belief systems, change viewpoints, or change habits of the mind (McComish & Parsons, 2013). Moreover, transformational learning has been termed as a progression of making sense of one's experiences, implying adults' beliefs and expectancies could be altered after crucial reflection and dialogue with individuals capable of illuminating those fixed ideas. A transformational leader forms relationships and creates a connection to increase motivation for individuals (Amanchukwu et al., 2015).

The transformational learning theory aligned with the study as the method to advocate for understanding parents' perceptions about boys, which led to parents developing alternative

perspectives regarding confidence in learning and implementing home intervention reading activities. Additionally, transformational leadership supported the study by focusing on transformational leaders and the power to motivate and inspire individuals to see the importance and greater good of the task. Amanchukwu et al. (2015) stated the transformational leader focuses on one's understanding of one's potential. McComish and Parsons (2013) indicated transformational leaders cultivate foresight for the future, commit to a need for change, and make meaningful experiences. The two theories, Vygotsky's social constructivist learning and Mezirow's transformational learning theory) built the framework for the research and helped define the questions of the research study (McComish & Parsons, 2013. Finally, both theories supported the outcomes of understanding parents' concepts of the realities of the world and self-confidence to provide intervention for boys.

Research Literature Review

The purpose of the basic qualitative study was to explore parents' perceptions of fourth- and fifth-grade boys reading two to three grades below grade level and the level of confidence the boys' parents have to learn and provide reading intervention at home for the boys to help raise low reading scores (Caissie et al., 2017). Understanding the perceptions of parents was discussed throughout the literature (Amanchukwu et al., 2015). More detail on the significance of parents' attitudes which led to the implementation of RTI activities at home as an effective method to elevate boys' low reading scores was provided in the research literature review, bridging the gap in knowledge and literature. An understanding of parents' perceptions of boys reading below grade level was provided and an understanding of parents' views of self-

confidence to implement a reading intervention at home which could help raise boys' reading proficiency was presented (McBride, Dyer, Liu, Brown, & Hong, 2009).

Early Childhood Development and Parental Responsiveness

Early identification of academic problems is necessary when young students continue to show a lack of instructional understanding in the educational setting. When caught early, students have the opportunity to receive an intervention, which provides the help needed before failing or before a significant gap in years occurs between grade level and reading level (Mellard, 2017). Family poverty could impair a student's ability to be ready for school (Hair, Hanson, Wolfe, & Pollak, 2015). Hair et al. (2015) stressed environmental conditions can affect brain structures due to stress and poverty.

Many students, particularly boys, become at risk for failure during the early school years and struggle to keep up with peers in class. At the age of 3 or 4, signs of difficulty in academics, and more specifically with reading, occur and follow the student from preschool through high school and beyond. Students are given an early screening and provided intervention services to help shrink the gap and keep at-risk boys from falling behind peers in reading (Mellard, 2017). The outcomes of assessments, screening, and progress monitoring drive the identification of students not meeting academic expectations (Shapiro, 2019).

Early childhood development and parental responsiveness have an influence on student achievement. Every parent wants the child to excel in school, and when the child has difficulty learning the basic skills, apprehension and anxiety set in for the parent and the child (Klotz & Canter, 2019). When parents find out the child struggles with reading at an early age, parents

find and provide an early intervention program for those children struggling during the early stages of academic work. Some parents are not aware of such reading interventions, and students either stay home during the early years (ages 2–4) or are enrolled in preschool. Teachers are tasked with the responsibility of finding ways to get the students on track. Many parents living in high poverty areas are unfamiliar with the resources students need and are deficient in obtaining material goods which are necessary to afford a healthy developmental foundation for the child (Layton, 2015).

Students having the hardest time academically are referred for evaluation and classified for special education services (Klotz & Canter, 2019). Intervention provided at an early age has been shown to have positive outcomes for students in education and indicates students reach a successful reading proficiency (Shapiro, 2019). As a final point, the response parents have toward students at risk in reading has an effect on academic achievement.

Parents' Perceptions of Boys With Reading Difficulties

Shaw and Bell (1993) emphasized parents' lack of firmness and discipline leads to more intimidating styles of interactions with the child and spending less time teaching skills needed for home and school, which could lead to antisocial and behavior problems. An absence in family management skills fuels antisocial behavior in the child, leading parents to become ill-tempered and reluctant to find out how the child is performing in school academically. Other parents need help with parenting skills while trying to help the child improve educational achievements. Caissie et al. (2017) discussed specific themes, such as parenting and financial difficulties; the mother's education level, which affected involvement in the child's education; the relationship

the parent had with the child's school; and the parental role the mother played in the child's cultural life and language acquisition. Parents do not become fully involved in a child's schooling because of other worries and challenges (Caissie et al., 2017). Terlitsky and Wilkins (2015) stated parents with low levels of education result in children struggling with reading. Parents do not help the child at home because of low confidence in abilities to assist. The low confidence parents have in ability negatively affects student behavior and induces low literacy advancement (Terlitsky & Wilkins, 2015).

Caissie et al. (2017) found fourth-grade boys have fallen behind in reading, and parents were frustrated with the prospect of having a child unable to read. According to The Nation's Report Card (as cited in McFarland et al., 2018), fourth-grade students' reading achievement levels in the 10th and 25th percentiles were lower in 2017 than in 2015 across the nation. Spending time doing a child's homework is not a pleasant experience for parents. Concerns about whether struggling readers are prepared to enter middle school cloud parents' minds (Collins & Wolter, 2017). On a larger scale, anxiety has grown to a national level regarding students moving on to fourth and fifth grade and without acquiring reading comprehension skills (Perkins & Green, 2018). By encouraging parental involvement, research has shown parents aid in increasing the child's academic improvement and achievement, which could lead to academic success for the child (McBride et al., 2009).

Reading Behaviors, Abilities, and Struggles of Fourth- and Fifth-Grade Boys

Children are introduced to reading at an early age. Reading is an essential element of a child's growth process, and various facets of learning center on the ability to read (Wambiri &

Ndani, 2015). Wambiri and Ndani (2015) found experiencing early reading skills at home, with the parent's support, had a bearing on the child's later success as a learner. The study suggested reading behaviors of children are shaped by parental beliefs and attitudes about reading. Flores de Apodaca, Gentling, Steinhaus, and Rosenberg (2015) studied the effects of parental involvement in the child's school during the early developmental years and found the child showed a significantly higher level of achievement in reading.

With higher levels of reading achievement, chances of the child's retention were lowered by the time the child entered eighth grade (Flores de Apodaca et al., 2015). Community schools and colleges have spent a large number of resources in an effort to remediate incompetent and dropout students from high school, to prepare students for college readiness on a global and technological scale (Fiester, 2010). Fiester (2010) indicated the decline in interest begins long before the student reaches high school and stems from the loss of motivation and interest in school which begins in middle school, especially for those retained students and those struggling to keep up academically. In the study, the 2009 fourth-grade NAEP reading test was analyzed, which showed the total number of students falling within the category of Below Proficient and Below Basic, the two lowest categories out of four on the NAEP assessment, and the family income for these students (Fiester, 2010). A table depicted the percentage of family income for the four geographic areas where students were tested: the city, suburb, town, and the rural areas. Data showed a percentage of students fell in the classification of low-income status and a percentage of students fell in the classification of moderate to high income. More specifically, the percentage of fourth-grade city students with a low-income status in the Below Proficient

category was 30% higher than the percentage of students with a moderate- and high-income status, and the percentage of fourth-grade city students with a low-income status in the Below Basic category was 22% higher than the percentage of students with a moderate- and high-income status (Fiester, 2010). The total percentage of students living in poverty was higher than the total percentage of students with poor test scores on the national level, which emphasized fourth-grade students living in poverty could not read proficiently (Fiester, 2010). Students not reading on grade level by third grade were less likely to leave school without a diploma, and the percentage increased for poor students (Campbell et al., 2019; Wahr, 2018). President Obama (as cited in Fiester, 2010) stated, "The relative decline of American education is untenable for our economy, unsustainable for our democracy, and unacceptable for our children, and we cannot afford to let the decline continue" (p. 4).

Several factors point to the need to research perceptions of parents regarding why some boys in the upper elementary grades are struggling to read in school. The underperformance in reading is especially prominent in low-income families (Fiester, 2010). Boys are promoted from third grade to fourth grade reading two to three grades below grade level (Fiester, 2010). Consequently, many politicians and journalists across the nation have declared third-grade reading scores predict the number of prison beds needed for the future (Sanders, 2013). Although the overarching statement has been researched and found to be an urban myth, a plethora of in-depth studies point to the number of adult inmates unable to read beyond a third-grade level (Sanders, 2013). Research has shown a strong link between America's expanding incarceration rates and primary low literacy skills (Packhem, 2017).

Packhem (2017) maintained 85% of all youngsters in the juvenile court system are functionally illiterate; 70% of incarcerated adults in America's prisons are not able to read past the fourth-grade reading level. Two out of three learners not proficient readers by the end of fourth grade may end up in jail or on welfare. The struggle continues when these boys are promoted into the fifth grade and then into middle school, as the downward spiral in reading and literacy continues throughout high school and beyond. Struggling readers begin showing task avoidance early in the educational years (Orkin et al., 2017). As students become older, the learners continue to avoid reading-related tasks, which could develop into poor behavior patterns, negatively influencing skill development and motivation (Orkin et al., 2017).

Tracking Test Scores, Low Reading Proficiency Levels, and Summer Slide

Summative and interim assessments are used to determine student learning and proficiency. These assessments support moving students on to a deeper learning experience, remediating and reviewing concepts and skills, or extending interventions as the next steps for student growth (Marion & Leather, 2015). Simmons et al. (2008) stated students entering the third and fourth grade with low proficiency levels are at risk of performing poorly in the upper grades. Based on the results of the district benchmark scores administered three times per year, and the state-mandated high-stakes assessment taken in the spring of the previous year, students may be placed in the RTI program (Helberg & Elish-Piper, 2011). These test score results are used as screenings to determine if students are at-risk learners in need of intervention (Helberg & Elish-Piper, 2011). Fiester (2010) argued if the United States does not get students on the trajectory to becoming proficient readers, the country may leave behind a growing and

indispensable percentage of the country's human capital to poverty and increase America's population of underperforming readers.

Devoid of ongoing academic learning and skills during the summertime, many students, particularly those from low-income homes, fall behind in academic achievement (McLaughlin & Smink, 2010). Falling behind in academics throughout the summertime is called a *summer slide*. During the summer, students could lose more than two months of reading achievement, and the setback is especially real for low-income youth (McLaughlin & Smink, 2010). Fiester (2013) found these academic setbacks contributed to the growth of the reading achievement gaps because many low-income students did not have the resources to support the educational achievement needs compared to more affluent peers. Furthermore, many students regressed in the summer months, generating a reading gap, which grew over the years, leaving stressed readers struggling to catch up (Fiester, 2013).

McLaughlin and Smink (2010) researched the essential findings of disadvantaged youth and found by the end of fifth grade, these students were approximately three reading equivalents below grade level and were nearly three reading equivalents below the more prosperous peers. Additionally, an early reading summer loss may cause these students to drop out of high school or not attend college. The Council of Chief State School Officers (2009) noted America pledged to be a country of optimism and opportunity for all Americans but failed to apply the declaration to the youngest citizens. A child's birth is celebrated, but then a pause is put in place to see if the child achieves in school before the child's strengths and necessities are attended to (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2009).

Kim et al. (2016) explored the effects of implementing a low-cost, large-scale summer reading program for low-income students and found 80% of fourth-grade students fell within the low-income range and failed to read proficiently on the NAEP test compared to middle-income students. Kim et al. found as parental income increased, so did reading comprehension skills for students during the summer months. The findings indicated low-income students needed to take part in a summer reading intervention program which could help improve students' reading skills. The plan was put in place for students to use at home, which provided summer-based reading comprehension activities. Parents became partners in the home reading initiative and learned to encourage the child to complete summer reading activities which increased exposure to books (McComish & Parsons, 2013). Results showed the outcome of the program improved students' reading comprehension and future literacy skills.

The study aligned with Mezirow's (1991) transformational learning theory and showcased the parents' confidence to gain knowledge of and carry out a reading intervention program at home (McComish & Parsons, 2013). The study aligned with the transformation phases of the parent adjusting the perception and interpretation of self, modifying belief structures, and adjusting routines at home. The transformation showed motivation for implementing the program for the child at home (McComish & Parsons, 2013; Mezirow, 1997, 1998).

Parental Participation and Socioeconomic Position

Participation-related variables could have a positive or negative effect on a child's academic achievement. Participation on a positive level could be parents involved in the child's

early reading at home. Shuffelton (2017) stated parental involvement is a unique way to participate in the public domain. Participation in parent workshops could have a dual meaning, both positive and negative. Lack of education and the parent's socioeconomic level could harm parent participation (Heath et al., 2018). Some parents do not participate in school activities because of a lack of communication between the school and parents. Online interventions could provide ways to help parent participation in programs.

During the child's early age and throughout the rest of the child's school life, parents participate in a child's academics by reading books and other literature at home (Mokhtari, Neel, Kaiser, & Hong-Hai, 2015). When parents are involved in the child's early reading development, the child takes on a love for reading, which leads to improved performance in learning at school (Mokhtari et al., 2015; Wambiri & Ndani, 2015). Phillips, Norris, Hayward, and Lovell (2017) suggested a child's home-based literacy environment stimulates language and emergent reading skills before the child enters school. For example, when parents read out loud to the child, cognitive skills are supported (Merga & Ledger, 2018). Additionally, Merga and Ledger (2018) found the interaction between parent and child was enhanced; hence, children's attitude toward reading was improved.

Some parents do not take on the responsibility of participating in the child's academic learning and achievement. Many parents do not take comfort in teaching the child how to read during the early developmental years. Wambiri and Ndani (2015) found a significant number of parents do not see themselves as critical collaborators in the child's emergent reading development. Giménez, Ortiz, López-Zamora, Sánchez, and Luque (2017) revealed 73% to 85%

of children whose parent or sibling had reading struggles developed into poor readers. Consequently, parents were not eager to participate in the child's education because of personal inadequate academic levels.

These findings support Mezirow's (1991) theory of transformational learning (McComish & Parsons, 2013). Understanding parents' perceptions was relevant to exploring parents' confidence to participate in parent intervention workshops (Amanchukwu et al., 2015). A study concerning single-parent, low-income mothers revealed the need for parents to receive parenting skills, regardless of the mother's level of education, which helped improve the child's academic achievements (Caissie et al., 2017). In addition, workshops and community-based programs were made available for parents, to better the interactions between the parent and child at home and increase achievement for the child at school. Some of the parenting intervention programs targeted and addressed disruptive child behaviors, and some of the parenting workshops focused on helping the child with school academics at home. Parents looked to schools for solutions and signed up for workshops, which offered assistance on how to work with the child on homework and behavior. Most parents whose children performed well in school attended and participated in the workshops for the duration of the programs (Heath et al., 2018). Conversely, barriers prevented other parents from following through with participating in workshops or programs (Duppong-Hurley, Hoffman, Barnes, & Oats, 2016).

Heath et al. (2018) explored the reasons parents could not follow through with attending workshops, which affected the child's learning trajectory. Many parents had busy work schedules and could not make the meetings. Some parents needed babysitters to watch the

children while the parents attended the meetings. For other parents, cultural beliefs were a factor (Khalifa et al., 2016). For example, Khalifa et al. (2016) found many Hispanic parents were not involved because of cultural viewpoints and expectations which differed from the school's expectations.

Petrone (2016) analyzed Mexican parents' perceptions of parental involvement and school district expectations in North Carolina schools and the regional challenges encountered in attempting to promote a more robust parental engagement system for both groups. On the one hand, Petrone found educators and schools believed Latino parents were not involved in the child's academic life because of language barriers, cultural diversities, and lack of desire to push the child to work hard. On the other hand, Latino parents had confidence in parenting skills when engaging with the child. Petrone argued Latino parents were involved in the child's school by following personal traditional parental participation customs, such as making sure the child ate well at home, was cared for in a loving home, and the parent–child communication was secure. The parental involvement was manifested differently from the expected norms school districts have of being involved, such as participating in school functions, going on class trips, engaging in bake sales, and attending back-to-school nights. Petrone concluded parental involvement was demonstrated in a different way across diverse classes and cultural groups. Khalifa et al. (2016) noted the impact of being aware of cultural diversities, as parental involvement was viewed differently between Hispanic and school personnel.

Ultimately, many of these parents did not attend because of socioeconomic status (Duppong-Hurley et al., 2016). Heath et al. (2018) found parents could not attend community-

based programs or academic workshops because the parent had a job and could not leave to participate in a seminar or training. Another factor was if the child was disruptive, the parent did not want to take the child to the venue (Heath et al., 2018); as a result, parents opted not to participate in the workshops even though the parenting intervention training could support the parent and child in the long run. Parents of the children not participating in the events could have benefited from attending the workshops.

In a study by Lee and Blitz (2016), grandparents stated a lack of communication from the school created a sense of isolation and a sense of not knowing where to get answers in order to work with grandchildren at home. Another study explored lack of parental involvement in the school and concluded the school's noncommunication and shortage of information about how the parents could be involved was a factor (Hasnat, 2016). Heath et al. (2018) concluded the nonattendance of parents should not be interpreted as a lack of concern for the safety and security of the child.

Another barrier related to parental nonparticipation is the socioeconomic level of parents (Caissie et al., 2017). Several parents are less educated, in a lower socioeconomic level, and have a reduced capacity to manage the content of the workshops on a practical and logistical level (Heath et al., 2018). For example, the issues of not having transportation to get to the workshop or not having someone to look after a sick child were issues which arose for parents. Parents did not attend preventive parent training workshops and programs because of the lack of finances and personal support. Furthermore, time was a factor. Many of the workshops took place at an inopportune time, which did not allow these parents to attend, even if transportation was

available (Heath et al., 2018). These barriers were a result of the parents' socioeconomic status (Heath et al., 2018).

A need to develop a method to get information to parents through online interventions was discussed in the study by Heath et al. (2018). Barriers to participating in parent interventions included parents not following through with attending training or community-based parenting programs (Duppong-Hurley et al., 2016). A result of the findings was to offer alternative means to partake in workshops or community-based programs. Conversely, parents with busy schedules might be able to access the information at a more flexible, convenient time (Heath et al., 2018).

The need to develop online or other means of delivery methods provided a way for parents to participate in the intervention programs and workshops. Designing online interventions replaced the barriers and provided parents with a solution. Offering parenting interventions through online delivery was adapted as a pilot, as a successful means of communicating, getting parents involved, increasing participation in parent training, and providing content at a more convenient time (Heath et al., 2018). The findings in the study support Vygotsky's (1930) ZPD theory. Vygotsky's theory provided an overview of gaining an insight on parents' perceptions of learning and understanding how parents understood the reality of attending workshops and applying information learned in online intervention after training. In the study, Heath et al. (2018) explored families and helped to increase parental engagement with training by having families watch the Triple P—Positive Parenting Program on television. Successful online training was explored. Baker, Sanders, Turner, and Morawska (2017) concluded the program helped to improve dysfunctional parenting, built confidence in the

parent's ability, and enhanced the child's behavior. In the long run, attending the workshops or community-based programs online helped bring about change for the parent and the child.

As a result of watching the program, which featured parents working with children during behavior problems, the poor behaviors changed in the homes of families viewing the six-episode TV show (Baker et al., 2017). At the time of Baker et al.'s (2017) study, though, many of these low-intensity interactive intervention programs were nonexistent or not readily available for parents of students with behavior problems. Baker et al. stated online parenting interventions were in the early stages but indicated favorable outcomes for parents of children with behavior problems. The importance of developing and providing various types of intervention delivery methods and observing the shifting schedules of parents, which allowed parents to learn useful skills at multiple times and locations (Heath et al., 2018).

Parental Input and Involvement as a Homeschool Resource

Parental involvement continues to be one of the most meaningful practices in which a citizen is involved in the public domain (Shuffelton, 2017). Cunha et al. (2015) conducted a study regarding parents' involvement in working with the child on homework at home. Interviews were conducted to analyze how parents perceived the role of helping the child with homework. The research suggested parents contemplated the notion to provide RTI activities at home. The study started with examining the perspectives of fourth-grade parents as much of the literature found revolved around the negative and positive aspects of parent involvement in homework help, depending on the behaviors of the parents (Cunha et al., 2015). A total of 32 semi-structured interviews were conducted and analyzed in the study. The results showed

parents' perceptions of working with the child on homework were favorable and taking on the role of homework involvement showed a positive meaning, fostering academic achievement for the child.

The conclusion of the study showed the importance parents placed on homework. Cunha et al. did not conclude the research without stressing the significance of parent–teacher collaboration and parent-training workshops to improve parental homework involvement at home. Ultimately, efforts took place to empower parents to become trainers and supporters for young readers (Fiester, 2010). Families with more education, awareness, and abilities created better learning environments for the child (Chiu & Chow, 2015; Sedlackova, 2017).

These positive results, collected from parents' perspectives on homework, correlated with parents' perceptions of implementing the RTI program at home. Although some parents saw parental involvement in homework help as positive, others saw parental involvement as a time-consuming exercise and a waste of time, which fostered anger, irritation, and frustration between the parent and the child (Cunha et al., 2015). In a different study about parental participation and involvement, Heath et al. (2018) noted, although some parents were trained to implement interventions for the at-risk child, many hesitated and discontinued going to the training. Data showed nonparental engagement produced high nonattendance rates in parents for students needing the most assistance (Heath et al., 2018). A postintervention survey was given, and 91 parents with the desire to improve learning skills and help the child signed up for workshop training; 44 parents failed to show, despite courtesy phone calls and reminders (Heath et al., 2018).

These factors influenced the research questions for the study, which clarified why parents failed to follow through with attending workshops for training and provided insights into improved parental engagement (Heath et al., 2018). Parents' insights into the reason's parents did not attend training and workshops and explored purposes for nonparental participation and engagement in schools were explored. Outcomes of the research ended with parents having good intentions of attending the workshops to increase knowledge and support the child's learning and development. Face-to-face workshops did not engage the parents of students needing support. In the end, an alternative call to action for parents with low or no attendance at workshops would be to offer online methods for parent participation (Heath et al., 2018). In another study, Gerzel-Short (2018) found other barriers of parental involvement were time constraints, parents not able to connect with teachers through communication, and the fear of upsetting the teacher regarding specific issues or needs of the child.

Home-Based Response to Intervention

RTI is a three-tiered instructional program driven by the data analysis of student academic outcomes (King & Coughlin, 2016; Warren & Robinson, 2015). The RTI model was created to support early intervention in general education classes (Abou-Rjaily & Stoddard, 2017; Dunn, 2018). In addition, the RTI framework is designed to provide intervention for students falling behind in reading or math and uses ongoing intervention and screening to address the academic and behavior needs of students (Dunn, 2018; Wingate et al., 2018). Gerzel-Short (2018) described RTI as a tiered structural framework intended to deliver an elevated aspect of reading instruction to learners struggling with reading, who are academically

challenged, and need additional targeted teaching. Poon-McBrayer (2018) and Abou-Rjaily and Stoddard (2017) discussed the breakdown of the instructional program as follows: Tier 1 students receive general education of the core curriculum in a whole-group setting, using differentiated instruction, to foster motivation and dissuade behavioral issues; Tier 2 consists of small-group instruction for students needing further review or remediation of the skills taught in the lesson; Tier 3 focuses on intense, individualized intervention for students not making adequate improvement. Students not improving at all are given referrals for special education services.

Wingate et al. (2018) explored a resource school recognized for effectively implementing inclusive education. The first phase of the mixed-method study focused on the qualitative method, which explored how the RTI model was learned, implemented, and practiced by principals, special needs counselors, and teachers in the school. Poon-McBrayer (2018); Swindlehurst, Shepherd, Salembier, and Hurley (2015); and Werts, Carpenter, and Fewell (2014) iterated the appropriate implementation of RTI helps to prevent or reduce the number of student referrals and placement in special education classes in schools. Opposing reasons for RTI implementation are the inconsistencies and concerns in implementing RTI (Swindlehurst et al., 2015). Based on the study, Wingate et al. found some concerns were received from parents of high school students complaining and declaring RTI was not practical for the child; the program had a negative effect on the students' academic learning environment; RTI was a waste of time, as the student spent time completing homework or conversing with friends in the resource room during RTI pull-out; and there were gaps in RTI services because of school district

underfunding, contributing to inconsistencies in implementation of the program. Wingate et al. noted other researchers discussed another barrier to the implementation of RTI was directly related to parental involvement and a lack of understanding the program. Kamrath and Brooker (2018) indicated parent attitudes toward the elementary schools were negative when the parents associated parent involvement with schools and education.

Wingate et al. (2018) found parents did not have much information about the RTI framework and did not look at the program favorably. The school districts needed to have better communication with parents regarding the RTI program. Wingate et al. indicated social workers could play a significant role in making sure school districts improve in communicating with parents about the implementation of RTI. Helberg and Elish-Piper (2011) proposed parents should keep the lines of communication open with schools, be sure interventions are implemented with fidelity for the child in school and get updates on the child's progress frequently.

Change in Parental Perceptions

Parental involvement plays a significant role in the academic development and success of the child. Parent participation is crucial for the child's progress (DeMatthews, 2018). Helberg and Elish-Piper (2011) determined when parents work alongside the child and teacher, the child has a better chance of overcoming reading challenges. Gerzel-Short (2018) found when teachers collaborated with parents to collapse learning gaps among students, parents could help the child in the areas of weakness. Students received additional help in reading when completing the RTI

activities while working with the parent at home, turning reading challenges into reading triumphs (Helberg & Elish-Piper, 2011).

When parents helped the child with homework, the quality of the child's achievement varied (Orkin et al., 2017). Orkin et al.'s (2017) study required parents of struggling readers to complete a questionnaire which was given to determine the behaviors parents showed when supporting the child with homework. The questionnaire was divided into three categories—strategic practices, compensatory exercises, and intrusive practices—to measure parental support and level of control toward the child's ability to perform a specific task (Orkin et al., 2017). The study supported Vygotsky's (1930) social constructivist learning theory in which parents understand the realities of parents' own world. Orkin et al. explored the breakdown of each category and explained how the behaviors were measured.

First, strategic practices assessed parents encouraging the child's independent mastery and used verbiage which inspired the child to persevere through challenges. Second, compensatory exercises were used to assess parents' compensatory actions and verbiage used, and parents' level of feeling obliged to complete some of the work for the child. Finally, intrusive practices were used to determine the interfering, meddling behavior parents showed while the child completed homework and to reveal the verbiage parents used to correct the child while the child was reading (Cunha et al., 2015). The information was gathered from parents with struggling readers. The study concluded parents understood the parenting style in which the child was raised and how the positive or negative effects in assisting the child could affect the child's academic learning in the future (Orkin et al., 2017). Ultimately, the knowledge iterated

Vygotsky's social constructivist transformational theory of the parents' perceptions of understanding the personal effects, both positive and negative, of providing homework help for the child at home.

Parents interrupting the child during homework came with the desire to make sure the child did well (Cunha et al., 2015). The interruption could have caused a negative effect, sending a cue to the student indicating the student was not capable of working on homework or reading independently. The outcome of the study revealed parents had the best intentions for the child (Cunha et al., 2015). Conversely, an intrusive parent could have hurt the performance of the struggling learner in the long run. In addition, an increase in homework help by the parent could have had unfavorable results for the struggling child. Hence, with the knowledge learned, parents understood personal behavior and changed personal actions to bring about change and provide a more positive academic homework experience for the child at home (Cunha et al., 2015). Understanding the perspective of the intrusive parent and what drives the need to want to make the child perform better correlated with understanding the parents' perspective regarding boys with reading struggles.

When parents understand what RTI is, how to implement the program, the benefits for the child, and outcomes for the child, an opportunity for success increases. Reading should be made a priority at home for the child, setting time aside for the parent and child to read together. Providing knowledge of what an RTI model is could help parents understand the basics of how the program could help the child at home. Zirkel (2018) reported four segments of RTI: the program is research based, progress monitoring checks a child's progression in learning,

screening explores a child's academic and behavior issues, and the three tiers or levels of instruction provide a progression of additional intense tutoring. Parents should be given an example of what the problem-solving, three-tiered framework looks like, constructed to provide high-quality teaching to struggling students with academic challenges, to learn and understand how implementing the program at home could help the child (Gerzel-Short, 2018).

In a study based on a six-week intervention session, weekly intervention progress reports were given to parents to provide information on where the child was on an academic level and how the parents can support the child at home (Kamrath & Brooker, 2018). The study lent to the notion parents could help support the child at home when provided with tools to help with implementation. Kamrath and Brooker (2018) explored the usefulness of the intervention by evaluating and recapping the academic improvement of the students to understand perceptions of the parents and students regarding the influence of intervention implementation in the school. The benefits of implementing the RTI program at home led to increased knowledge in academic and behavior strategies for the child, through progress monitoring, screening, and intense instruction (Zirkel, 2018). The study led to the notion of exploring parents' perceptions of gaining confidence and learning how to work with the child at home, which followed Mezirow's (1991) theory of transformational learning (McComish & Parsons, 2013). The outcomes led to increased self-confidence in the parents, which led to parents helping the child become successful in school. As Gerzel-Short (2018) found, increased family participation in a child's academic learning is vital to student success. Finally, many teacher leaders and reading experts suggest the need for parents to become reading coaches to help the child learn reading skills

(Fiester, 2010). Helberg and Elish-Piper (2011) stated even older children benefit from hearing texts being read aloud at home.

Kamrath and Brooker (2018) found the improvement in attitude for parents and children indicated an increase in positive behavioral change in the school climate and culture. The findings from the study showed the change in parents' perceptions of the school could change the attitudes of the parents and involvement in the academic lives of the child (Kamrath & Brooker, 2018). Terlitsky and Wilkins (2015) found students' literacy skills and behavior improved as the learners were influenced by the participation of parents in literacy activities at home. As parents gained confidence in themselves and the ability to help the child in educational learning, improvement in literacy and positive behavior in children increased (Terlitsky & Wilkins, 2015).

Parental Approach to Self-Confidence, Implementation, and Effectiveness

Encouraging parents to be involved in a child's academic growth and be supportive of a child's reading success influences proficiency and motivation for reading and may help the child succeed in school (Camacho & Alves, 2017). One of the ways a parent could raise self-confidence is to enroll in a class which addresses reading skills and readiness. Parents without the ability to read could develop personal literacy skills to become equipped to help the child do well in school (Fiester, 2010). A multitiered support system could be used by the school counselor and then shared with parents to effectively show how to help the struggling reader at home (Ziomek-Daigle, Goodman-Scott, Cavin, & Donohue, 2016). Sink and Ockerman (2016) stated parents implemented a program at home with fidelity and were effective in helping the

child overcome reading difficulties. Four themes were discussed in the study, which showed how undergraduate students dealt with reading difficulties: sought assistance from others, developed positive relationships, was highly motivated to achieve, and believed in themselves.

In a study by Ingraham et al. (2016), an approach to effectiveness was found in a high school where only two thirds of the students graduated. When the method to communicate with the population of mostly Spanish-speaking parents changed, the graduation rate increased within three years (Ingraham et al., 2016). The change came about when the use of bilingual participatory dialogues and processes were introduced to parents, which in turn increased parental involvement and effectiveness in the school (Ingraham et al., 2016). The method included school personnel understanding and recognizing the parents' varying levels of literacy in English and in the native language.

Bilingual parent workshops were the tool used to increase parent education, boost parent engagement, and improve parent collaboration with the school. The findings suggested when parents were given the tools needed, by communicating with parents in own native language, a change in learning occurred for the parent and the student (Ingraham et al., 2016). By communicating with parents in own native language, self-confidence materialized in parents, and parents implemented strategies learned to help the child at home (Sink & Ockerman, 2016), which helped make the children become better students in the school (Ingraham et al., 2016). Parent interactions with the school increased because changes in the delivery of the message were made and parents could understand what the children needed to be successful in school.

Ingraham et al.'s (2016) study aligned with Mezirow's (1991) transformational learning theory, which explored individuals' understanding of confidence and potential (McComish & Parsons, 2013). Parents felt supported and were given the tools to become self-confident not only to support children at home by implementing effective strategies to help children become better students but furthermore, to become change agents and leaders (Amanchukwu et al., 2015). The parents began to conduct workshops in the school to help other parents become self-confident and effective educational providers at home. A model which showed parents' perceptions of helping the child at home to become a better student and the confidence to become an educational advocate for the community was provided in the study. Mezirow's transformational learning theory suggests the research may have helped to develop an influence on motivating perceptions of parents to learn and assist children at home with academic activities and to implement supplemental reading activities, which may have led to an increase in proficient reading levels.

Counterargument: Alternate Perspectives

Terlitsky and Wilkins (2015) found family literacy programs help poor readers improve, as parents learn how to engage positively with students. The contradictions analyzed by Terlitsky and Wilkins were poor readers did not enjoy reading, did not participate in the skill of reading, and learned to be disabled because of limited family experiences. The counterargument pointed out parents were unmotivated and had a reluctance to help children with the literacy process (Terlitsky & Wilkins, 2015). Giménez et al. (2017) concluded parents with reading impairments more than likely have children with low reading abilities. Parents do not have knowledge,

competence, and tools to support the child (Gerzel-Short, 2018). Herman and Reinke (2017) explored teachers' perceptions of parents and concluded parents did not participate in school activities or help the child with homework. Conversely, multiple findings indicated, with teacher training and the school personnel's assistance with families, parents were eager to support the child's academic and behavioral needs to prevent long-term adverse results (Herman & Reinke, 2017; Ziomek-Daigle et al., 2016).

Gap in Literature

Few studies highlight parents' perceptions of boys in upper elementary grades struggling with reading complexities, specifically boys reading two to three grade levels below proficiency (Ciullo, Falcomata, & Vaughn, 2015). Research conducted to explore successful reading interventions for boys with reading difficulties in the upper elementary grades are limited when compared with the available studies exploring interventions for students with reading problems in the early elementary grades (Wanzek et al., 2017). Similarly, not much research was found highlighting parents' perceptions of having the confidence to learn and implement RTI for upper elementary boys at home. Cunha et al. (2015) found parents' perspectives were often overlooked during research. Wingate et al. (2018) concluded parents have not received information about RTI, have little knowledge about the program, and do not have a positive outlook on the framework.

Chapter Summary

The literature review for the basic qualitative study explored the different sources to analyze and understand parents' perceptions of fourth- and fifth-grade boys with low reading

proficiency (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015). The literature review was used to comprehend parent perceptions of implementing RTI activities at home for effective improvement in reading. Major themes in the study were factors contributing to reading behaviors and abilities, challenges of struggling readers, problems related to parent involvement, the complexity of RTI, positive aspects related to parental implementation, negative issues related to parental self-confidence, and perceived barriers of socioeconomic status.

A plethora of research was found outlining and discussing the three-tiered RTI framework (Zirkel, 2018). Little is known concerning parents' perceptions surrounding many topics. For example, specific research about parental attitudes of fourth- and fifth-grade boys scoring two to three grades below grade level was not found. Furthermore, not much research was found concerning parental perceptions of learning and implementing an intervention program at home. Little research was available regarding the perceptions of extended family care, grandparents caring for grandchildren, and the perceptions grandparents have regarding boys struggling to read. Furthermore, little information singled out specific genders of children. The focus was more on children or students as opposed to the reading behaviors and struggles of boys or girls (Kamrath & Brooker, 2018). Additionally, most literature found targeted younger students in the early emergent grades as opposed to students in upper elementary grades.

The documentation for the study was limited. The study was necessary to fill a gap in the research literature and increase awareness of parents' viewpoints of at-risk readers and whether parents have the confidence to learn and put at-home intervention activities into practice for the child. Research has shown when parent involvement in a child's academic success increases, the

achievement gap for at-risk readers decreases (Fiester, 2010). The social constructivist learning theory focuses on observing how individuals understand the world and personal realities (Vygotsky, 1930). Mezirow's transformational learning theory explores individuals' understanding of confidence and potential (McComish & Parsons, 2013). As a final point, gaining insight into how the two theories linked with the research helped to develop an influence on motivating perceptions of parents, which led to an increase of proficient reading levels for boys (Amanchukwu et al., 2015).

Parents' perceptions were made public with administrators, parents, teachers, and social workers in the school community to disclose innovative approaches used to cultivate confidence in parents to work with fourth- and fifth-grade boys on reading intervention methods at home. Utilizing research to support parents' views on personal abilities eliminated reading inabilities. The study provided a different perception of learning for parents and increased reading skills for boys at risk for reading failure, which supported positive school accomplishments. As parents became more confident in personal abilities to help the child, the more likely the parent was to participate in the child's academic learning, which contributed to the success of the child (Terlitsky & Wilkins, 2015).

The literature review, which provided background material and explored methodologies of existing studies, constructed the subject matter of the present research. The next chapter provides a synopsis of research procedures, data collection, data preparation, data analysis, reliability and validity, and ethical practices to ensure the welfare, safety, and confidentiality of the research participants (National Institutes of Health [NIH], 2016) in the study. An account of

the methodology and design of the research used in the study explored parents' viewpoints of boys reading far below the proficiency level and analyzed parents' confidence to implement intervention activities at home to help improve boys' reading comprehension and scores.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of the basic qualitative study was to explore parents' perceptions of fourth- and fifth-grade boys reading two to three grades below grade level and the level of confidence the boys' parents have to learn and provide reading intervention at home for the boys to help raise low reading scores (Caissie et al., 2017). Proficiency rates were categorized into student performance levels and defined by scaled scores across grade levels. The proficiency rates were based on mastery of content on the district-mandated reading benchmark assessments called Renaissance Star Reading, given three times per year, using criterion-referenced analysis, norm-referenced analysis, percentile rank (PR), or a scaled score (SS; Renaissance Learning, 2013). Performance levels for students in fourth grade were categorized as follows:

- Proficient/Advanced or At/Above Benchmark, which is equal to at/above the 40th PR or at/above 424 SS and ranges from 424 and above;
- Basic or On Watch is equal to the 25th to 39th PR or below 424 SS and ranges from 357 to 423;
- Below Basic or Intervention is equal to the 10th to 24th PR or below 357 SS and ranges from 269 to 356; and
- Far Below Basic or Urgent Intervention is equal to below the 10th PR or below 269 SS and ranges from 0 to 268 (Renaissance Learning, 2013).

Performance levels for students in fifth grade were categorized as follows:

- Proficient/Advanced or At/Above Benchmark, which is equal to at/above the 40th PR or at/above 525 SS and ranges from 525 and above;

- Basic or On Watch is equal to the 25th to 39th PR or below 525 SS and ranges from 453 to 524;
- Below Basic or Intervention is equal to the 10th to 24th PR or below 453 SS and ranges from 452 to 345; and
- Far Below Basic or Urgent Intervention is equal to below the 10th PR or below 345 SS and ranges from 344 to 0 (Renaissance Learning, 2013).

Students scoring below the 40th percentile or below the proficiency rate of the cut score 357 SS in the fall for fourth-grade students and below the proficiency rate of the cut score 453 SS in the fall for fifth-grade students, as per the criterion-referenced Renaissance Star Reading assessment, performed in the low proficiency category. Regarding reading assessments, a cut score was necessary for performance at each achievement level and outlined the lower limits of at/above basic, below basic, or far below basic SS (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015).

Herman and Reinke (2017) stated for students struggling with academic and behavior issues, parents' involvement is crucial to deter foreseeable long-term damaging outcomes. The aim of the study was essential to explore and comprehend parents' perceptions and viewpoints of the reading struggles of fourth- and fifth-grade boys. The research was a vital tool to guide parents with knowledgeable facts related to boys reading below grade level. Caissie et al. (2017) stated several parents believe personal education is not sufficient in helping the child with schoolwork. The resource provided by the research study eliminated the beliefs. Parents were empowered to help the child with reading activities at home and ideally administered RTI materials to assist the child with improving low reading abilities, which helped to eliminate the

foreseeable damaging outcomes. Additionally, the study provided needed information to an already limited knowledge base of research material.

The target population for the study was 15 to 20 parents of fourth- and fifth-grade boys with low reading proficiency who attended an urban elementary school. As a result of the basic qualitative research study, all school stakeholders learned about and understood the perceptions of parents raising fourth- and fifth-grade boys with low reading proficiency scale scores ranging from 650 to 749 on state-mandated standardized assessments (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015). Performance below the proficiency reading range of 750 to 850 on the standardized assessments meant boys were not ready for the next grade level and needed additional support to meet the expectations for the next grade level (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015). The results of the research report were publicized for all stakeholders (Ward et al., 2018).

Qualitative questions were utilized to answer precise questions to understand the impact and insight on how the world is from the standpoint of the participants' perspectives (Hammarberg et al., 2016). The open-ended research questions were formulated and supported from the foundation of the theoretical framework of the study; observed, guided, and addressed specific problems in the study; and aligned with the basic qualitative research design (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). The following research questions guided the study:

Research Question 1: What were parents' perceptions on why fourth- and fifth-grade boys scored on a lower reading proficiency level when compared to classmates scoring on or above the reading proficiency level?

Research Question 2: How confident were parents to learn and implement Response to Intervention (RTI) supplemental activities at home to effectively assist with raising low reading proficiency scores of fourth- and fifth-grade boys?

The significant sections of the chapter address the problem statement, research questions, research methodology and design, and role of the researcher. Research procedures are discussed, including population and sample selection, instrumentation, data collection, and data preparation. The chapter includes data analysis, reliability and validity, ethical procedures, and a chapter summary.

Research Design and Rationale

The research approach used for the study was the basic qualitative design, which is the most used type of qualitative research in education (Merriam, 2009). Merriam (2009) stated the goal of the basic qualitative design is to comprehend how people make sense of lives, experiences, the world, and realities. Percy, Kostere, and Kostere (2015) described the basic qualitative design as an investigation of individuals' mindsets, viewpoints, or beliefs about specific concerns or occurrences. The design was suitable for responding to the research questions and fit the context of seeking to comprehend parents' views about fourth- and fifth-grade boys' low reading scores and parents' confidence to learn and implement an intervention program at home (Creswell, 2003, 2013). Questionnaires, interviews, and observational field notes were used to collect data for the basic qualitative research design. Face-to-face, semi-structured, open-ended interviews were conducted with participants, questionnaires were utilized, and field notes were used to explore the significance of participants' perceptions.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher's role in the study was twofold, one as a teacher and the other as an observer. The teacher was employed in the school and taught one of three fourth-grade classes and one of three fifth-grade classes in the elementary school where the boys attend. The relationships with some of the families of fourth- and fifth-grade boys in the school were based on a professional association. The parents of these students were not selected to take part in the study due to the professional relationship with some of the parents. To avoid biases, parents of boys taught were omitted, certifying no existing or prior relationship between the participants.

Additionally, the researcher in the role of an observer used bracketing to suspend assumptions against all other parents taking part in the study. Bracketing is the process of putting aside personal experiences, biases, and preconceived ideas of the research topic to understand the participants' views and not align participants' beliefs to fit into research observations (Ward et al., 2018). The authentic practice of bracketing was implemented through the process of setting aside professional familiarities and biases with parents and eliminated preconceived ideas of knowledge based on previous studies and theories about the research of the study (Flipp, 2014). The method of writing down personal biases, professional experiences with parents, and prior knowledge gained about the topic before the research process began was used to suspend bracketing (Flipp, 2014; Ward et al., 2018). During data collection, data analysis, and when writing the final research report, the bracketed notes were looked at and reflected on to make sure misrepresentation, preconceived knowledge, or personal beliefs and views did not surface, keeping the research in check (Flipp, 2014). Personal biases were written in the final research

report, permitting the audience to gain an awareness of personal bias when reading the results and interpretations of the research data (Flipp, 2014).

To address any ethical issues or conflicts, at the start of the interviews, the participants were informed both orally and in writing (see Appendix C) of the freedom to leave the study for any reason. Participants were informed and reassured all information collected, recorded, and transcribed would be held confidential and protected under lock and key for three years (Heath et al., 2018). Additionally, for the sake and welfare of the research participants' confidentiality and privacy, semi-structured open-ended recorded interviews, constructed around the study's research questions, transpired in a neutral location outside of school grounds where other parents would not recognize the research participants, school personnel, or students (van den Berg, Vos, de Groot, Singh, & Chinapaw, 2018). Each participant was interviewed in one of the reserved study rooms of the local library to protect and maintain the privacy of the participants. The scheduled meeting time was set at the convenience of each participant. Participants were not given monetary incentives.

The interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder, with the recorder pointing away from the participant to circumvent obtrusive recording. The recorded interview, labeled with each participant's pseudonym for anonymity, was backed up on the personal computer and stored in an encrypted, password-protected file folder (Saunders, Kitzinger, & Kitzinger, 2015). Interview recordings were transcribed using the Otter Voice Meeting Notes program. After the Otter Voice Meeting Notes program transcribed each participant's interview, the lock protection feature was used to protect the confidentiality of the transcripts. To confirm the accuracy and

validity of results, participants had an opportunity to explore the respective interview transcripts (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter, 2016). Member checking was utilized to provide credibility of the data results collected from the participants' interviews (Cope, 2014).

Research Procedures

The Research Procedures section defines the target population, sampling strategy and rationale, and criteria for sample selection. The number of participants (Creswell, 2013), a description of recruitment, and the initial steps for contacting parents are included. A description of how participants were informed about the study and how consent was obtained is included.

Population and Sample Selection

The approximate total population of parents of fourth- and fifth grade boys attending the urban elementary school was 69. The target population for the study was 12 to 15 parents of fourth- and fifth-grade boys reading two to three grades below reading proficiency. Guetterman (as cited in Park & Abell, 2008) stated 12 to 700 participants are sufficient when conducting a research study in education. Fifteen participants were chosen to ensure enough data were available for the research. Purposeful sampling was utilized to select participants. Patton (as cited in Guetterman, 2015) noted purposeful or purposive sampling involves selecting cases for in-depth study in which researchers learn a great deal about the issues found in the cases of the research, yielding insight and thorough understanding of the participants.

Participants were acquired only after e-mailing and inviting all parents of boys in the fourth and fifth grades to participate. The method of asking all parents to participate in the research was done to uphold anonymity (NIH, 2016) for the purposefully chosen parents (Birt et

al., 2016). The upper elementary instructional literacy coach extracted the appropriate assessment data of fourth- and fifth-grade boys reading two to three grade levels below proficiency. The literacy coach was sure the identified assessment data were accurate, consistent, and usable before disseminating the information for the research study. The district administrator was informed of and approved the process, and consent was obtained for the study (see Appendix D). The selection criteria were based on (a) test scores of fourth- and fifth-grade boys scoring between 650 and 749 on the state-mandated reading assessments called the New Jersey Student Learning Assessments, formerly called the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), and (b) the boys scoring at or below the 24th percentile (Below Basic/Intervention or Far Below Basic/Urgent Intervention) on the fall district-mandated reading benchmark assessments called Renaissance Star Reading, comparable to the state test scores (Creswell, 2013).

PARCC (2016) reported assessment scores to range from Levels 1 to 5. A student scoring at Level 1 to Level 3 indicated the student did not meet the grade-level expectations and needed remedial help to move on to the next grade. A student scoring at Level 4 to Level 5 indicated the student has a solid grasp of grade-level material and is college and career ready. Low proficiency scaled scores were derived from the Level 1 cut score of 650 through the Level 3 cut score of 725 for Grades 3–11, indicating students falling within the range of cut scores from Levels 1 to 3 require additional support to move toward the end-of-year benchmark expectations. The state-mandated assessments are a series of standardized tests administered to gauge whether students

understand specified grade-level concepts of English language arts, mathematics, and science (NJDOE, 2018).

Parents of fourth-grade boys were chosen based on research by Yale University (as cited in Fiester, 2010) which stated students not reading on grade level by the end of third grade may be poor readers through high school and tend to have more behavior and academic problems. Following the specific process of purposeful sampling, parents of fifth-grade boys were selected to participate (Lodico et al., 2010). The growing concern was boys were entering middle school reading below grade level at the end of the school year. The perceptions of parents about boys moving on to the next grade reading two to three grades below proficiency were reflected in the research questions. After receiving permission from the district administrator (see Appendix D) and the Institutional Review Board (IRB) (see Appendix E), the research process began. Once the upper elementary instructional literacy coach extracted the identified assessment data, parents were e-mailed utilizing purposeful sampling. Upon obtaining parent contact information from the school's parent portal database, the prospective participants were recruited by discussing the goal of the study and inquiring about parent participation.

Participants were contacted a total of five times throughout the research process. An account of all participant contacts included e-mails, phone calls, and face-to-face interviews. The breakdown of contact with participants were as follows:

- First contact time: A recruitment letter was e-mailed, with an attached link to a short, general, two-part questionnaire to all parents of fourth- and fifth-grade boys, inviting the parents to participate in the study (see Appendices H & I).

- Second contact time: Utilizing purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2013), the first phone call was made to parents to invite potential participants to take part in the interview portion of the research study. Near the end of the call, a personal phone number was provided in case parents had questions (see Appendix A).
- Third contact time: Interviews with participants were conducted after parents signed the consent form. The interview protocol was used to conduct the interview utilizing a digital voice recorder. Each recording was labeled with the participant's pseudonym for anonymity throughout the interview process (Saunders et al., 2015) (see Appendices C & F).
- Fourth contact time: Within two days of the interview, the participant was called and asked to retrieve and view an e-mailed copy of the interview transcript for accuracy and validation (Birt et al., 2016).
- Fifth contact time: Within two days of sending the transcript to the participant, a follow-up call was made to verify the participant read the transcript and the information was authentic. Throughout the study, participants were welcome to make contact by phone, text, or e-mail when questions arose.

Instrumentation

Interview was the research instrument used for the basic qualitative study to explore the personal qualities of the participants taking part in the study. Cope (2014) stated interviews are used as a method of data collection in a qualitative study to gain a comprehensive view of the experience. The interview questions were open-ended and presented face-to-face, with each

participant responding to the questions asked (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In-depth, semi-structured interviews with parent participants of boys reading two to three grades below grade level were used to gather data. Semi-structured interviews offered some flexibility, however, followed the guidelines for maintaining research protocol. Interviews conducted in the study were designed to collect rich information from parent participants' attitudes concerning boys reading below grade level. Although interviews could be time-consuming, conducting interviews for the research provided a deeper understanding of participants' viewpoints regarding boys.

The four-step interview protocol was used for the present study. Castillo-Montoya (2016) discussed the rigorous, four-step interview protocol refinement (IPR) and how the reliability of the instrument is strengthened through the IPR framework which is most compatible for semi-structured interviews. The interview protocol was refined and enhanced which increased the quality of data collected from the study. The first step in the process was to ensure the interview questions aligned with the research questions guiding the study. A matrix for mapping the interview questions with research questions was created to show the alignment of the study's research questions to the participants' responses to the interview questions (see Table 4). The second step involved in the interview protocol was to make sure the questions created for the interviews were rich, inquiry-based, and provided a rich conversation for participants taking part in the study (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). A script was generated and used for each interview to guide the flow of the conversation from one interview question to the next. The goal was to ask focused questions in an effort to obtain meaningful, detailed data from the participants which

was essential to addressing the research questions. In-depth questions provided an opportunity for the participants to share an understanding of personal experiences concerning boys.

Phase 3 of the IPR was to receive feedback from the Subject Matter Experts (SME) to enhance reliability and ensure the IPR was trustworthy as a viable research instrument for the study (see Appendix G) (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). Feedback was necessary to ensure participants were able to understand the interview questions which showed transparency, straightforwardness, and accountability, and whether the interview questions align with the purpose of the research study (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). Phase 4 of the interview protocol required piloting the IPR to get a sense of the best order of the interview questions and how long the interview process took (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). After simulating the interview protocol, final revisions were made to the order of questions and an approximate timing for the interview process was provided.

At the start of each interview, the research procedures were discussed, such as duration of the interview, utilization of a recording device, and the confidentiality–privacy contract (van den Berg et al., 2018). Interviews included asking parents two semi-structured, open-ended questions which were constructed based on the research questions in the study. Interview questions were aligned with the research questions in the study (see Appendix F).

The interview questions were created to replicate the social rules of conversation and consisted of two interview questions with 15 sub-questions (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). The interview questionnaire was reviewed by the SME panel and modified accordingly (see Appendix G). An interview protocol (see Appendix F) was used to guide the conversation and

inquiry, which included a script, prompts, and follow-up questions (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). The raw data from all interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder and transcribed verbatim utilizing Otter Voice Meeting Notes, which accurately transcribed information from each participant's interview in preparation for analyzing and coding the data.

To strengthen the study, another research instrument called observational fieldnotes was used to collect data (see Appendix B). The method of utilizing observational fieldnotes described participants' reactions before, during, and after the interview (Merriam, 2009; Sutton & Austin, 2015; van den Berg et al., 2018). Yüksel and Yildirim (2015) described observational fieldnotes as another source of data used to validate a participants' experience. The observational fieldnotes provided insight on how parent participants showed nonverbal reactions to questions asked during the interview (see Appendix B) (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). Nonverbal cues were a vital part of the research study. The observed cues were documented after each participant left the local library where the interviews took place (see Appendix B) (Cope, 2014).

Questionnaires was another research instrument used in the study to gather information from parents of fourth and fifth grade boys and the boys' basic attitude towards reading. Questionnaires were emailed to each of the 69 parents using SurveyMonkey asking for responses to the questions (see Appendix H). Once the parent read and agreed to answer the questions, the parents clicked the link, answered the questions, and submitted the form. The 26 responses from parents were returned. Responses on the instrument documented the parents' viewpoints of the boys' attitudes towards reading and verified parent's viewpoints of boys and reading with the other instruments used in the study.

Fieldnotes, transcripts, and questionnaires were collected for the process of analyzing and coding. Transcripts and field notes were coded and explored using NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software program (van den Berg et al., 2018). NVivo was used as the coding method for classifying, categorizing, managing, decoding, and examining the transcribed interview data. The relationships within the data were investigated and the analysis was combined by linking and shaping the data to identify trends, which led to the process of coding. The topics, concerns, comparisons, and differences revealed through participants' responses were pinpointed by coding and then decoded (Sutton & Austin, 2015). Coding into themes was developed, then analyzed, using the raw data from participants' interviews, questionnaires, and fieldnotes, while using the research questions as a guide, utilizing the data reduction technique to organize and condense the data for manageability (National Science Foundation, 1997). Braun and Clarke (2006, 2016) stated the analysis is conducted to discover, explore, and classify patterns found in accumulated data of a basic qualitative study. The answers to the open-ended research questions on the meanings, magnitudes, and insights of participants' viewpoints were provided from the data and produced into themes (Hammarberg et al., 2016).

Data Collection

The basic qualitative research study used data collection techniques such as questionnaires (Merriam, 2009), one-to-one recorded interviews, and observational field notes (Sutton & Austin, 2015) to collect data. An e-mail was sent to the school district administrator requesting permission to conduct the study (see Appendix D). Data collection began once the school district and IRB provided authorization to perform the study.

Upon approval from the IRB (see Appendix E), the study commenced, and concluded within the time frame of three weeks. Participants were interviewed at the convenient of the participants. By extending the time frame of the data collection process to three weeks ensured the participants were accommodated and enough information for the study was collected. The instruments utilized for data collection were a parent questionnaire emailed to all parents of fourth- and fifth-grade boys in one school within the district and a total of 15 semi-structured open-ended interview sub-questions administered to a purposeful sample of participating parents. In addition, a digital recording device to record interviews of participants, fieldnotes gathered after each interview, the Otter Voice Meeting Notes program for transcribing interviews and notes, and NVivo data analysis software to analyze and code collected data were used (van den Berg et al., 2018).

All parents of fourth- and fifth-grade boys were notified by e-mail and invited to participate in the research study (see Appendix I). To ensure the parents of boys who were at-risk readers were not singled out, apart from the entire population of parents, every identified parent of an upper elementary boy in the school received the invitation to participate in the study by e-mail. At the bottom of the letter, parents were asked to click on the link to complete the short Parental Perceptions Questionnaire (see Appendix H) about the son's reading habits, created using SurveyMonkey. Once the parents clicked the Submit tab on the questionnaire (see Appendix H), the form was returned to be part of the research study. Using purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2013), potential participants were chosen, as contact information of the prospects was gathered from the school's parent portal database.

When the time came for the face-to-face interviews to be conducted, purposeful sampling was used to choose prospective participants (Creswell, 2013), who were contacted by phone to discuss the goal of the study and then recruited to participate in the interview portion of the research. The recruitment phone calls were private, following the script of the Recruitment Telephone Script (see Appendix A), to ensure the confidentiality of potential participants. The information was obtained from 15 participants utilizing purposeful sampling to ensure enough data were provided to perform the study. Creswell (2013) expressed purposeful sampling permits the researcher to select participants based on precise criteria. Participants chosen through purposeful sampling were reminded verbally and in writing of the freedom to leave study for any reason (NIH, 2016) and assured all information collected would be held confidential and protected under lock and key in a file cabinet for three years (Heath et al., 2018).

Data Preparation

Purposefully selected parents were called and asked to take part in the research study. A phone call was made to the prospective participants and an invitation was given. If the potential participant agreed to take part in the research, the participant was asked to meet at the local library for the interview in one of the reserved study rooms for the sake of privacy and confidentiality. In addition, each participant was asked to choose a specific time which best fit the participant's schedule. Merriam (as cited in Yazan, 2015) discussed guidelines to follow when preparing for successful interviews, noting good questions, the type of questions asked, and which questions to avoid were appropriate methods when conducting an effective interview. When the participant arrived in the private conference room of the local library for the interview,

the participant was asked to read and sign the Informed Consent Form (see Appendix C); the participant was given a copy of the signed form. A phone number was provided at the top of the form in case the participant had questions after the interview.

After the participant signed the consent form, the interview protocol and questions (see Appendix F) were used to conduct the interviews. Each participant was assigned a pseudonym, used to help identify the participant to keep identities hidden (Saunders et al., 2015). Each participant participated in the study by responding to semi-structured questions crafted to explore and understand parents' views of boys reading two to three grade levels below proficiency and parents' viewpoints of ability to learn and carry out intervention activities at home to help raise reading scores of boys struggling to read. Participant interviews were recorded and lasted 30 to 40 minutes.

Participants were directed to call in case questions regarding the study surfaced. Immediately following the interview of each participant, notes and reflections on the participant's gestures related to the context of the questions were written in the form of observational fieldnotes (see Appendix B). Observational fieldnotes, outlined the nonverbal behaviors, and were a pertinent part of the study. Fieldnotes were taken when a participant displayed nonverbal cues while discussing a particular issue which did not come across on the recording but spoke volumes about the participant's thoughts concerning the topic (see Appendix B) (Blackstone, 2018). The accumulated recorded raw data were accurately transcribed to understand participants' viewpoints. Member checking was applied as each participant received

a copy of the respective transcript to verify, explore, and check for misleading statements, exactness, and authentication of results (Birt et al., 2016).

Member checking helped to eradicate any biases from the research. Member checking provided credibility and confirmation of findings gathered during the study (Birt et al., 2016). Member checking was used to verify the accuracy of the participants' transcripts (Cope, 2014). When participants received the e-mail displaying the personalized transcribed notes, participants checked for authentication of results. The participants were assured of the opportunity to meet and provide clear, transparent answers if participants had further inquiries about the study or transcript.

Data Analysis

Data analysis methods for organizing and preparing collected data for the basic qualitative research study consisted of transcribing interview recordings into transcripts. Fieldnotes were taken directly after the interview process and were used to complement the recorded interviews which could not accurately capture behaviors, impressions, and nonverbal cues of the participants (see Appendix B). The observational field notes were relevant when analyzing the collected data. Fieldnotes were written immediately after the interview. The observational field notes provided the date, the time of day, the participant's pseudonym name, and nonverbal cues describing how the participant responded to interview questions (see Appendix B). Observational field notes provided a nonverbal reminder of the personal encounter with each parent and a connection to the parent's verbal viewpoints shared during the interview.

Questionnaires, transcripts, and observational fieldnotes were analyzed and coded using NVivo (Sutton & Austin, 2015).

The process of coding for the present study encompassed a qualitative research technique called axial coding. Data sources linked together, words and phrases from the transcripts of the interviews, words scribed from the observational fieldnotes, and responses from the questionnaires revealed codes, categories, and subcategories within the research. By linking and analyzing the attitudes and nonverbal behaviors of parents, an inductive approach for coding was used, which was straightforward and provided a systematic set of procedures to analyze data (Thomas, 2006). Thomas (2006) described the inductive approach as editing the raw text data into a summary plan, establishing strong links between the goal of the research and the findings, and developing a framework of the experiences evident in the raw data. While coding, the search for similar texts, expressions, and passages to establish relationships between the data led to creating categories and putting the categories into themes. Allen (2017) described coding as the practice of discovering connections between data. Through the collection of data and using coding to reveal connections among the collected data, themes in the data materialized (Allen, 2017).

The data analysis software NVivo made sense of and helped manage the transcripts and coded the data. The procedure for initially examining the data were to upload the recorded files of the open-ended interview questions, observational fieldnotes, and questionnaires into NVivo Transcription. All data were encrypted when uploaded and stored in the electronic program. The data will be stored securely in an encrypted file in the computer, then stored in a locked file

cabinet for a total of three years. Data were imported into NVivo 12 for reviewing and coding the transcripts. Using open and axial coding to find the relationships among the coded data chunks revealed themes to depict the findings from the qualitative research in a clear manner (Allen, 2017). Further procedures used for data analysis included categorizing and collapsing the codes to identify and describe the themes which emerged from the research. The summarized data presented information which emerged from the participants' interviews and not from the viewpoint of the researcher (Sutton & Austin, 2015).

Reliability and Validity

Patton (1999) described credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability as rigorous techniques used to collect superior data, assiduously and thoroughly explored, providing responsiveness to matters of reliability, validity, and triangulation. To address the concerns of reliability and validity data were meticulously collected and the study process allowed others to judge the quality of the resulting product (Patton, 1999). Once the data were methodically collected and reported, participants in the study had an opportunity to confirm the results of the research by examining the interview transcripts to verify the accuracy and validation of the outcomes (Birt et al., 2016). Credibility shows the results of the research were believable from the viewpoint of the participants. Member checking was a way to provide trustworthiness and validation of reported data results collected from participants, who were free to provide additional insight when needed (Birt et al., 2016). Member checking is a way to omit bias when discussing the findings from the research (Lodico et al., 2010).

Member checking, a technique used to check the credibility in research, was conducted in the study (Cope, 2014). As a result of data collected from the interviews, transcripts were generated and shared with participants to check for accuracy and verify precision regarding experiences. Member checking provided trustworthiness and validation of results collected from participants, who were free to add more information (Birt et al., 2016). Well-defined research procedures led to the process of member checking to verify the experiences of the target population and avoided errors during the process of collecting data.

Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe, and Neville (2014) stated transferability is a qualitative research strategy which checks validity through merging material from various sources, using several methods or data approaches. Transferability allows future researchers to replicate the research in a similar setting. Dependability highlights the need for the research to account for changes in the study when the study's context changed. The research study is responsible for describing the changes. Korstjens and Moser (2018) stated dependability encompasses the characteristic of consistency. Using member checking and triangulation strategies assured data collected were valid, credible, and consistent with the viewpoints of the participants. Dependability and conformity allow transparency of the research to be studied (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The process of conformability evaluates possible bias in the study. Procedures to check and recheck the data were performed throughout the research study.

Ethical Procedures

Qualitative research is utilized to seek and expand insights into why participants have specific stances and thoughts which influence the conduct of the participants (Sutton & Austin,

2015). Following the principles of ethical behaviors and *The Belmont Report* guidelines, participants in the research study were treated with kindness and respect (Resnick, 2015). Upon conducting the study, every precaution was taken to value and protect research participants to prevent ethical issues from entering into the preparation, execution, and follow-up of the research (NIH, 2016). Ethical procedures were put in place for clinical research to protect volunteer participants and to safeguard the science (NIH, 2016). Interviews took place in a neutral location in a small group-study rooms of the local library to protect the privacy of the research participants (Lodico et al., 2010). Conducting the interviews away from school grounds where the sons attended assured participants' identities were not compromised by parents or school personnel, safeguarded confidentiality, and demonstrated fairness. Upon meeting each participant, the participant was assured of the plan to monitor and protect all information collected. Participants were guaranteed confidentiality, and privacy rights were enforced.

Once the participant signed the Adult Consent Form, which outlined and explained the confidentiality rights and anonymity of the participant, all private information such as questionnaires, recordings, observational field notes, the Adult Consent Form, and the transcribed interview transcripts remained classified for the welfare of each research participant (NIH, 2016). Participants were reminded of the right to withdraw from the study without penalty, made aware of new changes within the study, and informed about what was discovered from the research, to establish fairness (NIH, 2016). Participants had the opportunity to review respective interview transcripts to confirm the accuracy and validation of results (Birt et al., 2016). For participant safety, privacy, and confidentiality, all information obtained will remain sealed and

stored in the secured file cabinet for three years (Heath et al., 2018). Access to all participants' data were restricted to the individual conducting the study and will be destroyed after three years.

Chapter Summary

The main points of the methodology chapter were the problem statement, research questions, research methodology, research design, and role of the researcher. Research procedures were discussed and included the population, sample selection, and instrumentation (Lodico et al., 2010). Data collection, data preparation, and data analysis were discussed and organized to address the issues outlined in the research questions (Cope, 2014). The chapter included the features of reliability and validity and the structure of ethical practices which addressed the importance of clinical research to protect and respect volunteer participants and safeguard the authenticity of the science (NIH, 2016). Chapter 4 includes the findings and the results of the data analysis.

Chapter 4: Research Findings and Data Analysis Results

A large proportion of students in the upper elementary grades are at-risk readers, are not proficient in reading, and are promoted to the next grade. Many of these students are boys unmotivated and unwilling to read. The problem was parents' attitudes were unknown regarding parental perceptions of upper elementary boys reading two to three grades below grade level and the level of confidence the boys' parents has to learn and provide reading intervention at home for the boys (Caissie et al., 2017). The purpose of the basic qualitative study was to explore parental perceptions of fourth- and fifth-grade boys reading two to three grades below grade level and the level of confidence the boys' parents have to learn and provide reading intervention at home for the boys to help raise low reading scores (Caissie et al., 2017). Parental perceptions and confidence were analyzed to understand parents' self-awareness of sons' low reading proficiency levels, self-assurance, confidence to acquire knowledge, and ability to put reading intervention activities into effect for sons at home.

Data were gathered from questionnaires e-mailed to all parents of fourth- and fifth-grade boys in one inner-city school. Included in the chapter are the reliability and validity of collecting data regarding specific dialogue provided by the participants. Data were used to explore parents' perceptions of boys' reading capabilities, analyze parent interviews, and observe fieldnotes based on participants' actions during the interviews. Research findings consolidated from the responses of the data answered the following research questions:

Research Question 1: What were parents' perceptions on why fourth- and fifth-grade boys scored on a lower reading proficiency level when compared to classmates scoring on or above the reading proficiency level?

Research Question 2: How confident were parents to learn and implement Response to Intervention (RTI) supplemental activities at home to effectively assist with raising low reading proficiency scores of fourth- and fifth-grade boys?

Data Collection

The process of data collection began upon receiving permission to conduct the research from the school district (see Appendix D) and from the IRB (see Appendix E). The process continued with every parent of the school population of fourth- and fifth-grade boys receiving a recruitment letter via e-mail (see Appendix I). The letter introduced and outlined the goals of the study, with a link attached to answer a short questionnaire (see Appendix H) which provided parents an opportunity to participate in the first part of the research study about sons' reading abilities and struggles.

Upon receipt of the returned questionnaire responses from the parents, potential participants were contacted and recruited by telephone to take part in the study. These potential participants were chosen based on purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2013) as these parents met the criteria for the study. Criteria to take part in the study called for participants to be parents of fourth- or fifth-grade boys reading two to three grades below grade level. The recruitment was conducted by telephone (see Appendix A). During the telephone call, the parent was asked to take part in the interview portion of the study. Several of the parents agreed to take part in the

study and provided a convenient time to meet at the local library for the interview. A total of 15 parents agreed to take part in the study.

Before the start of the interview, the participant listened to the script from the Interview Protocol and Questions outline (see Appendix F). The participant was thanked for the willingness to participate in the interview and iterated the aim of the study, the types of questions the participant would be asked, and the approximate length of the interview. A copy of the Informed Consent Form (see Appendix C) was read to the participant, and portions of the consent form were clarified if a participant had a question regarding the study. Information received from the participant was held confidential for the welfare and safety of the participant (NIH, 2016).

During the reading of the consent form, the participant was asked for permission to record the conversation. Participants had the option to consent or not consent to the request to record the conversation. When the Informed Consent Form was read aloud to the participant and the participant's questions were answered for clarity, the participant was asked to sign the consent form. The final part of the script of the Interview Protocol and Questions was read, and the participant was reminded of the section in the Informed Consent Form which indicated permission to record or not record the interview. The participant was again asked to consider the option to consent or not consent to record the conversation and to check the box with the suitable choice. All 15 participants consented to record the interview.

After the participant was thanked, the participant was reminded of the freedom to turn off the recorder at any time if the participant wanted to keep something off the record. Once again,

the participant was reminded not to hesitate to ask questions during the interview process. The recorder was then set up and the participant's responses to the interview questions and sub-questions outlined on the Interview Protocol and Questions Form (see Appendix F) were recorded. Table 1 indicates the number of interviews which took place over a period of three weeks. As the weeks progressed, more participants took part in the process.

Table 1

Time Frame for Collection and Responses

No. weeks interviews were conducted	No. days interviews took place during the week	No. interviews during the week	Collection and response of informed consents
Week 1	two days[a]	two interviews	two informed consents signed and collected
Week 2	three days[a]	three interviews	three informed consents signed and collected
Week 3	four days[a]	ten interviews	ten informed consents signed and collected

[a]Time frame taken to collect informed consents and conduct interviews.

Once the interview was over and the participant left the room, fieldnotes were taken to capture the physical and emotional observations of the participant during the interview process (see Appendix B) (Creswell, 2013). Within two days, the participant received an e-mail of the transcript to check for accuracy and validity. After two days, the participant was called to verify the accuracy and validity of the transcript. Every participant agreed the transcript was correct. The time frame for the collection and response of voluntary informed consent from the participants took three weeks.

A total of 69 parent recruitment letters with an attached questionnaire were e-mailed through SurveyMonkey to every parent of fourth- and fifth-grade boys in one of the elementary schools in the district (see Appendix I and Appendix H). Questions on the parental questionnaire were specific and focused on perceptions, observations, and concerns parents had when observing the sons' reading behaviors at home. SurveyMonkey, the platform used to e-mail the questionnaires to parents, was responsible for organizing and returning parent responses upon completion. A total of 26 questionnaires were completed by participants and returned through the online survey platform, which analyzed the answers to the questions and created a percentage graph. The completed response rate for the Parent Perceptions Questionnaires was 38%.

When the time came for interviews to be conducted, each of the 15 purposefully chosen participants met for an interview at the local library in one of the reserved study rooms for privacy and confidentiality. A pseudonym was assigned to the participant at the onset of the interview to ensure anonymity. Each interview lasted 30 to 40 minutes. The frequency and duration of collecting data for interviews with participants and using the data collection instruments took place over three weeks. The interviews were conducted over a span of two days in Week 1, three days in Week 2, and four days in Week 3.

When recruiting potential participants by telephone (see Appendix A), an interview time was set up with parents agreeing to voluntarily take part in the study. Participants met for a face-to-face semi-structured interview at the local library. The script on the Interview Protocol and Questions Form (see Appendix F) was read to each participant. The information on the Informed Consent Form (see Appendix C) was read to the participant, followed by the interview questions

on the Interview Protocol and Questions Form (see Appendix F). All these steps were part of the data collection for each instrument used in the study.

No deviation from the data collection plan took place. During the collection of data, the noteworthy circumstance encountered was the untimely cancellation of two participants agreeing to be interviewed. The first participant forgot about the interview and the second participant had an emergency. Both participants called to reschedule the interviews. These two participants were interviewed at the local library during the third week of interviews.

Results

A percentage of general two-fold yes and no answers about participants' personal thoughts concerning the reading behaviors of sons was gathered and presented (see Appendix H and Appendix J). The parental perceptions' questionnaires were e-mailed to a mixed group of parents regarding a diverse group of fourth- and fifth-grade boys' reading on various reading levels (Appendix H). Participating parents answered the questionnaire, then returned the questionnaire back by email. All responses remained anonymous throughout the study and were beneficial to the study (Appendix J).

Significant revelations from the data instruments led to finding themes in the study. The data analysis included describing how the data were secured, prepared, sorted, categorized, coded, and searched to create emerging themes for the study. Once the data from the questionnaires, interviews, and fieldnotes were collected, the information was stored as encrypted data in a file to prepare for analyzing. The data analysis for the study began with

categorizing and preparing the data. Recordings of the interviews were uploaded into the Otter Voice Meeting Notes software, which provided transcripts of the participants' conversations.

The transcripts and observational fieldnotes provided a plethora of information to use as data for the study. Each transcript was e-mailed to the respective participant on the day following the interview. Participants checked the transcripts to verify accuracy and validity. Each participant received a call as a follow-up to the e-mail of the transcript and verified the transcript was accurate. The transcripts, observational fieldnotes, and responses from the parental questionnaires were uploaded into NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software, which helped to delve deeper into the collected data by organizing and analyzing the data.

Questionnaires, observational field notes, and interview information was entered into the software which classified, sorted, and arranged the responses together to create codes and phrases. Coding the data were created by reading and labeling the interpretations of the findings. Some responses were allocated into several codes. Data from the software were double-checked to be sure the codes were aligned. Some of the participants' responses were moved from one code to another as needed, to show similarities in the references of the data. Table 2 provides a representation of the data (Creswell, 2013). The frequency shows how many times each code was referenced in the participants' responses.

Table 2

Frequency of Codes Created From Data

Interview question (IQ), sub-question (SQ), and code	*f*
IQ1	
SQ1. Boys' reading behaviors	30
Challenges	16
Successes	13
SQ2. Boys' thoughts about reading	33
SQ3. Parents first noticed reading challenge	18
SQ4. Parent concerns about reading ability	38
SQ5. Sons cope with a reading challenge	23
SQ6. Parent reactions to not wanting to read	33
Parents' trying to help boys with a reading problem	18
Parental advice to son	9
SQ7. Parents' thoughts on child reading below grade level	33
SQ8. Parents' conversations on sons' reading struggles	21
Description of Conversation	18
School supporting student	4
Teacher communication or input	12
Unaware of struggle	5
Unmotivated (Boys)	8
IQ2	
SQ1. Parents' individual thoughts about reading	27
SQ2. Parents' reading experiences growing up	21
Language barrier	6
SQ3. Boys see parents read at home	19
How often	9
Modeling/examples	4
SQ4. Parents' confidence to learn reading intervention activities	18
SQ5. Parents' level of confidence	15

(*continued*)

Table 2

Frequency of Codes Created From Data (*continued*)

Interview question (IQ), sub-question (SQ), and code	*f*
SQ6. Commitment to implement a reading intervention	19
By any means necessary	9
SQ7. Anything to prevent the parent from implementing reading activities at home	20
Time constraints	9
Unmotivated (Parents as children)	6
Use of technology	8
Validation, strength, and confidence: Parents goals and accomplishments	8
Working, school, or parent visitation demands	6

Deconstructing the data and the codes assisted in understanding the relationships found among the codes. The relationships among the codes were segmented and linked to build a body of evidence for the emerging themes. The themes provided answers to the research questions. By unveiling the fundamental meaning of the data and identifying themes, gathering snapshots of the parents' understanding of the world, and collecting pictures of understanding parents' interpretations and perceptions of learning new beliefs and changing habits of mind, the data were segmented into categories by research question. A closer look revealed the research questions were aligned with the emergent themes and supported by representative data. The responses in Table 3 illustrate participants' views concerning boys' reading challenges.

Table 3

Emergent Themes Supported by Participant Quotes

Interview question and theme	Participant quote
Research Question 1: What are the parents' perceptions on why fourth- and fifth-grade sons scoring on a lower proficiency level when compared to classmates scoring on or above the reading proficiency level?	
Theme: More challenges than successes for boys	"It's like a look of dread when I say go read a book. My son doesn't like to read. It's that he barely picks up a book. It's almost like a punishment."
	"He hates it. He dreads reading and maybe because he doesn't understand what is going on. Maybe the words, he doesn't comprehend the words. I guess it's so big that he just doesn't like doing it."
Theme: Attitudes and reactions of boys and parents	"I kind of get upset about it because I just know that reading is important. And if he can't do it, I think about his future. I'm not gonna be here forever."
	"He needs to be able to take care of himself to become an independent person, and reading is all a part of it. And he's got to learn how to get over that hurdle."
Theme: Parental frustrations, advice, and teacher communication	"Challenge your mind. A book can help you challenge your mind. A book can take your mind to a lot of places. You need to learn how to read."
	"I mean, it's a disappointment for me because of his age. He should be on his grade level. . . . I want him to be, you know, on his level of reading."
	"I have to always inform him that he has to read in school because that is a part of his education. And he will need that, you know, to go on to the next."
	"Teachers have brought it to my attention. We've discussed a plan. It's a lack of consistency."
	"I've spoken to the teacher about his struggles."
	"It makes me think, I need to do something to get him back on track."

(*continued*)

Table 3

Emergent Themes Supported by Participant Quotes (*continued*)

Interview question and theme	Participant quote
Theme: Parental concerns and self-accountability	I just thought it was my fault my son wasn't reading on the right grade level. . . . I had to work just to keep things moving. It was my fault that I wasn't there more, maybe to show him that reading can be fun. So, I blame myself. I could have done more as a parent. "I think that's probably why he became a jokester, like a clown in the classroom. So, you know, to put that behavior on something else other than showing people that he can't read." I'm working on the job. I'm in school full time and coming home, and I don't be with my son enough to sit down with him to read, but it reflects on me because you know, if he's failing, then I'm gonna fail. "This is the same conversation, and this has only started since he's in fifth grade now, so it's only been two years. Like, fourth and fifth grade has been the main struggle."
Theme: Parental frustrations and teacher communication	"His reading struggle was holding him back from achieving." "This is something new to me, I didn't know he was struggling."
Research Question 2: How confident are parents to learn and implement Response to Intervention (RTI) supplemental activities at home to effectively assist with raising low reading proficiency scores of fourth- and fifth-grade boys?	
Theme: Impact of parents' actions	"I am a good model for my son." "I enjoy reading." "I'm in school, so they see me read every day." "Oh, I read on my Kindle all the time."
Theme: By any means necessary. Parents are willing to learn how to help sons with interventions at home.	"Sure, that I can definitely do. I will make time for that." "Maybe on a weekend, or on a day off, I could definitely commit." "Yes, I can commit to doing intervention three times a week."

(*continued*)

Table 3

Emergent Themes Supported by Participant Quotes (*continued*)

Interview question and theme	Participant quote
Theme: Impact on parents' self-improvement. Strengthening reading skills helped parents become confident as readers.	"My level of confidence in doing intervention at home is very high."
	"I'm pretty sure that I could at home, I could make it happen."
Theme: Parental confidence, lack of time, and lack of motivation.	"I work two jobs, sometimes three; and there are evenings that I get home late."
	"I'm confident that I could help. My concern is time. I do work a lot, to make sure I can make ends meet at the house."
	"Oh, my reading experiences weren't that great! I didn't like to read that much. And I struggled, myself, in school."
	"I had a difficult time with it. I was in a special education class because I was reading below my grade level."
	"I work 42 hours a week, at night. By the time he gets home from school, I'll be at school. Sometimes on the weekend, I go to school."
	"Reading didn't interest me. I also didn't understand why I struggled so much."

Participants provided the data needed for the research study. Results from the data were organized using data instruments, patterns, research questions, and themes. Emerging themes aligned with the research questions to provide a snapshot of parents' understanding of the world and an understanding of parents' perceptions of confidence to learn and provide interventions for boys at home. Table 4 portrays the emerging themes from each of the research questions. Condensing the codes to themes provided answers to the questions concerning parents' viewpoints on boys struggling to read.

Table 4

Research Questions and Emerging Themes

Research question	Emerging themes
What are the parents' perceptions on why fourth- and fifth-grade boys are scoring on a lower proficiency level when compared to classmates scoring on or above the reading proficiency level?	• More challenges than successes for boys • The attitudes and reactions of boys and parents • Parental concerns and accountability • Parental frustrations and teacher communication
How confident are parents to learn and implement Response to Intervention (RTI) supplemental activities at home to effectively assist with raising low reading proficiency scores of fourth- and fifth-grade boys?	• Impact of parents' actions • By any means necessary • Impact on parents' self-improvement • Parent confidence and the lack of time/motivation

Parents' perceptions on why fourth- and fifth-grade boys are scoring on a lower proficiency level when compared to classmates scoring on or above the reading proficiency level were the boys struggled with reading and faced more challenges than successes. Most of the boys had negative attitudes concerning reading, and as a result, parents took on personal blame as a reaction to the boys' attitudes. Parents were concerned and held themselves accountable for the sons' lack of reading skills. Parents believed something should happen to get the sons on track. Some parents were at a loss and did not know what to do. The boys were frustrated because the boys had been struggling with reading for a few years, and parents were frustrated. Parents did not want the sons to struggle.

Some teachers spoke with the parents concerning the boys' difficulties with reading and reading comprehension, low reading proficiency levels, and disinterest in reading. Consequently, many parents expressed concern the sons' teachers did not communicate the boys' reading

problems in the early educational years, while some teachers waited until the middle of the school year to express concerns about the boys' reading difficulties.

Many parents were confident and ready to learn and implement RTI supplemental activities at home to assist with raising low reading proficiency scores of the fourth- and fifth-grade boys. The impact parents wanted to impart on the boys was to model reading as essential. Parents modeled several ways to read at home and used a variety of tools, including iPads, computers, and smartphones. Parents were willing, by any means necessary, to learn how to support the boys by implementing reading interventions at home.

Some parents experienced reading struggles when growing up. Regardless of the reading struggles, the parents were eager to learn and help the boys with reading. Parents expressed confidence and strength to help the boys improve. Some parents expressed a lack of time to learn and implement a reading intervention at home was a concern. The barriers for some parents to learn and implement reading interventions at home included work and school obligations. Some parents worked long hours during the week and attended college on the weekends. Despite the barriers, most parents were still willing to find time to learn and implement reading activities at home for the boys.

Reliability and Validity

The use of open-ended qualitative questions answered the research questions concerning an understanding of parents' awareness and effect on how the world is (Hammarberg et al., 2016). Three sources of data, questionnaires, interviews, and observational fieldnotes were used to collect the data from the participants over three weeks to triangulate the data and attain

validity for the study. The study was conducted using bracketing to eliminate personal preconceived thoughts, experiences, and bias by suspending assumptions against parents taking part in the study (Ward et al., 2018).

Participants were provided the opportunity to explore the interview transcripts for accuracy and validity (Birt et al., 2016), or member checking. The member checking was used to ensure credibility in the research (Cope, 2014). Member checking provided trustworthiness and validation of the results from data collected from the participants, who were permitted to make modifications and add to the discussion at another time (Birt et al., 2016). Member checking is applied to eliminate biases when discussing the findings from the study (Lodico et al., 2010).

The implementation of transferability, a qualitative research strategy, utilized a variety of methods to check the validity of the data provided from several sources (Carter et al., 2014). Future researchers use transferability when replicating the study in a similar setting. Should changes have occurred in the context of the study, the changes had to be accounted for, which is called dependability, a characteristic of consistency (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). No changes or inconsistencies occurred within the study.

Conformability assesses potential bias in the study. To eliminate bias, the data were checked and rechecked by applying a variety of methods. Korstjens and Moser (2018) stated member checking and triangulation ensure the collection of data were valid, credible, and consistent with participants' perspectives. Dependability and conformity permitted transparency of the research to be analyzed (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

Chapter Summary

The results of the basic qualitative study were reviewed and aligned with the research questions. The Parental Perceptions questionnaire and open-ended qualitative interview responses were related to the open-ended research questions to understand parents' perceptions of fourth- and fifth-grade boys reading below grade level and of having the confidence to provide RTI activities to boys at home. The responses collected from the questionnaires, interviews, and observational fieldnotes provided the foundation for answering the research questions. Codes were created, collated, and analyzed from the responses and developed into themes.

Eight themes emerged from the collected data: more challenges than successes for boys, the attitudes and reactions of boys and parents, parental concerns and accountability, parental frustrations and teacher communication, the impact of parents' actions, by any means necessary, impact on parents' self-improvement and constraints, and parental confidence and lack of time and motivation. Each of the themes provided valuable information for parents of boys in upper elementary grades struggling to read. Parents of students struggling to read, both now and in the future, can use the information as a tool to provide knowledge. The final chapter includes a discussion of the study outlining the findings pertaining to the peer-reviewed literature, interpretations of the findings in the context of the theoretical framework, conclusions, limitations of the study, recommendations for further research, implications for educational leadership, and a conclusion capturing the essence of the study.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

Research since 2010 has shown an increase in the number of boys in fourth- and fifth-grade classes struggling with reading, having limited reading comprehension abilities, and reading two to three grades below grade level. The purpose of the basic qualitative study was to explore parents' perceptions of fourth- and fifth-grade boys reading two to three grades below grade level and the level of confidence the boys' parents have to learn and provide reading intervention at home for the boys to help raise low reading scores (Caissie et al., 2017). The study may contribute to the existing research body, with further studies conducted. Further studies can help parents discover and comprehend information obtained from discerning parents' viewpoints on learning and implementing reading activities at home which may help fourth- and fifth-grade boys struggling with reading.

Key findings gave an account of the diverse viewpoints of the participants. An outline of the themes and subthemes was generated as a result of analyzing the basic qualitative study, which led to the key findings discussed in Chapter 4. Regarding the two research questions, a snapshot of participants' viewpoints of fourth- and fifth-grade boys' inability to read on grade level was provided, which laid the foundation for the study. Most of the boys moved on to the next grade or middle school with a deficit in reading two to three grades below level. The first research question focused on the personal insights of parents regarding boys struggling to read. Most of the participants indicated the boys were frustrated, unmotivated, and unable to comprehend a text when reading.

The second research question focused on understanding participants' perceptions of acquiring knowledge of and executing RTI activities at home. Although all of the participants voiced concern over boys' inability to read on grade level and a need for the boys to get on track with reading before moving on to the next grade, participants' answers were varied. Some participants responded to the charge of learning and providing intervention for the boys at home with an overwhelming "by any means necessary" attitude. In contrast, some participants indicated work and school hindered the ability to learn and apply RTI activities at home for the boys, as time constraints were to blame. Although reading was a personal struggle for the participants as children, other participants discussed learning and applying RTI activities at home was an undertaking the participants would try, especially concerning helping struggling boys to increase reading scores. In the chapter, a summary of the research findings related to the research questions is provided, followed by interpretations, conclusions, limitations of the study, recommendations for further research, and implications for leadership.

Findings, Interpretations, and Conclusions

The findings extend knowledge of the peer-reviewed literature described in Chapter 2. While the peer-reviewed literature focused mainly on parents' perceptions and remediation of reading struggles for students in early elementary grades, the study's findings pointed to similar accounts discussed in the peer-reviewed literature. Similarities included parents' perceptions of children with reading difficulties. Research questions were used to organize the study's findings to understand parents' perceptions.

Research Question 1

The first research question was, "What were parents' perceptions on why fourth- and fifth-grade boys scored on a lower reading proficiency level when compared to classmates scoring on or above the reading proficiency level?" All parent participants of fourth- and fifth-grade boys in one elementary school did not participate in the study. The data was collected from 26 potential participants and used in the study. The findings from the Parental Perceptions' questionnaires focused on the parents' perceptions regarding boys' reading behaviors. The results from the responses on the questionnaire were almost even and only varied slightly in the areas of parents wanting the boys to improve in reading (54%) and the boys' difficulty with reading chapter books (46%) (see Appendix J). While slightly more than half of the parents saw the boys as needing to improve in the area of reading, a slightly higher number of parents (54%) did not see the reading of chapter books as a challenge for the boys, which contain several challenging words and provide fewer illustrations to aid in comprehending the text (see Appendix J). Sixty-two percent of the parents said the boys would pick up a book and read without the parent asking or enforcing the behavior (see Appendix J).

The questionnaire results revealed only 15% of the parents sensed the boys like to read books, while 85% of the parents believed the boys do not like to read (see Appendix J). The data showed 88% of the parents were concerned about the reading behaviors of the boys (see Appendix J). When asked whether the boys had a difficult time reading chapter books, texts found in upper elementary school libraries utilized to teach lessons, 54% of the parents stated the

boys had a difficult time reading the books (see Appendix J). Fifty-four percent of the parents revealed wanting to see an improvement in the boys' reading abilities (see Appendix J).

The interview results revealed parents' thoughts concerning boys in upper elementary grades reading below grade level. An analysis of the interviews revealed a concern about the boys not wanting to read was mentioned 60 times. Throughout the interview process, when parents were asked about the personal reaction to boys not wanting to read, some parents tried to help the boys with the reading problem and a few advised boys on why reading was important. Parents' concerns over boys' reading ability were referenced 38 times during the interviews. Throughout the interview process, parents discussed boys' thoughts and attitudes about reading. The parents' perceptions of the boys' mindsets regarding reading were referenced 33 times. Parents referenced boys' reading behaviors 30 times, pointing out the boys had more challenges than successes when reading.

Research Question 2

The second research question was, "How confident were parents to learn and implement Response to Intervention (RTI) supplemental activities at home to effectively assist with raising low reading proficiency scores of fourth- and fifth-grade boys?" According to the findings from the questionnaire given to all parents of fourth- and fifth-grade boys in one elementary school, 96% of the parents believed if the boys practiced reading activities at home, the consistent practice would improve the boys' reading proficiency, especially the boys reading below grade level (see Appendix J). Overall, 77% of parents desired to see an improvement in the boys' reading levels (see Appendix J). The questionnaire results revealed many parents reported the

boys struggled with reading beginning in the lower grades. In addition, 81% of parents reported the boys had difficulty reading in other content-area classes (see Appendix J). Consequently, 100% of the parents agreed the boys would benefit greatly from taking part in a reading intervention provided at home (see Appendix J).

The interview results revealed whether parents had the confidence to learn and implement intervention activities for boys at home. The responses parents provided were referenced a total of 43 times. When the responses were segmented into smaller discussions, parents discussed whether anything could prevent the implementation of intervention activities at home. The number of references toward the response to preventing implementation, both positive and negative, was 20. Many parents discussed time constraints as a hindrance for implementation, referenced nine times. In contrast, some parents discussed personal goals, referenced eight times, and work or school obligations, referenced six times, as a hindrance, providing a total of 43 references during the interview process.

The interview results revealed some of the parents' thoughts about reading, referenced 27 times, and the impact of actions taken to overcome the negative thoughts about reading, referenced 21 times. Parents discussed the importance of becoming more confident in the area of reading. Gaining confidence to learn and implement reading intervention activities at home was discussed and referenced a total of 18 times throughout the interview process.

The literature showed parents have concerns about boys struggling with reading and being promoted to the next grade (Collins & Wolter, 2017). Perkins and Green (2018) found anxiety has grown to a national level regarding students in middle school who have not attained

reading comprehension skills. The reading behaviors of fourth- and fifth-grade boys begin to show task avoidance toward reading (Orkin et al., 2017). Boys' negative attitudes include poor behavior patterns and negative skill development, which leads to boys being unmotivated. The literature noted parents do not become involved in helping the child at home because of other obligations and challenges (Caissie et al., 2017), in alignment with some of the parents in the present study. Terlitsky and Wilkins (2015) reported parents do not help the child for fear the parents' low levels of education or poor reading skills are not good enough to help the child at home. Parents' low confidence in themselves negatively impacted students and induced poor behavior in the child (Terlitsky & Wilkins, 2015).

Cunha et al. (2015) stressed some parents see homework involvement for the child as positive, while some see homework assistance as time consuming and a waste of time, fostering anger and frustration between the parent and child. The present study highlighted periods of frustration by boys and the parents because the boys are not able and do not want to read. The literature stated parental involvement is crucial for the child to be successful (Helberg & Elish-Piper, 2011).

When teachers work in conjunction with parents, parents help to collapse the learning gap for struggling readers at home and provide an increased chance for the child to overcome reading challenges (Helberg & Elish-Piper, 2011). Orkin et al. (2017) emphasized an increase in student achievement comes about as a result of parent involvement and a change in parent perceptions. Parents not adept at reading develop reading skills and become equipped to help the child at

home (Fiester, 2010). Kamrath and Brooker (2018) stated when parents are provided with the tools to support the child at home, academics improve.

The parents are supported by school personnel, as shown in the literature, which helps parents develop a personal level of self-confidence to learn and implement effective reading strategies at home to help the child become successful (Amanchukwu et al., 2015). A correlation of the peer-reviewed literature with the present study indicated a gap in the literature. The information from parents about the viewpoints concerning upper elementary boys struggling with reading, was sought in the present study, as research was comparatively limited. Few studies were found highlighting parents' perceptions of why many boys in the upper elementary grades struggle with reading complexities and read two to three grades below grade level (Ciullo et al., 2015). Similarly, little information was found regarding parents' perceptions of providing RTI activities at home for upper elementary boys.

Analysis and interpretation of the findings in the context of the theoretical framework clarified what the findings meant. Existing research and theories for the basics of the theoretical framework were used in the study. The findings were based on the theoretical framework of Vygotsky's (1930) social constructivist learning theory and Mezirow's transformational learning theory (McComish & Parsons, 2013; Mezirow, 1997). The study aligns with Vygotsky's social constructivist learning theory of understanding the participants' world and personal realities and Mezirow's transformational learning theory of understanding participants' interpretations and perceptions of learning innovative methods to boost confidence and shift beliefs and habits of the mind.

The foundation of the theoretical frameworks was created, validating the development of the study and the formation of the research questions (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). The study's research questions linked to Vygotsky's (1930) social constructivist learning theory to attain insight on parents' perceptions of understanding and learning from the boys' academic struggles. Furthermore, the research questions connected with Mezirow's transformational learning theory (McComish & Parsons, 2013; Mezirow, 1997) by exploring the interpretations and perceptions of parents' adequate confidence to learn and utilize an intervention program to help the child at home. When reviewing the questionnaires from parents, concerns about the boys' reading ability were revealed as a recurring theme throughout the study. The findings were organized and structured based on the two research questions related to better understanding parental perceptions concerning the reading struggles of fourth- and fifth-grade boys.

Limitations

One of the major limitations of the qualitative study was the method of data collection and transferability. Although collecting the data were a time-consuming process, and the process of meeting with 15 participants took place over a period of three weeks, the time frame for conducting the research could have been extended. Giving particular attention to transferability, the study could have taken place over a period of one month, as opposed to three weeks, to provide more time and opportunities to include additional parents in the study. The extended time could have provided additional conversations, which could have assisted in providing surplus information to help bridge the gap between the participants and the research (Daniel, 2019).

While trustworthiness and credibility had to be established with the participants taking part in the study, a limitation of the study was whether credibility or integrity occurred from the results of the study. The results obtained from the participants' perceptions could not be verified against other participants' viewpoints. Although some of the parent perceptions were similar, every participant has own unique ideas, experiences, and views. Furthermore, indicative of the accumulated data, the responses obtained from the participants were open-ended and unrestricted, as the participants had more influence over the content stated and shared during the interviews.

Another limitation was the labor-intensive nature of the qualitative study. To ensure dependability, the data from the participants had to be obtained with fidelity and without bias, which required rigorous effort and transparency (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). A limitation of the study lies in whether the method of collecting data, categorizing the data, coding and recoding the data, and analyzing the data were conducted without bias to ensure data were sound and all-inclusive. Member checking was utilized to discuss findings from the study with the participant to make sure participants' perspectives were accurately valid (Lodico, Spaulring, & Voegtle, 2010), which provided trustworthiness, credibility, and confirmation of the results collected from the participants (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter, 2016; Cope, 2014). Bracketing eliminated personal preconceived ideas based on prior studies and theories about the research of the study by suspending professional familiarities and biases with parents, experiences, biases and assumptions about the participants before, during, and after the study (Filpp, 2014). When categorizing, coding and recoding, and analyzing the data, applying conformability and

triangulation ensured bias was eliminated. By checking and rechecking the data using more than one method the potential for biases were eliminated through conformability. Triangulation was used to cross validate data utilizing at least two sources to ensure the collected data is credible and consistent with the participants' perspectives permitting transparency of the study (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

The findings from the data were acquired and approved by participants to ensure confirmability of the data and to verify the results of careful organization of interpreting and transcribing the content of the parents' interviews into transcripts. Parents confirmed the validity of the transcripts, which ensured validity of the collected data. A limitation of the study was, due to the uniqueness of each participant's viewpoint, the cause and effect of the issue or causality in the qualitative study was difficult to replicate. The limitations of the study indicated no possible way to analyze the outcome of the qualitative data mathematically to ensure confirmability of the results. Research could have been conducted using the quantitative research design to discover how many participants believe a specific way. The quantitative method could have verified the data based on the quantity of responses received as opposed to conducting research to gain emotional insight of parents' viewpoints.

Recommendations for Further Research

The basic qualitative study investigated the parents' viewpoints on challenges and interventions for fourth- and fifth-grade boys at risk for reading failure. Based on the emerging themes produced from and useful to the research study, further research is needed. Future research can focus on providing parental support in applying a variety of methods to help boys

reading below grade level by shifting to a more global perspective. Supporting parents with a variety of ways to connect, communicate, and collaborate with teachers, social workers, and guidance counselors may help support parents on an emotional and academic level to increase boys' academic achievement. Future research could focus on supplying practical, research-based advice for parents and include a toolbox of step-by-step, short intervention activities and lessons. The lessons would contain a range of best practices in teaching parents to become confident in themselves and, in turn, better able to confidently help boys become better readers at home. Future research could focus on support services provided by other parents having gone through the process of learning and implementing intervention activities for boys at home, which produced more self-confidence in parents willing to take the time to implement the intervention program at home.

Changes in policies and practices and staying within the boundaries of the qualitative study should focus on the school district providing short online courses generated from the teaching staff on how to teach a basic intervention lesson. Additionally, a focus should be on teachers recording personal lessons working with a small group of students during small-group instruction outlining the key points of the lesson for the intervention being taught. Once comfortable with learning the material, parents may deliver at-home interventions confidently and consistently, through an innovative and creatively crafted training and learning platform, generated from input by the guidance counselor, social worker, and teacher, which could be labeled the Three C's Toolbox for Parents: Commitment, Confident, and Consistent. Parents could use the recordings as part of the home intervention toolbox to help boys at home.

Implications for Leadership

The study results were significant to parents' perceptions of upper elementary boys reading below grade level and the parents' perceptions of developing the confidence to implement interventions for boys at home. The study was intended to provide an overview of answers from parents in the study. The findings were provided in the form of codes, themes, and subthemes to inform future research. The study could benefit parents of boys reading two to three grades below grade level as a gap existed for struggling readers not reading on grade level. A way to fill the gap is for the parents to intervene at home, with the input of a network of organized, systematic support from leaders in the educational community. The idea was formed after analyzing the themes and subthemes generated from conducting the study.

The potential impact for positive social change, as a result of the study, is for leaders to understand the need for overall increased parental support with boys in upper elementary grades. Parents of boys reading two to three grades below reading need additional increased support to learn how to provide Response to Intervention (RTI) activities at home for boys. With the assistance of educational leaders, parents would experience learning RTI based on a practice called the zone of proximal development (Danish, Saleh, Andrade, & Bryan, 2017). As a result of the study, leaders should gather a group of staff members, teachers, building administrators, and district leaders together to create an action plan outlining each step towards the goal of supporting parents, determined to see the low reading scores of upper elementary boys reading below grade level increase, Deadlines should be created to make sure each step of the plan is followed through and parents have the tools needed to implement short reading activities for

boys at home. Leaders should share the action plan with other staff members, parents, and stakeholders, A leadership committee comprised of parents, teachers, and administrators will revisit and revise the plan every three months beginning at the start of the school year to ensure the plan is being followed, is current, and is achievable for the parents involved in administering RTI for the boys at home.

Most of the literature focused on parents unwilling or unable to provide intervention activities at home for children. The parents did not have the resources at home to help children reading below grade level. Providing parents with a toolbox of materials would be a result of teachers gathering resources for parents to use at home with the boys, aligning with Vygotsky's social constructivist learning theory of understanding parents' world and realities. Parents' would need personal confidence and a willingness to learn and provide reading intervention activities at home with the sons. Parents could commit to implementing an at-home intervention toolbox to fill the reading gap for boys reading two to three grades below grade level and consequently close the knowledge and confidence gap for parents learning how to implement intervention activities at home. Mezirow's transformational learning theory focuses on understanding the parent's point of view and the magnitude of changing viewpoints and learning new belief systems. Future researchers should consider pursuing the suggested activities, considering the findings from the study.

The parent materials, created in the form of a parent support toolbox, would encompass a variety of short, interactive live videos and demonstration manuals modeling how the parents could work with the boys at home. Teaching materials could be generated by teachers willing to

volunteer some time to record live methods of teaching five- to seven-minute intervention strategies for parents to view, practice, and consistently use at home, helping to build parents' confidence in the delivery of the lessons. Parents could commit to working with the boys a minimum of three times per week, which could help build foundational reading skills in upper elementary boys struggling to read. As limited research is available, the study provides an outline for future researchers to follow.

Conclusion

Providing at-home reading intervention services for older elementary boys could be the catalyst needed to move the boys closer to being on grade level in reading. The results of the study revealed eight major themes: more challenges than achievements for boys, attitudes and reactions of boys and parents, parental concerns and accountability, the impact of parents' actions, by any means necessary, impact on parents' self-improvement, parent confidence, and the lack of time or motivation to help the child at home. The emergent themes provided answers to the research questions. In addition, the results of the participants' interactions provided key findings in the study. One limitation of the study was not all questionnaires were returned by parents. Even with the limitation, some parents participated in face-to-face interviews to discuss perceptions regarding the boys' reading skills. In addition, the research provided recommendations for future researchers willing to close the reading achievement gap for fourth- and fifth-grade boys.

To further the research on the topic, future researchers could follow the outline in Figure 1, which illustrates the stages parents and educators could take to close the reading achievement

gap for fourth- and fifth-grade boys struggling to read, from a local to a global level. The core of the model begins with capturing the essence of the topic. Empowering parents to implement intervention activities for boys at risk may help close the reading gap before boys enter middle school. Collaborating with and providing parents with teaching tools and assistance could help build confidence to deliver intervention services for boys struggling with reading. Schools could support parents, and the district could continue the practice in other schools in the district. Parents providing intervention services for boys at home could be encouraged on a global level, reducing the reading gap for upper elementary boys worldwide. The intervention model, created using data from the present study, provides a guide toward closing the persistent reading gap for struggling upper elementary boys.

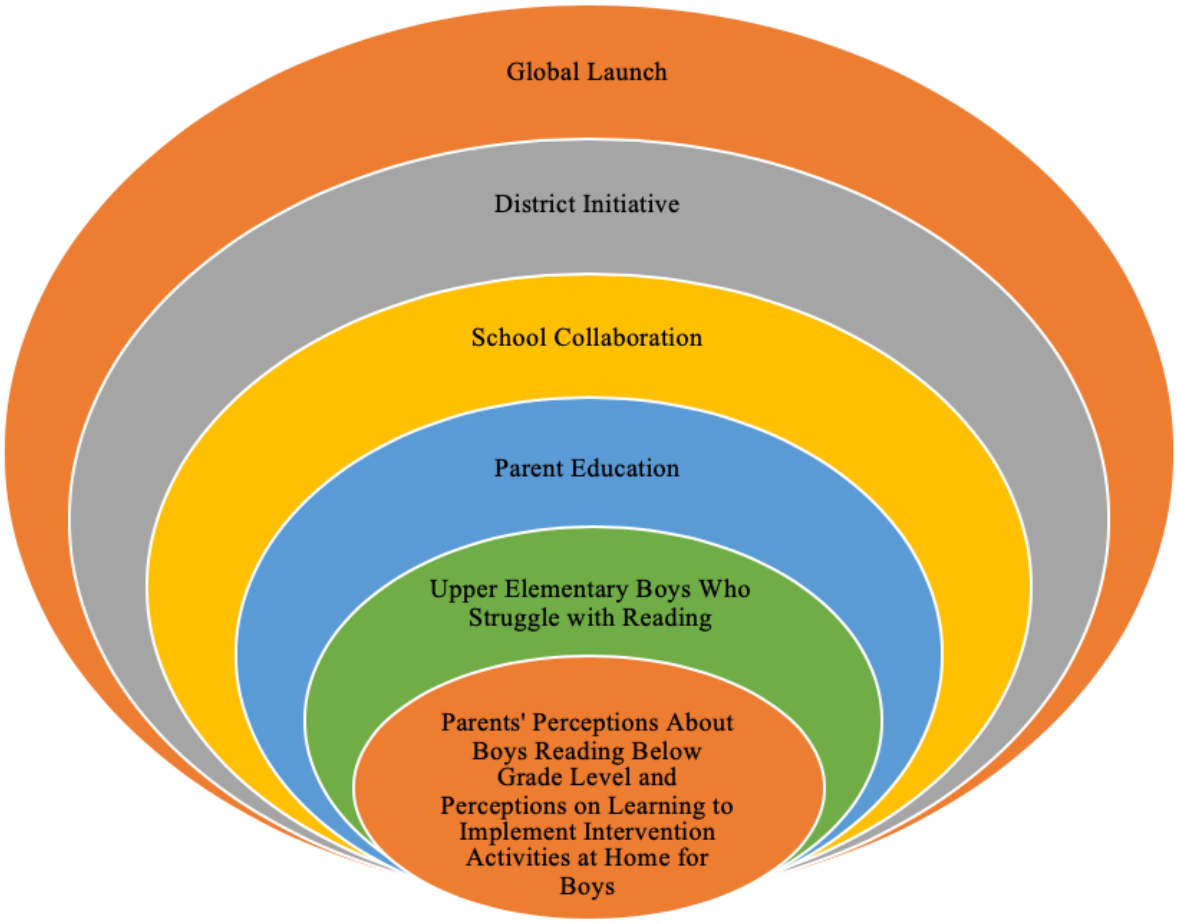

Figure 1: Gradation stages showing how parents can help close the reading achievement gap for upper elementary boys, from a local to a global level. Providing support for parents from a local to a global level could help parents, boys, schools, and school districts worldwide close the reading achievement gap for fourth- and fifth-grade boys struggling to read.

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Appendix A: Telephone Recruitment Script

Good morning/afternoon (Participant's Name), my name is Linda Giles. I am a doctoral student at the American College of Education. I am conducting research for my dissertation, and you have been identified as a possible participant for my study. Do you have a moment to discuss the study over the phone?

No: Thank you for your time. Do you mind if I send you some materials regarding the study within a week? If you wish to discuss the study, please contact me at [redacted].

Yes: Great! The purpose of the study is to understand parents' perceptions of boys' low reading proficiency rates. The study seeks to learn parents' perceptions of sons reading two-to-three grades below the current reading level and seeks to understand parents' confidence to implement intervention activities at home. As I have mentioned, you have been identified as a possible participant for the study. Participation involves an interview that may last up to 40 minutes, and your participation in the study is voluntary. If you do not wish to participate in the study, you may withdraw at any time.

I may publish the results of the study; however, I will not use your name or share any information you provide. Your information is going to remain confidential. Do you have any questions for me so far?

Yes: (Answer any questions)

While there may be no direct benefit to you, the potential benefit of your participation is that it will offer a greater understanding of your beliefs and experiences with your child struggling with reading and the confidence you have to implement intervention strategies at home. In the research study, there are no known risks to you. How does this sound? **(Answer any further questions, set up a time for the interview, and to explain the process for Informed Consent)**

Thank you for your time, (Participant's Name). I greatly appreciate that you have taken the time to discuss this with me over the phone. (Offer contact information). You may call me for any questions you may have regarding the study. My contact information is [redacted].

Appendix B: Sample of Fieldnotes

Fieldnotes

Recorded After Interview: Overall Observations and Nonverbal Cues

Date: 1-2-2020

Start Time: 3:30 p.m.

End Time: 4:10 p.m.

Place: **Study room in the local library**

Participant Pseudonym Number/#: [redacted]

Observations before interview:

- eyes darting around the room
- wringing of hands (participant spoke of being a little nervous)
- Sat on edge of chair

Observations during interview:

- hands were resting in lap
- began to relax
- sat back in the chair

Observations after interview:

- smiling when leaving the room
- shook researcher's hand when leaving

Appendix C: Informed Consent Form

American College of Education
Guidelines for Informed Consent for Research Participants

Prospective Research Participant: Read the consent form carefully and ask as many questions as you like before you decide whether you want to participate in the research study. You are free to ask questions at any time before, during, or after your participation in the research.

Project Information

Project Title: Parents' Perceptions of Boys' Low Reading Proficiency Rate: A Basic Qualitative Study

Researcher: Linda Giles
Organization: American College of Education
Email: [redacted].com **Telephone:** [redacted]

Researcher's Faculty Member: Dr. Michelle McCraney
Organization and Position: American College of Education, Dissertation Chair
Email: Michelle.McCraney@ACE.Edu

Introduction
I am Linda Giles, and I am a doctoral candidate student at the American College of Education. I am researching under the guidance and supervision of my Dissertation Chair, Dr. McCraney. I will give you some information about the project and invite you to be part of the research. Before you decide, you can talk to anyone you are comfortable with about the research. The consent form may contain words you do not understand. Please ask me to stop as we go through the information, and I will explain. If you have questions later, you can ask them then.

Purpose of the Research
You are being asked to participate in a research study which assists with understanding parents' perceptions of boys' low reading proficiency rate and understand the perception of parents' confidence to learn and implement intervention activities at home. The study seeks to understand viewpoints, behaviors, and beliefs of parents with fourth and fifth-grade boys who are at-risk readers, which generates student achievement. Through investigation, the research will be a valuable resource tool, made accessible for current and future parents of students reading below proficiency levels, providing support to increase parental knowledge in a New Jersey school district.

Research Design and Procedures

The study uses a qualitative methodology and a basic research design. The informed consent form is disseminated to specific participants within a New Jersey school district. The study consists of fifteen to twenty parent participants, who are purposefully selected based on the criterion of boys' reading two to three grades below the reading level of the current grade. The study involves 30 to 40-minute interviews to be conducted at the site most convenient for participants. After data collection and analysis, the participants are sent the transcripts. Participants have the opportunity to review the interview transcripts for accuracy.

Participant selection

You are being invited to take part in the research because of your experience as a parent who can contribute much to the understanding and viewpoints of parents' perceptions of sons who are struggling readers and the parents' perception of confidence to implement reading intervention activities at home**,** which meets the criteria for the study. Participant selection criteria: parents of fourth- or fifth-grade boys who are reading two to three grades below reading level.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in the research is entirely voluntary. It is your choice whether to participate. If you choose not to participate, there are no punitive repercussions and you do not have to participate. If you select to participate in the study, you may change your mind later and stop participating even if you agreed earlier.

Procedures

I am inviting you to participate in the research study. If you agree, you are asked to share your thoughts and perceptions of boys' reading scores and confidence with regards to learning and implementing reading intervention strategies at home. The type of questions asked range from your unique perspective to direct inquiries about the topic of reading.

Duration

The interview portion of the research study requires approximately 30 to 40 minutes to complete. If you are selected to participate in the study, the time expected is a maximum of 40 minutes. If you are chosen to be participant, the time allotted for the interview is 30 to 40 minutes at the local library, inside a small study room, at a time convenient for the participant. A follow-up debriefing session takes a maximum of 20 minutes.

Risks

The researcher asks you to share personal and confidential information, and you may be uncomfortable talking about some of the topics. You do not have to answer any question or take part in the discussion if you do not wish to do so. You do not have to give any reason for not responding to any question.

Benefits
While there is no direct financial benefit to you, your participation is likely to help us find out more about parents' perceptions of boys' reading scores and perception of parents' confidence with regards to learning and implementing reading intervention strategies at home**.** The potential benefits of the study can aid the school district and educational community in providing supports for parents in the implementation of an intervention for fourth- and fifth-grade boys struggling to read.

Confidentiality
I will not share information about you or anything you say to anyone outside of the researcher. During the defense of the doctoral dissertation, data collected is going to be presented to the dissertation committee. The data collected is to be kept in an encrypted computer file and the computer locked in a file cabinet for three years. Any information about you is to be coded and will not have a direct correlation, which directly identifies you as the participant. Only I know what your participant number is, and I will secure your information.

Recording of Interview
Interviews may be recorded to assist with the accuracy of your responses. You have the right to refuse to be recorded. Please select one of the following options:

I consent to recording: Yes _____ No_____

Sharing the Results
At the end of the research study, the results are going to be available for each participant. It is anticipated to publish the results so other interested people may learn from the research.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw
Participation is voluntary. At any time, you wish to end your participation in the research study, you may do so without repercussions.

Questions About the Study
If you have any questions, you can ask them now or later. If you wish to ask questions later, you may contact Linda Giles. The research plan has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board of the American College of Education. The committee's role is to make sure research participants are protected from harm. If you wish to ask questions of the group, email IRB@ace.edu.

Certificate of Consent
I have read the information about the study, or it has been read to me. I acknowledge why I have been asked to be a participant in the research study. I have been provided the opportunity to ask questions about the study, and any questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I certify I am at least 18 years of age. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in the study. Linda Giles, the

researcher, has explained to me the purpose and benefits of her research study and has also explained to me that:

1. My participation is voluntary.
2. I can withdraw from the study at any time.
3. I am assured my information is confidential.
4. I am assured I will remain anonymous, and my name will not be shared with any other organizations.
5. She expects to publish the study, and the findings of the research study will be managed so the sources of information cannot be identified.
6. I can contact her at [redacted].com or [redacted].

Linda Giles has not asked me to sign any other agreements. This is the only consent and confidentiality form. I understand the terms of my participation, and I give consent to voluntary participation in the research study.

Print or type name of Participant: _____
Signature of Participant: _____
Date: _____

I confirm the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered to the best of my ability. I confirm the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily. A copy of the Consent Form has been provided to the participant.

Print or type name of lead researcher: _____
Signature of lead researcher: _____

I have accurately read or witnessed the accurate reading of the assent form to the potential participant, and the individual has had the opportunity to ask questions. I confirm the individual has freely given assent.

Print or type name of lead researcher: _____
Signature of lead researcher: _____
Date: _____

Signature of faculty member: _____
Date: _____

PLEASE KEEP THIS INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR YOUR RECORDS.

Appendix D: School District Permission to Conduct Research

[redacted] SCHOOL DISTRICT

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

May 31, 2019

Ms. Linda Giles

[redacted]

Dear Ms. Giles,

This letter is written to grant you approval to conduct the study entitled, "Parents' Perceptions on Boys Low Reading Proficiency Rate: A Basic Qualitative Study" within the [redacted] School District. The purpose of the study is to examine and understand parents' perceptions of raising fourth and fifth grade boys reading two to three grades below proficiency rate and whether parents' level of confidence to learn and implement Response to Intervention activities at home will aid in effectively raising low reading levels.

It is my understanding that confidentiality will be maintained throughout the study and the name of the organization and/or teachers will not be included in the study.

Lastly, I confirm that I am authorized to approve research for this organization and that this plan complies with the [redacted] School District's policies.

Please feel free to share the results of the study with the Superintendent upon completion.

Sincerely,

[redacted]

[redacted]

Appendix E: IRB Permission to Conduct Research

January 22, 2020

To: Linda Giles
Michelle McCraney, Dissertation Committee Chair

From: Becky Gerambia
Becky Gerambia
Assistant Chair, Institutional Review Board
Office of Institutional Analytics

Re: IRB Approval

"Parents' Perceptions of Boys' Low Reading Proficiency Rate: A Basic Qualitative Study"

The American College of Education IRB has reviewed your application, proposal, and any related materials. We have determined that your research provides sufficient protection of human subjects.

Your research is therefore approved to proceed. The expiration date for this IRB approval is one year from the date of review completion, January 22, 2021. If you would like to continue your research beyond this point, including data collection and/or analysis of private data, you must submit a renewal request to the IRB.

Our best to you as you continue your studies.

Appendix F: Interview Protocol and Questions Aligned With Research Questions

Interview Protocol for the Study on Parents' Perceptions of Boys Reading Two to Three Grade Levels Below and Confidence to Provide Intervention Strategies at Home	
Participant Pseudonym Number/#: Date:	Start Time: End Time:
Script prior to the interview: *I'd like to thank you (participant pseudonym number/#) once again for your willingness to participate in the interview aspect of my study. As I have mentioned to you before, the purpose of my study is to learn and understand parents' perceptions of boys struggling to read. The study seeks to explore parents' viewpoints of fourth- and fifth-grade boys reading two to three grades below grade level and the level of confidence the boys' parents have to learn and provide reading intervention at home for the boys to help raise low reading scores. The research aims to document your beliefs and viewpoints of son's reading struggles and to better understand how current and future parents of students reading below proficiency level can be supported, as the findings of the data may be a valuable resource tool. Our interview today lasts approximately 30 to 40 minutes. I will be asking you about your son's reading background, experiences with reading, successes, and challenges with reading, ideas you may have about your role as a parent of an at-risk reader, and the approach you have taken or would like to take regarding the improvement of your son's academically challenged reading abilities.* [Present a paper copy of the informed consent form. Read informed consent. Answer questions. Have the participant sign informed consent.] *In the informed consent, you indicated that I have your permission (or not) to record our conversation. Are you still ok with me recording (or not) our conversation today?* ___Yes ___No If yes*: Thank you! Please let me know if at any point you want me to turn off the recorder or keep something you said off the record.* If no: *Thank you for letting me know. I will only take notes of our conversation. Before we begin the interview, do you have any questions?* *Before we begin the interview, do you have any questions?* [Discuss questions] *If any questions (or other questions) arise at any point in the study, you can ask them at any time. I would be more than happy to answer your questions.*	

Research Question One: **What were parents' perceptions on why fourth and fifth-grade boys scored on a lower reading proficiency level when compared to classmates scoring on or above the reading proficiency level?**

Interview Question: *Can you tell me your thoughts about your son's reading struggle?*

Sub-questions:

1. Can you describe your child's reading behaviors (include successes and challenges)?
2. What does your child think about reading?
3. When did you first notice reading was a challenge for your son?
4. What concerns you most about your son's reading ability?
5. How does your son cope with his reading challenge?
6. What are your reactions when your child says he does not want to read?
7. When you hear your child is reading two to three grades below his grade level, what do you think?
8. Have you ever taken part in a conversation centered on the academic reading struggles of your son? If yes, can you describe that conversation and what it made you think of?

Research Question Two: **How confident are parents to learn and implement response to intervention (RTI) supplemental activities at home to effectively assist with raising low reading proficiency scores of fourth and fifth-grade boys?**

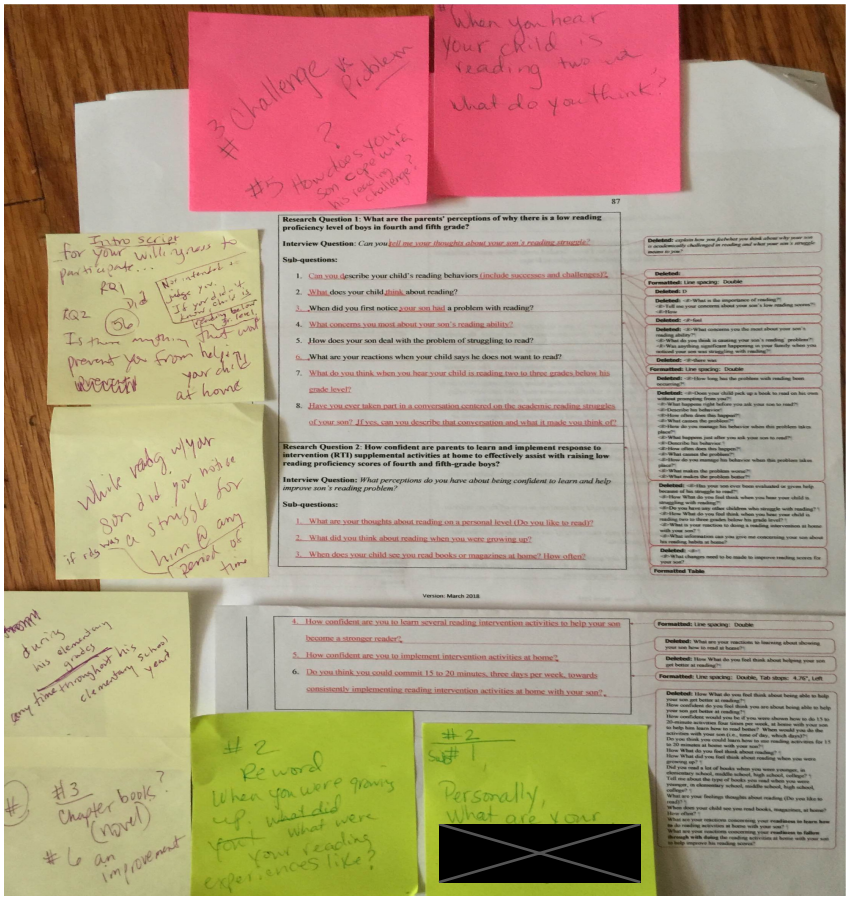
Interview Question: *What perceptions do you have about being confident to learn and help improve son's reading problem?*

Sub-questions:

1. Personally, what are your thoughts about reading?
2. When you were growing up, what were your reading experiences like?
3. Does your child see you read magazines, books, or on-line books at home? How often?
4. How confident are you to **learn** several reading intervention activities to help your son become a stronger reader?
5. What is your level of confidence to **implement** reading intervention activities at home?
6. Could you commit 15 to 20 minutes, three days per week, towards implementing reading intervention activities at home with your son?
7. Is there anything that would prevent you from helping your child with reading activities at home?

Appendix G: Research Instrument Feedback From Subject Matter Experts

Once research tools were composed by the researcher, a panel of subject matter experts (SME) assembled to explore the instruments and provided feedback. SME panel provided such comments towards questionnaires and interview questions, which resulted in appropriate written changes made to the interview research instrument and the Parent E-mail Questionnaire. A screenshot of such notes provides evidence of direct input received from the panel. Changes are shown in the right margin of the interview questions instrument. Revisions to research instruments were implemented, as a result of oral and written consultations, based on specific recommendations provided by the SME panel.



Appendix H: Parental Perceptions Questionnaire

(Questions connected to a link in the recruitment e-mail letter)

Parents' Perceptions of Boy's Reading Habits

Please click the yes or no tab or check off an answer to the questions about your son's reading habits at home. Press the submit button at the end.

Would you like to see improvement in your sons' reading scores? Yes ___ No ___

Does your son like to read? Yes ___ No ___

Does your son pick up a book to read without you asking him? Yes ___ No ___

Does your son have a difficult time reading chapter books (novels)? Yes ___ No ___

Do you have any concerns about your son's reading behaviors? Yes ___ No ___

Could practicing reading activities at home help your son get better at reading?

Yes ___ No ___

If your son is reading below grade level, would you like to see improvement in the area?

Yes ___ No ___

Has your son struggled with reading at any period of time? Yes ___ No ___

Does your son have difficulty with reading in Social Studies, Science, or Math?

Yes ___ No ___

Can your son benefit from a short intervention reading program at home? Yes ___ No ___

SUBMIT

Thank you for your response.

Ms. Linda Giles

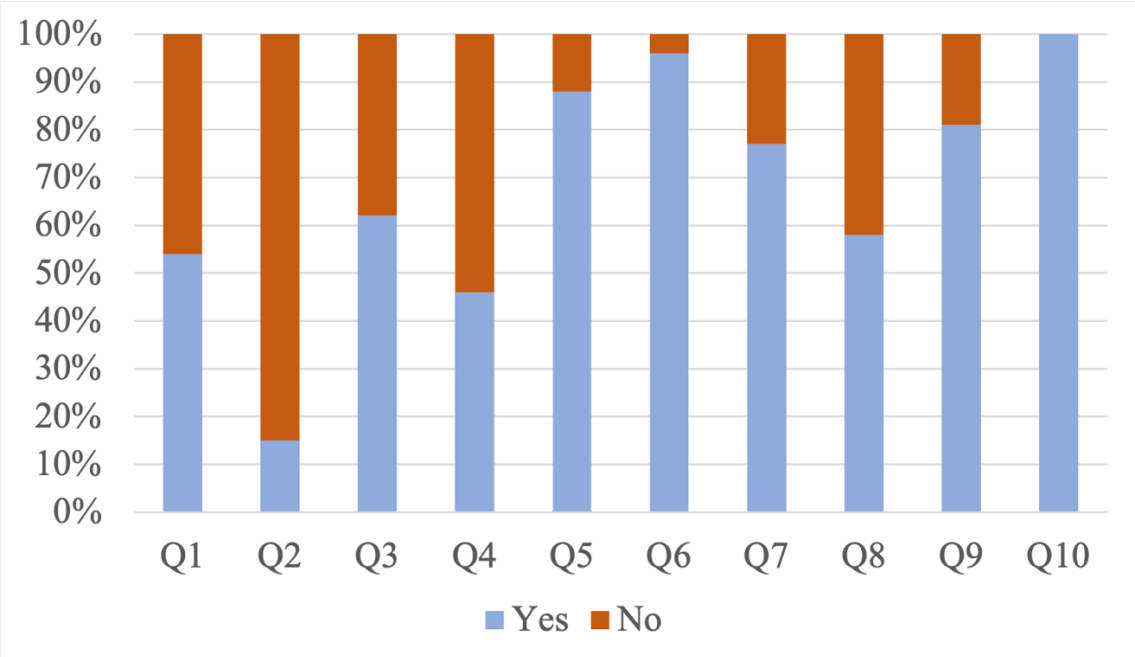
Appendix I: Recruitment E-Mail Letter

American College of Education

[Date]
[Participant's Name]
[Address]

Dear [Participant's Name],
My name is Linda Giles and I am emailing to let you know about an opportunity to participate in a dissertation research study about parents' perceptions of fourth and fifth-grade boys who are struggling readers. I am a doctoral student at the American College of Education. The study seeks to understand viewpoints, behaviors, and beliefs of parents with fourth and fifth-grade sons who are at-risk readers, which generates student achievement. The research aims to document your views and understandings of sons who struggle with reading to better understand parents' perceptions of boys' low reading proficiency rate and to understand the perception of parents' confidence to learn and implement intervention activities at home. You were identified for the study because you are a parent of a fourth or fifth-grade boy.
The purpose of the research study is to explore parents' perceptions of boys who struggle with reading and to understand parents' perceptions of learning and conducting reading intervention activities at home to help raise low reading scores. As I have mentioned, you have been identified as a possible participant for the study. Agreement to be contacted for more information does not obligate you to participate in the study. Your participation in the study is voluntary. If you do not wish to participate, you may withdraw at any time.
I may publish the results of the study; however, I will not use your name or share any information you provided. Your information is to remain confidential. If you would like additional information about the study, please click the link below to complete a short questionnaire and I will contact you to provide more details.
Thank you again for considering the dissertation research opportunity.
CLICK HERE: LINK

Appendix J: Collective Percentage of Parents' Responses



% Yes	54	15	62	46	88	96	77	58	81	100
% No	46	85	38	54	12	4	23	42	19	0
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10

Note. Q# represent the number of the questions on the questionnaire.