

The beliefs and practices of pre-service teachers and the relationship  
to theoretical orientations to reading: A case study

by

Sarah Elizabeth Broman

B.S., Fort Hays State University, 2010

M.S., Fort Hays State University, 2014

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

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Manhattan, Kansas

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## **Abstract**

All human beings possess within them implicit and explicit theories which they use repeatedly throughout their lives to explain a wide array of experiences (Tracey & Morrow, 2017). In education, teachers use their theories about reading and learning to read to inform nearly every aspect of their instruction. These belief systems develop over a lifetime and are used as filters when making instructional decisions (Cunningham & Fitzgerald, 1996; Prawat, 1992; Richardson, Anders, Tidwell, & Lloyd, 1991; Smith, 2004). Understanding and identifying these theoretical perspectives empowers educators to make informed instructional decisions in the classroom while also clarifying and defining their roles as teachers. While numerous studies have documented the relationship between teachers' beliefs and instructional practices, there appeared to be limited research that related preservice teachers' beliefs and practices to their personally held theoretical perspectives.

This study explored pre-service teachers' beliefs and practices and how they related to their theoretical orientations to reading. The study specifically addressed the gap in the research focusing on pre-service teachers who were enrolled in a literacy methods course. Multiple data sources were gathered from interviews, observations, and artifacts and documents. These data were collected and analyzed throughout the duration of the study.

The study's findings established the relationship between pre-service teachers' theoretical orientations to reading and their beliefs and instructional practices. The data analysis revealed that the pre-service teachers' previous life experiences, and experiences in the literacy methods course and corresponding internship influenced their theoretical orientations to reading. Further data analysis also revealed inconsistencies related to the alignment of pre-service teachers' beliefs and instructional practices and change of theoretical orientations.

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Approved by:

Major Professor  
Dr. Lotta Larson

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## **Dedication**

I dedicate this dissertation to my family. To my children, Lizzy and Bobby, I hope you always feel loved. All of my accomplishments in life would be meaningless without you. You two are literally everything I live for each day, and I am so proud of the people you have become. To my parents, Ruth and Dean, thank you for instilling in me a strong work ethic along with the belief that I can do anything for a short period of time. I would not be the person I am today without your encouragement and support. To the love of my life and best friend, Troy, thank you for being the voice of reason through my tantrums and meltdowns. You saw me at my worst and loved me anyway. Thank you for the endless laughs and love. Finally, to my dogs Sneezer and Bear, thank you for snuggling with me when I needed a break from writing.

## **Chapter 1 - Introduction**

When I procured my first job as an elementary teacher, I was excited to put everything I had learned from my teacher preparation program to use. I quickly became disheartened when I was informed by a long-time veteran teacher that I wouldn't need to concern myself with what I learned at the university as most of it wasn't truly applicable in the real classroom. I began to feel a gentle persuasion to follow the lead of my colleagues by mirroring their instructional practices and assimilating myself to that of the culture of my grade-level team. Going against my own beliefs about reading instruction and what I understood to be best practices as part of the assimilation process caused me a great deal of cognitive conflict during my first few years as an educator.

It was during this time that my grade-level team was tasked with improving the reading fluency and comprehension scores of our at-risk students. We were given computer-generated charts and tables along with individual student scores to help us in this endeavor. Overwhelmed by the data, I had so many questions my peers could not answer. How do we make sense of the complicated reading benchmark assessment data and use it to improve students' reading? Which instructional approach is the best? Why do we continue to use the instructional materials in small intervention groups that were clearly not effective? No one knew how to use the assessment data to improve and tailor instruction to meet the individual student needs. My peers had their own ideas regarding the best approach to reading instruction, but their beliefs were in opposition to what I had learned at the university. The consensus seemed to indicate we should continue doing things the way they had always been done. This resistance to change would prove to be a pivotal turning point in the direction of my career as a professional educator. In fact, it was this

experience that put me on a trajectory towards higher education leading me to identify, acknowledge, and embrace the theories I believe to be true regarding literacy instruction.

My experiences have confirmed Lortie's (1975) assumption that most educators can talk about what they believe to be instructionally appropriate decisions, but lack the ability to have meaningful discussions regarding the theoretical underpinnings that support their beliefs. During a recent presentation to a group of pre-service teacher educators, those in attendance were asked to identify the theories that support and inform their literacy instruction in the classroom. The exercise proved to be difficult. The professors were able to discuss in great detail the strategies and activities they endorsed in the classroom, but failed to connect their practices to the theoretical approaches to reading in the discussion. It became apparent that the theories which inform instructional practices are often absent from the minds of many educators, veteran and new teachers alike.

Within the last several years, attention from the educational research community on teacher preparation programs has intensified (Spear-Swerling, 2007). In this current climate of accountability in education, universities have been urged to evaluate the rigor and effectiveness of their teacher education programs to ensure they adequately meet the needs of preservice teachers. Extending beyond the content, it is necessary to recognize the many levels and complexities of teacher learning when evaluating teacher preparation programs. According to Stollar, Poth, Curtis, & Cohen (2006), learning evolves as a nested system including systems within systems. If we unpack the complexities of teacher learning systems, we can then begin to discover what teachers believe about learning to read and how they have come to believe it. We must concern ourselves with the development of teachers' knowledge and instructional practices

and how these are influenced by their systems of beliefs if we are to improve teacher education preparation programs.

During the last several years, I have taught literacy assessment courses to pre-service teachers at a university in the Midwest. It has been fascinating to discover how they use their personal knowledge to navigate themselves through the teacher education program. Their stories provide for me a deeper understanding of how they develop and revise their personally held beliefs and philosophies surrounding literacy instruction. Additionally, their stories give an account of the influences that inform their knowledge base regarding reading and learning to read. Pre-service teachers often mention both university instructors and mentor teachers as major influences on their instructional practices and beliefs (Dvorak & Bates, 2007; Broman, 2017). In fact, the literature regarding pre-service teachers' theoretical orientations to reading identifies the instructor and cooperating teacher as significant influences (Harste & Burke, 1977).

I believe to better understand the development of pre-service teachers' theoretical orientations to reading and how these orientations relate to their beliefs and instructional practices, it is necessary to examine their preconceptions regarding reading instruction and what informs them during their undergraduate experience. In order for me to explore these phenomena further, I felt the best course of action would be to conduct a qualitative inquiry through case study. Using in-depth interviews and observations as part of my methodological approach to data collection, I hope to construct a deeper understanding of pre-service teachers' theoretical orientations to reading and how this intersects with their beliefs and instructional practices.

## Overview of the Issues

For over a century, there has been an ongoing argument over the best approach to teach reading. In what has been described as the “reading wars” and “the great debate” (Chall, 1967), politicians, policy makers, and other stakeholders have engaged in the battle between phonics and whole language instruction. To understand the depth and breadth of the issues surrounding the reading war, it is necessary to consider the origins of reading instruction in early America.

America was founded by a protestant Christian group known as “Puritans” who sought religious freedom and economic advantages which were denied to them in England. According to Formicola (2011), “They brought with them covenant theology, a belief in the work ethic, and a respect for individualism, all of which translated into notions of government by consent and accountability, economic competition, human rights, and a sense of belief in the providential destiny of America” (p. 775). Consequently, American Protestants controlled American culture, education and politics during the infancy of America.

Puritan ideology was reflected in the colonial reading materials and instructional practices of the time. The first American textbook, *The New England Primer*, was used to teach reading and Bible lessons in schools up until the twentieth century (Vacca, J.L., Vacca, R.T., Gove, M.K., Burkey, L.C., Lenhart, L.A., & McKeon, C.A., 2018). Published in the 1600’s, the *Primer* reflected a strong bottom-up approach to reading instruction and followed a sequence of skills focusing on print (Vacca et al., 2018). Reading instruction was offered to children as young as toddlers through the use of an oral, spelling approach to reading known as the “alphabet method” (Barry, 2008). Using the alphabet method, students received an introduction to Christianity via their hornbooks. According to Barry (2008), this first reader included the alphabet, a set of syllables called a syllabary, the Lord’s Prayer, and the invocation. Children

named the letters of the alphabet, spelled the syllables from the syllabary, and spelled and recited the printed prayers from the hornbook (Monaghan, 2005). The alphabet method was the only approach to reading instruction until the 1820's.

As education made its transition from the home to schools in the eighteenth century, American educators began to take interest in the work of European education reformers Rousseau and Pestalozzi who emphasized the importance of meaning for young readers (Matthews, 1966; Monaghan, 2005). According to Barry (2008), prominent American educators of that time such as Horace Mann believed the primary concern in American education was the meaningless nature of the material. As a result of this new way of thinking, a graded series of reading textbooks known as the Eclectic series of William Holmes McGuffey Readers were developed and published in 1836 to aid in the process of reading instruction (Barry, 2008). These became known as basal readers. The books within the basal reading series focused on the sounds of letters in words for younger students and interesting short anthologies for older students. Additionally, they included prereading activities and comprehension questions teachers could utilize in the teacher-centered lessons. According to Vacca et al. (2018), words were not systematically introduced in textbooks until the mid 1800's. It was not uncommon for colonial children of the time to meet between 20 to 100 new words on one page (Vacca et al., 2018). The McGuffey Readers quickly became a mainstay in American education at that time primarily due to the shrewd marketing tactics of the publishers (Venesky, 1987).

Although popular, the McGuffey Readers did not lead the way in literacy acquisition for long. By the 1930's, the alphabet method of literacy acquisition was advocated for by educators who believed that children learned from whole to part instead of part to whole (Matthews, 1966; Monaghan, 2005). Endorsing this approach, educators used picture cards to introduce whole

words during reading instruction. According to Barry (2008) around the time of the Civil War, “phonic” readers caught the interest of educators emphasizing a sound-symbol relationship of letters. The instructional materials changed along with this new way of thinking. At the close of the Civil War, the basal reading series resembled those still in use today (Barry, 2008).

Beginning in the twentieth century, education saw a shift in approaches to reading instruction. Prominent researchers of the time, William S. Gray, of the University of Chicago, along with William H. Elson, co-authored the Scott Foresman series (Mayrogenes, 1985). Gray went on to later serve as the senior author of the Scott Foresman “Dick and Jane” reading series from 1940 to 1948 (Barry, 2008). These books represented the progressive education movement’s ideology that children’s interests should be considered along with current research on teaching and learning. The books used a whole-word approach to reading with common words repeated throughout the text. While the texts were thought to support reading based on behaviorist principles, the stories were of little interest to the students and excluded minorities which reflected the social climate in the 1950’s (Vacca et al., 2018).

In his book “Why Johnny Can’t Read”, Rudolf Flesch (1966) led the charge against the whole word approach and encouraged others to endorse a phonics, or bottom-up approach. Flesch argued, “The teaching of reading-all over the United States, in all the schools, in all the textbooks- is totally wrong and flies in the face of all logic and common sense” (p. 2). Flesch criticized the one-word method utilized in the Dick and Jane series and characterized it as, “horrible, stupid, emasculated, pointless, tasteless little readers” (pp. 6-7). As Barry (2008) noted, “With language such as this, it is no wonder that a reading “war” erupted. This acrimony, which involved not only pedagogical differences but also the expensive reading programs that aligned with those differences, continues to today” (p. 43). According to Barry (2008), Flesch’s

(1966) admonishment of a phonics-based approach to reading instruction did not change the teaching practices of teachers in America. Chall (1967) reported, “most schoolchildren in the United States were taught to read by...a meaning-emphasis method” (p. 256) throughout the following decade.

According to Barry (2008), Jeanne Chall, a reading researcher from Harvard University, conducted an investigation into the reading research and instructional programs available. She found that a phonics approach to reading instruction produced better readers “not only in terms of the mechanical aspects of literacy...but also in terms of the ultimate goals of reading instruction-comprehension and possibly even speed of reading” (Chall, 1967, p. 307). During this time, basal readers continued as a mainstay in reading instructional materials. However, Ravitch (2000) reported the 1970’s saw an “overemphasis on drill and workbooks” (p.444).

As a result, progressive educational ideals focusing on meaning-centered approaches to instruction gained momentum. Children’s literature, authentic texts, and teacher empowerment all became characteristics of the reading approach which came to be known as whole language (Barry, 2008). As the debate continued to be the center of reading research discussion, Chall (1983) revisited the discussion and posited that both phonics and whole word approaches are vital in reading instruction. She argued that different emphasis is required at different stages of reading development thereby creating a balanced approach to literacy (Barry, 2008).

Yetta Goodman (1989) introduced the term “whole language” while working with Harste and Burke (1977). Goodman (1989) described one of Harste and Burke’s (1977) instructional paradigms as a “whole-language view of reading” (p. 115). Yetta and her husband, Ken Goodman (1986) encouraged others to consider the concept of whole language throughout their work as reading researchers. In *What’s Whole in Whole Language*, Ken Goodman (1986)

described the principles of the whole language concept and how it differed from other approaches, specifically in the ways readers construct meaning from language (Barry, 2008). The Goodmans' work significantly added to the field of reading research, shifting the "great debate" from phonics versus whole-word to phonics versus whole language.

As the "great debate" over the best approach to teach reading continued, the US Congress charged the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) and the Secretary of Education with the task of appointing a panel of experts to evaluate the various approaches to reading (National Institute of Child Health and Development, 2000). Based on the panel's findings, the "Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching Children to Read: An Evidence-Based Assessment of the Scientific Research Literature on Reading and its Implications for Reading Instruction" (National Reading Panel, 2000) resulted. The results of this study became the foundation for the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001.

Reading First, a provision of NCLB, was designed in response to the congressionally mandated National Reading Panel's (NRP) report issued in 2000. In efforts to close the widening achievement gap between ethnic minorities and white Americans, Reading First legislation demanded states to assist local school districts in identifying and implementing research-based materials, strategies, and programs. This was to include intervention and remediation materials and programs based on scientific evidence (NCLB, 2001, p.123). Following its investigation, the NRP found that "phonics instruction produces the biggest impact on growth in reading when it begins in kindergarten or 1<sup>st</sup> grade before children have learned to read independently" and it "failed to exert a significant impact on the reading performance of low-achieving 2<sup>nd</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grades" (NRP, 2000, pp. 2-93-94). The panel went on to report that systematic phonics

instruction should be integrated within the curriculum in order to create a more balanced approach to reading instruction.

While the goal of Reading First was to provide support for the implementation of research-based reading instruction into schools, many were in agreement that the legislation did not succeed in bringing reform to the schools. Yatvin (2000) said that “from the beginning, the Panel chose to conceptualize and review the field narrowly, in accordance with the philosophical orientation and research interest of the majority of its members” (p.1) maintaining a biased emphasis towards phonics instruction (Yatvin, 2000). Grunwald (2006) criticized Reading First claiming it has done nothing but pad the wallets of publishers who make millions from the basal reading series textbook industry (Grunwald, 2006, p. B1). Yatvin (2000) reported the NRP made no mention of the importance of early learning and support for home literacy, critical determinates for school success or failure (Yatvin, 2000). Allington (2002) added that the NRP excluded all non-experimental research regarding ethnographic studies of students learning to read in the classroom, as well as research indicating the influence motivation has on literacy acquisition. Educational psychologist Gerald Coles (2000) stated the NRP report has been, harmful because it falsely holds out the promise of a simple, “magic bullet” solution to the literacy failure of millions of children, especially those who are poor, while at the same time discouraging social policy attention to forces both in and out of schools that influence literacy outcomes (p. xvii).

In spite of the original intent of the Reading First (2006) legislation, it could be argued that policy makers did more to convolute than clarify the debate on teaching reading leaving teachers in a further state of confusion regarding reading instruction and a mistrust towards policy makers.

More than fifteen years have passed since the creation of NCLB and we continue to find ourselves at a crossroad between closing the achievement gap and the debate over reading instruction. The pendulum has swung dramatically to both sides of the argument throughout the discussion over reading instruction. Some argue for whole language approach to reading while others might argue for a decoding approach. One could argue that the debate truly is not about the act of reading instruction as much as it is about the theoretical approaches subscribed to by those in disagreement. In order to have an informed and intelligible conversation regarding appropriate reading instruction, it is necessary to consider the theoretical orientations to which one endorses.

As previously mentioned, the conception of reading has historically been viewed as points on a continuum which has essentially polarized reading instruction, with educators committing themselves exclusively to their particular theoretical perspective (Woolacott, 2002). Such categorization has been described as whole language versus phonics, but could perhaps better be understood as a constructivist versus systematic instructional approach to reading and learning to read, with an interactive approach blending the two perspectives (Vacca et al., 2018). It is important to realize that a single discipline cannot inform modern day teachers of insights and understandings they need to educate students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. A variety of fields such as education, linguistics, cognitive psychology, technology, sociology, and anthropology contribute to the knowledge and beliefs about reading and learning to read (Vacca et al., 2018).

The past three decades of reading research has primarily focused on the roles of cognition and language in reading acquisition (Vacca et al., 2018). According to Vacca et al. (2018), cognitive scientists are interested in how readers learn to automatically decode words, use prior knowledge, or schemata, to understand what they are reading, and how they use reading

strategies to monitor their comprehension. Out of the ever-changing conception of reading, four models have emerged to explain the concept and act of reading (Woolacott, 2002).

*Reading as Transmission* perspective was dominant up to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (McNeil, 1992). The author was viewed as the source and locus of meaning where meaning was merely a deduction of the author's intent (Sibanda, 2010). This perspective emphasized skill and drill (Alvermann, 2001) and was teacher-centered. Further, the biography of the author was thought to help the reader better comprehend the text (Sibanda, 2010). Sibanda provided various researchers' definitions of reading through a transmission point of view:

“Reading is a process of looking at written language symbols, converting them into overt or covert speech symbols, and the manipulation of them so that both the direct (overt) and implied (covert) ideas intended by the author may be understood” (Haffner & Hayden, 1982: 4 in Burns, Roe, and Ross, 1988:32).

“Specifically, reading is the process of reconstructing from the printed patterns on the page the ideas and information intended by the author” (Hittleman, 1978; 5 in Dallman et al., 1982:23).

*Reading as Translation* perspective dominated traditional times up to the 1900's and assumed that meaning resided in the text (Sibanda, 2010). According to Serafini (2003), a text embodies one solitary meaning against which all other meanings are measured. Silva & Matsuda (2002) explain that this single meaning is one in which the teacher knows and the students must guess. Success is measured by how accurate a student is when determining a passage's specified meaning Sibanda, (2010). The goal of the reader is to translate the implicit meaning in the text (McNeil, 1992). As Vanhoozer (1998) described, “Every reading is a translation, every reader a translator” (p.86). In other words, meaning is found by closely analyzing the text through the

isolation of its' discrete parts, making this perspective a systematic and mechanistic one (Maggart & Zintz, 1992). According to Sibanda (2010), the text is neutral to ensure an objective and correct interpretation (Sibanda, 2010). Further, close attention is given to words and their parts which are synthesized to establish meaning (Sibanda, 2010).

*Reading as Interaction* perspective of the 1970's implies a perceived interaction between the reader and the text as being the locus of meaning (Sibanda, 2010). Silva and Matsuda (2002) posited that the text ceases to be a dictator of meaning and instead becomes a partner with the reader. Within the interaction between the text and reader, meaning cannot be found without the other (Sibanda, 2010). Ultimately, the perspective acknowledges that meaning resides more in the text than in the reader. Sibanda (2010) added that some measure of subjectivity can be found due to readers' diverse experiences and backgrounds they bring to the reading. Juan and Martinez (2006) posited that the text provides directions for the reader to create meaning from their personal cognitive schemas. Burns, Roe, and Ross (1988) defined this perspective as, "the attainment of meaning as a result of the interplay between perceptions of graphic symbols that represent language and the memory traces of the readers' past verbal and non-verbal experiences" (p. 32).

*Reading as Transaction* perspective represents the most recent orientation and attributes the reader with the responsibility of creating meaning from the text (McNeil, 1992). As a further extension of the application of Schema Theory in literacy, Rosenblatt (1978) argued that every reading experience is unique to each individual (Tracey & Morrow, 2017). Textual meaning is indeterminate as each reader brings their diverse backgrounds and experiences to the text and to the act of reading (Sibanda, 2010). Texts cease to be neutral and instead become social constructions of meaning (Serafini, 2003). In fact, a transactional response to reading as

described by Rosenblatt (1978) is constructivist in nature because it emphasizes the importance of the active reader engaging in meaning making (Tracey & Morrow, 2017). Readers construct meaning which opens the possibility for multiple and sometimes conflicting interpretations from readers (Sibanda, 2010). According to Silva and Matsuda (2002), textual meaning depends on who is reading.

All human beings are influenced by the known and unknown theories to which they subscribe (Tracey & Morrow, 2017). Knowledge and experiences shape the beliefs and practices of an individual which aid in the process of developing a theoretical orientation (Hartse & Burke, 1977). There are many reasons why identifying and understanding theoretical orientations is important. Understanding and identifying theories helps educators define and clarify their roles as teachers. For instance, what a teacher believes influences pedagogical practices in the classroom (Harste & Burke, 1977). Teacher theoretical orientations affects students' perceptions of what reading is (Reutzel, 1997) and empowers teachers to make informed decisions about instructional practices (Roos, 1993; Mallette & Barone, 2014). Wolf, Ballentine, and Hill (2000) argued that pre-service teachers must examine their personal beliefs and literacy histories in order to effectively respond to the instructional needs of children during their field experiences.

It is necessary for those involved in teacher education to take a closer look at what is being taught and the effectiveness and impact of content delivery. According to Maloch, Flint, Eldridge, Harmon, Loven, Fine, Bryant-Shanklin, and Martinez (2003), coursework should build on a knowledge base that prepares teachers to respond strategically to students during reading instruction. Teacher educators must also pay particular attention to the beliefs pre-service teachers have regarding reading acquisition and instruction. According to Barnyak and Paquette (2010), the belief system plays a central role in pre-service teachers' practices. Barnyak and

Paquette (2010) argued that pre-service teachers are unlikely to change their teaching styles unless their beliefs can be changed first. Further, understanding preservice teachers' beliefs about learning will help direct their placements in school settings, inform their supervision, and understand their learning (Hollingsworth, 1989).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Pre-service teachers often underestimate the value and importance of theory in their preparation programs (Whitney, Olan, & Fredrickson, 2013). Pre-service teachers believe courses in their preparation programs focus too much on theory and too little on practical strategies (Kagan, 1992; Randi & Corno, 2007). While they claim to receive too much instruction on learning theories, pre-service teachers are often unable to articulate their beliefs about teaching and learning (Lortie, 1975). Richardson (2003) reported that pre-service teachers' entering beliefs influence what and how they learn during the teacher preparation program. Further, their beliefs based upon their practical knowledge, personal learning preferences, or stereotypes and misconceptions (Davis, 2004) often do not align with the realities they will face in the classroom (Pajares, 1992; Rebmann et al., 2015). If these beliefs regarding learning are not confronted and challenged they could present obstacles to student learning (Davis, 2004). Pajares (1992) further warned, "unexplored entering beliefs may be responsible for the perpetuation of antiquated and ineffectual teaching practices" (p. 328). Snowling and Hulme (2012) advocated for a general principle of a "virtuous circle;" for researchers and educators that theory should inform practice and practice should inform theory. Therefore, to create effective teacher preparation programs reflective of the needs of pre-service teachers, it is necessary to understand

their theoretical orientations and beliefs about learning (Leko, Kulkarni, Lin, & Smith, 2015) and how they intersect with their instructional practices.

### **Purpose of the Study**

Several studies have established a congruence between teacher beliefs and instructional practices (Charlesworth et al., 1993; Kagan & Smith, 1988; Smith & Shepard, 1988; Spidell, 1988; Wing, 1989; Ketner, 1997). Despite the research on teachers' beliefs and practices, there continues to be a lack in the current research relating pre-service teachers' beliefs and practices to their personally held theoretical perspectives. Many teachers do not make connections from theory to their instructional practices arguing theory is not relevant (Randi & Corno, 2007). However, Park (2013) suggested pre-service teachers might disregard theory because they lack an understanding of how theory influences their instructional practices and decision-making. While pre-service teachers desire more "practical" material and less theory (Whitney, Olan, & Fredrickson, 2013), Randi and Corno (2007) contended that more research is needed to help teachers identify and call up theory-based practices that resolve their immediate problems.

Researchers recommended future investigations regarding educational beliefs and practices in relationship to theoretical orientations. Snowling and Hulme (2014) argued the need for a closer link between theory and practice research. Ritchey, Coker, Jr., and Jackson (2015) argued for additional research that could help develop a better understanding of the ways teachers' theoretical orientations, instructional practices, and student outcomes are related. Leko, Kulkarni, Lin, and Smith (2015) suggested future research regarding the long-term effects of coursework, personal, and practical experiences on beliefs. Ketner (2001) recommended more research on teacher theoretical orientation to reading and beliefs about developmentally

appropriate practices. In line with the current demands for research, the purpose of this study is to explore pre-service teachers' beliefs and practices and how they relate to their theoretical orientations to reading. This study will specifically address the gap in the research focusing on preservice teachers who are enrolled in a literacy methods course. My goal is to develop a deeper understanding of pre-service teachers' theoretical beliefs and how those beliefs might influence their future practices as teachers of reading.

### **Research Questions**

Qualitative research relies on carefully crafted questions aimed at driving the direction and course of the study. This collective case study explored the following three research questions and their respective sub-questions:

1. How do pre-service teachers discuss the influences on their theoretical orientations to reading?
  - a. Did pre-service teachers' life experiences play a definitive role in what they believed to be true regarding literacy acquisition and instruction?
  - b. How did pre-service teachers' experiences in the literacy methods course and corresponding internship influence their theoretical orientations to reading?
2. How do pre-service teachers connect their instructional practices and beliefs to their theoretical orientations to reading?
  - a. Do pre-service teachers' practices align with their theoretical orientations to reading?
  - b. How do pre-service teachers discuss their beliefs about reading and learning to read?

3. What are the pre-service teachers' theoretical orientations to reading?
  - a. What were the pre-service teachers' theoretical orientations to reading at the beginning of the study?
  - b. What were the pre-service teachers' theoretical orientations to reading at the end of the study?

### **Significance of the Study**

Pre-service teachers internalize their theories about teaching long before they begin their coursework at the university (Holt-Reynolds, 1992; Grisham, 2000). These theories regarding student learning are shaped by their own experiences learning to read, during volunteer work with children, or reflecting on their personal reading habits (Evans, 1995). Teachers' beliefs about learning influence their consciousness, attitudes, instructional practices, and learner development (Shinde & Karekatti, 2012). All coursework in the teacher preparation program is filtered through these personally held theories (Grisham, 2000). In fact, the beliefs pre-service teachers have regarding student learning do not appear to change significantly until they accept a teaching position and are influenced by the local school culture (Maloch, Flint, Eldridge, Harmon, & Loven, 2003). It is of the utmost importance that teacher educators seek to identify and understand pre-service teachers' beliefs about student learning that support their theoretical orientations in effort to maintain practical and relevant teacher preparation programs. Cummins, Cheek, & Lindsey (2004) argued that if theoretical orientations are a major determinant of instructional practices, then teacher educators must ensure pre-service teachers develop a theoretical orientation that is "reflective of current and pertinent research in the field" (p. 183).

A review of the literature to date on pre-service teachers' beliefs and practices in the area of reading instruction has left several questions unanswered. This study seeks to fill in the gaps in the literature by providing an in-depth perspective on pre-service teachers' theoretical orientations to reading. Specifically, this study will explore pre-service teachers' beliefs and practices and how they relate to their theoretical orientations to reading.

### **Limitations of the Study**

There are several possible limitations in this qualitative study. This study will be conducted with participants who are enrolled in a literacy methods course in the teacher education program. It is common for undergraduates to change majors in their academic careers. Therefore, some of the pre-service teachers in the study may not be as committed to the teaching professions compared to their peers.

A caveat of case study research is that transferability, not generalization, is the goal of the research (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). Therefore, the findings from this research cannot be generalized but will be used to provide insight into the relationships between preservice teachers' theoretical orientations and their beliefs and practices.

Another limitation of this study is researcher bias. I have worked as a reading specialist at the university level for several years educating pre-service teachers in the area of literacy assessment and interventions. I offer private tutoring services to struggling readers in the surrounding area and consult with local schools looking to improve their reading programs. Further, I have focused my doctoral coursework in the area of literacy. Because of my strong literacy background, my perspective regarding reading instruction will be vastly different from those of the pre-service teachers in the study. My role as the researcher will require me to

acknowledge my biases and remain open-minded when interpreting the data I collect from the exploratory case study.

## **Definition of Terms**

The terms used within this dissertation are described and defined as follows:

**Beliefs:** personally held mental constructs that do not require community consensus or agreement to establish their validity (Nespor, 1987); beliefs are the principles individuals use to interpret and understand their personal experiences.

**Cognitive Dissonance:** the mental discomfort of maintaining two or more contradictory beliefs, ideas, or values (Hollingworth, 1989).

**Epistemology:** the study of what knowledge is, where knowledge is located, and how knowledge increases (Cunningham & Fitzgerald, 1996).

**Epistemological Beliefs:** a system of beliefs about the acquisition of knowledge that are independent of each other and have direct and indirect effects on learning (Schommer, 1994)

**Implicit theories:** theories about teaching and learning that pre-service teachers have internalized prior to their professional coursework (Holt-Reynolds, 1992).

**Personal Knowledge:** The sum of beliefs developed in the individual over the course of a lifetime based upon acculturation and socialization in a given society (Grisham, 2000).

**Phonics Perspective:** a perspective of reading instruction that focuses on the ability to distinguish the relationship between phonemes (the sounds in spoken language) and graphemes (the letters of the alphabet that represent those sounds)(Yell & Drasgow, 2005).

**Practical Knowledge:** That which is developed within the job context, such as on-the-job training or field experiences (Grisham, 2000).

**Professional Knowledge:** That which the teacher develops within a formal academic program, such as a teacher education program, and is the least valued form of knowledge (Lanier & Little)

**Skills Perspective:** a perspective of reading instruction that employs a part-to-whole approach to reading acquisition emphasizing sight words and vocabulary acquisition (DeFord, 1985).

**Teacher Cognition:** Pre- or in-service teachers' self-reflections; beliefs and knowledge about teaching, students, and content; and awareness of problem-solving strategies prevalent to classroom teaching (Kagan, 1990).

**Theory:** explanations of phenomena that are grounded in belief systems typically supported by research and accepted by the majority (Tracey & Morrow, 2017).

**Theoretical Orientation:** a personal belief system regarding reading based upon knowledge and experience; the deep philosophical principles that guide teachers to establish expectations about student behavior and the host of decisions they must make as they teach reading lessons (Harste & Burke, 1977, p.32).

**Whole Language Perspective:** a perspective of reading instruction that employs a whole-to-part approach to reading acquisition building upon prior knowledge and experiences (DeFord, 1985).

## **Organization of the Study**

Chapter one introduces this study in which I focus on providing an in-depth account of the relationship between pre-service teachers' theoretical orientations and their reading knowledge and practices. This chapter includes an overview of the issues, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, limitations of the study, definition of the terms, and organization of the study.

Chapter two discusses the theoretical underpinnings that serve as the framework for the proposed study. The cognitive constructivist theory along with the social constructivist theory, will provide the foundation for the research. Chapter two also provides an overview of the research related to the dominant theoretical approaches to reading instruction, the Theoretical Orientation of Reading Profile, teacher beliefs and knowledge, teacher preparation programs and theoretical orientations to reading, and instructional practices and theoretical orientation to reading.

Chapter three discusses the research methodology, which describes the research design, data collection, and data analysis that will be used in the study. Chapter three also includes a description of the research setting, the participants, and the role of the researcher.

Chapter four describes the results after collecting and analyzing the data from the case study in which pre-service teacher participants will be interviewed on three occasions during the first three months of the fall semester. A description of the environment, the phenomenological interview process, the Theoretical Orientation of Reading Profile instrument, and the theoretical orientations of the pre-service teacher participants and the researcher will be included.

Chapter five examines the findings of the study as well as the conclusions drawn after extensive data analysis. The implications regarding the relationship between pre-service teachers' theoretical orientations and their beliefs and practices will be discussed along with recommendations for future research.

## **Chapter 2 - Review of Relevant Literature**

The focus of this study is to develop and ascertain a deeper understanding of pre-service teachers' beliefs and practices and how these relate to their personally held theoretical orientations to reading. This chapter will present theoretical perspectives conducive for teaching and teacher education to include the cognitive constructivist theory and the social constructivist theory. A review of the literature includes related research supporting the study and is presented according to the significant themes: teacher beliefs, instructional practices, knowledge, theoretical orientations to reading, and the intersection of these themes. This research seeks to explore pre-service teachers' beliefs and practices and how they relate to their theoretical orientations to reading.

### **Theoretical Perspectives of the Study**

The primary theories of support for this study are cognitive constructivism and social constructivism. Windschitl (2002) noted that researchers often do not indicate differences between the two perspectives. Both view reading as part of a social or cognitive process. However, there are distinguishing differences between cognitive and social constructivism. The cognitive constructivist theory suggests that learning is an active process (Powell & Kalina, 2009). Knowledge is seen as something that is actively constructed by learners based on their existing cognitive structures (Woolfolk, 2015). Teachers subscribing to cognitive constructivist methods aim to assist students to assimilate new information to existing knowledge (Powell & Kalina, 2009). The social constructivist theory emphasizes the importance of culture and context and how they relate to the constructing of knowledge (Windschitl, 2002). These theories are both

relevant to this study as they will provide a framework for understanding the many complexities of teaching and the correspondence of beliefs and practices theoretical orientations.

## **Constructivism**

Constructivism is the basis of educational theory (Risko, Roller, Cummins, Bean, Block, Anders, & Flood, 2008). It has been understood in various ways, including as a learning theory, a philosophical approach on human knowledge, and an approach to social inquiry (Taber, 2011). Specifically in education, constructivism is a theory of learning that emphasizes the active construction of knowledge by individuals (Gunning, 2010). It is comprised of ideas regarding how learning occurs along with the factors that influence learning. Further, it supports how curriculum and instruction should be designed to best support educational endeavors, given what is currently understood about learning. Constructivism can also be thought of as an epistemological perspective regarding knowledge acquisition where knowledge is constructed and transformed by the learner rather than transmitted by others (Taber, 2011).

Moshman (1982) identified three types of constructivism: exogenous constructivism, endogenous constructivism, and dialectical constructivism. In exogenous constructivism, there is an external reality constructed as knowledge is formed (Moshman, 1982). In this form of constructivism supported by the information processing conceptualizations of cognitive psychology, networks of information and schemata are elaborated and constructed to help learners understand their experiences. Endogenous constructivism, or cognitive constructivism (Cobb, 1994; Moshman, 1982) focuses on the internal and individual constructions of knowledge. Piagetian Theory (Piaget, 1977) emphasized the importance of internal conflict as learners attempt to resolve mental disequilibrium as they construct knowledge. Learners must

negotiate the meaning of experiences that are different from their existing schema. Dialectical constructivism or social constructivism (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989; Rogoff, 1990) considers knowledge acquisition as a social interaction process involving sharing, comparing, and debating among other learners. From this perspective, learning is considered a highly interactive process where learners construct their own meaning from experiences while also helping others find meaning in the process. This view of constructivism is a reflection of Vygotsky's (1968) research regarding sociocultural theory of learning which emphasized the importance of mentors who support and guide the learner during the learning process.

According to the constructivism perspective, learners must build their own understanding (Taber, 2011). Students construct knowledge through an active process, not through passive reception. The learner must actively seek to make sense of what is experienced while relating those experiences to what is already understood. Renzulli (2006) described learning activities characteristic of the constructivist perspective:

The type of learning advocated by these theorists can be summarized as knowledge and skill acquisition gained from investigative and creative activities that are characterized by three requirements. First, there is a personalization of the topic or problem-the students are doing the work because they want to. Second, students are using methods of investigation or creative production that approximate the *modus operandi* of the practicing professional, even if the methodology is at a more junior level than that used by adult researchers, filmmakers, or business entrepreneurs. Third, the work is always geared toward the production of product or service that is intended to have an impact on a particular audience. The information (content) and the skills (process) that are substance

of inductive learning situations are based on need-to-know and need-to-do requirements.  
(Renzulli, 2006, p. 230)

Further, how information is presented and how learners are supported is crucial to the process of constructing knowledge (Risko, Vukelich, & Roskos, 2008). Students' preexisting conceptions that they bring to each task provide a platform for new information to be built upon and challenged if necessary. Risko et al. (2008) added that regardless of their prior knowledge, each person's existing knowledge has a powerful influence on future learning and whether or how conceptual change occurs.

The constructivist perspective supports the belief that reading is made up of several cognitive processes (Taber, 2011). These processes result from the reader's experiences along with formal instruction that take place within the social context of the learner. Cambourne (2002) identified three separate, but overlapping core theoretical assumptions he describes as *conditions of learning*:

- (1) What is learned cannot be separated from the context in which it was learned.
- (2) The purposes or goals that the learner brings to the learning situation are central to what is learned.
- (3) Knowledge and meaning are socially constructed through the processes of negotiation, evaluation, and transformation (p. 26).

Applying this first assumption to the development of literacy, constructivism acknowledges the importance of the child's experiences and contexts in which they learn to read and write. Cambourne (2002) stated that the constructivist approach to literacy instruction supports the belief that the methods to teach reading and writing determine the child's ability and understanding to use reading and writing effectively.

Cambourne's (2002) second assumption recognized that student learning goals and engagement are important and central to what is learned. Cambourne posited that student engagement is directly linked to: (a) the student's self-efficacy regarding learning; (b) the value the student places on learning; (c) the student is free of stress and anxiety; and (d) the student respects the teacher (Cambourne, 1995; Savery & Duffy, 1995). Snow, Griffin, and Burns (2005) discussed the importance of readers' goals and purposes for reading. Readers will effectively apply cognitive and metacognitive strategies that support learning when they are deeply invested and engaged in reading.

Cambourne's (2002) third assumption concluded that individuals base their experiences on socially constructed knowledge. Understanding of the world depends on the manner in which individuals impose meaning on it. In relation to literacy, constructivism views social interactions as the foundation for learners to construct meaning and develop their knowledge and understanding about reading and writing.

Cambourne's (2002) framework provided correspondence between constructivist theory and instructional practice in the classroom. Cognitive constructivists support the idea that learning to read is a mental process of assimilating new information into existing schemata which serves as a foundation for the accommodation of new information. Adding to the principles of cognitive constructivism, social constructivism views reading as a social process where collaboration and cooperative learning are key. Learners construct their understanding and knowledge through social interactions that enrich their learning (Cambourne, 2002). Table 2.1 compares a constructivist classroom to a traditional classroom.

**Table 2.1 Comparison of Traditional and Constructivist Classrooms (University of Hong Kong, Retrieved August, 2017)**

<b>Traditional</b>	<b>Constructivist</b>
Curriculum begins with the parts of the whole. Emphasizes basic skills.	Curriculum emphasizes big concepts, beginning with the whole and expanding to include the parts.
Strict adherence to fixed curriculum is highly valued.	Pursuit of student questions and interests is valued.
Materials are primarily textbooks and workbooks.	Materials include primary sources of material and manipulative materials.
Learning is based on repetition.	Learning is interactive, building on what the student already knows.
Teachers disseminate information to students; students are recipients of knowledge.	Teachers have a dialogue with students, helping students construct their own knowledge.
Teacher's role is directive, rooted in authority.	Teacher's role is interactive, rooted in negotiation.
Assessment is through testing, correct answers.	Assessment includes student works, observations, and points of view, as well as tests. Process is as important as product.
Knowledge is seen as inert.	Knowledge is seen as dynamic, ever changing with our experiences.
Students work primarily alone.	Students work primarily in groups.

### **Cognitive Constructivism**

Cognitive constructivism is based on Jean Piaget's (1953) theory of cognitive development. In cognitive constructivism, learning is constructed through a personal, mental process (Powell & Kalina, 2009). Consistent with the constructivist perspective, Piaget stressed the importance of the child as an active participant in their cognitive development (Penn, 2008). Common to most cognitivist approaches, cognitive constructivism assumes that knowledge is made up of symbolic mental representations and is seen as something that is actively constructed by learners based upon their existing cognitive level of development (Powell & Kalina, 2009).

Piaget (1953) described these cognitive levels as developmental stages. Further, children's schemas are constructed through the process of assimilation and accommodation, as they move through the different stages of development (Wadsworth, 2004). Piaget's (1953) four stages of development are: Sensorimotor stage (from ages zero to two years old); preoperational stage (two to seven years old); concrete operational stage (seven to eleven years old), and the formal operational stage (eleven years old to adulthood).

Piaget's great project (his 'genetic epistemology') centered on how humans acquire knowledge of the world beginning with the genetic information from their parents (Taber, 2011). In Piaget's (1953) sensorimotor stage, children begin to discover their surrounding environment using their senses and physical activities to explore the world around them. As the children get older they also begin to use language as a means of discovery (Wadsworth, 2004). According to Wadsworth (2004), children in the next preoperational stage continue to develop their language skills but have difficulties grasping the thoughts of others. Piaget (1953) explained that within this stage there is "symbolic function" where children assign meaning to different symbols and pictures representative of objects within their environment. Following this is an additional sub-stage of "intuitive thought" where children ask multitudes of questions about everything within their environment (Wadsworth, 2004). Within the concrete operational stage, children begin to replace intuitive thought with logical reasoning. This is considered to be a pivotal growth point in the brain in terms of logical development (Wadsworth, 2004). In Piaget's (1953) formal operations stage children will begin to use higher-level thinking skills and abstract ideas to solve problems. Piaget's (1953) stages are widely accepted as a basis for explaining the growth of logical thinking in children.

In addition to the stages of development, Piaget's (1953) theory included assimilation and accommodation, which are processes children go through as they search for balance or "equilibration" in their learning (Wadsworth, 2004). Powell (2006) explained that "equilibration" is manifested in a cognitive conflict and occurs when children shift from one developmental stage to the next. This cognitive conflict presents a mental state of unbalance or disequilibrium. It is uncomfortable for the learner to be in this state of unbalance as they are forced to adjust their thinking (schema) to resolve the conflict and become more comfortable (Powell, 2006). According to Piaget (1953), assimilation occurs when children bring new information to their present schemas and accommodation occurs when children change their existing schemas to accommodate the new information.

Cognitive constructivists like Piaget believed that knowledge is actively constructed by the learner (Taber, 2011). Each learner interprets experiences and information in the light of their existing knowledge, their stage of cognitive development and their cultural background (Powell & Kalina, 2009). Learners use these factors to organize their experience and to select and transform new information. Knowledge is therefore actively constructed by the learner rather than passively absorbed; it is essentially dependent on the standpoint from which the learner approaches it. Moshman (1982) described three explanations for the construction of knowledge based upon constructivist principles: (1) The realities and truths of the external world direct knowledge construction.; (2) Internal processes such as Piaget's organization, assimilation, and accommodation direct knowledge construction.; and (3) Both external and internal factors direct knowledge construction (Moshman, 1982). Because knowledge is actively constructed, learning is presented as a process of active discovery.

The role of the teacher is not to drill knowledge into students through consistent repetition, or to motivate them into learning through carefully employed rewards and punishments as reflected in behaviorist theoretical perspectives (Taber, 2011). Rather, the role of the teacher from a constructivist viewpoint is to facilitate discovery by providing the necessary resources and by guiding learners as they attempt to assimilate new knowledge to old and to modify the old to accommodate the new (Powell & Kalina, 2009). Teachers must thus take into account the knowledge that the learner currently possesses when deciding how to construct the curriculum and to present, sequence, and structure new material. According to Reutzel and Cooter (2007), an effective reading teacher knows (a) what skills the child must learn, (b) where the child is in his or her literacy development, and (c) which skills the child is ready to learn—their zone of proximal development.

Cognitivist teaching methods focus on helping students in assimilating new information to existing knowledge, and enabling them to make the appropriate modifications to their existing conceptions to accommodate that information (Woolfolk, 2015). Further, while cognitivists allow for the use of “skill and drill” exercises in the memorization of facts, formulas, and lists, they place greater importance on strategies that help students to actively assimilate and accommodate new material (Taber, 2011). Constructivist approaches to learning put the student at the center and can be witnessed in activities such as (a) inquiry and problem-based learning, (b) dialogue and instructional conversations, (c) cognitive apprenticeships, (d) cooperative learning, and (d) activities promoting and supporting conceptual change (Woolfolk, 2015).

## **Social Constructivism**

“Social constructivism is a highly effective method of teaching that all students can benefit from, since collaboration and social interaction are incorporated” (Powell & Kalina, 2009). Social constructivism is based on the social interactions and thinking processes of students and expands cognitive constructivism emphasizing the collaborative nature of learning. Social constructivism was developed by psychologist Lev Vygotsky, a Russian scholar and social learning theorist (Tracey & Morrow, 2017). Vygotsky’s (1962) research and theories center around social constructivism and language development such as cognitive dialogue, the zone of proximal development, social interaction, culture, and inner speech (Vygotsky, 1962).

The premise of Vygotsky’s work was the belief that children learn as a result of their social interactions. Davidson (2010) wrote, “According to Vygotsky, development is the transformation of socially shared activities into internalized processes” (p. 247). Because his theory relies primarily on social interactions and their cultural contexts that influence learning, most psychologists classify Vygotsky as a social constructivist (Woolfolk, 2015). Vygotsky was a cognitivist, but rejected the assumption made by cognitivists such as Piaget that it was possible to separate learning from its social context. He focused on the personal experiences of others and how they are modified by interactions with others (Taber, 2011). Vygotsky (1968) stated:

Every function in the child’s cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level and, later on, on the individual level; first, between people (inter-psychological) and then inside the child (intra-psychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relationships between individuals. Vygotsky’s theory of social learning has been expanded upon by numerous later theorists and researchers. (Vygotsky, 1968, p.57)

Vygotsky emphasized the role of language and culture in cognitive development. According to Vygotsky (1968), language and culture are central to human intellectual development and in how humans perceive the world, and are the frameworks through which humans experience, communicate, and understand reality. Vygotsky stated:

A special feature of human perception ... is the perception of real objects ... I do not see the world simply in color and shape but also as a world with sense and meaning. I do not merely see something round and black with two hands; I see a clock ... (Vygotsky, 1968, p.39)

Vygotsky accepted Piaget's claim that learners respond not to external stimuli but to their interpretation of those stimuli. However, Vygotsky (1968) argued that cognitivists such as Piaget had overlooked the essentially social nature of language. As a result, he claimed they had failed to understand that learning is a collaborative process. Vygotsky distinguished between two developmental levels:

The level of actual development is the level of development that the learner has already reached, and is the level at which the learner is capable of solving problems independently. The level of potential development (the "zone of proximal development") is the level of development that the learner is capable of reaching under the guidance of teachers or in collaboration with peers. The learner is capable of solving problems and understanding material at this level that they are not capable of solving or understanding at their level of actual development; the level of potential development is the level at which learning takes place. It comprises cognitive structures that are still in the process of maturing, but which can only mature under the guidance of or in collaboration with others. (Vygotsky, 1968, p. 85)

Vygotsky's (1962) zone of proximal development (ZPD) has been described as a zone in which learning occurs when the child receives help. According to Powell and Kalina (2009), children often learn easiest in this zone when others are involved in the process. After students achieve the goal of the activity, their zone expands enabling them to do more.

“There is no one constructivist theory of learning, but “most constructivists” share two main ideas: that learners are active in constructing their own knowledge and that social interactions are important to knowledge construction” (Bruning, Schraw, Norby, & Ronning, 2004, p. 105). “While there are several interpretations of what constructivist theory means, most agree that it involves a dramatic change in the focus of teaching, putting the students’ own efforts to understand at the center of the educational enterprise” (Prawat, 1992, p. 357). Table 2.2 compares the basic tenets of cognitive and social constructivism. Regardless of the differences in perspectives, most constructivists agree upon the four central characteristics believed to influence learning: 1) learners construct their own learning; 2) new learning depends on students’ current understanding; 3) the critical role of social interaction and: 4) the necessity of authentic learning opportunities for meaningful learning (Bruning, Royce, & Dennison, 1995; Pressley, Harris & Marks, 1992).

**Table 2.2 Cognitive and Social Constructivism**

<b>Constructivism</b>	<b>Associated Theorists</b>	<b>Basic Tenets of Theory</b>	<b>View of Knowledge and Learning</b>
Cognitive	Jean Piaget William Perry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Focuses on mental process rather than observable behavior</li><li>• Knowledge comprises symbolic mental representations</li><li>• Learning can be separated from the social context</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Knowledge is actively constructed based on existing cognitive structures</li><li>• Learning is relative to the stage of cognitive development</li></ul>
Social	Lev Vygotsky	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Variety of Cognitive Constructivism</li><li>• Emphasizes collaborative nature of learning</li><li>• Learning is the product of social interactions</li><li>• Cannot separate learning from its social context</li><li>• Emphasized the role of language and culture</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Knowledge is actively constructed in response to interactions with environmental stimuli</li><li>• Learners respond to their interpretation of stimuli</li></ul>

## **Beliefs**

As a universal construct, the concept of belief has traditionally been left to those interested in spiritual and philosophical inquiries. However, beliefs have become the subject of inquiry in many diverse fields where attitudes and values are central to social research including education (Rebmann, K., Schloemer, T., Berding, F., Luttenberger, S., & Paechter, M., 2015; White & Chant, 2014; Toll C.A., Nierstheimer, S.L., Lenski, S.D., & Kolloff, P.B., 2004; Schmidt, 2013; Shinde & Karekatti, 2012). Subject specific beliefs such as beliefs about reading

are essential for researchers as they attempt to understand how children learn. Approaching beliefs from an information processing perspective helps researchers focus on learner characteristics not only such as self-concept and self-efficacy, but also on the nature of intelligence, motivation, and knowledge (Pajares, 1992). Because of the wide variation in definitions of belief, it is necessary for the researcher to define belief according to the purpose of the study.

Pajares (1992) defined beliefs as personal principles, constructed from experience, which individuals use to interpret new experiences and information and to guide action. According to Nespor (1987), beliefs are strong predictors of behavior and influential in determining how individuals organize tasks and problems. Nespor (1987) added that beliefs do not require general or group consensus or agreement to establish their validity, nor do they require internal consistency within individual belief systems.

According to Nespar (1987) there are four characteristics of beliefs: 1) Beliefs can consist of existential presumptions that are the incontrovertible, personal truths everyone holds (Pajares, 1992). They are the beliefs about oneself and others. 2) Beliefs can be alternative to reality and based instead on ideal situations. 3) Beliefs have a strong affective and evaluative component that often determine the value placed on the content by the teacher. This can determine the amount of time and energy a teacher spends teaching the material. 4) Beliefs are episodic in structure, meaning they result from previous critical episodes and experiences.

A teacher's general knowledge is comprised of the theories and beliefs which serve as a foundation for their instructional practices in the classroom (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Munby, Russell, & Martin, 2001; Rebmann et al., 2015). In the classroom, teachers are faced with an inordinate amount of complex tasks and decisions. The manner in which they carry out these

tasks is based on their professional knowledge and their teaching decisions (Rebmann et al., 2015) influenced by their beliefs and attitudes towards knowledge and knowledge acquisition (Al-Amoush, S., Usak, M., Erdogan, M., Markic, S., & Eilks, I., 2013; Ariza & Pozo, 2002; Brownlee, 2004; Cheng, M. M. H., Chan, Tang, S.Y.F., & Cheng, A.Y. N., 2009; Gullenberg, A., Kellner, E., Attorps, I., Thoren, I., & Tarneberg, R., 2008). Teachers' beliefs influence their goals, procedures, instructional materials and practices, their roles, their students, and the schools they work in (Kuzborska, 2011). Shine and Karekatti (2012) posited that teachers' beliefs influence their consciousness, attitudes about teaching, instructional practices, and learner development. According to Rebmann et al. (2015) compared to the research regarding learners' beliefs, less research has been conducted focusing on teachers' beliefs.

Several conclusions regarding beliefs are supported by decades of empirical research. Beliefs are difficult to change and are formed early (Lortie, 1975; Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992). Beliefs affect behavior and how an individual organizes knowledge (Nespor, 1987; Hollingsworth, 1989; Windschitl & Stahl, 2002). Beliefs act as filters through which new information and experiences are interpreted (Calderhead & Robson, 1991; Hollingsworth, 1989; Grisham, 2000; Richardson, 2003). Beliefs about teaching come from personal experience including experiences with schooling and instruction and formal knowledge (Grisham, 2000; Lanier & Little, 1986; Richardson, 1996).

Beliefs are complex and form as a result of one's personal life experiences. According to Brownlee, Syu, Mascadri, Cobb-Moore, Walker, Johansson, Boulton-Lewis, and Ailwood (2012) teachers develop sophisticated beliefs over the course of their education and ongoing professional development experiences. These experiences bring forth the development of a

personal belief system made up of ‘clusters’ of beliefs. While it is difficult to operationalize the construct of educational beliefs, breaking it into clusters is beneficial and helpful to researchers:

Educational beliefs about are required-beliefs about confidence to affect students’ performance (teacher efficacy), about the nature of knowledge (epistemological beliefs), about causes of teachers’ or students’ performance (attributions, locus of control, motivation, writing apprehension, math anxiety), about perceptions of self and feelings of self-worth (self-concept, self-esteem), about confidence to perform specific tasks (self-efficacy). (Pajares, 1992, p. 316)

Fenstermacher (1978) predicted that educational research regarding teacher effectiveness would begin to focus on teacher beliefs (Pajares, 1992). Pintrich (1990) suggested that the study of teacher beliefs would become the most beneficial construct to teacher education (Pajares, 1992). Pajares (1992) further noted that while the construct of beliefs does not lend itself to empirical investigation due to its global nature, there is enough supporting evidence to conclude that the study of beliefs is valuable and viable to the field of education. Nevertheless, the construct of belief in the context of education is still difficult to operationalize for research purposes. Table 2.3 presents sixteen fundamental assumptions identified by Pajares (1992) regarding teacher beliefs that will serve as the operational definition of beliefs for this study.

**Table 2.3 Sixteen Assumptions for Studying Teachers' Educational Beliefs (Pajares, 1992)**

Assumption	Supporting Research
1. Beliefs are formed early and tend to self-perpetuate, preserving even against contradictions caused by reason, time, schooling, or experience.	Abelson, 1979; Buchmann, 1984, 1987; Buchmann & Schwille, 1983; Clark, 1988; Florio-Ruane & Lensmire, 1990; Ginsburg & Newman, 1985; Lasley, 1980; Lortie, 1975; Munby, 1982; Nespor, 1987; Nisbett & Ross, 1980; Posner, Strike, Hewson, & Gertzog, 1982; Rokeach, 1968; Schommer, 1990; VanFleet, 1979; Wilson, 1990
2. Individuals develop a belief system that houses all the beliefs acquired through the process of cultural transmission.	Abelson, 1979; Brown & Cooney, 1982; Eisenhart et al., 1988; Nisbett & Ross, 1980; Peterman, 1991; Posner, Strike, Hewson, & Gertzog, 1982; Rokeach, 1968; VanFleet, 1979
3. The belief system has an adaptive function in helping individuals define and understand the world and themselves.	Abelson, 1979; Lewis, 1990; Nisbett & Ross, 1980; Rokeach, 1968; Schultz, 1970
4. Knowledge and beliefs are inextricably intertwined, but the potent affective, evaluative, and episodic nature of beliefs makes them a filter through which new phenomena are interpreted.	Abelson, 1979; Calderhead & Robson, 1991; Eraunt, 1985; Goodman, 1988; Nespor, 1987; Nisbett & Ross, 1980; Posner, Strike, Hewson, & Gertzog, 1982; Schommer, 1990
5. Thought processes may well be precursors to and creators of belief, but the filtering effect of belief structures ultimately screens, redefines, distorts, or reshapes subsequent thinking and information processing.	Abelson, 1979; Calderhead & Robson, 1991; Goodman, 1988; Nespor, 1987; Nisbett & Ross, 1980; Posner, Strike, Hewson, & Gertzog, 1982; Rokeach, 1968; Schommer, 1990
6. Epistemological beliefs play a key role in knowledge interpretation and cognitive monitoring.	Anderson, 1985; Kitchner, 1986; Nespor, 1987; Nisbett & Ross, 1980; Peterman, 1991; Posner, Strike, Hewson, & Gertzog, 1982; Schommer, 1990
7. Beliefs are prioritized according to their connection or relationship to other beliefs or other cognitive and affective structures. Apparent inconsistencies may be explained by exploring the functional connections and centrality of beliefs.	Kitchner, 1986; Peterman, 1991; Posner, Strike, Hewson, & Gertzog, 1982; Rokeach, 1968
8. Belief structures, such as educational beliefs, must be understood in terms of their connections not only to each other, but also to other, perhaps more central, beliefs in the system. Psychologists usually refer to these substructures as attitudes and values.	Kitchner, 1986; Nespor, 1987; Peterman, 1991; Posner, Strike, Hewson, & Gertzog, 1982; Rokeach, 1968; Schutz, 1970
9. By their very nature and origin, some beliefs are more inconvertible than others.	Abelson, 1979; Bandura, 1986; Clark, 1988; Lewis, 1990; Lortie, 1975; Nisbett & Ross, 1980; Rokeach, 1968
10. The earlier a belief is incorporated into the belief structure, the more difficult it is to alter. Newly acquired beliefs are most vulnerable to change.	Abelson, 1979; Clark, 1988; Lewis, 1990; Munby, 1982; Nespor, 1987; Nisbett & Ross, 1980; Posner, Strike, Hewson, & Gertzog, 1982; Rokeach, 1968
11. Belief change during adulthood is a relatively rare phenomenon, the most common cause being a conversion from one authority to another or a gestalt shift. Individuals tend to hold on to beliefs based on incorrect or incomplete knowledge, even after scientifically correct explanations are presented to them.	Abelson, 1979; Lewis, 1990; Nespor, 1987; Nisbett & Ross, 1980; Posner, Strike, Hewson, & Gertzog, 1982; Rokeach, 1968
12. Beliefs are instrumental in defining tasks and selecting the cognitive tools with which to interpret, plan, and make decisions regarding such tasks; hence, they play a critical role in defining behavior and organizing knowledge and information.	Abelson, 1979; Bandura, 1986; Lewis, 1990; Nespor, 1987; Nisbett & Ross, 1980; Posner, Strike, Hewson, & Gertzog, 1982; Rokeach, 1968; Schommer, 1990
13. Beliefs strongly influence perception, but they can be an unreliable guide to the nature of reality.	Abelson, 1979; Bandura, 1986; Buchmann & Schwille, 1983; Lewis, 1990; Nespor, 1987; Nisbett & Ross, 1980; Rokeach, 1968
14. Individuals' beliefs strongly effect their behavior.	Goodman, 1988; Janesick, 1977; Rokeach, 1968; Tabachnick & Zeichner, 1984
15. Beliefs must be inferred, and this inference must take into account the congruence among individuals' belief statements, the intentionality to behave in a predisposed manner, and the behavior related to the belief in question.	Goodman, 1988; Janesick, 1977; Rokeach, 1968; Tabachnick, & Zeichner, 1984.
16. Beliefs about teaching are well established by the time a student gets to college.	Abelson, 1979; Buchmann, 1984, 1987; Buchmann & Schwille, 1983; Clark, 1988; Clark & Peterson, 1986; Floden, 1985; Florio-Ruane & Lensmire, 1990; Ginsburg & Newman, 1985; Lortie, 1975; Nespor, 1987; Nisbett & Ross, 1980; Rokeach, 1968; Weinstein, 1988, 1989; Wilson, 1990

## **Personal Epistemologies and Beliefs**

Central to the discussion regarding theoretical orientations to learning is the understanding of one's epistemological beliefs. According to Cunningham and Fitzgerald (1996), all questions surrounding one's epistemology center upon what constitutes knowledge, how it is attained, and where it is located. Beginning their professional education, teachers start with beliefs that focus on truth as being absolute, positioning the teacher as the primary source of knowledge (Rebmann et al., 2014). In later stages, teachers begin to develop an understanding of teaching as a process of facilitation regarding the teacher and student as co-learners (Rebmann, et al., 2014). Brownlee (2004) and Brownlee et al. (2012) emphasized that teachers' decisions and behaviors are not only influenced by their belief systems, but also by other variables as well.

Teachers believe knowledge comes from their formal preparation, vicarious experiences, collaborative work with others, and self-reflection (Grisham, 2000). This exemplifies a Vygotskian perspective (1978) that assumes knowledge is constructed by the individual but is also facilitated through social interactions and one's own experiences. In terms of student learning, Vygotsky's work provides a way to think about the teacher's role in the classroom. With the teacher acting as a mediator in student learning, the Zone of Proximal Learning offers teachers guidance within a theoretical framework. Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development was defined as:

...the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86)

The pragmatic influences of Dewey's work (1956) also continue to influence the development of educators' epistemological stances regarding learning. Dewey believed the study of education to be a reciprocal process. Further, understanding one's epistemological beliefs leads to self-awareness and knowledge interpretation which can enable change (Cunningham & Fitzgerald, 1996). From a constructivist standpoint, because teachers are knowing beings, knowledge influences their actions (Richardson, Anders, Tidwell, & Lloyd, 1991). Therefore, it is logical to connect one's epistemological beliefs to their theoretical orientations of learning.

According to Bondy, Ross, Adams, Nowak, Brownell, Hoppy, Kuhel, McCallum, and Stafford (2007), beliefs can also be described as personal epistemologies; beliefs about knowledge and how one comes to know. These personal epistemologies influence teachers' approaches to learning based upon their beliefs about knowledge. Hofer and Pintrich (1997) posit that these core beliefs about the nature of knowledge and knowing form one's personal epistemology. According to Bondy et al. (2007), beliefs related to certainty (i.e. is knowledge absolute, tentative, relative?) and simplicity/complexity (i.e. is knowledge composed of discrete bits of information or is it an integrated tapestry?) fall within the nature of knowledge. Bondy et al. (2007) continued that within the nature of knowing, beliefs are related to the source of knowledge and the speed with which one comes to know.

The research on personal epistemologies influences teachers' instructional practices (Bondy et al., 2007). Howard, McGee, Schwartz, and Purcell (2000) summarized:

Teacher epistemology has been shown to affect teachers' use of teaching strategies (Hashweh, 1996), their use of problem-solving approaches (Martens, 1992), their efforts in curriculum adaptation (Benson, 1989), their use of textbooks (Freeman & Porter, 1989), their openness to student alternative conceptions (Hashweh, 1996), their pre-

service training needs (Many, Howard, & Hoge, 1997), their students' reading practices (Anders & Evans, 1994), and their students' use of higher-level thinking skills (Maor & Taylor, 1995). (Howard et al., 2000, p.1)

Adding to the research on personal epistemologies, Sibanda (2010) posited that determining pre-service teachers' cognition on reading would provide insights into how they will go about teaching reading in the classroom. "Their epistemological assumptions of where meaning in reading resides would determine where they will place their focus in their teaching of reading. Although teachers may not be conversant or articulate about their theoretical orientation on reading, they nevertheless have specific beliefs which shape their practices, and such beliefs should not be taken lightly"(Sibanda, 2010, p. 150).

Research on personal epistemologies further indicates that beliefs about knowledge and how one comes to know influences student learning (Ravindran, Greene, & DeBacker, 2005). Pajares (1992) found that epistemological beliefs are central in knowledge interpretation. Hofer (2002) agreed, "beliefs about knowledge and knowing have a powerful influence on learning, and deepening our understanding of this process can enhance teaching effectiveness" (Hofer, 2002, p. 13). Hofer (2002) continued, "Students...may approach the learning process quite differently depending on whether they view knowledge as a set of accumulated facts or an integrated set of constructs, or whether they view themselves as passive receptors or active constructors of knowledge" (Hofer, 2002, p. 3). Therefore, understanding one's epistemological beliefs can lead to self-awareness and enable change (Cunningham & Fitzgerald, 1996).

It is difficult to operationalize the construct of beliefs because of the interchangeable use of beliefs and knowledge in research literature. Richardson (1996) differentiated the constructs of beliefs and knowledge by describing the "truth condition" and its often inconsistent

application in the philosophical literature resulting in a muddying of the two constructs. In the philosophical literature, knowledge is reliant upon a “truth condition” thereby excluding it as a psychological construct (Leher, 1990). Richardson (1994) states, “A proposition is knowledge if there is rigorous evidence for the premise, and the procedures for developing the argument as well as the conclusions are agreed upon by a community of scholars, scientists, or other professionals” (Richardson, 1994, p. 92).

On the other hand, when a proposition is held psychologically, by an individual, and drives the actions of that individual, it is a belief. Evidential beliefs are beliefs derived from knowledge, but beliefs do not require a ‘truth condition’ (Leher, 1990). Richardson (1994) posits that much of the research literature views knowledge as the result of a psychological process often equating knowledge with beliefs. For example, Kagan (1990) used the terms belief and knowledge interchangeably in her research on the issues surrounding the study of teachers’ knowledge and beliefs.

This positivist perspective regarding knowledge conflicts with the constructivist perspective that considers knowledge to be individual reconstructions commonly accepted (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Further, constructivist theory supports that knowledge and beliefs are internally constructed but mediated through social and cultural exchanges (Fosnot, 1996). This aligns with a social constructivist perspective that supports the idea that knowledge and beliefs are socially and culturally developed. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that teachers construct their knowledge and beliefs within a social context. From this Vygotskian perspective, new learning is shaped by prior experiences, cultural perspectives, and metacognitive and reflective practices.

Similarities between the two constructs can also be found when considering teachers' personal and practical knowledge. Personal knowledge refers to the belief systems created by an individual as a result of their socio-cultural experiences and includes knowledge of, "who the teacher is and what she cares about" (Lampert, 1984, p. 204). Practical knowledge on the other hand, develops through both classroom experiences and cultural experiences beyond the classroom. Elbaz (1981) argued that practical knowledge guides teachers towards relying on their intuitions more than logical reasoning.

Elbaz (1983) used the term 'orientation' to specify how practical knowledge relates to practice. She identified five aspects of this orientation: situational, self, social, experimental, and theoretical. She argued that, "The theoretical orientation, in a sense, conditions all the others, determining the contours of practical knowledge" (Elbaz, 1983, p. 102). She went on to discuss how the knower implicitly or explicitly conceptualizes theory and practice. The relationships between them dictate how practical knowledge is acquired and used for practical purposes. Further, a teacher's personal, practical, and professional knowledge all constitute an individual knowledge base and belief system.

According to Vacca, Vacca, and Gove (1995) three major sources of knowledge contribute to a teachers' knowledge and belief system; professional, personal, and practical. Merging the concepts together, personal practical knowledge (Clandinin & Connelly, 1986; Elbaz, 1987) represents how a teacher comes to understand a classroom situation through experience. Richardson (1996) added that constructs of knowledge and beliefs are considerably similar to the concept of personal practical knowledge. Within this understanding, knowledge is embodied within the whole person. In other words, knowledge is not separated from the "knower", but rather personalized, idiosyncratic, and often tacit (Carter, 1990). Smith (2004)

posited the system of knowledge as our theory of the world providing organization for our experiences. These personally held theories act as filters when perceiving, understanding, organizing, and acting upon experiences.

Everything that we know and believe is organized into a personal theory of what the world is like, a theory that is the basis of all our perceptions and understanding of the world, the root of all learning, the source of hopes and fears, motives and expectancies, reasoning and creativity. And this theory is all we have. If we can make sense of the world at all, it is by interpreting our experience with the world in the light of our theory.

The theory is our shield against bewilderment. (Smith, 2004, p. 14)

Rebmann et al. (2015) conducted a study to investigate the extent to which pre-service teachers' epistemic beliefs differ. The results of their quantitative study showed that pre-service teachers differ widely in their epistemic beliefs. Rebmann et al. (2015) found that only a small proportion (29.7%) of pre-service teachers held a sophisticated view regarding knowledge, while the majority (70.3%) held an absolutist view. Rebmann et al. (2015) concluded that most pre-service teachers believe knowledge is easily constructed, meaning things are often simpler than they are when taught by a teacher. The researchers attributed this to the pre-service teachers' own learning experiences which involved more traditional approaches to learning. Rebmann et al. (2015) posited that, "pre-service teachers' assumptions about learners and learning do not fit well with the epistemic underpinning of the didactic and curricular approach of areas of learning" (Rebmann et al., 2015, p. 296).

## **Self-Efficacy and Beliefs**

Teacher preparation programs allow for pre-service teachers to engage in a variety of experiences which scaffold new learning through observation, participation in brief field experiences, and eventually student teaching. These real world experiences are meant to present pre-service teachers with insight into their future profession while working alongside their university professors and supervising teachers. Although these experiences offer important information and knowledge regarding teaching, the belief systems of pre-service teachers are also of great importance (Haverback, 2009).

Personal efficacy as it relates to teaching has been described as an individual's belief about their abilities to teach effectively (Plourde, 2002; Massengill, Shaw & Dvorak, 2007). It includes motivation, cognitive resources, and actions taken to control given events (Bandura, 1977). According to Pajares (1992), self-efficacy is the basis for social cognition theory. Pre-service teachers' beliefs about their own abilities as teachers influence their instructional decisions and ultimately shape their educational experiences (Soodak & Podell, 1997). Kagan described how pre-service teachers use their sense of self-efficacy to influence their beliefs about themselves and their students:

Once in the classroom, novices first seek to confirm and validate their self-images; gradually, given the appropriate conditions, novices begin to use their growing knowledge of pupils and classrooms to modify, adapt, and reconstruct their images of self as teacher. Thus, in a very real sense, the initial focus of novice teachers is inward.

(Kagan, 1992, p. 147)

According to Haverback (2009), a high sense of self-efficacy has been correlated with academic achievement and positive teacher practices. Teacher efficacy is believed to be linked

not only to teaching practices, but also to the learning outcomes of the students (Massengill Shaw & Dvorak, 2007; Shinde & Karekatti, 2012). A teacher's self-efficacy influences the ability to engage and assist students in their learning (Armor, Conroy-Oseguera, Cox, McDonell, Pascal, & Pauly, 1976). Teachers with a high sense of self-efficacy persevere longer when attempting to help struggling students (Gibson & Dembo, 1984) and are less critical of students when they make mistakes (Ashton & Webb, 1986). In fact, teachers with a high sense of self-efficacy are confident they can reach even the most difficult students, with the opposite found to be true for teachers with low self-efficacies (Shinde & Karekatti, 2012). According to Allinder (1994), teachers who have a high sense of self-efficacy tend to be better organized and well-planned. Further, they are more open to new ideas (Guskey, 1988; Stein & Wang, 1988) and seem to exhibit more enthusiasm for teaching (Allinder, 1994). Moreover, teachers with a high sense of self-efficacy are more likely to be satisfied with their job and less likely to leave the profession because of teacher burnout (Caprara, Barbaranelli, Borgogni, & Steca, 2003).

It should be noted that pre-service teachers with little teaching experience can demonstrate an inflated sense of self-efficacy (Haverback, 2009; Haverback & Parault, 2009). Haverback and Parault (2009) noted that pre-service teachers often regard themselves as having considerable influence as teachers of reading and display high senses of self-efficacy towards tasks they have never completed. This inflated sense of self can become problematic when the pre-service teachers enter the teaching field and discover the difficulties teachers of reading face on a daily basis in the classroom.

Pre-service teachers' beliefs are influenced and shaped by a variety of factors. Their knowledge, prior experiences, beliefs about learning, and self-efficacy coincide to create the learning system that will inform their instructional decisions. It is necessary therefore, to

investigate how teacher self-efficacy beliefs are created (Haverback, 2009). In her study, Haverback (2009), investigated how pre-service teachers' rate their self-efficacy beliefs and if these beliefs change after field experiences. Unlike other studies that investigated self-efficacy beliefs of pre-service teachers, Haverback's (2009) research focused on pre-service teachers' self-efficacy before they had any formal education or experiences in the real classroom. From this study, the pre-service teachers' self-efficacy beliefs were not based on mastery experiences, but rather on their predictions of their teaching abilities. Haverback (2009) found that most pre-service teachers rated themselves as having rather high teaching efficacy. While this might seem encouraging, given that teachers with high efficacy seem to have better experiences in the classroom compared to those with lower self-efficacies, Haverback concluded that these results were based on pre-service teachers who had no prior mastery experiences compared to those in prior studies (Massengill Shaw & Dvorak, 2007; Shinde & Karekatti, 2012).

In a study conducted by Dvorak and Bates (2007) regarding the literacy knowledge, beliefs, and self-efficacy of pre-service teachers, researchers found that pre-service teachers came to their reading methods course with a relatively high self-efficacy which increased as a result of their learned knowledge and field experiences. This finding reflects Bandura's (1977) position that a person's self-efficacy increases as a result of motivation, knowledge, and opportunities to take action. During the study, pre-service teachers were given the opportunities to learn formal knowledge and apply it during their field work while instructing elementary students. This illustrated Bandura's (1989) vicarious experience and verbal feedback origins of self-efficacy.

## **Intersection of Beliefs and Instructional Practices**

The constructs of espoused beliefs and beliefs-in-use result from the research of Argyris and Schon (1974). The research outlines the construct of belief as it pertains to professional practice can be broken into two categories, espoused beliefs and beliefs-in-use. According to Argyris and Schon (1974) espoused beliefs are those theories that individuals swear allegiance to when asked, whereas beliefs-in-use represent the theories actually practiced and used by the individual. It is necessary for this study to include Argyris and Schon's (1974) research as part of the literature review in order to present the many facets of pre-service teacher beliefs and how they might intersect with instructional practice.

A teacher's belief system is comprised of both knowledge and theories constructed and shaped through personal experiences. It is the foundation they will use when making decisions regarding practice and instruction (Barnyak & Paquette, 2010). Instructional actions and teacher thinking are interpreted and translated within this belief system (Day, Pope, & Denicolo, 1990; Elbaz, 1983). Research supports that teachers hold implicit beliefs that effect their learning and their teaching practices (Fang, 1996). Because teachers' belief systems are often implicit, gaining direct access to them is complicated and challenging for researchers (Pajares, 1992).

Teachers' theories about learning are "the rich store of general knowledge of objects, people, events, and their characteristic relationships that teachers have that effects their planning and their interactive thoughts and decisions as well as their classroom behavior" (Fang, 1996, p. 49). Teachers use these theories as filters through which to make instructional decisions (Cunningham & Fitzgerald, 1996; Prawat, 1992; Richardson, Anders, Tidwell, & Lloyd, 1991; Smith, 2004). The strong influence of teachers' beliefs systems on their reading instruction greatly influences lesson planning and student learning (Cheek, Steward, Lauren, & Borgia,

2004; Cummins, Cheek, & Lindsey, 2004). Further, Blanton and Moorman (1987) note there is a definite relationship between teachers' knowledge and instructional behavior.

Grisham (2000) examined teachers' beliefs and practices in the area of reading and language arts. The results of the study indicated the complex interaction of teachers' knowledge (personal, professional, and practical) with teachers' beliefs and their instructional practices:

Teachers' theoretical conceptions of reading were changed as a result of the cohesiveness of the (pre-service education) program teachings (professional knowledge), and these effects appear to be steady over time. Field experiences during student teaching (practical knowledge) did not seem to form a consistent picture as far as changing beliefs (personal knowledge) and/or practice of the participants. Once participants had their own classrooms, some participants' theoretical conceptions about literacy changed and it was the context of the teaching situation which seemed to make a difference. The increasing pressure for accountability in teaching may have influenced teachers' beliefs and practices as well. (Grisham, 2000, p.66)

A seminal contribution to the research in relationship to beliefs and practices has been in the area of reading (Fang, 1996). While the research is rather limited in this area, a number of studies suggest that teachers have theoretical beliefs about reading which are indicative of their instructional practices and actions in the classroom (Blanton & Moorman, 1987; Harste & Burke, 1977; Kamil & Pearson, 1979; Longberger, 1992; Mangano & Allen, 1986; Rupley & Logan, 1984).

Harste & Burke (1977) hypothesized that teachers make decisions about reading instruction based upon epistemological principles they hold about reading and learning. Harste proposed, "a teacher's theoretical orientation establishes expectancies and influences goals,

procedures, materials, and classroom interaction patterns” (cited in DeFord, 1985, p. 352). An extensive analysis of the relationships among theoretical orientations, beliefs, and practices help create a deeper understanding of teachers’ cognitive activity (Johnson, 1992).

There are many inconsistencies between teachers’ beliefs and practices. This ‘inconsistency thesis’ is evident as a dominant theme in the research on teacher beliefs and practices (Fang, 1996). Researchers have reached a variety of conclusions regarding the degree to which teachers’ beliefs are consistent with practices (Fang, 1996). Research supports the idea that teachers possess theoretical beliefs that shape their teaching practices (DeFord, 1985; Harste & Burke, 1977; Richardson, Anders, Tidwell, & Lloyd, 1991).

Other studies present contradictory findings to suggest an inconsistency between teachers’ expressed beliefs and their practice. For example, Kinzer (1988) compared elementary pre-service and in-service teachers’ beliefs and instructional decision making. While the participants in Kinzer’s study shared similar theoretical orientations to reading, in-service teachers demonstrated more inconsistencies in their instructional practice. Readence, Konopak, and Wilson (1991) replicated the Kinzer study and found participants varied from consistent to highly inconsistent in their instructional practices. These findings support the idea that while there is a relationship between teachers’ beliefs and practices, it is not always strong (Duffy & Anderson, 1984). However, it is difficult to discern the nature of the inconsistencies, as a lack of relationship between beliefs and practice might also be an indication the teacher is going through change (Richardson et al., 1991).

A certain amount of inconsistency between teachers’ beliefs and instructional practices is expected considering the complex nature of the classroom environment. Contextual factors such as school or administration philosophy can cause inconsistencies to be apparent between beliefs

and practices (Many, Howard, & Hoge, 2002). Poulson, Avramidis, Medwell, and Wray (2001) emphasize that more attention must focus on the practical concerns surrounding how teachers can apply their theoretical beliefs within the imposed constraints of the classroom. It is well noted in research that the teachers' abilities to provide instruction consistent to their beliefs and theoretical beliefs may be limited by these same constraints (Duffy, 1982; Duffy & Anderson, 1984; Duffy & Ball, 1986; Paris, Wasik, & Turner, 1991; Roehler & Duffy, 1991). Duffy & Anderson's (1984) conclude that the context of the classroom can have a powerful influence on a teacher's beliefs and instructional practices.

Novice teachers often allow school culture to dictate pedagogical practices as they move from college to the realities of the classroom (Maloch, Flint, Eldridge, Harmon, Loven, Fine, Bryant-Shanklin, & Martinez, 2003). While teachers were able to discuss their beliefs about reading instruction outside of the classroom, their instructional decisions and practices were governed by the culture and nature of the classroom life (Duffy & Anderson, 1984). Therefore, Duffy's description of life in the classroom where teachers are "consumed with maintaining a flow of productive activities while faced with a variety of implicit and explicit mandates that define and limit their instructional options" (Duffy, 1982, cited in Fang, 1996, p.55), is equally applicable to contemporary classrooms.

### **Theoretical Orientations to Reading**

Harste and Burke (1977) were among the first to discuss reading as theoretically based. They operationalized this concept of a theoretical orientation of reading in their definition: "the particular knowledge and belief system held toward reading" (Harste & Burke, 1977, p. 32). Theoretical orientations to reading include philosophical principles that guide teachers in their

decisions regarding student expectations and reading instruction. Differences in these theories or orientations may result in a variation of teaching practices (Steiner, 1977).

Based upon data from their research, Harste and Burke (1977) concluded that these theoretical orientations help teachers establish expectations and influences used during their planning and implementation of reading instruction. Additional research supports the idea that theoretical orientations influence teachers' decision making in reading instruction (Borko, Shavelson, & Stern, 1981; Kamil & Pearson, 1979; Shavelson, 1983; Stern & Shavelson, 1983). DeFord (1981). These studies suggest that teachers who share theoretical orientations to reading seem to possess and exhibit similar behaviors and expectations.

Researchers consider the role of the teacher and teacher beliefs as an important to student learning (DeVries, 2008; Ornstein & Levine, 1984). However, measuring teacher beliefs had been challenging as there was not reliable and valid instrumentation available. In response to the need for a consistent way to profile the knowledge and belief systems of teachers, DeFord (1985) developed an instrument to determine teachers' theoretical orientations to reading.

In 1985, DeFord developed and validated an instrument to determine a teacher's theoretical orientation of reading. This instrument, referred to as the DeFord Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP), measured teachers' beliefs about reading instruction and practices. DeFord developed this Likert scale response instrument from a constructivist perspective which argues that the knowledge and beliefs one holds influences the actions and behaviors of themselves and others (Magoon, 1977). Therefore, the TORP was created to assist researchers in measuring teachers' knowledge and beliefs about reading and reading instruction. DeFord (1985) posited, "An understanding of how theory is generated, modified, and practiced will further our understanding of the instructional process" (DeFord, 1985, p. 365).

DeFord (1985) conducted a pilot study to ensure the instruments validity and reliability. Forty-seven participants with a known orientation of reading were administered the Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile. The study produced an 80% reliability rate. Following the pilot study, an additional study was conducted with a sample of ninety participants. The sample was divided into three groups of thirty, with each group representing one of the three theoretical orientations. After the TORP was administered, the data were collected and analyzed by a team of researchers. DeFord concluded, “Teachers of known theoretical orientations responded in consistent, predicable patterns to statements about practices in reading instruction” (DeFord, 1985). The TORP has been used extensively since its development and is considered to be a reliable and valid indicator of teachers’ theoretical orientations to reading (Schleffer, Richmond, & Kazelskis, 1993).

DeFord (1985) suggested that teachers could be categorized into three clusters of historical orientations toward to teaching of reading: phonics, skills, and whole language. In her study, DeFord (1985) clarified that while there are three types of orientations, they should be viewed as a continuum related to reading instruction. Phonics and whole language are at the two extremes on the continuum with skills situated in the middle. The orientations overlap in instructional practices, specifically in areas of proximity to another orientation (DeFord, 1985). That is, the phonics and skills orientations have a tendency to share some practices, as do skills and whole language orientations. However, it is less likely for phonics and whole language to share practices.

## **Phonics Cluster**

During an examination of reading instructional material grouped by similar characteristics, DeFord (1985) found one group learning small language units with a gradual movement toward whole word reading and reading comprehension. The teacher's manuals allotted large amounts of time for decoding isolated phones and letter patterns while the students' texts systematically introduced consonant-vowel combinations (DeFord, 1985). Sight word recognition activities were included for irregular words followed by fluency and comprehension activities after foundational letter/sound correspondences were built. DeFord labeled this cluster of reading material "phonics".

The term "phonics" describes the relationship of spelling patterns to sound patterns within the orthographic code of language. This system teaches learners about these relationships and how to use it to recognize words (Mesner & Griffith, 2005; Stahl, 1992). The source of meaning in phonics instruction is the text or the teacher. The teacher's role is to direct the lesson and monitor student responses. The student's role is to read selections from the text and learn through isolated practice of discrete skills. Examples of instructional materials include basal textbooks and worksheets with evaluations given through objective assessments. The National Reading Panel Report (1995) included phonics as one of the five critical areas of reading instruction (NRP, 2000; Starrett, 2007).

Most researchers have agreed upon seven essential components of quality phonics instruction. Phonics instruction should: 1) develop the alphabetic principle; 2) develop phonological awareness; 3) provide a thorough grounding in letters; 4) not teach rules; 5) provide ample practice in reading words; 6) lead to automatic word recognition; and 7) be only one part of reading instruction (Stahl, Duffy-Hester, & Dougherty, 1998; Stahl, 1992; Starrett, 2007). The

teaching of phonics can take place in various classroom settings and can be embedded within whole language lessons (Dahl & Freppon, 1995; Stahl, Duffy-Hester, & Dougherty, 1998).

### **Skills Cluster**

DeFord (1985) categorized the second group of reading instructional material based on an emphasis of sight word vocabulary. In this material, vocabulary words were introduced in context and then used within the students' texts for practice. Word attack skills and the use of context clues were taught to help students when they approached unknown words. This "skills" cluster identified by DeFord (1985) is commonly referred to as strategy instruction or a balanced approach of reading instruction.

The source of meaning in the skills orientation involves the use of both text information and personal knowledge to develop meaning. The teacher's role is to direct the lesson and differentiate instruction. Instructional materials include a variety of reading materials and worksheets with evaluation in the form of objective and subjective assessments. Although the terms are often used interchangeably, teaching reading strategies and a balanced skills approach to literacy are technically different. Reading skills result in the automatic actions of decoding and comprehending words fluently and efficiently. Reading strategies, however, are deliberate attempts to decode and construct meaning within text (Afflerbach, Pearson, & Paris, 2008). Presley and Harris (1996) identified six reading strategies found to improve comprehension: summarization, imagery, story grammar, activating prior knowledge, self-questioning, and question answering. A balanced approach to literacy instruction includes effective skills and strategy instruction along with holistic reading and writing instruction tailored to the individual needs of students (Pressley, Rochrig, Bogner, Raphael, & Dolezal, 2002). The skills cluster is

situated in the middle of DeFord's continuum, between the teaching of phonics and whole language instruction.

### **Whole Language Cluster**

The final group of reading instructional material was categorized by DeFord (1985). "Whole language" provides readers with literature from the beginning of instruction placing emphasis on story and text structure as the foundation for teaching smaller units of language. The source of meaning in the whole language orientation is the meaning students bring to the text in a particular context. The teacher's role is to activate students' prior knowledge, and to model and guide the lesson. Students use prior knowledge when reading the text to anticipate and confirm their understanding.

Instructional materials include a variety of books, as well as materials and stories written and shared by the students. Activities focus on words or letters within the reading of the text as part of shared reading and writing experiences (DeFord, 1985).

Whole language activities also include journal writing and individual work. Evaluation through portfolio assessments allow for multiple interpretations of meaning and ongoing assessment in the form of recorded data rather than assessment scores. It is difficult to operationalize the concept of whole language.

Researchers often find it useful to explain practices that do not characterize whole language. Kenneth Goodman (1992), an advocate of whole language, discussed the exclusions to the definition of whole language. It is not: 1) outcome-based education; 2) phonics-only reading programs; 3) direct instruction; 4) a single program, set of materials, or technique (Goodman, 1992; Watson, 1989).

Whole language has its roots within Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development emphasizing the relationship between student learning, social context, and environment (Goodman, 1989; Vygotsky, 1978). Literature-based reading instruction encouraging the reading of whole children's literature for discussion and writing was used as early as the 1930's. This earlier approach was the predecessor to the current whole language movement (Daniels, Zemelman, & Bizar, 1999). Whole language reached its peak in the late 1970s and 1980's with researchers such as Kenneth Goodman, Dorothy Watson, Jerome Harste, Carolyn Burke, and Yetta Goodman and the formation of teacher support groups (Goodman, 1989; Goodman, 1992).

Dechant (1993) furthered the research regarding theoretical orientations to reading in terms of implicit theoretical orientations becoming explicit through practice. According to Dechant, teachers who endorse a phonics theoretical orientation are most likely to plan and provide for environment where the teacher directs the instruction. Students are asked to read for the purpose of finding information; to sound out words; to work with a list of words consisting of a common phonemic element; to 'drill' on sound-symbol relationships; and to complete an assigned text and workbook pages within the designated time frame.

According to Dechant (1993), utilizing a skills theoretical orientation, teachers are most likely to create a learning environment reflecting a balance between phonics and whole language instruction. Both graphophonic information and prior knowledge are used in together to create meaningful reading instruction. Readers are encouraged to begin using graphophonic information or prior knowledge to make predictions about the text and to assist them in the construction of meaning.

Dechant (1993) described the classroom environment of a teacher who endorses a whole language theoretical orientation. The classroom is a literacy-rich environment where students

have open access to a variety of reading materials. Students are immersed daily in a variety of authentic reading and writing activities that include speaking and listening. The focus is on reading for meaning, pleasure, and interest. There is a focus on communication, and personal reading is shared with others. Time is set aside during the class schedule for silent reading and for students to enjoy listening to stories read aloud. Further, teachers believe that the reader's prior knowledge and experiences in relation to the text initiate information processing during reading. Table 2.4 represents the assumptions and principles of the theoretical orientations to reading as identified by Vacca et al., (2018).

**Table 2.4 Assumptions and Principles of Theoretical Orientations to Reading**

	<b>Phonics Orientation (Bottom-Up)</b>	<b>Skills Orientation (Interactive/Balanced)</b>	<b>Whole Language (Top-Down)</b>
<b>Relationship of Word Recognition to Comprehension</b>	Students must recognize each word to comprehend the passage.	Students can comprehend by quick and accurate word identification.	Students can comprehend even if they cannot identify each word in a passage.
<b>Use of Information Cues</b>	Students should use word and letter-sound cues exclusively to identify unknown words.	Students process letter-sound and meaning cues simultaneously to identify unknown words.	Students use meaning and grammatical cues in addition to letter-sound cues to identify unknown words.
<b>View of Reading</b>	Reading requires using and mastering word identification skills.	Students can learn to read by developing skills and strategies in meaningful contexts.	Students learn to read through meaningful and authentic literacy experiences.
<b>Units of Language Emphasized in Instruction</b>	Emphasis is placed on letters, letter-sound relationships, and words.	Emphasis is placed on letters, letter-sound relationships, words, sentences, paragraphs, and reading passages.	Emphasis is placed on sentences, paragraphs, and reading passages.
<b>Instructional Importance</b>	Accurate word identification is most important.	Accurate word identification contributing to meaning is most important.	Reading for meaning is most important.
<b>Assessment</b>	Students should be assessed on discrete skills.	Students should be assessed on the basis of their performance in meaningful contexts. Assessment informs instruction.	Students should be assessed on the kind of knowledge they construct through reading.

## **Reading and Family Life**

Long before children enter their first years of schooling, they have acquired the cognitive skills that eventually develop into their foundations of reading (Schwanenflugel & Knapp, 2016). These skills along with their attitudes about reading begin at home. “When children are raised in alliterate society, they are in the process of acquiring literacy from infancy onward” (Baker, Scher, & Mackler, 1997, p. 78). According to Purcell-Gates (1996), parents implicitly, and sometimes explicitly, teach their children important literacy lessons through their everyday interactions with written materials such as newspapers, books, magazines, and shopping websites (Schwanenflugel & Knapp, 2016). These interactions form children’s foundational understanding regarding the importance and use of literacy in society.

Beginning with a toddler’s first words, children begin to develop their oral language and use it as a means of communication. In fact, a child’s oral language development not only precedes and accompanies reading, but also greatly influences their learning (Snow, 1983). The home influences on children’s literacy acquisition are most important and depend on the quantity and quality of conversations they hear and engage in directly (Schwanenflugel & Knapp, 2016). Heath (1989) conducted a case study that provided evidence that the amount of conversation in the home was linked to socioeconomic status. However, recent research conducted by Weisleder and Fernald (2013) found that the number of words a child heard was not consequential to language development. Rather, children who heard more child-directed talk developed larger expressive vocabularies and used more words talking to themselves. Along with quantity, conversation quality contributes to language development (Schwanenflugel & Knapp, 2016). When parents engage in meaningful conversations with their children by asking open-ended

questions and responding with interest, they help develop and support their children's language development (Hill, 2001). Therefore, conversation practices in the home vary among families, and these differences are not always explained by socioeconomic status. Responding to this research, parents of all backgrounds can encourage the language development of their children through meaningful, interesting conversations (Schwanenflugel & Knapp, 2016).

Along with language and cognitive development, children also develop actual reading skills at home that provide opportunities to: (1) become familiar with literacy materials; (2) observe the literacy activities of others; (3) independently explore literate behaviors; (4) engage in joint reading and writing activities with other people; and (5) benefit from the teaching strategies that family members use when engaging in joint literacy tasks (DeBaryshe, Binder, & Bell, 2000, pp. 119-120).

It is generally accepted that children who grow up in literacy-rich environments typically learn to read more easily than their peers who did not have the same access to books and other reading materials. Furthermore, when children are exposed to shared reading experiences with their parents, they gain more from the reading event than mere observation (Burgess, Hecht, & Lonigan, 2002). Shared reading events enhance children's reading development in various ways (Schwanenflugel & Knapp, 2016). For instance, children who participate in shared reading experiences typically develop greater receptive and expressive vocabularies (Mol, Bus, de Jong, & Smeets, 2008). Additionally, Spanish-speaking children who experience shared reading on a daily basis for at least one year during their first three years of life have higher language and cognitive development scores (Raikes et al. 2006) Furthermore, children who engage in shared reading experiences develop a better understanding of the ways books are structured and presented (Schwanenflugel & Knapp, 2016).

Parents may not only engage in shared reading and other literacy related activities with their children, but also directly teach them fundamental reading skills both before and after entering school (Schwanenflugel & Knapp, 2016). In fact, parents' beliefs about learning to read strongly influence the home reading activities (Curenton & Justice, 2008; Phillips & Lonigan, 2009). Lower-income parents seem to prefer the direct teaching of letters and words during reading interactions (Gallimore & Goldenberg, 1993). Parents often engage with their children through reading-related play such as nursery rhymes and games that teach the alphabet. They also teach children specific reading and writing skills directly (Schwanenflugel & Knapp, 2016). While parents differ when it comes to the types and amount of reading they share with their children in the home, their practices are influenced by their resources, their own reading habits, and their beliefs regarding literacy acquisition. Therefore, what parents emphasize strongly impacts the attitudes and beliefs about reading that the children bring to their formal education in school (Schwanenflugel & Knapp, 2016).

### **Poverty and Reading Acquisition**

A broad definition of poverty can be described as a lack of necessary resources needed for daily living. Children who grow up in poverty experience many hardships because their families cannot afford, or do not have access to, the resources they need to survive. This lack of resources directly impacts their development, specifically in reading (Schwanenflugel & Knapp, 2016). Children from low socioeconomic homes receive less cognitive stimulation than those from middle-income homes (Jensen, 2009). For instance, only 36 percent of low-income parents read to their children on a daily basis compared to 62 percent of upper-income parents (Coley, 2002). Additionally, children from low-SES homes are less likely to receive help with homework

and half as likely as their affluent peers to visit museums and other educational outings (Bradley, Corwyn, Burchinal et al., 2001). Children in poverty also have fewer books in their homes compared to their upper-income peers (Phillips & Lonigan, 2009). Additionally, the availability of books is directly related to children's reading achievement scores (Evans et al., 2014). Children from low-SES homes also have fewer toys, play areas, and lack access to the internet, another source of reading materials and information (Evans, 2004). Schwanenflugel and Knapp (2016) argued that children in poverty lack more than reading-related materials and experiences. Children from impoverished homes are often malnourished and often lack adequate health insurance coverage putting them at-risk for frequent illness and long-term health issues (DeNavas-Walt, Proctor, & Smith, 2013).

The constant concern of not having enough resources to support daily living necessities causes stress for both adults and children. Parents who spend inordinate amounts of time and energy worrying about supporting their family financially are often at-risk for stress-related illnesses and fatigue (Wadsworth & Rienks, 2012). Furthermore, stressed parents often have little time or energy to positively interact with their children on a regular basis (Schwanenflugel & Knapp, 2016). Therefore, low-SES parents are less likely to read with their children (Phillips & Lonigan, 2009; Raikes et al., 2006)

## **The History of Reading Teacher Education**

The history of teacher education in reading parallels conceptually to three trends in teacher education (Russell & Korthagen, 1995). The 'apprenticeship' model was central in teacher preparation programs from approximately 1900 until the late 1960's. Two reviews identified the knowledge pre-service teachers needed to learn in their preparation programs

(Gray, 1961; Russell & Fea, 1963). At this time, content knowledge was a central theme throughout the teacher education literature in reading. Emphasis in this model was placed on the knowledge pre-service teachers learn from coursework and from their mentors.

From the 1960's to the early 1980's when basal textbooks dominated reading practices, assisting pre-service teachers in improving both their knowledge base and application of knowledge across the content was central to teacher preparation in reading instruction. Austin (1968) and Chall (1975) conducted extensive research reviews on preparing teachers to teach reading. Austin recommended an increase in practical activities, while Chall concluded that elementary teachers educated "during the 1960's and 1970's were not receiving adequate instruction" (p.47). Artley (1978) agreed and recommended teacher preparation programs increase the number of credit hours in reading along with more field experience teaching reading. The recommendations of Artley and Chall were reflective of the 'apprenticeship' model that dominated the field prior to the 1980's.

Finally, from the mid 1980's through the 1990's, these models were challenged by a more holistic approach emphasizing reflective teaching, journal writing, and action research. The perspective in field experience has also changed to one that focuses on interpersonal relationships and reflective thinking (Maloch et al., 2003). During the 1980's, reviews of the research about teaching reading suggested that if teachers used research-based strategies in their instructional practices, students' learning would improve (Barr, 1984; Calfee & Drum, 1986; Otto, Wolf, & Eldridge, 1984; Raphael, 1987; Rosenshine & Stevens, 1984; Tierney & Cunningham, 1984). This was an overly simplistic assumption to make regarding the translation of theory into practice. Teacher education in reading was also viewed in this manner. A review of research by Calfee and Drum (1986) presented what reading teachers needed to know. While

not recounting how teachers accomplished the task of teaching reading, Calfee and Drum referred to the lack of attention to both the teacher and instruction when they wrote, “the present study would have been more informative if grounded in a theoretical framework of the curriculum and pedagogy of the task” (Calfee & Drum, 1986, p. 819).

Barr (1984) posed the question: “How should children be taught to read?” Although teachers were participants in only two of the studies included in Barr’s review of research about teaching reading, she at least considered that “it may be important to characterize the behavior of teachers...(a) general description of teaching may not adequately represent that received by different groups in a class” (Barr, 1984, p.573). Barr’s review was structured around instructional methods, thereby perpetuating the process-product model, as did the following review completed by Raphael (1987). Raphael argued that teachers should use strategies and methods to increase student learning. However, there was no discussion of knowledge acquisition or the ways teachers might apply it in practice. Additionally, there was no discussion of theoretical understandings of the research and reading process.

Central to a review of research conducted by Otto, Wolf, and Eldridge (1984) were themes of management of reading instruction, teachers’ planning and decision making. Otto et al. (1984) recommended more research should be conducted in the area of teachers’ personal beliefs and perceptions. Like Barr, Otto et al. called for more in-depth studies of teacher behaviors as indicators of their beliefs and perceptions. Otto et al. considered that predictions of teachers’ personal perceptions and beliefs might be as influential in how one teaches, e.g. with regard to the selection of materials or methods. Tierney and Cunningham (1984) presented a review of the methods teachers might use to teach reading comprehension and concluded with an appeal for “reading-comprehension instructional researchers to have a vision of how research being

reported fits into a larger picture of ‘best program’” (Tierney & Cunningham, 1984, p. 640). Two of the four components they suggested were “a vision of teachers” and “a vision of teacher support and change” (Tierney & Cunningham, 1984, p. 641).

The reviews of reading research by Barr (1984), Otto et al. (1984) and Tierney and Cunningham (1984) all suggested that new questions about teachers’ decision making, beliefs, and ways of learning and teaching needed to be examined; similar questions were also being asked by teacher education researchers. Therefore, new approaches to teacher education began to surface (Russell & Korthagen, 1995). This led to a shift from the old process-product model, with an emphasis on new directions that included reflective teaching, action research, teacher narratives, and reflective journal writing. Shulman’s (1986) description of the state of teacher education aligned with the profile of reading teacher education: “Teacher education programs...seem to be based on the view that teacher candidates will teach effectively once they have acquired subject matter knowledge, become acquainted with models of innovative curriculum, and have practiced using them” (Shulman, 1986, p. 8).

Some of the research from the mid 1980’s on through the 1990’s forecasted changes were ahead. Previous models (both the apprenticeship and process-product models) were being challenged. Researchers were increasingly concerned with concepts of the reflective practitioner and connections among formal, theoretical, and abstract knowledge; informal, personal and practical knowledge (Fenstermacher, 1994; Schon, 1983). However, reading research of the 1990’s did not reflect particularly dramatic shifts from process-product studies to studies of teachers and their beliefs, their understandings and practices.

Changes in teacher education were, in fact, represented in the work of only some reading researchers. In the *Handbook of Reading Research II* (1991), only three of the nine chapters in

the section entitled ‘Literacy and Schooling’ discussed the implications of research reviewed for teacher education (Hoffman, 1991; Pearson & Fielding, 1991; Roehler & Duffy, 1991). Pearson & Fielding focused on “principles of comprehension instruction” (Pearson & Fielding, 1991, p. 849) and also discussed subtle differences between the teacher’s role in explicit instruction and scaffolded instruction. In addition, Pearson & Fielding highlighted a new way of thinking that considered the teacher “a facilitator of learning and as a co-equal with students in a learning community” (Pearson & Fielding, 1991, p. 849). Roehler & Duffy (1991) described the instructional actions of pre-service teachers and questioned how teacher educators might assist teachers in learning to make instructional decisions that seem to promote learning. Roehler and Duffy concluded that more information was needed in order to improve the complexities of teacher education programs.

Hoffman (1991) discussed the lack of research related to teacher and school effects on learning. He argued that improvement would occur as “more researchers, without enormous resources but with a scientific model, move into schools to observe and systematically study reading instruction and learning to read in classrooms” (Hoffman, 1991, p. 948). Paris, Wasik and Turner (1991) suggested similar directions for teacher education research, while others (Ehri & Williams, 1996; Graves, Pauls, & Sallinger, 1996) continued to represent the process-product model. Ehri and Williams (1996) discussed learning to teach reading as a process that develops over a teacher’s career and pre-service education as providing background knowledge about the “structure of written language, the nature of reading processes and reading disabilities, alternative methods of teaching reading, and how to assess students’ reading capabilities” (Ehri & Williams, 1996, p. 240). Similarly, Graves, Pauls, & Sallinger, (1996), placed an emphasis upon the content knowledge beginning teachers must possess.

Alverman (1990) reviewed the research related to the current trends of teacher certification and licensure along with studying classroom teachers and reading specialists. After her intense inquiry, she developed a framework of teacher education that included three dominant traditions: the traditional craft, the competency-based, and the inquiry-oriented.

Describing the themes among the inquiry-based researchers Alvermann (1990) reported:

Nearly all of the studies reported have incorporated teacher decision making and reflection, either as part of an interview or as a means for studying teachers' thought processes. Most have been long-term studies, some extending for a year or more.

Thematically, the studies have been concerned with how teachers acquire knowledge of complex reading strategies and what beliefs, or implicit theories of teaching they use to guide their reading instruction. (p. 689)

Alvermann (1990) concluded, "a growing interest in the inquiry-oriented approach...promises new perspectives on how pre-service and in-service teachers acquire knowledge and how their beliefs influence practice" (Alvermann, 1990, p. 704).

Barr (2001) provided her appraisal of the research community's stance regarding teacher education. Her position statement emphasizes the need for research into the constructs and thinking processes that support teachers' decision-making and practices:

We do not gain an understanding of these global descriptions of how teachers use the same approach differ, or learn about how teachers think: what guides their participation and how they evolve instructional patterns that differ in unique ways from other teachers espousing similar philosophical perspectives. Studies that focus on learner response provide the basis for understanding learners, but they are not useful in developing an understanding of how teachers think and act. The descriptions of how children make

sense of their instruction would be of interest to new and experienced teachers, but the description might be more informative with a more elaborated representation of teaching. The assumption that researchers must choose between a focus of teaching and learning can be questioned; we learn most when both aspects of this interactive whole are represented. (Barr, 2001, p. 398)

Barr continued that the most critical question remains: “How do teachers learn and how can teacher education foster this process?” (Barr, 2001, p.407).

This review of reading research is particularly important to my study as it illuminates the particular limitations of the research literature; specifically studies of pre-service teachers, reading teacher education, and the studies of teachers. The comprehensive work of Anders, Hoffman, and Duffy (2000) clearly indicated the emphasis of reading research over the last decades has focused primarily on the process of reading and learning to read. Limited empirical evidence is available regarding the issues of teacher educators. However, recent reviews of research have begun to show interest into how teachers learn and how they use that learning in their instructional practices.

Research reviews of both pre-service and in-service teachers regarding reading teacher education serve as a platform for future questions concerning the needs of pre-service teacher learning. Pre-service education has not been an area of interest in the reading research community until recently. The number of articles published between 1989 and 1995 was more than four times the number that appeared from 1965 to 1975 (Anders et al., 2000). In the 1990’s a shift in focus of research perspectives on in-service teacher education supported this increase in interest. The emphasis shifted from a focus on teacher behaviors relating to student gains as a

basis for curriculum in teacher education, to the process of teacher learning as a model for constructing more effective contexts for in-service education:

This change in perspective suggest that the complexities of teacher change are constituted by shifting definitions of reading, of increased awareness of the contexts in which teachers teach, and of the sensitivity to the possibilities of collaboration among educators. (Anders et al., 2000, p. 730).

According to Dvorak and Bates (2007), teacher preparation programs have often been seen as a wedge between the apprenticeship of learning and student teaching, which has often been viewed as the most influential experience for pre-service teachers. Of these three stages (apprenticeship, teacher education program, student teaching) the teacher education component has often been thought of as the weak middle stage (Dvorak & Bates, 2007). In summary, research to date reveals limited answers to the many questions about teacher education. Traditional models of teacher education involve both pre-service and in-service experiences. However, teacher education research to date does not reveal much about this or explain, “how teachers of reading are created, how they teach, nor how they change” (Anders, et al., 2000, p. 732).

More information is needed to differentiate the terms teacher ‘training’ and ‘teacher education’. Research reveals how to ‘train’ teachers through targeting and assessing specific behavioral outcomes. However, few studies have investigated the education of teachers to include decision-making abilities, strategic teaching, and conceptual changes. Hoffman and Pearson (2000) suggested that teacher education must take a broad approach in selecting strategies to nurture excellence: “Our goal is not to reject training as a useful heuristic for

helping teachers acquire a part of their teaching repertoire but rather, to situate training within a broader vision of teaching and teacher learning” (Hoffman & Pearson, 2000, p.36).

Research does indicate the need for answers to critical questions left unanswered in the literature. For example, what should be the goals of teacher education? How do we prepare, and sustain, teachers for meeting the multitude of needs of the student readers they teach? Further, voices of teachers of reading in the classroom are needed if we are to adequately understand the complexities of instructional decision-making. Exploring these issues in future studies will add valuable information to the field of reading teacher education, promoting a deeper understanding about teachers’ knowledge, beliefs, experiences, and ways of knowing.

### **Pre-Service Teachers and Teacher Education**

Teacher preparation programs are frequently criticized for failing to provide relevant and practical information needed to sustain new teachers in the profession (Cox et al., 1998; Long et al., 2006). Some argue that education courses fail to connect to the daily challenges and complexities of classroom teaching in general and diverse contexts (Darling-Hammond, 2010). However, additional studies regarding research on reading teacher preparation were more optimistic. Anders, et al. (2000, Hoffman and Pearson (2000), and Pearson (2001) offered additional insights regarding reading teacher preparation. From this research, four major points of consensus emerged. First, researchers suggest teacher preparation programs focus on the pre-service teacher as a learner while in the program. Doing so instills the idea that learning to teach should be a life-long endeavor (Hoffman et al., 2005). Second, course work in the reading teacher preparation program should develop a knowledge base that is flexible, adaptive, and responsive to students’ needs. This presents an on-going challenge as teacher educators help pre-

service teachers link their field experiences to the new content knowledge learned through course work (Hoffman et al., 2005). Third, teacher education programs that include a field-based practicum seem to have positive effects on pre-service teacher learning. Field experiences in which pre-services teachers receive feedback, ongoing support, and guidance is crucial (Hoffman et al., 2005). Finally, researchers concurred that teachers can learn what is taught in course work. However, it is undetermined how long these changes in learning are maintained (Hoffman et al., 2005). Therefore, it is critical that pre-service teachers learn to identify and examine their incoming beliefs and literacy histories as they reflect about and respond to the students they work with in their field experiences (Wolf, Ballentine, & Hill, 2000).

In 2007, the International Reading Association (IRA) analyzed research data regarding teacher preparation for reading instruction. The IRA found that new teachers entering the classroom must have the following knowledge: (a) conceptual understandings about the foundations of language, (b) proficiency with formal and informal assessment tools to determine readers' strengths and weaknesses, and (c) expertise with instructional strategies and materials for readers of all backgrounds and abilities. The IRA report indicated that teacher preparation programs that provide this knowledge will prepare teachers who are better prepared to teach reading. However, even experienced teachers can have inaccurate understandings of their knowledge about phonemic awareness, phonics, and early reading development (Cunningham & Fitzgerald, 2004; Spear-Swerling, 2007).

Knowledge alone does not automatically create an effective teacher of reading just as having the knowledge and skills to perform a task does not ensure the task will be performed successfully (Bandura, 1986). Often overlooked is the interaction between teachers' knowledge, skills, and beliefs. Pre-service teachers' beliefs and instructional practices are rooted in their

early schooling experiences (Holt-Reynolds, 1992). Further, these beliefs about teaching are well established before students enter college (Pajares, 1992). These implicit beliefs and prior experiences as a learner seem to determine what can be learned from coursework as pre-service teachers (Kagan, 1992). Quite often, these implicit theories about teaching and learning are overly optimistic, naïve, and representative of a transmission view of knowledge from teacher to student (Lortie, 1975; Richardson, 1996).

While the goal of teacher preparation programs is to impart knowledge they will need to be successful in the classroom, researchers have found that students are not always open to learning new information (Barnyak & Paquette, 2010). According to Whitney, Olan, and Fredrickson (2013), pre-service teachers desire:

“more “practical” material and less (or, sometimes, no) material they deem “theory.” By “theory” they seem to mean not only theory in the classic sense but also any evidence from research, discussion of ethics or socioeconomic issues or policy, or other aspects of the context for teaching. By “practical” they seem to mean concrete activities that they can use in the classroom the next day with little or no modification or reflection.

(Whitney, et al., 2013, p. 184)

Whitney et al. (2013) further explained that pre-service teachers frequently prefer to be told what to teach during their field experiences instead of relying on their own knowledge and skills regarding how and what to teach. Additionally, pre-service teachers “see learning to teach less as a task of learning to think in a particular way and instead as a task of learning to do particular things” (Whitney, et al., 2013, p.194). Whitney et al. contributes these attitudes to an inherited prejudice against “over theoretical” teacher preparation programs reported via mass media and

by teachers themselves. Yet, as pre-service teachers become acclimated to the teaching experience through fieldwork, their attitudes towards theory soften.

Mayor (2005) suggested that pre-service teachers' personal theories about effective teaching are enhanced through activities in the teacher preparation programs. However, these preconceived theories about learning may not be dissuaded during the teacher education program (Rath, 2001). In fact, many pre-service teachers believe what was good teaching for them is still good teaching now (Pajares, 1992). Therefore, evaluation of pre-service teachers' belief systems should be a central part of teacher education instruction. Pre-service teachers must examine their belief systems connected to teaching practice and identify the shortcomings of their beliefs (Asselin, 2000).

Researchers have noted the pressures pre-service teachers face that ultimately cause a modification of their beliefs due to a variety of contextual factors (O'Brien, Stewart, & Moje, 1995; Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1985). These contextual factors such as school culture, curriculum expectations, local policies, and the pressures of standardized testing force pre-service teachers to adapt their belief system to mirror that of their cooperating teacher. Teacher preparation programs must address the personal, social, and pedagogical factors that can affect a novice teacher's instructional decisions in the classroom. Further, preparation programs should recognize the influences that shape the constraints and opportunities in the complex classroom environments where teaching takes place (Fang, 1996).

Additional research to support Argyris and Schon's (1974) findings continue to build upon the idea that what teachers report about their beliefs regarding student learning may not be a direct reflection of their instructional practices in the classroom. Pre-service teachers often display conflicting epistemological beliefs between their work and their comments regarding

reading instruction (Many, Howard, & Hoge, 2002). Shkedi and Laron (2004) found pre-service teachers' beliefs about reading instruction idealistic when exposed to the informal seminars of the university classroom. Kinzer (1988) found that pre-service teachers who are closely tied to the university may be influenced by theoretical considerations taught in in course work. Further, few pre-service teachers were challenged or influenced by mere observation in the classroom (Bruinsma, 1985). However, when pre-service teachers experienced student teaching, their beliefs-in-use became more realistic and reflective of their classroom experiences (Shkedi & Laron, 2004). Beliefs were not likely to change following student teaching but tended to be influenced by the beliefs of supervising teachers (Ravindran, Greene, & DeBacker, 2005). Shkedi and Laron (2004) conclude that the pre-service teachers' beliefs-in-use did not change, but instead are a reflection of varying educational experiences (i.e., informal seminars vs. formal teaching experiences).

There seem to be inconsistencies in the research findings related to the role teacher preparation programs play in changing or shaping pre-service teachers' beliefs (Hall, 2005; Richardson, 2003). Some research indicates pre-service teachers' beliefs can change due to a teacher education course or program (Donahue, 2000; Garmon, 2004). When change occurs, it typically happens during field experiences (Leko, Kulkarni, Lin, & Smith, 2015). Further, change is often not uniform with some researchers finding pre-service teachers' beliefs changed while others did not (Anderson, Smith, & Peasley, 2000; Hollingworth, 1989). Whether or not change of beliefs occurred was often contributed to the strength of the incoming beliefs of the pre-service teacher (Richardson, 2003). Still some researchers found the teacher preparation programs to be of little consequence when it came to changing and shaping beliefs (McDiarmid, 1992; O'Brian & Stewart, 1990). There are a number of reasons why there are discrepancies

between studies, including when the studies were conducted. Some took place after participants took a methods course yet others took place after student teaching. According to Leko, et al. (2015), another reason for the discrepancies might be how the changes were measured and the scope of beliefs investigated such as changes to overall teaching philosophies vs. smaller pedagogical changes.

In 2007, Dvorak and Bates conducted a study to identify the literacy knowledge, beliefs, and self-efficacy of pre-service elementary teachers. Fifty-two pre-service teachers completed the DeFord (1985) Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP) both before and at the conclusion of a reading methods course. In addition to the TORP, pre-service teachers also completed a self-efficacy profile and a questionnaire. The quantitative results of the study showed a statistically significant change of beliefs and self-efficacy after completing the reading methods course. While previous studies on teacher education and the possible influence of pre-service education showed inconsistent findings (Grisham, 2000; Massengill, Mahlios, & Barry, 2005), Dvorak and Bates (2007) found pre-service teachers' post-orientations were not dependent on their pre-orientations suggesting some fluidity of change between theoretical orientations. These findings imply that formal knowledge attained during teacher preparation courses may affect pre-service teachers' beliefs.

The study of pre-service teachers' theoretical orientations and beliefs provides the field of reading research with valuable information and insights regarding the future development of teacher education programs in reading. Leading pre-service teachers towards the interrogation of their beliefs aids teacher educators towards developing critical awareness skills and devising professional action plans. Whitney, et al. (2013) summarized:

Ultimately, we want pre-service teachers to be able to envision how they might draw from the range of knowledge they have (subject matter, learning and learners, teaching practices, contextual), and we want them to do so in principled ways. One goal for our work as teacher educators is to help students articulate principles that guide their practices as educators and to help students build heuristics that will help them make connections from the variety of experiences they bring to the decisions they make as teachers.” (Whitney et al., 2013, p. 198)

Pre-service and in-service teachers alike should be encouraged to develop a greater self-awareness and understanding of their theoretical orientations and beliefs that serve as the foundation of their pedagogical knowledge (Whitney, et al., 2013). According to White and Chant (2014), beliefs about curriculum, pedagogy, students, and the goals of education influence instructional practices and decision making. Therefore, developing a self-awareness will help pre-service teachers critically examine their choice of instructional decisions and practices which are based on their theoretical orientations (Ketner, Smith, & Parnell, 1997). Further, being mindful of the possible influences on beliefs such as personal experiences learning to read and practical experiences from field work will enable pre-service teachers to critically reflect on the influences that inform their instructional decisions (Leko et al., 2014).

As pre-service teachers progress through the teacher preparation program, teacher educators must also be mindful of the pre-service teachers’ theoretical orientations to reading and their beliefs about reading instruction. Kagan (1992) posited that in order for pre-service teachers to modify, adapt, and reconstruct their beliefs about their students and themselves as teachers, pre-service teachers should be placed with supervising teachers whose beliefs and practices are not congruent with theirs. Contradicting this thought, Bean and Zulich (1992)

posited that there could be a possible benefit to placing student teachers with supervising teachers who endorse the same theoretical beliefs regarding reading and reading instruction.

Quite often, student teacher placement is often more of a matter of convenience than careful thought about potential impacts on student teachers and educational beliefs (Bean & Zulich, 1992). Further, aligning pre-service teacher and supervising teacher theoretical orientations isn't necessarily practical following the traditional model of student teacher field experiences (Brown, Potter, & Roth, 2002). This has become an area of interest for researchers as they continue to investigate teacher education programs, methods utilized for placement of student teachers in their field experiences, and potential alternatives to traditional models (Bowen, Potter, & Roth, 2002; Sanford & Hopper, 2002; Zeichner, 1992). According to Worthy and Patterson (2001), the perspective for studying field experiences has shifted from a "practice what you have learned in methods courses" to an approach that focuses more on reflecting thinking and relationships. More research is needed to explore the relationships between the student teacher and the cooperating teacher with a focus on how classroom practices shape the beliefs of pre-service teachers. Studies of this nature may offer valuable insights for those who make administrative decisions regarding student teacher placements.

Teaching involves what we believe and how we believe it (Opfer & Pedder, 2011). Because there are many different perspectives, the researcher makes suggestions, but it is up to the teacher to use expertise in practice (Davis, 2004). The significance of a belief system plays a major part in teaching practice. Therefore, teachers are unlikely to change their instructional practices and teaching styles when change is necessary unless their belief system can be changed first (Barnyak & Paquette, 2010). Further, the relationship between beliefs and practices is substantially complex and often doesn't align. When teachers' beliefs are inconsistent with their

instructional practices it is most likely attributed to an incongruity of beliefs. According to Barnyak & Paquette (2010), it is important for teacher educators and pre-service teachers to discuss pre-formed beliefs to help them better understand their experiences. Understanding and addressing their entering beliefs will serve as a foundation on which to build new information that pre-service teachers will need to become effective teachers.

### **Connecting Theory to Practice**

According to Randi and Corno (2007), teachers frequently complain that theory is not relevant to their instructional practices and decision making. This might be true if they are asked to apply theory, one by one, and asked to apply them regardless of their immediate teaching situation. Therefore, Randi and Corno (2007) contend that more research is needed to help teachers identify and call up theory-based practices that resolve their immediate problems. Teachers' beliefs and instructional practices have been areas of focus in the reading research community for many years. However, research is limited regarding the connection of the two areas. Recently an interest in the relationship between theoretical orientations to reading and instructional practices has developed. This study will explore pre-service teachers' beliefs and practices and how they relate to their theoretical orientations.

Ketner, Smith, and Parnell (2001) conducted an investigation of teachers' theoretical orientations to reading and their endorsement of developmentally appropriate practices. Results indicated a substantial congruence between developmentally appropriate practice and the theoretical orientation endorsed by the teachers. Sixty-six teachers of grades kindergarten through third grade took part in the study. Participants were mailed a questionnaire consisting of two instruments, the DeFord (1985) Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile and the Smith

(1993) Primary Teacher Questionnaire (PTQ). The quantitative data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). From this study, Ketner, Smith, and Parnell (2001) found a positive relationship between teacher endorsement of developmentally appropriate practices and a whole language theoretical orientation. Teachers' beliefs regarding developmentally appropriate practice appeared to correspond to their theoretical orientations. This adds to the research establishing a congruence between teacher beliefs and practice in early childhood classrooms (Charlsworth, Hart, Burts, Thomasson, Mosely, & Fleege, 1993; Kagan & Smith, 1988; Smith & Shepard, 1988; Spidell, 1988; Wing, 1989).

Kuzborska, (2011) examined secondary pre-service teachers' beliefs and instructional practices in Lithuania. The results of the study indicated a strong relationship between teachers' beliefs and their classroom practices. This study supports the notion that teachers teach in accordance with their theoretical beliefs and that the differences in theoretical beliefs may result in differences in the nature of the literacy instruction (Borg, 2003; Borg, 2006). The research of Cummins, Cheek, and Lindsey (2004) informed Kuzborska's (2011) study which argued that if theoretical orientation is a major determinant of how teachers act during instruction, then teacher educators can affect classroom practice by ensuring that pre-service teachers develop a theoretical orientation that is "reflective of current and pertinent research in the field" (Cummins, et al., 2004, p. 183).

Grisham (2000) investigated the effectiveness of constructivist literacy coursework on the belief systems and teaching practices of twelve teacher participants. Criteria for participation was based upon DeFord's (1985) Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP). Six of the participants were identified as endorsing a skills orientation while the remaining six participants endorsed a whole language orientation. Along with the administration of the TORP, interview

and observation data was collected. Grisham (2000) followed the twelve participants from the beginning of their student teaching experiences up until the completion of their second year teaching in order to assess the impact of the teacher preparation program, particularly the literacy component of the program, upon their teaching practice. Grisham noted the constructivist theory described by Fosnot (1996) as a useful framework for understanding how teachers conceptualize literacy learning both in and out of school:

Constructivism is a theory about knowledge and learning; it describes both what “knowing” is and how one “comes to know.” Based on the work in psychology, philosophy, and anthropology, the theory describes knowledge as temporary, developmental, nonobjective, internally constructed, and socially and culturally mediated. Learning from this perspective is viewed as a self-regulatory process of struggling with the conflict between existing personal models of the world and discrepant new insights, constructing new representations and models of reality as a human meaning-making venture with culturally developed tools and symbols, and further negotiating such meaning through cooperative social activity, discourse, and debate.” (Fosnot, 1996, p. ix)

Although twelve participants were included in the study, Grisham (2000) presented a detailed summary of one case and briefer summaries of two others. These three summaries served to document the representation of findings in the cross-case analysis. A significant finding of the study was that the constructivist orientation of the teacher preparation program had a significant impact on the participants. This was evidenced by results from the TORP first administered in the fall semester following an intensive summer literacy theory course. Data supporting the TORP was collected from literacy autobiographies and interviews and showed a shift in beliefs over the three-year study. Teachers’ theoretical orientations to reading were

changed as a result of the cohesiveness of the teacher preparation program (professional knowledge) and appeared to be steady over time. The participants' field experiences during student teaching (practical knowledge) did not appear to contribute to belief change (personal knowledge) and/or instructional practices of the participants. When participants had their own classrooms, some changed their theoretical orientations to reading and others did not. The context of the teaching situation seemed to make a difference along with the pressures teachers face regarding accountability in teaching. Further, Grisham (2000) found that the preparation program influence on teachers' practices was more apparent than that of beliefs. Teachers discussed reading theory in terms of practice rather than in terms of theoretical orientations. These findings are important to those involved in educating pre-service teachers because they indicate pre-service teachers are influenced by their preparation programs "although the relationship is neither direct nor simple" (Grisham, 2000, p.164).

Nierstheimer, Hopkins, Dillon, and Schmitt (2000) investigated pre-service teachers' knowledge and beliefs about struggling readers and what should be done to help them. Three semesters of pre-service teachers were enrolled in a corrective reading methods course with a tutoring practicum where features of Reading Recovery professional development model were infused. Using the theoretical lens of constructivism, Nierstheimer et al. (2000) documented the pre-service teachers' knowledge and beliefs to determine changes in belief over time. After pre-service teachers participated in the course, they shifted from the belief of assigning responsibility to someone else toward the belief of assuming responsibility for helping children with reading problems. While the orientations of the pre-service teachers were unclear at the beginning of the study, it was evident they formed clear orientations based upon their knowledge and beliefs and evidenced in their choice of instructional practices. To help struggling readers, the pre-service

teachers identified practices characteristic of a skills approach to reading such as providing opportunities for children to practice reading and teaching children multiple reading strategies. Nierstheimer et al. (2000) concluded that it is essential for teacher educators to provide opportunities that lead pre-service teachers towards connecting their theoretical orientations, known or unknown, to their practice. “As teacher educators, we have found that as we provide opportunities for prospective teachers to challenge their own beliefs, and practice the theory that they have not yet connected to experience, our students are empowered, take responsibility for their own learning, and step up to accept responsibility for the learning of the children in their care” (Nierstheimer et al, 2000, p. 14).

Kizner (1988) investigated the belief systems of pre-service and in-service teachers. The areas of significant interest to Kizner were whether or not pre-service and in-service teachers’ beliefs differed, and whether or not the two groups made instructional choices based upon their theoretical orientations. Prior to the study, Kinzer (1988) acknowledged Duffy & Anderson’s (1982) research findings that the realities of the classroom cause in-service teachers to modify their theoretical knowledge. Therefore, Kinzer expected pre-service teachers to make instructional decisions more consistent with their theoretical orientations since they had not yet experienced truly independent classroom teaching.

Kizner (1988) studied eighty-three undergraduate students and ninety-one practicing teachers and asked them to complete identical packets of material. Each packet included two sets of instruments-one targeting the theoretical orientations, the other targeting beliefs about the reading process. The results from the data indicated that both pre-service and in-service teachers’ beliefs regarding the process of reading were similar, although pre-service teachers appeared to be more reader-based and holistically oriented. However, pre-service teachers were more

consistent in their belief inventories regarding the reading process. This is most likely because in-service teachers view issues related to how reading takes place and how reading ability develops as discrete issues. This finding was in opposition to the expectations Kizner (1988) had regarding pre-service and in-service teacher differences.

Kizner (1988) also found overall correspondence between the two groups' instructional choices based upon their respective theoretical orientations. Both groups chose lesson plans that were reader-based and holistic. Further, both groups had a tendency to choose lessons inconsistent with their belief systems. This indicated that the participants often chose reader-based/holistic plans in spite of their beliefs as demonstrated on the inventory. Duffy, Roehler, and Johnson (1986) have posited that teachers' beliefs move through contextual "filters" mitigating their beliefs and causing in-service teachers to override their theoretical orientations. Kizner (1988) explained that teachers might be required to adhere to district or state-mandated management systems or skills charts which in turn could influence responses to reflect what *is* done, as opposed to what teachers believe *should* be done. Concluding the study, Kizner (1988) found the pre-service and in-service teachers did not have substantially different theoretical orientations. However, pre-service teachers were found to be more consistent in their beliefs concerning the reading process and development than in-service teachers. He argued that teachers would most likely make different instructional decisions when planning lessons in a realistic classroom context and called for more research into teachers' beliefs and practices.

Ritchey, Coker, Jr., and Jackson (2015) investigated the relationship between teachers' theoretical orientations to writing instruction and their self-reported instructional practices. The first, second, and third grade teachers reported common instructional practices. The correlational relationships between teachers' theoretical orientations and their instructional practices varied by

grade level. The findings indicated that the relationships between theoretical orientations and instructional practices varied depending on the outcome and whether it predicted achievement or growth. Richey et al.(2015) argued that additional research is needed to help develop a better understanding of the ways teachers' theoretical orientations, instructional practices, and student outcomes are related.

Hoffman, Kugle, and Cherry (1981) studied the relationship between the actual performance of teachers during reading instruction to their theoretical orientations. The researchers used the DeFord (1985) Theoretical Orientation of Reading Profile (TORP) along with focused interviews to collect data. Based upon data collected from the TORP, the findings from this study suggest that there was not a strong relationship between teacher beliefs or orientations and their instructional practices. Researchers questioned the validity of assessing teacher beliefs through a pencil-paper type task such as the TORP. "At best we are looking at what teachers think they should be doing or how teachers perceive we would like them to respond. At worst, we are artificially forcing teacher beliefs to fit one or another conceptual model for the teaching of reading" (Hoffman, Kugle, & Cherry, 1981, p.12). However, the data collected from the interviews in the study suggest a relationship between conceptions and practice. The conflicting findings in the study resulted in a call for future research in this area that focuses more on systematic observations of teachers engaged in teaching, complemented by focused interviews. Hoffman, et al. (1981) concluded, "As we grow to better understand the relationship between conceptions of teaching and situational teaching behavior, we will be in a much better position to examine relationships between teacher orientations and pupil learning as well as to embark on enlightened programs of teacher education" (Hoffman, et al., 1981, p. 12).

Sibanda (2010) conducted a study to investigate the influence direct reading instruction had on pre-service teachers' reading cognition and the influence their theoretical orientations had on their pedagogical practices. Questionnaires were utilized to determine the pre-service teachers' reading cognition before and after their completion of a reading methods course which the researcher taught. Analysis of various assignments to include lesson plans and teaching observations was done to determine the pre-service teachers' pedagogical practices. Follow-up interviews were also conducted to establish the explanations for the consistencies and inconsistencies between the pre-service teachers' theoretical perspectives and pedagogical practices. Sibanda (2010) found that there was a causal relationship between direct instruction and reading theoretical orientation, which is not always existent between reading theoretical orientations and pedagogical practices. Sibanda reasoned the inconsistent findings might be due to environmental factors that often compel teachers to implement perspectives different from those they theoretically endorse.

Simbanda's (2010) research was informed by previous studies. Davis, Konopak, and Readence (1993) studied the reading beliefs and practices of two elementary teachers and found that the reader-based theoretical orientation of the teachers was not consistent with their practices which favored a text-based approach. Borg (2006) explained discrepancies by noting the environmental realities of the school culture and classroom setting often go against the teachers' personal beliefs and in turn dictate the practices in the classroom. Borg (2006) reported on Richardson et al. (1991) findings that most teachers were found to endorse a skills-oriented text-based orientation to reading and implemented this in their instructional practices.

Paris (1997) conducted a study to explore the consistency between teachers' theoretical orientations to reading and planning for reading instruction over time. In this longitudinal study,

nine teacher participants completed the Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP) at the onset of their student teaching experience. Additional data was collected from a variety of sources such as observations, interviews, journals, and lesson plans. The focus of the study centered on the stability of the teachers' theoretical orientations to reading over time, the consistency between the theoretical orientations and planning for instruction, and the possible factors that influence consistency between theoretical orientations and instructional planning.

At the conclusion of the three-year study, Paris (1997) indicated the theoretical orientations and planning for instruction were consistent for four of the teacher participants and inconsistent for five. All but one of the participants' theoretical orientations to reading remained consistent and didn't appear to change over time. Paris attributed the inconsistencies and consistencies between beliefs and practice to various issues. She noted that the data collected during the interview process contradicted the teachers' instructional planning. This was most likely due to the basal reading program most of the teachers were required to use in the classroom. Teachers who were able to carry out their personal beliefs regarding reading instruction in the classroom were most likely supported by the administration and resulted in consistency in their instructional planning.

The results of the literature review regarding the connection of beliefs to instructional practices indicate inconsistencies in findings among the researchers. Much of the literature supports additional research on teachers' beliefs and practices correspondence (Basturkmen, Loewe, & Ellis, 2004; Isikoglu, Basturk, & Karaca, 2009; Phillips & Borg, 2009) by upholding the assumption there does not appear to be congruence between what teachers report as their theoretical beliefs- referred to by Argysis and Schon (1974) as "espoused beliefs"-and their classroom practices, often referred to as "attributed beliefs" (Speer, 2005). Additionally, while

pre-service and in-service teachers' theoretical orientations to reading were similar in nature, their instructional practices differed and often were not a reflection of their reported beliefs regarding reading instruction. Further, some studies indicated only pre-service teachers demonstrated instructional practices corresponding to their theoretically held beliefs towards reading instruction while in-service teachers' instructional practices varied significantly from their reported orientations. These findings contradict results from previous research studies conducted in the area of beliefs and practices and their congruence in reading (Karimi, Abdullahi, Khales, & Haghghi, 2014; Liao 2004; Wu, 2002) and support findings claiming congruence between orientations and practices in reading.

Read (2014) argued that the debates regarding the connection between theory and practice may lie in the interactions between the two. As Kothari (2005) noted, "the theory/practice divide...has become exacerbated as alternative strands in development studies are increasingly uneasy with what is seen as the over-emphasis on planning change without significant identification and critique of the ideologies that underpin them" (Kothari, 2005, p. 4).

Teacher educators play a vital role in the 'bridging' of theory and practice by developing pre-service programs and field experiences relevant to the needs of the pre-service teachers they serve. To make changes to teacher preparation programs, we must be responsive to students' voices regarding theory and practice (Louden & Rohl, 2006). Furthermore, if teachers are unaware of relevant research literature, then they are unlikely to notice the absence of current research findings in their teacher preparation programs (Spear-Swerling, 2007).

## **Summary**

The purpose of this study is to explore pre-service teachers' beliefs and practices and how they relate to their theoretical orientations to reading. This chapter was an organized review of pertinent literature regarding: theoretical perspectives, constructivism, beliefs including personal epistemologies and self-efficacy, the intersection of beliefs and practices, theoretical orientations to reading as they pertain to pre-service teachers, the history of reading instruction, pre-service teachers and teacher education, and the connections between theory and practice. In the following chapter, I will present the methodology and give an account of how the study will be conducted.

## **Chapter 3 - Methodology**

This chapter provided an outline for the research methodology and design for the study. The purpose of this qualitative collective case study was to explore pre-service teachers' beliefs and practices and how they related to their theoretical orientations to reading. The study documented the relationship between pre-service teachers' theoretical orientations to reading and their knowledge and beliefs regarding reading instruction. The information was organized in the following sections: 1) research design, 2) research questions, 3) setting, 4) participants, 5) role of the researcher, 6) role of the pre-service teacher participants 6) research timeline 7) data collection, 8) data analysis, 9) trustworthiness, and 10) summary.

### **Research Design**

The goal of this qualitative case study was to develop a deeper understanding of relationships between pre-service teachers' theoretical orientations to reading and their instructional practices. The pre-service teachers' experiences and stories were understood through a broad social constructivist lens. This perspective, along with the assumptions that inform the research, are identified in this chapter, along with the notable scholars who have significantly contributed to the perspective's development.

In this study, qualitative research lends itself to the exploration of a research problem in which the variables were unknown. The participants' stories and experiences offered insight about the occurring phenomenon that could not be gained through the literature alone. Therefore, the research problem required both an exploration and an understanding from the participants' perspective.

Qualitative research was appropriate for this study because it allowed me to conduct the study in a natural setting where I was able to observe the participants over a period of time. Doing so provided me the opportunity to develop an understanding of the phenomena from both the participants' perspectives and my own. It was my goal to understand and interpret pre-service teachers' experiences within the contexts in which they occurred. DeMarris and Lapan (2004) stated that qualitative research involved close attention to the interpretive nature of inquiry and situating the study within the political, social, and cultural context of the researchers, and the researcher's presence in the accounts they presented.

In this collective case study I took a closer look at the ways in which pre-service teachers connected their beliefs and instructional practices to their theoretical orientations to reading. According to Stake (2005), a collective case is studied to provide insight on an issue where data are gathered through the use of in-depth interviewing and observation. Case study researchers explore each case in order to uncover new and unusual interactions, events, explanations, interpretations, and cause-effect connections (DeMarris & Lapan, 2004). Case study research typically leaves the determination of meaning and worth to the researcher who may then construct their own generalizations by drawing on the information from the case study (Stake, 1995).

## **Research Questions**

Qualitative research relies on carefully crafted questions aimed at driving the direction and course of the study. This collective case study sought to answer the three following questions and their respective sub-questions.

1. What influences pre-service teachers' theoretical orientations to reading?

- a. Did pre-service teachers' life experiences play a definitive role in what they believed to be true regarding literacy acquisition?
  - b. How did pre-service teachers' experiences in the literacy methods course and corresponding internship influence their theoretical orientations to reading?
2. How do pre-service teachers connect their instructional practices and beliefs to their theoretical orientations to reading?
- a. Do pre-service teachers' practices align with their theoretical orientation to reading?
  - b. How do pre-service teachers discuss their beliefs about reading and learning to read?
3. What are the pre-service teachers' theoretical orientations to reading?
- a. What were the pre-service teachers' theoretical orientations to reading at the beginning of the study?
  - b. What were the pre-service teachers' theoretical orientations to reading at the end of the study?

### **Setting**

The literacy methods course in which the pre-service teachers were enrolled was located on the campus of Sunflower University. The university was situated in a rural community in the Midwest with an average population of 20,500. Both virtual and on-campus enrollment was approximately 14,600 with approximately 290 students enrolled in the teacher education program. The average class size of a literacy methods course was 15 students.

The pre-service teachers' internship experiences took place in the same community where the university was located. By mere coincidence, the pre-service teachers were all placed in kindergarten classrooms. Selena's and Martin's internships were located at Nixon Elementary School, in an older neighborhood in the district. Aleina's internship took place at Taft Elementary School situated in a prominent neighborhood within the community.

## **Participants**

The three pre-service teacher participants, Selena, Martin, and Aleina, were enrolled in a literacy methods course at Sunflower State University (pseudonym), a division two university in the Midwest. Pseudonyms were used to protect the pre-service teacher participants' anonymities. As specified in table 3.1, two are female and one is male. Their age, ethnicity, year in school, current GPA, and number of completed education courses are indicated in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1 Demographic Data of Pre-Service Teacher Participants**

<b>Participants</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Number of Courses Taken</b>	<b>GPA</b>	<b>School Standing</b>
Selena	Female	29	Hispanic	5	3.53	Senior
Martin	Male	22	Caucasian	3	3.3	Senior
Aleina	Female	20	Caucasian	3	4.0	Junior

### **Professor of the Methods Course**

Professor Marshall of the literacy methods course was a full professor at Sunflower University. She held a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education, a Master's Degree in Education Administration, and a Doctor of Philosophy in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis in Reading. She was a first grade teacher in a local school district for 24 years before

taking a job at the university. She has been teaching at Sunflower University since 2001. In order to develop a more cohesive understanding of the pre-service teachers' beliefs and practices and the relationship to their theoretical orientations to reading, it is necessary to examine the theoretical orientations to reading of those the pre-service teachers in this study interact with and by whom they are possibly influenced. For this reason, Professor Marshall was administered the DeFord (1985) Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP). The professor's score of 59 on the TORP indicated she primarily endorsed a decoding perspective or bottom-up philosophy of reading instruction.

### **Mrs. Jones**

Mrs. Jones, a kindergarten teacher at Nixon Elementary School had a bachelor's degree in elementary education and was Selena's internship mentor teacher. Mrs. Jones had been teaching in the school district for seven years. In order to develop a better understanding of the influences on pre-service teachers' beliefs and practices regarding reading and learning to read, I administered the theoretical orientation to reading profile (TORP) to Mrs. Jones at the beginning of the study. Her score of 69 fell within the skills cluster parameters of 65-111 indicating she endorsed a skills approach to reading instruction.

### **Mrs. Smith**

Mrs. Smith, a kindergarten teacher at Taft Elementary School, had a master's degree in early childhood and special education and had been teaching in the school district for twelve years. Mrs. Smith was Martin's internship mentor teacher during the course of this study. In order to develop a better understanding of the influences on pre-service teachers' beliefs and

practices regarding reading and learning to read, I administered the theoretical orientation to reading profile (TORP) to Mrs. Smith at the beginning of the study. Her score of 79 fell within the skills cluster parameters of 65-111 indicating she endorsed a skills approach to reading instruction.

### **Mrs. White**

Mrs. White, a kindergarten teacher at Nixon Elementary School, had a bachelor's degree in elementary education and was Aleina's internship mentor teacher. She had been teaching in the school district for nine years. In order to develop a better understanding of the influences on pre-service teachers' beliefs and practices regarding reading and learning to read, I administered the theoretical orientation to reading profile (TORP) to Mrs. White at the beginning of the study. Her score of 73 fell within the skills cluster parameters of 65-111 indicating she endorsed a skills approach to reading instruction.

## **Role of the Researcher**

My primary role in this research was that of an observer. It was necessary as an observer involved in qualitative inquiry to identify and discuss my own biases, values, and assumptions by writing them into the research (Creswell & Poth, 2017). This reflexivity allowed me to acknowledge how my personal experiences might shape the way I interpreted the data I collected during inquiry. As a middle-class, Caucasian-American, I was raised in a lower-income home in the Midwest. I taught preschool for approximately eight years in an urban area. I also had the opportunity to live abroad for three years teaching conversational English to students of all ages in Okinawa, Japan. I began my formal education to become an elementary teacher in my mid-

thirties, graduating from the university in which I am now employed. After I completed my undergraduate coursework, I taught in a rural school district in the Midwest for four years. Two years later, I graduated with my master's in education as a Reading Specialist and accepted a job with the university as an instructor. I am currently an instructor of both a reading methods and children's literature course.

My experiences have provided me the opportunity to work with a wide range of students of all ages. These experiences have shaped my perspective regarding how people learn and specifically how they acquire literacy. Early in my educational career, I endorsed a decoding and skills-based approach to reading instruction. Graduate-level course work and my experiences in the university classroom have since shaped my perspective closer to a skills and whole language approach to reading. I am currently of the opinion that a blended approach to reading instruction is most appropriate in the elementary education classroom. I believe it is important to discuss my personal theoretical orientation of reading because it has undoubtedly influenced my instruction in the classroom when working with pre-service teachers. It has also had the possibility of impacting the way I interpreted and developed an understanding of the data I collected in the study.

An underlying assumption of qualitative research is that rich data are situated in real context only to be captured through the interaction between the researcher and participants. My role as a researcher in this case study was to provide a safe space for the pre-service teacher participants in which to discuss their beliefs and experiences about reading and reading instruction. I facilitated the inquiry process through in-depth interviews and observations. According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2016), the researcher should adopt an insider point of view by seeking to discover and understand the meaning of the participants' experiences. Further, it

was necessary to reflect on my personal voice and perspectives while acknowledging that my own experiences acted as a filter when I interpreted the data.

Another role I assumed in this collective case study was that of a learner. Acknowledging this sense of self helped me adequately reflect on all aspects of the research process and allowed me the opportunity to position myself as a curious student in search of answers and ready to listen rather than that of an expert or authority expected to talk (Glesne, 2006). As a learner, I viewed the process of research as a fluid one, consisting of dynamic interactions within the research process as a whole. Rather than view my research a static, neatly bound process, I understood the research process would often lead me to an uncomfortable place of anxiety as I learned to differentiate and interpret the data I collected.

Prior to my research, I obtained approval from the Internal Review Board (IRB) of the Office of Research Compliance at Kansas State University (Appendix A). I followed all appropriate procedures to ensure participant confidentiality and privacy. Further, I maintained a high level of ethics and integrity by establishing a supportive and respectful relationship with the pre-service teachers participating in this study. Letters of informed consent were given to the pre-service teachers to inform them of their rights as participants in this study (Appendix B).

### **Role of the Pre-Service Teacher Participants**

In order to develop a better understanding of the relationship between pre-service teachers' beliefs and practices and their theoretical orientations to reading, participant selection was considered. The three pre-service teachers I selected to study were enrolled in a reading methods course located on the campus of the university. The pre-service teachers enrolled in the course participated in a literacy field experience, which provided me the opportunity to observe

them in the natural context of the elementary classroom. The observations took place one day a week for approximately 60 minutes over a three-week period. I also collected relevant lesson plans and teaching reflections from the pre-service teachers that helped me develop a better understanding of their instructional practices and decision making. The Pre-service teachers also completed the DeFord (1985) Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile at both the beginning and end of the twelve-week study. The results from the TORP provided me with knowledge regarding the pre-service teachers' beliefs about reading and reading instruction prior to their experiences in the reading methods course. In addition to the observations and TORP administration, I interviewed the pre-service teachers on three occasions, at the beginning, middle, and end of the study (Appendix C).

### **Research Timeline**

As outlined in Table 3.2, the data collection process for this research spanned across approximately twelve weeks. This included an initial visit with the pre-service teachers to administer the DeFord (1985) Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile and discuss any questions or concerns they might have. This initial visit occurred during the last week of August, 2017. The first interview in the three interview process occurred the first week of September, 2017. Each pre-service teacher participant was interviewed during the week for approximately sixty minutes. The second interview occurred during the first week in October, 2017. Following the interviews, the data were transcribed and coded. Observations were conducted during the last three weeks of October, 2017. Each pre-service teacher participant was observed once a week for three weeks as they underwent their field experiences. The last interview of the interview process occurred during the second week of November, 2017 followed by the final DeFord (1985)

Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile administration during week twelve. The study began August 28, 2017 and ended November 13, 2017. Table 3.2 outlines the data collection timeline.

Table 3.2 Research Timeline

Date	Location	Data Collection
M 08/28	Selena Martin Aleina	Initial pre-service teacher participant selection
W 08/30	Selena Martin Aleina	Administer the Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile
M 09/05	Selena Martin	Interview 1
T 09/06	Aleina	Interview 1
M 10/02	Selena Martin	Interview 2
T 10/03	Aleina	Interview 2
M 10/09	Selena Martin Mrs. Jones Mrs. Smith	Observation 1  Administer the Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile
W 10/11	Aleina	Observation 1
M 10/16	Selena Martin	Observation 2
W 10/18	Aleina	Observation 2
M 10/ 23	Selena Martin	Observation 3
W 10/25	Aleina	Observation 3
M 11/06	Selena Martin	Interview 3
T 11/07	Aleina	Interview 3
M 11/13	Selena Martin Aleina	Administer the Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile

## **Data Collection**

In August 2017, appointments were made with the pre-service teacher participants to discuss the research process and provide a timeline of the study. Interviews took place between the months of September and November. Individual interviews were scheduled four weeks apart and last approximately sixty minutes. Arranging the interview schedule accordingly provided the necessary time needed to collect and reflect upon the qualitative data gleaned from the interviews. This also aided in establishing relationship continuity between the researcher and the pre-service teacher participants.

During this qualitative case study, a variety of data were collected in addition to interviews. Pre-service teachers' biographical information, course assignments to include written reflections and lesson plans, and responses to the DeFord (1985) Theoretical Orientation of Reading Profile (TORP) completed at both the beginning and end of the study were collected for analysis. Data were collected during the scheduled observations in the form of field notes taken by the researcher. These multiple forms of data served as evidence in this case study research which provided for the development of converging lines of inquiry and desired triangulation of data (Yin, 2014). During the data collection process I focused on 1) the pre-service teachers' theoretical orientations to reading as indicated on the DeFord (1985) Theoretical Orientation of Reading Profile (TORP), 2) pre-service teachers' beliefs about reading and reading instruction, and 3) pre-service teachers' instructional practices.

Table 3.3 Research Questions and Corresponding Data Collection and Analysis Methods

Question	Data Collection	Methods of Analysis
<p>1. How do pre-service teachers discuss the influences on their theoretical orientations to reading?</p> <p>a. Did pre-service teachers' life experiences play a definitive role in what they believed to be true regarding literacy acquisition and instruction?</p> <p>b. How did the pre-service teachers' experiences in the literacy methods course and corresponding internship influence their theoretical orientations to reading?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-Service Teacher Interview</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coding and comparing interview responses and generated discussion pertaining to their orientations to reading</li> </ul>
<p>2. How do pre-service teachers connect their instructional practices and beliefs to their theoretical orientations to reading?</p> <p>a. Do pre-service teachers' practices align with their theoretical orientations to reading?</p> <p>b. How do pre-service teachers discuss their beliefs about reading and learning to read?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-Service Teacher Interviews</li> <li>• Classroom Observations</li> <li>• Artifacts/Lesson plans and reflections</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coding and comparing interview responses and generated discussions</li> <li>• Coding and comparing classroom observations</li> <li>• Coding and comparing lesson plans and reflections</li> </ul>
<p>3. What are the pre-service teachers' theoretical orientations to reading?</p> <p>a. What were the pre-service teachers' theoretical orientations to reading at the beginning of the study?</p> <p>b. What were the pre-service teachers theoretical orientations to reading at the end of the study?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scoring and comparing the Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile</li> </ul>

## **Interviews**

One of the most important sources of data for this case study was the in-depth interview. According to Yin (2014), the researcher has two primary jobs: 1) to follow the researcher's line of inquiry as reflected by the case study protocol and 2) ask the researcher's questions in an unbiased manner that serves the needs of the inquiry. The interviewee might suggest other sources of evidence and people to interview to help the researcher develop a better understanding of the issues. Thus, the interviewee is viewed as an informant rather than participant during the interview process which is a critical aspect of the interview process in a case study (Yin, 2014). Following the design of the case study interview process, the interviews conducted in this study utilized an open-ended method (Appendix C). Each interview consisted of different themes in which I asked pre-service teachers about the interpretations of their experiences and beliefs, and the meaning they constructed from these occurrences. Their responses then served as a springboard for future inquiry.

### **In-Depth Interviews**

The Three-Interview Series (Seidman, 2006) offered a model of in-depth interviewing appropriate in case studies (Appendix C). In-depth interviewing involves a series of three separate interviews with each participant that: 1) focuses on participants' life history 2) concentrates on the details of the participants' experiences, and 3) asks participants to reflect upon the meaning of their experiences (Seidman, 2006). Following this interview model, I lead pre-service teachers towards the themes relevant to this study.

### **Interview One**

This interview asked “How did you come to be a student enrolled in the teacher education program?” The purpose of the first interview was to give pre-service teachers the space to reconstruct and narrate their past life experiences that led them to become a student at the university. I lead the pre-service teacher participants towards discussing their early reading experiences at home and at school that laid the foundation of their beliefs and attitudes about reading. These experiences along with how they used reading as adults for both professional and leisure purposes combined to give a personal account of the knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes they had about reading and reading instruction.

### **Interview Two**

This interview asked “What is it like for you to be a student enrolled in the literacy methods course? What are the details of your experiences as a pre-service teacher learning to teach reading?” This interview concentrated on the concrete details of the pre-service teachers’ experiences specifically as students enrolled in the teacher education program at the university. This account served as a reconstruction of their daily lives as students in respect to their experiences in the literacy methods course. The primary purpose of this interview was to obtain information about the pre-service teachers’ experiences as students in the literacy methods’ course and how their theoretical orientations to reading intersected with their instructional practices. I did not ask for opinions, but rather the details of the experiences they chose to discuss. It is upon these details that their opinions may be built (Seidman, 2006).

### **Interview Three**

This interview asked pre-service teachers to reflect on the meaning of their experiences. This required that they acknowledge the interactions of the influences in their lives that have led them to their current systems of belief, knowledge, and attitudes about reading and reading instruction. While the pre-service teacher participants engaged in making meaning of their experiences in all of the interviews, it was the third that primarily used meaning-making as the focal point of the interview.

### **Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile**

It is generally accepted that the classroom teacher is an important factor in student reading achievement and success (Hattie, 2003). The DeFord (1985) Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP) is a valid and reliable likert scale instrument used to measure teachers' beliefs about reading instruction and practices. This instrument was used in this study to identify the theoretical orientations to reading of the pre-service teachers, along with the internship mentor teachers and the professor of the literacy methods course (Appendix D). The TORP was administered and analyzed at the beginning of the study prior to coursework and field experiences. The results from the TORP provided the researcher with knowledge regarding the pre-service teachers' beliefs about reading and reading instruction prior to their experiences in the literacy methods course and corresponding internship. The TORP was also administered to the pre-service teachers at the end of the study to explore the possibility of belief change relating to the influences of the literacy methods course and internship experiences.

## **Observations**

Case studies take place in the real context of the case. Therefore, this provided an ideal opportunity for direct observations to occur. As pre-service teachers enrolled in a literacy methods course and engaged in a corresponding field experience, I was able to observe the social and environmental conditions that influenced their knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes about reading and reading instruction. The observations ranged from formal and informal events such as observing the pre-service teachers as they taught lessons in the elementary classroom and observing their interactions with the elementary students and classroom teacher. Observational evidence added new dimensions for understanding the phenomenon being studied (Yin, 2014). While Yin (2014) suggested the possibility of video recording the observations as a possibility, I chose not to record the observations to protect the welfare and interests of the elementary school children in the classroom. To adequately capture the social and environmental contexts within the classroom observation, I took detailed field notes for data analysis.

## **Artifacts**

According to Yin (2014) physical artifacts in a case study have less potential relevance, but can be an important component in the overall case. For this collective case study, I found the use of specific artifacts necessary and relevant. I collected and analyzed the pre-service teachers' literacy methods course assignments in the form of reflections and lesson plans. The reflection offered a glimpse into the ways pre-service teachers make meaning from their experiences. The lesson plans provided evidence into the instructional practices of the pre-service teachers. The most beneficial use of the reflections and lesson plans was the evidence supporting how pre-

service teachers connected their beliefs to their instructional practices and if these practices and beliefs are supported by their theoretical orientations to reading.

## **Data Analysis**

The data collected as evidence in this case study were analyzed following a deduction model of reasoning common in qualitative studies. Following this analytical model, hypotheses and assumptions were articulated within the background of the theory, which was tested and confronted against the raw data (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). Choosing an analytic strategy presents a problem for many researchers choosing case study as a research method. According to Yin (2014) the analysis of case study evidence is underdeveloped compared to its other aspects. Because of this, it was necessary that I formulated a plan to guide me throughout the duration of the data analysis process towards a deeper understanding pre-service teachers' beliefs and practices and the relationship to their theoretical orientations to reading.

Glesne (2006) offered suggestions on how to “find the story” couched within the voluminous amounts of data. The first part of the process is to begin data analysis early. Glesne (2006) suggested that data analysis done simultaneously with data collection enables the researcher to focus and shape the study as it proceeds. Following this example, I consistently reflected on the data and worked to organize them in order to construct meaning. I video recorded each of the pre-service teachers' interviews and later that day used Microsoft Word to transcribe our conversations. Following the transcription, I used memo writing and color-coded the data to help guide me during the data analysis process. The use of memos was especially important to me as I underwent the data analysis process. Memos helped me understand the beliefs and practices of pre-service teachers and how they related to their theoretical orientations

to reading. While analyzing the data from observations and interviews, I notated key information that I recognized as meaningful and relevant to the study. I identified and color-coded themes, patterns, and possible connections between themes that were useful to support the research questions. The data analysis steps were not independent of one another, but instead were interrelated and simultaneous of one another during the research process (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

## **Interviews**

In-depth interviews were conducted as part of the data collection process in this study (Appendix C). The interviews were recorded and immediately transcribed in an effort to adequately capture the context of the interviews. Further, transcribing immediately after the interviews allowed me to review and become more familiar with the participants and their experiences. After the transcription process was concluded, I carefully analyzed the recordings and transcriptions to support my understanding of the pre-service teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes about reading and reading instruction, and how these influenced their theoretical orientations to reading.

Because of the extreme volumes of data available to the researcher, it was necessary to exercise judgement regarding relevancy to the study. While sorting and minimizing the large quantities of data to something more manageable and significant, the researcher began the data analysis process through interpretation and making meaning of the data (Seidman, 2006).

During the data analysis process, data collected from the interviews were coded following a process as described by Glesne (2006). Each major code identified a concept central to the study with the option of adding more codes should the situation have presented itself after

thorough analysis of the data. To facilitate the use of a coding scheme, a code book was made to record major codes, sub-codes, along with their brief explanation. Using this code book, I was able to refer to it as I further analyzed the data looking for connections between the codes and sub-codes. Through such analysis, I was able to mine the data for the most relevant and vital information to use as evidence when writing up the data. A coded interview is included in Appendix F.

## **Observations**

During my observations in the elementary classroom, I kept a handwritten log of what I observed along with my interpretation of the events in my field notebook. The notes in the form of field log entries, or other handwritten notes, were organized according to major themes in the study that were relevant to pre-service teachers' instructional practices during their field experience. The observation data was color-coded to help me organize my thoughts and identify any reoccurring themes that emerged from the careful analysis. I also took pictures of different events such as the games the pre-service teachers created as part of a literacy methods course assignment. In addition, I took pictures of the internship classrooms to help me develop an accurate description of each of the internship locations. Following case study protocol regarding availability, the field notes were organized, categorized, complete, and available for later access (Yin, 2014).

## **Trustworthiness**

The multiple sources of data collection in this case study contributed to the trustworthiness of the study. This triangulation of data provided a relationship between the data

collected to establish validity. Research validity was thought of both during the research design and the data collection process. Creswell and Poth (2017) described eight verification procedures typically used in qualitative research: 1) prolonged engagement and persistent observation; 2) triangulation; 3) peer review; 4) negative case analysis; 5) clarification of researcher bias; 6) member checking; 7) rich, thick description; 8) external audit. Attending to all of these in one study was not necessary. Therefore, this study addressed the following

### **Prolonged Engagement and Persistent Observation**

The researcher collected data for approximately twelve weeks from September to November, 2017. During this time the researcher observed and interviewed pre-service teachers in order to gain information relevant to the case study. During the data collection process, the researcher spent extended time in the field to gain participant trust and learn the cultural context of the pre-service teachers. The elementary school culture is quite different than that of the culture at the university. Therefore, the observations of pre-service teachers during their field experience at the elementary school and the interviews provided the researcher with rich opportunities to collect data in the real context of the case.

### **Triangulation**

The use of multiple data collection methods and sources in the study provided a triangulation of data to reinforce the validity of the study. Data from interviews, observations, and the DeFord (1977) Theoretical Orientation of Reading Profile were collected and analyzed according to relevance and significance to the study.

## **Peer Review and Debriefing**

The external reflection and input of this study was conducted by my major professor. I depended on her expertise and years as an academic advisor to review this study and the research process that informs it. Members of my committee also offered their guidance throughout the process.

## **Negative Case Analysis**

As a qualitative researcher, it is necessary to be conscientious of negative cases and unconfirming evidence in order to rework the hypotheses driving the study (Glesne, 2006). This differs from a quantitative study where the researcher looks to disprove the null hypotheses. Instead, qualitative researchers are conscious of alternative evidence that may present a need to modify the hypotheses to fit the needs of the study. Negative case analysis helped me acknowledge my biases as I interviewed and observed pre-service teacher participants who had different opinions than me about reading and reading instruction. Discussions with the pre-service teachers allowed me to explore my study interests as well as my subjectivities.

## **Clarification of Researcher Bias**

It is necessary for researchers to reflect upon their own subjectivities in order to acknowledge their presence within the study. While quantitative research seeks to remove biases from the study to prevent threats of validity, qualitative researchers seek to embrace biases by weaving them into the study through acknowledgement. I remained conscientious of my biases previously mentioned in this study and remained in a constant state of reflection to ensure they did not lead me to make misinterpretations of the data collected.

## **Member Checking**

Qualitative researchers seek to understand and interpret how participants interact in the social settings that surround them. In order to develop this understanding, researchers must gain access to the perspectives of the participants (Glesne, 2006). It is the responsibility of the researcher to share interview transcripts, field notes, and drafts of the final report with the participants to ensure their perspectives are presented accurately. For the purposes of this study, pre-service teacher participants were included in the member checking process throughout the duration of the study to ensure their stories and perspectives were represented accurately.

## **Rich, Thick Description**

According to Creswell and Poth (2017), a rich, thick description of the data is representative of good qualitative research practices. Further, good qualitative research can be replicated by other researchers arriving at the same conclusions (deMarris & Lapan, 2004). In this study, I sought to provide an accurate portrayal of how pre-service teachers came to understand their beliefs, knowledge, and attitudes about reading and reading instruction and how these intersected with their practices and theoretical orientations to reading. It was my intention to provide a detailed description of the data collection process and the study findings in hopes that others might be able to continue or replicate the research.

## **Summary**

This qualitative collective case study sought to provide an in-depth perspective on pre-service teachers' beliefs and practices and how they related to their theoretical orientations to reading while enrolled in a literacy methods course. This study identified the knowledge, practices, and attitudes pre-service teachers had regarding reading and reading instruction. The pre-service teacher participants were observed and interviewed over a twelve week time frame. Data collected from these events as well as from the administration of the DeFord (1985) Theoretical Orientation of Reading Profile helped create a triangulation of data used to support the trustworthiness and validity of this study.

This chapter outlined the theoretical framework, methodology, data collection and data analysis process of the study. Chapter four will provide a comprehensive account of the findings from the study and a description of the data analysis and interpretations of the researcher.

## Chapter 4 - Findings

To become empowered as professionals, pre-service teachers must be able to apply their knowledge and beliefs about reading and learning to read when making instructional decisions. The purpose of this study was to explore pre-service teachers' beliefs and practices and how they relate to their theoretical orientations to reading.

I conducted this study during the fall semester of the 2017/2018 school year between August 28, 2017 and November 13, 2017. In this study, I explored the ways in which pre-service teachers' enrolled in a literacy methods course and corresponding internship connected their beliefs and instructional practices to their theoretical orientations to reading. The results of this study provided to me a framework for beginning to answer the three questions and their respective sub-questions.

1. How do pre-service teachers discuss the influences on their theoretical orientations to reading?
  - a. Did the pre-service teachers' life experiences play a definitive role in what they believed to be true regarding literacy acquisition?
  - b. How did the pre-service teachers' experiences in the literacy methods course and corresponding internship influence their theoretical orientations to reading?
2. How do pre-service teachers connect their instructional practices and beliefs to their theoretical orientations to reading?
  - a. Do the pre-service teachers' practices align with their theoretical orientations to reading?

- b. How do the pre-service teachers discuss their beliefs about reading and learning to read?
3. What are the pre-service teachers' theoretical orientations to reading?
  - a. What were the pre-service teachers' theoretical orientations to reading at the beginning of the study?
  - b. What were the pre-service teachers' theoretical orientations to reading at the end of the study?

To further explore the relationship between pre-service teachers' theoretical orientation to reading and their beliefs and instructional practices, it was necessary to conduct in-depth interviews as a means of understanding. The purpose of the first interview was to give pre-service teachers the space to reconstruct and narrate their past life experiences that influenced their beliefs about reading and learning to read. I led the pre-service teacher participants, Selena, Martin, and Aleina, towards discussing their early reading experiences at home and at school that laid the foundation of their beliefs and attitudes about reading. These focused life histories gave a personal account of the knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes they have about reading and reading instruction. The second interview concentrated on the concrete details of the pre-service teachers' experiences specifically as students enrolled in the teacher education program at Sunflower University. This account served as a reconstruction of their daily lives as students in respect to their experiences in the literacy methods course. The primary purpose of this interview was to obtain information about the pre-service teachers' experiences as students in the literacy methods' course and how their theoretical orientations to reading intersected with their instructional practices. The final interview asked pre-service teachers to reflect on the meaning of their experiences. This required that they acknowledge the interactions of the influences in

their lives that have lead them to their current systems of belief, knowledge, and attitudes about reading and reading instruction. While the pre-service teacher participants engaged in making meaning of their experiences in all of the interviews, it was the third that primarily used meaning-making as the focal point of the interview.

### **Selena**

At the time of the study, Selena, a 29 year-old Hispanic female, had completed 15 credit hours in the Teacher Education program. She was considered a senior at the university with a grade point average of 3.53 and had recently transferred from a small community college with an Associate's degree in nursing.

Selena grew up in an impoverished, troubled home. One of eight siblings to grow up in a single parent household, life was difficult for Selena. The children were raised by their unemployed mother who supported the family on the meager social security income of their deceased father. Selena described her mother as being uninterested and uninvolved in the lives of her children. Although their mother was never abusive, her emotional absenteeism left a remarkable void in her children's lives. In addition to her troubled home life, Selena did not have many friends. Her extreme shyness kept her from developing friendships with the other children at school. On the other hand, while she may not have made many friends, the relationships she made with her teachers transformed school into a safe haven for her as a child.

I first met Selena last fall at a student recognition program for those new to Sunflower University. The program took place in a small town located close to where Selena lived. I was amazed by her incredible story as she told me her family, which included her husband and five children, were all moving with her so she could attend the university. She planned to enroll her

children in new schools and her husband would look for a construction job to support the family while she pursued her elementary education degree. The dedication and support of her entire family profoundly touched my heart. Unbeknownst to me, she would later become a participant in my study. Selena's previous graduation from community college, and her attendance at Sunflower University while she pursued a bachelor's degree, was monumental. Selena would become the first of her family to graduate from a university.

### **Martin**

At the time of the study, Martin, a 22 year old Caucasian male, had completed 10 credit hours in the Teacher Education program. He was considered a senior at Sunflower University with a grade point average of 3.3 and admitted he was unsure of his decision to become a teacher. He changed majors several times before he made the decision to pursue an elementary education degree.

Martin grew up in what most would consider to be an average middle class family. He was the third out of four children, with an older sister and brother, and a younger brother. Growing up, his father was a hardworking man who provided for his family on a daily basis. Both of his parents worked, and it was expected that when he grew up and completed college, he would eventually take over his grandfather's business. In a stereotypical fashion, Martin's father didn't get to spend a lot of time with him during the week, but always encouraged the children to excel in sports. His mother, on the other hand, who operated a daycare center, was always more concerned about his scholastic endeavors and less caring about his participation in sports.

Early on this dynamic created something of a dichotomy for Martin. He wanted to excel at sports, because that is what boys were supposed to do, but he also knew he was struggling in

school, especially with reading, and found it difficult to focus any time on getting better. In fact, he had really come to the conclusion that it was too difficult for him and started doing the bare minimum possible in order to just skate by. By the time he got to the third grade, he had made up his mind that he absolutely did not like to read. Throughout his life however, Martin eventually developed an interest in reading and claimed to enjoy reading books based on the Bible, sports, and leadership. Although it was hard for him to make time to read for pleasure as a college student, he still tried to squeeze it in whenever possible.

### **Aleina**

Aleina was a 20 year old female. She was considered a junior at the university with a grade point average of 4.0. At the time of the study, she had taken 6 credit hours in the Teacher Education program.

Aleina and her older sister by four years grew up in the country outside a small rural town in the Midwest. She was raised by her two parents in an average middle class home on the family farm. The nearest neighbors lived miles away which meant the sisters relied on each other for companionship and entertainment. Every Saturday morning, Aleina's mother took the girls to the library. The girls looked forward to the library visits as if it were a secret paradise awaiting their return. They were each allowed to check out ten books to occupy their minds for the week. They frequently chose the same books week after week just to hear their mother make their favorite characters come alive when she read to them. The characters in the stories became cherished childhood friends thanks to their mother's way of making the books come alive. Aleina fondly remembered some of her favorite titles such as, "I'll Love You Forever" by Robert Munsch. Aleina's mother would sing the song from the book each time she read it. Aleina hoped

to share the same book with her own children one day. In the evenings while their mother was busy putting the supper dishes away, the girls would take turns sitting with their father to enjoy one of their library books together before bedtime.

Often times, their grandmother would drop in for a visit to read to the girls as well. Their grandmother, a retired first-grade teacher, enjoyed reading to her granddaughters and never missed an opportunity to share her love of reading with them. Aleina loved to hear her grandmother's stories and believed her love of teaching profoundly influenced her life. "I always just felt happy and loved. Like, you are just sitting there cuddled up to your mom or your grandma reading a book to you" (Aleina, Interview One). The love for reading was instilled in Aleina and her sister at a young age thanks to their family experiences and the weekly trips to the library.

### **Professor Marshall**

Professor Marshall of the literacy methods course held a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education, a Master's Degree in Education Administration, and a Doctor of Philosophy in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis in Reading. She taught first grade in for 24 years before taking a job at Sunflower University in 2001. In order to obtain a better understanding of the possible influences on the pre-service teachers' beliefs regarding reading and learning to read, it was necessary to examine the theoretical orientations to reading of Professor Marshall, professor of the literacy methods course. For this reason, Professor Marshall was administered the DeFord (1985) Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP). The professor's score of 59 on the TORP indicated she primarily endorsed a decoding perspective or bottom-up philosophy of reading instruction.

### **Mrs. Jones**

Mrs. Jones, a kindergarten teacher at Nixon Elementary School, was Selena's internship mentor teacher. She had a bachelor's degree in elementary education and had been teaching in the school district for seven years. In order to obtain a better understanding of the influences on pre-service teachers' beliefs and practices regarding reading and learning to read, I administered the theoretical orientation to reading profile (TORP) to Mrs. Jones at the beginning of the study. Her score of 69 fell within the skills cluster parameters of 65-111 indicating she endorsed a skills approach to reading instruction.

### **Mrs. Smith**

Mrs. Smith, a kindergarten teacher at Taft Elementary School, was Martin's internship mentor teacher. She had a master's degree in early childhood and special education and had been teaching in the school district for twelve years. In order to obtain a better understanding of the influences on pre-service teachers' beliefs and practices regarding reading and learning to read, I administered the theoretical orientation to reading profile (TORP) to Mrs. Smith at the beginning of the study. Her score of 79 fell within the skills cluster parameters of 65-111 indicating she endorsed a skills approach to reading instruction.

### **Mrs. White**

Mrs. White, a kindergarten teacher at Nixon Elementary School, was Aleina's internship mentor teacher. She had a bachelor's degree in elementary education and had been teaching in the school district for nine years. In order to obtain a better understanding of the influences on pre-service teachers' beliefs and practices regarding reading and learning to read, I administered

the theoretical orientation to reading profile (TORP) to Mrs. White at the beginning of the study. Her score of 73 fell within the skills cluster parameters of 65-111 indicating she endorsed a skills approach to reading instruction.

## **RQ 1. How Do Pre-Service Teachers Discuss the Influences on Their Theoretical Orientations to Reading?**

Selena, Martin, and Aleina experienced drastically different events in their personal lives. Each came from different socioeconomic backgrounds, had different familial experiences, and recalled different home life experiences when it came to literacy acquisition. Despite their radically different life experiences, they each found themselves enrolled in the literacy methods course and corresponding kindergarten internship at Sunflower University preparing to become elementary educators. Because of their diverse backgrounds and experiences, I began to wonder what they believed about reading and learning to read. Did their life experiences play a definitive role in what they believed to be true regarding literacy acquisition and instruction? How did their experiences in the literacy methods course and corresponding internship influence their theoretical orientations?

### **1. a. Did the Pre-Service Teachers' Life Experiences Play a Definitive Role in What They Believed to be True Regarding Literacy Acquisition and Instruction?**

Our previous life histories shape who we are as individuals and provide the lens through which we interpret events in our daily lives (Tracey & Morrow, 2017). Because events in our lives are interpreted through various perspectives informed by our life histories, the pre-service teachers' stories of learning to read along with their home lives made me wonder how these experiences influenced their perspectives regarding reading and learning to read.

### **Selena's Life History Experiences**

One of eight siblings raised by a single mother, Selena grew up in an impoverished home. Selena and her siblings were never encouraged to keep up on schoolwork or to read at home. "...it wasn't encouraged or we didn't even think about it or we just didn't" (Selena, Interview One). In fact, Selena had little recollection of her early reading experiences as a young girl. "The only experiences I had was like the teacher reading to us, um, or us reading by ourselves only at school. At home, I didn't read that much or anything like that" (Selena, Interview One).

Selena's earliest memories of her literacy experiences were reading events that occurred at school. Early on, Selena learned the important role independent reading and read alouds had when building students' literacy skills. Selena struggled with reading fluency growing up in a home where multiple languages, primarily Spanish, was spoken. However, in spite of her struggles, and the fact that she didn't like to read, reading class was something she looked forward to if the teacher was dynamic and passionate about sharing a love for reading. Selena recalled enjoying silent reading time along with opportunities to hear books read aloud. "I enjoyed the teacher reading to us. She made it (the book) come alive" (Selena, Interview One).

Occasionally, the teacher would turn the books into reader's theater activities. The students would dress up as the characters and act out the story as the teacher read it aloud. "Dressing up as the characters and making the book come to life. We kind of read the book before and then the teacher gave us parts. Each person had to be a character" (Selena, Interview One). Although this particular teacher used strategies aimed at engaging readers, Selena admitted they did not immediately change her opinion about reading. Certainly, these reading events played a significant role in shaping Selena's beliefs regarding reading and learning to read. Reflecting on these positive experiences as a young girl, Selena was anxious to learn how to

become an effective teacher like those she fondly remembered. She believed it was important to follow best practices like allowing students to choose their own books to read, giving the students plenty of time in the classroom to read, and helping them select books that are at an appropriate level for them.

Selena discussed how she helped her own children read at home. She wanted them to have the home literacy experiences she herself did not receive. Most likely, these experiences influence her beliefs regarding literacy acquisition.

“For my daughter, I have a kindergartener and the teacher gives her a mini book at her level so she reads simple words like, “We can.” And then it goes, “We can jump. We can...” So my daughter reads a book to me every day. The same book. Just like repetition I think. I think that helps a lot because if it says, “We can jump.” They have a picture of animals or something jumping. She has special instructions like that worksheet that say, “Don’t tell her the words. You can help her sounding out the first sound like the J but don’t tell her the word.” So something like that. That was really good because I can see her like the first time that she brought it, she couldn’t read it that well. But once I helped her more, I can see her reading the whole book by herself now.”

### **Martin’s Life History Experiences**

Martin believed his home life had a profound impact on his belief regarding the importance of reading. His parents never forced their children to read at home. Therefore, Martin and his three siblings were often left to their own devices after they got home from school. In fact, Martin said the indifference towards reading in the home most likely caused reading struggles in both Martin and his younger brother.

“My parents never really forced us to read as much as they probably should have. That’s probably why I probably struggled a little bit. My brother struggled a little bit in reading as well because we really didn’t focus on it as much at home.” (Martin, Interview One)

Although their mother read to them at night and helped them with homework, reading was not of great importance. “We really didn’t focus too much on reading. That’s probably why I started out not too well when they say it’s really important to start young reading at home” (Martin, Interview One). While reading was not emphasized in his home growing up, Martin said his mother was a big influence on him growing up. She always took the time to read to them at night and help the children with their studies.

“Well, my mom runs a daycare so we have a lot of books, but I was just never interested in going and grabbing one to read. She was always busy with that stuff until 5:00 and then she was all tired. But she would read to us at night...She was always there helping me with homework at nights and talking me through things. She’s always been a good mentor to me.” (Martin, Interview One)

Martin struggled to read his first few years of school. At a young age, he had already made up his mind that he would not become a good reader. Third grade proved to be a year of transition in Martin’s young life thanks to the expertise of his classroom teacher, Mr. Brown. At the end of the previous school year, it was recommended that Martin be put on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) to address his reading difficulties. His third grade teacher thought differently of this decision and instead began to take a special interest in him. Having taught both his mother and father, Mr. Brown felt a close connection to Martin and made the effort to get to know him better.

“...I did not like reading. They wanted to give me an I.E.P. I didn’t enjoy reading. I wasn’t good at it. And then my third grade teacher was a male and he told my parents and the school because the school wanted to give it (I.E.P.) to me, but he fought against it. He said enjoy it. Find books that you like. He said, “He just needs to enjoy it.” I was into sports and didn’t really care. And he found some books that I should start enjoying, and then my reading level just sky rocketed. He was my mom’s teacher. He was my dad’s teacher. He was there for a while. He just sparked it in me that I actually do need to learn and I want to learn.” (Martin, Interview One)

Mr. Brown asked Martin about his interests and what he enjoyed doing in his free time. Using this information, he was able to suggest a variety of books Martin might enjoy reading. Instead of the popular chapter books most of his friends in third grade were reading, Martin especially liked books about animals, sports, and history. Mr. Brown always made sure to have plenty of these books on hand for Martin to read and tried to cater to his interests whenever possible. For instance, Mr. Brown knew he loved Native American history. When Martin came to school one morning, a large teepee was in the back of the classroom! Mr. Brown informed the class that the teepee was their new reading area. Martin couldn’t believe it! It was experiences like these that made Martin feel like his teacher really cared and believed in him.

“Well, it showed me that he actually cared about me and wanted me to do better in school when other teachers just let me slide by, pushing me on, putting me on an I.E.P.. But he actually took time out of his day to help me get better so I could be where my classmates were in the classroom.” (Martin, Interview One)

As Martin’s confidence in reading increased, his reading achievement improved as well. He used to get low scores on the Accelerated Reader (A.R.) quizzes he took, but soon he was

able to answer all of the questions correctly and actually began to enjoy it. Martin said his teacher used many different strategies in the classroom to make reading interesting and engaging. For instance, Martin remembered reading frequently with partners. Mr. Brown paired students together who had commonalities in their reading abilities or were perhaps friends. It was obvious to Martin that Mr. Brown spent the time and energy adequately pairing students together to help build student confidence and success. Reading was so important in Mr. Brown's classroom that Martin had difficulties remembering any other subjects he taught that year. It was obvious Mr. Brown valued reading evidenced by the amount of instructional time that was spent in the classroom each day learning and practicing.

“He did a lot of partners. You read with your partners and then they help you if you're messing up because he can't be around everyone at the same time. And it is someone you are usually comfortable with. He can kind of figure out who to couple you with and kind of just build off of each other. They can help you and you can help them kind of thing. We did a lot of A.R. (Accelerated Reading) back then. I don't know if they do that anymore or not. We did a lot of A.R. and I actually enjoyed it because the questions came up and I actually knew the answers. In the first and second grade, I didn't. So I was like, “I actually know this stuff! I've read this!” He really pushed hard in reading in third grade. I really don't remember any other subjects because I struggled so hard in reading. That's really what I remember the bulk of in third grade.” (Martin, Interview One)

Like many students who struggle to read, the reading gains he made in elementary school began to diminish as he entered his middle school years. Martin found himself struggling as he was expected to read more complex texts. He had difficulty comprehending the technical content area material and became embarrassed when he was forced to read aloud in class. In fact, it

caused him such a great degree of stress that he developed a stutter. Once again, an experienced teacher recognized Martin's difficulties and worked to help improve the deficiencies in his reading. During his eighth grade year, Martin received special reading services along with five other students. It was during this time that he met a dynamic language arts teacher. She suggested he read a book series she picked out for him. Martin recalled reading the entire four book series in less than a month. He had never done anything like that before! His teacher explained how important it was to find books that interested him. She continued to support and encourage him along with the other students during the school year.

“She actually found a series of books that I went through in like a month and there were four books! And I've never done that! And she was like, “You just really have to find the books that you enjoy. I can tell you struggle with books you don't care about because you are reading the words, but you are not processing it in your mind.” And she really pushed us.” (Martin, Interview One)

When Martin began taking classes at Sunflower University to become a teacher, he was one again influenced by a teacher. His Foundations of Education instructor had a profound impact on his reading experiences as a young adult. The instructor said if preservice teachers read a book a month, they could increase their knowledge and increase their intelligence. This was monumental to Martin because no one had ever told him he could actually increase his intelligence.

“He really helped us get into it (reading) more. He said when you want more knowledge, you need to read at least three to five books a year, or a book a month if you can, if you have the time for it. It just really helps you learn a whole lot more than you think. When

you're reading, you don't think you are learning anymore. You are just doing your school work and not doing anything extra." (Martin, Interview One)

Martin continued that he tried to read at least one book every two to three months because he understood the importance of reading.

### **Aleina's Life History Experiences**

Aleina experienced a literacy-rich home life growing up. In addition to weekly library visits and reading to the girls every night, Aleina's mother provided instructional videos emphasizing phonics skills.

"My mom still thinks that is why we are such good readers today because we just did phonics ALL the time. And we have an at-home phonics kit thing that we would go through...It was this set of VHS tapes and little books that came along with it...It was real interesting" (Aleina, Interview One)

By the time Aleina and her sister entered kindergarten they were already fluent readers. Their early literacy experiences at home became the foundation for the girls' reading successes. Aleina recalled reading at a ninth-grade reading level when she was in third grade. She attributed her reading achievement to the fact that she was surrounded by a variety of literacy events and phonics instruction at a very young age.

Elementary school proved to be a place where Aleina's love for reading continued to flourish. She believed this was largely due to the instructional practices her teachers used to promote literacy in the classroom. While the teachers in her early elementary school experiences focused more on phonics instruction, the teachers in her upper elementary classrooms seemed to understand the importance of allowing children time to read independently. In elementary school

and beyond, she remembered teachers dedicated at least twenty minutes a day for free reading time. Aleina loved this because she was allowed to read at her own pace, but still had the teacher nearby if she got stuck on a word.

“I remember that all the way through elementary school we had at least 20 minutes that was set aside each day so that we could sit there and read, which I thought was great. Because not only that, not only are you sitting there reading, but you get to read at your own pace.” (Aleina, Interview One)

Several of her teachers frequently shared read alouds. She recalled, “Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of Nihm” by Robert C. O’Brein as being one of her favorites. She believed the teachers used read alouds as a way to develop students’ listening comprehension while addressing the different learning needs in the classroom. She took notice of the fact that her teachers truly cared about their students and used a variety approaches to ensure all students had an equitable opportunity to learn.

“But yeah, I think that the way that the teachers I had growing up cared and really tried to reach every student versus blanketing everything like, “This is what we are going to learn because this is how most everyone learns.” But no! It wasn’t like that! They addressed every learning style and I think it helped a lot.” (Aleina, Interview One)

In addition to read alouds and free reading time, Aleina enjoyed the spelling lessons that were part of the school’s literacy curriculum. Each week the students studied twenty new words reflecting specific structural analysis skills and completed worksheet activities in their spelling books. At the end of the week, students took a spelling test to demonstrate their mastery of these skills. Aleina loved spelling lessons because she was good at them. In fact, she won two spelling

bees in junior high school. She attributed her success to the phonics instruction she received early in her childhood.

“I loved spelling and I am still pretty good at spelling. And so I think that has a connection to reading as well, being able to see those words and visually being able to put that in front of you and remember the words. When you get to where you have to spell them out or sound them out, you kind of have to remember coming across those words when you are reading on your own.” (Aleina, Interview One)

In addition to the weekly spelling lessons, new vocabulary words were also taught as part of the literacy curriculum. Teachers created the vocabulary lists based on selected words from the story the class was reading. Students were to complete vocabulary worksheets by finding the definition of the words using a traditional dictionary or their laptops. After defining the words, students then used each of the vocabulary words in a sentence making sure to spell each word correctly and follow correct sentence structure. “We had quite a bit of vocabulary...She (teacher) would have premade worksheets that she would make and print out for everybody” (Aleina, Interview One).

Although vocabulary lessons were not always her favorite, Aleina’s love for learning across the English Language Arts content was further demonstrated in the joy she found during grammar lessons using the Shurley Method. She recalled the excitement she shared with her best friend when it was time to take out their Shurley books. They loved learning the catchy jingles and often practiced them together just for fun. Aleina often found herself singing the jingles at home for the listening enjoyment of her parents. Not only were the lessons fun, but she also gained a deeper understanding of sentence structure. Further, the lessons informed her syntactic cueing system increasing the development of her literacy skills. “I remember my classmates

hated it so much. But me and my best friend...when it was time for English, we were like, “Yes!” I LOVED the Shurley Method and loved doing all of the songs and the parts of speech” (Aleina, Interview One).

From the beginning, Aleina was able to read fluently. She could “zip through stuff” rather quickly but it took her a while to grasp the comprehension aspect of her reading. She would often reason with herself that she just needed to read at a good rate to avoid getting made fun of by her peers and to maintain her higher reading level. It took her a while to realize that reading at a good rate wasn’t the only thing that made a good reader. She began using metacognitive strategies to monitor her thinking as she read the material. She would ask herself questions after finishing each paragraph to make sure she understood the story.

### **1. b. How Did the Pre-Service Teachers’ Experiences in the Literacy Methods Course and Corresponding Internship Influence Their Theoretical Orientations?**

The literacy methods course proved to be a challenge to pre-service teachers as this was the first methods course they took in the teacher preparation program. Along with the course, their first corresponding internship experience was also required. As I began to contemplate the development of pre-service teachers’ theoretical orientations to reading, I wondered if the literacy methods course and the corresponding internship influenced their beliefs regarding reading and learning to read. In what ways might the pre-service teachers’ beliefs about reading and learning to read be influenced? How did pre-service teachers discuss the influences the literacy methods course and corresponding internship have on their theoretical orientations? In what ways did these experiences inform their beliefs about reading and learning to read?

### **Selena's Literacy Methods/Internship Experiences**

When I visited the kindergarten internship classroom to observe Selena, it was evident to me that the mentor teacher relied heavily on the scripted reading program the district provided. In a typical daily reading workshop lesson, the students watched several short movies, sang a phonics song, and worked to complete photocopied alphabet booklets. There was little direct instruction during the reading workshop time and according to Selena, the mentor teacher often seemed unprepared. In fact, it seemed as though the scripted program had replaced the need for the mentor teacher to make her own instructional decisions. For instance, Selena commented that the mentor teacher did not include many of the strategies she learned about in the literacy methods course. She believed these strategies and practices were an important part of effective literacy instruction.

“I never saw them practice sight words in class. I think I would go over the sight words in class. Because those are the words that children will come upon more often. If they know their sight words and they see it, they will read better and start reading more.”

(Selena, Interview Three)

Therefore, it seemed Selena learned more about teaching the scripted program than she did of important foundational reading instruction concepts. For instance, Selena she used the vernacular of the scripted program to discuss concepts she believed were necessary in reading instruction.

“I think you have to use those because you teach them like...I don't know what comes...But there are categories like picture power, partner power, pointer power, all different powers they need to practice doing. I think it is a combination of all of them that they can read. They can use different powers.” (Selena, Interview Three)

In addition to the lack-luster presentation of the scripted program, the classroom was often chaotic and disorganized. It was common for at least half of the children to be extremely off-task during partner reading time. Instead of walking around the room to monitor student reading, the teacher would frequently busy herself with other things and forget to watch the clock. It was not uncommon for the children to be off-task for 15 to 20 minutes of the 60 minute literacy block. Additionally, Selena discussed how the mentor teacher was often unprepared. In Selena's words, she "winged" it by frequently reading lessons straight out of the teacher's manual without previewing them first. Although Selena thought the children still learned from the lessons, she felt they would learn more if the teacher was better prepared.

Selena believed it was the experiences in the literacy methods course rather than the corresponding internship that seemed to influence her opinions regarding how children learn to read.

"Through my courses, I realized that reading is a very important part of teaching. I think reading is the most important subject because if students don't know how to read, then they won't be able to read their math problems, read a social studies passage, or anything that involves reading. I have been working hard in trying to understand reading by reading the text, highlighting, and rereading. I think this method will help students as well." (Selena, Interview Three)

Because of her experiences in the course, she believed children learn to read in steps with plenty of practice. "I feel like now I know how to actually teach literacy, all the different steps and guided reading. All sorts of things I just learned" (Selena, Interview Three). Admittedly, she hadn't realized learning to read could be so complex. Initially, she believed that children learn to read by pointing to the words. Prior to the literacy methods course, she had little knowledge of

the major components of reading instruction such as fluency, comprehension, phonics, phonemic awareness, and vocabulary, or their involvement in the process of learning to read. She now believes each component plays an important part in reading and in learning to read. “I think you need all of them. You need to be a good reader to comprehend good. Probably not all of them at the same time, but work with each of them (Selena, Interview Two).

When asked if her beliefs about reading and learning to read had changed since she had been in the literacy methods course and internship she thought they had. “Yeah, more with the literacy methods class because the professor does a very good job teaching us how to teach reading. (Selena, Interview Two). The limited teaching experiences, and the adherence to the scripted reading program, left Selena feeling as though she hadn’t learned much during the internship. For instance, the mentor teacher did not always seem to make her feel welcomed, which added to Selena’s frequent disappointment of her internship experience. When asked if she felt the internship had changed her beliefs about reading she said she didn’t think so.

“For this one, I don’t feel like I am learning too much. Sometimes when I am there I feel like I am not even there because she won’t let me do anything. She kind of gives me the cold shoulder. I feel like if I was with a different teacher it would be different. I hear other students say they are with a teacher and they get to teach mini-lessons every Tuesday but I don’t get to do that. I just do little stuff like walk around the room and see what they are doing.” (Selena, Interview Two)

### **Martin’s Literacy Methods/Internship Experiences**

When I arrived to observe Martin in the kindergarten internship classroom, I was immediately impressed with the room arrangement and classroom décor. It was obvious to me

that creating a literacy-rich environment was important to the mentor teacher. For example, there were two separate areas for vocabulary work. The word wall took a prominent place in the classroom and covered a good majority of wall space. Week by week, new words were added to the wall and students were encouraged to frequent it during creative writing. There was also a smaller bulletin board that contained content words the students were learning during the week such as pumpkin pie, potatoes, and turkey. The students were encouraged to use these words when writing stories about Thanksgiving dinner. On the opposite side of the room where the children met during circle time, a poster hung on the white board. It displayed a paragraph the students had written as part of a language experience approach exercise earlier that morning. Labels had been placed all around the classroom that indicated the names of materials and frequently visited spaces. It seemed the opportunity to read was everywhere in the room.

Martin was impressed by the mentor teacher's abilities to create a warm and inviting classroom. He liked that she had the alphabet prominently displayed in three places around the classroom and that there were opportunities to read something everywhere students looked. He thought this was crucial for students learning to read because everywhere they went they saw new learning opportunities.

During the first few semesters at Sunflower University, Martin continued to question his decision until he began his first internship experience. Martin recalled the apprehension he had towards his abilities to teach the kindergarten children in the internship classroom and was shocked that the mentor teacher asked him to begin working with struggling readers the first day. Initially wanting to observe the teacher from the sidelines, Martin was forced into teaching on his very first day. While he admitted it terrified him at the time, he also said it was extremely helpful because he had no time to second guess his abilities to help the struggling children. At the end of

the day, he felt excited. Further, the experience on the first day made him feel more confident in his abilities, and most important, his decision to become a teacher.

Martin said his experiences in the literacy methods course and in the internship provided him many valuable learning opportunities.

“It’s very shocking, but so helpful. I am in kindergarten for my internship so they are really struggling. I take my literacy thoughts and throw them in there to help them read and write. I never...I would have told them, “Here, just follow my hand. And that’s how you do it.” But the literacy methods course helped me sound out the words to them instead of just giving the word to them. It’s been really helpful. A lot!” (Martin, Interview Two)

He greatly enjoyed his time in the kindergarten classroom and wished he could remain there for future internships. He learned a lot from the mentor teacher as she provided him with ideas on how to improve his instruction. He especially appreciated the fact that he used everything he had learned in the literacy methods course when writing his formal lesson plan. Further, he witnessed the mentor teacher using the strategies and practices he learned about in the literacy methods course. For example, both the literacy methods professor and the mentor teacher used the same hand motions when they taught students to sound out words.

Martin was surprised by how complicated learning to read actually was for a young child. In the literacy methods course, the professor gave the pre-service teachers a pretest on phonograms students in early elementary school are taught. Martin said he was shocked by his inability to pass a simple assessment meant for kindergarten and first graders. He was amazed that his brain was able to read words including the phonograms automatically, but he struggled to read them in isolation in the same way a first grader would. Martin said the lessons he learned in

the literacy methods course actually helped him since he missed so much of the foundational lessons in reading during his earlier years in grade school.

“We went over phonics today and we were all just shocked. We all didn’t know what was going on. We did a pretest and we were all just messing up. We were like, this is kindergarten stuff and first grade. We have it in our brains but we just don’t remember the easy steps that you start with. It’s crazy that she is taking us down and building us up. It’s this word goes with this...Oh, that makes it way easier. Actually, I am enjoying it. It’s kind of what I didn’t get in first and second grade because I wasn’t there with reading and everything. I feel like it’s going to build me up to know more with what I struggled with. Now learning it when I am older is gonna help me out a lot I think.” (Martin, Interview One).

### **Aleina’s Literacy Methods/Internship Experiences**

When I arrived to observe Aleina in the kindergarten internship classroom, I was hard pressed to locate a specific reading area in the classroom. Behind the mentor teacher’s desk, a set of tall cabinets lined the wall. The mentor teacher had placed decorations including the names of colors on the cabinet doors. The decorations on the side of the cabinet included the days of the week. A media table that housed the mentor teacher’s laptop and projector was next to the cabinets. The entire area looked more like a continuation of the mentor teacher’s office area than an area of instruction for the students.

Across the room, a shelving unit stood against the wall containing clipboards, cups of markers, paper, and other supplies one might expect to see in a literacy center. However, the shelving was stacked high making the majority of the supplies out of the student’s reach. The

word wall was located on the wall adjacent to the shelving unit. The word wall was the most spacious of all the literacy displays, but it was sadly empty and appeared never to have been used. Baskets containing books and folders were placed on all of the tables. There was one book shelf in the classroom that contained some high-interest non-fiction titles, and next to the shelf was a stack of comfy seat cushions for students to use during free reading time.

The classroom also lacked characteristics commonplace in most kindergarten classrooms. For instance, there were no desks in the classroom like one would expect to see in a typical kindergarten classroom. Instead, the students sat at kidney shaped and rectangle tables absent of nametags or personalization. Also missing from the classroom were seasonal decorations. There were no decorations such as leaves, acorns, or pumpkins to indicate it was fall. I found this to be particularly strange as most grade school classrooms are heavily decorate with seasonal items, especially around Halloween and Thanksgiving. In general, the classroom setting had an unorganized and haphazard arrangement not conducive for fostering student learning.

Aleina mentioned how nervous she was about the thought of teaching lessons to children in the internship. She had never done anything like that before and had reservations about her abilities.

“I feel a lot more comfortable at this point. At the beginning I was very nervous. I thought, “Oh my goodness! I can’t talk in front of them! I am not a teacher. I can’t do that in front of them yet!” I was nervous at the beginning and remember thinking, “What if I can’t do this? What if I can’t actually be a teacher? This is terrifying to be with these kindergarteners. They are all over the place and I am actually trying to get them to focus and it is not working!” The first couple of weeks were very difficult for me and it was very eye-opening. (Aleina, Interview Three)

When asked about the most influential experiences in the literacy methods course and corresponding internship, Aleina said the professor influenced her the most..

“I would say my professor. She is amazing! A lot of her ideas are ideas that make sense to me. Even as someone who doesn’t have a lot of background in teaching reading... it has been like when she says it, a lightbulb comes on like, “Well, yeah! Of course! That makes sense!” A lot of her ideas I hope to be able to use, those... and be able to use the resources she has provided us in class and everything. To keep a hold of those for when I am a teacher and build on my professional library. Have those documents downloaded on my computer so I can use them like the jingles and flashcards. Those methods and things that she has gone over just make sense at this point.” (Aleina, Interview Two)

According to Aleina, the professor’s influence on her beliefs about reading, along with the concepts she learned, were an integral part of her success. Aleina hoped to use her professor’s ideas and resources provided in the literacy methods course to offer a strong literacy foundation for students in her future classroom. Her professor instilled in Aleina the desire to make learning fun and interesting whenever possible. The professor modeled this through her enthusiasm for learning along with teaching lessons in an engaging manner. Instead of simply assigning reading material, lecturing with power point presentations, and assigning quizzes, the professor taught lessons using strategies and engaging activities, and encouraged them to do the same.

The literacy methods course and internship provided many meaningful learning opportunities Aleina would not have experienced from merely reading the textbook. Therefore, Aleina’s confidence in her abilities to work with students dramatically improved. Bolstering her assurance, she was recently offered a paraprofessional position in the district she grew up.

“I walked into the semester not having any kind of background at all about teaching reading. So everything I learned has been from my professor. I have noticed that everything she has taught us the mentor teacher practices in the classroom like the phonics dance. They have a song that focuses on the sounds and it goes through each letter of the alphabet, like a little jingle that goes with each letter. So as far as phonics goes, it is very similar to what we have learned in class. There are a lot of aspects I have noticed that he teacher goes with like learning phonics, learning the letters, learning how to read, like how to get the words without having to struggle through it, doing it in chunks at a time. So I didn’t have any background at all about how to teach reading but all of the methods my professor has gone over, the different ways to teach and go about it have been used in the teacher’s classroom. It is nice to have a teacher where it connects so well because you can see...You learn about it in the course and then you see it done by the mentor teacher. It is really helpful.” (Aleina, Interview Three)

## **RQ 2. How Do Pre-Service Teachers Connect Their Instructional Practices and Beliefs to Their Theoretical Orientations to Reading?**

After reading a plethora of research articles both agreeing and disagreeing that teachers connect their practices to their theoretical orientations, I wanted to investigate this ongoing debate further in this study. I wanted to explore how pre-service teachers connected both their beliefs (what they say they believe to be true about reading and learning to read) and their instructional practices to the reading perspective they seemed to endorse. I wanted to know if their practices aligned with their theoretical orientations to reading. Furthermore, I wanted to explore how they discussed their beliefs about reading and learning to read.

## **2. a. Do Pre-Service Teachers' Practices Align with Their Theoretical Orientation to Reading?**

Because the pre-service teachers often do not display a large knowledge base regarding instructional practices that support literacy acquisition, most of what they know and do in the classroom is a direct result from instruction in the literacy methods course and corresponding internship. For this reason, I found studying their instructional practices of great interest. I was intrigued to investigate whether or not pre-service teachers practice what they claim to believe to be true regarding reading and learning to read.

### **Selena's Instructional Practices**

Throughout the duration of the study, I asked Selena questions relating to her teaching practices and decisions in order to explore whether or not her instructional practices connected to her theoretical orientation to reading. Her responses in the interviews, along with the game she created as part of an assignment for the literacy methods course, suggested she endorsed a phonics approach to reading.

“I think as you begin to teach them how to read, they have to know phonics. How do they know how to read the word if they don't know how to read it? I think phonics and then you work up from that. Phonics, and then sight words, and then comprehension.” (Selena, Interview Three)

As part of an assignment in the literacy methods course, Selena was to develop a game to play with the children during the internship. Selena created a game called, “Feed the Monsters.” The monsters' bodies were made from small buckets and foam balls decorated with wiggly eyes and pipe cleaners serving as their heads. Each monster had a different rime written on their front,

and students were to match the correct rime with onsets that were displayed one at a time on index cards. When a word was created, and the match was correct, the children fed the monster the word. Initially, Selena had planned to play this game with the entire class. However, the mentor teacher reasoned with Selena that it might be better to play the game in small groups. Selena was happy to take the mentor teacher's advice and realized this gave individual children more time to play the game and master the phonics-based concept.

I discovered that although she seemed to endorse a phonics approach to reading and learning to read, her instructional practices represented a variety of theoretical orientations. For example, Selena frequently discussed the possibility of using graphic organizers in her lessons to increase student reading comprehension. "Teachers can read a chapter and kind of have them (students) do a graphic organizer to find the setting, the plot. Everything that they can keep track on the graphic organizer throughout the book" (Selena, Interview Two). Graphic organizers are constructivist by nature and therefore are typically considered to support a whole language approach to reading.

Selena's response regarding how assessment might be used in the classroom seemed to represent a skills orientation to reading. A skills approach to reading assumes that assessment is primarily used to drive instruction. When I asked Selena how she might use assessment in the classroom, she was unsure, but had a few ideas of why it might be necessary. She said teachers often assigned reading levels based on assessments. Reading goals could then be set to encourage students to raise their reading levels.

"Kind of like, see where they are at like reading levels. Try to get them to increase their level depending on...I think they have tests. Do they do that?...And then see how good they score on their test and then if they scored high enough they can go to a higher

reading grade or level. If they scored low, they can try to find a book that's at their level.”

(Selena, Interview Two)

Although Selena had learned a variety of teaching strategies and activities in the literacy methods course, she had difficulty discussing what she might teach for her formal lesson assignment. “I haven't got that far yet. Right now I haven't looked at my formal or what I am going to do” (Selena, Interview Two). Through a series of additional questions, I attempted to elicit responses in order to help her draw out how she might develop a lesson for the assignment. However, it was to no avail. “I don't know yet. I haven't thought about it...I don't understand the question” (Selena, Interview Two). The following month, Selena was scheduled to teach her formal lesson. It was quite interesting to me that when the time came, Selena did not consider her own ideas about what she would to teach, but instead, went along with the mentor teacher's wishes regarding the lesson plan. Because the mentor teacher strictly adhered to the district's scripted reading program, Selena was forced to teach directly from the script herself. As a result, she had mixed feelings about this.

“I felt like I was limited...Limited to only using that and not bringing in my own ideas.

Everything that was in there I felt like I had to do it because that is how she did, it was her style, the way her students were learning.” (Selena, Interview Three)

Selena didn't necessarily have a problem with the scripted material, but thought teachers should adapt it if necessary to meet the needs in the classroom. This was quite different from the way her mentor teacher taught.

“I feel like that teachers should use it as an example, not like a manuscript. On there, you can see the teacher is talking and saying, “Okay students, do this.” And you should get this response. But what if you don't get that response? I think you should just use that for

example. Like still use the terms because other teachers are using it, too.” (Selena, Interview Three)

### **Martin’s Instructional Practices**

Martin seemed to initially display a whole language orientation to reading at the beginning of the study. When asked how he might determine student growth in reading he responded by saying he would use read alouds to determine student comprehension and vocabulary growth through context clues. He believed students who participated in their own learning showed growth. He further added that tests (formal assessments) don’t necessarily determine this kind of student growth. His comments seemed to be representative of a whole language approach to reading where more focus is placed on the kind of knowledge the students construct rather than on their performance on an assessment.

“If they are reading aloud and they are struggling and then you see improvement on a word they didn’t know last week and they know it this week... Assessment is very important. Tests...not completely ... it’s not really the test. It is how involved... and participation more than tests. Because tests are kind of where they remember and pass on rather than grow with it.” (Martin, Interview Two)

Furthermore, Martin believed vocabulary was the most important aspect of reading. “You’ve got to know your vocabulary before you go in. You’ve got to build yourself up when reading or you’re not going to get it. Like pronunciation and that kind of stuff. I think it is very important” (Martin, Interview One). When I asked him what a typical reading lesson in his classroom might look like, he responded by mentioning comprehension activities that aligned with the whole language perspective. It appeared to me that Martin thought having students

understand and create meaning from reading events was important. On several different occasions early in the study, he seemed to display an endorsement to a constructivist, whole language approach to reading and learning to read. “Read out loud to them and see who is understanding it. Watch the cues of the kids...Read the book first, and then get some vocab words, maybe do a venn diagram or something” (Martin, Interview One).

At the beginning of the study, Martin said he was unsure about the materials he would use in his future classroom and in fact, had a difficult time discussing them. He identified that he would use whisper phones, white boards, poster paper to be used during the language experience approach, and sentence strips. I found it interesting that when he attempted to describe the materials used to teach literacy, he actually described the classroom of his mentor teacher in the internship classroom. He primarily focused on her instructional practices which exemplified a blended approach to literacy.

“I am not sure on that. Maybe a board. There are all kinds of stuff that you have got to have. ABC’s and numbers all over the room. I think it is important to have reading stations. They have this talk thing, whisper phones. They talk out loud so students who like to talk can just whisper read in there. And they have comfortable spots to read. She just draws sticks for who does that. I think that it is important to be comfortable when you are reading, the environment, instead of just sitting at the desks the whole time. I think that paper like I explained is really important to literacy and a board where you have a sentence with sight words. And the sight words go on it. You have the five words and the sentences go on it and the students have to put them in sentences. I think it is important for kindergarteners to have their own sight words.” (Marin, Interview Two)

Martin went on to describe how his mentor teacher used some of these materials in her classroom. There was no doubt in my mind that he was greatly influenced by his experiences in the internship classroom.

“Watching my mentor teacher, she uses a lot of...It’s like two or three lines of writing with the dotted line in the middle and then a huge top for their drawing. So they will write a sentence of what they are thinking. She will ask them a lot. She’ll have them lay down and close their eyes and she’ll ask them to envision what they are doing at recess. What are they doing at school? And then they will go write down and draw a picture of it. I think that is a really cool idea. It makes them visualize it and then write it down and draw it. They are kind of in the scribble stage with art, but I can envision doing something like that.” (Martin, Interview Two)

Martin often discussed the importance of vocabulary in reading instruction. Therefore, I assumed he would not hesitate to choose this for his future formal lesson he was to teach. When I asked him what he was planning for his formal lesson, Martin said he hadn’t given it much thought yet as it was still early in the semester. However, during our discussion, it was obvious to me that he was considering a lesson similar to what his mentor teacher frequently did in the classroom.

“I haven’t thought that much about it yet. It is kindergarten and they are so low down on the totem pole. You kind of have to start from scratch with them. I don’t know if I would just do a writing lesson because they do a lot of sight words in writing. So I might ask the teacher what the new sight word might be and kind of incorporate a lesson to include the sight word. And maybe a drawing with a story including the sight word.” (Martin, Interview Two)

When it got closer to the date of his formal lesson, Martin asked his mentor teacher for advice on what to teach. She gave him several options such as a lesson on fluency, rhyming, or CVC words, although she hoped he would focus on fluency. Martin chose a lesson on CVC words. He reasoned that everyone in the literacy methods classroom chose rhyming or fluency lessons. He wanted to do something different, something more challenging. The mentor teacher agreed, but cautioned him that students might not be ready for this concept until after the first of the year when she typically taught it. Therefore, if the students did not understand the new concept, she didn't want Martin to feel bad. It would take them some time to build up to it. I found it interesting that Martin chose this lesson as it did not align with his endorsement of a whole language approach to reading and learning to read.

Towards the end of the study, it seemed Martin's approach to reading instruction had changed. When I asked him to discuss what he was thinking when he created his formal lesson plan as part of his literacy methods course assignment, his response seemed to exemplify approaches to reading instruction different than whole language. It seemed he had somewhat moved away from authentic reading experiences and had moved towards practices endorsed by a skills approach. "I think it (formal lesson) was a mix of that because I know they still need vocab and sight word consistency. They need to see it a lot. That is why I went over the flash cards multiple times before we even went to the sentence strips because that is how I got the vibe from the class that they need to see it multiple times and then do a little activity and then go put it on paper." (Martin, Interview Three)

At the end of the study, I asked Martin to describe what a first grade reading lesson might look like in his future classroom. Instead of focusing on vocabulary as he did at the beginning of the study, Martin instead described a phonics lesson. "In first grade that is really when you need

to push on all of that. They are learning sounds and phonics so I feel like those things would be more important than vocabulary (Martin, Interview Three).

### **Aleina's Instructional Practices**

During the study, Aleina described instructional practices she might use in the classroom that represented a variety of reading perspectives. For instance, she believed incorporating vocabulary instruction during group reading was important because it gave students the chance to hear words used in context while developing a working understanding of the definitions. She added that developing listening skills and building students' vocabulary would in turn support their comprehension. This seemed to represent a whole language approach to reading as students used meaning and grammatical cues to identify unknown words in context. Further supporting a whole language approach to reading, Aleina believed lessons should include assessments like graphic organizers which are typically thought of to be constructivist-based strategies.

Aleina also discussed instructional practices that represented a skills approach to reading and learning to read. For example, she believed that reading instruction should include a mixture of direct instruction and independent reading. She also added that she believed children learn to read through repetition and plenty of opportunities to practice.

Aleina's understanding of developmentally appropriate instruction and her endorsement of reading perspectives was challenged in the internship classroom. The mentor teacher in the kindergarten internship classroom often gave the students opportunities to read independently which is a common practice in whole language instruction. The students selected a book and choose a comfortable spot in the classroom to read by themselves. After independent reading, the children then shared their books with a partner.

Aleina had conflicting ideas about using independent reading in the early grades. While she believed independent reading built students' social skills needed in group work, she was not sure how effective it truly was for emergent readers. She reasoned that because kindergarten students are typically not fluent readers, they might end up off task staring at the pages. Aleina's concern was justified as the National Reading Panel (2000) recommended emergent readers received adequate instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics skills. Furthermore, this was an issue of concern that prevented teacher buy-into the new scripted curriculum. Some teachers did not believe it supported the needs of young readers. I found this of great interest because when I observed Aleina in the internship classroom, I often saw a large majority of the students off task during the independent and partner reading times.

When we first discussed Aleina's plans for her formal lesson she would teach later in the semester, she was unsure of what she might do. She said the children were currently learning color words along with a phonics song and dance. They were also working on basic manuscript skills when learning to write new letters. The children were only able to read a handful of sight words and were just beginning to develop an understanding of phonics and the alphabetic principle. She hoped the children might be able to read a little better and comprehend what they were reading before the formal lesson instead of just looking at the pictures and guessing the words. Although she had not put much thought into what she might do for her formal lesson, she said she wanted to incorporate grammar using the Shurley Method even though the children hadn't learned much about it so far in the classroom. The professor taught the class some beginning jingles, reminding her of the enjoyment she got from reciting them as a young girl. Aleina reasoned that the Shurley Method helped her get better at writing sentences and that grammar was one of the building blocks of reading and writing. Therefore, she wanted to

emphasize grammar in her formal lesson. . Her rationale seemed to represent her tendency to endorse a skills approach to reading.

I met with Aleina again after she taught her formal lesson. Although she envisioned herself doing something with grammar, her mentor teacher asked her to teach the students a lesson on rhyming instead because they really struggled with this. The mentor teacher initially taught rhyming at the beginning of the school year and commented that the children had difficulties in this area. Therefore, she preferred that Aleina teach rhyming because it was an area of significant weakness in students' learning. As part of the anticipatory set, Aleina brought in a duffle bag containing some mystery items. From the bag, she took out a small baseball bat and asked students to name the item. She did the same for a hat. She then asked the students if bat and hat sounded similar. She repeated this process with all of the items in the bag until it was empty. She used these examples to begin her discussion about rhyming words. Next, she read aloud a book she had borrowed from the literacy methods professor. While she read the book, she asked a student volunteer to record tally marks on the dry erase board for every rhyming word pair the class identified. Following the read aloud, she provided a worksheet assessment on which students were to connect pictures of things that rhymed. This lesson therefore, appeared to endorse a phonics approach to reading as it seemed to emphasize letter-sound relationships and words.

Although she initially wanted to teach a lesson about grammar, Aleina was pleased with the formal lesson and felt confident about her teaching performance. She was especially happy in her ability to capture the attention of her students at the beginning of the lesson. As a young girl, she remembered how excited she got when her teachers would bring special items from their

home to share with the class. Her memories inspired her to do the same with the students she taught in the classroom.

Aleina believed teachers can informally assess students by observing them in the classroom. She believed the purpose of reading assessments was to determine how much students were able to comprehend from the last chapter or section covered in class. How students performed on tests indicated whether or not students learned the material presented in class and if the teacher needed to change instructional strategies. A skills approach to reading supports the belief that students should be assessed in meaningful contexts where the assessment is used to drive further instruction. Aleina's beliefs regarding assessment seemed to exemplify a skills approach to reading and learning to read.

The professor had recently discussed using a before-during-after graphic organizer as a read aloud strategy. Aleina felt this particular strategy would not work in the kindergarten class she was currently in unless it was adapted because the students are not able to write very well. Instead of writing, the students could draw pictures of story events. Therefore, she concluded that it is necessary for her to keep the students' abilities in mind when planning instruction.

## **2. b. How Do Pre-Service Teachers Discuss Their Beliefs About Reading and Learning to Read?**

Pre-Service teachers often have difficulties discussing what they believe about reading and learning to read (Lortie, 1975). The pre-service teachers in my study further exemplified Lortie's (1975) claim when asked to discuss and elaborate on their beliefs regarding reading and learning to read. While they were able to discuss their general beliefs about reading, each of my three participants had difficulties describing the reading perspective they appeared to endorse.

### **Selena's Discussion Regarding Beliefs**

Selena struggled to read all of her life and never really saw the value in it until she began going to college. Certainly, her opinion and belief about the value of reading has changed significantly.

“I didn't think reading was that important. But, now I see that it is everywhere. You have to be able to read...I didn't think there was so much involved in reading. Because there are a whole bunch of things in reading like comprehension, fluency, the ABCs, I didn't think there was that much involved. But now I see the importance of each one...(In my classroom), I think the focus will be reading. Like in the morning, you will have reading groups. And I think you will have to focus more on it than any other subjects because you have to be able to read to do the other subjects.” (Selena, Interview Three)

I asked Selena to discuss her beliefs about how children learn to read and what kind of activities she might use in the classroom to teach children reading concepts. She believed it was essential for students to have plenty of opportunities to practice reading. In other words, she believed children learn to read by reading often.

“Just all kind of activities. Not always the same. So we can have read alouds. Somebody reading to another person. Have the book read to you. Just different kinds of activities. I am not really sure what kinds yet. But you can have groups take turns and do different activities.” (Selena, Interview One)

Selena's mentor teacher strictly adhered to a scripted reading program in the internship classroom. Towards the end of the study, I asked Selena if she believed her beliefs had changed regarding how children learn to read. She concluded that they had changed and reasoned that

children should not be expected to read right away. The teacher needed to “work them up.” She went on to describe the steps to follow using the scripted program.

“There are some steps, like you have powers. Next week you will have other powers...It says you have picture powers, pointer powers. You have partner powers. So if they learn those, that is how they can improve on their reading...They point to the word and they have to say things like, “I see a garden.” And then they have to use their finger to point to the words when they read them...For the mini lesson I am doing (picture power) they don’t specifically go into detail like sound it out. And I have to tell them to do. I think it is very important to sound it out. Like the /b/ sound.” (Selena, Interview Three)

Selena believed it was important for teachers to model good reading habits in order to set an example for their students.

“I feel like as a teacher I need to read more myself so that I can teach them how to be good readers...Because, as a teacher, you’ll be doing a lot of reading and teaching reading so it’s important for the teacher to know how to read to be able to teach reading.” (Selena, Interview Three)

While Selena had many beliefs regarding the value of reading, she had difficulties discussing her beliefs in relation to the theoretical perspective she endorsed. When asked at the end of the study if she felt her beliefs about reading and learning to read had changed, she demonstrated an inability to articulate her beliefs. “I don’t know. I forgot what they was” (Selena, Interview Three). In fact, when I informed her that she endorsed a decoding perspective, she wasn’t able to discuss this further with me. “I think still decoding. I don’t think that has changed” (Selena, Interview Three).

### **Martin's Discussion Regarding Beliefs**

At the beginning of the study, Martin said children learn to read at a young age by reading books about animals and the ABC's. He said it was important for students to hear the words they are thinking about in their heads. "You've got to hear what you are saying in your head and say it out loud" (Martin, Interview Two). He believed children start at a young age learning small words and gradually learn more complex words as they get older. "In kindergarten, you are teaching easy words that we all know, like sight words. You kind of build on them until you're in high school. Then in high school it is literature. You just have to teach it broad" (Martin, Interview Two).

Initially, Martin believed students learned to read primarily by learning and focusing on using vocabulary words. After completing the internship, he said vocabulary and sight words were stepping stones to comprehension. He said he also now recognized the importance of teaching students to break words apart to sound them out. He also said students need multiple opportunities to see and use new words.

"It does show that you really have to sound out the words to them multiple times before they hear it. It might be the third time before they hear that letter in there and that sound they need to put on the paper. It has become way more important to me. You have to know each step. Each fluency, comprehension, all of that to make them become a good reader and a good writer. It is way more important than I thought. I thought it was just a stepping stone. But no, it's crucial to have in the classroom that is for sure. (Martin, Interview Three)

When asked how his beliefs about reading and learning to read might influence his instructional practices he alluded to his beliefs regarding the importance of student motivation.

He said it was easy for him to understand the struggling students in the classroom because he used to be just like them. He said when students want to give up it is important to encourage them that they can do it. He believed the students' frustration to read could stem from not being encouraged to read at home. Therefore, he believed it was crucial to spend time with students just as his teachers did with him years ago. Martin also believed it was important to remind students to use the strategies they were taught. For instance, students needed help stretching words apart as they sound them out, and they needed to be reminded to point to the words as they read.

“And you got to be able to sound out the words or them. Help them hear it (making stretching motions). I have had a lot of opportunities with struggling students reading and you just have to get them to want to do it is my main thing I have found out.” (Martin, Interview Three) Because Martin understood the importance of reading, it made him realize how crucial it was for students to want to read. Therefore, student motivation to read was something Martin believed was necessary of students were to improve.

At the end of the study, I asked Martin if he thought his beliefs about reading and learning to read had changed since the beginning of the study. He emphatically said he believed they had changed significantly. He speculated that his beliefs about reading and learning to read had changed due to the experiences he had in the internship classroom. “I think it (beliefs about reading) has changed a lot just being in that class” (Martin, Interview Three).

Martin went on to discuss his belief regarding the importance of early literacy instruction to create a foundation for future literacy.

“Every grade is important, but in the younger grades, you really have to start them out strong. Kindergarten...first-grade is really where it starts the foundation for them. It is

very important because I have been on the other side where I didn't think it was important and I struggled. I don't want students to struggle like I did because it wasn't fun." (Martin, Interview Three)

### **Aleina's Discussion Regarding Beliefs**

Aleina believed there were many components to becoming a good reader. Students should be able to read words with automaticity in order to be fluent when reading. She said students who read fluently without any major problems should then be able to retell the major events of the story they read.

When asked about the importance of the phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary instruction in the classroom, Aleina believed these are all equally important and necessary for students' literacy acquisition. She added that these areas of reading are most likely taught following an instructional timeline beginning with phonemic awareness and phonics. After the students are able to sound words out and recognize that each of the sounds can be put together to create words, Aleina believed teachers could then begin to add vocabulary to their instruction followed by fluency. She reasoned students in kindergarten are not expected to be fluent readers when they are just beginning to understand the alphabetic principle.

"I am just imagining the kindergarteners I am working with. If you were expecting them to read through one of those books fluently it is just not possible right now. What they can do is point out the sounds they know. You can sit them down and say, "What sound does that letter make?" and they are able to sound it out for you. And then they are able to

understand the word which would then go into vocabulary and then moving on from there.” (Aleina, Interview Two)

At the beginning of the semester, Aleina had difficulties talking about what she believed to be true about reading and learning to read. However, her conversations with me were reflective of the literacy-rich experiences and reading events she witnessed both at home and at school. Therefore, although she could not specifically identify her beliefs, she often utilized her tacit theories regarding reading in her conversations and instructional practices. For instance, when given an assignment to create a game that would be utilized in the internship classroom, she focused on decoding skills. After observing the students play her game, she said having students repeat the sounds and letters of words in the game was beneficial for student learning. Repetition, she reasoned, allowed students to be able to “imprint” the words to memory. She added that making the game fun was also necessary for student learning, but she didn’t recognize it as one of her beliefs. She wished her theories about reading were more “mapped out” and defined. Furthermore, she felt uncomfortable discussing her beliefs about reading instruction in case they were wrong. Reflecting on this at the end of the semester, she said her low self-confidence most likely contributed to her hesitation towards discussing her philosophies about reading instruction. As the semester came to a close, she understood the importance of making reading fun and came to acknowledge this as a valid belief she possessed.

When asked how she felt her beliefs about reading and learning to read would influence her instructional practices in the classroom Aleina was unsure. She said she is not sure what she believes about reading and how students learn to read. Aleina said she believed teaching phonics was especially important at the kindergarten level when young students are learning to break words apart. She reflected back on how she learned to read and believes her experiences

influenced her beliefs about reading and learning to read, but she is not sure how her beliefs would influence her practices.

I don't know if I can really create a solid belief yet. At this point, I have seen through my mentor teacher and through what we have talked about in the methods class that it is important to have multiple approaches to it and not just send them into independent reading. At this point, I don't know if I can have a full belief yet but I am kind of going with the fact that having a balance of each type of reading instruction is important.

(Aleina, Interview Two)

Although Aleina claimed to believe in a balanced approach to reading, she demonstrated a misunderstanding of what that actually meant. It was evident to me from our discussions that she understood a blended approach to reading instruction to mean using multiple decoding strategies and activities to teach a variety of phonics skills. She said kindergarteners needed to break bigger words down from the beginning. If they did not recognize a word initially, she taught them how to cover up portions of the word to isolate parts that they might recognize. She then showed them how the letters and sounds made up the new whole word. She also thought it was important for students to understand that phonograms can represent different sounds. Using phonogram flashcards was another example of how she would use a blended approach in her instruction. She also believed a blended approach meant teaching across the curriculum. For example, when asked if she thought about the different approaches to reading instruction when she was preparing for her formal lesson, she said she did. She wanted to include multiple approaches to reading by integrating singing, counting, matching, drawing, and listening.

### **RQ 3. What are the Pre-Service Teachers' Theoretical Orientations to Reading?**

An instrument, referred to as the DeFord Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP), was developed and validated in 1985 to measure teachers' beliefs about reading instruction and practices. This 28-item Likert scale response instrument was designed from a constructivist perspective to assist researchers in measuring teachers' knowledge and beliefs about reading and reading instruction. I administered this instrument to the pre-service teachers in my study in order to obtain a better understanding of their beliefs about reading and learning to read. What were their theoretical orientations to reading at the beginning of the study? What were their theoretical orientations to reading at the end of the study?

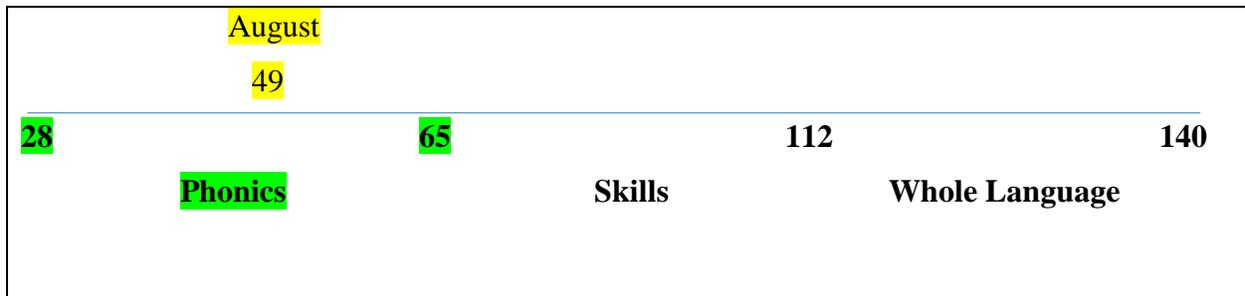
#### **3. a. What Were the Pre-Service Teachers' Theoretical Orientations to Reading at the Beginning of the Study?**

In order to obtain a better understanding of how pre-service teachers connect their beliefs and practices to their theoretical orientations to reading, I administered the DeFord (1985) Theoretical Orientation to reading Profile (TORP) to the pre-service teachers in my study at the beginning of the study. The scores on the TORP extended on the continuum from 28 to 140 and were divided as follows: the scores on the continuum between 28 to 64 represented a decoding orientation with behaviorist theoretical underpinnings; the scores on the continuum between 65 to 111 represented an interactive orientation with cognitivist theoretical underpinnings; and the scores on the continuum between 112 to 140 represented a whole language orientation with constructivist theoretical underpinnings.

### Selena's Theoretical Orientation to Reading at the Beginning of the Study

At the beginning of the study, Selena's TORP score was a 49. On the continuum, ranging from 28 to 140 points, Selena's score represented a decoding perspective as it fell within the phonics cluster range of 28 to 64 points. The phonics orientation that Selena subscribed to assumes that instruction initially focuses on phonemes with a gradual movement towards word units and attention to comprehension (DeFord, 1979). A large amount of time in the classroom is spent practicing decoding isolated letters and letter combinations. Texts used during instruction focus on phonemic consistency and the systematic introduction of consonant-vowel combinations. More complex activities are then increased such as fluency and comprehension once students have a solid understanding of the alphabetic principle (DeFord, 1979). Sight word instruction is only used when students cannot use decoding skills to sound out irregularly spelled words. While Selena could not articulate the assumptions of the theoretical orientation she endorsed, the TORP provided me a clear understanding of what she believed about reading instruction.

**Table 4.1 Selena's Beginning TORP**

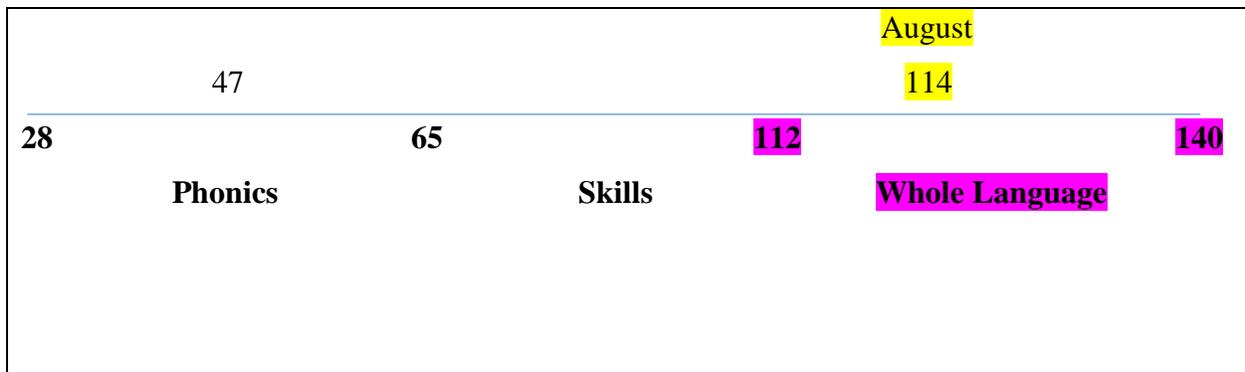


### Martin's Theoretical Orientation to Reading at the Beginning of the Study

At the beginning of the study, Martin's TORP score was a 114. On the continuum, ranging from 28 to 140 points, Martin's score represented a whole language perspective as it fell

within the whole language cluster range of 112 to 140 points. The whole language orientation to which Martin subscribed assumes that readers should be involved in authentic literacy events. Quality literature is used as a framework for dealing with smaller units of language. For example, students might be directed to circle all of the occurrences of “and” in the story or underline all words that begin with the letter “d” (DeFord, 1979). Additionally, activities that focus on words and letters are combined in student/group shared reading and writing experiences (DeFord, 1979). According to Martin’s beginning TORP score, he endorsed these aforementioned instructional practices and beliefs about literacy acquisition. However, given his score’s proximity to the upper skills perspective parameter, it is possible his beliefs about reading and learning to read represented a possible overlap of theoretical orientations. Table 4.2 depicts Martin’s beginning TORP score on the continuum.

**Table 4.2 Martin’s Beginning TORP**



**Aleina’s Theoretical Orientation to Reading at the Beginning of the Study**

At the beginning of the study, Aleina’s TORP score was a 67. On the continuum, ranging from 28 to 140 points, Aleina’s score represented an interactive perspective as it fell within the skills cluster range of 28 to 64 points. A skills endorsement assumes that reading instruction should place emphasis on sight word vocabulary used in context of the reading event (DeFord,

1979). Reading materials include sound/letter correspondence but primarily focus on initial and ending consonant sounds of the vocabulary words. Furthermore, long and short vowel sounds are taught with multiple opportunities to practice, but taught in a less systematic way when compared to a phonics approach (DeFord, 1979). Word attack skills are also introduced and taught following a hierarchical order beginning with affixes, and continuing with root words, compound words, and context clues (DeFord, 1979). Aleina’s beginning TORP score reflected these instructional beliefs and is represented in Table 4.3 on the TORP continuum.

**Table 4.3 Aleina’s Beginning TORP**

	<b>August</b>			
	<b>67</b>			
<b>28</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>112</b>		<b>140</b>
	<b>Phonics</b>	<b>Skills</b>		<b>Whole Language</b>

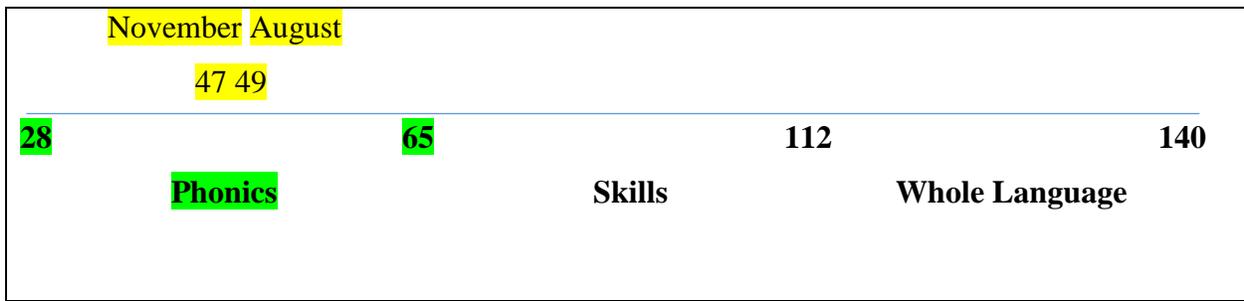
**3. b. What Were the Pre-Service Teachers’ Theoretical Orientations to Reading at the End of the Study?**

At the end of the study, I administered the DeFord (1985) Theoretical Orientation to reading Profile (TORP) to the pre-service teachers in my study. The scores on the TORP extended on the continuum from 28 to 140 and were divided as follows: the scores on the continuum between 28 to 64 represented a decoding orientation with behaviorist theoretical underpinnings; the scores on the continuum between 65 to 111 represented an interactive orientation with cognitivist theoretical underpinnings; and the scores on the continuum between 112 to 140 represented a whole language orientation with constructivist theoretical underpinnings.

**Selena’s Theoretical Orientation to Reading at the End of the Study**

At the beginning of the study, Selena’s TORP score of 49 indicated she endorsed a phonics approach to reading and learning to read. Throughout the duration of the study, she continued to endorse a phonics approach to reading instruction with her score falling between the phonics cluster parameters of 28 and 64. At the end of the study, Selena’s score moved two points down on the continuum to 47. Therefore, similar scores before and after the study indicate Selena did not experience a change in beliefs.

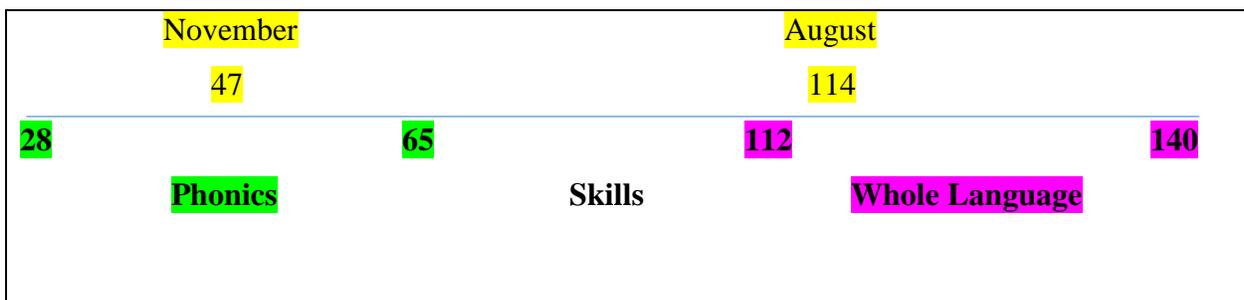
**Table 4.4 Selena’s Beginning and Ending TORP**



**Martin’s Theoretical Orientation to Reading at the End of the Study**

At the beginning of the study, Martin’s score of 114 on the DeFord Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP) fell within the whole language cluster parameters of 110 to 140. At the end of the study, Martin’s score of 47 represented a drastic shift in perspective falling within the phonics cluster parameters of 28-64.

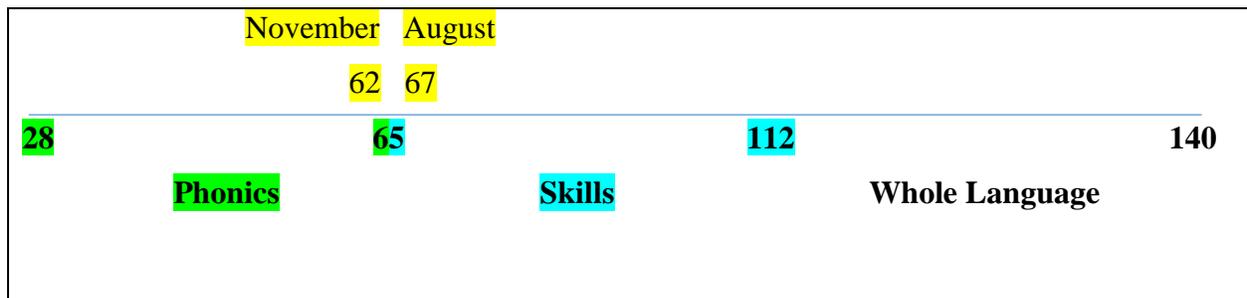
**Table 4.5 Martin’s Beginning and Ending TORP**



### Aleina's Theoretical Orientation to Reading at the End of the Study

At the beginning of the study, Aleina's score of 67 on the DeFord Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP) indicated she endorsed a skills approach to reading instruction with her score falling within the parameters of the skills cluster of 65 to 111. At the conclusion of the study, her endorsement changed to a phonics perspective with a score of 62 falling within the parameters of 28 to 64. Although her endorsement in perspectives changed, the proximity of the scores on the continuum indicated her beliefs about reading and learning to read might represent a possible overlap of theoretical orientations.

**Table 4.6 Aleina's Beginning and Ending TORP**



### Summary

In this study, I explored the ways in which pre-service teachers enrolled in a literacy methods course and corresponding internship connected their beliefs and instructional practices to their theoretical orientations to reading. The study took place in the fall semester of the 2017/2018 school year. The data informing this study were collected by interviews of three pre-service teachers, observations in the internship classroom, and artifacts and documents such as lesson plans and written reflections collected from the literacy methods professor. The data were analyzed through a process of critical reflection and coding reoccurring themes that emerged.

In this study, I explored the beliefs and teaching practices of Selena, a 29 year old Hispanic pre-service teacher enrolled in the literacy methods course and corresponding internship. Selena completed her internship in a kindergarten classroom. As a young girl, Selena never thought school was important. Growing up in extreme poverty, she saw education as not only unattainable, but altogether unnecessary for her place in life. However, her experiences in college gave her the self-confidence she needed to rise above her circumstances and visualize herself as a teacher. Selena had minimal personal and practical knowledge of reading and learning to read and did not experience a change in beliefs regarding reading and learning to read during the duration of the study.

In this study, I explored the beliefs and teaching practices of Martin, a 22 year old Caucasian pre-service teacher enrolled in the literacy methods course and corresponding internship. Martin completed his internship in a kindergarten classroom. As a young child, Martin had difficulties learning to read. He believed he would never learn to read and in third grade he essentially gave up on the idea of becoming a reader. However, Martin's interactions with a few of his teachers changed his mind about his reading capabilities. These experiences with his teachers influenced his decision to become a teacher himself in order to help others in the same situation he was once in as a young boy.

Martin's initial endorsement of whole language at the beginning of the study drastically changed to an endorsement of phonics at the end of the study. At the end of the study, his perspective had drastically changed to a phonics approach most likely influenced by the internship experience. Martin was placed with a dynamic kindergarten teacher who demonstrated a blended approach to reading in her instructional practices. Therefore, his internship provided

an experience opposite of his perspective and most likely influenced his beliefs about reading instruction at the end of the study.

In this study, I explored the beliefs and teaching practices of Aleina, a 20 year old Caucasian pre-service teacher enrolled in the literacy methods course and corresponding internship. Aleina completed her internship in a kindergarten classroom. Aleina's love for reading was instilled in her at a young age. She had a strong phonics background as a young reader that served as a foundation for her advanced reading development. While she believed explicit phonics instruction was an essential part of learning to read, she also believed in the importance of finding meaning from the text. Because this was an area she struggled with as a young girl, she understood comprehension, along with decoding, was an essential component of fluent reading. Aleina had minimal practical knowledge about reading and learning to read, but had a life history full of literacy-rich experiences. Although the internship kindergarten classroom environment was not ideal, Aleina enjoyed her time in the classroom and gained confidence in her abilities to become a teacher.

The following chapter will discuss the findings related to the case study results described in this chapter. Implications for teacher preparation programs will be discussed as they relate to pre-service teachers' beliefs and practices and how they relate to theoretical orientations to reading. Suggestions for further research will be provided to explore the relationship between pre-service teachers' theoretical orientation to reading and their beliefs and instructional practices.

## **Chapter 5 - Discussion**

The previous chapter presented and analyzed data collected from interviews and observations based on the research questions of the study. Chapter Five provides discussion and conclusions based on the major concepts central to this study. This chapter will present and discuss four sections: (1) research questions along with their respective sub-questions, (2) themes, (3) implications, and (4) recommendations for future research.

The purpose of this study was to explore preservice teachers' beliefs and practices and how they related to their theoretical orientations to reading. In this chapter, I will discuss the findings from Chapter Four as they relate to the research questions and respective sub-questions.

### **Discussion of RQ 1. How Do Pre-Service Teachers Discuss the Influences on Their Theoretical Orientations to Reading**

During the interview process of this study, pre-service teachers engaged in an autobiographical narrative told through their life stories. Their histories provided an understanding of how they constructed the personal knowledge that influenced their theoretical perspectives. "The development of an autobiographical narrative is a powerful tool that helps you link your personal history as a reader to instructional beliefs and practices" (Vacca et al., 2010).

Analysis revealed pre-service teachers' theoretical orientations were initially influenced by their previous life experiences to include experiences in the home literacy environment and school reading experiences. It is important to consider these experiences of preservice teachers as they become the foundation of their literacy knowledge. "Personal knowledge of reading and learning to read grows out of a teacher's history as a reader and writer" (Vacca et al., 2010).

Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005) added that literacy is often experienced first at home. Further, children from different communities and socio-economic backgrounds may be exposed to differing literacy practices. The pre-service teachers in this study had dissimilar reading experiences at home which resulted in different degrees of influence on their theoretical orientations to reading.

### **1. a. Did Pre-Service Teachers' Life Experiences Play a Definitive Role in What They Believed to be True Regarding Literacy Acquisition and Instruction?**

Home literacy experiences influenced the manner in which the pre-service teachers developed their beliefs about reading instruction. Aspects of the pre-service teachers' home lives appeared to play a role in how they interpreted their early literacy experiences. For example, socioeconomic status surely influenced pre-service teachers' perceptions about reading and learning to read. Those pre-service teachers in the study that grew up in poverty conditions were not exposed to literacy-rich environment like their peers.

On the contrary, those that were from middle class homes and experienced more literacy events seemed to have more knowledge about reading acquisition and demonstrated an appreciation for reading. In addition, findings indicated that the more home literacy experiences the pre-service teachers had, the more definitive the pre-service teachers' beliefs were regarding literacy acquisition.

Home life also influenced pre-service teachers' beliefs about the importance, value, and purpose of reading. Pre-service teachers who grew up in homes where reading was not emphasized tended to believe that reading was not important. Furthermore, they did not see the value or purpose in reading beyond reading for information. Those that did not value reading

were not readers themselves. Additionally, those pre-service teachers that did not view literacy as important growing up were shocked by the complex nature of teaching reading in the classroom.

Literacy experiences at school seemed to be influential in shaping pre-service teachers' beliefs about reading and learning to read. If the pre-service teachers experienced literacy-rich events at school that reflected best practices, then the pre-service teachers seemed to be influenced by these experiences. Additionally, teacher knowledge and expertise also seemed to greatly influence what the pre-service teachers came to believe about reading and learning to read.

Pre-service teachers in the study all discussed teachers throughout their lives that made a difference. Interactions with these teachers seemed to have a lasting effect on what pre-service teachers believed to be true about reading and learning to read. Those that struggled as readers themselves appeared to be strongly influenced by the teaching practices that helped them overcome their reading difficulties. For instance, they seemed to reflect on the reading approaches endorsed by the teachers that helped them overcome their reading challenges. Furthermore, the pre-service teachers adopted these beliefs as their own and discussed them throughout the study.

### **1. b. How did the Pre-Service Teachers' experiences in the literacy methods course and corresponding internship influence their theoretical orientations?**

At the beginning of the study, the pre-service teachers had minimal practical and professional knowledge regarding reading or learning to read. Therefore, content shared with the pre-service teachers by the professor of the literacy methods course along with the experiences in

the internship provided pre-service teachers a beginning foundation of practical and professional knowledge in literacy.

Each of the pre-service teachers highly regarded the professor and believed they were learning many valuable strategies and practices in her course. Therefore, she had a great amount of credibility as a literacy professional. In fact, two of the three pre-service teachers in the study identified the literacy methods experience and professor as the primary influence on their theoretical beliefs about reading and learning to read.

It seemed that the pre-service teachers' classroom experiences along with the pre-service teacher/mentor teacher relationships were key when considering the influence the internship had on pre-service teachers' theoretical orientations. In fact, the level of pre-service teacher satisfaction regarding their experiences seemed to align with the degree of influence the internship experience had. Furthermore, pre-service teachers that were treated more as observers rather than practicing teachers did not seem to be influenced much by the experience. On the contrary, those that experienced strong working relationships with their mentor teachers were greatly satisfied and reported the experience as highly influential on their beliefs about reading and learning to read. Therefore, the quality of the internship experience (Barnyak & Paquette, 2010) and pre-service teacher/mentor teacher relationship most likely contributed to the manner in which the pre-service teachers were influenced.

Stansell and Robert (1979) theorized that preservice teachers' theoretical orientations are influenced by teachers at the university, which are often contradicted by the supervising teachers' orientations during practicum settings. The analysis of the data collected in this case study did not confirm nor dispute Stansell and Robert's (1979) claim. This uncertainty most

likely was due to the limited amount of time the pre-service teachers spent in the classroom during their internship compared to a student teaching practicum.

## **Discussion of RQ 2. How Do Pre-Service Teachers Connect Their Instructional Practices and Beliefs to Their Theoretical Orientations to Reading?**

The pre-service teachers in this study could not discuss the theoretical aspects of their beliefs about reading and learning to read. In fact, they simply had no knowledge of theoretical concepts such as top-down, interactive, or bottom-up in regards to reading instruction. Conversely, the pre-service teachers discussed the practical aspects of teaching such as teaching strategies and practices. Furthermore, they had difficulties articulating their beliefs and practices about reading instruction. Therefore, the data analysis revealed that pre-service teachers in the study had difficulty connecting their instructional practices and beliefs to their theoretical orientations to reading.

### **2. a. Do Pre-Service Teachers' Practices Align with Their Theoretical Orientation to Reading?**

The data analysis related to this research question resulted in definitive, yet inconsistent, findings. I discovered that the pre-service teachers' instructional practices were influenced by their experiences in the literacy methods course and internship classroom. The pre-service teachers' instructional practices were reflective of their theoretical orientations during our interviews. Furthermore, their instructional practices also aligned to their theoretical orientations when creating games as part of an assignment for the literacy methods course. However, their

instructional practices did not align to their theoretical orientations when they taught their formal lessons in the internship classroom.

The pre-service teachers' instructional decisions were inextricably linked to the expectations of the mentor teachers. In fact, these expectations were indisputable influences on the pre-service teachers' plans for instruction and practice. All three pre-service teachers in the study chose the approval of their mentor teacher in the internship classroom over their own beliefs and instructional practices. For instance, each pre-service teacher discussed what they planned to teach during their formal lesson as part of the literacy methods course assignment. When the time arrived to plan their formal lessons, each of the mentor teachers told the pre-service teachers what they would like them to teach. Although Martin's mentor teacher gave him a few choices to pick from, they were her ideas nevertheless. Both Selena and Aleina felt forced into teaching from the scripted program their mentor teachers used. This was especially troubling for Selena as she had difficulties following the scripted dialogue. According to Moore (2003), pre-service teachers often adopted the teaching practices and style of the mentor teacher regardless of whether it conflicted with the theory and practice taught in the university classroom.

## **2. b. How Do Pre-Service Teachers Discuss Their Beliefs About Reading and Learning to Read?**

The pre-service teachers in this study had great difficulties discussing their beliefs about reading and learning to read. Wolf, S.A., Ballentine, D., & Hill, L.A. (2000) argued it was important for pre-service teachers to examine their beliefs and literacy histories as they plan for the literacy needs of children in their internship experiences. Rath (2001) posited that teachers

will teach the same way they were taught unless their preconceived beliefs are addressed in the teacher preparation program. Changes and influences on their implicit belief systems during the teacher preparation program are only made when new information fills in a gap in their own education (Barnyak & Paquette, 2010). Thinking about and analyzing your own beliefs requires reflective thinking (Worthy & Patterson, 2001). This was something the pre-service teachers in this study had difficulty doing.

Selena's implicit theories reflected a strong endorsement of a bottom-up, phonics approach to reading and learning to read. Selena believed literacy instruction should include phonics, sight words, and comprehension instruction, but she had little knowledge of how to teach reading in general. When asked how she believed children learned to read, she responded that children must practice by reading books, especially those that included spelling patterns. Selena believed making meaning was not as important as being able to read the words accurately. Although this represented a phonics approach to reading instruction, she was not able to identify it as such. Therefore, helping her discover her beliefs required an inordinate amount of questioning. When asked about instructional materials or how she might use assessment in the literacy classroom she was unable to answer. It was likely that her minimal professional and practical knowledge prohibited her from directly answering questions about her beliefs about reading and learning to read. Instead, Selena often referred to her personal knowledge gained from her own experiences learning to read as a young girl and helping her children at home.

Martin's implicit theories seemed to represent more holistic principles about reading and learning to read. When asked to define his beliefs about reading and learning to reading, Martin's responses centered primarily on student motivation to read, making reading fun, student interest, and vocabulary instruction. Most likely, this was due to his own experiences growing up as a

struggling reader. Martin's self-assessment of his personal experiences learning to read seemed to represent that of a whole language approach. Therefore, it was not surprising that his entering beliefs would be similar to his earlier personal experiences. However, when he was asked to describe the materials he found to be important in the literacy classroom, or how he might use assessment, he was at a loss for ideas. Therefore, it was evident that Martin had little understanding of the underpinnings that supported his theoretical orientation in relation to his beliefs and practices. This was probably due to the fact that he had little practical and professional knowledge regarding reading instruction, and was relying on his personal knowledge to inform his beliefs.

During our interviews, Aleina demonstrated a more advanced explanation of her beliefs on reading and learning to read compared to the other pre-service teachers in the study. Her implicit theories about how children learn to read seemed to reflect a highly pragmatic emphasis on skills. She mentioned that although she didn't believe she had a solid belief about reading instruction, she recognized that she was using the experiences in the literacy methods course and the internship to develop her personal belief about reading instruction.

Although Aleina claimed not to have any beliefs about reading that she could speak of, her comments throughout the interviews indicated otherwise. It wasn't that she didn't have beliefs, but rather she simply had difficulties articulating them. Furthermore, growing up in a literacy-rich environment, she possessed more knowledge about reading and learning to read than she gave herself credit for.

### **Discussion of RQ 3. What are the Pre-Service Teachers' Theoretical Orientations to Reading?**

The Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP) was developed and validated by Diane DeFord in 1979. This Likert scale survey instrument categorized 28 items into three broad theoretical clusters: phonics, skills, and whole language. These clusters each represented a different perspective to reading and learning to read and were located along a continuum of orientations to instruction. Phonics and whole language perspectives were located on opposite ends of the continuum with the skills perspective located in the middle. DeFord (1985) explained that the points representing instructional practices could overlap one another as was the nature of a continuum. The overlap was most likely to occur with orientations close to each other. For example, the phonics and skills orientations were likely to share instructional practices as were the skills and whole language orientations. Conversely, the instructional practices related to phonics and whole language orientations did not experience an overlap of instructional practices based on their proximity to one another on the continuum. A copy of the TORP instrument is found in Appendix D.

The scores on the TORP extended from 28 to 140 and were divided as follows: The parameters of the phonics cluster were 28 to 64 and represented a decoding orientation; The parameters of the skills cluster were 65 to 111 and represented an interactive or balanced orientation; and the parameters of the whole language cluster were 112 to 140 and represented a whole language orientation.

Barnyak and Paquette (2010) posited that literacy teachers generally endorsed one of the three perspectives of reading instruction. The model they endorsed can have a profound influence on teaching styles, choice of instructional materials, and their flexibility in instructional

design (Barnyak & Paquette, 2010). Vacca et al., (2010) added that each theoretical orientation to reading is supported by different assumptions and principles about reading and learning to read. They each have dramatically different objectives, materials, practices, and decisions related to literacy instruction. The pre-service teachers in this study subscribed to a variation of these assumptions and principles.

### **3. a. What Were the Pre-Service Teachers' Theoretical Orientations to Reading at the Beginning of the Study?**

In order to obtain a better understanding of how pre-service teachers connect their beliefs and practices to their theoretical orientations to reading, I administered the DeFord (1985) Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP) to the pre-service teachers at the beginning of the study. The scores on the TORP extended on the continuum from 28 to 140 and were divided as follows: the scores on the continuum between 28 to 64 represented a decoding orientation with behaviorist theoretical underpinnings; the scores on the continuum between 65 to 111 represented an interactive orientation with cognitivist theoretical underpinnings; and the scores on the continuum between 112 to 140 represented a whole language orientation with constructivist theoretical underpinnings.

#### **Selena's Theoretical Orientation to Reading at the Beginning of the Study**

Growing up in a troubled, impoverished home, Selena was not encouraged to read. In fact, she lacked the personal experiences of being read to at home and seemed to develop the belief over time that reading was not important. As a mother of four children, she desired to give her children the home literacy experiences she never had as a child by reading to them and

assisting with their schoolwork. Prior to the study, Selena had very little understanding of literacy acquisition and experienced great difficulties articulating what she believed about reading and learning to read. Her TORP score of 49 at the beginning of the study indicated to me that she endorsed a phonics approach. When the TORP was first administered, Selena had not been exposed to content taught in the literacy methods course or the internship. Therefore, her TORP score was most likely primarily influenced by her experiences helping her children learn to read with the materials they brought home from school. Table 5.2 depicts this score on the TORP continuum.

### **Martin's Theoretical Orientation to Reading at the Beginning of the Study**

Martin struggled to read as a young boy, but he was able to overcome his reading difficulties thanks to a few influential teachers. These teachers each emphasized that he should read books that interested him. Therefore, Martin learned from an early age that learning to read involved making personal connections and creating meaning from texts. Martin initially believed that learning to read involved finding books that interested the reader along with an emphasis on vocabulary words. Prior to any experiences in the literacy methods course or the internship classroom, Martin's TORP score was a 114. On the continuum, ranging from 28 to 140 points, Martin's score represented a whole language perspective as it fell within the whole language cluster range of 112 to 140 points. Furthermore, his score seemed to be influenced by his personal experiences growing up as a struggling reader. Table 5.2 depicts his score on the TORP continuum.

### **Aleina's Theoretical Orientation to Reading at the Beginning of the Study**

At the beginning of the study, Aleina's TORP score was a 67. On the continuum, ranging from 28 to 140 points, Aleina's score represented an interactive, or skills perspective, as it fell within the skills cluster range of 28 to 64 points. Aleina grew up with a wide variety of rich, literacy experiences both at home and at school. These experiences created for her a strong foundation in literacy that she would come to use when beginning to interrogate her in-coming tacit beliefs about reading and learning to read. While she initially wasn't able to definitively discuss her beliefs about reading and learning to read, she displayed a working understanding of the foundational concepts of reading and the necessity of them in reading education. Table 5.2 depicts her beginning TORP score on the continuum.

### **3. b. What Were the Pre-Service Teachers' Theoretical Orientations to Reading at the End of the Study?**

At the end of the study, I administered the DeFord (1985) Theoretical Orientation to reading Profile (TORP) to the pre-service teachers in my study. The scores on the TORP extended on the continuum from 28 to 140 and were divided as follows: the scores on the continuum between 28 to 64 represented a decoding orientation with behaviorist theoretical underpinnings; the scores on the continuum between 65 to 111 represented an interactive orientation with cognitivist theoretical underpinnings; and the scores on the continuum between 112 to 140 represented a whole language orientation with constructivist theoretical underpinnings

### **Selena's Theoretical Orientation to Reading at the End of the Study**

At the beginning of the study, Selena's TORP score of 49 indicated she endorsed a phonics approach to reading and learning to read. Throughout the duration of the study, she continued to endorse a phonics approach to reading instruction with her score falling between the phonics cluster parameters of 28 and 64. During our third and final interview, she commented that reading should be taught following a specific order beginning with phonics, and adding sight words and comprehension to later instruction. Her comments were reflective of the phonics orientation that assumes once the sound/letter correspondence is established, more complex activities are added to instruction such as fluency and comprehension. Sight word instruction is utilized only if students cannot use their phonics skills to decode the unknown or irregular word (DeFord, 1979). Therefore, given the comments Selena made regarding reading instruction along with her TORP score, it was clear to me that she continued to endorse a phonics approach to reading and learning to read.

Because of the limited teaching opportunities she received in the internship classroom along with the strict adherence to the scripted reading program, Selena was not presented with differing reading perspectives challenging her beliefs regarding literacy acquisition. Furthermore, the phonics perspective endorsed by the literacy methods professor only reinforced Selena's incoming beliefs about reading. At the end of the study, Selena's score moved two points down on the continuum to 47. Therefore, similar scores before and after the study indicate Selena did not experience a change in beliefs. Table 5.2 represents Selena's beginning and ending TORP scores.

### **Martin's Theoretical Orientation to Reading at the End of the Study**

At the beginning of the study, Martin's TORP score of 114 indicated that he initially endorsed a whole language perspective to reading. However, at the end of the study, Martin's TORP score of 47 indicated he endorsed a phonics approach to literacy acquisition. This was a drastic shift of perspective indicating he experienced a significant change of beliefs regarding reading and learning to read. This change occurred due to the influences he experienced both in the literacy methods course and in the internship classroom. Mrs. Marshall, the literacy methods professor endorsed a phonics approach to reading as indicated by her TORP score of 56. Her instruction in the methods course undoubtedly reflected these beliefs along with her years of experience teaching emergent readers. Therefore, although she taught a wide variety of instructional strategies, she most likely taught them through a phonics perspective lens.

Martin's internship teacher endorsed a skills perspective as indicated by her TORP score of 79 and had a master's degree in early childhood and special education. Her instructional practices were reflective of a blended approach to reading. She emphasized sight word vocabulary introducing them in context of sentences the students helped write as a group. Instruction in letter/sound correspondence was also included in these group writing activities. Furthermore, she allowed the students multiple opportunities to practice their newly acquired literacy skills.

Martin's beginning TORP score of 114 was close to the skills perspective upper parameter of 112. This indicated that his beliefs could easily overlap and represent both a skills and whole language endorsement. Therefore, given his mentor teacher's endorsement of a skills approach to reading, it would not have surprised me if his ending endorsement score would have reflected the same. After all, he credited the mentor teacher for influencing his beliefs the most

during the semester. It was of great surprise to see Martin's ending TORP score of 47 as this indicated a strong endorsement of a phonics orientation. The drastic change of perspectives indicated that Martin experienced cognitive dissonance due to his experiences in both the literacy methods course and the internship. This score made me question who had more influence on his beliefs about reading, his mentor teacher as he claimed, or the literacy methods professor. I concluded that Martin was influenced considerably by both, but it was actually his experiences in the literacy methods course that influenced him the most given Mrs. Marshall's strong phonics endorsement. Table 5.2 represents Martin's beginning and ending TORP scores.

Aleina's TORP scores at the beginning and end of the study represented a slight decrease moving her from an initial skills endorsement to phonics. Her initial score of 67 at the beginning of the study was situated in close proximity of the upper phonics parameter of 65. Therefore, this indicated that her beliefs about reading and learning to read might have been representative of a possible overlap of theoretical orientations. Therefore, her TORP score of 62 represented a slight movement on the continuum at the end of the study and did not necessarily indicate a strong change in beliefs.

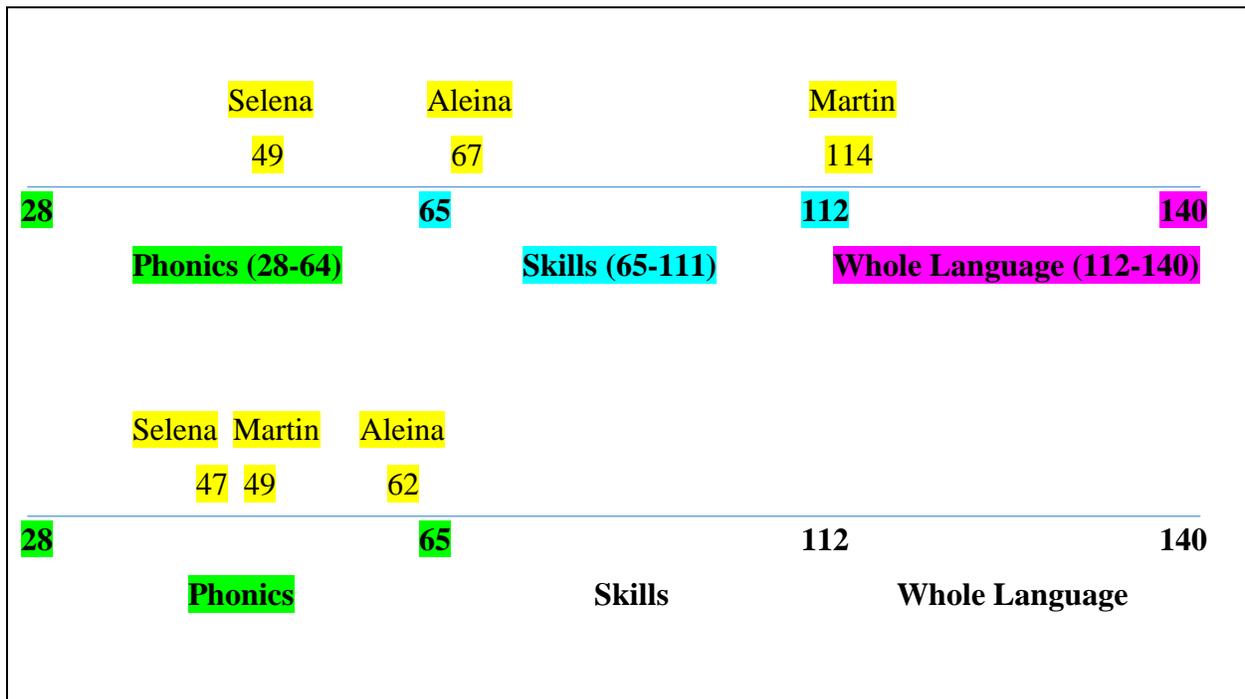
Aleina's experiences in the literacy methods course and internship classroom only minimally influenced her beliefs as they seemed to align with the variety of her early literacy experiences both at home and at school. Therefore, her incoming beliefs were not challenged enough to cause the cognitive dissonance needed to dramatically change her theories regarding literacy acquisition. Although she was indifferent towards her experiences in the internship classroom, Aleina indicated that she was greatly influenced by her experiences in the literacy methods course. This suggests that the slight movement on the TORP continuum was most likely

due to the instruction she received from the literacy methods professor who endorsed a phonics perspective to reading and learning to read. Her scores are represented in Table 5.2.

**Table 5.1 Beginning and Ending TORP Scores**

Name	Beginning TORP	Theoretical Orientation	Ending TORP	Theoretical Orientation
Selena	49	Phonics	47	Phonics
Martin	114	Whole Language	49	Phonics
Aleina	67	Skills	62	Phonics

**Table 5.2 Beginning and Ending TORP Scores on the Continuum**



Yellow: Pre-Service Teacher TORP Scores / Green: Phonics/ Blue: Skills/ Purple: Whole Language

## Themes

This section provides discussion based on the findings of the study interpreted through a constructivist theoretical lens. Acknowledging that pre-service teachers' beliefs and practices influence their theoretical orientations allowed me to explore the connection between the major

concepts and philosophies reviewed in Chapter 2 along with the findings from the pre-service teachers' experiences in the literacy methods course and the corresponding internship.

The findings served as springboard from which the following themes emerged : (1) the influence of life experiences on theoretical orientations to reading (2) the influence of the literacy methods course and corresponding internship on pre-service teachers' theoretical orientations to reading (3) pre-service teachers alignment of instructional practices to theoretical orientations to reading (4) pre-service teachers' discussions regarding their beliefs about reading and learning to read (5) changes in pre-service teachers' theoretical orientation to reading

### **Theme 1. The Influence of Life Experiences on Theoretical Orientations to Reading**

Two major sub-themes were identified under this theme. First, the home life experiences of the pre-service teachers were found to influence their theoretical orientations to reading. Literacy begins at home. In fact, before they enter school, children have already acquired the cognitive skills they need for literacy acquisition (Schwanenflugel & Knapp, 2016). The manner in which these skills develop is dependent on the home literacy environment and the amount and type of parental support children receive.

Second, the pre-service teachers' school experiences, especially their interactions with significant teachers, influenced their theoretical orientations to reading. According to Holt-Reynolds (1992), the beliefs and instructional practices of pre-service teachers are rooted in their school experiences. In fact, each of the pre-service teachers discussed teachers who were influential in their lives as young learners.

## **The Influence of Home Life Experiences**

The pre-service teachers in this study experienced profoundly different home lives, and their home literacy experiences were reflective of these differences. According to DeBaryshe, Binder, and Bell (2000), children develop reading skills at home that provide them the opportunity to become familiar with literacy materials. Selena grew up in abject poverty. Her childhood home was devoid of books and other reading materials as these were considered luxuries the family simply could not afford. Children from low-income homes typically have fewer toys, play areas, and reading materials (Evans, 2004), and Selena's home environment was no different. Therefore, Selena missed the opportunity to become familiar with literacy materials early on in life. Martin's mother operated a daycare out of the family home. This provided Martin with a wide variety of books and other literacy materials he was free to explore. Although books were available in the home, Martin had no interest in them. Aleina, on the other hand, visited the library every weekend and checked out ten books each week. In fact, as early as Aleina could remember, her mother made sure the children had plenty of books and literacy materials to choose from.

Along with the opportunity to become familiar with literacy materials, developing reading skills at home provides the opportunity to observe the literacy activities of others (DeBaryshe, Binder, & Bell, 2000). In fact, parents implicitly and explicitly teach their children through their everyday interactions with literacy materials such as newspapers and online shopping (Schwanenflugel & Knapp, 2016). Poverty limits the amount of positive interactions parents have with their children because they often have little time or energy (Schwanenflugel & Knapp, 2016). Furthermore, the lack of available resources causes a great deal of stress which can lead to depression and illness (Wadsworth & Rienks, 2012). During our interview

discussions, Selena described her unemployed single mother as emotionally absent and uninvolved in the lives of her children. Therefore, Selena was not afforded opportunities to observe her mother engaging in literacy events such as reading or shopping online. While some mothers might ask their children to create shopping lists or read food labels as a way to engage their children in purposeful, everyday literacy tasks, Selena's mother completely avoided interactions with her children altogether. In fact, as she grew older, Selena found herself taking on the responsibilities of the home as her mother became more distant and withdrawn. These experiences were vastly different from both Martin's and Aleina's as they each had opportunities to witness their parents interacting with and using literacy materials in meaningful ways.

According to DeBaryshe, Binder, and Bell (2000), reading skills developed at home provide children the opportunity to independently explore literate behaviors. Both Selena and Martin were never encouraged to read at home. Not only was Selena not encouraged to read, she also did not receive help with her schoolwork. This reality aligned with research conducted by Bradley, Corwyn, Burchinal, et al. (2001) that posited children from low income homes were less likely to receive help with homework when compared to their more affluent peers. Although Martin came from an average middle-class home, his parents did not emphasize reading or encourage him to read independently. Both Selena and Martin attributed their personal reading struggles to the fact that they were never encouraged to read independently. While Martin eventually became "hooked" on reading after finding books that interested him, Selena never found a passion to read for pleasure. Conversely, Aleina described herself as a bookworm and reported reading for pleasure ever since she could remember. Certainly this was due to the value her mother and grandmother placed on reading at a very young age.

In addition to the exploration of independent literacy behaviors, children develop reading skills at home when they engage in joint reading and writing activities with others (DeBaryshe, Binder, & Bell, 2000). Again, Selena was not provided this opportunity growing up. In fact, her home life was a direct reflection of the literature regarding the effects of poverty on literacy acquisition (Phillips & Lonigan; Raikes et al., 2006) that posited low-SES parents are less likely to read with their children. Although Martin's parents did not encourage reading in the home, his mother always made time to read to the children in the evening before bed. In fact, Martin claimed that he still enjoyed being read to and listened to audiobooks frequently. Aleina's literacy-rich home environment afforded her multiple opportunities to read books with her family. Both her mother and grandmother took turns sharing stories with Aleina and her sister. The joint reading activities Martin and Aleina enjoyed at home certainly provided them with opportunities to learn from the teaching strategies their mothers' used during the joint literacy tasks (DeBaryshe, Binder, & Bell, 2000).

While parents differ in their approaches to sharing and providing literacy experiences in the home, their practices are influenced by their available resources, their personal reading habits, and their beliefs about reading and learning to read (Schwanenflugel & Knapp, 2016). These influences unquestionably shaped the pre-service teachers' beliefs about reading, and in turn helped develop their tacit beliefs regarding reading instruction. Therefore, their familial experiences in the home were identified as major influences on their theoretical orientations to reading.

### **The Influence of School Experiences**

The pre-service teachers' beliefs about reading and learning to read were additionally shaped as a result of experiences at school. This is important when considering how life experiences influence theoretical orientations to reading. Selena could only recall a few of the instructional strategies and activities her teachers used in the classroom. It wasn't the teaching strategies that impacted her, but rather the compassion and love the teachers extended her; these were things she did not receive at home. By meeting her belonging needs, the teachers made Selena feel as though she mattered. While this might not have directly influenced her theoretical orientation to reading, it is important to consider as it most likely affected her motivation to learn and remain in school.

Martin, on the other hand, credits his teachers for changing his life. Because of his academic struggles, he had given up on the prospects to become a reader by the time he entered third grade. However, his teachers recognized Martin's reading difficulties and helped him overcome them. In fact, over the course of his education, he credited teachers as being most influential in his life as a reader. This highlights Hattie's (2003) claim that the teacher is the most important factor in student achievement. Furthermore, Martin's experiences in school significantly influenced his theoretical orientation to reading as his incoming beliefs at the beginning of the study were a reflection of the whole language reading strategies his teachers used to improve his reading.

Aleina's experiences in school were also representative of her theoretical orientation to reading. As a young girl, Aleina loved the Shurley Method grammar lessons. These lessons influenced her belief that understanding sentence structure and having an extensive vocabulary are necessities to becoming a fluent reader. In fact, how she made sense of her school

experiences seemed to suggest that she interpreted them through an interactive approach to reading.

## **Theme 2. The Influence of the Literacy Methods Course and Corresponding Internship on Pre-Service Teachers' Theoretical Orientations to Reading**

Two major sub-themes were found under this theme. First, pre-service teachers were influenced by the experiences in the literacy methods course. This sub-theme is reflective of the manner in which pre-service teachers construct knowledge and meaning based on their experiences in the literacy methods course.

Second, the influence of the internship experience on pre-service teachers' theoretical orientations was dependent upon their individual placements and experiences. Pre-service teachers' experiences in the internship classroom brought forward ways to reimagine the placement process in reading field experiences. Matching pre-service teachers with mentor teachers who share similar theoretical orientations to reading could possibly strengthen the pre-service teachers' internship experience and contribute to their knowledge base regarding reading and learning to read.

### **The Influence of the Literacy Methods Course**

Teacher preparation programs are often criticized for failing to provide relevant and practical information needed to sustain new teachers in the profession (Cox et al., 1998; Long et al., 2006). Researchers argue that education courses often fail to help pre-service teachers prepare for the daily challenges and complexities they will face in the classroom (Darling-Hammond, 2010). While the goal of teacher education programs is to convey knowledge pre-

service teachers will need to be successful in the classroom, they often are not open to learning new information (Barnyak, 2010). In fact, pre-service teachers desire more “practical” and less material they deem as “theory” (Whitney et al., 2013).

In 2007, the International Literacy Association (ILA) identified that pre-service teachers needed to have a conceptual understanding about the foundations of language. At the beginning of the study, Selena did not realize the process of learning to read was so complex. Before entering the literacy methods course, she believed children learned to read by pointing to the words. Furthermore, prior to her coursework, she had little knowledge of the major components of literacy (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension) or how they worked together in the reading process. Martin also was surprised at how complicated learning to read was for a young child. In the literacy methods course, Martin was given an assessment to test his knowledge of phonograms and was shocked when he could not pass a simple test meant for kindergarteners. Like Selena and Martin, Aleina also admitted that she had no knowledge regarding literacy acquisition concepts and was surprised by the complexities of reading instruction. The pre-service teachers’ initial beliefs regarding reading and learning to read aligned with current research that claimed pre-service teachers believe knowledge is easily constructed, viewing reading acquisition simpler than when actually taught by the teacher (Rebmann, 2015).

According to the constructivist perspective, learners build their own understanding (Taber, 2011). This construction of knowledge is done through an active process where the learner must seek to make sense of the experiences and relate them to what is already known (Renzulli, 2006). The pre-service teachers each became active learners while seeking to understand and conceptualize the material that was taught in the literacy methods course.

Additionally, the literacy methods professor, Mrs. Marshall, presented the course material in such a way that supported and guided them through the learning process. This was important because the presentation of new information was crucial for learners to process and construct meaning from the experiences (Risko, Vukelich, & Roskos, 2008). Mrs. Marshall structured the learning events to coincide with what would take place in the internship classroom during the pre-service teachers' field experiences. This gave them the opportunity to learn about literacy concepts in course work and witness them in action in the internship classroom. The pre-service teachers benefitted from Mrs. Marshall's instructional approach and made specific reference to the connections they made between their course work and field observations.

The experiences in the literacy methods course influenced the pre-service teachers' theoretical orientations to reading in that their initial simplistic view of reading instruction was replaced with a deeper conceptual understanding that aligned with their perspectives regarding reading and learning to read. In fact, each of the pre-service teachers in the study contributed their belief change about literacy acquisition to the content they learned in the literacy methods course along with the professor's instructional approach.

### **The Influence of the Internship Experience**

It is important for teacher educators to be mindful of how pre-service teachers' beliefs about reading instruction are influenced by their field experiences. In this study, the manner in which the internship influenced the pre-service teachers was dependent on their individual experiences in the classroom. Quite often, pre-service field experience placement is more a matter of convenience rather than careful consideration regarding potential impacts on pre-service teachers' educational beliefs (Bean & Zulich, 1992). In this study, the three pre-service

teachers were coincidentally placed in kindergarten classrooms with mentor teachers who varied considerably in their instructional approaches.

Selena and Aleina were both placed with mentor teachers that strictly adhered to a scripted reading program. Because Selena lacked knowledge about reading and learning to read, observing the mentor teacher deliver the heavily scripted reading program did not afford Selena the opportunity to observe many of the concepts she learned about in the literacy methods course. In fact, Selena learned more about how to teach the scripted program than anything else. Furthermore, Selena reported that she often felt invisible in the classroom and was only given the opportunity to teach on a few occasions. She spent most of her time in the classroom observing the mentor teacher. Mere observation and minimal teaching opportunities using the scripted program did not provide learning experiences that drastically challenged or changed her phonics orientation to reading. Furthermore, the mentor teacher's skills orientation to reading did not influence Selena's beliefs about reading because of the heavy reliance on the scripted program. According to Worthy and Patterson (2001), field experiences have shifted away from a "practice what you have learned in method courses" to an approach that focuses more on relationships and reflective thinking. Essentially, Selena's internship experience reflected this shift although she did not develop a relationship with the mentor teacher. Selena desired more opportunities to teach and felt unsatisfied with her internship because she was not given opportunities to do so. As a result, she felt she did not learn much during the internship.

Although Aleina's mentor teacher also strictly adhered to the scripted reading program, it was not as consequential to her as it was to Selena because of the strong literacy background Aleina developed as a child. Aleina was given a few opportunities to teach and did not seem to mind the infrequency of these occasions. In fact, she seemed indifferent towards her internship

experience in general. Both Aleina and her mentor teacher shared a skills orientation to reading, but this also was of no consequence to her learning as the heavily scripted program was strictly adhered to in the classroom.

Martin on the other hand, was placed with a mentor teacher who utilized her strong literacy background gained from a master's degree in early childhood and special education to provide authentic literacy opportunities to her students. Although he was unable to fully articulate his beliefs about reading specifically, Martin and his mentor teacher shared similar theoretical beliefs regarding literacy acquisition. Beginning the first day of his internship, Martin taught lessons and interacted with the children each day he was in the classroom. As a result of his exceptional internship experience, he credited his mentor teacher with changing his beliefs about reading and learning to read.

Researchers continue to investigate potential alternate models of field placement experiences (Bowen, Potter, & Roth, 2002; Sanford & Hopper, 2002; Zeichnre, 1992). Kagan (1992) posited that in order for pre-service teachers to reconstruct, modify, and adapt their beliefs about their students and themselves as teachers, they should be placed with mentor teachers whose beliefs and practices are different from their own. Contrary to this position, Bean and Zulich (1992) concluded there could be a possible benefit to placing pre-service teachers with mentor teachers who share the same theoretical beliefs regarding reading and learning to read. However, aligning pre-service teachers' theoretical orientations to reading with the mentor teachers' orientations is not practical compared to the traditional model of field experience placement (Brown, Potter, & Roth, 2002).

Considering the experiences of Selena and Aleina, aligning their theoretical orientations to their mentor teachers' orientations would have been of little consequence given the mentor

teachers' reliance on the scripted program. Conversely, Martin and his mentor teacher shared similar skills-whole language theoretical orientations to reading at the beginning of his internship. However, his beliefs drastically shifted by the end of the study to a phonics orientation. This is in opposition to Kagan's (1992) previously mentioned argument against aligning pre-service teacher and mentor teacher theoretical orientations.

### **Theme 3. Pre-Service Teachers Alignment of Instructional Practices to Theoretical Orientations to Reading**

A teacher's general knowledge encompasses personal theories and beliefs which serve as a foundation for their instructional practices (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Munby, Russell, & Martin, 2001; Rebmann et al., 2015). These beliefs influence their goals, procedures, and the decisions they make regarding their instructional practices (Kuzborska, 2011). The consistency or inconsistency between teachers' instructional practices and beliefs has been central to the discussion in research regarding the degree to which teachers' practices are connected to their beliefs (Fang, 1996). Furthermore, teachers' theoretical beliefs related to reading shape their instructional practices (DeFord, 1985; Harste & Burke, 1977; Richardson et al., 1991). However, additional research suggests otherwise (Kinzer, 1988; Duffy, 1977). Therefore, there is conflicting research regarding whether or not teachers' instructional practices consistently align to their beliefs.

The findings from this study indicated inconsistencies regarding whether or not pre-service teachers aligned their instructional practices to their beliefs about reading and learning to read. I found that when pre-service teachers discussed the practices they might use in their future classrooms, their choice of materials and instructional practices aligned with their

theoretical orientations. Furthermore, I found that when pre-service teachers completed assignments for the literacy methods course such as the creation of a literacy game to be played in the internship classroom, their practices aligned to their perspective orientations as well. However, when the pre-service teachers taught and created their formal lessons in the internship classroom, they did not align their beliefs and practices. In fact, they adopted the teaching style and method of their mentor teacher regardless if it was in conflict with their own beliefs. For instance, both Selena and Aleina taught lessons directly from the scripted reading program. Selena commented that she wanted to adapt the script to make it more of her own but felt pressure to teach the lesson exactly like the mentor teacher. Martin wanted to teach a lesson on vocabulary but decided on teaching CVC words at the suggestion of the mentor teacher. According to Moore (2003), pre-service teachers made these choices rather than risk disapproval from the mentor teacher. Duffy and Anderson (1982) posited that although teachers are able to discuss their beliefs outside of the classroom, their practices are governed by the complexities and constraints of the classroom life and culture. Moore (2003), provided a possible solution suggesting a need for mentor teachers, university faculty, and pre-service teachers to openly discuss the learning situations to which they each bring varying levels of knowledge and expertise. Doing so involves the development of university and school relationships through the “process of identifying problems and creating solutions through interaction” (Whitford & Gaus, 1988).

#### **Theme 4. Pre-Service Teachers' Discussions Regarding Their Beliefs about Reading and Learning to Read**

The study of pre-service teachers' beliefs as they relate to their theoretical orientations to reading provides the field of reading research with valuable information regarding the future development of reading teacher preparation programs. It is crucial for reading teacher educators to help pre-service teachers identify and interrogate their beliefs in order to empower them to become informed decision makers and leaders in their profession. Whitney et al., (2013) posited that pre-service teachers should be able to envision how they might use their wide range of knowledge in principled ways. Furthermore, it should be the goal of teacher educators to help pre-service teachers articulate the beliefs that guide their practices (Whitney et al., 2013).

According to White and Chant (2014), beliefs related to curriculum, pedagogy, and student learning influence instructional practices and decision making. Additionally, being mindful of the influences on beliefs such as personal experiences learning to read and practical experiences gained from field work will enable pre-service teachers to reflect on the experiences that influence their teaching practice (Leko et al., 2014). Throughout the duration of this study, the pre-service teachers were guided towards identifying and discussing what they believed to be true about reading and learning to read.

The pre-service teachers in this study each experienced difficulties discussing what they believed to be true about reading instruction. Because knowledge and beliefs are closely intertwined (Pajares, 1992), they seemed to have difficulties separating the two, often relating their beliefs as practical applications in instruction. For example, Selena discussed her belief regarding literacy acquisition in terms of offering children plenty of opportunities to practice

reading books with spelling patterns rather than using theoretical conceptions to describe her beliefs.

Although the pre-service teachers were unable to discuss their beliefs using theoretical terminology, I was able to identify their theoretical perspectives by carefully analyzing their discussions regarding their beliefs about instructional practices. I discovered that each pre-service teacher endorsed a different reading perspective at the beginning of the study. Selena's discussions with me regarding instructional practices indicated she believed in a phonics, or bottom-up approach to reading. Martin endorsed a whole language approach to reading, or top-down, and Aleina subscribed to a skills, or interactive approach to reading. At the end of the study, both Martin and Aleina had shifted their beliefs to a phonics approach to reading.

From the data analysis and reflection on the findings, I speculated that the content shared in the literacy methods course might be taught with a focus on practical application rather than the theoretical underpinnings related to the practices. This would explain the lack of knowledge the pre-service teachers shared regarding the theoretical approaches to reading. According to Barnyak and Paquette (2010), teacher educators must not only teach pre-service teachers how to implement best practices, but they must also dispel misconceptions. Barnyak and Paquette (2010), also argued that the belief systems held by teachers are quite often projected onto their students. Therefore, the evaluation of pre-service teachers' belief systems should be included in the teacher preparation program. Leading pre-service teachers towards the discovery of their beliefs regarding reading and learning to read will not only improve their teaching practice, but also encourage them to become lifelong, reflective practitioners.

## **Theme 5. Changes in Pre-Service Teachers' Theoretical Orientation to Reading**

The affective, evaluative, and episodic nature of beliefs makes them a filter through which new phenomena are understood and interpreted (Pajares, 1992). Knowledge and beliefs are inextricably intertwined. Three major sources of knowledge (professional, personal, and practical) inform teachers' knowledge base and beliefs (Vacca, Vacca, & Gove, 1995). In his study regarding reading teachers' connections between beliefs and practices, Grisham (2000) found that the interactions of this knowledge informed teachers' beliefs and influenced their instructional practices. According to Grisham (2000) teachers' theoretical orientations of reading were changed as a result of their professional knowledge acquired from the cohesiveness of the teacher preparation program (practical knowledge), and these changes appeared to be steady over time. Field experiences on the other hand, did not seem to be as consistent in changing beliefs (personal knowledge) and/or the instructional practices of the pre-service teachers (Grisham, 2000). Once teachers had their own classrooms, some experienced a change in theoretical orientations to reading and contributed the change to the context of the teaching situation (Grisham, 2000).

Selena's limited personal knowledge regarding literacy acquisition prevented her from discussing her beliefs about reading and learning to read. Therefore, when she began the literacy methods course, she seemed to absorb everything the professor taught thereby increasing her professional knowledge of reading. Her incoming beliefs according to her TORP score at the beginning of the study indicated she endorsed a phonics approach to reading. Because Selena's internship mentor teacher strictly adhered to a scripted reading program, she learned more about how to teach the program which most likely did not increase her practical knowledge regarding reading instruction. Additionally, Selena did not align her instructional practice to her beliefs

during the teaching of her formal lesson. Just like Selena, the university professor, Mrs. Marshall, also endorsed a phonics approach. Therefore Selena's theoretical conceptions about reading were not challenged in the literacy methods course or the corresponding internship. Therefore, she experienced no cognitive dissonance causing her to interrogate her beliefs about reading and learning to read. Selena's TORP score decreased two points on the continuum moving closer towards the lower parameter of the phonics cluster which indicated her phonics orientation might have been strengthened as a result of her experiences in the literacy methods course. However, the slight shift on the continuum did not indicate a change in her overall theoretical orientation to reading at the end of the study. This lack of change was in opposition to Grisham's (2000) finding that pre-service teachers' theoretical conceptions change as a result of professional knowledge gained by the teacher preparation program. This study was conducted during Selena's first methods course in the program. Therefore, it is premature to make conclusions regarding Selena's beliefs as they relate to the cohesiveness of the teacher preparation program until she is further along in her education.

Aleina grew up in a literacy-rich environment and was encouraged to engage in literacy activities early in life. Because of these early life experiences in literacy, Aleina had a considerable amount of personal knowledge regarding reading and learning to read. This knowledge informed her beliefs about reading at the beginning of this study. Although Aleina had some difficulties discussing her beliefs, she actually knew more about the basic concepts of reading for which she gave herself credit. Aleina enjoyed the literacy methods course and claimed to have been mostly influenced by Professor Marshall and the course work. She was indifferent to her experiences in her internship (practical knowledge) as the mentor teacher strictly adhered to the scripted reading program. Aleina felt pressured to teach the scripted

program for her formal lesson. While her instructional practices aligned when she completed assignments for the literacy methods course, they did not align during her formal lesson as a result. Aleina's incoming TORP score at the beginning of the study represented a skills approach. This score decreased by five points on the continuum shifting her theoretical orientation to reading from a skills approach to a phonics approach to reading and learning to read. It could be argued that a change in beliefs in this case reflected knowledge gained from the teacher preparation program (Grisham, 2000) in addition to the influence Professor Marshall's phonics orientation presented.

Martin's incoming beliefs at the beginning of the study reflected a whole language theoretical orientation to reading. He had limited personal knowledge of the complex nature of reading and had difficulties discussing his beliefs during our interviews. In fact, his discussions about his beliefs were representative of the practices his teachers used to help him overcome his personal reading struggles. The instructional practices he discussed and demonstrated initially seemed to align with his whole language perspective. However, his practices did not align when he taught his formal lesson as his mentor teacher directed him to choose between three skills related lessons. At the beginning of the study, Martin and his mentor teacher shared similar beliefs about reading according to their TORP scores. The mentor teacher strongly endorsed a skills approach to reading as indicated by her TORP score of 79. Martin's score of 114 represented a whole language perspective, but was only two points from the skills cluster upper parameter. His score's proximity to the skills upper parameter indicated the possibility of an overlap in perspectives. Martin's ending TORP score of 47 was unexpected and seemed to clearly represent Grisham's (2000) assumption that change results from the teacher preparation program. Martin attributed his change in beliefs to his experiences in the internship. While there

is no question that these experiences influenced him, the data analysis and review of the literature seemed to indicate that his experiences in the literacy methods classroom presented the cognitive conflict necessary for his change in perspective.

### **Summary of Themes**

Pre-service teachers' enter the teacher preparation program with both implicit and explicit beliefs about reading and learning to read. These beliefs are informed by the pre-service teachers' experiences and influence their instructional practices and decisions in the classroom. This study explored these beliefs and practices and the relationship to their theoretical orientations to reading. The themes that emerged from the findings were based on the research questions. A discussion of the following themes was presented: (1) the influence of life experiences on theoretical orientations to reading; (2) the influence of the literacy methods course and corresponding internship; (3) pre-service teachers' alignment of instructional practices to theoretical orientations to reading; (4) pre-service teachers' discussions regarding their beliefs about reading and learning to read; and (5) changes in pre-service teachers' theoretical orientations to reading.

### **Implications**

A large body of research has established a relationship between teachers' beliefs and their instructional practices (Charlesworth et al., 1993; Kagan & Smith, 1988; Smith & Shepard, 1988; Spidell, 1988; Wing, 1989; Ketner, 1997). However, despite the research regarding teachers' beliefs and practices, there appeared to be minimal discussion in the research regarding the following: What is the relationship between pre-service teachers' theoretical orientation to

reading and their beliefs and instructional practices? The findings reflected the need for the consideration of the following recommendations for both pre-service teachers and those involved in the development and delivery of teacher preparation programs:

- **Help pre-service teachers identify their personal theoretical orientations to reading.**

Pre-service teachers often come to the university with known and unknown beliefs about reading and learning to read. However, it is difficult for pre-service teachers to articulate those beliefs in order to engage in meaningful conversations about their instructional decisions and practices. Therefore, it is critical that pre-service teachers develop a clear understanding of their own beliefs about reading and learning to read in order to intelligibly support their choice of instruction and interventions used in the classroom.

- **Unify the relationship between the pre-service teacher, the university professor, and the mentor teacher of the internship classroom.**

It is common for pre-service teachers to defer to the mentor teacher disregarding their own beliefs or instructional practices. Pre-service teachers often strive to please the mentor teacher at all costs, even if it means going against their own beliefs about reading instruction or the research-based best practices they learned during their teacher preparation program. Therefore, the findings suggest a need for unifying the relationships between the pre-service teacher, the university professor, and the mentor teacher of the internship classroom in hopes of creating a space for the pre-service teacher to explore and implement newly acquired teaching skills and knowledge.

- **Educate pre-service teachers on the three main approaches to reading instruction.**

Pre-service teachers have difficulties articulating their beliefs about reading and learning to read. Their beliefs influence everything they do in the classroom including how they set

instructional goals, what procedures they follow, what materials they use, and their approach to instruction. In spite of the importance, pre-service teachers are mostly unaware of the three main approaches to reading instruction and how this relates to their teaching practices.

Therefore, literacy teacher educators should create meaningful opportunities for pre-service teachers to explore and discover their theoretical orientations to reading.

- **Identify the personal theoretical orientations of the university literacy methods professors.** It is necessary for those involved in literacy teacher education to provide a balanced view of the three main approaches to teaching reading within the literacy methods curriculum. To do so requires that reading teacher educators interrogate their own personal beliefs about reading and learning to read to avoid presenting a biased, one-sided view of literacy instruction in the literacy methods classroom.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

The intent of this collective case study research was to explore pre-service teachers' beliefs and practices and how they relate to their theoretical orientations to reading. The intent was not to generalize findings; however, the findings may provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between pre-service teachers' theoretical orientation to reading and their beliefs and instructional practices. Several suggestions for future research are suggested.

- **Conducting a quantitative study to determine statistical significance of pre-service teachers' life experiences.**

Qualitative research offers valuable insights through the intersection of participant narratives. However, research often presents the need for a quantitative approach to understand a particular event or phenomenon. It is recommended that future

quantitative studies investigate the statistical significance of the literacy methods course and the internship experience in relation to the pre-service teachers' theoretical orientation to reading. Because pre-service teachers self-reported influences on their theoretical orientation to reading varies, it would be interesting to determine what variable was most influential.

- **Conducting a longitudinal study following pre-service teachers enrolled in a literacy methods course until their third to fifth year of teaching.**

In-service teachers often leave the profession between their third and fifth year in the field. This is partially attributed to a lack of practical and professional knowledge along with a lack of confidence in their teaching abilities. Therefore, it would be beneficial to explore pre-service teachers' theoretical orientations to reading as they relate to their instructional practices and beliefs, following them to their first few years as in-service teachers.

- **Conducting a case study to explore how the knowledge of pre-service teachers' theoretical orientation to reading influences their teaching self-efficacy.**

Pre-service teachers in this study seemed to display a change in their self-efficacies after given opportunities to teach in the elementary classroom.

Therefore, it would be interesting to explore if having knowledge of their personal theoretical orientations to reading would influence their teaching self-efficacies.

- **Conducting a qualitative study exploring the quality of internship and practicum experiences**

During this study, it became clear that some pre-service teachers did not experience quality internship experiences. Because of the importance field experiences have on pre-service teacher learning, exploring internship quality and pre-service teacher satisfaction would be beneficial to those involved in teacher preparation programs.

### **Coda**

Human beings possess within them conscious and unconscious belief systems that are used to interpret and define their daily experiences. These beliefs, or theories, are largely influenced by culture, social interactions, and personal experiences. According to Tracey and Morrow (2017), when people are aware of these beliefs they are able to label them, think about them, talk about them, and compare them to beliefs different than their own. It is important to understand and identify individuals' beliefs, or theories, as they are closely linked to behavior and practices (Tracey & Morrow, 2017).

Pre-service teachers view reading and learning to read through several different theoretical lenses. Therefore, they also have different perspectives regarding their endorsement of instructional approaches. Understanding and identifying these perspectives helps them clarify and define their roles as teachers and empowers them to make informed instructional decisions. It is of the utmost importance that teacher educators seek to identify and understand pre-service teachers' beliefs about student learning that support their theoretical orientations in effort to maintain practical and relevant teacher preparation programs.

**First, influences on pre-service teachers' theoretical orientations to reading vary; however, the pre-service teachers' theoretical orientations in this study were influenced by:**

**1) previous life experiences; 2) experiences in the literacy methods course; and 3) experiences in the internship classroom.** A large body of research suggests that beliefs are formed early in life (Abelson, 1979; Buchmann, 1984, 1987; Buchmann & Schwille, 1983; Clark, 1988; Florio-Ruane & Lensmire, 1990; Ginsburg & Newman, 1985; Lasley, 1980; Lortie, 1975; Munby, 1982; Nespor, 1987; Nisbett & Ross, 1980; Posner, Strike, Hewson, & Gertzog, 1982; Rokeach, 1968; Schommer, 1990; VanFleet, 1979; Wilson, 1990). The pre-service teachers' beliefs about reading and learning to read were influenced by their previous life histories. Pre-service teachers who came from home environments that did not encourage reading not only struggled as readers themselves and initially lacked confidence in their teaching abilities, but also demonstrated a lack of professional and practical knowledge. Conversely, those that came from literacy-rich home environments not only excelled academically, but also maintained comparably more practical and professional knowledge regarding reading and learning to read. In addition to home literacy experiences, the pre-service teachers in this study each recalled teachers who motivated them to become better readers and ultimately influenced their decision to become teachers themselves. This supported the generally accepted belief that the teacher is the most important component in the classroom.

Overall, the pre-service teachers in the study did not possess much practical or professional knowledge about reading and learning to read at the beginning of the study. Therefore, both the literacy methods course and professor, along with the internship experience and mentor teacher, influenced the pre-service teachers' beliefs about reading instruction and their choice of instructional practices. Furthermore, the quality of the internship experience, and the teaching abilities of the mentor teacher, seemed to influence pre-service teacher learning and knowledge about teaching literacy in the classroom. While some have argued that the practicum

experiences outweigh what is taught in the university classroom (Stansell and Roberts, 1979), this claim was undetermined in this study.

Second, **multiple obstacles hindered the connections pre-service teachers made to their beliefs and instructional practices and their theoretical orientations to reading. These obstacles were identified as: 1) difficulties identifying and discussing their beliefs; 2) lack of practical and professional knowledge; and 3) assimilation to the culture of the internship classroom.** The interaction and intersection of knowledge, beliefs, practices, and experiences formulate the individual theoretical orientation to learning (Opfer, D. & Peddler, D., 2011). Pre-service teachers in this study had difficulties articulating their personal beliefs about reading and learning to read. They were able to discuss the practical aspects of teaching reading such as describing the instructional practices they might use in their future classrooms, but they had difficulties relating these to the theoretical orientation to reading. In fact, the pre-service teachers demonstrated little to no understanding or knowledge of the different theoretical approaches to reading instruction such as phonics, decoding, or whole language. This was an important finding because teachers who are aware of the theories that support their choice of instructional practices are better equipped to select interventions that best suit the particular learning needs in the classroom (Tracey, D.H., & Morrow, L.M., 2017). The pre-service teachers in this study disregarded their own beliefs and preferred instructional practices to accommodate the desires of the mentor teacher in the internship classroom.

Third, **the pre-service teachers' theoretical orientations to reading according to the DeFord Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP) varied.** The pre-service teachers' orientations to reading: endorsed a phonics perspective at both the beginning and end of the study demonstrating only slight movements on the TORP continuum (Case Study One);

endorsed a whole language perspective at the beginning of the study and a phonics perspective at the end of the study demonstrating a drastic movement on the TORP continuum (Case Study Two); and 3) endorsed a skills perspective at the beginning of the study and a phonics perspective at the end of the study demonstrating a possible convergence of the two perspectives.

Pre-service teachers begin their education with preconceived theories that may go unchallenged during their teacher preparation programs (Rath, 2003). These preconceived beliefs about reading and learning to read are often implicit, making it difficult for teacher educators to help pre-service teachers discover and explore their personal theories. Therefore, it is essential that teacher preparation programs guide pre-service teachers towards discovering their personally held theories regarding reading and learning to read. Doing so would adequately prepare them to be informed decision makers and problem solvers. Furthermore, understanding and addressing these preconceived beliefs will serve as a new foundation upon which pre-service teachers can build new practical and professional knowledge (Barnyak & Paquette, 2010).

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# Appendix A - IRB Approval

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY: IRB Protocol #  Application Received:  Routed:  Training Complete:



## Committee for Research Involving Human Subjects (IRB) Application for Approval Form

Please send your completed application to [comply@k-state.edu](mailto:comply@k-state.edu)

### INSTRUCTIONS

**Be sure to save the application PDF to your computer before you begin completing the form. You may not be able to save your changes if you edit this form in a web browser.**

The KSU IRB is required by law to ensure that all research involving human subjects is adequately reviewed for specific information and is approved prior to inception of any proposed activity. Consequently, it is important that you answer all questions accurately. If you need help or have questions about how to complete this application, please call the Research Compliance Office at 532-3224, or e-mail us at [comply@ksu.edu](mailto:comply@ksu.edu).

Please provide the requested information in the outlined text boxes. The text boxes are designed to accommodate responses within the body of the application. As you type your answers, the text boxes will expand where appropriate and as needed. After completion send your application by e-mail to [comply@k-state.edu](mailto:comply@k-state.edu).

You may sign this form using a digital signature. DO NOT sign the form until it has been completed. You cannot edit the form entries once the form has been digitally signed. If you are making revisions to a previously signed form, right-click the digital signature and select Clear to remove the signature (this can only be done by the person who originally digitally signed the form).

Forms that have not been signed will not be accepted.

*Additional material is requested with this application. Be sure to provide electronic copies of the following documents (if applicable) and submit them to [comply@k-state.edu](mailto:comply@k-state.edu) along with your application:*

- Consent Form (see *Administrative Information, IX. Informed Consent A.*)
- Sponsor's grant application or contract as submitted to the funding agency. (See *Administrative Information*)
- Surveys, instruments, etc used for data collection (see *V. Design and Procedures C.* and *X. Project Information P.*)
- Debriefing statement to be utilized (see *IX. Informed Consent E.*)

FAILURE TO PROVIDE ALL INFORMATION REQUESTED MAY LEAD  
TO A DELAY IN PROCESSING YOUR REQUEST.

**Please proof read and check spelling BEFORE submitting the form.  
To use Acrobat spelling check, press F7 or select EDIT, CHECK SPELLING**

**PLEASE CONTINUE TO THE NEXT PAGE  
TO BEGIN COMPLETING THE FORM**

**ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION:**

Title of Project/Course:

Type of Application:  New / Renewal  Revision (to a pending new application)  
 (check one box)  Modification to an existing approved application #:

Principal Investigator Details: (must be a KSU faculty member):

Name:  Degree/Title:

Department:  Campus Phone:

Campus Address:

E-mail:  Fax #:

Responsible Graduate Student: (Person to contact for questions/problems with the form):

Name:  Campus Phone:

E-mail:

Does this project involve any collaborators not part of the faculty/staff at KSU? (projects with non-KSU collaborators may require additional coordination and approvals):

No  Yes

Project Classification (Is this project part of one of the following?):

Thesis  Dissertation  Faculty Research

Other:

*Note: Class Projects should use the short form application for class projects.*

Copy of the Consent Form:  Copy will be submitted to comply@ksu.edu with this application  Consent form not used

Funding Source:  Internal  External (Identify source. You will also need to provide a copy of the sponsor's grant application or contract as submitted to the funding agency. This should be submitted to comply@ksu.edu with your application.)

Based upon criteria found in 45 CFR 46 – and the overview of projects that may qualify for exemption explained at <http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/policy/checklists/decisioncharts.html>, I believe that my project using human subjects should be determined by the IRB to be exempt from IRB review:

No  Yes (If yes, please provide the category of "Exemption" in the space below)

**Exempt Projects:** 45 CFR 46 identifies six categories of research involving human subjects that may be exempt from IRB review. The categories for exemption are listed here: <http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/policy/checklists/decisioncharts.html#2> If you believe that your project qualifies for exemption, please indicate which exemption category applies (1-6). Please remember that only the IRB can make the final determination whether a project is exempt from IRB review, or not.

Exemption Category:

**MODIFICATION:**

Is this a modification of an approved protocol?  No  Yes If yes, please comply with the following:

If you are requesting a modification or a change to an IRB approved protocol, please provide a concise description of all of the changes that you are proposing in the following block. Additionally, please highlight or bold the proposed changes in the body of the protocol where appropriate, so that it is clearly discernible to the IRB reviewers what and where the proposed changes are. This will greatly help the committee and facilitate the review.

- I. **NON-TECHNICAL SYNOPSIS** (Please provide a brief narrative description of proposal. This should typically be less than 75 words and be easily understood by nonscientists):

Pre-service teachers are often not aware of the theories that inform their reading practices and beliefs. While conducting this study, I intend to explore pre-service teachers' beliefs about reading and reading instruction and how their beliefs and instructional practices are connected to their personal theories regarding reading. Results from the study will add to the research in the field of teacher education and reading teacher education.

- II. **BACKGROUND** (concise narrative review of the literature and basis for the study):

Pre-service teachers often underestimate the value and importance of theory in their preparation programs (Whitney, Olan, & Fredrickson, 2013). Pre-service teachers believe courses in their preparation programs focus too much on theory and too little on practical strategies (Kagan, 1992; Randi & Corno, 2007). While they claim to receive too much instruction on learning theories, pre-service teachers are often unable to articulate their beliefs about teaching and learning (Lortie, 1975). Richardson (2003) reported that pre-service teachers' entering beliefs influence what and how they learn during the teacher preparation program. Further, their beliefs based upon their practical knowledge, personal learning preferences, or stereotypes and misconceptions (Davis, 2004) often do not align with the realities they will face in the classroom (Pajares, 1992). If these beliefs regarding learning are not confronted and challenged they could present obstacles to student learning (Davis, 2004). Pajares (1992) further warned, "unexplored entering beliefs may be responsible for the perpetuation of antiquated and ineffectual teaching practices" (p. 328). Snowling & Hulme (2012) advocated for a general principle of a "virtuous circle;" for researchers and educators that theory should inform practice and practice should inform theory. Therefore, to create effective teacher preparation programs reflective of the needs of pre-service teachers, it is necessary to understand their theoretical orientations and beliefs about learning (Leko, Kulkarni, Lin, & Smith, 2015) and how they intersect with their instructional practices.

There is a significant amount of research on the process of reading (Chall, 1983, 1990; Clay, 1991; Durkin, 1996; Goodman, 1965, 1967; Goodman et al., 1987). In their research, Anders, Hoffman, & Duffy (2000) gave an account of both pre-service and in-service teachers in the context of reading instruction. The authors pointed out that while the area of educational research in teacher education is expanding, there remains several questions surrounding how best to prepare and support teachers of reading. Roehler & Duffy (1991) posited that teacher educators must assist pre-service teachers by presenting them with research that illuminates beliefs, the relationships among various belief systems, and the role of beliefs on instructional decision making. Although more research is needed on teacher beliefs in general (Pajares, 1992) several

studies have established a congruence between teacher beliefs and instructional practices (Charlesworth et al., 1993; Kagan & Smith, 1988; Smith & Shepard, 1988; Spidell, 1988; Wing, 1989; Ketner, 1997). Despite the research on teachers' beliefs and practices, there continues to be a lack in the current research relating pre-service teachers' beliefs and practices to their personally held theoretical perspectives. Many teachers do not make connections from theory to their instructional practices arguing theory is not relevant (Randi & Corno, 2007). However, Park (2013) suggested pre-service teachers might disregard theory because they lack an understanding of how theory influences their instructional practices and decision-making. While pre-service teachers desire more "practical" material and less theory (Whitney, Olan, & Fredrickson, 2013), Randi and Corno (2007) contended that more research is needed to help teachers identify and call up theory-based practices that resolve their immediate problems.

Researchers recommended future investigations regarding educational beliefs and practices in relationship to theoretical orientations. Snowling & Hulme (2014) argued the need for a closer link between theory and practice research. Ritchey, Coker, Jr., & Jackson (2015) argued for additional research that could help develop a better understanding of the ways teachers' theoretical orientations, instructional practices, and student outcomes are related. Leko, Kulkarni, Lin, & Smith (2015) suggested future research regarding the long-term effects of coursework, personal, and practical experiences on beliefs. Ketner (2001) recommended more research on teacher theoretical orientation to reading and beliefs about developmentally appropriate practices. In line with the current demands for research, the purpose of this study is to explore pre-service teachers' beliefs and practices and how they relate to their theoretical orientations to reading. This study will specifically address the gap in the research focusing on preservice teachers who are enrolled in a literacy methods courses. My goal is to develop a deeper understanding of pre-service teachers' theoretical beliefs and how those beliefs might influence their future practices as teachers of reading.

### III. PROJECT/STUDY DESCRIPTION

(Please provide a concise narrative description of the proposed activity in terms that will allow the IRB or other interested parties to clearly understand what it is that you propose to do that involves human subjects. This description must be in enough detail so that IRB members can make an informed decision about the proposal).

In order to develop a better understanding of the relationship between pre-service teachers' theoretical orientations of reading and their beliefs and instructional practices participant selection must be considered. The five pre-service teachers I select to study must be enrolled in a reading methods course located on the

on three different occasions to complete the interview process.

E. List all biological samples taken: (if any)

F. Debriefing procedures for participants:

Following the completion of the study, pre-service teacher participants will be given access to the findings from my study. They will also be given the opportunity to review my findings from their interviews to ensure I understood and interpreted their stories and discussions correctly.

VI. **RESEARCH SUBJECTS:**

A. Source:

Students enrolled in a reading methods course in the College of Education at Fort Hays State University where I am a faculty member. (NOTE: These are not my students.)

B. Number: (provide a brief rationale for your sample size)

I have chosen to study five pre-service teachers. I realize this number might change if some choose to discontinue their participation. This will be a collective case study. Therefore, five or less is a good number for participation.

C. Inclusion criteria: (List any unique qualifiers desirable for research subject participation)

The students should be enrolled in the literacy methods course on campus.

D. Exclusion criteria: (list any unique disqualifiers for research subject participation)

The participants must have no existing experience as a classroom teacher prior to the study with the exception of volunteering in a classroom. For example, participants cannot be enrolled in the course as part of their teaching license renewal or serve as a paraprofessional.

E. Recruitment procedures:

How will subjects be identified?

Students enrolled a literacy methods course on campus will complete a biography questionnaire that will give me information about their reading background and their prior experiences.

How will subjects be recruited (advertisement, associates, etc.) ?

I will visit the classroom of my associate who teaches the reading methods course. I will describe the study I am currently hoping to conduct and ask pre-service teachers to please consider participating.

How will subjects be enrolled?

Those pre-service teachers who choose to participate in the study will indicate this when completing the biography questionnaire.

Describe any follow-up recruitment procedures: (reminder emails, mailings, etc.)

I will make additional visits to the reading methods classroom if necessary to continue my recruitment.

VII. **RISK - PROTECTION - BENEFITS:** The answers for the three questions below are central to human subjects research. You must demonstrate a reasonable balance between anticipated risks to research participants, protection strategies, and anticipated benefits to participants or others.

A. **Risk for Subjects:** (check all that apply)

- Exposure to infectious diseases
- Use of confidential records
- Exposure to radiation
- Manipulation of psychological or social variables such as sensory deprivation, social isolation, psychological stressors
- Examining for personal or sensitive information in surveys or interviews

campus of the university. The pre-service teachers enrolled in the course will participate in a literacy field experience, providing for me the opportunity to observe them in the natural context of the elementary classroom. The observations will take place one day a week for approximately 45 minutes over a three week period. I will also collect any relevant lesson plans and teaching reflections from the pre-service teachers to help me have a better understanding of their instructional practices and decision making. In addition to the observations, the researcher will interview the pre-service teachers on three occasions, at the beginning, middle, and end of the study. In addition to observations and in-depth interviews, I will administer the Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile to the pre-service teacher participants. The DeFord (1985) Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP) is a valid and reliable likert scale instrument used to measure teachers' beliefs about reading instruction and practices. This instrument will be used in this study to identify pre-service teachers' theoretical orientations to reading. The TORP will be administered and analyzed at the beginning of the study prior to coursework and field experiences. The results from the TORP will provide the researcher with knowledge regarding the pre-service teachers' beliefs about reading and reading instruction prior to their experiences in the reading methods course. The TORP will also be administered at the end of the study to explore the possibility of belief change after the completion of coursework and field experiences.

**IV. OBJECTIVE**

(Briefly state the objective of the research – what you hope to learn from the study).

In line with the current demands for research, the purpose of this study is to explore pre-service teachers' beliefs and practices and how they relate to their theoretical orientations to reading. This study will specifically address the gap in the research focusing on preservice teachers who are enrolled in a literacy methods courses. My goal is to develop a deeper understanding of pre-service teachers' theoretical beliefs and how those beliefs might influence their future practices as teachers of reading.

**V. DESIGN AND PROCEDURES** (succinctly outline formal plan for study)

A. List all sites where this research will be conducted:

Fort Hays State University-reading methods classroom (Interviews)  
 Local elementary school classrooms in Hays, Kansas (Observation of pre-service teachers during their field experiences)

B. Variables to be studied: 1)The teaching practices of the pre-service teachers during their field experiences 2) Pre-service teachers' beliefs about reading and reading instruction 3) Pre-service teachers' personal theoretical orientations to reading 4) The relationships between pre-service teachers' practices and espoused beliefs to their actual teaching practices

C. Data collection methods: (surveys, instruments, etc - **copies must submitted to comply@k-state.edu**).

Observation-The researcher will take field notes and record observation data in a journal or log book.  
 Interviews- The researcher will interview the pre-service teachers on three different occasions during the twelve week study. Interviews will be transcribed and coded for use in this study.  
 Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP)- DeFord's (1985) likert scale instrument proven to be valid and reliable

D. List any factors that might lead to a subject dropping out or withdrawing from a study. These might include, but are not limited to emotional or physical stress, pain, inconvenience, etc.

The pre-service teachers' lack of time might be a reason for discontinuing this study. It might be difficult for some to meet

**IX. INFORMED CONSENT:** Informed consent is a critical component of human subjects research - it is your responsibility to make sure that any potential subject knows exactly what the project that you are planning is about, and what his/her potential role is. (There may be projects where some forms of “deception” of the subject is necessary for the execution of the study, but it must be carefully justified to and approved by the IRB). A schematic for determining when a waiver or alteration of informed consent may be considered by the IRB is found at <http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/policy/checklists/decisioncharts.html#c10>

Even if your proposed activity does qualify for a waiver of informed consent, you must still provide potential participants with basic information that informs them of their rights as subjects, i.e. explanation that the project is research and the purpose of the research, length of study, study procedures, debriefing issues to include anticipated benefits, study and administrative contact information, confidentiality strategy, and the fact that participation is entirely voluntary and can be terminated at any time without penalty, etc. Even if your potential subjects are completely anonymous, you are obliged to provide them (and the IRB) with basic information about your project. See informed consent example on the URCO website. It is a federal requirement to maintain informed consent forms for 3 years after the study completion.

**Answer the following questions about the informed consent procedures.**

Yes     No    **A.** Are you using a written informed consent form? If “yes,” include a copy with this application. If “no” see B.

Yes     No    **B.** In accordance with guidance in 45 CFR 46, I am requesting a waiver or alteration of informed consent elements (see section VIII above). If “yes,” provide a basis and/or justification for your request.

Yes     No    **C.** Are you using the online Consent Form Template provided by the URCO? If “no,” does your Informed Consent document have all the minimum required elements of informed consent found in the Consent Form Template? (Please explain)

Yes     No    **D.** Are your research subjects anonymous? If they are anonymous, you will not have access to any information that will allow you to determine the identity of the research subjects in your study, or to link research data to a specific individual in any way. Anonymity is a powerful protection for potential research subjects. (An anonymous subject is one whose identity is unknown even to the researcher, or the data or information collected cannot be linked in any way to a specific person).

Yes     No    **E.** Are subjects debriefed about the purposes, consequences, and benefits of the research? Debriefing refers to a mechanism for informing the research subjects of the results or conclusions, after the data is collected and analyzed, and the study is over. (If “no” explain why.) **Copy of debriefing statement to be utilized should be submitted to [comply@k-state.edu](mailto:comply@k-state.edu) with your application.**

**F. Describe the Informed Consent Process:**

- Presentation of materials which subjects might consider sensitive, offensive, threatening, or degrading
- Invasion of privacy of subject or family
- Social or economic risk
- Risk associated with exercise or physical exertion
- Legal risk
- Review of medical records
- Review of criminal records
- HIV/AIDS or other STD's
- Employment/occupational risk
- Others – Please explain below (Indirect risks, risk to individuals who are not the primary subjects):

**B. Minimizing Risk:** (Describe specific measures used to minimize or protect subjects from anticipated risks.)

Part of interview process in qualitative research is to openly acknowledge personal biases. Different from quantitative research, qualitative research embraces biases and builds them into the study. Prior to the study I will take a personal account of my biases to prevent them from affecting my interpretation of pre-service teacher interview responses. Qualitative researchers must develop a trusting and respectful relationship with the participants in order to create a safe space for inquiry to occur. To build this relationship, I will 1) inform the participants of their rights to discontinue the study at any time with no negative recourse 2) ensure their privacy and confidentiality 3) treat them with respect and kindness.

**C. Benefits:** (Describe any reasonably expected benefits for research participants, a class of participants, or to society as a whole.)

By participating in this study, the findings from this study will add to the research in the fields of reading research and education and teacher education programs.

**D. More than Minimal Risk?** In your opinion, does the research involve more than minimal risk to subjects? (“Minimal risk” means that “the risks of harm anticipated in the proposed research are not greater, considering probability and magnitude, than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests.”)

- Yes                       No

**VIII. CONFIDENTIALITY:** Confidentiality is the formal treatment of information that an individual has disclosed to you in a relationship of trust and with the expectation that it will not be divulged to others without permission in ways that are inconsistent with the understanding of the original disclosure. Consequently, it is your responsibility to protect information that you gather from human research subjects in a way that is consistent with your agreement with the volunteer and with their expectations.

Explain how you are going to protect confidentiality of research subjects and/or data or records. Include plans for maintaining records after completion.

In order to protect pre-service teacher participants' confidentiality, I will make certain to keep all data collected in a locked cabinet inside my locked office. I will keep these records of the research in a locked cabinet for three years after the completion of the study. I will shred and dispose of the data collected after this time has expired.

Who is obtaining the consent? (i.e. Principle Investigator, Graduate Student, etc.)

Graduate Student: Sarah Broman

When and where will consent be obtained?

Consent will be obtained prior to the study (08/21/2017 time frame). After determining the pre-service teacher participants used for the study, the researcher will obtain consent directly from them. All pre-service teacher participants are considered legal adults age 18 or older.

If assent (for minors) is required, please describe who will obtain the assent? (Assent means a child's affirmative agreement to participate in research)

N/A

If assent (for minors) is required, when and where will assent be obtained?

N/A

How will consent be obtained from non-English speaking participants? (a translated written form, orally, identify the name and qualifications of the individual providing the translation)

N/A

**Informed Consent Checklist**

Items	YES	NO	N/A
Does the title appear at the top of the consent/assent form?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the consent/assent form written toward the subject?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there a statement that explains that the study is <i>research</i> ?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there a statement that explains the <i>purpose</i> of the research?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are the procedures to be followed explained clearly and adequately?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the consent document describe <i>risks or discomforts</i> to subjects as a result of participating in the research?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the consent/assent form written in the <i>native language</i> of the potential subject?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are participants compensated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If the subjects' identity is known to the PI, does the form detail how confidentiality of records will be maintained?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is contact information for both the PI and the URCO/IRB office included?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the consent document indicate to the participant that he/she can withdraw at any time from the project without penalty or loss of benefit?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there probable circumstances which would require the PI to terminate a subject's participation regardless of his or her consent?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the consent document written in lay language (Recommended 8th grade level)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

X. **PROJECT INFORMATION:** (If you answer Yes to any of the questions below, you should explain them in one of the paragraphs above)

Yes  No A. Deception of subjects? If "YES" explain why this is necessary.

Yes  No B. Shock or other forms of punishment

Yes  No C. Sexually explicit materials or sexual experience

Yes  No D. Sexual orientation

- Yes  No E. Sexual abuse
- Yes  No F. Handling of money or other valuable commodities
- Yes  No G. Extraction or use of blood, other bodily fluids, or tissues (if "yes", you must comply with facility and handling protections detailed in the 5th Edition of the Biosafety in Biomedical Laboratories (BMBL))
- Yes  No H. Questions about any kind of illegal or illicit activity
- Yes  No I. Questions about protected health information as defined by HIPAA
- Yes  No J. Purposeful creation of anxiety
- Yes  No K. Any procedure that might be viewed as invasion of privacy
- Yes  No L. Physical exercise or stress
- Yes  No M. Administration of substances (food, drugs, etc.) to subjects
- Yes  No N. Any procedure that might place subjects at risk
- Yes  No O. Will there be any use of Radioactive materials and/or use of Radioactive producing machines
- Yes  No P. Any form of potential abuse; i.e., psychological, physical, sexual
- Yes  No Q. Is there potential for the data from this project to be published in a journal, presented at a conference, etc?
- Yes  No R. Use of surveys or questionnaires for data collection. **Copies should be submitted to comply@k-state.edu with your application.**

**XI. SUBJECT INFORMATION:** (If you answer yes to any of the questions below, you should explain them in one of the paragraphs above)

- Yes  No a. Under 18 years of age (these subjects require parental or guardian consent)
- Yes  No b. Over 65 years of age
- Yes  No c. Minorities as target population
- Yes  No d. Physically or mentally disabled
- Yes  No e. Economically or educationally disadvantaged
- Yes  No f. Unable to provide their own legal informed consent
- Yes  No g. Pregnant females as target population
- Yes  No h. Victims
- Yes  No i. Subjects in institutions (e.g., prisons, nursing homes, halfway houses)
- Yes  No j. Are subjects likely to be vulnerable to coercion or undue influence
- Yes  No k. Is this international research? If yes, provide details as to if OHRP regulations apply in or near the area you intend to conduct research or if you have contacted individuals for applicable regulations to human subject research.
- Yes  No l. Are research subjects in this activity students recruited from university classes or volunteer pools? If so, do you have a reasonable alternative(s) to participation as a research subject in your project, i.e., another activity such as writing or reading that would serve to protect students from unfair pressure or coercion to participate in this project? If you answered this question "Yes," explain any alternatives options for class credit for potential human subject volunteers in your study. (It is also important to remember that: Students must be free to choose not to participate in research that they have signed up for at any time without penalty. Communication of their decision can be conveyed in any manner, to include simply not showing up for the research.)  

The pre-service teachers that will make up my sample are not my own students. If they choose not to participate they can simply decline or discontinue their participation at any time.
- Yes  No m. Is audio from the subjects recorded? If yes, how do you plan to protect the recorded information and mitigate any additional risks?  

I will keep the recorded audio on my private laptop which is password secured. I will delete the recordings when I am finished transcribing the data.
- Yes  No n. Are research subjects' images being recorded (video taped, digitally recorded, photographed)? If yes, how do you plan to protect the recorded information and mitigate any additional risks?

- C. **Does your non-KSU collaborator’s organization have an Assurance with OHRP?** (for Federalwide Assurance listings of other institutions, please reference the OHRP website under Assurance Information at: <http://ohrp.cit.nih.gov/search>).

Yes     No    If yes, Collaborator’s FWA #

**Is your non-KSU collaborator’s IRB reviewing this proposal?**

Yes     No    If yes, IRB approval #

**XV. IRB Training:**

- A. **The URCO must have a copy of the Unaffiliated Investigator Agreement on file for each non-KSU collaborator who is not covered by their own IRB and assurance with OHRP.** When research involving human subjects includes collaborators who are not employees or agents of KSU the activities of those unaffiliated individuals may be covered under the KSU Assurance only in accordance with a formal, written agreement of commitment to relevant human subject protection policies and IRB oversight. The Unaffiliated Investigators Agreement can be found and downloaded at <http://www.k-state.edu/research/comply/irb/forms>

**Online Training**

**\*TRAINING REQUIREMENTS HAVE RECENTLY CHANGED\***

**The IRB has mandatory training requirements prior to protocol approval. Training is now offered through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Program. Instructions for registration and access to training are on the URCO website <http://www.k-state.edu/research/comply/>.**

**Use the check boxes below to select the training courses that apply to this application. If you have any questions about training, contact URCO at [comply@ksu.edu](mailto:comply@ksu.edu), or (785) 532-3224.**

**Mandatory Training**

**Required for all Principal Investigators, research staff and students**

- Responsible Conduct of Research  
 IRB core modules

**Required (Provost-mandated) for all full-time K-State employees**

- Export Compliance

**Required procedure-specific training (check all that apply to this protocol):**

- International Research     Research in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools     Research with Children  
 Research with Prisoners     Internet Research     Vulnerable Subjects - Research Involving Workers/Employees  
 Research with Subjects with Physical Disabilities and Impairments     Illegal Activities or Undocument Status in Human Research  
 Gender and Sexuality Diversity in Human Research     Research with human blood, body fluids, or tissues  
 Research with Older Adults

**All new personnel or personnel with expired training are required to register for CITI and take the new training requirements. If you previously completed online IRB modules, your training status will remain current until it expires. URCO will verify training from the previous system as well as the new system prior to approval of any protocol.**

**XII. FDA ACTIVITIES:** Answer the following questions about potential FDA regulated activities:

- Yes  No a. Is this a Clinical Trial?
- Yes  No b. Are you using an FDA approved drug/device/diagnostic test?
- Yes  No c. Does this activity involve the use of FDA-Regulated products? (biological products, color additives, food additives, human drugs, etc.)
- Yes  No d. Has the protocol been submitted to the FDA, or are there plans to submit it to the FDA?
- Yes  No e. Have you submitted an FDA form 3454 or 3455 (conflict of interest)?

**XIII. CONFLICT OF INTEREST:** Concerns have been growing that financial interests in research may threaten the safety and rights of human research subjects. Financial interests are not in them selves prohibited and may well be appropriate and legitimate. Not all financial interests cause Conflict of Interest (COI) or harm to human subjects. However, to the extent that financial interests may affect the welfare of human subjects in research, IRB's, institutions, and investigators must consider what actions regarding financial interests may be necessary to protect human subjects. Please answer the following questions:

- Yes  No a. Do you or the institution have any proprietary interest in a potential product of this research, including patents, trademarks, copyrights, or licensing agreements?
- Yes  No b. Do you have an equity interest in the research sponsor (publicly held or a non-publicly held company)?
- Yes  No c. Do you receive significant payments of other sorts, eg., grants, equipment, retainers for consultation and/or honoraria from the sponsor of this research?
- Yes  No d. Do you receive payment per participant or incentive payments?
- e. If you answered **yes** to any of the above questions, please provide adequate explanatory information so the IRB can assess any potential COI indicated above.

**XIV. PROJECT COLLABORATORS:**

**A. KSU Collaborators:** List anyone affiliated with KSU who is collecting or analyzing data: (list all collaborators on the project, including co-principal investigators, undergraduate and graduate students).

Name:	Department:	Campus Phone:	Campus E-mail:
<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>
<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>
<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>
<input type="button" value="Add Row"/>		<input type="button" value="Delete Row"/>	

**B. Non-KSU Collaborators:** List all collaborators on your human subjects research project not affiliated with KSU in the spaces below. KSU has negotiated an Assurance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP), the federal office responsible for oversight of research involving human subjects.

Name:	Organization:	Phone:	Institutional E-mail:
<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>
<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>
<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>
<input type="button" value="Add Row"/>		<input type="button" value="Delete Row"/>	

## INVESTIGATOR ASSURANCE FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

(Print this page separately because it requires a signature by the PI)

P.I. Name: Title of Project: XVI. **ASSURANCES:** As the Principal Investigator on this protocol, I provide assurances for the following:

- A. **Research Involving Human Subjects:** This project will be performed in the manner described in this proposal, and in accordance with the Federalwide Assurance FWA00000865 approved for Kansas State University available at <http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/assurances/forms/filasurt.html>, applicable laws, regulations, and guidelines. Any proposed deviation or modification from the procedures detailed herein must be submitted to the IRB, and be approved by the Committee for Research Involving Human Subjects (IRB) prior to implementation.
- B. **Training:** I assure that all personnel working with human subjects described in this protocol are technically competent for the role described for them, and have completed the required IRB training accessed via the URCO website at: <http://www.k-state.edu/research/comply/irb/training>. I understand that no proposals will receive final IRB approval until the URCO has documentation of completion of training by all appropriate personnel.
- C. **Extramural Funding:** If funded by an extramural source, I assure that this application accurately reflects all procedures involving human subjects as described in the grant/contract proposal to the funding agency. I also assure that I will notify the IRB/URCO, the KSU PreAward Services, and the funding/contract entity if there are modifications or changes made to the protocol after the initial submission to the funding agency.
- D. **Study Duration:** I understand that it is the responsibility of the Committee for Research Involving Human Subjects (IRB) to perform continuing reviews of human subjects research as necessary. I also understand that as continuing reviews are conducted, it is my responsibility to provide timely and accurate review or update information when requested, to include notification of the IRB/URCO when my study is changed or completed.
- E. **Conflict of Interest:** I assure that I have accurately described (in this application) any potential Conflict of Interest that my collaborators, the University, or I may have in association with this proposed research activity.
- F. **Adverse Event Reporting:** I assure that I will promptly report to the IRB / URCO any unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others that involve the protocol as approved. Unanticipated or Adverse Event Form is located on the URCO website at: <http://www.k-state.edu/research/comply/irb/forms>. In the case of a serious event, the Unanticipated or Adverse Events Form may follow a phone call or email contact with the URCO.
- G. **Accuracy:** I assure that the information herein provided to the Committee for Human Subjects Research is to the best of my knowledge complete and accurate.

You may sign this form using a digital signature. DO NOT sign the form until it has been completed.

You cannot edit the form entries once the form has been digitally signed. If you are making revisions to a previously signed form, right-click the digital signature and select Clear to remove the signature (this can only be done by the person who originally digitally signed the form). Forms that have not been signed will not be accepted.

P.I. Signature:  Date:

# Appendix B - Informed Consent



## Institutional Review Board (IRB) Informed Consent Template Form

comply@k-state.edu | 785-532-3224

If you are performing research involving human subjects, it is your responsibility to address the issue of informed consent. This template is intended to provide guidance for crafting an informed consent document. The Committee for Research Involving Human Subjects (IRB) strongly recommends that you model your consent form on this template. However, if you choose a different approach, it must contain at a minimum the same elements as this standard version. Language and terminology used in the consent form must be written at no more than the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level, so that the potential participant can clearly understand the project, how it is going to be conducted, and all issues that may affect his or her participation. In addition, please write the consent form in a manner that addresses your subjects directly instead of writing it in a manner that addresses the University Research Compliance Office directly. *Information on the important issue of informed consent can be found in 45 CFR 46 at <http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/45cfr46.htm#46.116>. Federal law mandates that all signed and dated informed consent forms be retained by the P.I. for at least three years following completion of the study.*

**WAIVER OF INFORMED CONSENT:** *There are limited instances where the requirement for a formal informed consent document may be waived or altered by the IRB.*

*45 CFR 46 states that "An IRB may waive the requirement for the investigator to obtain a signed consent form for some or all subjects if it finds either:*

- 1) That the only record linking the subject and the research would be the consent document and the principal risk would be potential harm resulting from a breach of confidentiality. Each subject will be asked whether the subject wants documentation linking the subject with the research, and the subject's wishes will govern; or*
- 2) That the research presents no more than minimal risk of harm to subjects and involves no procedures for which written consent is normally required outside of the research context."*

If a study employs only questionnaires and surveys as the source of their data, it may generally be assumed that to answer and return the questionnaire is an appropriate and sufficient expression of free consent. However, there are circumstances that might call this assumption into question - e.g., teacher-student relationship between the investigator and the subject, etc. However, a statement should be included on the questionnaire or survey form indicating that participation of the subject is

strictly voluntary, the length of time reasonably expected to complete the questionnaire or survey form, and that questions that make the participant uncomfortable may be skipped.

### Form Content

**PROJECT TITLE:** Full title of project. If possible, the title should be identical to that used in any funding/contract proposal. **PROJECT APPROVAL DATE/**

**EXPIRATION DATE:** provided in the approval letter, must be in place before distributing to subjects. **LENGTH OF STUDY:** Estimate the length of time the subject will be expected to participate.

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR/CO-INVESTIGATOR(S):** Must be a regular member of the faculty.

**CONTACT DETAILS FOR PROBLEMS/QUESTIONS:** Name, phone number and/or email address of the P.I.

**IRB CHAIR CONTACT INFORMATION:** *For the subject should he/she have questions or wish to discuss on any aspect of the research with an official of the university or the IRB.*

*These are:* Rick Scheidt, Chair, Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, (785) 532-3224; Cheryl Doerr, Associate Vice President for Research Compliance, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, (785) 532-3224.

**PROJECT SPONSOR:** Funding/contract entity.

**PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH:** Explain in lay terms that this is a research project, and why the research is being done.

**PROCEDURES OR METHODS TO BE USED:** Explain in lay terms and in language understandable at the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level how the study is going to be conducted and what will be expected of participants. Tell participants if they will be audio or videotaped, if they will be paid, etc. **ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURES OR**

**TREATMENTS, IF ANY, THAT MIGHT BE ADVANTAGEOUS TO SUBJECT:** Explain any alternative procedures or treatments if applicable.

**RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS ANTICIPATED:** Describe any foreseeable risks or discomforts from the study. If there are no known risks, make a statement to that effect.

**BENEFITS ANTICIPATED:** Describe any *reasonably expected* benefits from the research to the participant or others from the research.

**EXTENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY:** Explain how you plan to protect confidentiality.

**IS COMPENSATION OR MEDICAL TREATMENT AVAILABLE IF INJURY**

**OCCURS:** *In cases where more than minimal risk is involved.* **PARENTAL APPROVAL**

**FOR MINORS:** If minors or those who require the approval of a parent or guardian are participants, you should include a space for their consenting signature.

**PARTICIPANT NAME/SIGNATURE:** Name of research participant and signature.

**WITNESS TO SIGNATURE (PROJECT STAFF):** Staff signature.

Please proofread and check spelling. To use Acrobat spelling check, press F7 or select EDIT, CHECK SPELLING.

When this form is printed, this instruction page will not be shown

The beliefs and practices of pre-service teachers and the relationship to theoretical orientations of reading: A case study

**PROJECT TITLE:**

**PROJECT APPROVAL DATE:**                      **PROJECT EXPIRATION DATE:**

**LENGTH OF STUDY:**                       **12 weeks**

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:**                     

**CO-INVESTIGATOR(S):**                     

**CONTACT DETAILS FOR PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:**                     

**LEMS/QUESTIONS: IRB CHAIR**

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

**PROJECT SPONSOR:**                     

In line with the current demands for research, the purpose of this study is to explore pre-service teachers' beliefs and practices and how they relate to their theoretical orientations to reading. This study will specifically address the gap in the research focusing on preservice teachers who are enrolled in a literacy methods courses. My goal is to develop a deeper understanding of pre-service teachers' theoretical beliefs and how those beliefs might influence their future practices as teachers of reading.

**PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH:**

**PROCEDURES OR METHODS TO BE USED:**

In order to develop a better understanding of the relationship between pre-service teachers' theoretical orientations of reading and their beliefs and instructional practices participant selection must be considered. The five pre-service teachers I select to study must be enrolled in a reading methods course located on the campus of the university. The pre-service teachers enrolled in the course will participate in a literacy field experience, providing for me the opportunity to observe them in the natural context of the elementary classroom. The observations will take place one day a week for approximately 45 minutes over a three week period. I will also collect any relevant lesson plans and teaching reflections from the pre-service teachers to help me have a better understanding of their instructional practices and decision making. In addition to the observations, the researcher

will interview the pre-service teachers on three occasions, at the beginning, middle, and end of the study. In addition to observations and in-depth interviews, I will administer the Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile to the pre-service teacher participants. The DeFord (1985) Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP) is a valid and reliable likert scale instrument used to measure teachers' beliefs about reading instruction and practices. This instrument will be used in this study to identify pre-service teachers' theoretical orientations to reading. The TORP will be administered and analyzed at the beginning of the study prior to coursework and field experiences. The results from the TORP will provide the researcher with knowledge regarding the pre-service teachers' beliefs about reading and reading instruction prior to their experiences in the reading methods course. The TORP will also be administered at the end of the study to explore the possibility of belief change after the completion of coursework and field experiences.

IA

ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURES OR TREATMENTS, IF ANY, THAT MIGHT BE ADVANTAGEOUS TO SUBJECT:

RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS ANTICIPATED:

Examining for personal information in surveys or interviews

Date:

WITNESS TO SIGNATURE: (PROJECT STAFF)

By participating in this study, the findings from this study will add to the research in the fields of reading research and education and teacher education programs.

**BENEFITS ANTICIPATED:**  
**EXTENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY:**

In order to protect pre-service teacher participants' confidentiality, I will make certain to keep all data collected in a locked cabinet inside my locked office. I will keep these records of the research in a locked cabinet for three years after the completion of the study. I will then dispose of the data collected after this time has expired.

**IS COMPENSATION OR MEDICAL TREATMENT AVAILABLE IF INJURY OCCURS?** Yes No

**PARENTAL APPROVAL FOR MINORS: PARENT/GUARDIAN**

**APPROVAL SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Terms of participation: I understand this project is research, and that my participation is voluntary. I also understand that if I decide to participate in this study, I may withdraw my consent at any time, and stop participating at any time without explanation, penalty, or loss of benefits, or academic standing to which I may otherwise be entitled.**

**I verify that my signature below indicates that I have read and understand this consent form, and willingly agree to participate in this study under the terms described, and that my signature acknowledges that I have received a signed and dated copy of this consent form.**

**(Remember that it is a requirement for the P.I. to maintain a signed and dated copy of the same consent form signed and kept by the participant).**

**PARTICIPANT NAME:**

**PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_

Date:

End of document ■

## **Appendix C - Interview Protocol**

### **Interview One: Focused Life History**

*“How did you come to be a student enrolled in the teacher education program?”*

The purpose of the first interview is to give pre-service teachers the space to reconstruct and narrate their past life experiences that led them to become a student at the university. I will lead the pre-service teacher participants towards discussing their early reading experiences at home and at school that laid the foundation of their beliefs and attitudes about reading. These experiences along with how they use reading as adults for both professional and leisure purposes combine to give a personal account of the knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes they have about reading and reading instruction.

#### ***Questions and Explorations:***

*What was that like for you?*

*How did that affect you?*

*What/Who shaped...?*

*How do you think that contributed to...?*

*How was that significant in your development as a pre-service teacher?*

*How would you describe...?*

## **Interview Two: The Details of Experience**

*“What is it like for you to be a student enrolled in the literacy methods course?  
What are the details of your experiences as a pre-service teacher learning to teach reading?”*

This interview will concentrate on the concrete details of the pre-service teachers' experiences specifically as students enrolled in the teacher education program at the university. This account will serve as a reconstruction of their daily lives as students in respect to their experiences in the literacy methods course. The primary purpose of this interview is to obtain information about the pre-service teachers' experiences as students in the literacy methods' course and how their theoretical orientations of reading intersect with their instructional practices. I will not ask for opinions but rather the details of the experiences they choose to discuss. It is upon these details that their opinions may be built (Seidman, 2006).

### ***Questions and Explorations:***

*If I were to observe you teaching your formal observation reading lesson in the elementary classroom, what kinds of things would I observe you doing, and why?*

*How would you describe the kinds of materials you would select to use for classroom reading instruction?*

*How would you go about setting goals for the reading program in your future classroom?*

*Tell me about how you will use assessment data to plan your instruction.*

*How will you determine student growth in reading when you are a classroom teacher?*

*Describe the best learning environment you feel is most conducive for reading growth and achievement.*

*How do you continue to learn about reading and the teaching of reading yourself?*

*How would you define the significance of your own beliefs and knowledge about reading in your experiences as a pre-service teacher?*

### **Interview Three: Reflection on the Meaning**

*“Given what you have said about your life prior to becoming a pre-service teacher and given what you have said about your present experiences in the literacy methods course, how do you understand reading and reading instruction? What do these experiences mean to you? ”*

This interview will ask pre-service teachers to reflect on the meaning of their experiences. This will require that they acknowledge the interactions of the influences in their lives that have led them to their current systems of belief, knowledge, and attitudes about reading and reading instruction. Seidman (2006) reports that the combination of the exploring the past to help understand the events that led participants to where they are, and describing the specific details of their present experiences, establishes the necessary conditions for reflecting upon their current situation. While the pre-service teacher participants engage in making meaning of their experiences in all of the interviews, it is the third that primarily uses meaning-making as the focal point of the interview.

#### ***Questions and Explorations***

How would you describe your understanding of your theoretical orientation to reading?

In what ways do you think your beliefs and knowledge about reading are reflected in your instructional practices (lesson plans and teaching during field experiences)?

Describe how you think your theoretical orientation is reflected in your instructional practices.

In your experiences as a pre-service teacher in a literacy methods course, what kinds of knowledge and experiences do you see yourself consistently using as part of your approach to reading instruction?

Based on your own experiences, what do you suggest pre-service teacher educators do to improve the teacher education reading program?

## Appendix D - Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP)

### THE DEFORD THEORETICAL ORIENTATION TO READING PROFILE

Directions: Read the following statements, and circle one of the number responses that will indicate the relationship of the statement to your feelings about reading and reading instruction. SA 1 2 3 4 5 SD (select *one* best answer that reflects the strength of agreement or disagreement-- SA is strong agreement, and SD is strong disagreement)

1. A child needs to be able to verbalize the rules of phonics in order to assure proficiency in processing new words. SA 1 2 3 4 5 SD
2. An increase in reading errors is usually related to a decrease in comprehension. SA 1 2 3 4 5 SD
3. Dividing words into syllables according to rules is a helpful instructional practice for reading new words. SA 1 2 3 4 5 SD
4. Fluency and expression are necessary components of reading that indicate good comprehension. SA 1 2 3 4 5 SD
5. Materials for early reading should be written in natural language without concern for short, simple words and sentences. SA 1 2 3 4 5 SD
6. When children do not know a word, they should be instructed to sound out its parts. SA 1 2 3 4 5 SD
7. It is a good practice to allow children to edit what is written into their own dialect when learning to read. SA 1 2 3 4 5 SD
8. The use of a glossary or dictionary is necessary in determining the meaning and pronunciation of new words. SA 1 2 3 4 5 SD
9. Reversals (e. g., saying "saw" for "was") are significant problems in the teaching of reading. SA 1 2 3 4 5 SD
10. It is good practice to correct a child as soon as an oral reading mistake is made. SA 1 2 3 4 5 SD

11. It is important for a word to be repeated a number of times after it has been introduced to insure that it will become a part of sight vocabulary. SA 1 2 3 4 5 SD
12. Paying close attention to punctuation marks is necessary to understanding story content. SA 1 2 3 4 5 SD
13. It is a sign of an ineffective reader when words and phrases are repeated. SA 1 2 3 4 5 SD
14. Being able to label words according to grammatical function (nouns,etc.) is useful in proficient reading. SA 1 2 3 4 5 SD
15. When coming to a word that's unknown, the reader should be encouraged to guess based upon meaning and go on. SA 1 2 3 4 5 SD
16. Young readers need to be introduced to the root form of words (run, long) before they are asked to read inflected forms (running, longest). SA 1 2 3 4 5 SD
17. It is not necessary for a child to know the letters of the alphabet in order to learn to read. SA 1 2 3 4 5 SD
18. Flashcard drill with sight words is an unnecessary form of practice in reading instruction. SA 1 2 3 4 5 SD
19. Ability to use accent patterns in multi-syllable words (pho to graph, pho tog ra phy, and pho to graph ic) should be developed as a part of reading instruction. SA 1 2 3 4 5 SD
20. Controlling text through consistent spelling patterns (The fat cat ran back. The fat cat sat on a hat.) is a means by which children can best learn to read. SA 1 2 3 4 5 SD
21. Formal instruction in reading is necessary to insure the adequate development of all skills used in reading. SA 1 2 3 4 5 SD
22. Phonic analysis is the most important form of analysis used when meeting new words. SA 1 2 3 4 5 SD
23. Children's initial encounters with print should focus on meaning, not upon exact graphic representation. SA 1 2 3 4 5 SD
24. Word shapes (word configuration, b i g) should be taught in reading to aid in word recognition.

SA 1 2 3 4 5 SD

25. It is important to teach skills in relation to other skills. SA 1 2 3 4 5 SD

26. If a child says "house" for the written word "home," the response should be left uncorrected.  
SA 1 2 3 4 5 SD

27. It is not necessary to introduce new words before they appear in the reading text.  
SA 1 2 3 4 5 SD

28. Some problems in reading are caused by readers dropping the inflectional endings from words (e.g., jumps, jumped). SA 1 2 3 4 5 SD

## Scoring Directions

1. Identify items 5, 7, 15, 17, 18, 23, 26 and 27.
2. Score all other items 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25 and 28 by giving the number of points corresponding to the number circled in each item, i.e., if a 4 is circled, give 4 points, etc. Do not score items 5, 7, 15, 17, 18, 23, 26 and 27 when doing this.
3. Now score items 5, 7, 15, 17, 18, 23, 26 and 27 by reversing the process. If a 1 is circled, give 5 points. If a 2 is circled, give 4 points, a 3 = 3 points, a 4 = 2 points, and a 5 = 1 point.
4. Add the total of the two scores for one total score and compare with the following scale.

**0 - 65 decoding perspective – Bottom-Up Philosophy - Behaviorism**

**66 - 110 skills perspective – Blended philosophy - Cognitivism**

**111 - 140 wholistic perspective – Top-Down Philosophy - Constructivism**

**NOTE: A score in the 85-120 range indicates the probability to learn and use a balanced approach to reading instruction.**

The DeFord Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile

This test was copyrighted by the International Reading Association in 1985.

## **Appendix E - Recruitment Materials**

### *Recruitment Letter*

# **WANTED: A Few GREAT Pre-Service Teachers!**



Sarah Broman, doctoral candidate at Kansas State University, is conducting research for her dissertation and she needs your help!

The purpose of her study is to explore pre-service teachers' beliefs and practices and how they relate to their theoretical orientations to reading.

Questions you might have...

How can I participate?

Easy! Simply complete the demographic data form enclosed with this letter, indicate you would like to participate, and return the paperwork to RH 239 of the Teacher Education office.

But I am super busy! How long will this take?

Your participation will take approximately five hours of your time spread out over the course of the semester. Should you decide to participate you will be interviewed on three separate

occasions for approximately 90 minutes in addition to completing two surveys for a duration of 30 minutes.

Is my participation confidential?

Absolutely! No names will be used in the research.

More Questions?

Contact Sarah Broman at (785) 628-4683 or at [sebroman@fhsu.edu](mailto:sebroman@fhsu.edu)

This research has the support of Dr. Lotta Larson, Associate Professor, KSU and Dr. Chris Jochum, Department of Teacher Education, Chair

### *Recruitment Email*

Dear Pre-Service Teachers,

Greetings! My name is Sarah Broman and I am a Ph.D. candidate from Kansas State University. I am currently conducting my dissertation study which explores pre-service teachers' beliefs and practices and how they relate to their theoretical orientations to reading.

As I told you during my recent visit to the classroom, I am asking all pre-service teachers enrolled in the on-campus section of TEEL 365 Literacy Methods to participate in my study. As part of your participation I ask that you complete the DeFord (1985) Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP). For your convenience, I have included the survey in this email.

If you are willing to help me, please click the link below. It will take you directly to the consent form and the TORP. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (785) 628-4683, sebroman@fhsu.edu, or stop by my office located at Rarick Hall 239.

Thank you in advance for your valuable time!

Sarah Broman

<insert link here>

### *Telephone Script for Case Studies*

Hello, this is Sarah Broman. You recently received an email and completed the DeFord (1985) Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP) and consent form as part of my dissertation study which explores pre-service teachers' beliefs and practices and how they relate to their theoretical orientations to reading. Thank you so much for your help!

I am calling to ask if you would be interested in further contribution to my study. I am seeking five pre-service teachers to volunteer as case study participants. This participation would involve three interviews with you and three observations of you during your field experience.

If you are interested, I would be happy to meet with you to discuss this further and answer any questions you might have.

<If interested, set up a meeting time>

Thank you so much for your time!

*Demographic Information*

**Name:**

**Age:**

**Gender:**

**Ethnicity:**

**GPA**

**School Standing (fresh,soph,etc):**

**Number of Courses Taken in the Teacher  
Education Department (restricted and non-  
restricted courses)**

How many degrees do you currently hold? Please list.

What other licenses/certificates relating to education do you currently hold?

Are you or have you ever been a paraprofessional? If yes, please explain.

## *Debriefing Letter*

Dear Pre-Service Teacher Participant,

Thank you for your participation in this study. The goal of this study was to explore pre-service teachers' beliefs and practices and how they relate to their theoretical orientations to reading.

This study addressed the gap in the research focusing on preservice teachers who are enrolled in a literacy methods course.

Your participation is not only greatly appreciated by the researcher involved, but the data collected added to the research in the fields of teacher education preparation and reading instruction.

The study findings indicated...

If you have any questions about this study, please contact me.

Thank you!

Sarah E. Broman

600 Park Street  
239 Rarick Hall  
Hays, KS. 67601  
785-628-4683  
sebroman@fhsu.edu

## Appendix F - Coded Interview Two with Selena

<p><b>Researcher:</b> If I were to observe you in the classroom teaching your formal observation in the classroom, what kinds of things do you think I would observe you doing?</p> <p><b>Selena:</b> How I read? Or how I speak the reading?</p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> You have your formal observation coming up in November, right? What kind of things do you think I would see you doing in your observation? What are your plans for your formal observation lesson in the classroom?</p> <p><b>Selena:</b> I haven't got that far yet. Right now I haven't looked at my formal or what I am going to do.</p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> Just kind of think about it. What do you THINK might be important? There isn't any wrong answer. What do you envision yourself possibly doing?</p> <p><b>Selena:</b> Like in the lesson?</p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> Uh huh</p> <p><b>Selena:</b> I don't know yet. I haven't thought about it.</p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> How do you think you would describe the kind of materials you would select to use for your reading instruction? What kind of materials do you think would be important for reading instruction?</p> <p><b>Selena:</b> I don't understand the question</p>	<p>It seems like she doesn't have much knowledge about different reading activities and strategies.</p>
---	---

**Researcher:** As a teacher, when you teach reading, what kind of materials do you think would be important to have as a reading teacher?

**Selena:** For literacy?

**Researcher:** Uh huh

**Selena:** I think just like having that background of reading and how to show it to the students as well.

**Researcher:** How might you do that? How would you show it to the students?

**Selena:** By example. By modeling it and reading. Kind of like comprehension and getting them to analyze what I am reading.

**Researcher:** How would you go about doing that?

**Selena:** Kind of like ask them questions. Like During and before the book ask them “What do you see in this?” Like the title, and the pictures, and the cover. Ask them questions like, “What do you think is going to happen next?”

**Researcher:** Okay.

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Researcher:** So when you say you are asking them to do a before-during-after reading strategy like you were saying what kind of book would they be reading?

**Selena:** Depends on the grade. If it’s kindergarten something simple like

This didn’t answer my question and I am not sure if it is because she doesn’t understand because she is bilingual or if she doesn’t have enough knowledge about reading to answer.

She learned this in the literacy methods course. The professor teaches before-during-after strategy and requires that the pre-service teachers use it in their read aloud lessons.

whatever their grade level is. Ask them what happened first, next and then last.

**Researcher:** Let's just go to kindergarten.

Would it be the students' book that they checked out of the library? Would it be a big book that you are sharing with the children? Would it be a classroom basal reader? What exactly would you envision teaching with doing the comprehension lesson you were just describing?

**Selena:** Something that goes along with the lesson. Like if you are teaching about friendship, find a book about friendship. There's a time when teachers read to the students. The teacher reads the book that shows for them for the lesson. Kind of like tie everything together.

**Researcher:** Where would the lesson come from?

**Selena:** Maybe from the lesson plan.

**Researcher:** Okay, so it would be your lesson plan that you came up with. If you were teaching them about friendship you said you would try to find a book about friendship to share with the class?

**Selena:** Yeah

**Researcher:** Well now let's think about say a fourth grade classroom. What might you use for reading materials in a fourth grade classroom?

**Selena:** Chapter books.

Her facial expression indicated she really didn't know what I was referring to when I mentioned big books or a basal reader.

She seemed to understand the importance of using literature to teach abstract concepts.

<p><b>Researcher:</b> And what would you do with the chapter books?</p> <p><b>Selena:</b> Teachers can read a chapter and kind of have them do a graphic organizer to find the setting, the plot. Everything that they can keep track on the graphic organizer throughout the book.</p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> Would they do that as a class or do it in small groups? Would they do it by themselves? How would you have them go about doing that?</p> <p><b>Selena:</b> Every student should have one and they can do it by themselves and at the end we can all share it and their ideas and what they got.</p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> Would the chapter book be the same for everyone or would all of the students have a different chapter book?</p> <p><b>Selena:</b> Well, the teacher is going to be reading the chapter, like every chapter. Students will be writing down whatever they think. Like the characters and stuff.</p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> So you think that the teacher would do most of the reading and the students would do the listening and filling out the graphic organizer?</p> <p><b>Selena:</b> Yeah, sometimes. But there can be other times where students can do it on their own.</p>	<p>The literacy methods professor stressed the importance of graphic organizers and required pre-service teachers to learn how to include them into their instruction.</p> <p>Selena was describing how the professor from the literacy methods course taught how to use graphic organizers with chapter books. The professor read a chapter of a book aloud each day in class and had the pre-service teachers complete the organizer.</p>
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**Researcher:** What would a spelling lesson look like? Or a structural analysis lesson look like? What would you do for that?

**Selena:** For fourth grade?

**Researcher:** uh huh

**Selena:** What do you mean a spelling lesson? Like just the words?

**Researcher:** Yeah. Like what materials would you use to teach the students about structural analysis like prefixes and suffixes and that sort of thing? How would you go about teaching that?

**Selena:** I think in the beginning you would begin with a big list and from that list you select some for everybody. And they study them and then take a test. If they get some of them wrong then you put them back in the list.

**Researcher:** So would everyone get the same list or would every list be different?

**Selena:** I think in the beginning everybody would get the same list and then you start from there changing it according to their knowledge and how to spell the words.

**Researcher:** Where would you get the list from?

**Selena:** I guess they have for every grade the list. I don't know where you find it. I think it's on the standards. I don't know.

**Researcher:** Would it come with maybe the teacher's basal reader series? Would it come

The literacy methods professor had recently discussed how she taught spelling when she taught in the district. Every child had a different list depending upon their needs. It seems like Selena is referring to what she heard her professor discuss in class.

out of that book? Do you know what I am talking about?

**Selena:** (laughs) No.

**Researcher:** So you don't really know about the basal reader?

**Selena:** We kind of , Dr. Walizer kind of talked about it but I didn't really know if vocabulary comes from there.

**Researcher:** Do you see yourself using a basal reader in the classroom?

**Selena:** For sometimes, yes.

**Researcher:** How would you go about setting goals for your students to read?

Their reading goals?

**Selena:** Kind of like, see where they are at like reading levels. Try to get them to increase their reading level depending on...

**Researcher:** How would you find out where they were?

**Selena:** I think they have tests. Do they do that?

**Researcher:** uh huh

**Selena:** And then see how good they score on their test and then if they scored high enough they can go to a higher reading grade or level. If they scored low they can try to find a book that's at their level.

**Researcher:** Tell me about how you might use their test scores to plan your instruction in the classroom.

She doesn't seem to have any real knowledge about basal reader programs, what they are, etc.

I don't think she really knows what a basal reader is.

Seems to have a beginning understanding of how reading assessments might be used.

**Selena:** You kind of have to work between the high reading levels and lower grades level or reading levels. You kind of have to work in between both of those.

**Researcher:** Okay, what do you mean?

**Selena:** If there are some students that struggle with reading they need more instruction than the ones that are higher. I have an example in my social studies internship. What they do for science is there is like two or three different teachers in that same school. So for science, the one teacher teaches science. The other teacher teaches literacy or math. One group is the lower where they don't comprehend too well so they all come in the same room. So they teaches it more with more instruction. With the other group that comes in, they are more advanced so she won't teach it the same way she taught the other students.

**Researcher:** How do you think they group those students?

**Selena:** I think the teachers just kind of see over all the grades they do.

**Researcher:** So they look at their letter grade? How do they know this particular group is low and needs more help? How do they know that?

**Selena:** I think they do that when they hear them read. I don't really know how they do it but the teacher just kind of sees them and

It seems like she is discussing differentiated instruction. She is basing her ideas on her experiences in other field experience settings.

She seems to have only a limited understanding of how teachers group students or set instructional goals.

how well they comprehend. And when she asks questions, how well did they respond.

**Researcher:** How does the teacher know that the students are making progress? How would you know if you were working with a group of students, how would you know that they were making progress in their own reading? What would be some things to indicate that they were doing better?

**Selena:** Just like if they understand the story. Like, if you asked them to do a graphic organizer, how well do they fill it out. How well did they respond to the questions? Can they comprehend the story or something like that.

She refers to graphic organizers a lot because the literacy methods professor encourages the use of them.

## Appendix G - Observation Field Notes

<p>When I arrived in the kinder classroom the teacher was doing a read aloud. Then, the teacher showed sight words on the elmo and students reviewed as whole words with students.</p> <p>The students then were instructed to try to spell sight words on their dry erase boards. The difference in classrooms is crazy! This kindergarten room is SO MUCH MORE literacy based compared to the other rooms I have visited!</p> <p>Teacher told students they were playing sight word show down.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students were given a sight word.</li> <li>2. Students look at teacher while she says the word.</li> <li>3. Students write the word on their boards.</li> <li>4. Teacher calls out 3-2-1.</li> <li>5. Students say SHOWDOWN!</li> <li>6. Teacher says, "Everyone spell <i>the</i>."</li> <li>7. Students spell <i>the</i> in unison.</li> </ol> <p>During the game, the teacher instructs the pre-service teacher to correct letter formation when needed.</p> <p>Pre-service teacher is involved with students. On a language experience approach poster the students had previously done, there is evidence of the use of invented spelling.</p>	<p>Quality of internship experience in this classroom is exceptional compared to the others I have observed.</p> <p>Students enjoyed playing this game. It increased student motivation to learn. Martin was smiling the entire time they played the game.</p> <p>Martin was told to help students with their letter formation. His mentor teacher makes sure he gets plenty of opportunities to work with the students during his hour time.</p> <p>Whole Language approach activity</p>
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<p>Clearly the teacher was dictating what the students were talking to her about.</p> <p>There are a great deal of whole language strategies used in the classroom.</p> <p>The students learn the new word <i>be</i>.</p> <p>The students spent time cutting out the letters b e out of papers the teacher gave them. They were then to glue the letters in the elkin boxes.</p> <p>I feel like the strong whole language approach will further influence the pre-service teacher's whole language orientation.</p> <p>The pre-service teacher encouraged several students to sound it out. /b/ /e/</p> <p>It is interesting that his interactions with the students are mostly phonics-based telling students to "sound it out".</p> <p>The pre-service teacher has the student say the whole word first and then sound it out.</p> <p>The students finished their newly made books and were instructed to meet the teacher on the floor to read their books.</p> <p>Teacher chose one student to read her book on the elmo while the rest of the class pointed at each word and choral read together.</p> <p>Teacher discussed the punctuation in the book (example?) "What does our voice do when we have a question mark?" The teacher had them practice their intonation.</p> <p>A writing activity was introduced.</p> <p><i>"This or That"</i></p>	<p>Phonics activity</p> <p>The mentor teacher uses a variety of whole language and phonics activities in her instruction. This seems to be representative of her skills theoretical orientation.</p> <p>Martin endorsed a whole language approach to reading at the beginning of the study. I wonder if he will maintain this.</p> <p>Phonics instruction</p> <p>These are strategies they have been learning in the literacy methods class as well.</p> <p>Understanding this aspect of fluency helps them make meaning from the reading.</p>
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<p>The students can write about football or cheerleading. They are to write their own story.</p> <p>Mentor Teacher: Does it matter if we don't know how to spell some words in our story?</p> <p>That's okay! We can do hard things!"</p> <p>"We're not going to spell out the words football and cheerleader."</p> <p>"We don't know all of the hard spelling rules yet. That is why we have the alphabet." (points to wall)</p> <p>Teacher encouraged the students to use the word wall for the words they might want to use in their story.</p>	<p>This was such a great authentic writing experience.</p> <p>The teacher didn't focus on spelling words correctly. More focus was made on creating meaning in their writing. I think this showed the children that writing and reading are purposeful activities and used in real and authentic ways.</p>
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