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Content Area Literacy in the Primary Grades: Teachers' Sense of Efficacy in Teaching Narrative and Informational Text

Christine Cherry Selman

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CONTENT AREA LITERACY IN THE PRIMARY GRADES:
TEACHERS’ SENSE OF EFFICACY IN TEACHING NARRATIVE
AND INFORMATIONAL TEXT

by

Christine Cherry Selman

Abstract of a Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

May 2011
ABSTRACT

CONTENT AREA LITERACY IN THE PRIMARY GRADERS:

TEACHERS’ SENSE OF EFFICACY IN TEACHING NARRATIVE

AND INFORMATIONAL TEXT

by Christine Cherry Selman

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Research has documented the scarcity of informational text and the overabundance of narrative text in the primary grades (Duke, 2000; Yopp & Yopp, 2006). The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine primary teachers’ beliefs, or efficacy, in teaching narrative and informational text as well as assess their use of both text types in the classroom. Efficacy data were collected with a previously established questionnaire that had been slightly altered to assess efficacy in narrative and informational text. Two sub-categories made-up the efficacy measure for each type of text: teacher sense of efficacy in instructional strategies and teacher sense of efficacy in student engagement. Use of text was assessed with a researcher-created questionnaire that asked teachers to report frequency of specific types of narrative and informational texts used within one week in the classroom.

Results indicated that primary teachers felt significantly more efficacious teaching narrative text as compared to informational text. Results also showed teachers’ sense of efficacy in teaching each text type significantly correlated with their use of text type. Finally, contradicting previous research, results indicated teachers use more informational text than narrative text. Possible reasons for contradictory results and recommendations for future research are discussed.
Lastly, recommendations for teachers, administrators, and other educators are provided. Recommendations include ways to increase effective use of informational text in the primary grades. Suggested strategies for teaching informational text include a focus of three areas: increasing student exposure to informational text, understanding text structure, and implementing effective instructional strategies.
The University of Southern Mississippi

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TEACHERS’ SENSE OF EFFICACY IN TEACHING NARRATIVE AND INFORMATIONAL TEXT

by

Christine Cherry Selman

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate School of The University of Southern Mississippi in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Literacy skills are necessary for all students to be successful in life. The International Reading Association states that students “will need advanced levels of literacy to perform their jobs, run their households, act as citizens, and conduct their personal lives” (1999, p.3). Literacy is the ability to read and comprehend written material in a variety of formats, as well as write to communicate one’s ideas (Farris, Fuhler, & Walther, 2004). According to Vacca and Vacca (2008), literacy skills are a major factor in student achievement across all content areas, not just in reading and language arts.

Due to low test scores, an increase in the demand for technology, and changes with standards and standardized testing, content area literacy in the middle and high school grades has received much attention over the last decade (Moss, 2005). The term content area literacy refers to the ability of students to read and comprehend information across subjects. Proponents of content area literacy believe that every teacher, regardless of subject area, should be able to assist students in reading to comprehend text in his or her discipline (Billmeyer, 2002). Instruction on how to read and comprehend in the content areas is essential for students to be successful (Duke, 2000; Moss, 2005; Wood, 2002).

Most people associate the term content area literacy with middle and high school students (Wood, 2002). Even though elementary students are not always included in discussions on content area literacy, it is essential for instruction with that type of text to occur in the elementary grades (Moss, 2005; Wood, 2002). Usually, the term
*informational text* is used to describe the same text that is referred to with content area literacy in the primary grades (Moss, 2005). The primary purpose of informational text is to convey information about the natural or social world (Duke, 2000). Thus, texts associated with science and social studies are often considered informational text as opposed to narrative text. On the contrary, narrative text generally has characters, a setting, plot, conflict, and solution (Sanacore, 1991), and is usually found in reading and language arts.

Narrative and informational texts differ in their purpose and structure (Moss, 2004). The purpose of narrative texts is to tell a story, which contains characters, problems, solutions, and lessons learned (Dymock & Nicholson, 2007). Text structure is referred to as the way the material is presented to the reader (Moss, 2004). Narrative texts generally follow a story line; informational texts can be structured in one of five ways: description, cause and effect, compare and contrast, problem and solution, and sequencing (Neufeld, 2005).

The need for comprehending informational text is present in daily activities. Kletzien and Dreher (2004) claim that students are inundated with informational text (as opposed to narrative) later in schooling and in society; therefore, the ability to read and comprehend informational text is imperative. Moreover, Venezky (2000) claims that schools’ lack of attention to informational text is leaving students ill prepared for the demands in life. He uses the term “chasm” (p. 20) to describe the disconnect between what students are learning, and what students need to know. Narrative and informational text are different, and effective instruction with both is necessary for students to be successful in school and later in life (Duke, 2000). Proponents for content area
instruction in the primary grades understand the significance of knowing how to read and comprehend informational text and the importance of beginning that instruction early (Duke, 2000; Hall & Sabey, 2007; Kletzien & Dreher, 2004; Moss, Reutzel, Smith, & Fawson, 2005; Venezky, 2000; Yopp & Yopp, 2000).

Background

The underlying theme for content area literacy is for students to be able to read to learn in various subjects (Swafford & Kallus, 2002). The belief that content area literacy instruction is important for students of all ages is not a novel concept. Educator William S. Gray advocated literacy instruction across the contents for students of all ages as early as 1925. Though the idea has been around for years, content area literacy instruction for primary students has only recently received heightened attention and is becoming more popular and emphasized by educators. Moss (2005) credits increases in standards-based education and standardized testing, as well as the technological demands of the information age for the heightened attention to content area literacy. An increase in standards-based education is evidenced by State Departments of Education requiring Language Arts frameworks to include standards for reading and writing with informational text; standardized tests used for school accountability purposes also reflect these standards. As a result, teachers are more explicitly held accountable for ensuring students can read and comprehend this text type. Finally, the abundance of technology and use of Internet websites for research, which are predominantly informational text (Kamil & Lane, 1998; Moss, 2005), increases the literacy demands for students. To be successful in society, students must be able to read and comprehend informational text.
The increases in standards, standardized testing, and emphasis on technology/Internet websites indicate the attention to content area literacy is at an all time high (Moss, 2005).

Even though attention to content area literacy has been at an all time high over the past five years, student achievement, as measured by standardized test scores, has not indicated improvements. Data from the 2009 National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP) reading assessments indicated only one-third of grade four students nationwide scored at or above the proficient mark; thus, 66% of American students are not reading on a proficient level. Grade four reading scores from 2009 do not reveal a significant change from 2007, indicating no considerable growth over the two year period. On the contrary, 2009 grade eight reading scores indicate significant growth (1%) as compared to 2007 scores. Even though scores increased, only 30% of grade eight students scored at or above the proficient mark, indicating growth is still desperately needed (NAEP, 2009). Additionally, based on the nearly 1.5 million students who took the 2009 ACT, only 23% scored high enough in all subjects to be considered ready for college (ACT, 2010). Clearly, American students are in need of academic improvements across the board from elementary to high school.

Data from the 2009 NAEP assessment indicate that Mississippi’s students are also struggling with reading in both elementary and secondary school. In Mississippi, only 22% of fourth graders scored at or above proficient levels, with 78% of Mississippi’s fourth graders scoring basic or below in reading. Mississippi’s eighth graders are performing even worse: only 19% scored proficient or advanced in reading, while nationwide, 30% of the students are proficient or advanced. Poor reading scores in
Mississippi and nationwide indicate a lack of reading skills – skills needed to be successful later in school and life.

In order to understand and improve reading scores, it is necessary to examine the types of questions on the assessment. The classification of test questions on the grade four NAEP is balanced: approximately 50% are narrative and 50% are informational. However, research indicates that narrative and informational text are not equally taught, and students are not adequately exposed to informational text in the classroom. Studies suggest that on average, less than 10% of materials in first grade classrooms are classified as informational; while only 3.6 minutes a day is spent on instruction with writing informational text (Duke, 2000). Therefore, if primary students are not adequately exposed to and instructed with informational text, it is only natural that they will not do well when tested in this area (Gregg & Sekeres, 2006; Newkirk, 1989; Sanacore & Palumbo, 2009; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998).

To begin to ascertain why there is an imbalance of instruction with narrative and informational text in the classroom, the instructional beliefs and practices of the teacher must be examined in relation to those text types. Teachers are considered to be one of the most important factors that impacts student learning (Hanushek, 1992; Wright, Horn, & Sanders, 1997). The idea that beliefs drive actions is at the heart of teacher efficacy (Rotter, 1982). For example, research shows that if a teacher believes he or she can have an impact on student learning – despite challenging circumstances – then he or she will do more to ensure the student is learning (Bandura, 1977). Teacher sense of efficacy is a critical component to successful classrooms. Efficacy consistently ranks as one of the most significant teacher characteristics associated with student achievement (Tucker,
Porter, Reinke, Herman, Ivery, Mack, & Jackson, 2005), and is considered to be an important factor that keeps teachers in the profession (Grant, 2006).

Ascertaining teacher beliefs in teaching is a broad topic, and narrowing the focus to certain teacher-level factors related to student learning is important. Of all the responsibilities of a teacher, his or her instructional strategies (Marzano, 2003; Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001) and the extent to which he or she can get the students engaged are found to be critical components for a successful teacher. Thus, when identifying teacher characteristics that have a positive impact on student learning, one should consider the factors of instructional strategies and student engagement.

Instructional strategies, a teacher-level factor that greatly influences student learning (Marzano, 2003; Marzano et al., 2001), are the intended actions and tasks chosen by the teacher to achieve certain goals (Gunning, 2008). Teachers continually make decisions with regards to how material is presented to students, and what the students will do with the material. Research identifies the two most effective instructional strategies as identifying similarities and differences and summarizing and note taking (Marzano et al., 2003). Effective and more experienced teachers tend to use more instructional strategies; some studies have found that when used appropriately, the aforementioned strategies can impact student scores by as much as 45% (Marzano et al., 2003). Therefore, instructional strategies are an influential factor with regards to teaching and student learning.

Engagement is the extent to which the mind is captivated in a topic; it is influenced by motivation, abilities, and interest of the student (Guthrie, 1996). Of special interest to engagement in education is student’s reading engagement. Guthrie (2004) claims that engaged readers frequently read and do not have difficulty staying focused.
Moreover, they generally are engrossed in the text and consider the ideas being read; thus, the engaged reader is interacting with the text and meaning is derived (Guthrie, 2004). Studies have found that reading engagement is highly correlated with student achievement, even more so that well-established factors such as gender and socioeconomic status (Guthrie et al., 2001; Guthrie & Schafer as cited in Baker, Dreher, & Guthrie, 2000; Kirsch, de Jong, LaFontaine, McQueen, Mendelovits, & Monseur, 2002). Moreover, teachers can have an important influence on students’ reading engagement in selecting high-quality literature, conveying enthusiasm for reading, and developing comprehension skills associated with good readers (von Rembow, 2006).

Teachers have an important role in influencing student engagement (von Rembow, 2006) and selecting high quality instructional strategies (Marzano, 2003; Marzano et al., 2001) that have positive impacts on student learning. Teacher efficacy regarding student engagement and instructional strategies can provide a useful lens through which to explore the factors contributing to the imbalance of text in the classroom.

Theoretical Framework

Theory presented by Ruddell and Unrau (2004) in their reading model, *Reading as a Meaning-Construction Process: The Reader, the Text, and the Teacher* can provide a framework for understanding the interconnectedness of the reader, the teacher, and the text/context. As the title suggests, the reader, the teacher, and the text are important components that influence comprehension. *Reader* refers to the prior beliefs and knowledge of the reader in both the cognitive and affective domains. The affective domain incorporates previous experiences, motivations, attitudes, values, and beliefs;
whereas the cognitive domain includes understandings, knowledge of social interactions, metacognitive strategies, and various types of knowledge. Reading is a complex process, and many factors within the reader influence the ability for him or her to read (Ruddell & Unrau, 2004).

According to the theory (Ruddell & Unrau, 2004), the second dimension that impacts the reader’s ability to make meaning of text is the teacher. Teacher refers to the same components as the reader because the teacher has his or her own beliefs and understandings about society, learning, and interacting with text. Based on the teacher’s beliefs, efficacy, and knowledge, he or she decides how to present the material to the student and the procedures in which to interact with the text. The teacher can select and execute specific instructional strategies to increase student engagement, and as a result, increase student learning. Some researchers believe that the teacher is the single most important factor that influences student learning (Wright et al., 1997). Thus, teachers are an important factor to consider when investigating student learning, especially with reading.

The final component with the theoretical model includes the text. Text refers to the learning environment in which the reader derives meaning from the selected text. Ruddell and Unrau (2004) take a constructivist approach to learning to read, and claim that meaning is constructed as a result of the interactions among teacher, reader, and text/context. For example, teachers are responsible for creating a stimulating environment in which the reader is encouraged to actively engage in text to construct meaning. Specifically, teachers can make reading tasks meaningful by allowing students to construct meaning by interacting with text in various ways: connecting visuals with sight-
words (Cowden, 2010), researching topics of interest, writing paragraphs for a reader interested in the topic (Tompkins, 2009) and incorporating shared reading and writing tasks (Gately, 2007). Text can include the specific type of text used in reading, such as narrative or informational, as well as the level of the text. By selecting texts of various genres and topics on the reader’s level, teachers can provide the reader with adequate opportunities to engage in texts that help prepare him or her for success in the future. Due to the importance of the interconnectedness of the reader, teacher, and text, all of these components need to be considered when discussing reading.

Statement of the Problem

Concrete evidence highlights the drastic imbalance of narrative and informational text in the classroom, despite the unquestionable need for instruction with both (Duke, 2000; Yopp & Yopp, 2006). Knowing how to read and understand informational text is increasingly more important as state and national standards require students to successfully read and comprehend informational text (Moss, 2005). Additionally, research has documented students’ preference for informational text (Mohr, 2003; Pappas, 1991) and their success with it if it is adequately taught (Pappas, 1991; Reutzel, Smith, & Fawson, 2005; Williams, Hall, & Lauer, 2004). Thus, there is an unexplained discrepancy in the need to teach informational text and the instructional practices of teachers.

One way to investigate why teachers make certain instructional decisions is to look at their belief system, or efficacy, with regards to a particular area. Efficacy has been studied heavily since 1977 (Bandura, 1977), and refers to teachers’ cognitions and behaviors (Fives & Buehl, 2010). Over the years, efficacy has been measured using a
variety of instruments with demonstrated reliability and validity (Fives & Buehl, 2010; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). While there is adequate research on the need and lack of instruction with informational text, there is currently no research available on why primary teachers are not adequately exposing and instructing students with informational text. Using efficacy to explore why teachers make certain instructional decisions with regards to teaching narrative and informational text can help provide valuable information and help address the serious problem of inadequate instruction in this area.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship between teacher efficacy and use of narrative and informational text in the primary classroom. Investigating why humans do certain things is a complex and complicated task. The goal of the study was not to answer this question completely; rather it was to begin a preliminary investigation of this topic. The intention of this study was to explore one area of this question with regards to teacher beliefs, or efficacy, with teaching narrative and informational text. Due to the varied and multiple tasks teachers encounter daily, the focus of the study was narrowed to two important aspects associated with student success: instructional strategies (Marzano, 2003; Marzano et al., 2001) and student engagement (Guthrie, Schafer, & Huang, 2001). Specifically, the researcher was interested in teacher sense of efficacy with instructional strategies in teaching narrative and informational text, and teacher sense of efficacy with student engagement in teaching narrative and informational text.

**Research Questions**

The study had three research questions and 10 hypotheses:
Research Question 1: Are there differences in primary teachers’ efficacy in teaching narrative and informational text?

H$_1$: Primary teachers’ overall level of efficacy differs when using narrative text as compared to informational text.

H$_2$: Primary teachers’ levels of efficacy in promoting student engagement differ when using narrative text as compared to informational text.

H$_3$: Primary teachers’ levels of efficacy with instructional strategies differ when using narrative text as compared to informational text.

Research Question 2: Does primary teachers’ efficacy impact the use of narrative and informational text in the classroom?

H$_4$: The use of narrative text correlates with overall teacher efficacy when teaching narrative text.

H$_5$: The use of narrative text correlates with teachers’ efficacy in student engagement when teaching with narrative text.

H$_6$: The use of narrative text correlates with teachers’ efficacy with instructional strategies when teaching with narrative text.

H$_7$: The use of informational text correlates with overall teacher efficacy when teaching informational text.

H$_8$: The use of informational text correlates with teachers’ efficacy in student engagement when teaching with informational text.

H$_9$: The use of informational text correlates with teachers’ efficacy in instructional strategies when teaching with informational text.
Research Question 3: Does primary teachers’ use of narrative text differ from their use of informational text in the classroom?

H₀: Primary teachers’ use of narrative text is greater than their use of informational text in the classroom.

Limitations, Delimitations, and Assumptions

Before conducting research, it is important for the researcher to understand factors that may impact the validity and/or limit results of the study. Measures to reduce the influence of outside factors will increase statistical power and the ability to generalize to other populations (Gay, 1996). In this section, limitations, delimitations, and assumptions of the study are discussed.

Limitations

When analyzing research, it is important to realize certain limitations with studies that may impact internal validity. Two primary limitations should be considered before interpreting the results of this research study: self-reported data and the use of only teachers in Mississippi. Self-reported data is frequently a limitation with studies due to the possibility of inaccurate responses (Gay, 1996). Uncontrollable history effects such as inclement weather and bad days may influence participant responses. Participation in the study was also voluntary. Participants who declined to respond to the questionnaire may represent a certain group of teachers who may be burned out, apathetic, or simply too busy to participate.

Delimitations

The population of this study provides limits to generalizing results. Participants are kindergarten through grade three classroom teachers in select Mississippi schools.
Participants and schools are not randomly selected; therefore the sample may leave out some groups. Additionally, teachers will complete the questionnaire only once; therefore, history effects, such as a bad day, may limit the study by teachers responding according to their momentary frustrations.

Assumptions

It is assumed that participants will respond honestly and complete/return only one questionnaire. A cover letter will be attached to the front of the questionnaire explaining who should complete the questionnaire. The cover letter will specify directions for completing and returning the questionnaire; directions will indicate that participants should complete only one questionnaire.

Definition of Key Terms

Throughout this document, many terms will be used repeatedly. A list of key terms and their definitions are included to establish a common understanding of the terms.


2. Informational text - The primary purpose of informational text is to inform the reader about the natural or social world (Duke, 2000). Examples include “All-About” books, such as All About Volcanoes (2000) and most reference books, such as encyclopedias and atlases (Duke & Bennett-Armistead, 2003). In the studies referenced
throughout this document, some researchers refer to informational text as *expository*. These terms are synonymous and will be used interchangeably. However, some researchers use the terms *fiction* and *nonfiction*. Many nonfiction books are informational, but not all of them. If the researcher(s) use *fiction* and *nonfiction*, the terms are not changed in the description of the study.

3. **Fiction** - Fiction is any type of literature used to entertain (Anderson, 2010). It is often described as *stories* and follows the story grammar as explained in *narrative text*.

4. **Nonfiction** - Nonfiction refers to any text that is factual. While all informational text is nonfiction, not all nonfiction is considered informational text (Duke & Bennett-Armistead, 2003).

5. **Primary students** - In this study, primary students are referred to as children enrolled in school between kindergarten and third grade.

6. **Teacher efficacy** - According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy refers to a teacher’s beliefs in his or her capabilities to “organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (p. 2-3). A teacher with high self-efficacy believes that he or she is capable of having a strong impact on student learning, and thus, can generally persist regardless of challenging circumstances (Bandura, 1977). Teacher efficacy is considered a powerful characteristic that positively affects student achievement (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Tucker et al., 2005) and keeps teachers in the profession (Grant, 2006).

7. **Student Engagement** – Student engagement refers to the combination of motivation, strategies, and activities used by the student when learning. Research indicates that the more engaged the student, the more successful he or she is academically
Guthrie & Alvermann, 1999). Teachers can implement certain strategies to promote student engagement of text, such as by using, artifacts, questioning, and topics of interest to the student (Dymock & Nicholson, 2010; McKenna & Robinson, 2009; Raphael, 1982).

8. **Instructional strategies** – A strategy is a “deliberate, planned activity or procedure designed to achieve a certain goal” (Gunning, 2008, p.146). Teachers can implement certain instructional strategies that promote comprehension and positively impact student achievement (Marzano, 2003; Marzano et al., 2001).

9. **NAEP** - NAEP stands for the National Assessment for Educational Progress and is funded by the U.S. Department of Education. The assessment is the only national test in elementary, middle, and high school, and assesses a representative sample of students in all 50 states in the areas of reading, math, science, writing, arts, civics, economics, geography, and U.S history (http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/aboutnaep.asp).

10. **Quantitative study** – A quantitative study is a research study that collects numerical data. The most common research objectives with quantitative research are to describe, explain, and/or predict. Data is usually collected using means of precise measurement with reliable and valid instruments. Statistics are generally used to analyze data and infer results (Johnson & Christensen, 2004).

11. **Qualitative study** – a study that relies on non-numerical data such as words and pictures. The most common research objectives are to describe, explore, and discover. Data is generally collected through open-ended questions, interviews,
observations, and/or field notes, and results are presented in a narrative form (Johnson & Christensen, 2004).

**Summary**

Preparing students for success in life is the ultimate goal of educators. Teachers play an important role in assuring students will be prepared for school and life. One way to prepare students is to provide a balance of instruction and exposure to narrative and informational text so that students are able to read and comprehend both types of text. As previously mentioned, primary students are not receiving adequate instruction with and exposure to informational text. Without appropriate instruction and exposure to this type of text, students are not going to be prepared for the demands of school and life.

Investigating the role of teachers in students’ academic success is both relevant and important. In a study to determine the effectiveness of teachers, Wright, Horn, and Sanders (1997) found that the teacher is the most important factor in student achievement. The purpose of this study is to investigate the teacher’s belief system, or efficacy, with teaching narrative and informational text. The results of this study are anticipated to probe the larger question of why there is an imbalance of text types in the primary grades, a topic that has not been explored. It is anticipated that data from this study will be used to better educate teachers so that they can better prepare students for today’s demands. Then, students will be better equipped with one of the most important skills in life: reading.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A thorough examination of research focused on narrative and informational text, teacher efficacy, and the importance of instructional strategies and student engagement is important in understanding the relationship of these constructs. This chapter presents a review of the literature organized into four sections: (a) introduction, (b) narrative and informational text, (c) teacher efficacy, and (d) classroom practices of instructional strategies and student engagement.

Introduction

The rapidly increasing emphasis on standardized test scores and the underlying deficiencies they reflect (Moss, 2005) has helped increase the focus on content area literacy in American education. Usually content area literacy is used to describe academic subjects such as science, history/social studies, and mathematics in middle and high schools. However, the foundation for success later in schooling begins in the primary grades, specifically in kindergarten through grade three (Wood, 2002). Instead of using the term content area literacy in the primary grades, the term informational text is usually used to describe text where the primary purpose is to “communicate information about the natural or social world” (Duke, 2000, p. 205). An understanding of the concepts related to text within primary grades (particularly characteristics of narrative and informational text), teachers’ beliefs with regards to teaching text, and the critical factors of student engagement and instructional strategies can help researchers and practitioners more thoroughly promote a balanced use of narrative and informational text in the primary grades.
As one examines research on informational text in the primary grades, several factors emerge. Perhaps the most startling component is the low frequency of informational text in the primary grades. A seminal piece of research indicates that, on average, less than ten percent of materials in first grade classrooms are classified as informational text. Furthermore, after nearly 80 days of observations within these first grade classrooms, researchers found an average of less than four minutes a day of instruction with informational text. Several of the classrooms (seven out of twenty) had no instruction with informational text whatsoever (Duke, 2000). Yopp and Yopp (2006) examined the titles of books read to pre-kindergarten through third graders both at home and school throughout the course of a school year. They found only eight percent of the titles read to students at school were informational text, and seven percent of the titles read by adults at home were informational. Clearly, primary students are not being adequately exposed to informational text. Furthermore, students need to comprehend informational text because they will be tested on it with standardized tests used in state accountability measures. Analyses of test questions on the reading portion of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) indicate that approximately 50% of fourth grade and 65% of eighth grade test questions are informational. It is evident that students need to be able to read and comprehend informational text.

One cannot determine, however, that reading informational text is necessary purely because of current testing requirements. Venezky (2000) uses the term *great chasm* to describe the gap between what students learn in school and what is needed in the real world. The need to read and comprehend informational text is critical to most reading tasks required of adults, including reading content on the Internet (Kamil & Lane,
Use of the Internet has become increasingly important, with 96% of its content consisting of informational text (Kamil & Lane, 1998).

It is evident that there is a drastic imbalance of narrative and informational text yet an unquestionable need for it. Research indicates that when given the choice between informational and narrative text, 84% of first graders chose informational text (Mohr, 2003). Additionally, students as young as kindergarten experienced success with informational text (Pappas, 1993). Several other studies confirm these findings (Reutzel et al., 2005; Williams et al., 2004).

One important question remains: Why are primary teachers not adequately exposing and instructing students with informational text? One way to ascertain why there is an imbalance with text instruction is to determine teachers’ beliefs, or efficacy, with teaching narrative and informational text. Efficacy is considered one of the most important teacher characteristics impacting students and student learning (Allinder, 1995; Anderson, Greene, & Loewen, 1988; Ashton & Webb, 1986; Ross, 1992; Tucker et. al, 2005). According to theories of teacher efficacy, beliefs drive actions (Bandura, 1997); as a result, discerning teacher beliefs is important to understanding the decisions teachers make.

Two of the most important components of student achievement that are primarily influenced by the teacher are instructional strategies used (Marzano, 2003; Marzano et al., 2001) and the level of student engagement (Guthrie et al., 2001). Teachers can choose to implement research-based instructional strategies to increase student engagement in all subjects, especially reading (Alvermann, 1991; Morrison & Wlodarczyk, 2009; von
Teacher beliefs about instructional practices and student engagement will impact the strategies used in the classroom.

Bandura (1977) is credited with coining the term teacher efficacy, and it refers to the belief that a teacher’s expectations highly influence his or her actions. If the teacher believes he or she can have a positive impact on a student, regardless of challenging circumstances, he or she will persist through challenges and be less likely to give up on the student. Additionally, teacher efficacy and student achievement are highly correlated: higher levels of efficacy correlate to higher test scores (Ashton & Webb, 1986).

Educational theorists Ruddell and Unrau (2004) contend that one must explore and understand the interconnectedness of a teacher’s belief system, type of text used in the classroom, and the reader (including achievement). According to their theory, the teacher, text, and reader are essential components of the reading process, and therefore, important to analyze when addressing the problem of inadequate reading instruction. A thorough understanding of the relationship between teacher and text may help explain why a reader is having difficulty, as evident in test scores.

Narrative and Informational Text

Narrative and informational text differ in their purpose. The purpose of a narrative text is to tell a story (Moss, 2004). Narrative text generally follows a story grammar structure where there is a main character who faces a problem, determines a goal or solution, encounters challenges, and in the end learns a moral or lesson (Sanacore, 1991). With narrative text, the reader is involved with the events in the story, and makes predictions as to how events will unfold. Informational text, on the other hand, can be defined as text with a primary purpose to “communicate information about the natural or
social world” (Duke, 2000, p. 205). Informational text, also known as expository text, is often characterized with factual information, headings, subheadings, graphs, and charts, (Sanacore, 1991). Moreover, according to Rosenblatt’s Reader Response Theory, students have different stances with narrative and informational text. With narrative text, students approach the text with an aesthetic stance to enjoy and appreciate it. With informational text, students take an efferent stance in order to glean information (Rosenblatt, 1995). Consequently, the reader has a very different experience with informational as compared to narrative text.

Narrative and informational text are also different in their structure (Sanacore, 1991). Text structure refers to the way the text is presented to the reader (Moss, 2004). The ability to identify the structure of a text allows one to construct a mental representation of the content read. While narrative text is generally structured to tell a story, informational text can have one of five structures (Sanacore, 1991). These include sequencing, compare and contrast, cause and effect, problem and solution, and description (Neufeld, 2005). Headings, titles, and words such as first and therefore, provide clues to the reader to indicate which organizational pattern the author is using. These clues signal certain genres and organizational structures, while also aiding in comprehension. Readers with an awareness of text structure have improved reading comprehension (Dymock & Nicholson, 1999).

Experiences with both types of text during the early years of schooling is necessary in order to provide students with the foundation needed for success in the upper grades (Duke, 2010; Heider, 2009; Moss, 2003; Wood, 2002). Exposure to and instruction with informational text is especially important since informational text
structure is the primary literary format in academic content areas. However, because narrative and informational text generally follow different text structures, a lack of exposure to informational text may lead to difficulties in content areas later in schooling (Sanacore, 1991). In addition to narrative text dominating the primary classroom reading materials, both teachers and parents generally read storybooks as opposed to informational text which results in less familiarity with this text type (Yopp & Yopp, 2006). One reason for this is that narrative texts have more simple organizational patterns, and informational texts contain more complex relationships between concepts (Williams, Hall, & Lauer, 2004). Graesser, Golding, and Lang (1991) agree that informational text tends to be more difficult for students to comprehend, as compared to narrative text. Direct instruction with text structure can be beneficial even to primary students, and is necessary to aid in comprehension of the more difficult informational text (Pappas, 1993; Williams et al., 2004).

Importance of Informational Text

The need to comprehend informational text is growing (Moss, 2004). Duke (2004) claims, “We are surrounded by text whose primary purpose is to convey information about the natural or social world. Success in schooling, the workplace, and society depends on our ability to comprehend this material” (p. 40). This highlights the need for students to be able to comprehend informational text in order to be successful not only in school but in life (Moss, 2004).

Furthermore, Venezky (2000) calls attention to the large gap between what schools are teaching and the reading demands of the world. He claims that the literacy needs of adults rest primarily with comprehending informational text, such as reading
graphs and charts, completing forms, and reading manuals. However, the primary literacy skills elementary students are being taught are associated with narrative texts. One way to alleviate this gap is for schools to teach informational skills needed for success in the real world (Venezky, 2000).

Interacting with informational text allows students to be exposed to content specific terminology, an important skill for students in the 21st century (Hall & Sabey, 2007; Moss, 2004). By the time students enter middle school, it is estimated that 75% of the material will be presented using informational text (Daniels, 2002); by the time students reach high school, 90% of the material is estimated to be informational text (Venezky, 2000). Not only is informational text dominant in the high school classroom, but also on the Internet (Kamil & Lane, 1998). Moss (2004) argues that the need for comprehending informational text on the Internet is a necessary skill for students. According to Kamil and Lane (1998), after randomly searching 50 web sites, they found that 48 sites (or 96%) were classified as informational.

Educators have documented the need for experiences with both informational and narrative text. The texts differ in purpose, features, and structure (Duke, 2000; Moss, 2004; Sanacore, 1991; Williams et al., 2004). In order for young students to be successful with both types later in schooling, they need exposure and instruction with both texts in the foundational years (Duke, 2000; Gill, 2009; Gregg & Sekeres, 2006; Hall & Sabey, 2007; Moss, Leone, & Dipillo, 1997; Read, 2005; Sanacore, 1991; Webster, 2009; Yopp & Yopp, 2006). This lack of skill with informational text is documented through the results of some standardized tests. For example, the National Center for Educational Statistics (2010) indicates that, on the grade four NAEP reading
test, 51% of the questions are narrative and 49% of the questions are informational. On the eighth grade reading test, 36% are classified as narrative, and 64% are *Reading for Information* and *Reading to Perform a Task*. In other words, approximately one-half of the questions on the Grade Four Reading NAEP assessment are informational, and approximately two-thirds on the Grade Eight Reading NAEP assessment are informational. Students are being heavily assessed with informational text, but research indicates that they are not being adequately taught it (Duke, 2000; Yopp & Yopp, 2006).

*The Fourth Grade Slump*

In 1983, Chall and Jacobs began to study patterns of standardized test scores and found family income to be a factor influencing some scores. While they found test scores from low-income second and third graders were compatible with test score from higher-income students, a gap among these two groups of students began to emerge in the fourth grade, especially in the area of vocabulary (Sanacore & Palumbo, 2009). The term “fourth grade slump” was coined to describe this pattern of decreasing scores in reading and writing with low socio-economic statuses (SES) students. When students move from third to fourth grade, Chall (1996) claims students must shift from *learning to read* to *reading to learn*. Snow, Burns, and Griffin (1998) provided two possible reasons for the fourth grade slump. First, the assessments are drastically different in third grade as compared to fourth grade. Additionally, students are presented with much more non-fiction information in fourth grade, and the students’ struggles with nonfiction begin to surface. If students are not exposed to informational text prior to fourth grade, it is likely they would experience difficulty with it in fourth grade and beyond (Newkirk, 1989). For example, one’s word knowledge highly correlates to one’s comprehension (Anderson &
Freebody, 1981). Exposure to informational text aids in vocabulary development critical to comprehension (Moss, 2004). Students with a limited vocabulary experience more difficulty comprehending informational text (Sanacore & Palumbo, 2009). Teachers in grades four and up often expect students to know how to comprehend informational text structure; however, many students lack the abilities and need more explicit instruction (Gregg & Sekeres, 2006). Exposure to content-area vocabulary in the primary grades will help students succeed with informational text when they encounter more of it in middle and high school (Duke, 2000).

Further explanations of the fourth grade slump are offered by Sanacore and Palumbo (2009) who contend students have difficulty finding texts of interest on their reading level and are not given adequate time to read at school. The primary classroom is dominated by narrative text; over time, exposure to only one type of text can misrepresent literacy and limit students (Sanacore, 1991). Additionally, many schools view reading for pleasure as unnecessary (Sanacore & Palumbo, 2009) and students may not be given the time to experience reading for fun or for personal interest.

Overall, the fourth grade slump suggests students struggle with comprehending text, much of which is informational (Chall, 1996). Exposure to various genres and effective reading instruction with informational text in the primary grades, along with time set aside for students to read, have been suggested as ways to help alleviate the fourth grade slump, and help students succeed with a variety of texts (Duke, 2000; Sanacore & Palumbo, 2009; Snow et al., 1998).
Beliefs About Primary Students and Informational Text

In the late 1900s, many educators advocated for a prevalence of narrative text in the primary grades (Britton, Burgess, Martin, McLeod, & Rosen, 1975; Egan, 1986, 1993; Moffett, 1987). Moffett (1987) claimed that the majority of primary students preferred narrative over informational text. Additionally, he argued that primary students experienced more success with narrative text, especially in writing. His rationale was that primary students are naturally egocentric and can relate to stories easily. In 1993, Egan claimed that fairy tales, a type of narrative text, are universally engaging to young students and are instrumental in fostering understanding of abstract binary concepts, such as courage and cowardice. Narratives such as fairy tales provide an easy avenue for young students to learn about their world, and therefore, Egan contends should be used heavily in early elementary classrooms. In Teaching as Story Telling, Egan (1986) called for teachers to appeal to students’ natural ease with storytelling, and plan the curriculum to center around imaginative, narrative stories. Britton et al. (1975) claimed narrative writing, specifically writing that focused on individual’s expressive emotions, was the basis of learning to write. Britton et al. (1975), Egan (1986, 1993), and Moffett (1987) suggest that primary students and narrative texts fit together beautifully, and narrative texts should dominate the primary classroom.

However, Pappas (1993) challenged the idea that young children need instruction primarily with narrative text, and disagreed with educators who argued that young students were more comfortable with narrative text. To make a case, she conducted a study with 20 kindergarten students, 10 male and 10 female, from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds. Each student was individually pulled-out of the classroom
three times to be read a narrative and informational text. During each of the three sessions, the students were read the book and then asked to re-read it to the researcher while being audio taped. The audiotapes were analyzed to determine students’ responses to the different types of texts. Specifically, Pappas wanted to determine how the kindergarteners understood co-referentiality of narrative text (the identity chain as indicated by key words such as he, his, and him identifying the character throughout the text) as compared to co-classification of informational text (the identity chain with non-narrative text). Results indicated that students did well in their re-enactments of both genres and were successful with co-referentiality and co-classification. In other words, students performed just as well with informational text as they did with narrative text. Moreover, when asked which book they preferred—narrative or informational—the majority of students (over 70%) preferred the informational text. The results of this study challenged the idea that young students were more inclined to do better and enjoy narrative text as compared to informational text; thus becoming one of the seminal studies concerning informational text in the primary grades (Gambrell, 2005).

Since the Pappas (1993) study, the topic of informational text and young students has been studied more heavily. The following three sections present research expanding on Pappas’ (1993) landmark study. The first section highlights studies of primary students succeeding with informational text. Then, the frequency of informational text in the primary classroom is discussed. Finally, the last section provides results from studies claiming informational text can be motivational for young students.
Young Students and Text Structure Instruction

As previously stated, narrative and informational texts differ based on text structure, and narrative text structure is generally taught more than informational, especially in the primary grades (Duke, 2000; Moss, 2004; Sanacore, 1991; Williams et al., 2004). For years, some educators questioned the ability of young students to succeed with informational text, especially text structure instruction (McGee, 1982; Taylor, 1982). McGee (1982) studied third and fifth grade students’ ability to recall informational text, and found that high-achieving students had an awareness of text structure and used it to aid recall. Additionally, Taylor (1982) examined the relationship between text structure and recall with informational text, and found that age and ability level are related to recall ability. Specifically, those students who were more successful in recalling facts had a greater awareness of text structure. Age also correlated with recall: low-achieving fifth grade readers recalled more information than high achieving third graders.

Even though McGee (1982) found that third graders were not very sensitive to text structure, others have found conflicting results. Williams et al. (2004) conducted a study to determine how well second grade students developed an awareness of text structure. Specifically, the researchers wanted to determine if second graders could benefit from a specially designed program of instruction emphasizing text structure with compare and contrast informational text. Results indicated that the students who received text structure instruction did significantly better on summarizing a compare and contrast paragraph on content that had been taught. Additionally, students were tested on material of which they were not instructed, and results showed that students who received explicit
instruction with text structure scored significantly higher than students who did not receive the explicit text structure instruction. Therefore, students who received the explicit instruction with text structure were more successful at transferring the strategy to new material as compared to other groups. Overall, results indicated second grade students were successful with compare and contrast text structure when taught using explicit instruction. This study demonstrates students can learn to comprehend informational text structure *if* it is taught. Therefore, educators should include explicit instruction on informational text with students as young as second grade (Williams et al., 2004).

Reutzel et al. (2005) also studied primary students’ ability to comprehend informational text. Specifically, they were interested in primary age students’ success rates with reading comprehension strategies using science-based informational text. They wanted to determine if there was a difference in test scores and oral retellings based on how reading strategies were taught, either independently or embedded with others. Participants were 80 second graders randomly assigned to treatment groups with four teachers. Analysis of oral retellings indicated students in the group using multiple strategies performed significantly better when retelling informational text than the students in the independent strategy group. Further, results from a science content test revealed that students in the multiple strategies group performed significantly better with science content than in the single strategy group. Therefore, students who received the multiple strategies were much more successful with comprehending informational text. Students only instructed in a single strategy were not provided the reading comprehension instruction needed relating to informational text. This study showed that
second grade students benefitted from explicit reading comprehension instruction in informational text and primary teachers should teach multiple strategies to their students. Also, the success of primary age students with informational text rests with the focus of teacher’s instruction. Thus, means to improve students’ skills should begin with the behaviors of the teachers, not just those of the students. This study showed once again primary students benefitted from explicit instruction with informational text.

Duke and Kays (1998) also linked the success of primary students with informational text to the actions of teachers. The researchers studied how 20 preliterate kindergarteners developed knowledge of informational text over a three-month period. In September, the researchers asked students to pretend-read a narrative text and an informational text, and documented students’ responses. Three months later, the students repeated the pretend-read task. During the three months between the two recorded readings, the classroom teacher read narrative texts on a near daily basis and informational texts approximately three to four times per week. Results indicated that students included in their pretend reading many more informational text features, such as classificatory structures and compare/contrast features in December than in September. Specifically, students increased significantly (p > .05) in the areas of timeless verb constructions, and generic noun constructions, two characteristics of informational text. From their observations, Duke and Kays concluded kindergarten students were not only capable of interacting and responding to informational text, but also enjoyed it. Thus, the success of primary students with informational text is documented even as young as kindergarten.
Duthie’s (1994) qualitative work also demonstrates success of young students with informational text as used in works of nonfiction. Based on the belief that exposure to informational text in the primary grades is crucial to building an appreciation and understanding of nonfiction later in schooling, Duthie (1994) conducted a nonfiction-based reading and writing workshop with her first grade students. The workshop emphasized contrasting presentations, teacher modeling, and lessons on research, organization, and table of contents. Outcomes of the workshops included more enthusiastic discussions, with usually quiet students eagerly participating. Student responses such as, “How come there’s no caption? How will we know what’s in the picture?” (p. 592) demonstrated students’ acute examinations of non-fiction work. During the in-class writing workshop, students revealed their new knowledge of non-fiction by writing their own books. Students included a glossary, table of contents, tables, and a cross-sectioned drawing. Through this specific study, the teacher noticed an increase in confidence and comfort with non-fiction, confirming that, with appropriate exposure and instruction, students even as young as first grade could enjoy and succeed with informational text (Duthie, 1994).

Finally, the use of informational text had positive results with a group of first graders in a study conducted by Sunanon Webster (2009). This qualitative study showed the impact of a read-aloud of informational text on students’ written retellings and drawings. Sunanon Webster collected data through field notes, interviews, and student artifacts. Once data were analyzed and triangulated for common themes, results indicated that students used their own experiences to connect to the text, and directed look-backs increased students’ ability to recall facts. The read-alouds included in the study increased
students’ vocabulary and content knowledge of the topic. In addition, effective use of reading strategies such as word study and echo reading were effective in increasing comprehension of the topics. This study showed that first graders were successful with informational text used in a read-aloud format.

Collectively, these studies demonstrate the success of primary students with informational text when teachers specifically teach them how to interact with the text. The studies all show when students are effectively taught with the appropriate instructional strategies, they are able to succeed, even as young as kindergarten (Duke & Kays, 1998; Pappas, 1993). Thus, the teacher’s role of selecting and effectively teaching with informational text is critical for student success with this text type.

*Frequency of Informational Text in the Primary Classroom*

For teachers to effectively infuse informational text into their classrooms, it is logical that these text types must be well represented in the reading materials physically available to students daily (Duke, 2000). In order to learn more about the frequency of informational text in the primary classroom, Duke conducted a study of 20 first grade classrooms in the Boston area, observing ten classrooms from low socio-economic status (SES) school districts and ten from high SES districts. She observed each classroom for four days, looking for the frequency of genre types on walls, surfaces, and in the classroom library. A total of 18,183 pieces of text were reviewed for genre classification. Results indicated an extremely low overall number of informational texts present in all of the classrooms. Specifically, of the materials on the wall viewed by the researcher, an average of only 2.6% were classified as informational text, with no classroom having more than 10% of materials categorized as informational. In the classroom library, an
average of 9.8% of texts was classified as informational. Additionally, there were significantly more informational and narrative informational texts in high SES districts than in low SES districts, and there was a significantly greater amount of informational text present in high SES districts. Throughout the 79 days of observation, Duke found an average of only 3.6 minutes a day of informational texts in whole-group instruction during written language activities. Furthermore, seven of the twenty classrooms spent no time with informational text during the four days observed. Due to the scarcity of informational text present in these classrooms, it was clear that informational text was not receiving the attention it deserved (Duke, 2000).

In a study examining not only materials read to students at school but also at home, Yopp and Yopp (2006) investigated the types of books read-aloud to pre-kindergarten through third grade students over the course of a school year. Data included 1,830 titles read by 1,144 teachers and 1,847 titles read by the children’s parents or other family members at home. Results indicated that of the titles read by teachers at school, 77% were narrative, 8% informational, 1% mixed, and 14% other. Similar results were reported for the titles read at home: 77% were narrative, 7% informational, 3% mixed, and 12% other. This study confirmed and extended Duke’s findings six years earlier showing a continued drastic inequality in the types of books read to children.

Results from Pressley, Rankin, and Yokoi (1996) also indicate an imbalance of genres exposed to young students in the classroom. Pressley et al. collected data from 45 kindergarten through grade two teachers who were selected by reading supervisors as exemplary reading teachers. Teachers reported only 6% of the material read in their classroom could be classified as informational text. Similarly, Jacobs, Morrison, and
Swinyard (2000) studied responses from a nationwide survey of elementary (K-6) teachers about the types of books read aloud to their students over the past 10 days. Results indicated that on average, informational books were read three of the 10 days, and picture books read six of the 10 days. As Anderson et al. (1985) suggested, students read what their teacher reads to them; therefore, if teachers expose students to more informational texts through read-alouds, students may be more inclined to read those books on their own (Jacobs et al., 2000).

Materials such as reading basals and textbooks also have been examined to determine if they equitably represent the different genres, especially narrative and informational text. Baumann, Hoffman, Duffy-Hester, and Ro (2000) found that 83% of elementary teachers use basals in the classroom to some extent; Moss and Newton (2002) claim that 95% of American classrooms use basals. Studies (Flood & Lapp, 1986; Neuman, 2006) have found that basal readers contain far more narrative text than informational text. Flood and Lapp (1986) analyzed eight basals from grades one through six and found that informational text accounted for less than 35% of the content. Later, Moss and Newton (2002) analyzed six basal readers from grades two, four, and six published from 1995 to 1997, and results indicated that content for all three grades was less than 20% informational text. Specifically, the second grade basals consisted of approximately 50% fiction, 15% informational text, 30% poetry, and 5% biographies and plays (Moss & Newton, 2002).

Because of the increased focus on academic content areas in higher grades, one might expect more exposure to and use of informational text in the higher grades (Moss & Newton, 2002); however, a thorough examination of the types of text at each grade
level contradicts this. Of the six basal publishing series analyzed, Moss and Newton (2002) found that only two series – Houghton Mifflin and Scholastic – increased in the percentage of pages devoted to informational text. The other four publishers – Macmillan McGraw Hill, Scott Foresman, Harcourt Brace, and Silver Burdett Ginn – decreased in the number of pages including informational text as the grade increased. This study highlighted the continued scarcity of informational text available in basal readers and questioned publishers’ awareness for the need of adequate informational text in the elementary grades (Moss & Newton, 2002).

It is clear that primary students are not being adequately exposed to informational text. Duke’s (2000) study highlighted the scarcity of informational text with instruction and materials in the classroom. Results by Pressley et al. (1996) and Jacobs et al. (2000) found similar results. However, it is not only teachers who have a preference for narrative text. Yopp and Yopp (2006) found that parents and/or adults at home overwhelmingly chose informational text over narrative. Furthermore, an imbalance of text is also evident in text books and reading basals (Flood & Lapp, 1986; Moss & Newton, 2002; Neuman, 2006). In order for students to receive balanced literacy instruction, students must have exposure to more informational text (Duke, 2010; Hall & Sabey, 2007; Wood, 2002).

Informational Text as Motivational

One’s motivation to read is an important element in learning to read (Guthrie, 1994). Guthrie, Wigfield, Barbosa, and colleagues (2004) suggest that students who are interested and motivated to learn about a specific topic, desire to understand the topic more fully, and therefore, develop a deeper understanding of the material. Researchers have documented the positive effects of motivation on test scores (Gottfried, 1985) and
grades (Sweet, Guthrie, & Ng, 1998); thus, it is important for teachers to be aware of the importance of motivation on learning to read (Guthrie et al., 2004).

Young children are naturally curious about the world around them, and teachers often neglect to take advantage of their interest in the world (Moss, Leone, & DiPillo, 1997). Moss et al. (1997) claim that when teachers do not expose students to adequate amounts of informational text, they neglect to tap into this early natural curiosity, resulting in negative ramifications for students. Caswell and Duke’s (1998) findings in a case study indicate that informational text is not only motivational, but may spark literacy skills for some students. While directing the Harvard Literacy Lab, Caswell and Duke noticed that two students – one first grader and one fourth grader – showed more motivation, interest, and success with informational text as compared to narrative text. They agree with Newkirk (1989) that early exposure to informational text could not only help with providing a foundation for encountering informational text in the later years, but that instruction with informational text could open the door to overall literacy development. The authors believe that primary teachers need to expose students to a variety of texts in order to better meet the needs of all students.

Gregg and Sekeres (2006) also document the relationship of informational text and motivation. In a high minority, high poverty fourth grade classroom, they intentionally taught geography skills through exposing students to experiments and discussions of the content prior to reading informational text on the content. Through the course of the year, the researchers found that students were selecting more informational texts and retaining more information from them. They claim that effective instruction
with informational text along with meaningful exposure to content prior to reading it increases student motivation and comprehension.

Britton et al. (1975), Moffett (1987), and Egan (1986, 1993) supported the predominant use of narrative text in the primary classroom because they assumed young students preferred it. However, several research studies contradict that assumption. Mohr (2003) conducted a study to determine the types of books children chose to read when presented a variety of genres. Texts included both fiction and non-fiction with a variety of cultures, languages (Spanish and English), genders, and ethnicities represented in the books. Out of the 190 first grade students participating in the study, the majority of students (84%) chose non-fiction over fiction. This study highlighted the overwhelming preference of these first graders to non-fiction and questioned the idea that students prefer reading about characters who are very similar to them in gender, language, and culture. Due to the role motivation plays in learning to read, educators cannot afford to ignore it. As Moss et al. (1997) claim, exposure to informational text taps into children’s innate curiosity about the natural world around them; that curiosity must be used as an entrance into literacy instruction. When teachers neglect to incorporate informational text into their literacy instruction, the students who need it for motivational purposes are ultimately left without the skills needed to be successful with that type of text (Caswell & Duke, 1998).

Narrative and informational text differ based on purpose, text structure, and text features; literacy instruction should include exposure and effective teaching with both types of text (Duke, 2000; Moss, 2004; Sanacore, 1991; Williams et al., 2004). Research documents that students are not getting enough instruction and exposure with
informational text (Duke, 2000; Flood & Lapp, 1986; Jacobs et al., 2000; Moss & Newton, 2002; Newman, 2006; Pressley et al., 1996; Yopp & Yopp, 2006). When students do not get adequate instruction with informational text, they are left unprepared for subsequent grades in school and society (Sanacore, 1991; Venezky, 2000). Society is inundated with informational text, and it is essential for students to be able to comprehend it (Moss, 2004).

From the literature reviewed, two key points are made with regards to previous beliefs about narrative and informational text. First, prior to Pappas’ 1993 seminal study, narrative was considered more suitable for young students and therefore, more preferred by young students (Britton et al., 1975; Egan, 1986, 1993; Moffet, 1983). Second, text structure instruction was believed to be developmental and appropriate for older students only (Englert & Thomas, 1987). Williams et al. (2004), however, confirmed Pappas’ (1993) study that primary students can be successful with informational text. Specifically, Williams et al. (2004) showed that with explicit instruction with text structure, second graders could not only develop a sensitivity to text structure, but could transfer the knowledge to unfamiliar content. The work of Duke (2000) revealed that overwhelmingly, there is underrepresentation of informational text instruction and presence in primary classrooms. Many educators suggest that an increase in instruction and exposure to informational text in the primary grades will prepare students for success later in schooling and life (Chall & Snow, 1988; Duke, 2000; Moss, 2004; Neuman, 2001). Thus, the role of the teacher is crucial, and the focus for understanding and addressing the problem of an imbalance of text instruction with primary students rests with the teacher and his or her beliefs about narrative and informational text. The
following section of the review of the literature investigates more deeply the impact of teachers’ beliefs, or efficacy, within the classroom.

Teacher Efficacy

In the introduction to the chapter, the theoretical framework, *Reading as a Meaning Construction Process: The Reader, the Text, and the Teacher*, was presented as a frame of reference by which the interrelatedness of these concepts may be examined. Thus far, this review of the literature has examined the importance of informational text in the primary classroom. Students need to be able to comprehend informational text in order to be successful later in schooling and in life (Moss, 2004; Venezky, 2000). In order for students to be successful, teachers need to spend an adequate amount of time with instruction of informational text, as well as have appropriate amounts of materials in the classroom. Despite the well-documented need for informational text and the success of students with it, teachers are still not adequately using and incorporating it within the classroom (Duke, 2000; Yopp & Yopp, 2006).

This section presents a review of literature specifically on the teacher’s belief system, also known as teacher efficacy. One way often used to investigate the underlying reasons teachers do or do not implement certain practices in their classrooms is to explore their belief systems, or efficacy, regarding the specific area of concern. It is possible that by conducting such an investigation, a better understanding may be had of why there is a shortage of informational text in the primary grades. The reviewed literature is divided into three sections: theories of efficacy, teacher efficacy and student achievement, and teacher efficacy and classroom management.
Theories of Efficacy

The general concept of self efficacy, or one’s expectations about a condition or a person (Rotter, 1982), has been researched by educators and psychologists since the 1970s (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). Woolfolk, Rosoff, and Hoy (1990) credit the RAND organization for the first measurement of teacher efficacy in the 1970s. The RAND organization first measured teacher efficacy with two Likert-style items: (a) “When it comes right down to it, a teacher really can’t do much because much of a student’s motivation and performance depends on his or her home environment,” and (b) “If I try really hard, I can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated students” (Woolfolk et al., 1990, p. 138). Teachers who disagree with the first statement and agree with the second statement indicate higher levels of teacher efficacy. Later, many researchers added to these two items to gain a better measure of self efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001).

According to Bandura (1997), the lack of power to influence important things and events could lead to anxiety and indifference. Bandura claimed that the ability to not only strive for positive outcomes and distance oneself from negative ones had purposeful value and offered a great source of motivation, especially for teachers, stating:

Among the mechanisms of [personal] agency, none is more central or pervasive than beliefs of personal efficacy. Unless people believe they can produce desired effects by their actions, they have little incentive to act. Efficacy belief, therefore, is a major belief of action. People guide their lives by their beliefs of personal efficacy. Perceived self-efficacy
refers to beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments. (p. 2-3)

According to Bandura’s (1977) theory of self-efficacy, if a teacher believes he or she has control over an outcome, such as student achievement, the teacher is more likely to persist and work hard even when faced with challenges.

Due to the unique environment within the classroom, teacher efficacy was later identified as a type of self efficacy (Bandura, 1977). Ashton and Webb (1986) further described teacher efficacy as general teaching efficacy (GTE) and personal teaching efficacy (PTE). General teaching efficacy is the extent to which external factors, such as socioeconomic level and conditions at home, influence the classroom (Woolfolk et al., 1990). Personal teaching efficacy is more teacher-specific and refers to the extent to which a teacher feels an ability to impact students regardless of challenging circumstances (Woolfolk et al., 1990). Though researchers may use slightly different terminology with regards to efficacy, the main emphasis is that teachers’ beliefs drive their actions (Rotter, 1982).

According to Tucker et al. (2005), teachers’ sense of efficacy consistently ranks as one of the most important teacher characteristics associated with student achievement. Grant (2006) claims that an understanding of the relationship between persistence and self-efficacy would decrease teacher turnover. Grant emphasized that experienced educators should assist new teachers in improvement and development of a greater sense of self-efficacy. New teachers need competence, constructive and positive feedback, emotional maturity, and
guidance in handling stress. Grant concluded that when teachers have personal and professional needs met, they are more likely to develop persistence and high self-efficacy, and therefore, remain in the classroom.

**Teacher Efficacy and Student Achievement**

Since the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act (2001), states have been required to monitor and report student achievement data in order to determine if students are meeting proficient levels as defined by their state. Determining the factors that correlate with student achievement is important to understanding how to increase test scores, which implies a greater level of student achievement. The following studies affirm the notion that teacher efficacy positively correlates with student achievement.

Ashton and Webb (1986) are credited with the seminal research showing the connections between teachers’ efficacy and student performance (Frase, 2004). Specifically, they studied teacher efficacy and teacher motivation through interviews of eight teachers, four with high levels of efficacy and four with low levels of efficacy. Results indicated that fostering high teacher efficacy was crucial for the promotion of student achievement. Ashton and Webb assert that the classroom teacher is the single most important factor for school improvement efforts. The researchers found that teachers with high efficacy differed from teachers with low efficacy in how challenges, opportunities, and expectations were viewed. Teachers with high efficacy had more persistence, expected more from students, planned more challenging activities, and had a greater sense of pride with their work (Ashton & Webb, 1986). On the contrary, teachers with low efficacy experienced more stress, doubt, and were more likely to give-up when faced with challenges in the classroom. Further results from Ashton and Webb indicated
instructional strategies differed between teachers with low and high efficacy. Teachers with low efficacy tended to think low achieving students would not and could not learn as much as high achieving students, and therefore, spent less time with low achieving students. In addition, high efficacy teachers had better classroom management, fewer feelings of frustration, higher expectations, valued class time more, managed time more efficiently, encouraged students often, and had a greater sense of trust with students. Ashton and Webb’s findings confirmed Heider’s (1958) theory that when two people are interacting, one reacts to the other’s perceptions. Therefore, teachers’ perceptions of student ability impact student achievement.

In another component to their research with efficacy and student achievement, Ashton and Webb (1986) studied teacher efficacy and student achievement with low achieving high school students. Participants were 48 teachers who taught math and communication classes at four southeastern high schools. Students were selected because they had previously scored below 30% on the Metropolitan Achievement Test. Results indicated positive correlations with teacher efficacy and both math and language achievement. However, the students’ reading scores did not positively correlate with teacher efficacy. Ashton and Webb concluded teacher efficacy and student achievement may correlate only with certain subjects. However, in this particular study these teachers did not teach reading.

Allinder (1995) also studied the relationship of teacher efficacy and student learning outcomes. Participants were 19 special education teachers and two students each teacher selected to monitor throughout the program. Participants were trained to use a type of formative evaluation, Curriculum Based Measurements (CBM), and then
monitored student progress in math over a 16-week period. Teacher efficacy was measured with Gibson and Dembo’s (1984) Teacher Efficacy Scale. Results indicated that teachers with higher efficacy scores were more likely to increase end-of-year goals and have higher expectations for students. In addition, the students of high efficacy teachers performed better on The Math Computation Test-Revised in each subgroup. Tucker et al. (2005), Anderson et al. (1988), and Ross (1992) also found similar results: teacher efficacy positively correlates with student achievement.

As suggested by the results of the studies presented, there is an important relationship between teacher efficacy and student achievement (Allinder, 1995; Anderson et al., 1988; Ashton & Webb, 1986; Ross, 1992; Tucker et al., 2005). One way educators can increase student achievement is by considering the importance of teacher efficacy in the classroom. When teachers believe they can have a positive influence on student learning despite challenges, they will do more to ensure students are learning (Bandura, 1997).

Student Engagement and Instructional Strategies

This review of the literature has presented evidence showing primary teachers do not incorporate enough instruction with informational text, despite the fact that students need it. It has also shown the relatedness of teaching efficacy to the beliefs of teachers and the outcomes for students. However, a more in-depth examination of two specific components of student achievement, student engagement (Guthrie et al., 2001) and instructional strategies (Marzano, 2003; Marzano et al., 2001), must also be presented. Only by understanding the implications of these factors, can educators better understand teachers’ beliefs and actions.
Referring to the theoretical framework presented earlier (Reading as a Meaning Constructing Process: The Reader, the Text, and the Teacher), this section elaborates on the reader’s engagement and the teacher’s instructional strategies. Student engagement is presented within the categories of engagement theories and reading engagement; and instructional strategies are presented within the categories of instruction in general, the importance of instructional strategies, and instructional strategies that increase motivation for reading.

**Student Engagement**

Student engagement refers to the combination of motivation, strategies, and activities used by the student when learning (Guthrie et al., 1996); it has Dewey’s theory of reflective thinking as its theoretical base (Mosenthal, 1999). Reflective thinking, Dewey (1933) states, is “the kind of thinking that consists in turning a subject over in the mind and giving it serious and consecutive consideration” (p. 3). To reach reflective thinking, an individual must first be perplexed and wonder about a topic, and then act to inquire information and material to address the perplexities (Dewey, 1933). According to Dewey, reflective thinking should be an educational goal for three reasons. First, reflective thinking liberates individuals from impulsive, mundane activities, empowering them to set goals and make plans to achieve them. Additionally, reflective thinking allows for methodical planning and creative solutions. In other words, reflective thinkers are able to make preparations to avoid consequences and danger; when confronted with problems they can be proactive and invent solutions. Finally, reflective thinking provides for more meaningful associations so that the reader makes deeper, more complex
connections among topics. Reflective thinking is the heart of Dewey’s (1933) idea of being intellectually engaged.

Dewey (1933) also cited attitude as an important component of reflective thinking. In order for thinking to be logical and lead to accurate conclusions, one needs to consciously choose an attitude of open-mindedness, whole-heartedness, and responsibility. Dewey contends that an attitude of open-mindedness will encourage one to discredit prejudice and bias, and remain mentally alert. Someone who delves into a topic whole-heartedly will earnestly desire to know the topic thoroughly. An attitude of responsibility leads one to consider consequences and maintain integrity in words and actions. A combination of both intellectual resources and moral attitudes are important in reflective thinking and necessary for high levels of student engagement in classrooms.

The National Research Council Institute of Medicine of the National Academies (2004) believes the combination of educational context and instruction, coupled with three psychological components (beliefs about competence and control, values and goals, and social connectedness) will lead to academic engagement. The National Research Council’s (NRC) viewpoint differs from Dewey’s in that while Dewey’s (1933) theory includes reflection and attitude in general, as the NRC seeks to explain engagement in the context of student learning in the modern classroom.

Reading engagement. A goal for every teacher should be to promote student engagement in reading (Kelly & Clausen-Grace, 2009). Reading engagement is defined as “the emotional involvement of the reader in the process of responding to the content of reading, as occurs in a total absorption in a story of play” (Harris & Hodges, 1995, p. 73). It involves factors associated with motivation, conceptual knowledge, and social
interactions (Baker, Dreher, & Guthrie, 2000). Because of the integral role of reading in education, the concept of reading engagement should be more specifically explored.

According to Guthrie (2004), an engaged reader is one who is absorbed in the text, not easily distracted, frequently reads, and self-monitors for understanding. An engaged reader can recall main ideas and supporting details, participate in discussions on topics in the text, and complete assignments based on the material covered in the text. An unengaged reader, on the other hand, does not read frequently, reads only when directed, does not self-regulate while reading, and has limited participation with discussions of the book. The level of student engagement has been quantified through many processes including interviews, observations, parental responses, and questionnaires (Baker et al., 2000).

Engagement is dependent upon both cognitive and motivational factors (Guthrie et al., 2001). Cognitive factors include the reader’s ability to read at the literal and inferential level, make connections to prior knowledge and other texts, and self-monitor for an understanding of the material. Frequent activation of these cognitive factors along with meaningful connections to students will help promote student comprehension (Guthrie et al., 2001). Motivational factors tap into the reader’s affective domain, the area of the brain that incorporates attitude, interests, and efficacy (Bell & McCallum, 2008). Moreover, in a longitudinal study conducted by Wigfield and Guthrie (1997), the authors found that an increase in intrinsic motivation increased student engagement with text, but not vice versa. Thus, motivation is a critical component for student engagement. An increase in motivation leads to an increase in student engagement, which may result
in increased comprehension and better reading ability as demonstrated by improved test scores (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997).

Importance of student engagement. Student engagement in reading is highly correlated with student achievement (Guthrie et al., 2001; Kirsch, de Jong, LaFontaine, McQueen, Mendelovits, & Monseur, 2002). Guthrie et al. (2001) found that highly engaged nine-year-old readers who came from low income, low education homes exhibited more student achievement than less engaged students from high income and high education homes. Researchers found similar results with regards to gender (Guthrie & Schafer as cited in Baker, Dreher, & Guthrie, 2000). Historically, girls have higher reading scores than boys; however, highly engaged boys (boys who read almost every day) had more success than less engaged girls (i.e., girls who did not read as frequently). Thus, student engagement in reading was more significant than demographic characteristics such as gender and socio-economic status.

Furthermore, in a meta-analysis of seven research studies from 1992-2002, Marzano (2003) found student motivation to have a positive, significant impact on student achievement. Effect sizes of the seven studies ranged from .39 to 1.62 with percentile gains ranging from 15 to 45. Student motivation was highly related to student achievement; the higher the motivation, the higher the scores. Student engagement is considered to be an important factor across content areas and with all types of text, including narrative and informational (Duke, 2010).

Even though Marzano (2003) found seven studies where student engagement had a positive impact on student achievement, Connor, Jakobsons, Crowe, and Meadows (2009) had differing results. Connor et al. studied the effects of Reading First instruction,
student engagement, and reading comprehension in elementary classrooms. Student engagement was determined by a one to three ranking on the Instructional Content Emphasis observation tool (ICE-R), developed by Vaughn and Briggs (2003). On this scale, a score of three indicates that almost every student in the class was following along; a score of two was assigned if over half were participating, and a score of one was given if most students did not appear to be paying attention. Analysis of their data show when teachers differentiated instruction, students tended to be more engaged. However, they found student engagement was a negative predictor of spring reading comprehension scores. The more the students appeared on-task, the lower their comprehension scores. Researchers were perplexed by these results, and suggested that the students may know how to act like they are paying attention, when in reality they may not be. Additionally, the researchers believe that appearing on-task may not be an indicator of cognitive engagement. Even though 95 classrooms were observed, one limitation to the study was that student engagement data were collected during one 45-minute observation per class. The results of this study indicate that more research is needed on student engagement.

Increasing student engagement in reading. Teachers play an important role in fostering student motivation (von Rembow, 2006). Teachers can read aloud to students using enthusiasm and expression, and provide opportunities for students to interact with relevant text – text that involves topics important to students, such as friendship and pets. Teachers can promote engagement through high quality conversations about books and model personal interactions with text, such as having adults share their current reading material with students, if appropriate. Teachers can also allow students to interact with each other in literacy activities such as cooperative learning groups as well as provide
opportunities for them to use a variety of materials, such as magazines, newspapers, level readers, and computers (von Rembow, 2006).

Morrison and Wlodarczyk (2009) provide additional strategies for teachers to use to improve student engagement. Making connections are essential to promoting comprehension; teachers’ use of questioning can lead students to make essential connections, including text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world connections. To help facilitate thinking to make these connections, high quality conversations are imperative (Alvermann, 1991). Teachers can foster reading engagement by facilitating student dialogue with text using strategies such as The Discussion Web (Alvermann, 1991) or think-pair-share (McTighe & Lyman, 1988).

Due to the overall positive relationship student engagement has on student achievement (Marzano, 2003), student engagement is an important element to consider when discussing student success. Researchers and educators (Morrison & Wlodarczyk, 2009; von Rembow, 2006) have provided teachers with many practices to promote engagement in the classroom. When teachers implement these practices in the classroom, students are more likely to engage the text and comprehend the material, which will likely lead to improved test scores (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997).

**Instructional Strategies**

Along with student engagement, instructional strategies are a critical component of effective teaching (Marzano, 2003). According to Marzano (2003), instructional strategies are one of the most important teacher-level factors that contribute to successful schools. An instructional strategy is the specific approach the teacher uses to educate students (Gunning, 2008). As the term suggests, the teacher’s knowledge of instruction is
an important component. This section presents research about the effects of instructional strategies on student learning, and suggestions for teachers to better instruct students with reading.

Key elements of effective instruction. From a meta-analysis of over 4,000 effect sizes and approximately 1,237,000 participants, Marzano (1998) identified three critical elements concerning effective instruction. First, teachers should know targeted knowledge and skills that the students are required to learn. Second, instructional goals need to incorporate four domain goals (knowledge, cognitive, metacognitive, and self), and teachers should use specific methods for achieving these goals. Third, teachers should consistently use instructional methods that relate to each of the four aforementioned goals. For example, an instructional goal aimed at the knowledge domain would be to understand important vocabulary words. An instructional goal aimed at the cognitive domain may be the ability for the student to demonstrate knowledge in a variety of ways. A metacognitive goal would include the student’s ability to self-monitor attention; an example of a self goal would be that the student gained a better understanding of him/herself in relation to others. Thus, instruction is complex; it is important for teachers to be aware of the four facets of instruction when teaching students. Understanding that instruction should be targeted for learning in many dimensions provides an important foundation needed prior to selecting and incorporating specific strategies (Marzano, 1998).

Importance of instructional strategies. Several studies were presented earlier in this chapter regarding the use of instructional strategies with primary students. While focusing on the use of narrative and informational texts, they also provide information
about the instructional strategies used by teachers, and the positive effects they had on student learning. These studies found that students were successful with comprehending more complex text when teachers used effective strategies (Williams et al., 2004; Reutzel et al., 2005). Duthie (1994) and Sunanon Webster (2009) also found similar results: when teachers increased exposure to informational text and incorporated explicit instruction, primary students thrived with informational text. Thus, findings confirm the notion that teachers’ instructional decisions greatly impact student learning.

Models have been developed to successfully execute instruction that promotes student achievement. One popular instructional model in the 1980s was the Instructional Theory Into Practice (ITIP) model developed by Madeline Hunter (Stallings, Robbins, Presbrey, & Scott, 1986). The ITIP model consisted of several steps for the teacher to execute. Steps included a set, statement of purpose and objective, delivery of new information in segments, a check for understanding, guided practice, closure to check for understanding, and independent practice. Stallings et al. studied the impact of teacher’s use of the instructional model on student achievement over a two year period. Results indicated that teachers who had completed the ITIP training and incorporated the elements of the model into their lessons had students who scored significantly higher in reading for both years of the study, and in mathematics for one year of the study, as compared to the scores of students taught by teachers who did not go through the training. Additionally, student engagement increased significantly in both math and reading, adding further evidence of the success of the model.

Later, educators began to analyze the effectiveness of instructional strategies through empirical research. Marzano led researchers at Midcontinent Research for
Education and Learning (McREL) (2001) to identify nine instructional strategies more likely to increase student achievement across subjects and grade levels. Each of these nine instructional strategies was selected based on the effect size the strategy had on student achievement. All studies analyzed were experimental in design with a control group. From each study, an effect size was determined to show the difference between students who were exposed to the treatment and students who were in the control group. Effect sizes, Marzano claims, can be converted to percentiles and indicate the percent growth students had in the experimental group as compared to the control group. The nine instructional strategies, along with their effect size and percentile growth are:

- **identifying similarities and differences** (1.61/ 45%)
- **summarizing and note taking** (1.00/ 34%)
- **reinforcing effort and providing recognition** (.80/ 29%)
- **homework and practice** (.77/ 28%)
- **nonlinguistic representation** (.75/ 27%)
- **cooperative learning** (.73/ 27%)
- **setting objectives and providing feedback** (.61/ 23%)
- **generating and testing hypotheses** (.61/ 23%)
- **the use of cues, questions, and advance organizers** (.59)/ 22%.

(p.7)

When teachers effectively use these strategies, they should be able to see growth in student achievement (Marzano et al., 2001).

Even though the data reveal strong implications that these strategies should positively impact student achievement, Marzano et al. (2001) and Marzano (2009) caution readers that instruction is only one component needed to increase student achievement. In response to questions and complaints from teachers about using these strategies and not seeing anticipated results, Marzano (2009) reminds readers about the
limitations and unknowns about the nine strategies. Specifically, he emphasizes that some strategies may work better with certain subjects or with students from certain backgrounds. This suggests that while instructional strategies used are a critical element of instruction, they are not the only thing to be considered.

More specifically, Marzano (2009) identified three common mistakes or misinterpretations about using his recommended instructional strategies. First, teachers too often focus on the narrow list of nine strategies, when they should be using them along with good classroom management techniques and high quality assessment. Marzano claims that solely relying on the nine strategies will not work, nor was it the intended message of the original publication. He also contends that it cannot be assumed that teachers should use all strategies in every class, when in fact certain strategies should be linked with appropriate lessons. For example, generating and testing hypotheses is probably not the most effective strategy for a Language Arts lesson on possessive pronouns. Marzano cautions teachers to critically review the strategy and match it to the appropriate objective, and he cautions administrators not to pressure teachers in using strategies simply to use them. Finally, Marzano challenges the assumption that these strategies will work all the time with every class. Marzano asserts that these strategies are not guaranteed, and that it is the nature of research within social sciences to have a combination of both positive and negative results. Even though the nine strategies have been criticized, results of the studies ascertain the significance of instruction within the classroom; thus, making it a critical factor within successful teaching.

*Instructional strategies that increase motivation for reading.* Teachers can have a positive impact on student achievement by selecting and incorporating effective
instructional strategies that promote motivation in reading and consequently, student engagement. Researchers and educators have identified several instructional strategies to increase motivation and student engagement specifically in reading (Guthrie et al., 2006). Based on a combination of a 22-study meta-analysis, treatments, qualitative reports, and characteristics of engaging schools, Guthrie et al. (2006) developed a list of seven instructional strategies or practices that increase motivation specifically in reading. Participants in the examined studies included teachers and students of both elementary and high school, and practices suggested are intended for all school-age students. The practices include teachers setting goals for reading; allowing students to make choices with regards to texts, tasks, and partners; and exposing students to interesting and relevant topics with appealing formats. Additionally, teachers should show involvement with students; when students feel that their teacher genuinely cares for them, intrinsic motivation increases. Extrinsic motivation – though controversial at times – can be increased with use of prizes such as tokens and recognition. Finally, teachers’ emphasis of mastery goals encourages students to read critically. Guthrie et al. encourage teachers to implement the above strategies to encourage students to not only read, but comprehend more.

As previously stated, teachers are considered the most important factor in student achievement (Wright et al., 1997). Studies indicate that effective teachers include techniques to increase student engagement (Marzano, 2003) and consciously use high quality instructional strategies (Marzano et al., 2001; Stallings et al., 1986). Educators and researchers of both of these topics have provided research-based practices for teachers to improve student engagement (Alvermann, 1991; Morrison & Wlodarczyk,
and use effective instructional strategies that will improve student achievement (Guthrie et al., 2006). By incorporating research-based instructional strategies that promote student engagement, teachers can play an important role in fostering student achievement.

Conclusion

America’s students are struggling with reading achievement, as indicated by scores on the NAEP. When one analyzes reading instruction at the primary level, it is clear that students are not receiving the instruction needed for success later in school and life. Research studies indicate that teachers overwhelmingly select narrative texts over informational for instruction (Duke, 2000; Yopp & Yopp, 2006). Additionally, studies indicated primary students could be successful with informational text (Pappas, 1993) and text structure if they were effectively taught (Williams et al., 2004). Despite the need for informational text, studies provide evidence that it is not adequately represented in the primary grades (Duke, 2000; Williams et al., 2004; Yopp & Yopp, 2006).

Teachers play a critical role in student learning; assessing their belief system can be one way of determining why there is an imbalance of text instruction in the primary grades. One way to assess a teacher’s belief system is to measure his or her self-efficacy in teaching narrative and informational text. As discussed in the second part of the Review of Literature, teacher’s sense of self efficacy has proven to be a significant variable in many educational studies (Allinder, 1995; Anderson et al., 1988; Ashton & Webb, 1986; Ross, 1992; Tucker et al., 2005). It is hypothesized that efficacy is an important variable in understanding the frequency and use of informational text in this present study. In order to more accurately measure teacher efficacy in the classroom, two
components—instructional strategies and student engagement—have been selected to narrow the focus. Moreover, teachers’ instructional strategies and student engagement have been shown as significant components of student achievement (Guthrie et al., 2006; Marzano, 2003); therefore, it is pertinent to determine teachers’ sense of efficacy with regards to instructional strategies and student engagement in teaching narrative and informational text.

The review of the literature consisted of three sections: information on narrative and informational text, research on the impact of teacher efficacy, and the importance of teachers engaging students and using effective instructional strategies. The literature reviewed in the first part of this section indicates that informational text is not used and taught as frequently as narrative text in the primary grades (Duke, 2000; Yopp & Yopp, 2006), despite the fact that young students can learn it and need it to be successful (Pappas, 1993; Sanacore, 1991; Williams et al., 2004). Additionally, students need to be exposed to informational text at an early age because they will encounter it more frequently in middle and high school (Duke, 2000) as well as in their adult years (Venezky, 2000).
CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

In the previous chapter, results of an extensive review of the literature on content area literacy in the primary grades were presented. The differences between narrative and informational text (Duke, 2000), and the important characteristics of text structure to informational text have been the subject of much research (Duke, 2000; Moss, 2004; Sanacore, 1991; Williams et al., 2004). Additionally, it has been suggested that the purposes of the two texts are different, yet both important for success later in life (Sanacore, 1991; Venezky, 2000). Currently, it is believed that a balance of narrative and informational text be used in order to maximize students’ reading ability; however, the literature documents the scarcity of informational text in the primary grades, and an over-emphasis of narrative text (Duke, 2000; Mohr, 2003). This poses a critical problem for students, as they are not receiving the instruction needed for success later in school and life (Duke, 2000; Hall & Sabey, 2007; Moss, 2005).

Some educators have advocated for the dominant use of narrative text in the primary classroom, claiming that it is more appropriate and developmental for young children (Britton et al., 1975; Egan, 1986, 1993; Moffett, 1987). However, research studies document young students’ success with informational text, indicating that they can comprehend the text if they are taught it (Pappas, 1993; Reutzel et al., 2005; Williams et al., 2004). Moreover, students need informational text in the primary classroom so that they will be better prepared for the future. Venezky (2000) claims that there is a great disconnect between what students and adults need to know to be successful in life and what is actually taught. An analysis of questions on the Grade 4 Reading NAEP
assessment indicates that nearly half of the questions are informational, and half are narrative. On the Grade 8 Reading NAEP, nearly two-thirds of the questions are informational, and one-third is narrative. Students need and are assessed with informational text, but the research indicates that teachers are not adequately incorporating it within the classroom.

The primary purpose for conducting this study is to address why there is a drastic imbalance of text types in the primary classroom. Even though this study will not completely determine why there is an imbalance, it is anticipated the results will reveal insight into teachers’ beliefs and actions as to why teachers generally choose more narrative than informational text. Based on the premise that beliefs drive actions (Rotter, 1982), if teachers do not believe they can adequately teach a certain type of text, then it is assumed that he or she will not adequately teach it or expose students to it. Consequently, if students are not adequately exposed to and instructed with a certain type of text, then it is assumed they will not do well when tested on it. Thus, determining teachers’ beliefs with regards to teaching narrative and informational text are critical in understanding the problem of inadequate informational text in the primary grades.

Despite the growing emphasis on the use of informational text with primary students and the documented scarcity of it in the classroom, no studies have been conducted that investigate why teachers are not using informational text to the extent they are using narrative text. Measuring teachers’ beliefs, or efficacy, with teaching narrative and informational text will provide insight into the instructional decisions made with text. Efficacy is one way to understand teachers’ cognitions and behaviors (Fives & Buehl, 2010), and has been found to have a significant positive relationship with student
achievement (Allinder, 1995; Anderson et al., 1988; Ashton & Webb, 1986; Ross, 1992). Due to the many demands and duties of teachers, the study was narrowed to focus on two important dimensions of teaching: student engagement (Guthrie et al., 2001) and instructional strategies (Marzano, 2003; Marzano et al., 2001). Thus, the areas of interest that make up teacher efficacy in this study are teacher efficacy in student engagement and teacher efficacy in instructional strategies. Engagement is the extent to which the mind is absorbed in a topic; it includes the combination of motivation, strategies, and activities used by the student when learning (Guthrie et al., 1996). Instructional strategies, another teacher-level factor that greatly influences student learning (Marzano, 2003; Marzano et al., 2001), are the planned procedures and activities chosen by the teacher to achieve a certain goal (Gunning, 2008). Teachers have an important role in influencing student engagement (von Rembow, 2006) and selecting high quality instructional strategies (Marzano, 2003; Marzano et al., 2001) that have positive impacts on student learning. Therefore, the focus of this study is overall teacher efficacy with narrative and informational text (a combination of instructional strategies and student engagement), teacher efficacy in student engagement while teaching narrative and informational text, and teacher efficacy in instructional strategies while teaching narrative and informational text.

The purpose of the study was to investigate the teachers’ belief system about teaching narrative and informational text. Specifically, this study is focusing on teacher’s sense of efficacy (including sense of efficacy in student engagement and sense of efficacy with instructional strategies) in teaching narrative and informational text. Several studies have explored the use of informational text in the classroom, but to date, no quantitative
or qualitative studies have been conducted that investigate why there is an imbalance.

While several studies exist showing the importance of teachers’ self-efficacy on instructional practices and student achievement (Allinder, 1995; Anderson et al., 1988; Ashton & Webb, 1986; Ross, 1992), there has been little specifically exploring these constructs within the context of text types. A quantitative study that probes teacher efficacy, beliefs, and attitudes of teaching informational and narrative text will provide critically needed information on this topic, and encourage educators to provide a more balanced approach to literacy instruction.

Research Questions

The study had three research questions and 10 hypotheses:

Research Question 1: Are there differences in primary teachers’ efficacy in teaching narrative and informational text?

H1: Primary teachers’ overall level of efficacy differs when using narrative text as compared to informational text.

H2: Primary teachers’ levels of efficacy in promoting student engagement differ when using narrative text as compared to informational text.

H3: Primary teachers’ levels of efficacy with instructional strategies differ when using narrative text as compared to informational text.

Research Question 2: Does primary teachers’ efficacy impact the use of narrative and informational text in the classroom?

H4: The use of narrative text correlates with overall teacher efficacy when teaching narrative text.
H₅: The use of narrative text correlates with teachers’ efficacy in student engagement when teaching with narrative text.

H₆: The use of narrative text correlates with teachers’ efficacy with instructional strategies when teaching with narrative text.

H₇: The use of informational text correlates with overall teacher efficacy when teaching informational text.

H₈: The use of informational text correlates with teachers’ efficacy in student engagement when teaching with informational text.

H₉: The use of informational text correlates with teachers’ efficacy in instructional strategies when teaching with informational text.

Research Question 3: Does primary teachers’ use of narrative text differ from their use of informational text in the classroom?

H₁₀: Primary teachers’ use of narrative text is greater than their use of informational text in the classroom.

Research Design

The aforementioned questions were answered using a quantitative study with self-reported data from a questionnaire. Participants completed the questionnaire and the researcher entered data into SPSS. The questionnaire measured eight variables: (a) teachers’ total sense of efficacy (which included a combination of instructional strategies and student engagement) with narrative text, (b) teachers’ total sense of efficacy with informational text, (c) teachers’ sense of efficacy for student engagement with narrative text, (d) teachers’ sense of efficacy for student engagement with informational text, (e) teachers’ sense of efficacy for instructional strategies with narrative text, (f) teachers’
sense of efficacy for instructional strategies with informational text, (g) use of narrative
text, and (h) use of informational text.

Participants

The population studied was kindergarten through third grade elementary teachers
in a southeastern state. Participants were certified teachers currently teaching in various
schools within this state. Because a true random sample is nearly impossible in
educational research, the researcher designed a purposive sample (Gay et al., 2009). A
purposive sample is a “process of selecting a sample that is believed to be representative
of a given population” (Gay et al., 2009, p. 134). The researcher attempted to get a
representative sample by surveying teachers at schools with various socio-economic
statuses, racial demographics, and locations (urban, suburban, and rural). The schools
were chosen based on their location and willingness to participate. All of the
kindergarten through third grade teachers at the chosen schools were asked to participate
in the study.

Data Collection

Once permission was granted from superintendents or headmasters at the chosen
schools, the researcher contacted principals to obtain permission to assist with data
collection. After a sufficient number of principals or designated faculty members were
obtained, the researcher submitted a proposal to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at
The University of Southern Mississippi for permission to proceed with the study (see
Appendix D). After IRB approval, the researcher hand-delivered packets containing
questionnaires and collection boxes to the schools. The packets contained directions for
the principal, researcher’s contact information, and the questionnaires. The
questionnaires consisted of two documents: a cover letter explaining the study (informed consent) and the instrument. The principal or designated faculty member distributed the questionnaire at a regularly scheduled faculty meeting; teachers returned completed questionnaires to a sealed collection box in a predetermined location. By completing and returning the questionnaire, the teacher consented to participation in the research study. The researcher returned to the schools to collect completed questionnaires; once all were collected the researcher entered and analyzed data using SPSS program. Approximately 450 questionnaires were distributed to the participating schools.

**Instrumentation**

The questionnaire used in this quantitative research study consisted of four sections: informed consent, a researcher-designed demographics sheet, an altered version of the *Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale* (2001), and a researcher-designed frequency measure. These four sections were presented to potential participants on pastel-colored paper, copied on one side only, and stapled together in the above mentioned order.

*Part One: Informed Consent Letter*

The first section of the questionnaire was a researcher-designed informed consent letter. This letter to participants explained the purpose of the study, directions for completing and returning the questionnaire, and contact information in case the participant had questions about the study. Additionally, the letter contained information about Institutional Review Board approval, a statement about participant protection, and ways to contact IRB if desired. Teachers agreed to participate in this study by returning the completed questionnaire to the designated drop box. See Appendix A for the Questionnaire packet.
Part Two: Demographics Sheet

In order to collect data on the participants, a researcher-developed demographic questionnaire was included. Participants were asked to provide gender, age, race/ethnicity, highest degree earned, National Board certification status, total number of years teaching, teaching certification, and grade(s) currently teaching. After data were collected, frequency measures were used to describe participants.

Part Three: Altered Version of the Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale

The next section of the questionnaire was the slightly altered version of the Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES), developed by Tschannen-Moran and A. Hoy in 2001. The original instrument, based on Bandura’s work, was developed by the two researchers and eight graduate students at The Ohio State University. The purpose of the original instrument was to provide a measure of teacher efficacy in the classroom. Three subscales were identified: student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management. The following section further explains the original instrument.

Reliability and validity of original instrument. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy conducted three studies to test reliability and validity of the instrument. The first study consisted of 224 participants and results reduced the original 52-item instrument to 32 items. The second study consisted of 217 preservice and inservice teachers and factor analysis of the items reduced the instrument from 32 items to 18. In the end, there were two versions of the instrument: a 24-item scale (the long version) and a 12-item scale (the short version). The 24-item scale had reliability scores of 0.91, 0.90, and 0.87 for instruction, management, and engagement, respectively, with a total reliability score of .94. The final 12-item scale had reliability scores of 0.86, 0.86, and 0.81 for instruction, management,
and engagement, respectively, with a total score of .90. The final instruments measured three constructs: efficacy in student engagement, efficacy in instructional strategies, and efficacy in classroom management. Further studies of the 24-item scale and 12-item scale continued to yield adequate reliability and validity measures, and Tschannen-Moran and Hoy argued it was the most accurate measure of teacher efficacy.

Later in 2010, Fives and Buehl reexamined the long and short forms of the original Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale to determine if the items factored the same with appropriate reliability and validity for practicing and preservice teachers. For their study, 102 practicing teachers and 270 preservice teachers participated. Results indicated that for practicing teachers, the same three factors emerged; however, for preservice teachers, items loaded to only one factor. Thus, the original instrument was appropriate to use with practicing teachers, but not preservice teachers. Reliability measures were still appropriate for both the long and short form with practicing teachers. Specifically, reliability with the long form for classroom management, instructional practices, and student engagement were .89, .89, .81 respectively, with a total score of .93. For the short form, reliability measures were .85, .74, and .78 respectively, with a total score of .86. Fives and Buehl’s results found that the same three factors accounted for 57% of the total variance. The items factored the same as Tschannen-Moran and Hoy’s, except for three items. Item one factored with classroom management, and items two and twelve factored with instructional strategies.

Due to its established reliability and validity, the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (2001) was desired for use in the present study. As previously stated, the original instrument consisted of three subscales: classroom management, instructional strategies,
and student engagement. Since it was assumed that classroom management techniques do not differ with narrative and informational text, the classroom management subscale was omitted from the final version of the instrument for this study. Anita Hoy, a co-author of the instrument from The Ohio State University, granted permission for the present researcher to alter the instrument by changing the statements to include narrative and informational text. See Appendix B for permission to use and alter the instrument. The following is an example of the alteration:

**Original Instrument:**

*How much can you do to help your students think critically?*

**Narrative Instrument:**

*How much can you do to help your students think critically with narrative text?*

**Informational Instrument:**

*How much can you do to help your students think critically with informational text?*

The final version of the altered instrument consisted of the eight questions measuring teacher efficacy for instructional strategies and eight questions measuring teacher efficacy with student engagement, from the TSES long form. Each item on the instrument was altered to represent narrative and informational text; therefore, there are a total number of 32 questions measuring teacher sense of efficacy.

**Part Four: Frequency Measure**

The final section of the instrument was a frequency measure designed by the researcher to determine the number of narrative and informational texts used by participants in a week. Participants were asked to consider instruction from the previous
school week, and indicate the number of times each of the 10 items was used during those five days. The ten items represented materials classified as narrative or informational text, as determined by Duke and Bennett-Armistead (2004), Sanacore (1991), the Panel of Experts, and the Focus Group. Materials representing narrative text included (a) fairy tales, fables, and/or folk tales/tall tales, (b) realistic stories – general fiction story books or passages, (c) dramatic texts, (d) historical fiction, biographies, and/or autobiographies, and (e) poems, song lyrics, rhymes (for literary enjoyment; non-informative). The following five categories represented informational texts: (a) science/social studies/math-related tradebooks, textbooks, passages, and/or big books, (b) reference books, (c) informative magazines, newspapers, and/or photos/captions, (d) informative poems, song lyrics, rhymes, riddles, and (e) informational charts, graphs, graphic organizers, and/or posters.

Validity of the frequency chart. A panel of experts reviewed the frequency measure to assure content validity of the items. The panel consisted of eight people, all who were educators with experience teaching K-6 grades and all who either had advanced degrees or were in the process of getting a graduate degree with an emphasis in Reading. The researcher provided a criteria sheet for the reviewers (see Appendix C). After the panel reviewed the demographics and frequency sections of the instrument, the researcher reevaluated the instrument based on their recommendations. Recommended changes included clarification of the directions to change “the last five days” to “the previous five days of schools.” Additionally, there was disagreement with the classification of some types of text. Specifically, many panel members marked true stories and historical fiction as informational; however, by definition they are stories and thus, categorized as
narrative even if they are non-fiction (Duke & Bennett-Armistead, 2003). Another area of concern raised by the panel of experts was with the classification of Internet (e.g., for researching) and Charts and Graphs. One panel member claimed that these two types of text were not always informational. In addition, one panel member raised concerns about the lack of a general narrative and informational category. The concerns raised by the panel were legitimate and prompted the researcher to seek clarification and advice from a focus group.

Focus Group

Based on the results from the Panel of Experts, it was decided that a focus group was needed to discuss three topics: (a) the types of text teachers may use in kindergarten-third grade classrooms, (b) the directions on the instrument, and (c) to confirm the classification of each category as either narrative or informational.

Participants of the focus group were a combination of practicing K-3 teachers in a public school district and literacy instructors at a large public university. Four teachers and three instructors participated in the two hour discussion. First, each participant individually brainstormed a list of text types present in the K-3 classroom. Then, each participant got with a partner to combine the lists. Next, the group made one master list of all text types teachers are likely to use in the classroom. After the list was created, the group categorized each text type into more general categories. For example, dictionary, thesaurus, atlas, alphabet books, and maps were categorized as Reference Texts. The discussion yielded a total of 12 categories. Finally, the participants labeled each category as narrative or informational.
After the focus group dispersed, the researcher combined a few of categories for more clarity and precision. Specifically, *Fairy Tales, Fables, and Folk Tales/Tall Tales* were combined. The category *Factual Posters* was combined with *Informative charts and graphs* to reduce the total number of categories. To ensure that the final frequency chart reflected the same categories, the researcher consulted with some members of the original focus group for advice and approval. All agreed that the combination of the aforementioned categories strengthened the instrument.

**Pilot Test**

A pilot test was conducted to determine if there were any major concerns with the instrument. According to Gay, Mills, and Airasian (2009), a pilot test is like a practice run where the researcher should address any areas of concern with administering the instrument. Wiersma and Jurs (2009) suggest to pilot test the instrument with 10-20 participants with similar characteristics as to be used in the actual study. A total of 19 certified teachers, all enrolled in a Master’s level reading/literature course at a large public university, completed the instrument for the pilot test. Results of the pilot study indicated that the instrument was appropriate for use in the final study.

**Data Analysis**

After the instrument was refined, the sample chosen, and approval obtained from the Institutional Review Board, the researcher distributed the questionnaire to participants for data collection. As previously mentioned, the desired sample size for the statistical tests was 100 (Sample Power Version 1.0). Due to an anticipated return rate of less than 50% (Wiersma & Jurs, 2009), approximately 450 questionnaires were distributed. The statistical software SPSS was used to analyze data.
Analysis of data included dependent t-tests, correlations, and comparisons of means. Dependent t-tests are used to determine if two scores are significantly different at a specified probability level (Gay et al., 2009). In this study, a probability of .05 was used. A sample size of approximately 75 was necessary in order to obtain a power of 80% to detect moderate relationships (Sample Power Version 1.0). Dependent t-tests were used to answer the first research question.

Correlations were used to answer the second research question. Correlations determine the relationship between two or more variables, and are measured by the correlation coefficient. The coefficient is represented by a decimal number between -1.00 and +1.00. A coefficient close to +1.00 represents a strong positive relationship; a coefficient close to -1.00 represents a strong negative relationship. A coefficient near 0.0 indicates no relation (Gay et. al, 2009). According to Gay and colleagues (2009), coefficients between +/- .65 and +/- 1.0 are strong; correlations between +/- .35 and +/- .65 are moderate; and coefficients between 0 and +/- .35 are weak. A sample size of approximately 100 is necessary in order to obtain a power of 80% to detect moderate relationships (Sample Power Version 1.0).

Finally, comparison of means and dependent t-tests were used to answer research question three, which sought to assess the frequency of narrative and informational texts in the classroom. To compare the total number of informational texts used to the total number of narrative texts, the researcher averaged all five informational texts together, and all five narrative texts together. Dependent t-tests were used to determine significance between the two groups (Gay et al., 2009).
Summary

Despite the need for more instruction and exposure to informational text, research indicates that primary students are not receiving adequate instruction with this type of text. A quantitative research study that investigates teachers’ beliefs about narrative and informational text is needed to provide beneficial information that begins to probe at why there is an imbalance of instruction in the primary grades. This study employed reliable and valid procedures to address the aforementioned research questions.

Theories of teacher efficacy claim that beliefs drive actions, and teachers’ actions impact student learning. Determining teachers’ beliefs with regards to narrative and informational text, especially with instructional strategies and student engagement, will provide valuable information for understanding the imbalance. Results of the study could encourage administrators and educators to provide a more balanced approach to literacy instruction. When primary students receive balanced instruction with narrative and informational text, they will be better prepared for subsequent grades in school and life.
CHAPTER IV
RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to gather data on teachers’ efficacy in teaching narrative and informational text in the primary grades, as well as assess the frequency of each text used in the classroom. This quantitative study employed the survey method with a specially designed questionnaire. This chapter presents the results of the study in the following format: introduction, demographics, descriptive statistics of all items on the instrument, a discussion of the research questions and hypotheses, and then a summary.

Introduction

There were eight variables in this study; three of which involved efficacy with narrative text, three involved efficacy with informational text, and two concerned the use of narrative and informational text. The three variables concerning efficacy and narrative text were total efficacy in teaching narrative text, teacher efficacy in instructional strategies while teaching narrative text, and teacher efficacy in student engagement while teaching narrative text. Similarly, the three variables concerning teacher efficacy and informational text were total efficacy in teaching informational text, teacher efficacy in instructional strategies while teaching informational text, and teacher efficacy in student engagement while teaching informational text. The final two variables were use of narrative text and use of informational text.

Data were collected using a five page questionnaire consisting of 51 items. The questionnaire consisted of a nine-item demographics section, 32-item efficacy section, and then a 10-item researcher-created frequency chart. A total of 21 schools participated in the study, representing five school districts across a southeastern state. Participating
schools represented a variety of socio-economic statuses, racial demographics, and test scores. Approximately 425 questionnaires were distributed, and 284 returned to the researcher, resulting in a 67% response rate.

**Demographics**

Participants were predominantly female, Caucasian, and most had only a Bachelor’s degree without National Board Certification. The majority of participants had between six and ten years of teaching experience. An overwhelming majority (89%) was teaching general/regular education classes, and 91% would categorize their class as self-contained. Finally, the breakdown of grades represented were fairly even: Kindergarten (22%), First (26%), Second (26%), and Third (25%). Approximately five percent of respondents classified their teaching assignment as “Other,” with most of those indicating a combination of the aforementioned grades. See Table 1 for more specific demographic information.

**Table 1**

*Characteristics of Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
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<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>98.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American/Alaskan</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American/Black</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race (continued)</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian/White</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Highest Degree Earned</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>61.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>35.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialists</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National Board Certified</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>83.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>In Process</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching Experience</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 5 years</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 years</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 years</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20 years</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-25 years</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30 years</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 31 years</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Table 1 (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classification of Current Teaching Assignment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General/Regular Education</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>89.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>25.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Contained</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>90.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Departmentalized</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Descriptive Statistics

Following the demographics section, participants rated 32 statements on a Likert-type scale of one to nine, with one indicating *Nothing* and nine indicating *A Great Deal*. The first 16 statements assessed teachers’ sense of efficacy in teaching narrative text, and the final 16 items consisted of the same words except *informational* was substituted for *narrative*. Therefore, the final 16 items assessed teachers’ sense of efficacy in teaching
The following sections describe reliability results of the instrument, and results of the 32 items that measure teacher sense of efficacy in teaching narrative text and teacher sense of efficacy in teaching informational text.

**Reliability**

Results from research questions one and two are from the Likert-style instrument altered from Tschannen-Moran and Hoy’s (2001) original teacher efficacy instrument. The 24-item scale had reliability scores of 0.91, 0.90, and 0.87 for instruction, management, and engagement, respectively, with a total score of .94. There was no need for the management section on the present study, so those items were omitted. Cronbach’s alpha measuring reliability for each area included in the present study were .90 for narrative student engagement, .90 for narrative instructional strategies, .93 for informational student engagement, and .93 for informational instructional strategies. Cronbach alphas are greater than .70, and therefore, considered adequate (Henson, 2001; Nunnaly, 1978; Robinson, Shaver, & Wrightman, 1991).

**Teacher Efficacy and Narrative Text**

Descriptive statistics for items representing teacher sense of efficacy in teaching narrative text on the instrument are presented in Table 2. Means for the 16 items ranged from 6.45 to 7.4, and standard deviations ranged from 1.25 to 1.57. Item numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 9, 10, and 14 constituted the category efficacy in student engagement for narrative text, and item numbers 5, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 15, and 16 constituted the category efficacy in instructional strategies for narrative text. The items for efficacy in student engagement for narrative text had a mean of 6.84 with standard deviation of 1.1; items categorized as efficacy in instructional strategies for narrative text had a mean of 7.14, with a standard
deviation of 1.03. The mean for total efficacy in teaching narrative text is 6.99 with a standard deviation of 1.01.

Table 2

*Descriptive Statistics: Narrative Items*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N1: How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students when teaching narrative text?</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>6.71</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N2: How much can you do to help students think critically when teaching narrative text?</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>6.75</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N3: How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest with narrative text?</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N4: How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well with narrative text?</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>7.06</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N5: How well can you respond to difficult questions from your students when teaching narrative text?</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>7.24</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N6: How much can you do to help your students value learning with narrative text?</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>7.13</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N7: How much can you gauge student comprehension of what you have taught with narrative text?</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N8: To what extent can you craft good questions for your students when teaching narrative text?</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N9: How much can you do to foster student creativity when teaching narrative text?</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>7.17</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 (continued).

**Descriptive Statistics: Narrative Items**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N10: How much can you do to improve the understanding of a student who is failing on assignments with narrative text?</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N11: How much can you do to adjust your lessons with narrative text to the proper level for individual students?</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>6.96</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N12: To what extent do you use a variety of assessment strategies when teaching narrative text?</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>6.61</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N13: When teaching narrative text, to what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>7.23</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N14: How much can you assist families in helping their children do well with narrative text?</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>6.45</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N15: How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom when teaching narrative text?</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>7.01</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N16: How well can you provide appropriate challenges for very capable students when teaching narrative students?</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>7.23</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative Text for Instructional Strategies (Average of items 5, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 15, and 16)</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>7.14</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative Text for Student Engagement (Average of items 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 9, 10, and 14)</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>6.84</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>9</td>
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Table 2 (continued).

Descriptive Statistics: Narrative Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Narrative Text Total</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>6.99</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Average of all items N1-N16)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teacher Efficacy and Informational Text

Descriptive statistics for instrument items concerning teacher efficacy in teaching informational text is listed below in Table 3. Means for the 16 items ranged from 6.23 to 7.14, with standard deviations ranging from 1.14 to 1.55. Item numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 9, 10, and 14 constituted the category efficacy in student engagement for informational text, and item numbers 5, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 15, and 16 constituted the category efficacy in instructional strategies for informational text. Items categorized as efficacy in student engagement for informational text had a mean of 6.65 with standard deviation of 1.22; items categorized as efficacy in instructional strategies for informational text had a mean of 6.89, with a standard deviation of 1.16. The mean for total efficacy in teaching informational text was 6.49 with a standard deviation of 1.55.
Table 3

Descriptive Statistics: Informational Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I1: How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>6.48</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>when teaching informational text?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I2: How much can you do to help your students think critically when</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>6.77</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reading informational text?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I3: How much can you do to motivate students Who show low interest with</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>6.53</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>informational text?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I4: How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well with</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>6.71</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>informational text?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I5: How well can you respond to difficult questions from your students</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>6.83</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>when teaching informational text?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I6: How much can you do to help your students value learning with</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>7.05</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>informational text?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I7: How much can you gauge student comprehension of what you have taught</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>7.14</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with informational text?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I8: To what extent can you craft good questions for your students when</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>7.11</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teaching with informational text?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I9: How much can you do to foster student Creativity when teaching</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>informational text?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I10: How much can you do to improve the understanding of a student when</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>6.61</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teaching with informational text?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 (continued).

*Descriptive Statistics: Informational Items*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I11: How much can you do to adjust your lessons with informational text to the to the proper level for individual students?</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>6.73</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I12: To what extent do you use a variety of assessment strategies when teaching informational text?</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>6.53</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I13: When teaching informational text, to what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>6.88</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I14: How much can you assist families in helping their children do well with informational text?</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>6.23</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I15: How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom when teaching informational text?</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>6.83</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I16: How well can you provide appropriate for very capable students when teaching informational text?</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>7.06</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informational Text for Instructional Strategies (Average of items 5, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 15, and 16)</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>6.89</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Informational Text for Student Engagement (Average of items 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 9, 10, and 14)</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>6.65</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informational Text Total (Average of all items I1-I16)</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>6.49</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Use of Narrative and Informational Text

Using a scale of one to five or more (5+), the final section of the instrument asked participants to indicate how often specific items were used for teaching during the previous five days of school with a majority of the students. A total of ten categories were presented; five represented narrative text and five represented informational text. The five narrative categories were (a) Fairy tales, fables, and/or folktales; (b) Realistic stories/general fiction stories; (c) Dramatic texts; (d) Historical fiction, biographies, and/or autobiographies; and (e) Poems, song lyrics, and/or rhymes for literary enjoyment. Responses for all five items were combined, and the mean for use of narrative texts was 9.26 with a standard deviation of 4.56.

The five informational categories were (a) Science/Social Studies/Math-related tradebooks, textbooks, passages, and/or big books; (b) Reference books; (c) Informative magazines, newspapers, and/or photos/captions; (d) Informative poems, song lyrics, rhymes, and riddles; and (e) Informational charts, graphs, graphic organizers, and/or posters. Responses for all five items were added together, and the mean for use of informational text was 12.58 with a standard deviation of 4.95. Table 4 provides descriptive statistics for each category on the frequency chart. Items are numbered in order of appearance on the chart, starting with the first column, but are grouped based on narrative or informational.
Table 4

*Descriptive Statistics: Frequency Chart*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frequency of Narrative Items</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F1: Fairy Tales, Fables, and/or Folk Tales/Tall Tales</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F2: Realistic Stories – general fiction story books or passages</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F4: Dramatic Texts</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F6: Historical Fiction, Biographies, and/or Autobiographies</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F8: Poems, Song lyrics, rhymes for literary Enjoyment; non-narrative</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative Total (Total F1, F2, F4, F6, &amp; F8)</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>9.26</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frequency of Informational Items</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F3: Science/Social Studies/Math-related tradebooks, textbooks, and/or big books</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F5: Reference books</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F7: Informative magazines, newspapers, and/or photos/captions</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F9: Informative poems, song lyrics, rhymes, riddles</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F10: Informational charts, graphs, graphic organizers, and/or posters</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informational Total (Total F3, F5, F7, F9, F10)</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>12.58</td>
<td>4.95</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Questions and Hypotheses

Three research questions with 10 total hypotheses guided this study. The following sections present each research question, corresponding hypotheses, the statistical analyses conducted, and the results of the tests.

Research Question 1: Are There Differences in Primary Teachers’ Efficacy in Teaching Narrative and Informational Text?

Three hypotheses correspond with research question one. The first hypothesis (H₁) states, Primary teachers’ overall level of efficacy differs when using narrative text as compared to informational text. Results from paired samples t-tests indicate this hypothesis is accepted and is statistically significant, $t(283) = 4.42$, $p < .001$. These data show participants reported statistically significant differences in their efficacy with regards to teaching narrative and informational text, and that their efficacy was greater with teaching narrative text. See Tables 2 and 3 for means.

The next hypothesis (H₂) states, Primary teachers’ levels of efficacy in promoting student engagement differ when using narrative text as compared to informational text. Results from paired samples t-tests indicate that this hypothesis is accepted, and there is a statistically significant difference in teachers’ sense of efficacy in promoting student engagement when teaching the two types of text: $t(283) = 3.25$, $p = .001$. See Tables 2 and 3 for means. Participants reported having significantly more efficacy in teaching narrative text as compared to informational text.

The third and final hypothesis (H₃) corresponding with research question one states, Primary teachers’ levels of efficacy with instructional strategies differ when using narrative text as compared to informational text. This hypothesis is accepted and
statistically significant: $t(283) = 4.01$, $p < .001$. See Tables 2 and 3 for means. Similar to student engagement, primary teachers report a significantly higher sense of efficacy in teaching narrative text as compared to informational text.

Research Question 2: Does Primary Teachers’ Efficacy Impact the Use of Narrative and Informational Text in the Classroom?

Six hypotheses ($H_4$–$H_9$) correspond to research question two. The first three are related to the use of narrative text, and the last three are related to the use of informational text. The first hypothesis ($H_4$) states, *The use of narrative text correlates with overall teacher efficacy when teaching narrative text.* Pearson correlations indicate that this hypothesis is accepted and statistically significant: ($r = 0.281^{**}$, $p < .001$).

The second hypothesis ($H_5$) associated with research question three states, *The use of narrative text correlates with teachers’ efficacy in student engagement when teaching with narrative text.* Pearson correlations were used to determine the relationship. Data for this hypothesis were statistically significant at the 0.01 level: ($r = 0.242^{**}$, $p < .001$), and therefore the hypothesis is accepted.

The third and final hypotheses ($H_6$) related to the use of narrative text states, *The use of narrative text correlates with teachers’ efficacy with instructional strategies when teaching with narrative text.* Similar to the previous two hypotheses, this hypothesis is also accepted, with Pearson correlations indicating a statistically significant correspondence at the 0.01 level: ($r = 0.294$, $p < .001$).

The final three hypotheses ($H_7$–$H_9$) associated with research question two involve the use of informational text and teacher sense of efficacy. The first hypothesis ($H_7$) concerning the use of informational text with teacher sense of efficacy states, *The
use of informational text correlates with overall teacher efficacy when teaching informational text. This hypothesis is accepted, as Pearson correlations indicate a significant correlation at the 0.01 level: \( r = 0.334, p < .001 \).

The next hypothesis (H₈) states, The use of informational text correlates with teachers’ efficacy in student engagement when teaching with informational text. Similar to the previous hypothesis, this hypothesis is accepted, as results from Pearson correlations indicate a significant correlation at the 0.01 level: \( r = 0.335p < .001 \).

The final hypothesis associated with research question two (H₉), The use of informational text correlates with teachers’ efficacy in instructional strategies when teaching with informational text, is accepted. Pearson correlations denote a significant correlation \( (r = 0.314, p < .001) \). Therefore, all six of the hypotheses associated with efficacy and use of narrative and informational text are statistically significant, and therefore accepted.

Research Question 3: Does Primary Teachers’ Use of Narrative Text Differ from Their Use of Informational Text in the Classroom?

The one hypothesis (H₁₀) corresponding to this research question states, Primary teachers’ use of narrative text is greater than their use of informational text in the classroom. According to the collection instrument created by the researcher, the hypothesis is rejected. Results of paired samples t tests indicated significant results, but in contrary direction to the hypotheses, \( t (283) = 11.99, p < .001 \), see Table 4 for means. Therefore, participants reported using informational text greater than narrative text in the classroom.
Summary

This chapter presented the results of this quantitative study. Results indicated that nine of the ten hypotheses were accepted and statistically significant. Based on results from this study, primary teachers use informational text more than narrative text. Additionally, there are differences in primary teachers’ sense of efficacy in teaching narrative and informational text, with teachers having a higher sense of efficacy with narrative text. Finally, primary teachers’ sense of efficacy impacts the use of text type in the classroom. The following chapter will discuss possible reasons for these findings.
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

The scarcity of informational text in the primary classroom has been well documented by researchers who contend narrative text is used for instructional purposes far more than informational text (Duke, 2000; Flood & Lapp, 1986; Jacobs et al., 2000; Moss & Newton, 2002; Newman, 2006; Pressley et al., 1996; Yopp & Yopp, 2006). This study sought to explore why there is an imbalance of text types in the primary grades by assessing teachers’ beliefs, or efficacy, in teaching narrative and informational text. More specifically, the purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of primary teachers’ beliefs in teaching narrative and informational text, as well as to determine the use of both text types in the classroom. This chapter discusses the findings, conclusions, implications of the present study, and recommendations for teachers, administrators, and school districts.

Summary of the Study

Content area literacy in the primary grades relies heavily on the use of informational text (Duke & Bennett-Armistead, 2003). Previous research has documented the scarcity of informational text in the primary grades (Duke, 2000; Yopp & Yopp, 2006), even though students are in need of reading comprehension for both narrative and informational text. The unexplained discrepancy between instruction using narrative and informational text suggests informational text is not getting adequate attention (Moss, 2005). Teachers are responsible for making decisions with regards to materials and instructional strategies used within the classroom; therefore, assessing their belief system will elucidate the driving factors of their decisions. The present study sought to assess
teacher sense of efficacy in teaching narrative and informational text in the primary grades, as well as evaluate the types of text that the teachers currently use in their classroom.

*Research Questions and Hypotheses*

Three research questions with 10 hypotheses guided this study:

Research Question 1: Are there differences in primary teachers’ efficacy in teaching narrative and informational text?

- **H1**: Primary teachers’ overall level of efficacy differs when using narrative text as compared to informational text.
- **H2**: Primary teachers’ levels of efficacy in promoting student engagement differ when using narrative text as compared to informational text.
- **H3**: Primary teachers’ levels of efficacy with instructional strategies differ when using narrative text as compared to informational text.

Research Question 2: Does primary teachers’ efficacy impact the use of narrative and informational text in the classroom?

- **H4**: The use of narrative text correlates with overall teacher efficacy when teaching narrative text.
- **H5**: The use of narrative text correlates with teachers’ efficacy in student engagement when teaching with narrative text.
- **H6**: The use of narrative text correlates with teachers’ efficacy with instructional strategies when teaching with narrative text.
- **H7**: The use of informational text correlates with overall teacher efficacy when teaching informational text.
H₈: The use of informational text correlates with teachers’ efficacy in student engagement when teaching with informational text.

H₉: The use of informational text correlates with teachers’ efficacy in instructional strategies when teaching with informational text.

Research Question 3: Does primary teachers’ use of narrative text differ from their use of informational text in the classroom?

H₁₀: Primary teachers’ use of narrative text is greater than their use of informational text in the classroom.

Participants studied were kindergarten through third grade teachers in a southeastern state. Teachers were from 21 schools in five school districts representing different regions, socio-economic statuses, and levels of achievement. Approximately 425 questionnaires were distributed and 284 were completed and returned, providing a 67% response rate. Participants were predominantly Caucasian, female, general education teachers with self-contained classrooms. A variety of ages and years of experience were represented. Additionally, the distribution of grades was fairly even.

Findings and Conclusions

This section discusses the findings and conclusions of the research questions and their implications. Overall, results from nine of the ten statistical tests were statistically significant, and this section discusses the possible reasons for the results. This section is organized in three sections: Efficacy in Narrative Text, Use of Text and Efficacy in Teaching Text, and Use of Narrative and Informational Text. The conclusions are interspersed with the findings; recommendations are discussed in the subsequent section.
Efficacy in Teaching Narrative Text

The first research question sought to determine if there are differences in primary teachers’ efficacy in teaching narrative and informational text. The hypotheses stated that primary teachers’ overall level of efficacy, their level of efficacy in promoting student engagement, and their level of efficacy with instructional strategies would all differ when teaching narrative as compared to informational text. Results indicated that in all three instances, teachers’ efficacy differed significantly when teaching with narrative and informational text. More specifically, teachers indicated a significantly greater sense of efficacy when teaching narrative text as compared to informational text in all three cases.

With both narrative and informational text, respondents indicated a slightly greater sense of efficacy with instructional strategies as compared to sense of efficacy with student engagement. While both areas – instructional strategies and student engagement – need attention, results indicate that teachers need more assistance in getting the students actively engaged with the text. Pre-reading strategies that help stimulate interest, such as questioning, artifacts, and visual images, are discussed in the Recommendations section of this chapter.

The overall findings of research question one suggest teachers are more comfortable with teaching narrative text than informational. These results support Duke’s (2000) and Yopp and Yopp’s (2006) findings that teachers spend more time on narrative text, while also suggesting teachers spend more time on that with which they are more comfortable and confident teaching.
Since the findings align with previous research, the results are not surprising, and may be attributed to several factors. Teaching informational text, which is generally associated with science and social studies, contains concepts and unique vocabulary associated with the specific subjects (Fisher & Frey, 2008; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). Therefore, teachers need to be knowledgeable of these content-specific terms. Many primary teachers may not have a science or social studies endorsement; therefore, it may be necessary for teachers to learn the concepts themselves prior to teaching the students. In the age of accountability and paperwork, teachers may not have the time needed to learn the content and then plan hands-on activities.

Another reason is that concepts may be more difficult for students to grasp, especially if they do not have much background knowledge or experience with informational text. If students’ previous teachers did not spend much time on informational text, the students will have a deficit in that area. Therefore, it may be more difficult for teachers to activate background knowledge and scaffold instruction if the students do not have much experience with informational text or concepts.

Informational text is generally organized into one of five text structures, whereas narrative text generally follows one structure: a main character or characters, setting, problem and solution, and a moral or lesson (Sanacore, 1991; Yopp & Yopp, 2000). If teachers are not knowledgeable of the five informational text structures and are limited on time to learn the particular structure of a text, then it is understandable that they may revert to that with which they already know and are comfortable teaching. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers become knowledgeable of text structure and effective ways to teach it in the classroom.
Use of Text and Efficacy in Teaching Text

The second research question explored the relationship between teachers’ efficacy levels and their impact on using narrative and informational text in the classroom. Six hypotheses accompanied this research question; the first set of three focused on narrative text, and the second set of three focused on informational text. The first set of hypotheses stated that the use of narrative text would correlate with three levels of efficacy: overall teacher efficacy, teachers’ efficacy in student engagement, and teachers’ efficacy with instructional strategies, all when teaching with narrative text. Similarly, the second set of hypotheses stated that the use of informational text would correlate with three levels of efficacy: overall teacher efficacy, teachers’ efficacy in student engagement, and teachers’ efficacy with instructional strategies, all when teaching with informational text. The results mirrored the previous results with narrative text: teachers’ efficacy in teaching informational text significantly correlated with their use of informational text.

Specifically, results indicated that all three levels of efficacy with narrative text significantly correlated with the use of narrative text. The three correlations for narrative text were all significant and similar in number; however, the strongest correlation was with sense of efficacy in instructional strategies and use of narrative text. Results with correlations involving informational text were similar in that all three were significantly correlated, but the strongest correlation was with sense of efficacy in student engagement while teaching with informational text and use of informational text. Since all correlations with sense of efficacy and use of text are significantly correlated, findings suggest that teachers need assistance with both instructional strategies and student engagement.
Overall, the results of research question two indicate that teachers’ efficacy highly correlate with their actions. These findings confirm Rotter’s (1982) claim that beliefs drive actions. Therefore, it is no surprise that all six of the correlations are statistically significant. The same factors that influenced the results of research question one also pertain to these results: primary teachers may not be as knowledgeable of science and social studies concepts and vocabulary, they are limited on time to learn the concepts themselves and then plan hands-on activities, they lack knowledge of the text structure, and finally, the students have less previous experience with informational text making it more difficult to teach.

These results suggest that teachers teach that with which they are comfortable teaching; therefore to increase time spent on informational text teachers need to become more comfortable and knowledgeable with informational text. Professional development focused on teaching informational text may help alleviate imbalance of instruction with narrative and informational text. More recommendations for teaching informational text are discussed in the Recommendations section.

*Use of Narrative and Informational Text*

Research question three sought to determine if primary teachers’ use of narrative text differed from their use of informational text. Participants indicated their use of the types of text by completing a researcher-made frequency chart. Respondents were asked to circle the amount of times per week (on a scale of one to five+) that each type of material was used with a majority of students over the course of the past five days. Based on previous research (Duke, 2000; Yopp & Yopp, 2006), the hypothesis stated that teachers’ use of narrative text would be greater than their use of informational text, but
results indicated contradictory findings. According to the present study, teachers use more informational text than narrative. Specifically, the type of narrative text most used was *Realistic Stories* and the least used type was *Dramatic Texts*. For informational texts, the most frequently used text was *Informational charts, graphs, and graphic organizers*. The least used informational text was *Informative magazines, newspapers, and/or photos/captions*. These results are not surprising, as *Realistic Stories* dominate basal readers (Flood & Lapp, 1986; Neuman, 2006), and a majority of elementary classrooms use basal readers to some extent (Baumann et. al, 2000; Moss & Newton, 2002). Additionally, graphic organizers can be easily used with multiple texts and across subjects (even though the intent in this chart was use with only informational text); therefore, it is not surprising that this number is high.

These results contradict the findings of two seminal pieces of research (Duke, 2000; Yopp & Yopp, 2006) that found teachers overwhelmingly used more narrative than informational text; therefore, it was surprising when contradictory results were found. There are several factors that may have influenced these results. One possible reason for the contradictory results includes a discrepancy in the terminology used on the frequency chart. Even though examples were provided for each type of text, teachers may have associated those terms differently than what the researcher intended. For example, while the researcher intended the category of *Informational charts, graphs, graphic organizers, and/or posters* to include those items only when used with informational text, the respondent may have read it to mean anytime a graphic organizer was used, including a bubble chart with a narrative story. Since the results contradict well established previous research, more research is needed in this area.
Contradictory findings could also be a result of teachers using informational text more because of the increase in state standards, accountability, and technological requirements – many associated with information rich Internet sites (Kamil & Lane, 1998; Moss, 2004). Educators may also have many more informational resources, such as posters, leveled readers, and supplemental texts intended for primary use as compared to previous decades (Bamford & Kristo, 2000; Gill, 2009; Moss, 2004). In fact, one researcher has stated that no single genre “has changed as radically in recent years as nonfiction” (Moss, 2003, p. 10). State standards, including teaching frameworks, have changed to include more emphasis on informational text over the past years (Moss, 2004). Additionally, textbook companies may be including more informational text in newer publications than previous editions. With the increase in materials, standards, and accountability, it makes sense primary teachers would use more informational text now than in previous years.

Still, however, this raises another concern. If the results of this study are accurate, and primary teachers are teaching more informational text, then it is troubling that they do not feel as efficacious, or capable, teaching it as compared to narrative text. Thus, they may be using it more, but may not be using it effectively. Informational text has a different purpose (Duke, 2000) and is organized differently than narrative text; therefore, instruction with it should be different (Fisher & Frey, 2008; Meyer, 1985; Moss, 2004). Regardless, it is recommended that teachers are provided research-based professional development to include teaching strategies for successfully teaching informational text. Specific recommendations for implementing appropriate instruction with informational text at the primary level are mentioned in the following section.
Recommendations for Policy and Practice

Based on the results of this study, primary teachers in general feel less efficacious, or capable, in teaching informational text. To provide students with adequate exposure and instruction with informational texts, teachers need to modify their existing teaching practices and/or adopt new ones. However, with change comes uncertainty and difficulty (Fullan, 1993), and teachers will need support. Changes are most successful when accompanied with embedded and continued professional development support (English & Steffy, 2001). Professional development should include reinforcement of concepts of informational text and the most effective ways to incorporate informational text within the classroom. Results from this study could have three benefits: (a) encourage teachers to reflect on their use of text type, (b) inform school districts of professional development that may be needed, and (c) if teachers decide to incorporate more instruction with informational text, then student understanding, and therefore test scores, could increase.

Neuman (2001) also calls for the early elementary classroom to be well equipped with teachers who use effective instructional methods and a variety of genres so that children can get the foundation they need to learn to read successfully. Not only will high quality instruction, especially with informational text, benefit every student, it will also help close the gap between children from low and upper income families (Chall & Jacobs, 1983). Professional development aimed at increasing teachers’ efficacy in teaching informational text should include a focus of three areas: increasing student exposure to informational text, understanding text structure, and implementing effective instructional strategies.
Increasing Student Exposure to Informational Text

Despite conflicting results from this study about the frequency of informational text, it is still important to ensure adequate use of informational text. Duke (2004) advocates for an increase in access to and time with informational text, as well as using informational text for authentic purposes to aid in comprehension. For example, when students are able to connect the information in the text to real life experiences, locate information that is especially interesting, and have opportunities to connect reading to writing, students will have more meaningful reading experiences and will be more likely to comprehend the text (Duke, 2004). To aid in providing more informational text to students, it is recommended that teachers self-assess their own attitudes and practices with regards to text selection. For example, teachers should analyze the types of books ordered through companies such as Scholastic, and analyze the genres of books read-aloud to students. Additionally, incorporating science/social studies based posters, magazines, and charts, while also integrating language arts skills with science and social studies, will increase student’s exposure to informational text. The first step in providing adequate instruction with informational text is having them available in the classroom.

Understanding and Teaching Text Structure

To be able to effectively teach informational text, teachers need to be aware of text structure and incorporate explicit instruction with each type of structure. Robinson and McKenna (2009) claim that by identifying text structure, readers are better able to understand the text’s “skeletal framework,” (69) and therefore, will be able to make sense of the information. While identifying text structure is an important skill, it is necessary to emphasize that identifying text structure is not the end goal. The end goal, rather, is
comprehension of the text; identifying text structure is a tool for comprehension (ESSDACK, 2007).

Five expository text structures are commonly found in informational text: exemplification/description, compare and contrast, cause and effect, problem and solution, and sequential/temporal (Fisher & Frey, 2008; Meyer, 1985; Moss, 2004). While introducing instruction with each text structure, it is recommended that instruction be focused on each one independently. Occasionally, however, authors use more than one structure. Once each structure has been explicitly taught, instruction should include identifying multiple patterns within a single work, especially in upper elementary grades (Fisher & Frey, 2008).

Implementing Effective Strategies

Along with teaching text structure, teachers should implement effective strategies that aid in comprehension. Prior to selecting effective strategies, teachers need to plan for high quality instruction. When teachers plan with knowing where they want to eventually end, (Wiggins and McTighe, 2005), they establish goals for the lesson, including specific skills and understandings desired as a result of the lesson. After goals and skills are established, teachers should plan for instruction by ensuring high quality texts are selected that align with the goals and will allow for healthy discussion. Questions and activities that promote higher order thinking should be decided upon (Shanahan et al., 2010) and materials gathered to successfully conduct the lesson. While there are many strategies devoted to comprehension, the researcher recommends special attention to five areas that aid in comprehension of informational text: prereading strategies, visuals, vocabulary instruction, interaction with text, and summarizing.
Prereading strategies. When teaching any type of text, it is important to implement prereading strategies to prepare students to read and comprehend the text. Some prereading strategies are activating prior knowledge, setting a purpose for reading, and increasing interest with the content. By activating prior knowledge, the teacher prepares the reader for what the author presumes he or she should know (McKenna & Robinson, 2009). One way to activate prior knowledge is to use artifacts and engaging questions that stimulate interest and motivation in the topic. Establishing a purpose for reading aids students in knowing what to anticipate while reading, and to focus on the most important information within the text (McKenna & Robinson, 2009). K-W-L charts and anticipation guides are tools that can promote interest in the content and establish a purpose with reading.

Visuals. Visualizing and using visuals is another strategy that promotes comprehension of text and aids in retention (Manning, 2002; Tompkins, 2009). Manning (2002) suggests that students, especially primary age, need assistance in creating mental images that align with information from the text. Students who have difficulty creating accurate mental images tend to lack the prior knowledge associated with the topic. Teachers can assist students in creating mental images by assessing understanding of the topic and providing opportunities to pause and consider the setting and details given in text (Manning, 2002). Additionally, graphic organizers provide students with a visual framework to make sense of new information (Gallavan & Kottler, 2007) and mentally organize the information for later use.

Emphasize vocabulary. Understanding the meaning of words is an essential component to comprehension (NICHD, 2000). Informational text often contains content-
specific terms that are outside of common language (Hall & Sabey, 2007). Therefore, instruction should emphasize the new terminology that may be unfamiliar to students yet critical for comprehension. Multiple opportunities to experience vocabulary words – including direct and indirect methods - will allow students to grasp a better understanding of the words (Tompkins, 2009). Techniques such as context clues, concept cards, graphic organizers, semantic maps, semantic feature analyses, and morphemic analyses can aid students in learning new words (Gunning, 2009).

Allow interaction with text. Teachers can use strategies such as the interactive read-aloud, modeling/conducting think-alouds, and questioning to allow the reader to actively engage in the reading process, and thus, comprehend the material. The goal for the teacher should be not only to teach the aforementioned strategies and skills, but to encourage students to transfer the use of strategies to independent reading.

The interactive read-aloud is a strategy where the teacher generally reads aloud to students and encourages them to be active participants in the reading process. The teacher uses good voice and intonation as well as stops at predetermined pages to invite brief responses from the students (Barrentine, 1996). During the interactive read-aloud, the teacher can model fluency, important connections, as well as invite students to make aesthetic connections to the text (Barrentine, 1996). Allowing children an opportunity to engage in meaningful conversation during reading greatly impacts children’s development of comprehension (Beck & McKeown, 2001; Reutzel & Cooter, 2003). Additionally, interactive read alouds as early as pre-kindergarten and kindergarten suggest improvements in vocabulary, comprehension, and analytical thinking that aid in development of reading skills (McGee & Schickedanz, 2007).
Teacher modeling refers to effectively showing students how to make sense of text. Teachers can model how they make meaning of informational text by doing a think-aloud. A think-aloud is a “metacognitive technique or strategy in which a teacher verbalizes thoughts aloud while reading a section orally, thus modeling the process of comprehension” (Dewey as cited in Harris & Hodges, 1995, p. 256). Think-alouds give students the opportunity to hear how their teacher makes meaning of the text. A think-aloud allows listeners to witness the way a reader connects ideas, makes predictions, and critically analyzes the text. Research indicates that effective use of think-alouds have a significant impact on students’ reading scores on standardized tests (Block & Israel, 2004).

Teachers can promote comprehension by asking students higher-order thinking questions and encouraging students to question what is read. The National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP) estimates that 70-80% of the questions students will be exposed to on standardized tests demand integration of ideas and concepts, rather than literal responses (Raphael & Au, 2005). To be able to think critically and successfully answer these type questions, students need to identify the type of question. Questions are generally categorized in one of three ways: right there, think and search, and beyond the text (Dymock & Nicholson, 2010; Raphael, 1982). By identifying the type of question, students are better able to determine thought processes needed to successfully answer.

Finally, connecting reading to writing increases the mental processes one must endure as opposed to doing only one process; thus, learning is enhanced when students write about something they just read (McKenna & Robinson, 2009). As McKenna and Robinson state, “Writing forces us to clarify and organize our own thinking before we
can put it into words for others” (p. 21). Teachers can provide opportunities for students to incorporate writing informational text through activities such as exit slips, reports, brochures, letters, cluster maps, All-About books, and Alphabet books (Tompkins, 2009).

**Summarizing.** The fifth and final strategy recommended is summarizing. Summarizing a text requires the reader to identify the most important concepts and grasp the main idea (NICHD, 2000). Summarizing has been regularly listed as one of the most effective strategies to promote comprehension (Gunning, 2009; NICHD, 2000; Pressley, Johnson, Symons, McGoldrick & Kurita, 1989). It is a complex task that requires the learner to have a thorough understanding of the material read. Thus, a student’s summary is a good indicator of his or her understanding (Gunning, 2009). To teach summarizing, it is recommended that teachers begin by having primary students orally retell an event or a story. Additionally teachers should model appropriate summarization as well as direct student’s attention to summaries within textbooks. Text clues such as chapter titles, headings, captions, and bold words can aid students in identifying the main idea (Gunning, 2009)

**Conclusion for Recommendations**

Based on the results of this study, teachers need professional development with teaching informational text. First, it is important for teachers to have informational text available in the classroom and spend an appropriate amount of time using it. Additionally, teachers need a thorough understanding of text structure so that they can teach students about this unique characteristic of informational text. Finally, teachers need to be aware of and know how to effectively use strategies for teaching informational text. These include using prereading strategies and visuals, incorporating vocabulary
instruction, promoting interaction with text, and teaching summarization. Professional development focused on teachers making conscious decisions to use informational text, teach text structure, and implement effective strategies will enable teachers to become more efficacious in teaching informational text, and students will reap the benefits.

Future Research

Future research should focus on obtaining a more accurate measure of the frequency of teaching narrative and informational text. Since the findings of the frequency portion of this research study contradict results to previous research, it is possible that the chart does not adequately measure teachers’ use of narrative and informational text. Despite going through rigorous measures to ensure reliability and validity, the researcher questions the validity of the frequency measure since the results contradict previous published results. Future research should focus on identifying a better measure of types of text used in the classroom. Since there are many text types that do not clearly fall into the categories of narrative and informational text (for example, biographies and narrative-informational series such as *The Magic School Bus*), it is difficult to define the frequency of narrative and informational text to teachers on a questionnaire to ensure valid results. To make certain the terminology is consistent across participants, it is recommended that the measure of texts be left to the researchers, as Duke did in 2000. A replication of her study, which included the research team analyzing each type of text in the room as well as observations of instruction with the text, would provide much needed updated information on the frequency of narrative and informational text in primary grades.
Summary

To ensure students are prepared for the future demands, it is imperative they are provided with high quality instruction across the content areas. Teachers are responsible for selecting the materials and deciding on instructional methods within the classroom. This study focused on the belief system of teachers who are making these important decisions within the classroom. Results of the study indicated that teachers are less confident with teaching informational text. Thus, professional development aimed at effective use of informational text in the classroom is recommended. When teachers are providing students with adequate instruction across the content areas, students will be better prepared for future grades and life.
APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE PACKET

September 2010

Dear Teachers,

Obtaining feedback from teachers is important for addressing educational needs. I am collecting data from kindergarten through third grade teachers for a study regarding teacher beliefs and abilities when teaching narrative and informational text. **I am asking all K-3 teachers at your school to help me by completing the attached questionnaire.** It should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Your participation is completely voluntary and the results will remain anonymous and confidential. You may decline or withdraw participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefit. There are no known risks involved with your participation outside of the inconvenience of completing the questionnaire. This study may be beneficial to you because it encourages you to reflect on your attitudes and philosophies towards your beliefs and abilities within the classroom. Further, results of this study are intended to help provide necessary support for teachers. Once data is collected and analyzed, results will be presented in a dissertation; the names of teachers, schools, and school districts will never be revealed. All responses will be aggregated so that no individual can be identified.

This research project has been approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at The University of Southern Mississippi. IRB approval ensures that all federal research guidelines are followed and participants are protected from risks. By completing and returning the attached questionnaire, you give the researcher permission to use the data as stated above. Any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant should be directed to the Chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5147, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001, (601) 266-6820.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at Christine.Selman@eagles.usm.edu or my research advisor, Dr. Hollie Filce, at Hollie.Filce@usm.edu.

**If you do not have any questions and are willing to participate, please do the following:**

1. Complete the following questionnaire. Please do not put your name on it.
2. Return it to the sealed collection box in the Teacher Workroom by Friday, October 1st.

Thank you in advance for your assistance with this project.

Sincerely,

Christine Selman
Doctoral Candidate
The University of Southern Mississippi
Department of Curriculum, Instruction, and Special Education
Teaching With Narrative and Informational Text

Directions: This questionnaire is designed to help us gain a better understanding of teacher beliefs and perspectives when teaching narrative and informational text. Please indicate your response by circling one number for each question below.

Definitions:
- Narrative text – text that tells a story; generally follows a story grammar structure (character(s), setting, plot, problem and resolution)
- Informational text – text where the primary purpose is to inform reader about the natural or social world (i.e. texts pertaining to science and social studies)

Part I: Narrative Text – text that tells a story (e.g. Franklin Goes to School, Chrysanthemum, Hop on Pop, etc.)

Scale: 1=Nothing  3=Very Little  5=Some  7=Quite A Bit  9=A Great Deal

1. How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students when teaching narrative text? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
2. How much can you do to help your students think critically when reading narrative text? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
3. How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest with narrative text? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
4. How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well with narrative text? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
5. How well can you respond to difficult questions from your students when teaching narrative text? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
6. How much can you do to help your students value learning with narrative text? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
7. How much can you gauge student comprehension of what you have taught with narrative text? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
Scale: 1=Nothing  3=Very Little  5=Some  7=Quite A Bit  9=A Great Deal

8. To what extent can you craft good questions for your students when teaching with narrative text? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

9. How much can you do to foster student creativity when teaching narrative text? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

10. How much can you do to improve the understanding of a student who is failing on assignments with narrative text? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

11. How much can you do to adjust your lessons with narrative text to the proper level for individual students? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

12. To what extent do you use a variety of assessment strategies when teaching narrative text? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

13. When teaching narrative text, to what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

14. How much can you assist families in helping their children do well with narrative text? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

15. How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom when teaching narrative text? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

16. How well can you provide appropriate challenges for very capable students when teaching narrative text? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

**Part II: Informational Text – text that informs about the natural and/or social world (e.g. books/passages on weather, animals, plants, geography, landforms, planets, communities, etc.)**

1. How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students when teaching informational text? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

2. How much can you do to help your students think critically when reading informational text? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

3. How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest with informational text? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

4. How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well with informational text? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale: 1=Nothing       3=Very Little       5=Some       7=Quite A Bit       9=A Great Deal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. How well can you respond to difficult questions from your students when teaching informational text?</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. How much can you do to help your students value learning with informational text?</td>
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<td>7. How much can you gauge student comprehension of what you have taught with informational text?</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. To what extent can you craft good questions for your students when teaching with informational text?</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. How much can you do to foster student creativity when teaching informational text?</td>
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<td>10. How much can you do to improve the understanding of a student who is failing on assignments from informational text?</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. How much can you do to adjust your lessons with informational text to the proper level for individual students?</td>
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<td>12. To what extent do you use a variety of assessment strategies when teaching informational text?</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. When teaching informational text, to what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?</td>
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<td>14. How much can you assist families in helping their children do well with informational text?</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom when teaching informational text?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. How well can you provide appropriate challenges for very capable students when teaching informational text?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part III: Frequency

Consider the teaching materials you used the previous five days of school for instructional purposes with a majority of your students. Approximately how many times did you use the following materials over the course of those five school days? Please indicate the amount by selecting one number below for each item.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5+</th>
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<tr>
<td>Fairy Tales, Fables, and/or Folk Tales/Tall Tales (e.g. Cinderella, The Tortoise and the Hare, Pecos Bill)</td>
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<td>Historical Fiction, Biographies, and/or Autobiographies (e.g. Henry’s Freedom Box, Molly’s Pilgrim, Martin Luther King, Jr.)</td>
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<td>Realistic Stories - general fiction story books or passages (e.g. Henry and Mudge, Alexander and the Terrible…)</td>
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<td>Informative Magazines, Newspapers, and/or photos/captions (e.g. Zoobooks, Weekly Reader, Scholastic News, etc.)</td>
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<td>Science/Social Studies/ Math-related tradebooks, textbooks, passages, and/or big books (teacher or professionally generated)</td>
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<td>Poems, Song lyrics, rhymes (for literary enjoyment; non-informative, such as Jack and Jill)</td>
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<td>Dramatic Texts (e.g. story-based plays and readers’ theater)</td>
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<td>Informative poems, song lyrics, rhymes, riddles (e.g. with factual info on weather, animals, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reference books (e.g. Encyclopedia, Atlas, Dictionary, Maps, Alphabet Books)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Informational charts, graphs, graphic organizers, and/or posters</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Your assistance is greatly appreciated. Thank you for your time.
APPENDIX B

PERMISSION LETTER FROM AUTHOR OF INSTRUMENT

----- Forwarded Message ----
From: Anita Hoy <anitahoy@me.com>
To: Christine Salim <christinesaliman12@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wed, February 17, 2010 3:32:20 PM
Subject: Re: Request to Alter Instrument

These modifications look fine. You are welcome to use the revised instrument in any form to gather data for your dissertation.

Anita

Anita Woolfolk Hoy, Professor
Educational Psychology & Philosophy
School of Educational Policy and Leadership
The Ohio State University
Columbus, OH 43210
phone 614-688-5064
fax 614-292-7000
e-mail anitahoy@osu.edu
www.cpe.osu.edu/persons/anitahoy

On Feb 17, 2010, at 12:48 PM, Christine Selman wrote:

Hi Dr. Hoy,

My name is Christine Selman and I’m a doctoral candidate in Curriculum, Instruction, and Special Education at The University of Southern Mississippi. My dissertation research will investigate teachers’ sense of efficacy relating to the use of narrative and informational texts in the classroom. In searching for an instrument to use, I found your Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale on your website. I would like to request permission to use your scale with some modifications. Specifically, I would like to add words to the statements so that they focus on teacher’s efficacy beliefs when teaching informational and narrative text. The following is an example of how I would like to alter the instrument making two statements out of each statement on your instrument:

Original Statement: How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students?

Alteration A. How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students when teaching narrative text?

Alteration B. How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students when teaching informational text?

May I have your permission to alter your instrument and use it in my dissertation study? Also, if I decide to collect data via a website such as Survey Monkey, may I have your permission for that as well? I would be glad to share any results I find with you.

Thank you,

Christine Selman

Christine Selman, M.S.
Graduate Assistant
The University of Southern Mississippi
Curriculum, Instruction, and Special Education
116 College Drive, #5007
Hattiesburg, MS 35406-0001
Phone 601.266.5247
Fax 601.266.4148
christine.selman@usm.edu
APPENDIX C

CRITERIA SHEET FOR REVIEWERS

Dear Expert Panel,
Thank you for volunteering your time to assist me in the development of this instrument. Your input is very important as it will assist me in validating two sections of the instrument for my dissertation.

Please complete the following information about yourself so that I can describe the characteristics of panel members.

Current occupation: __________________________

Years of teaching experience at the K-6 level: __________

Years of teaching experience at the college/university level: __________

Highest degree earned: Bachelors  Masters  Specialist  Doctoral

Are you currently a student? Yes  No
   If yes, what degree are you pursuing? __________________________
   Emphasis area? __________________________

Are you currently an elementary teacher (K-6)? Yes  No

Have you ever taught elementary students (K-6) at an accredited school? Yes  No

What grade(s) have you taught? __________________________

Please use the following definitions to aid in understanding the questions on the instrument.

Narrative text – text that tells a story; generally follows a story grammar structure (character(s), setting, plot, problem and resolution)
Informational text- text where the primary purpose is to inform reader about the natural or social world (i.e. texts pertaining to science and social studies)

Thank you for your time.
Validity Questionnaire

Please rate the attached instrument based on the following information:

1. Does the survey contain language that can be understood by primary teachers?
   ___________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________

2. Does this survey address specific and appropriate issues in the statements, as it relates to obtaining information regarding teacher use of text types?
   ___________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________

3. Are there any questions that you would exclude from the survey?
   ___________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________

4. Are there any other statements that you would include that are not a part of the instrument?
   ___________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________

5. Please make any other comments or suggestions about the survey below:
   ___________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________
APPENDIX D

APPROVAL FROM INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

Institutional Review Board
118 College Drive #5147
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001
Tel: 601.266.6820
Fax: 601.266.5509
www.usm.edu/irb

HUMAN SUBJECTS PROTECTION REVIEW COMMITTEE
NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Human Subjects Protection Review Committee in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the “Adverse Effect Report Form”.
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months. Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 10083002
PROJECT TITLE: Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy in Teaching Narrative and Informational Text
PROPOSED PROJECT DATES: 08/21/2010 to 08/20/2011
PROJECT TYPE: Dissertation or Thesis
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS: Christine Salmon
COLLEGE/DIVISION: College of Education & Psychology
DEPARTMENT: Curriculum, Instruction, & Special Education
FUNDING AGENCY: N/A
HSPRC COMMITTEE ACTION: Exempt Approval
PERIOD OF APPROVAL: 09/09/2010 to 09/08/2011

Lawrence A. Hosmen, Ph.D.
HSPRC Chair

Date
APPENDIX E

PERMISSION LETTERS FROM PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

July 9, 2010

Dear Christine Selman,

Once permission is granted from The University of Southern Mississippi’s Institutional Review Board (IRB), you have my permission to survey teachers in [redacted] School District to collect data for your research study concerning teacher efficacy with narrative and informational text.

I understand that teacher participation is voluntary, and individual responses will be kept confidential. In addition, any changes in research protocol must be approved by The University of Southern Mississippi’s IRB.

[Redacted]
Curriculum Director
August 17, 2010

Dear Christine Selman,

Once permission is granted from The University of Southern Mississippi’s Institutional Review Board (IRB), you have my permission to survey teachers in [Redacted] School District to collect data for your research study concerning teacher efficacy with narrative and informational text.

I understand that teacher participation is voluntary, and individual responses will be kept confidential. In addition, any changes in research protocol must be approved by The University of Southern Mississippi’s IRB.

Sincerely,

[Redacted]

Superintendent of Education
August 10, 2010

Christine Selman
The University of Southern Mississippi
118 College Drive #5057
Hattiesburg, MS 35406-0001

Dear Ms. Selman:

The Board of Education met in a regular session on Monday, August 9, 2010, and I am pleased to inform you that it was approved for you to conduct a research study to survey the teachers in grades K - 3 for use in your dissertation. We understand that this is voluntary and individual responses will be anonymous and confidential.

After your studies are complete, the Board would like for you to make a small presentation with the results of your study at a Board meeting. Please contact Ms. [redacted] for the date and place of the Board meetings.

We look forward to working with you. Should you have any questions, please feel free to call me at [redacted]

Sincerely,

[Redacted]

Superintendent of Education

/ f d l
July 21, 2010

Dear Christine Selman,

Your request to conduct research in the [Redacted] School District is approved. Once permission is granted from The University of Southern Mississippi’s Institutional Review Board (IRB), you have my permission to survey teachers in [Redacted] School District to collect data for your research study concerning teacher efficacy with narrative and informational text.

I understand that teacher participation is voluntary, and individual responses will be kept confidential. In addition, any changes in research protocol must be approved by The University of Southern Mississippi’s IRB.

With Regards,

[Redacted]

Deputy Superintendent
July 21, 2010

Dear Christine Salzman,

Once permission is granted from The University of Southern Mississippi's Institutional Review Board (IRB), I have permission to survey teachers in the following schools of the [redacted] School District to collect data for your research study concerning teacher efficacy with narrative and informational text:

I understand that teacher participation is voluntary, and individual responses will be kept confidential. In addition, any changes in research protocol must be approved by The University of Southern Mississippi's IRB.

[Redacted]

Assistant Superintendent
[Redacted] School District
APPENDIX F

PERMISSION LETTER FROM PROFESSOR

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

Department of Curriculum, Instruction, and Special Education

118 College Drive #5057
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001
Undergraduate Program: 601.266.5747
Graduate Program: 601.266.6987
www.usm.edu/cise

August 24, 2010

Dear Christine Selman,

Once permission is granted from The University of Southern Mississippi’s Institutional Review Board (IRB), you have my permission to request participation from the students in my graduate course CIE 768 for your pilot study concerning teacher efficacy with narrative and informational text.

I understand that teacher participation is voluntary, and individual responses will be kept confidential. Students will know that if they choose not to participate, they will not be penalized for their decision. In addition, any changes in research protocol must be approved by The University of Southern Mississippi’s IRB.

Ellen Ramp
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REFERENCES


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