ABSTRACT

"NOTHING IS GREATER TO A CHILD, I THINK, THAN A TEACHER AND THE
PARENT COMING TOGETHER FOR THEIR SAKE": A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF
ONE MOTHER'S BELIEFS ABOUT READING

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This study examined one mother's beliefs about reading, including the roles she assumed in the reading development of her three school-aged children, all of whom had diagnosed learning disabilities. The study focused on Lyn, a lower-middle-class, suburban, Caucasian woman. Data collected from Lyn's children and five of Lyn's children's teachers broadened the perspective of Lyn's reading beliefs.

My role as portraitist in the study allowed me to develop intimate relationships with each of the study actors as I searched for meaning in data I collected over a period of 11 months from Lyn, each of Lyn's children, and five of Lyn's children's teachers. Data collection methods included in-depth interviews and ethnographic observations in multiple ecological environments. Collected artifacts, field notes, and conceptual memos further clarified the meaning of interview and observation data.

Analysis of data revealed that Lyn's beliefs were shaped by her early reading experiences in school. The reading beliefs Lyn developed as a child persisted into her adulthood and exerted substantial influence on the roles she assumed in her children's reading development. The completed portrait reveals tensions within and among the portrait actors' reading beliefs and reading behaviors.

Findings from the study demonstrate that a parent's beliefs may be the key that unlocks the door to a more comprehensive understanding of how her children develop as readers in multiple ecological environments.

NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
DEKALB, ILLINOIS

MAY 2014

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EXAMINATION OF ONE MOTHER'S BELIEFS ABOUT READING

BY

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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF LITERACY EDUCATION

Doctoral Director:
    Laurie Elish-Piper

UMI Number: 3624855

UMI

Dissertation Publishing

UMI 3624855

ProQuest®

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

Lyn, your story has been told

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PREFACE

"We can never 'speak from nowhere,' given that we can speak (or more broadly, act) only by invoking mediational means that are available in the 'cultural tool kit' provided by the sociocultural setting in which we operate" (Wertsch, del Rio, & Alvarez, 1995, p. 287).

Situating My Relationship With Lyn

The language of *portraiture* (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) employs familiar terms in unfamiliar ways that may be confusing to readers who are unfamiliar with portraiture. Throughout my paper, I define and explain potentially confusing terms.

Lyn Davis, the primary actor in my study, is a Caucasian mother whose three children attend a high-performing elementary school in a largely middle- to upper-middle-class Midwestern suburb. I met Lyn in 2006 on the day before the first day of a new school year. Michael, Lyn's oldest son, had been assigned to my third grade classroom at Pleasant View Elementary School. Michael had an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) that chronicled a history of behavioral challenges that impacted his academic progress. During our initial meeting, Lyn was quick to inform me that daily communication between her and me would be central to Michael's success in third grade. Lyn intuitively understood what a breadth of studies have demonstrated: that strong communication between parents and teachers promotes reading development (Snow, Barnes, Chandler, Goodman, & Hemphill, 1991). During our first meeting, I listened with interest as Lyn lavished compliments on Michael's previous teachers and attributed Michael's progress to the efforts of numerous school staff members

including teachers, the building administrator, and the clerical staff.

Lyn and I maintained frequent communication throughout Michael's third grade year through a written daily journal, phone calls, and face-to-face meetings. The challenging behaviors that influenced Michael's academic progress in his early years of schooling lessened, and Michael completed his year in my classroom having demonstrated progress in all academic areas, including reading. After Michael's third grade year, Lyn contacted me occasionally with questions related to information she received during meetings with teachers and other faculty members at Pleasant View Elementary School.

Four years after our initial meeting, Lyn contacted me by phone after attending a meeting about her middle child, William, at Pleasant View Elementary School. Lyn was confused and upset by information she had received at the meeting. I was intrigued with Lyn's portrayal of herself as an outsider in the meeting. She told me, "My mom had a dog that was deaf. She always talked to the dog and I would say, 'Mom, why are you talking to that dog?' Now I'm that dog in those meetings" (PFL0510). I wondered if Lyn's compelling comment signaled a shift in her belief about her capacity to exert influence on her children's school progress. My decision to focus my study on Lyn's reading beliefs was inspired by the work of Purcell-Gates (1995) and Rogers (2003), whose ethnographic studies demonstrated that links exist between parents' relationships with reading and children's reading development.

<center>Protecting the Portrait Actors</center>

I used pseudonyms for the portrait actors, the settings in which I conducted my study,

and other individuals to whom I referred in my study. Lyn, the primary actor in my study, selected her pseudonym as well as pseudonyms for each of her children. I assigned pseudonyms for the teacher actors as well as for other people to whom I refer in my study. Pseudonyms are also used in the portrait actors' quotations. My use of pseudonyms protected, to the greatest possible extent, the privacy of the individuals who so graciously shared intimate aspects of their lives with me during my study.

<div align="center">Situating My Role as Portraitist in the Historical Contexts
of My Personal and Professional Lives</div>

In this section, I situate my role as portraitist of my study (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997a) in a "personal context" (Davis, 1997a, p. 32) of my unique beliefs, perspectives, and experiences. My enduring interest in children and adults with special needs is grounded in my personal experiences. I was diagnosed with epilepsy as a young child. To date, my parents, one living and one deceased, have never spoken about my disability. I was left behind in school. My teachers' expectations of my academic achievement were influenced by the medical paperwork my parents submitted in order for the school nurse at my elementary school to administer my daily medication. My sixth grade math teacher issued me a permanent library pass because I was too far behind to attend his class. My experiences as a young child with disabilities influenced my decision to focus my study on Lyn, a mother whose children's reading development was complicated by their identified disabilities.

I was a young adult when I finally gained the courage to ask our family physician to explain the reason that I had been medicated through my middle school years. It wasn't until I became an educator that I began to reveal my shameful secret to parents and colleagues. I

wanted parents of children with special needs to understand how important it was to provide their children with information that would empower them to overcome challenges associated with their disabilities. Further, I wanted to show parents that children with special needs can learn to read with appropriate supports in place at school and at home.

My interest in the relationships among parents, beliefs, and reading development was initiated more than 20 years ago, when I was employed as a teaching assistant in a private child care center. At the urging of the lead teacher and the center's director, I enrolled in a local community college and completed an associate's degree in early childhood education. My degree qualified me to accept a lead teacher position in the kindergarten class at the child care center.

During my first year teaching the kindergarten class, I met Donny, a three-year-old who was diagnosed with autism. Donny demonstrated behaviors that presented significant challenges to the young teachers in whose care Donny was entrusted. Donny often arrived at my classroom seeking comfort from his older sister, a student in my class. Over time, Donny assumed a permanent presence in my class and his challenging behavior decreased. Donny was also a student in the local public school district's early childhood program for children who have been diagnosed with special needs. On school days, he arrived at the child care center in the afternoon after attending the public early childhood program. Periodically, Donny's early childhood special education teacher, Ms. Horlain, and other district specialists, including the occupational therapist and speech and language teacher, visited Donny at the child care center. Ms. Horlain and her colleagues provided me with supportive materials and information that were designed to promote Donny's functioning and learning.

Late in the summer of 1994, just before I was scheduled to begin a new position at a local child care center, Ms. Horlain invited me to apply for a position as her teaching assistant at Pleasant View Elementary School. In August 1994, I began my career with the Anderson School District working as a paraprofessional at Pleasant View Elementary School in the early childhood program for young children with special needs.

During my work with Ms. Horlain, I assumed a role on a multidisciplinary team of professionals at Pleasant View Elementary School. Members of the team integrated their various disciplines to provide interventions designed to promote their young students' social, emotional, and cognitive development. Moreover, our team developed systems to support our students' families, including regular visits to our students' homes. The home visits allowed us to observe our students in their home environments and also to engage parents in *essential conversations* (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003). Lawrence-Lightfoot (2003) characterized essential conversations simply as "dialogue between parents and teachers" (p. xxiii). The beliefs and perspectives that the parents shared with Ms. Horlain and me during home visits began to shape my perspective of how parents influence children's development.

Ms. Horlain encouraged me to pursue further education that would qualify me to teach a class of my own. I enrolled in an undergraduate program at a local university where I completed a course of studies in early childhood education.

Upon graduation, I secured a position teaching first grade at an elementary school in the Anderson School District. The essential conversations (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003), both formal and informal, in which I engaged with parents provided me with glimpses into parents' beliefs about their own schooling as well as insights into the beliefs they held about their

children's development and school achievement. Lawrence-Lightfoot (2003) suggested that essential conversations among parents and teachers bridge the social spheres of school and families' ecological environments. Moreover, Lawrence-Lightfoot argued that children's school success is dependent upon the establishment of boundaries and connections among children's spheres of socialization inside and outside of school.

During my early years of teaching in the public school system, I began to view parents as wellsprings that enfold children's funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 2005). I employ the term *wellspring* as a simple, albeit profound metaphorical means of situating parents at the center of children's reading development. A wellspring is "an original and bountiful source of something" (Wellspring, n.d.). Moreover, my view of parents as wellsprings illuminates my belief that parents are children's first and most enduring teachers and counters a belief held by many educators that some parents are mere accessories and even barriers (Barnyak & McNelly, 2009) to children's reading development. *Funds of knowledge* is a broad term that references the "historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being" (Moll et al., 2005, p. 72).

The relationships I developed inside and outside of school with my young students and their families during the early years of my teaching career in public education were strengthened by visits I made to my students' homes each year during the first weeks of school. Home visits have served as pathways for strengthening relationships between parents and teachers in Head Start programs since the program's inception (Harden, Chazan-Cohen, Raikes, & Vogel, 2012). Evaluating children's experiences within a broad range of settings

and activities is central to understanding the influence of children's experiences on their social, emotional, and intellectual development (Bandura, 1979). Moll et al. (2005) argued that educators who understand children's home-based contexts will better understand the child as a whole child, rather than simply a student.

During visits to my students' homes, I gained valuable insight about my students' relationships with literacy as the children showed me their personal collections of books and other artifacts that represented their developing relationship with reading. Parents often shared stories of their own reading development. During the past 18 years, I have employed home visits as a means of building bridges between my students' home and school reading environments.

Mrs. Ortiz, a bilingual parent of a student in my first grade classroom, became more involved in her daughter's reading at school after I visited her family's home. Prior to my visit to her home, Mrs. Ortiz had not been a volunteer in her children's classrooms. However, during our home visit, she accepted my invitation to be a regular guest reader in my classroom. My students enjoyed Mrs. Ortiz's weekly visits during which she translated into Spanish the texts that I read aloud in English.

Parents of my students frequently expressed deep gratitude for my willingness to meet with them in their homes. Unrestricted from the obligation to present parents with rapid-fire information about their children's academic progress in traditional, 20-minute school-based conferences, I was able to listen critically and reflect upon the unique beliefs and experiences parents and children shared with me in the safe harbors of their homes. Some parents expressed doubts about their ability to promote the academic skills that they had struggled

with as young students. I heard fathers and mothers compare and contrast their own school experiences with the often vastly different experiences of their children. Many parents expressed surprise at the increased academic expectations schools set for young children and the pace at which children are asked to develop academic skills, especially in reading and writing.

Home visits afforded me valuable opportunities to observe interactions among my students and their family members that helped me better understand the foundations of my students' early learning development. While some homes reflected a play-based, child-centered approach to parenting, others revealed more rigid and authoritative parenting styles. The portraits I carry with me from home visits provide me with valuable insights into the literate lives of my young students and their parents.

Early in my career teaching elementary school, I realized that I was unprepared to provide appropriate reading instruction for every child in my classroom. While the majority of my first graders demonstrated steady growth in their reading development, my students with special needs continued to lag behind. I was ill-prepared to provide appropriate instruction for each of my students. I was frustrated with my overreliance on the support of my special education colleagues and with my inability to meet the needs of every child in my class. My strong desire to provide excellent reading instruction for every student compelled me to enroll in a graduate program at a local university.

Toward the end of my graduate program I met with my advisor to discuss the process I would need to initiate to conduct an independent study focused on early reading development and family-centered teaching. My advisor referred me to another professor at the same

university who is a well-respected authority on *family literacy* (Elish-Piper, 1997; Morrow, 1995; Rogers, 2003; Taylor, 1983).

Inspired and motivated by my conversations with the professors, I purchased a book on emergent literacy. Little did I know that the summary of *Beginning to Read: Thinking and Learning about Print* (Adams, 2001) was the first in what would eventually become an extensive bibliography that I would use to examine the relationships between parents' beliefs and reading development.

During my master's program, I conducted a case study of 8 first graders who had been identified by their teachers as having delays in reading development. Three volunteers and I met with the first graders and their families during 10 two-hour Saturday morning sessions, beginning in January. While I met with the parents each week and taught them how to promote their children's listening comprehension, volunteers taught the first graders strategies to promote their listening comprehension. Comments the parents made during conversations with me served as a springboard for my current examination of parents' beliefs. At the final session of the first Literacy in Families Empowers (LIFE) (Sokolinski, 2008) program, parents implored me to continue the program so other families could learn how to better support their young children's literacy development.

Inspired by the positive response of the program participants, I continued the program with a new group of families the following year. I began the second program with the help of my husband and one volunteer. LIFE continued for six more years with the help of 22 volunteers, many of them former LIFE participants who told me that they wanted to pay forward the benefits they had derived from the program. During its seven-year term, LIFE

supported 49 families. All parents who attended LIFE demonstrated a strong desire to promote their children's reading development. The responses of parents and children who participated in LIFE provided me with the initial momentum to examine the relationship between parental beliefs and reading development.

During the course of the LIFE program, some parents demonstrated transformations in their beliefs, as well as transformations in their reading behaviors. Davis (1997a) defined *transformation* as an "expanded vision" (p. 36) that resonates past the particular to the universal. Moreover, Davis suggested that transformation creates new reference points and new representations.

The most salient transformation I observed during the LIFE program was reflected in Dan, a parent who attended LIFE. Dan and his wife were concerned that their son, Owen, was not making adequate reading progress; therefore, they accepted my invitation to attend LIFE. The first time I suggested that Dan's son may benefit from having some choice in the books he read at home, Dan folded his arms across his chest and leaned back in his chair. He said,

> When a kid's teacher tells him to read eight pages in a book, that's it, he reads those pages! Someday, my kids will have to learn how to take directions from their bosses. They won't have a choice. They better learn that now! (POD0106)

During the final session of the LIFE program that year, I was touched by Dan's admission that he had been "dead wrong about that choice thing" (POD0106). I listened as Dan informed the other parents in the group that the previous week, for the first time, his young son had crawled into his parents' bed and asked his father to read one of the books he had received at LIFE. During the seven years I directed LIFE, many other families shared

similar stories with me about their transformative experiences in the program. I learned that families who attended LIFE wanted to foster their young children's reading development; however, they did not always understand how to support school-based literacy instruction in their homes. I knew that Dan's frustration must be shared by many other parents who did not have opportunities to discuss their beliefs with their children's teachers. The stories of the families with whom I worked in LIFE and in my elementary classrooms compelled me to examine beliefs as the key that may unlock the door to better understanding how parents influence children's reading development.

Situating the Selection of the Actors in My Study

The relationships I had established with all but one of the actors, Mrs. Hart, prior to my study served as a starting point to understanding the meaning of the actors' beliefs and behaviors. Multiple factors influenced my selection of Lyn as the primary actor in my study. First, my enduring interest in how children with special needs develop as readers was the driving force behind my decision to focus my study on Lyn and her children. Each of Lyn's three children was diagnosed with learning disabilities that affected their reading development. Moreover, I believed that Lyn's childhood experiences in special education would add richness to the completed portrait. Finally, portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997), the methodology I used to examine Lyn's beliefs, is "an agent of discovery" (Davis, 1997a, p. 36). I believed that the conversations Lyn and I would have during in-depth interviews would afford her opportunities to examine the meaning in her past and current relationships with reading and discover her capacity to act as an agent of change in her

children's reading development.

Lyn's children worked with multiple teachers. I invited five teachers to participate in my study. The invitations are shown in Appendix A. I invited each of the children's classroom teachers to participate in the study. Michael and William received the majority of their reading instruction in their classrooms from their classroom teachers. Mae received reading instruction from her classroom teachers as well as from Mrs. Purcell, a special education teacher at Pleasant View Elementary School, and Mrs. Taylor, the reading specialist at the school. Mrs. Collins, Mrs. Purcell, and Mrs. Taylor worked with more than one of Lyn's children and had long-term relationships with Lyn.

Citing the Actors' Quotations

I developed a three-part structure for citing quotations that I collected in field notes, in conceptual memos, and during interviews with the portrait actors (see Appendix B). In my teaching practice, I maintain anecdotal notes as a means of documenting conversations I have with some, but not all, parents. Quotations made by Lyn prior to the official start of my study are indicated by a "P" at the beginning of the citation.

Conclusion

My study is organized into a preface and six chapters. In Chapter 1, I introduce my study with background and rationale. In Chapter 2, I situate my study in a theoretical framework and present a discussion of the literature I reviewed. In Chapter 3, I introduce the portrait actors. I describe the methodology I employed in my study in Chapter 4. I discuss

the findings of my study in Chapter 5. Moreover, in Chapter 5, I describe and discuss three additional themes that emerged during the data analysis phase. In Chapter 6, I explain the limitations of my study and make suggestions for future research of how parents' beliefs influence children's reading development.

My study is situated in the contexts of my experiences working with families whose children struggled to read. A fundamental aim of my study was to draw attention to parents' beliefs as a possible key to unlocking the door to reading that often remains closed to children who struggle with reading and whose home literacy environments (HLEs) (Weigel, Martin, & Bennett, 2005) are not aligned with school reading environments. In the next chapter, I situate my portrait in a frame that describes the foundation of my study. First, I explain how I employ belief in my study. Next, I clarify the perspective from which I approached my study. In the third section of the next chapter, I describe the problem that compelled me to examine Lyn's beliefs. I explicate the purpose of my study in the fourth section. In the fifth section of the next chapter, I present the research questions that guided my study. I explain the significance of my study in the sixth section. In the seventh section of Chapter 1, I reveal four assumptions with which I approached my study. I explain the constraints of my research design in the eighth section. In the ninth section of Chapter 1, I define critical terms I employ in my study. In the final section of the chapter, I explain the history of my relationship with Lyn and her family.

CHAPTER 1

FRAMING THE PORTRAIT

"Parent beliefs are manifested in the environments parents provide, their parenting practices and behaviors they engage in, and the nature of the interactions they have with their children" (Weigel, Martin, & Bennett, 2006, p. 192).

The beliefs parents hold about reading shape families' HLEs and exert substantial influence on children's early and ongoing reading experiences (Aunola, Nurmi, Niemi, Lerkkanen, & Rasku-Puttonen, 2002; Burgess, Hecht, & Lonigan, 2002; Drummond & Stipek, 2004; Weigel et al., 2005, 2006). For the purpose of my study, I define *belief* as the evolving mental process by which people organize their enduring trust of social norms and knowledge. My perspective on beliefs (Falk, 2004; Goodnow, 1988; Sigel & Kim, 1996) evolved during my review of the literature over the course of nearly eight years. Falk (2004) considered belief to be a "central attitude" (p. 23). Goodnow (1988) suggested that belief encompasses conviction. Finally, Sigel and Kim (1996) posited that beliefs are "mental representations that function as a source of influence on behavior because they are conceptualized as the mediational means that encompass all facets of childrearing" (p. 85).

Multiple studies across a breadth of disciplines examine beliefs; however, few explicate a working definition of the term (Day & Coleman, 2010; Stringer, 1996). Moreover, belief is often used interchangeably with other terms used to examine views, attitudes, perceptions, desires, and other mental processes. The lack of distinction in research

studies has been acknowledged as problematic (Falk, 2004; Rokeach, 1972). The working definition of belief that I employed during my study focused my research questions, my research design, and my analysis of the data I collected in my study.

The early reading experiences children share with their parents have a profound influence on reading development and school-based reading achievement (Englund, Luckner, Whaley, & Egeland, 2004; Lam, Cheung, & Lam, 2009; Scarborough, 2002). Parents' beliefs influence the expectations they hold for their children's literacy learning potential (Miller, 1995; Sonnenschein et al., 1997).

Focusing the Lens of My Study

"The portraitist is very interested in the single case because she believes that embedded in it the reader will discover resonant universal themes" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997b, p. 14).

My 11-month in-depth study of Lyn's beliefs about reading was an effort to expand the current understanding of how parents' beliefs influence children's reading development. During my study, I employed a sociocultural perspective (Brause & Mayher, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch et al., 1995) that situated Lyn's beliefs in the social contexts of her past and present experiences with reading. Moreover, I narrowed the lens of my study to examine the nature and origin of Lyn's beliefs. Reading development is better understood when the social nature and origins of reading are examined (Au, 1997). For the purposes of my study, I adopted Goodnow and Collins's (1990) concept of *nature* as "original qualities" (p. 2). I employed my own definition of *origin* as the earliest discernible development of a belief.

Portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) shaped the design of my study and allowed me to examine the salient and subtle nuances of Lyn's complex relationships with reading.

Stating the Problem

"Children are having more and more learning experiences outside of school that are more important for their futures than is much of the learning they do at school" (Gee, 2004, p. 5).

A vast body of research demonstrates that children's HLEs and the roles parents assume in children's literacy development exert substantial influence on children's reading achievement (Heath, 1983; Wasik, Dobbins, & Herrmann, 2002; Yaden & Paratore, 2003). However, research of how parents' beliefs influence children's reading development is sparse. Examination of parents' beliefs is critical because parents' beliefs exert substantial influence on the ways parents and children engage in reading practices outside of school (Burgess et al., 2002; Weigel et al., 2006); however, studies that examine the relationships between parents' beliefs and parent's behaviors are lacking (Sonnenschein, Brody, & Munsterman, 1996). Children adopt their parents' beliefs directly and indirectly, through observation and direct teaching (Gadsden, 2000). Unfortunately, research that examines the complex relationships among parents' beliefs, the roles parents play in children's reading development, HLEs, and children's reading development is limited (Galper, Wigfield, & Seefeldt, 1997; Miller, 1995; Sy & Schulenberg, 2005). Moreover, studies that examine the nature and origins of parents' beliefs about reading are lacking.

It seems obvious that parents' beliefs would be the logical starting point in

examinations of children's reading development because the extent to which home and school literacy environments align influences reading development (Barbarin, Downer, Odom, & Head, 2010). The extent to which home and school literacy practices coincide are predictive of reading achievement in school (Pellegrini, 2002). Discontinuity among the ways children engage in reading practices in their homes and in their schools often creates tensions between parents and educators (Pennac, 1999; Purcell-Gates, 1995; Taylor, 1991). Tensions between children's home and school environments are characterized in literature as a *mismatch* (Barbarin et al., 2010). Mismatches between children's home and school environments are frequently marked by mistrust and misunderstandings among parents and educators (Galper et al., 1997). Children's reading development may be jeopardized when partnerships among parents and educators are not well established (Baker, Scher, & Mackler, 1997). Rogers (2003) argued that mismatches between homes and schools can endanger the well-being of the entire family. Moreover, mismatches among children's home and school environments can result in children and families being inaccurately labeled as at-risk for failure in their schools and communities (Gee, 2004; Kendrick, Rogers, Smythe, & Anderson, 2005). Snow et al. (1991) argued that mismatches between homes and schools are the major source of school failure.

Critical examination of parents' beliefs serves as a key starting point to understanding how educators can best promote children's reading development. The beliefs parents hold about reading development influence the ways parents and children engage in reading practices in a vast array of ecological environments (DeBaryshe, 1992, 1995; Stephenson, Parrila, Georgious, & Kirby, 2008). Moreover, children's experiences reading with their

parents have a profound effect on reading achievement (Bus, van IJzendoorn, & Pellegrini, 1995; Mason, Peterman, Powell, & Kerr, 1989). Evans, Fox, Cremaso, and McKinnon (2004) argued that current growth in home schooling and charter schools and new approaches to reading instruction provide an expanded rationale for increased examinations of parents' beliefs about reading. Educators may be better able to promote children's reading achievement if they understand the funds of knowledge (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005a) children bring with them to school and the nature and origin of children's reading experiences with their parents outside of school.

Setting the Purpose

"Parental belief systems may be the key to understanding individual differences in parents' home reading behavior" (DeBaryshe, 1992, p. 6).

The fundamental purpose of my study was to examine Lyn's beliefs as a means of understanding how she influenced her children's reading development. Lyn was a mother with unique beliefs and a distinctive voice. It is not my intent to generalize the findings of my study to other parents; rather, my study expands the current understanding of how parents influence children's reading development.

An extensive body of literature demonstrates that parents, especially mothers, exert influence on children's overall cognitive development (Korat, 2009), social-emotional development (Aram & Aviram, 2009), school achievement (Englund et al., 2004), and reading development (Rathbun, West, & Walston, 2005, April). Moreover, a breadth of research demonstrates that strong links exist between parents' involvement in children's schooling and

reading achievement (Zellman & Waterman, 1998). *Parent involvement* has been both broadly and narrowly defined. Reynolds (1992) viewed parent involvement as "any interaction between a parent and a child that may contribute to the child's development or to direct parent participation with a child's school in the interest of the child (e.g., participating in school activities)" (p. 442). Conversely, examinations of parent involvement are often focused on measurable, school-related behaviors, including parents' attendance at school meetings, school conferences, and other school-based events (Nord, 1998). In my study, I aimed to expand the current view of parent involvement by examining how parents' beliefs influence the ways parents engage in children's reading development in diverse ecological environments.

<div align="center">Guiding Questions</div>

"What really interests me, puzzles me, arouses my curiosity?" (Webb & Glesne, 1992, p. 791).

One overarching question guided my examination of Lyn's beliefs about reading: How do Lyn's beliefs influence her children's reading development in multiple ecological environments? Identifying and examining Lyn's beliefs about reading was the central focus of my study. Nine secondary questions sharpened the focus of my research lens.

1. What are Lyn's beliefs about
   a. reading,
   b. reading development,
   c. her own relationship with reading,

    d. her children's relationships with reading, and

    e. her children's teachers?

2. What are Lyn's roles in her children's reading development?

3. What are the nature and origin of Lyn's beliefs about reading and reading development?

4. What is the nature of the relationship between Lyn's beliefs and the roles she assumes in her children's reading development?

5. What are Lyn's children's beliefs about

    a. reading and

    b. themselves as readers?

6. What are the natures and origins of Lyn's children's reading beliefs?

7. What are the relationships among Lyn's beliefs and her children's beliefs about reading?

8. What are Lyn's children's teachers' beliefs about

    a. reading, reading development, and reading achievement; and

    b. the roles Lyn assumes in her children's reading development?

9. What are the natures and origins of Lyn's childrens' teachers' reading beliefs?

10. What are the relationships among

    a. Lyn's beliefs and her children's teachers' beliefs, and

    b. Lyn's beliefs, Lyn's children's beliefs, and Lyn's children's teachers' beliefs?

Significance of My Study

"The realm of parental beliefs encompasses a multitude of social suggestions communicated by the collective culture at particular points in time" (Lightfoot & Valsiner, 1992, p. 396).

The primary significance of my study lies in its potential to bring new insight to the complex and little understood ways in which parents' beliefs influence children's reading development. Parents' beliefs have been identified as an important facet of children's HLEs (DeBaryshe, 1995) and an influential component of early reading development (Curenton & Justice, 2008). Sigel, McGillicuddy-DeLisi, & Goodnow (1985) argued that parents' beliefs exert strong influence on children's beliefs. However, little is understood about the nature and origin of the beliefs parents hold about children's reading development. Moreover, research that examines how parents' beliefs influence children's reading development is sparse. The ethnographic approach I employed in my study allowed me to probe beneath the surface of Lyn's beliefs into the nature and origin of her beliefs. The portrait that emerges from my study may expand upon the current understanding of how parents' beliefs exert influence on children's reading development.

Revealing Assumptions of My Study

"Teachers' pedagogical knowledge is *situated* -- informed by setting, experience, and theoretical framework" (Klehr, 2012, p. 124).

My study was grounded in four fundamental assumptions:

1. People hold distinctive beliefs about reading.

2. People's beliefs are grounded in sociocultural experiences.

3. People's beliefs may or may not be reflected in their practices.

4. Parents' beliefs influence children's reading development.

Revealing Delimitations of My Study

"As one moves closer to the unique characteristics of a person or a place, one discovers the universal" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997b, p. 14).

Decisions I made early during the design phases delimited my study in three ways. First, I focused my study on one parent. Lyn was married and lived with her husband, Albert; however, I did not invite Albert to participate in my study. Second, I did not invite every teacher from whom Michael, William, and Mae received reading instruction to participate in my study. Third, Lyn and her children may have engaged in reading practices in a wide variety of ecological environments; however, my plan to collect data was limited to Lyn's home, the local public library, and Lyn's children's schools.

Defining the Terms

"For a meeting of the minds, it is imperative that the reader and the researcher have the same orientations to the problem, the same concepts, the same ideas" (Leedy & Ormond, 2005, p. 284).

The following terms are central to this study. These are terms I defined for the unique purpose of my study; therefore, citations are not provided.

1. *Belief* is the evolving mental process by which people organize their enduring trust of social norms and knowledge.

2. *Involvement* is a bounded term that refers to institutionally determined behavioral norms.

3. *Perspective* refers to an individual's socially situated interpretation of experience.

4. *Reading development* refers to changes in the ways adults and children read in multiple ecological environments.

Distinguishing Critical Terms in My Study

Interchangeable use of terms that label and describe mental processes and mental states is common in research literature. In my study, I distinguish *belief* from other mental processes and mental states. In Chapter 2, I discuss the ongoing debate among researchers and scholars over how mental processes and mental states are defined, categorized, and employed in research and the methodological problems associated with interchangeably using belief, perspective, and other terms associated with mental processes and mental states.

Researchers and scholars distinguish *development* and *achievement*. D'Andrade (1992) viewed achievement as "a culturally constructed object which exists only because some group of humans have developed the notion of 'achievement' and agree that certain things will count as an achievement" (p. 35). Bronfenbrenner (1979) posited an individualistic perspective of development: "Development is defined as a person's evolving conception of the ecological environment, and his relation to it, as well as the person's growing capacity to discover, sustain, or alter its properties" (p. 9).

The focus of my study was on the portrait actors' beliefs about reading in general. Data I collected in my study did not warrant distinguishing reading *development* and reading *achievement*; therefore, I employ the term *reading development* to encompass changes in the ways adults and children read in multiple ecological environments.

Framing the Portrait

"Portraitists try to feel as the subject feels" (Davis, 1997a, p. 25).

My professional association with Lyn was initiated late in the summer of 2006 when her oldest son, Michael, was assigned to my third grade classroom. Two years after Michael completed third grade, early in the summer of 2008, I resumed my relationship with Lyn when I interviewed her for a graduate project.

During the interview for my graduate project, Lyn told me that she had concerns about her younger son's reading development based on reports she had received from William's kindergarten teacher. I offered to tutor William to promote his reading development. Lyn accepted my offer. I tutored William three times a week, throughout the summer of 2008, at Lyn's home. From the summer of 2008 through the course of my study, at various times I provided William and Lyn's youngest child, Mae, with supplementary reading instruction at school, at the local public library, and at Lyn's home. I provided all of the tutoring free of cost.

My primary purpose in tutoring William during the summer before he entered first grade was to promote his interest in reading as well as to promote his reading stamina. *Reading stamina* is the ability to engage in reading for a period of time determined by a teacher. William frequently moved on and off of his chair during our first tutoring session. Moreover, he was often unable to respond to my directions without multiple restatements of the directions. During each tutoring session, I read out loud to William and listened to William read out loud to me from guided reading books (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996) that I

borrowed from the Pleasant View Elementary School. Also, during tutoring sessions with William, I taught and reviewed basic kindergarten sight words. A *sight word* is "a word that is immediately recognized as a whole and does not require word analysis for identification" (Harris & Hodges, 1995, p. 233). By the end of the summer, William read 100 of the studied sight words accurately in isolation; however, his ability to read the sight words in context remained inconsistent.

William's reading achievement continued to lag behind his age-level peers in first grade. I met with Mrs. Taylor, the reading specialist at Pleasant View, and Mrs. Gates, William's first grade teacher, early in the 2008-2009 school year to discuss a plan to promote William's reading development. I was invited to attend the meeting because of the work I had done with William during tutoring sessions the previous summer. With Lyn's written permission, I provided Mrs. Gates and Mrs. Taylor with information about William's current reading skills. I participated in several informal meetings with Mrs. Taylor and Mrs. Gates during William's first grade year. Both Mrs. Taylor and Mrs. Gates expressed repeated concerns about William's reading development as well as concerns about William's ability to sustain attention on instruction.

During the final quarter of William's first grade year, his pediatrician prescribed medication after diagnosing William with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). After William began taking medication for ADHD, Mrs. Gates reported improvements in William's ability to sustain attention on instruction at school. William continued to demonstrate delays in reading development during second and third grade in spite of daily reading interventions he received each year from Mrs. Taylor and special education teachers

at Pleasant View Elementary School. At the end of his fourth grade year, results of testing conducted by special education teachers at Pleasant View Elementary School demonstrated that William had a learning disability in reading comprehension. He started to receive special education services to promote his reading comprehension at the end of fourth grade.

In the fall of 2009, Lyn's youngest child, Mae, entered kindergarten, William started second grade, and Michael entered middle school. Mrs. Taylor, the reading specialist at Pleasant View Elementary School, approached me during the first month of school and expressed concern about Mae's early literacy development. According to outcome measures on the Illinois Snapshot of Early Literacy (ISEL) (Barr, Blachowicz, Buhl, Chaney, & Ivy, 2002), Mae demonstrated delays in literacy development that qualified her for placement in the district's Early Literacy Support Program (ELSP). Children who are recommended for the ELSP are kindergartners in the school district's six elementary school buildings whose performance on the fall ISEL place them in the lowest 25th percentile. Each year, approximately a dozen children who live in the school district attend ELSP to receive supplementary literacy instruction. The program is held in one of the district's elementary school buildings. Children in the ELSP attend regular kindergarten classes and eat lunch at their home schools; they are then transported by school bus to the ELSP in the afternoon..

Mrs. Rogers, the principal of Pleasant View Elementary School, made phone calls to parents to notify them that their children qualified for ELSP. After Lyn received a phone call from Mrs. Rogers recommending that Mae attend ELSP, Lyn contacted me with her concerns and confusion. "Are you kidding? She's never been to school. How is she supposed to know her letters already if she's never been to school?" (PFL0909). Lyn continued, "She said Mae

is behind the other kids. Well, I think most of those kids went to preschool. Why don't they compare her with other kids like her who didn't go to preschool?" (PFL0909). Lyn declined Mrs. Rogers' invitation to place Mae in ELSP.

During an informal phone conversation early in the school year in 2009, Lyn explained her reasons for declining the invitation to place Mae in ELSP: "If she went to that program, she wouldn't get off the bus in time for me to get her to ballet" (PFL0909). Mae had taken ballet lessons since she was four years old. Lyn and Mae had performed together in several dance recitals. Lyn also expressed concern to me about her two younger children's after-school transportation arrangements:

> William can't walk home alone every day. I have it all set up for them to walk home together. They don't realize home life. If they understand the home life and what's going on, it's easier to pick up on things. You have to be involved to know. (PFL0909)

Mrs. Taylor continued to express her concerns to me about Mae's capacity to progress in her literacy achievement without the additional support of ELSP. Mrs. Taylor was disappointed and confused about Lyn's refusal to provide Mae with additional literacy support. I did not tell Mrs. Taylor about my conversation with Lyn, nor did I tell Mrs. Taylor about Lyn's reasons to decline the invitation to place Mae in ELSP. My decision not to share Lyn's remarks with Mrs. Taylor was based upon previous conversations with Mrs. Taylor during which Mrs. Taylor expressed frustration that Lyn seemed to place higher value on Mae's dance schedule than on Mae's reading achievement.

Following my informal meeting with Mrs. Taylor, I met with Mrs. Lawrence, Mae's kindergarten teacher, and informed her that Lyn was a parent who expected explicit direction

from teachers about how to support her children's school achievement. Mrs. Lawrence appreciated the information. During the year Mae was in kindergarten, she received daily reading interventions from Mrs. Taylor, Mrs. Lawrence, and Mrs. Purcell, one of the building special education teachers.

During the summer of 2010, after William completed second grade and Mae completed kindergarten, I provided William and Mae with reading instruction twice each week at the local public library. When I arrived at Lyn's home to pick up the children for the second tutoring session, Lyn showed me decorated plastic book bags that contained books she had purchased for Mae. Lyn had also placed in the bag a collection of sight words cards that I had constructed for William two years earlier. Before we departed for the library, Lyn instructed me how to use the materials during my work with Mae. I changed my plans to use published intervention materials from school and instead used the materials Lyn gave me. Lyn did not accompany the children and me to the library that day or any other days that summer.

I did not tutor William or Mae during the 2010-2011 school year when William was in third grade and Mae was in first grade; however, toward the end of the school year, Mrs. Purcell invited me to observe one of Mae's reading lessons. During the lesson, Mrs. Purcell gave Mae multiple prompts to maintain focus as she used flash cards to teach Mae letters and letter sounds. Mae did not demonstrate an ability to identify every letter in her name.

I provided William and Mae with weekly reading instruction during tutoring sessions throughout the summer of 2011. Several weeks after Mae entered second grade, late in the summer of 2011, Mrs. Taylor asked if I had worked on letter-sound associations with Mae

during the summer. When I affirmed that each tutoring session with Mae included activities

to promote letter-sound associations, Mrs. Taylor smiled and reported that, according to initial

informal assessments, Mae demonstrated an ability to correctly identify 36 letter-sound

associations. However, Mae's improved ability to associate sounds with letters did not

consistently translate into her ability to decode words in context.

At the conclusion of Mae's second grade year, Mrs. Purcell, Mrs. Taylor, and Mrs.

Collins reported to me that Mae had demonstrated negligible progress in reading

development. Teachers at Pleasant View Elementary School use the Fountas and Pinnell

Benchmark Assessment System (Fountas & Pinnell, 2008) to assess the reading development

of students in first through fifth grades. While the average level at which children read at the

end of second grade is K-L (Fountas & Pinnell, 2008), Mae struggled to read level C texts.

In August of 2011, Lyn gave written consent to participate in my study (see Appendix

C). I obtained written assent from Michael, William, and Mae prior to conducting every

interview (see Appendix D) and observation (see Appendix E). I also obtained written assent

from Lyn's children each time I collected artifacts from them during my study (see Appendix

F).

During the summer of 2012, I continued to provide Mae with reading instruction four

to five times a week. During our first tutoring session at the local public library, Mae

expressed eagerness to sign up for the summer reading program. Children who participate in

the library summer reading program document in a log book the number of minutes they read.

When children read and document that they have read a specified number of minutes, they

receive prizes, including gift certificates to local restaurants. The prizes serve as extrinsic

motivators for children to read during the summer when they are not in school. William declined my suggestion that he participate in the program as well.

The week after I began tutoring Mae during the summer of 2012, Lyn joined Michael, William, Mae, and me at the public library once in order to obtain library cards for Michael and Mae and to renew her library card. William had previously obtained a library card. Neither William nor Lyn accompanied Mae and me to the library after the initial two visits. Mae selected the meeting place for each tutoring session. On the occasions that Mae elected to work at the library, she told me that she did so in order to collect prizes she had earned in the summer reading program.

Conclusion

My study is framed by the relationships I had established with Lyn, her children, and some of Lyn's children's teachers prior to my study. My relationships with each of the portrait actors deepened during my study. Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997e) argued that "portraits are constructed, shaped, and drawn through the development of relationships" (p. 135). Moreover, my study is situated in the contexts of my personal and professional experiences, most particularly in my efforts to promote young children's reading development by teaching their parents how to use strategies when they read with their children at home. In the following chapter, I explain the theories that framed my study. Then, I present a discussion of the literature that examines reading development and the roles parents play in children's reading development.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

"One must look beyond the school itself to understand the local meanings and impact of
schooling" (Gonzalez, 2005, p. 40).

This chapter presents a review of literature that examines the complex relationships

among parents' beliefs and children's reading development. I begin this chapter by situating

my study in historical and current literature that examines reading development. Next, I

identify and discuss the theoretical perspectives that guide my study, explicate the theoretical

framework of this study, and situate my study in a transformative paradigm. In the remaining

sections of this chapter, I unpack a breadth of literature that examines the complex

relationships among children's sociocultural histories, family demographics, parents' beliefs,

and children's reading development.

Situating My Study in Historical and Current Literature

"A person's beliefs and practices are at least in part a function of one's sociocultural
background" (Sonnenschein et al., 1996, p. 37).

Critical examination of parents' beliefs is central to understanding children's reading

development because parents exert lasting and profound influences on children's literacy

learning (Bus, 2002; DeBaryshe, 1992; Watson, 2002). A reciprocal relationship exists

among language, literacy, and communication (Beals & De Temple, 1992, December). The

oral and written literacy practices parents engage in with their young children at home serve as a foundation for children's future literacy learning. Moreover, the quality of conversations in which parents and young children engage during shared readings (Fisher, Frey, & Lapp, 2008) influences reading development, especially in terms of print concepts, vocabulary, and comprehension (Reese, 1995). Findings from Reese's (1995) study show that the conversations parents and children have during shared book reading are more predictive of reading development than the actual act of reading books together.

All children arrive at school with reading experiences. Children's reading achievement is influenced by the extent to which a child's reading experiences at home are similar to a child's reading experiences at school (Kendrick et al., 2005; Watson, 2002). Literacy is widely acknowledged as the key to full membership in a democratic society; however, not all children have the same opportunities to realize their full reading potential (Rogers, 2003). Children often fail to realize their full potential as students, citizens, and human beings when tensions exist among home and school literacies (Freire, 2003; Gonzalez, Moll, and Amanti, 2005a). Moreover, the reading futures of children may be compromised when disparity exists among the beliefs of parents and educators (Taylor, 1991).

<div align="center">Situating My Study in a Feminist Perspective</div>

"Feminist theory, like other contemporary approaches, validates difference, challenges universal claims to truth, and seeks to create social transformation in a world of shifting and uncertain meanings" (Weiler, 1991, p. 450).

The four theories that frame my study are grounded in a feminist perspective

(Gilligan, 1982; Millett, 1971; Ruddick, 1989). Throughout history, women have been marginalized. Moreover, women continue to struggle to be heard and understood (Millett, 1971). Nowhere is this phenomenon more salient than in women's unyielding attempts to gain agency in their children's reading development (Purcell-Gates, 1995; Rogers, 2003). Results of my longitudinal study of struggling first grader readers and their parents (Sokolinski, 2008) demonstrated that parents want to promote their children's literacy achievement, but often they do not understand how to do so. My study is grounded in a view of parents as potential agents of transformation and empowerment in children's literate lives.

Framing the Portrait in Four Theories

"All theories of literacy and all literacy pedagogies are framed in systems of values and beliefs which imply particular views of the social order and use literacy to position people socially" (Auerbach, 1991, p. 71).

Four distinctive theories converge in a theme of empowerment to frame the emerging portrait in my study. Sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978) provides an essential framework for examining Lyn's beliefs about her children's reading development. The theoretical framework of my study is further focused by funds of knowledge theory (Gonzalez et al., 2005a). Bandura's (1997) theory of self-efficacy and Bronfenbrenner's (1979) theory of human ecological development refine the theoretical framework in which my study is grounded. The four theories converge to illuminate my perspective of reading as a transformative social phenomenon.

<u>Sociocultural theory</u>

"Human beings possess the ability to participate in historically formulated courses of
intelligent action, the products of culture" (Gauvain, 2009, p. 163).

Sociocultural theory situates learning in the cultural histories that shape children's literate lives (Au, 1997; Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch et al., 1995). A primary goal of sociocultural research is to examine the relationships among human mental functioning, cultural history, and social memberships (Thorne, 2006). Moreover, sociocultural theory serves as a means of understanding how people assume and carry out diverse roles within social groups and institutions. Children's social experiences, values, and beliefs are shaped by the experiences they have with their parents in diverse social contexts. Sigel and Kim (1996) posited that parents facilitate children's introduction to the social worlds in which they live, work, and play.

The emergent literacy knowledge children bring with them to school is a predictor of achievement in the first three grades (Purcell-Gates, Jacobson, & Degener, 2004). Au (1997) argued that children's reading achievement is situated in their social and cultural experiences. Moreover, Au suggested that children's success or failure with reading achievement cannot be understood outside of their sociocultural histories. The earliest transactions children and their parents have at home form a foundation for future social interactions.

<u>Funds of knowledge theory</u>

"One must look beyond the school itself to understand the local meanings and impact of
schooling" (Gonzalez, 2005, p. 40).

Funds of knowledge theory (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005c) promotes a view of children's homes as "repositories of knowledge" (p. 26). Gonzalez et al. (2005a) argued that children's reading achievement can be promoted when teachers gain first-hand knowledge of how families employ reading in their homes during home visits. Teachers are positioned to build trusting relationships that promote meaningful conversations among all stakeholders in a child's reading development (Gonzalez et al., 2005c). Stakeholders include, but are not limited to, parents, students, extended family members, teachers, educators, and other community members.

A "teacher-as-researcher approach" (Gonzalez et al., 2005c, p. 14) can unite teachers and families in collaborative efforts to promote children's reading development. Moreover, Gonzalez et al. (2005c) suggested that when teachers and families are united, teachers' beliefs about themselves and their relationships with children and families can be transformed.

<u>Theory of self-efficacy</u>

"Beliefs of personal efficacy constitute the key factor of human agency"
(Bandura, 1997, p. 1).

Self-efficacy is a powerful mediator of beliefs, motivation, and performance (Bandura, 1989) and the central mechanism of human agency. Self-efficacy refers to "the striving for control over life circumstances" (Bandura, 1997, p. 1). Bandura and Locke (2003) asserted that a person's perceived self-efficacy is predictive of behavior over time.

Since parents exert substantial influence on children's reading practices (Neumann, Hood, & Neumann, 2009; Wasik et al., 2002), it stands to reason that examination of parents'

self-efficacy is critical to understanding how children become readers. Moreover, Lynch,

Anderson, Anderson, and Shapiro (2006) argued that parents' self-efficacy is central to

understanding the roles parents assume in children's reading development.

A reciprocal relationship exists between reading beliefs and reading behavior

(Bandura, 1997; Rokeach, 1985; Tesser & Shaffer, 1990). Parents' beliefs in their ability to

effect change in children's lives influence the roles they assume in children's reading

development (Lynch et al., 2006). The extent to which parents believe in their capacity to

effect change in children's reading development influences the relationships they have with

their children's teachers (Schaefer, 1991, p. 241). Moreover, the extent to which parents view

themselves as agents of change exerts direct and indirect influence on children's reading

achievement (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 1996; Lynch, 2002).

Theory of human ecological development

"Upon entering a new setting, the person's development is enhanced to the extent that
valid information, advice, and experience relevant to one setting are made available, on a
continuing basis, to the other" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 217).

Human ecological development theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) refines the theoretical

framework of my study. A focus on "development in context" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 12)

situates children's development and learning in multiple settings in which families engage in

literacy practices. Bronfenbrenner's (1986) theory of human ecological development

promoted a research model that allows for examination of developmental changes over time

in multiple environments.

Ecological human development theory explains how the reciprocal transactions among individuals and each of four nested systems influence learning and development. Bronfenbrenner (1979) argued that a child's reading achievement in the primary grades is influenced to a greater extent by the nature of relationships established between the child's home and school than it is influenced by how the child is taught at school. The influence of children's home environments on language and literacy development has been substantiated; however, little is understood about how the nature of children's home literacy practices influences specific aspects of language and literacy development (Roberts & Burchinal, 2002). Human ecological development theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) posits a view of the macrosystem as a system of beliefs and ideologies that support and bring about changes in social systems and cultures. While the macrosystem is particularly relevant to my examination of parents' beliefs, the relationships that exist among all four systems in Bronfenbrenner's (1979) theory are central to understanding how children are transformed by their reading experiences in their homes and schools. Bronfenbrenner (1979) argued that interconnectedness exists within and among the ecological settings in which individuals develop.

Sociocultural theory, funds of knowledge theory, theory of self-efficacy, and theory of human ecological development situate reading in the social contexts in which Lyn and her children live their daily lives. The four theories that comprise the theoretical framework of my study converge to present a view of reading as a vehicle of self-transformation (Freire, 1983).

Situating My Study in a Transformative Paradigm

"Human development is a process of transformation of participation in sociocultural activities" (Rogoff, 2003, p. 271).

The transformative paradigm (Mertens, 2005) is grounded in a feminist perspective that is characterized by efforts to empower the powerless. Mertens (2005) argued that transformative research surpasses mere efforts to challenge social oppression; rather, transformative research promotes shared control of research between the researcher and those being researched. Shared control requires researchers to examine the cultural norms that mediate social practices, including reading (Gonzalez et al., 2005a). Rogoff (2003) posited that culture shapes the structuring of children's participation in reading events.

When children enter school, parents' beliefs about reading development are often challenged by educators who have limited understanding of families' funds of knowledge (Gonzalez et al., 2005a). Schensul and Schensul (1992) argued that cultural change must preserve the cultural identities of groups and individuals. Moreover, family cultures must be understood before they can be acknowledged and preserved.

Influences of Sociocultural Histories on Children's Reading Development

"Individuals and generations shape practices, traditions, and institutions at the same time that they build on what they inherit in their moment in history" (Rogoff, 2003, p. 62).

Reading is inherently social (Au, 1997; Street, 2001). Moreover, the ways children and their parents employ reading inside and outside of school are mediated by cultural norms

(Ochs, 1986). Culture serves as a bonding force (Fagan, 1996) that unites people in shared systems of meaning (Joseph, 2000).

Children begin to construct historical "layers of meaning" (Keene & Zimmermann, 1997, p. 3) during early reading transactions with their parents. Parents imbue their children with funds of knowledge (Gonzalez et al., 2005a) that create an indelible stamp on their potential to access and employ reading throughout their lives. Literacy is a socially constructed phenomenon that varies from culture to culture. The extent to which parents associate themselves with dominant and non-dominant cultural groups over time shapes their beliefs and the ways they employ reading in their lives.

Findings of Purcell-Gates' (1995) ethnographic study of a low-income Appalachian family demonstrated that profound relationships exist between social class and children's access to literacy. Purcell-Gates argued that reading mastery relies on an ability to demonstrate literate behaviors valued by the dominant culture. Moreover, Moll (2005) argued that educators who do not understand the diverse funds of knowledge children bring to school are ill-prepared to promote the reading achievement of students whose cultural backgrounds differ from their own. Purcell-Gates suggested that children from non-mainstream families often require additional support from educators to bridge gaps that often exist among the ways that reading is employed in children's homes and also in school-based reading practices.

Alignment among children's home, school, and community cultures maximizes children's capacity to gain membership into literate society (Heath, 1986; Sonnenschein et al., 1997). Unfortunately, membership in the school "reading club" (Gee, 2004, p. 7) can be unattainable for children whose funds of knowledge (Gonzalez et al., 2005a) and cultural

traditions do not match school literacies. Rogers (2003) employed "cultural/discursive mismatch" (p. 4) to reference the misalignment of school and family literacies that can separate children and families from equal access to the rights and privileges afforded to children from mainstream families.

Studies of how personal histories, individual biographies, and cultural traditions influence reading development have been largely concentrated in three areas: in cross-cultural studies (Moayeri & Smith, 2010; Sorensen, 1994), in studies focused on the literacy learning of immigrant children (Palacios, Guttmannova, & Chase-Lansdale, 2008; Sohn & Wang, 2006), and in studies of nonmainstream families considered to be at risk for reading failure (Heath, 2004; Purcell-Gates, 1995). Kojima (1986) suggested that a child's school success is influenced by the extent to which children's home and school belief-value systems match.

Interpretation of human behaviors and beliefs must be grounded in historical contexts (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983). Examination of children's reading histories is central to reading development because children's knowledge of written language upon school entry is predictive of early and later school achievement (Scarborough & Dobrich, 1994). The meaning of reading behaviors and beliefs parents hold about reading must be interpreted in historical contexts of culture and social practice that are free from bias and judgment.

Situating Risk in a Culture of Misunderstanding

"Risk has been normalized and thus is here to stay; schools have produced all facets of risk in order to tame it" (Bialostok, 2004, p. 80).

Children whose families do not adopt institutionally bound perspectives of what it

means to be literate are often viewed as being at risk for reading failure in school. At-risk labels can be based upon misunderstood notions of how children and families employ reading in the multiple contexts of their lives (Cambourne, 1995). Results of longitudinal ethnographic studies conducted by Rogers (2003) and Taylor (1997) demonstrated that families who are considered by educators to be at risk are often successful at employing literacy in their homes and neighborhoods. Rogers argued that "literacy is not what it seems or promises to be" (p. 143) for many families whose literacy practices differ vastly from institutional literacy practices. Moreover, Rogoff (2003) argued that children are considered to be culturally deprived when home and school literacies do not match.

At-risk is a term that is often situated in a deficit view of families who are considered to be lacking in resources and the capabilities required to use literacy effectively in multiple social environments (Auerbach, 1989). Johnston (2004) suggested that the terms used to define children and families serve to empower or disenfranchise children and their families.

Risk is a construct used to identify children who are considered by educators to be unlikely to achieve predetermined, institutionally bound reading benchmarks based on individual, family, ethnic, or cultural determinants. Bialostock (2004) asserted that assignment of risk labels is often based upon socioeconomic status (SES), race, and gender and that risk labels are employed by educators as a means of situating children and families in positions of conformity.

Maternal education (Evans, Shaw, & Bell, 2000) and poverty (Neuman & Celano, 2001) are widely identified as risk factors in children's reading achievement; however, findings of a study conducted by Hammer, Farkas, and Maczuga (2010) demonstrated that a

relationship does not exist between maternal education and kindergarten-aged children's outcomes on measurements of reading. Hammer et al. argued that educational settings may equalize the effect of maternal education on school-aged children's achievement. Additionally, findings from Hammer et al. showed no impact of SES and single-parent status on reading outcomes. Rouse and Fantuzzo (2009) argued that "the *type of risk* matters" (p. 10). Moreover, they concluded that risk factors often associated with poverty, including maltreatment, are more predictive of school achievement than poverty itself.

The long-held practice of assigning deficit labels as a means of examining the ways that families living outside of the mainstream think about and employ reading in the contexts of their lives must be critically examined. Rogers (2003) suggested that external measures of children's literacy achievement may result in children and families being labeled as at risk for reading failure when inherent risk does not exist. Moreover, Rogers argued that risk is situational and mediated by tensions between home and institutional views of what it means to be literate. Frey (2010) argued for a strengths-based approach to promoting children's reading achievement that is grounded in mutual appreciation, affection, and respect among families and educators. Differences that continue to exist in children's reading development may be more the result of social inequities that result from misconceptions about children and families.

<center>Influence of Demographics on Reading Development</center>

<center>"The issue is one of social justice, not simply of improving reading scores" (Goldenberg, 2004, p. 1661).</center>

A vast number of comparative studies have examined persistent differences that continue to exist in children's reading development according to particular family demographics (Au, 2000; Britto, Brooks-Gunn, & Griffin, 2006; Cadima, McWilliam, & Leal, 2010; Goldenberg, 2004; Vernon-Feagans, Scheffner-Hammer, Miccio, & Manlove, 2002). Demographic factors that influence reading development include SES, race, and ethnicity. Mainstream students are characterized in the literature as typically developing, middle-class Caucasian children. Nonmainstream students are often characterized in the literature as minority children and children from low-income and poverty-level families. Vernon-Feagans et al. (2002) contended that differences persist in the literacy achievement of mainstream and nonmainstream children because educators have little understanding of how nonmainstream children and their families use literacy in the contexts of their lives outside of school. Au (2000) argued that while the achievement gap between mainstream students and nonmainstream students has narrowed over time, nonmainstream students continue to lag behind their mainstream peers. Moreover, Au suggested that there is a critical need for ethnographic research on how children use language and literacy in their social contexts so that educators can more effectively connect literacy instruction at school to children's use of language and literacy outside of school.

<u>Influence of socioeconomic status on reading development</u>

Numerous studies have examined the complex relationships between SES and reading development (Davis-Kean, 2005; Goldenberg, 2004; Hart & Risley, 1995; Neuman & Celano, 2001; Vernon-Feagans et al., 2002). All children enter school having had literacy experiences

with their parents; however, children from low-income families are more dependent on school experiences for literacy achievement in school than children from middle-income families because low-income children have fewer opportunities for literacy experiences outside of school than their middle-class peers (Goldenberg, 2004). Goldenberg's (2004) review of studies that examined the academic progress of students in varying demographic groups demonstrated that the academic progress of low-income and high-income first-graders is equivalent when they are in school; however, during the summer, when they do not attend school, children from low-income families make less academic progress than children from higher-income families.. Moreover, Goldenberg contended that children from low-income families arrive at school "less ready" (p. 1644) than middle-income children to learn emergent literacy skills, including letter recognition and phonological awareness. Those children who enter school behind their peers typically remain behind their peers (Cadima et al., 2010).

Critical examination of how poverty affects reading development is of primary importance because children who live in low-income families comprise the largest group of children who are at risk for academic failure (Vernon-Feagans et al., 2002). Vernon-Feagans et al. (2002) posited that differences in the vocabulary development of low-income and middle-income children account for the lower reading achievement of children from poor and low-income families. Young children from poor and low-income families are exposed to far fewer words than young children from middle-class families (Hart & Risley, 1995). Strong links exist between vocabulary development and reading comprehension (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998).

Studies of how family income and SES influence reading development are frequently

bound in perspectives of pathology and deficit (Auerbach, E. , 1989; Taylor, 1991; Whitehouse & Colvin, 2001). Families that have low levels of income are often viewed by educators as lacking in capabilities and resources (Rogers, 2003). While relationships have been found between reading development and SES (Neuman & Celano, 2001), demographic characteristics cannot be used to predict children's reading futures. Applegate, Burleson, and Delia (2003) posited that SES is a "crude measure of culture" (p. 33). Moreover, Neuman and Celano (2001) argued that critical examinations of the social structures of the environments in which children live and learn are central to understanding how SES influences reading development. Neuman and Celano suggested that the beliefs people develop in their social environments guide their actions.

Families in all SES groups possess strengths. Educators can capitalize upon families' strengths to promote children's reading development (Gonzalez et al., 2005a; Rogers, 2003). Moreover, all children, regardless of their social backgrounds, demonstrate emergent reading behaviors to some extent (Hart & Risley, 1995; Sulzby & Teale, 2003). Unfortunately, educators are often unaware of the diverse ways children and their parents employ reading outside of school (Gonzalez et al., 2005a; Rogers, 2003; Taylor, 1991). Failure to examine children's learning environments outside of school produces tensions among the ways children use literacy in school and in their other ecological environments.

Numerous qualitative studies demonstrate how nonmainstream families and children are disempowered when the ways they use literacy in their social environments are not aligned with school literacies. Purcell-Gates (1995) showed how a poor Appalachian mother with low literacy skills and her young son struggled to legitimize themselves in the literate

mainstream. Purcell-Gates (1995) and Rogers (2003) suggested that educators often withhold insider information from families who live outside of mainstream borders, including families who have low levels of income. Purcell-Gates argued for a view of literacy as a cultural practice that acknowledges the diverse ways families engage in literate practices in their lives outside of school.

Findings from Rogers's (2003) study of an urban African American family with a low level of income showed how a mother used local literacies (Barton & Hamilton, 1998) successfully to assume leadership roles in her family and neighborhood while struggling to gain agency in her daughter's school. Rogers challenged educators to gain knowledge of the ways families employ reading in the contexts of their everyday lives in order to transform institutional practices that separate children from equal access to education and full inclusion in democratic society.

Deficit views and narrow examinations of how nonmainstream families employ literacy were disputed in Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines's (1988) study of nonmainstream, inner-city families. Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines argued that commonly held stereotypes about the influence of SES on reading development can often be attributed to mismatches between children's home literacies and children's school literacies. Mismatches between children's homes and schools often result in tensions that further alienate families from literate society (Gee, 2004). Barbarin et al. (2010) characterized *mismatch* as discontinuity among children's ecological environments. Mismatches among schools, educators, and families can also result from differences in race and ethnicity.

In a study of 826 eight- to twelve-year-old non-Hispanic, European American, and

African American children and their families, Davis-Kean (2005) demonstrated that there is an indirect relationship between parents' socioeconomic status and parents' educational backgrounds. Moreover, Davis-Kean demonstrated that parents' educational backgrounds influence the beliefs parents hold about their children's capacity to achieve school success. Further, results from Davis-Kean's study showed that parents' beliefs influence the literacy behaviors parents engage in at home with their children. Davis-Kean concluded that parents who experienced academic success in school may be more likely to engage their children in literacy activities at home that promote literacy achievement in school. While Davis-Kean hypothesized that race would not influence ways parents and children engaged in literacy behaviors in their homes, differences in the groups were found. Within the African American sample, parents' educational backgrounds and incomes were indirectly related to children's literacy achievement in school. Stronger direct and indirect relationships were found among the European American parents' educational backgrounds and their children's literacy achievement.

Influence of race and ethnicity on reading development

Issues of race and ethnicity are not relevant to my study; however, a vast majority of the literature that examines the influence of parents on children's reading development is focused on minority families; therefore, I include a brief review of literature that examines the complex relationships among race, ethnicity, and student achievement in this section. Differences in student achievement related to race and ethnicity continue to be a source of concern for policymakers, educators, and parents. Brause and Mayher (2003) argued that

racial and ethnic labels reflect "an implicit bias in our society" (p. 287). Moreover, Brause and Mayer suggested that *minority* is a term that denies individual group identities. Hubbard and Mehan (1999) argued that conceptions about race, intelligence, and student achievement constrain educational reform. The literature I reviewed for my study reflects widespread misconceptions about the influence of race and ethnicity on broad-based school achievement and reading achievement.

Results of Gregory and Rimm-Kaufmann's (2008) longitudinal study of 143 African American and Caucasian mother-child dyads demonstrated that the nature of mother-child interactions is more strongly associated with high school graduation than race or ethnicity. Children in Gregory and Rimm-Kaufmann's study were more likely to graduate from high school when the students' mothers demonstrated respectful, supportive, and responsive behavior during block-building and word-generating activities with kindergarten-aged children regardless of race or ethnicity. Findings of Gregory and Rimm-Kaufmann's study demonstrated that a harsh, tough-love approach employed by a disproportionate number of African American mothers had positive effects on children's school readiness; however, a tough-love approach was not associated with positive outcomes among Caucasian children. Gregory and Rimm-Kaufmann argued for research that examines the nature of mother-child interactions with older children and how mother-child interactions influence student achievement.

A dramatic increase in the number of immigrant children in U.S. schools has resulted in comparative studies that examine the influence of race and ethnicity on student achievement (Palacios et al., 2008). Results of the Palacios et al. (2008) three-year

longitudinal study of 17,401 African American, Asian, Caucasian, and Hispanic immigrant children beginning in kindergarten demonstrated that race, ethnicity, and maternal education mediates reading achievement. By third grade, Asian and Caucasian immigrant students outperformed African American and Hispanic immigrant children. Interestingly, regardless of race or ethnicity, first-generation immigrant children outperformed second- and third-generation immigrant children. Palacios et al. referred to this phenomenon as an "immigrant paradox" (p. 1381). Of particular relevance in my study are the findings of Palacios et al. that maternal beliefs are more predictive of school achievement than home cognitive stimulation or parental warmth. The results of the Palacios et al. study and other studies (Davis-Kean & Sexton, 2009) serve as a backdrop to understanding how race and ethnicity may influence reading development. Finally, Davis-Kean and Sexton (2009) argued for a critical examination of data collection methods in research studies of diverse populations in order to better understand how race and ethnicity may influence the perception of research questions by families living in diverse home environments.

<u>Influence of children's HLEs on reading development</u>

Young children's home environments are widely acknowledged as the starting point for reading development (Hammer et al., 2010; Myberg & Rosen, 2009). A child's HLE (Burgess et al., 2002) begins to exert influence on school success during infancy (Forget-Dubois et al., 2009). Findings from the Forget-Dubois et al. (2009) longitudinal study of 662 twin pairs showed that environment was a stronger predictor of the association between early language development and school readiness than genetic influences.

The home is nested in a structure of larger interrelated ecological environments (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) that exert a powerful influence on a child's ability to gain membership in literate society. A child's intellectual, social, and emotional development must be examined and evaluated in the contexts of each environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) in order to maximize literacy learning in school (Cambourne, 1995).

Links between HLEs and reading achievement of school-aged children have been well documented (Evans et al., 2000; Senechal, LeFevre, Thomas, & Daley, 1998). Multiple facets of the HLE are frequently examined as contributors to reading development (Burgess et al., 2002). Home reading practices, parent involvement, SES, race, ethnicity, and parent beliefs have been identified as critical components of the HLE (Cadima et al., 2010). Early studies that examine relationships among HLEs and reading development focused on family income and social status as a means of understanding differences in young children's reading development (Heath, 1983; Teal, 1986).

Findings from Rashid, Morris, and Sevcik's (2005) study of 65 first and second graders with reading disabilities demonstrated that significant correlations exist among parents' home literacy activities and outcome measures of children's reading comprehension. Rashid et al. argued that the reading practices in which parents engage at home may be a stronger factor in the reading development of children with reading disabilities than literacy activities in which the child is more directly involved. Rashid et al. argued that additional studies that examine the HLEs of children with reading disabilities are needed to understand the nature of reading practices in which children and parents engage in diverse ecological environments.

Previous studies of children's HLEs focused on the extent to which families involve themselves in school-like practices including read-alouds (DeLoache & DeMendoza, 2008) and shared book readings (Bus et al., 1995). *Parent involvement* is a term typically employed to describe observable transactions during which parents and children engage in school-based activities. Moreover, parent involvement is often measured by the frequency and extent to which parents comply with educators' requests to engage in school-based activities and also by the extent to which parents comply with school practices. Rogers (2003) asserted that if parents do not comply with educators' requests to attend school functions and engage in particular behaviors with their children at home, educators often view parents as uninvolved and unsupportive. Zellman and Waterman (1998) argued that parent involvement is a broad undistinguished concept that encompasses a wide array of parent behavior. Later in this chapter, I present a more thorough discussion of literature that examines links between parents' beliefs and parental involvement.

Supportive HLEs promote children's reading motivation, which results in increased reading (Baker, 2003). Parents who spend time reading with their children and display favorable views of reading characterize supportive HLEs (Burgess et al., 2002). The extent to which parents value reading influences reading development (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Parents' values are often measured by the extent to which parents model the reading behaviors they want to promote in their children, parents' expression of expectations for reading achievement, parents' efforts to provide reading and writing materials for children at home, and parents' efforts to engage in reading practices with children at home. The HLE is also characterized by the extent to which children can access books and other reading

materials in their homes, parents' levels of education, and the frequency with which parents read to their children (Burgess et al., 2002).

Recent studies probe beneath the surface of the HLE to examine less understood facets of the HLE, including parents' beliefs (Weigel et al., 2005). Results of the Weigel et al. (2005) study of 123 families with preschool-aged children demonstrated that children whose parents held supportive beliefs about reading scored higher on tests of literacy and language. Results of the Barbarin et al. (2010) study of 310 Caucasian, African American, and Latino children and their parents demonstrated that children's early language and literacy development was related to the extent to which parents' beliefs and home literacy practices matched the beliefs and practices of early childhood teachers. Children whose parents and teachers both held child-centered beliefs about early childhood education attained higher scores on measures of early language and literacy development. Leseman and Jong (1998) argued for studies that bridge the gap between research that reduces the HLE to quantifiable characteristics and ethnographic research that examines contextual characteristics, including families' traditions, lifestyles, and belief systems.

<div style="text-align:center">Parents' Influence on Reading Development</div>

"Families are most effective when they function directly as educating agents" (Snow et al., 1991, p. 59).

A vast body of literature demonstrates that parents exert immediate and long-term influence on their children's reading development (Goldenberg, 2004; Hammer et al., 2010; Hart & Risley, 1995). Rogoff (2003) suggested that parents are cultural guides who shape

children's learning within multiple sociocultural learning environments However, the nature of the complex relationships that exist among children's multiple learning environments, parents, and reading development is not fully understood.

A recurring recommendation of numerous research studies that examine parents' influence on reading development is for increased longitudinal ethnographic studies that examine the ways in which parents and children engage in reading practices in order to better understand the complex associations among parents' beliefs and their children's reading development (Galper et al., 1997; Scher & Baker, 1994).

<u>Situating reading development in maternal influence</u>

Studies that focus on parental influences on children's development and learning focus largely on maternal influences; however, it is important to note that much of the literature reviewed for this study did not distinguish parents as mothers or fathers. When distinctions were made, most of the parents being examined were mothers or, in some cases, grandmothers.

Maternal influences have been examined as a means of understanding the reading development of children who are at risk of reading failure and children who demonstrate delays in reading development. Ruddick (1989) argued that mothers of children with disabilities and developmental delays often perceive themselves and are perceived by others as being responsible for their children's deficits.

Influence of maternal education on reading development

Maternal education has been shown to exert influence on children's literacy development and literacy achievement. Evans, Shaw, and Bell (2000) demonstrated that maternal education accounts for 19% of the variance in early literacy development. Moreover, mothers' educational levels have been shown to account for differences in mothers' reading behaviors (Hammer et al., 2010; Snow, Tabors, & Dickinson, 2001). Mothers with low levels of education have been shown to read less frequently to their children and engage in literacy activities at home with their children less frequently than mothers with advanced education (Hammer et al., 2010). A low educational level is widely recognized as less than 12 years of formal schooling or failure to attain a high school diploma or equivalent measure of high school completion (Rouse & Fantuzzo, 2009). Rathbun, West, and Walston (2005, April) concluded that children whose mothers have less than a high school education demonstrated lower performance in reading than children whose mothers completed high school.

Results of Curenton and Justice's (2008) study of 45 Appalachian preschool-aged children and their mothers demonstrated that a mother's education level did not affect the frequency of self-reported reading practices; however, significant differences were found in mothers' beliefs about how to engage their children in shared book readings. Mothers with higher levels of education had more positive beliefs about reading with their children. Moreover, children's understanding of reading conventions and print meaning was mediated by maternal education levels. Children whose mothers had higher levels of education scored

significantly higher on measures of reading conventions and print meaning than children whose mothers had low levels of education.

Findings of a study conducted by Gregory and Rimm-Kaufmann (2008) showed that kindergarten-aged children whose mothers had higher levels of education and higher IQs achieved higher grade point averages in high school than did kindergarten-aged children whose mothers had lower levels of education and lower IQs. In a study of Head Start parents, Galper, Wigfield, and Seefeldt (1997) demonstrated that mothers' education levels predicted outcomes on standard measurements of preschool-aged children's receptive language.

Findings from Lynch's (2009) study of 38 low-income urban, rural, and migrant Mexican parents (34 of whom were mothers) of four-year-old children enrolled in Head Start programs demonstrated that low-income mothers with low levels of formal education engage in meaningful print activities in the contexts of their daily lives. The means by which mothers in Lynch's study engaged in print literacy activities at home with their children varied; however, all mothers in each of the three demographic groups reported engaging in home literacy activities that centered on print. Lynch argued that educators should provide parents who have low levels of education with specific suggestions for promoting their children's literacy development. Moreover, Lynch suggested that educators should build on children's exposure to functional reading experiences that may include reading lists, notes, and advertisements.

While maternal education has been widely identified as a risk factor in reading development, Cadima, McWilliam, and Leal (2010) argued for use of the cumulative-risk model when examining the influence of ecological environments on development. The

cumulative-risk model is based on an assumption that an accumulation of high-risk factors, not a specific risk factor, affects development. Cadima et al. asserted that a high concentration of risk factors affects development, as opposed to individual factors. Moreover, Cadima et al. argued that the literacy development of children who enter elementary school with multiple environmental risk factors will be promoted by multifaceted interventions. Further, Cardima et al. asserted that interventions designed to promote the literacy development of children with multiple environmental risk factors should be based upon data collected in multiple learning contexts, including children's homes. Examinations of HLEs (Weigel et al., 2005), including examinations of the quantity and quality of language mothers employ during conversations with children at home, are central to understanding how mothers influence reading development.

<div align="center">Influence of maternal language on reading development</div>

Mothers exert a profound influence on children's language development. Hulit and Howard (1993) argued that children's acquisition of language is influenced by early social experiences with people who are central in children's lives. Mothers employ a distinctive language style called *motherese* (Hulit & Howard, 1993, p. 36) during oral language exchanges with their infants. Motherese is characterized by a mother's use of succinct sentences, high-pitched and exaggerated intonation patterns, repetition of the infant's utterances, and longer-than-typical pauses between utterances (Hulit & Howard, 1993). A vast body of literature demonstrates that mothers play critical roles in children's language and reading development.

Findings of the Britto et al. (2006) study of low-income African American mothers and their preschool-aged children demonstrated that salient features of mothers' behaviors during book-reading activities with their children promote expressive language development and school readiness. Britto et al. distinguished mothers' roles in book-reading activities. Mothers characterized as story-readers in the Britto et al. study engaged in less conversation and made fewer comments just prior to the book-reading activity than mothers characterized as story-tellers. Mothers characterized as story-tellers provided children with more positive feedback and used greater expressive language than mothers characterized as story-readers. Moreover, children whose mothers provided them with high levels of verbal guidance demonstrated higher levels of expressive language and school readiness than children whose mothers engaged in fewer conversations before and during shared book-reading activities.

Mothers' influence on language development and school success extends far beyond the early childhood years. Findings from Gregory and Rimm-Kaufman's (2008) longitudinal study of 142 socioeconomically diverse children and their mothers demonstrated that the nature of mothers' language and behavioral interactions with their kindergarten-aged children during block-building and word-generating tasks were predictive of children's rate of high school graduation regardless of SES. Children whose mothers used encouraging, respectful, and responsive language and behavior during block-building and word-generating tasks had higher rates of high school graduation than children whose mothers were less sensitive as measured by the extent to which the mothers were encouraging, respectful, and responsive. Moreover, findings from Gregory and Rimm-Kaufmann's study demonstrated that positive mother-child interactions in kindergarten were linked with higher student achievement for at-

risk children 12 years later. Gregory and Rimm-Kaufmann suggested that additional research is needed to gain a better of understanding of how mothers' use of language and behavior influences children's school success through high school.

In the following sections of this chapter, I review research studies that examine parents' beliefs as a critical influence on parent/child interactions that shape general learning and reading development.

Beliefs

"Beliefs are anchored in and ensconced in a schema that includes affect, intentionality, and value, which in their totality guide parent actions" (Sigel & Kim, 1996, p. 85).

In this section, I provide a concise discussion of literature that influenced how I viewed, defined, and examined beliefs in my study. Arguments among scholars and researchers abound on how to view, define, and measure human beliefs (Day & Coleman, 2010). In my study, I adopt a Durkheimian approach (Day & Coleman, 2010) to examining beliefs in which *belief* is viewed as a contextually bound construct. Day and Coleman (2010) suggested that a Durkheimian approach situates beliefs in the established norms of a society.

My review of the literature yielded multiple attempts by scholars and researchers to define belief (Falk, 2004; Sigel & Kim, 1996; Stringer, 1996); however, an agreed-upon definition of belief does not currently exist. Further, it is noteworthy that belief is seldom distinguished from other mental processes; rather, belief is often used interchangeably with attitude, perception, view, value, and other terms used to examine human mentality.

I define *belief* as the evolving mental process by which people organize their enduring

trust of social norms and knowledge. The terms I employed to define beliefs were influenced by my review of literature in which beliefs have been critically examined. I employed Steward's (1997) view of *process* as "a continuous activity, something which is *going on through time*" (p. 95). My use of the term *organized* was influenced by Rokeach's (1972) argument that beliefs are the means by which people organize their social worlds. I used *enduring* in my definition of belief to reflect Eidelson and Eidelson's (2003) argument that people form beliefs early in life and that beliefs are persistent through life, even when people are presented with evidence that contradicts their beliefs. Vygotsky's (Wertsch & Tulviste, 1992) theory of development influenced my decision to situate my definition of beliefs in people's trust of social norms and knowledge. Wertsch and Tulviste (1992) argued that Vygotskyian theory situates mental processes in social norms and knowledge. My definition is further focused by the theories that frame my study.

Examination of human beliefs presents salient methodological challenges. Day (2010) argued that "how belief is conceived and located reflects the context of the scholar and, therefore, the conclusions those scholars reach about the people they study" (p. 10). A variety of tools, including surveys, interviews, and observations, have been used to identify and interpret the meaning of people's beliefs. Sigel and Kim (1996) posited that the construction and use of tools employed in the research of beliefs should be tightly aligned to the theories that frame studies. Philosophical and methodological challenges (Sigel & Kim, 1996) notwithstanding, examinations of beliefs and other human mental processes continue as a means of interpreting and understanding the nature and origin of human behavior and how children learn.

<u>Influence of parents' beliefs on children's learning</u>

"Parents' beliefs about education reveal values, which are derived from both broad cultural traditions and specific contextual characteristics" (Chi & Rao, 2003, p. 352).

My study is guided by the research of scholars (Purcell-Gates, 1995; Rogers, 2003; Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1988) who recognize parents as wellsprings of information, insights, perspectives, and beliefs that shape children's reading development. Numerous studies across a wide span of disciplines have examined the complex relationships among parents' beliefs and children's development and learning trajectories (Hughes and Kwok, 2007; Cottone, 2012; Miller, 1988). I approach my review of the literature on parents' beliefs through a broad sociocultural lens and then narrow my review to studies that examine the relationships among parents' beliefs and their children's reading development.

The beliefs people develop during their social interactions give meaning to the experiences people have in multiple ecological environments (Dweck, 2000). Dweck (2000) suggested that people create meaning systems out of their beliefs. Moreover, Dweck argued that beliefs influence the ways individuals think, feel, and act.

The groundbreaking works of Sigel et al. (1985), Miller (1988), and Goodnow and Collins (1990) demonstrated that parent beliefs exert strong influence on children's development and learning; however, the direction of influence as well as the duration of influence is not fully understood (Stephenson et al., 2008). Aunola et al. (2002) suggested that the relationship between parents' beliefs and children's reading achievement is bidirectional. Findings from the Aunola et al. study of 111 first graders and their parents

demonstrated that children whose parents exhibited high levels of confidence in their children's reading achievement had higher levels of task-focused behaviors, which in turn resulted in better reading achievement. Moreover, children's use of task-focused strategies and children's high levels of reading achievement promoted parents' strong beliefs in children's reading competency.

Findings of Knight and Goodnow's (1988) study of 60 married, mostly middle-class, suburban couples demonstrated that parents in the study believed that their influence on their children's social development was more powerful than teachers' influence. Mothers in the study believed that they influenced their children's social development to a greater extent than fathers. However, parents in the study believed that teachers, more than parents, influenced children's cognitive development. Knight and Goodnow argued that parents' beliefs are comprised of internalized cultural norms that may be "'pre-packaged' rather than 'self-constructed'" (p. 519). Moreover, Knight and Goodnow suggested that parents are charged with the ultimate responsibility for children's character and personality, so they may retain some of the beliefs they hold about their children rather than adapting their beliefs to changing social norms.

<u>Cultural variations in parents' beliefs</u>

Comparative studies typify research that examines the influence of parents' beliefs on children's learning. The beliefs of minority parents and other parents living outside of the mainstream, including young parents, parents who have low levels of income, and parents with low levels of education, are frequently compared with the beliefs of mainstream, middle-

class, European American parents (Sonnenschein, Brody, & Munsterman, 1996) in order to better understand the influence of race and culture on student performance. In their longitudinal study of low- and middle-income, preschool- and kindergarten-aged children who were African American, European American, and mixed ethnicity, Sonnenschein, Brody, and Munsterman (1996) demonstrated that parents' beliefs about how to promote early literacy skills at home varied by ethnicity. Moreover, results from Sonnenschein et al.'s study demonstrated that parents' beliefs influenced the literacy practices they engaged in at home with their young children.

Numerous studies demonstrate that children fare better in school when the beliefs (Sonnenschein et al., 1997), literacy practices (Gee, 1999), and funds of knowledge (Gonzalez et al., 2005a) in children's homes and schools are aligned. Conversely, mismatches between home and school beliefs and practices have been shown to exert direct and indirect negative influences on children's literacy achievement. In a study of parents and preschool-aged children in four ethnic groups, Suizzo et al. (2008) demonstrated that parents' beliefs about childrearing practices are shaped by cultural and ecological factors. Findings of the Suizzo et al. study showed three distinct belief models: a conformity model, an autonomy model, and a prosocial model. Asian Americans in the Suizzo et al. study positively associated schooling with conformity while ethnic minority and European American parents in the study valued autonomy. Moreover, Suizzo et al. demonstrated that African American parents placed equal importance on both conformity and autonomy. According to parent surveys in the Suizzo et al. study, each group of parents placed equal value on a prosocial, group orientation approach to schooling. Suizzo et al. argued that alignment between home belief systems and school

Commented [O1]: There are two sources that would shorten to Sonnenschein et al. 1996, that is why I didn't shorten it in the paper. I question all corrections made to shorten these sources!

belief systems promotes children's school achievement. Suizzo et al. suggested that families will be better served when educators understand how the cultural origins of parents' beliefs influence the practices children and their parents engage in together at home.

In a longitudinal comparative study of 309 Asian American and 9,471 European American parents and their school-aged children, Sy and Schulenberg (2005) demonstrated that culture was found to be a significant factor in differences found in parents' beliefs about children's math and reading trajectories. Findings of Sy and Schulenberg's study demonstrated that Asian American parents placed higher value on structured early academic learning than European American parents. Moreover, Asian American parents demonstrated stronger involvement in academic activities in the home while European American parents were more involved in activities at school. Findings of Sy and Schulenberg's study also demonstrated that greater variability existed in the early reading and math achievement of Asian American children than in the early reading and math achievement of European American children. However, individual variability within each group did not exist in the average rate of change in student achievement over time. Moreover, differences in parents' beliefs were not predictive of student achievement in math and reading over time. Sy and Schulenberg suggested that factors not included in the study, such as teacher effects, may explain the decrease on the impact of parents' beliefs as children progress through the school years. Sy and Schulenberg argued for additional longitudinal studies that examine changes in parents' belief patterns over time. Teachers may be better equipped to promote students' achievement when they understand the beliefs that influence diverse home reading practices.

New understandings emerged from the Barbarin et al. (2010) study of the childrearing

beliefs and socialization practices of parents and teachers. Barbarin et al. argued that examination of beliefs is increasingly critical because once children from nonmainstream families enter school, they are more likely to be matched with teachers who have different racial and ethnic backgrounds from their own. The pivotal roles teachers assume in children's learning are influenced by their beliefs (Evans et al., 2004). A surprising result of the Barbarin et al. study demonstrated that the childrearing beliefs of African American, Latino, and European American parents matched teachers' beliefs more frequently than they differed. Barbarin et al. argued that while alignment among children's homes and schools is not the definitive factor in determining school success, children's adaptation to school is promoted when their home and school environments are similar. Teachers may be better equipped to support children when they have knowledge of the beliefs that influence the ways parents are involved in children's reading development.

Relationships among parents' beliefs, parental involvement, and parental engagement

"Human abilities and their realization depend in significant degree on the larger social and institutional context of individual activity" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. xv).

A vast body of literature demonstrates that parents' involvement in children's schooling influences children's academic achievement (Hoover-Dempsey, Sandler, & Howard, 1995; Patall, Cooper, & Robinson, 2008; Reed, Jones, Walker, & Hoover-Dempsey, 2000). Children who have involved parents have lower rates of retention, lower dropout rates, and higher rates of participation in advanced classes (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). Involved parents are typically characterized in the literature as parents who participate in

events and activities at school, including parent-teacher conferences. In the United States, parent involvement is considered to be an "institutional standard" (Sheldon, 2002, p. 301). In the following section, I review literature that examines parents' beliefs as a way of understanding parents' involvement in children's schooling.

<u>Influence of parents' beliefs on reading development</u>

"Beliefs are the starting point for all experiences the parent has with the child" (Weigel et al., 2006, p. 192).

Parents' beliefs may be the key to understanding differences in families' home reading behaviors (DeBaryshe, 1992). Findings from the Stephenson et al. (2008) study of 53 kindergarten-aged children and their parents demonstrated that the beliefs parents hold about children's current reading ability and about children's task-focused behaviors during reading home events are more highly correlated to measures of children's emergent reading development than parents' direct teaching of reading skills. However, Stephenson et al. found that a predictive strength of parents' beliefs on specific early reading skills lessened by the time the children were in first grade. The findings of this study suggested that early assessment of parents' beliefs may increase the current understanding of how parent beliefs influence reading development. Baker et al. (1996) argued that educators who have information about factors that influence home reading practices may be better equipped to deliver effective reading instruction that is designed to meet children's diverse needs.

The beliefs parents hold about children's reading development influence the frequency and quality of joint book readings among parents and their children (DeBaryshe, 1995) as

well as children's interest in reading (Galper et al., 1997). A meta-analysis conducted by Bus et al. (1995) established joint book reading among parents and children as a strong predictor of reading ability. However, it is not merely the act of parents reading aloud to children that shapes reading development; rather, the influence of parents' beliefs accounts for differences in the effects of parent-child joint book readings on reading development (Mason & Allen, 1986). Moreover, particular parental beliefs account for differences in reading development (Curenton & Justice, 2008). Curenton and Justice's (2008) study of 45 young Appalachian mothers and their children who ranged from 37 months of age to 62 months of age demonstrated that while differences in mothers' levels of education did not influence home reading behaviors, including the frequency of home reading events, a relationship was found among mothers' levels of education, mothers' beliefs about shared reading, and children's emergent reading development. Mothers in Curenton and Justice's study with higher levels of education demonstrated more positive beliefs about reading and viewed shared reading as a source of entertainment. Moreover, mothers who adopted a view of shared reading as a source of entertainment engaged in more extra-textual conversations with their young children that focused on print and print features. Curenton and Justice suggested that the nature of shared reading events among young children and their parents, not simply the frequency with which parents and their young children engage in shared readings, may influence reading development.

Delineating Parent Involvement and Parent Engagement

"Although parent involvement is considered to be a key contributor to children's academic success, the existing literature defines the construct narrowly (typically viewing it in terms of direct participation in school)" (Sy & Schulenberg, 2005, p. 505).

The terms *parent involvement* and *parent engagement* are often used interchangeably in the literature. Here, I make a critical distinction between parent involvement and parent engagement in an effort to expand the current limited view to reflect the diverse ways parents exercise control in children's reading development.

For the purposes of this discussion, I employ *parent involvement* as a bounded term, often used in the literature to describe the extent to which parents participate in school-based activities in order to promote children's learning. Numerous attempts have been made to develop operational definitions of parent involvement (Frey, 2010). Definitions of parent involvement include parents' communication with children and children's teachers, parents' participation in school events (e.g. parent-teacher conferences, fundraising events, and volunteer activities), the ways parents engage children in school-like activities at home, and parents' aspirations for children's school achievement. The broad array of definitions used to define parent involvement may contribute to inconsistent findings of studies that examine relationships between parent involvement and student achievement (Fan & Chen, 1999; McCoach, Goldstein, Behuniak, & Reis, 2010).

Studies that examine the influence of parents' involvement on student achievement are typically centered on the extent to which parents comply with teachers' requests to assist children with homework, attend parent-teacher conferences, and maintain communication

with school (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Reynolds, Mavrogenes, Berzuczko, & Hagemann, 1996). Chavkin and Williams (1985) argued that most parents limit their involvement to roles defined and assigned by teachers.

Many parents involve themselves in their children's school achievement by establishing relationships with educators (Shockley, Michalove, & Allen, 1995). Shockley et al. (1995) argued that the more literacy practices in which children engage with teachers, parents, and other people in their lives, the more their literacy development will be facilitated. Moreover, Shockley et al. suggested that reciprocity and respect are essential to building learning communities among parents, children, and educators.

Few studies have examined the nuances of parent involvement, including the extent to which parents' beliefs influence their involvement with their children's schooling. The vast majority of research on parent involvement examines the extent to which race, ethnicity, and other demographic factors affect parents' involvement in children's schooling. A notable exception is Zellman and Waterman's (1998) study of 193 second and third graders and their mothers, which demonstrated that neither race, nor ethnicity, nor SES was predictive of parent involvement. Conversely, child IQ was significantly predictive of parent involvement in homework. Findings of Zellman and Waterman's study demonstrated that mothers of children with higher IQs were less involved with homework than mothers of children with lower IQs. Zellman and Waterman suggested that parents of children with lower IQs may involve themselves in children's homework as a means of solving their children's academic problems. A discussion of homework as a widely accepted indicator of parent involvement is beyond the scope of this paper; however, it is worth noting here that the influence of

homework on student achievement is not well established (Kohn, 2006).

The notion of engagement broadens parents' associations with children's reading development to include the diverse ways families interact within multiple ecological environments. Sonnenschein, Brody, and Munsterman (1996) argued that in a literate society, virtually all children arrive at school having engaged in numerous experiences with print. Links exist between parental engagement and reading achievement. Lam et al. (2009) demonstrated that a positive relationship existed between the reading achievement of fourth grade children and the extent to which the children were engaged in early reading activities with their parents at home.

The ways children engage in print activities with their parents may be vastly different from the ways they engage in print activities at school. Shockley et al. (1995) argued for a pedagogy of engagement in which the diverse ways families employ reading in their ecological environments are valued as central to children's school achievement. Moreover, Shockley et al. suggested that within a pedagogy of engagement, learners understand that literacy has purpose in their lives.

The term *engagement* encompasses a broad array of ways parents and children use print as a function of daily life. Lam et al. (2009) characterized *engaged parents* as parents who read books with their children, sing songs to their children, tell stories to their children, and play word games with their children. Findings from Lynch's (2009) study of 38 low-income parents of preschool-aged children in a Head Start program demonstrated that parents engage in a wide variety of print-oriented activities with their young children. Parents in Lynch's study read school communications, store advertisements, flyers, and coupons more

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frequently than they read other print. Other types of print read by the parents in Lynch's study included recipes, notes, and calendars. Lynch suggested that educators should build upon the ways parents use print in their everyday lives in order to bridge the ways children use print in their homes and the ways children use print in school.

<div align="center">Influence of teachers on parental involvement</div>

Teachers hold strong beliefs about the roles parents should assume in their children's schooling. Epstein (1995) argued that most educators want to promote families' school involvement; however, teachers and school administrators do not necessarily know how to involve parents in their children's school lives. Moreover, teachers and administrators often develop negative beliefs about parents who are perceived to be uninvolved because they do not conform with teachers' expectations of what parents should do to support children's schooling (Barnyak & McNelly, 2009; Eberly, Joshi, & Konzal, 2007). Rogers (2003) suggested that parents who do not attend school functions and comply with teachers' requests are often considered by teachers to be uninvolved in their children's education.

Teachers' beliefs about what it means to be literate influence the relationships they establish with parents to promote children's learning. The extent to which teachers attempt to involve parents in children's schooling influences parents' involvement (Reed et al., 2000). Direct efforts by teachers to engage parents in school practices influences parent involvement (Epstein, 1986). Findings of Epstein's (1986) study demonstrated that more than 85% of parents helped their children with homework when a direct teacher request was given. Moreover, Epstein demonstrated that parents' willingness to assist with homework was

contingent upon the extent to which teachers provided parents with supports. Home supports included the provision of homework contracts, informal games, and worksheets. Supportive teachers requested that parents participate in learning activities at home more frequently than teachers who were not identified as providing parent support. Additionally, parents in Epstein's study were willing to increase the amount of time spent helping children with homework if teachers showed them what to do.

In a large-scale examination of state test results from positive- and negative-outlier schools in Connecticut, McCoach et al. (2010) demonstrated that teachers in the positive-outlier schools held more positive perceptions about the students' families than did the parents of students in the negative-outlier schools. McCoach et al. described positive-outlier schools as schools at which the student achievement was higher than predicted considering the demographic composition of the families. Conversely, McCoach et al. described the negative-outlier schools as schools at which the student achievement was lower than predicted according to the families' demographic composition. Teachers in the positive-outlier schools held more positive perceptions about the parents' involvement and consequently encouraged higher levels of parent involvement.

<u>Influence of parent involvement on student achievement</u>

The influence of parent involvement on student achievement has been widely researched (Englund et al., 2004; Frey, 2010; Hoover-Dempsey, Sandler, & Howard, 1997). Hoover-Dempsey et al. (1997) argued that examination of parental involvement is critical to understanding student achievement because parents exert substantial influence on children's

academic outcomes; however, findings from studies that examine effects of parent involvement on student achievement are inconsistent (Frey, 2010).

In a longitudinal study of low-income mothers and their children from birth through third grade, Englund et al. (2004) demonstrated that mothers' involvement in children's schooling had a direct and significant effect on the achievement of children in third grade. Moreover, when children in the Englund et al. study demonstrated high levels of achievement in first grade, their parents held high expectations for future school achievement. Additionally, parents who held high expectations for their first graders demonstrated higher levels of school involvement when their children were in third grade. Results from the Englund et al. study suggested that bidirectional relationships exist among parents' beliefs, parent involvement, and student achievement.

There is widespread belief among teachers that parents promote reading achievement through involvement in homework and other school-related activities with their children at home; however, findings from Galindo and Sheldon's (2012) large-scale study of students in kindergarten demonstrated that family involvement at school, rather than family involvement at home, mediated reading achievement. Galindo and Sheldon suggested that when schools exert efforts to involve families through outreach programs, the school becomes a welcoming environment, and parents are more likely to be involved in school activities.

The preponderance of studies that examines the influence of parents' involvement on academic achievement has focused on the achievement of preschool and elementary-aged students. Most parents of elementary students are involved to some extent in their children's schooling; however, parents' involvement decreases substantially by the time children reach

14 years of age and continues to decline through high school (Reglin, Cameron, & Losike-Sedimo, 2012). However, findings from the Reglin et al. (2012) study of 72 seventh graders at a low-performing school demonstrated that efforts to increase the reading achievement of older students can be promoted by involving parents. The reading scores of the seventh grade students in the Reglin et al. study increased significantly when the students' parents were shown how to use research-based activities during a structured program designed to promote parent involvement. These findings are critical because they demonstrated that it is never too late for teachers to involve parents in efforts to promote students' reading achievement.

Relationships Among Parents' Self-Efficacy, Children's Self-Efficacy, and Reading Achievement

"The striving for control over life circumstances permeates almost everything people do throughout the life course because it provides innumerable personal and social benefits" (Bandura, 1997, pp. 1-2).

A belief in one's capacity to exercise control and execute action to effect change is referred to as *self-efficacy*. I draw upon Bandura's (1997) definition of self-efficacy: "to believe in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (p. 3). Self-efficacy is a complex, multifaceted construct that Bandura and Locke (2003) viewed as being central to human functioning.

Parents hold beliefs about their children. Parents' self-efficacy is a particularly salient focus of my study because parents' perceived self-efficacy has been linked to the extent to which parents involve themselves in children's schooling (Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Brissie, 1992). Findings from the Hoover-Dempsey et al. (1992) study of 390 parents of

elementary-aged children demonstrated that parents who had strong self-efficacy volunteered at school more often and engaged in educational activities with their children more frequently than parents with low self-efficacy. More recent studies (Elder, Eccles, Ardelt, & Lord, 1995; Lynch, 2002; Machida, Taylor, & Kim, 2002) supported the Hoover-Dempsey et al. findings that strong relationships exist among parents' self-efficacy and parents' involvement in children's learning inside and outside of school.

In a study of 306 racially diverse Head Start children and their mothers, Machida et al. (2002) demonstrated that parents' self-efficacy was associated with the frequency of home learning activities. Interestingly, parents' self-efficacy was not related to the quality of the home learning environment.

Parents' self-efficacy has been linked to race. Findings of a study conducted by Elder et al. (1995) showed that low-income African American parents had less confidence in community services than their low-income Caucasian peers. Interestingly, while significant differences were not found in the self-efficacy of low-income African American and low-income Caucasian parents, differences were shown to exist in the extent to which each group of parents supported their children with homework and other supportive activities. Elder et al. asserted that this difference may be attributed to forced self-reliance. Since community services were not as readily available to African American parents in the study, they were forced to depend upon their own resources.

Gender is also a factor that contributes to effects of parents' perceived self-efficacy on children's perceived self-efficacy. Results of Lynch's (2002) study of 66 eight- and nine-year-old Canadian students and their parents demonstrated that mothers who had strong

beliefs in their ability to improve their children's reading achievement had children who had stronger beliefs in their reading abilities. Interestingly, fathers in Lynch's study who believed in their ability to promote their children's reading ability had children who had less belief in their reading abilities. The findings of Lynch's study are important because children's belief in their capacity to read is related to reading achievement (McTigue, Washburn, & Liew, 2009; Schunk, 2007).

The literature I reviewed in this chapter demonstrates that parents exert substantial influence on children's HLEs (Burgess et al., 2002) and thus, on children's reading development (Hammer et al., 2010). In the present chapter, I reviewed studies that examined relationships among parents' beliefs, parents' roles in children's reading development, and children's reading development (Goodnow & Collins, 1990; Purcell-Gates, 1995; Rogers, 2003). Questions persist about how parents develop the beliefs they hold about reading. Moreover, little is currently understood about how parents' beliefs influence the ways they engage in reading practices with their children at home. Cottone (2012) argued for an increase in studies that examine parent beliefs as an important aspect of children's HLEs.

Conclusion

A vast body of the literature reviewed for the present study situates reading development in the social and cultural contexts of children's homes and families (Auerbach, 1991; Gonzalez et al., 2005a; Sperling & Appleman, 2011). Parents, especially mothers, exert a profound influence on children's reading development (Burgess et al., 2002; Gregory & Rimm-Kaufman, 2008; Hart & Risley, 1995). Moreover, mothers' beliefs influence the roles

they assume in their children's reading development (Lynch, 2009; Zellman & Waterman, 1998) as well as the ways mothers and children engage in reading practices in the multiple contexts of their daily lives (Curenton & Justice, 2008; Elder et al., 1995; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1992; Machida et al., 2002). In my study, I conducted an in-depth, rigorous examination of one mother's beliefs in order to expand the current understanding of how parental beliefs influence children's reading development. In the next chapter, I introduce the actors in my study.

CHAPTER 3

INTRODUCING THE PORTRAIT ACTORS

"We see relationships as more than vehicles for data gathering, more than points of access.
We see them as central to the empirical, ethical, and humanistic dimensions of research
design, as evolving and changing processes of human encounter" (Lawrence-Lightfoot,
1997e, p. 138).

In this chapter, I describe Lyn and her children and the contexts in which they read.

Moreover, I describe my position in the lives of Lyn and her children, Michael, William, and

Mae. My associations with all but one of the actors in my study, Mrs. Hart, were initiated

prior to my study in the context of my profession.

Sketching the Primary Portrait Actors

"Portraitists seek to record and interpret the perspectives and experience of the people they
are studying, documenting their voices and their visions -- their authority, knowledge, and
wisdom" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997e, p. 147).

The primary purpose of my study was to examine Lyn's beliefs about reading.

Interviews and observations with Lyn's children added depth to my study that allowed me to

more closely examine the influence of Lyn's beliefs on the roles she assumed in Michael,

William, and Mae's reading development. Lyn was the primary actor in my study.

Interviews and observations with Michael, William, Mae, and five of Lyn's children's

teachers provided me with a broad perspective of how Lyn negotiated reading in multiple

ecological environments.

<u>Lyn's family</u>

Thirty-two-year-old Lyn, her 35-year-old husband Albert, and their three school-aged children were a Caucasian family that lived in a largely middle- to upper-middle-class Midwestern suburb in a home Albert purchased before he and Lyn met. Albert lived in the home by himself for four years before he and Lyn were married. Lyn moved into Albert's home when Michael was 18 months old. William was born three years later, after Lyn and Albert were married. Mae arrived two years after William.

<u>Lyn and Albert</u>

Lyn and Albert spent the vast majority of their leisure time together with their children and members of their extended families. Lyn reported that she did not allow people other than family members to care for her children. The Davis family was especially fond of outdoor activities, including fishing and camping. Lyn and Albert rarely attended social events without their children.

Lyn was a former special education student who was proud of the GED she earned three years after she withdrew from high school midway through her sophomore year. During high school, Lyn was placed in a classroom for students with behavior disorders because she was acting out in her regular education class. Lyn reported that she threw a pair of scissors across the room in a regular education class as a means of being reassigned to a special education class. She recalled, "I fought to get back in it because it really helped being in a smaller class, so I got to go back for a couple of more months before I dropped out"

(FL0712). Lyn's reading experiences in school shaped the beliefs she developed about reading, her use of reading, and the roles she played in her children's reading development.

By the time Lyn completed her GED, she was a single mother of six-month-old Michael.

At the beginning of my study, Lyn was employed as manager at a local retail shoe store; however, during the study, she became unemployed when a new supervisor would not accommodate Lyn's family schedule. Lyn had designated one day a week as a day that she was unavailable to work due to Mae's extracurricular schedule. Prior to her management job, Lyn held various other positions in the retail industry, including a position of retail sales clerk at a bedding store and a position of assistant manager at a shoe retailer. Albert was a self-employed building subcontractor with inconsistent employment. Albert supplemented his income by working on short-term construction and handyman projects. Lyn and Albert were a resourceful couple who enjoyed working on home improvement projects together. They had made extensive renovations to their home and property, including installation of plumbing and electrical systems. During the summer months, Lyn enjoyed gardening in her expansive yard. Lyn reported that neither she nor Albert used credit cards to make purchases.

Lyn and Albert participated in numerous community activities with their children. Each year, the family decorated their truck for the local Halloween parade. Every spring, Lyn and Albert participated in their community's city-wide garage sale. During my study, Lyn and Albert took their children to the grand opening of the local high school's fitness center. Lyn's family regularly attended annual school fun fairs. Moreover, Lyn was involved in the organization and management of Mae's cheerleading team. During my study, Lyn worked

with a vendor to outfit Mae's cheerleading team with team wear and accessories. Lyn often worked at concessions stands selling food during Mae's cheerleading competitions. She rarely volunteered at school.

<u>Michael</u>

Lyn's oldest son, Michael, was an eighth grader during my study. Michael was a quiet, well-behaved boy who enjoyed spending time with members of his immediate and extended family, including his maternal grandmother, with whom Lyn reported Michael had been close since he was very young. Michael enjoyed playing games on electronic equipment, including the family's iPad. He also enjoyed viewing videos on YouTube. During the study, Michael showed me several of his favorite YouTube videos (FN0811).

Lyn enrolled Michael in a private, local preschool program when he was four years old. Lyn reported that Michael's preschool teacher requested that Michael be removed from the preschool program after he demonstrated aggressive behavior toward other children. Michael's preschool teachers as well as his pediatrician recommended that Michael attend the local school district's early childhood screening. Based on the results of the screening, Michael was given a battery of tests by members of the school district's special education team. Results of the testing demonstrated that Michael had delays in cognitive development, social-emotional development, self-care, and language development. For one year, Michael attended the local school district's preschool for children with identified disabilities; he then entered kindergarten at Pleasant View Elementary School, where he was placed into a regular education kindergarten classroom.

At the time of my study, the majority of children at Pleasant View Elementary School who were diagnosed with special needs were placed in regular education classrooms. Contained classes for children with special needs were available at the local middle school but not at any of the local elementary schools. Special education paraprofessionals were assigned to support some, but not all, of the children who had special needs. Assignment of special education paraprofessionals was determined by special education teams including parents, school and district administrators, classroom teachers, and special education teachers.

Lyn reported that, during Michael's kindergarten year, a physician placed Michael on medication after diagnosing him with ADHD. The following year, Michael entered first grade at Pleasant View Elementary School. His IEP indicated that Michael's primary disability was an emotional disability. Michael no longer qualified for speech and language services. A paraprofessional was assigned to provide Michael with behavioral and academic support in first grade. Michael continued to demonstrate challenging behavior, including aggressive behavior toward his peers and refusal to comply with teachers' directions through second grade. Moreover, he continued to lag behind his peers in academic achievement.

By third grade, Michael's aggressive behavior had lessened; therefore, the number of minutes he received from the social worker at Pleasant View Elementary School was reduced. Michael continued to receive academic and behavioral support from special education teachers as well as paraprofessionals.

In the spring of 2009, the end of Michael's fifth grade year, Lyn took Michael to a pediatric adolescent psychiatrist for testing because she believed that her oldest son was depressed about his weight gain and also about his relationships with school peers. After

paying nearly $1,000 and making numerous requests for test results from the physician, Lyn reported to me that she was not able to access the test results. She explained, "I left message after message on the doctor's voicemail. Never once did anyone from there ever return my phone calls. It's like I never made any attempts with them" (PFL0510).

Michael was placed in a contained special education class when he entered sixth grade at Miller Middle School in the fall of 2009. In February of 2010, a learning disability was added as a secondary disability to Michael's IEP. He continued to receive instruction in contained, special education classes during his seventh and eighth grade years. Michael was an eighth grader at the time of my study.

Mrs. Hart, Michael's eighth grade teacher, reported that Michael was one of the best readers in her classroom; however, she commented that he rarely read voluntarily at school: "He would much rather sit there and look around than read a book" (TH0512). Michael participated successfully in a variety of extracurricular and recreational programs. During his elementary school years, Michael participated in summer science camps at the park district, played t-ball on a team in the summer between his first and second grade years, and participated in basketball camps during the summer of 2010. During his eighth grade year, Michael joined the middle school football team. He attended a summer football camp sponsored by the local high school during the summer of 2012 and joined the high school football team during the fall of his freshman year.

William

During my study, William was a student in a regular education fourth grade classroom

at Pleasant View Elementary School. William's first school experience was in kindergarten. Lyn reported that neither William nor Mae attended preschool because the cost of preschool was too high for her family.

William was an active, outgoing social boy who enjoyed playing with his friends during leisure time at home. Lyn reported that William enjoyed playing sports and participating in physical activity. Before William was old enough to attend kindergarten, Lyn enrolled him in ballet lessons. During William's kindergarten year, Lyn enrolled him in gymnastics classes. Lyn reported that William participated in local soccer and football programs during his first, second, and third grade years, but he did not participate in extracurricular activities during his fourth grade year. Lyn did not explain why William did not participate in team sports or other extracurricular activities during the time he was in fourth grade. William enjoyed watching television, watching videos on YouTube, and playing board games with his family. He especially enjoyed playing games on one of the family's iPads.

Lyn characterized William as a stubborn child with a strong will: "You can't get through to him. It's his way. There's no getting around that. He is what he is, and I just have to accept it" (PFL1011).

William had a history of ear infections that began when he was six months old. Lyn reported that William was diagnosed with slight hearing loss before he entered kindergarten. When William was three years old, his pediatrician recommended that William attend the local school district's early childhood screening. Results of the screening demonstrated that William had delays in speech and language development. For two years, before entering

kindergarten, William received speech and language therapy through the local school district's preschool program for young children with developmental delays. He continued to receive speech and language services throughout his years at Pleasant View Elementary School.

William demonstrated delays in literacy development in kindergarten according to his performance on the ISEL test (Barr et al., 2002). He received reading support from Mrs. Taylor in second grade and third grade. In the spring of 2010, at the end of his second grade year, William was placed on medication after he was diagnosed with ADHD. At the end of his fourth grade year, results of testing conducted by special education teachers at Pleasant View Elementary School demonstrated that William had a learning disability in reading comprehension. He started to receive special education services to promote his reading comprehension at the end of fourth grade.

Lyn reported that William never voluntarily read for pleasure at home. In the spring of 2011, during his third grade year, William and his classmates were given a reading homework assignment. The children were told to make a mask to represent a character in a fiction book they had read independently at home or at school. William refused to complete his book report assignment, so Lyn told him that he could not play with his favorite toy until he completed the project. William neither read a chapter book nor did he complete the assigned book report project. Eventually, Lyn returned William's favorite toy.

Mae

Mae was a second grader in a regular education classroom at Pleasant View

Elementary School during my study. Mae's performance on the fall ISEL (Barr et al., 2002) qualified her to receive reading support from Mrs. Taylor, the reading specialist at Pleasant View Elementary School. Mae was unable to identify the letters in her name. During her kindergarten year, Mae also received small-group reading support from Mrs. Purcell, one of Pleasant View Elementary School's special education teachers.

Mae's struggles with reading development continued in first grade. In addition to the reading support she received from Mrs. Purcell and Mrs. Taylor, Mae also received daily reading instruction from Mrs. Rogers, the Pleasant View Elementary School principal. Early in the school year, Mae's physician prescribed medication after diagnosing her with ADHD. Lyn reported that the medication made Mae sick; therefore, after three days of treatment, Lyn discontinued giving Mae the medication.

By the end of the third quarter of Mae's first grade year, Mae's teachers, Mrs. Rogers, and other faculty members at Pleasant View Elementary School hired a private neuropsychologist to evaluate Mae's cognitive functioning. Results of the evaluation demonstrated that Mae had dyslexia as well as significant deficits in her working memory.

During second grade, Mae continued to demonstrate extremely slow progress in reading development in spite of individualized daily instruction she received from Mrs. Collins (her classroom teacher), Mrs. Taylor, and Mrs. Purcell. She lagged behind her typically developing grade level peers by more than one year. Mrs. Collins reported that "word meanings are unclear for her" (TC0312). By the end of my study, Mae had demonstrated minimal progress in reading.

<u>The teacher actors</u>

I had established professional relationships with Mrs. Collins, Mrs. Purcell, Mrs. Taylor, and Mrs. St. Pierre prior to the commencement of my study. I met Mrs. Hart for the first time during her initial interview.

<u>Mrs. Collins</u>

Mrs. Collins was a Caucasian woman in her late 30s. She was married and did not have children of her own. During my study, Mrs. Collins was completing the 19th year of her teaching career. Prior to assuming her position at Pleasant View Elementary School, Mrs. Collins was a teacher in a self-contained special education classroom in a different school district. Mrs. Collins was a soft-spoken woman who was respected by her colleagues for her excellent classroom management and leadership skills. Mae was the third of the Davis children to be placed in Mrs. Collins's classroom. Mrs. Collins believed that children get to be readers "during the early years with a lot of exposure to stories and reading and read-alouds and just building enthusiasm for books" (TC0806).

<u>Mrs. Hart</u>

During my study, Mrs. Hart taught Michael and eight other students in a contained special education class at Miller Middle School. Mrs. Hart was a Caucasian woman in her 30s. She was married and did not have children of her own. At the time of my study, Mrs. Hart was completing her third year of full-time teaching. Mrs. Hart believed that reading development begins when "parents read to their children…at an early age" (TH0512). Mrs.

Hart's beliefs were manifested in the interactions I observed among her and her students during observations in her classroom.

Mrs. Purcell

Mrs. Purcell was a Caucasian woman in her mid 40s who was married and had three children of her own. She was completing her 16th year of teaching students with special needs during the year of my study. Mrs. Purcell had established a relationship with Lyn eight years prior to the start of my study when she began to provide Michael with special education support in kindergarten. Mae also received special education support from Mrs. Purcell during her kindergarten year. William did not work with Mrs. Purcell. Teachers at Pleasant View Elementary School recognized Mrs. Purcell as a compassionate teacher who put forth a great deal of effort to create a safe, caring environment for students, especially those with special needs. Mrs. Purcell believed that reading development is grounded in the "conversations families have at home" (TP0112).

Mrs. Taylor

Mrs. Taylor was a Caucasian woman in her early 60s. She was a widow with two adult children and a grandchild. Mrs. Taylor was a veteran teacher who completed her 24th year of teaching during my study. She assumed numerous leadership roles at Pleasant View Elementary School as well as leadership roles in her school district. Teachers at Pleasant View Elementary School often consulted with Mrs. Taylor when they had questions related to literacy. At the time of my study, Mrs. Taylor had known Lyn for eight years, since Michael

was in kindergarten. Mrs. Taylor had provided reading support for each of Lyn's children during their years at Pleasant View Elementary School. Mrs. Taylor believed that reading development starts "in the home…with parents reading nightly to kids" (TT0112).

<u>Mrs. St. Pierre</u>

Mrs. St. Pierre was a Caucasian woman in her 50s who was married with adult children of her own. During the year of my study, Mrs. St. Pierre was completing the 18th year of her teaching career. Mrs. St. Pierre was recognized by students and colleagues as being a creative teacher who engaged her students in active learning projects. During my study, Mrs. St. Pierre's class hosted a dinner theater at which students assumed acting roles in a play. William was the first of the Davis children to be placed in Mrs. St. Pierre's fourth grade classroom. Mrs. St. Pierre believed that reading development begins "before kids come to school, with hearing good, quality literature read to them over and over again" (TSP0212).

Positioning Myself in the Lives of the Portrait Actors

"In portraiture, the voice of the researcher is everywhere" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997d, p. 85).

Additional Pleasant View Elementary School faculty members, other than the teacher actors, to whom I refer in the remaining text are listed in Table 1.

I met Lyn in the fall of 2006 when her oldest son, Michael, was assigned to my third grade classroom at Pleasant View Elementary School. Mrs. Shile, a veteran paraprofessional at Pleasant View Elementary School, had been placed in my classroom to assist Michael and

other children who had been diagnosed, through testing administered by school personnel, as having learning disabilities and challenging behavior. Paraprofessionals at Pleasant View Elementary School are assigned to work with individual students or small groups who have been identified, based on tests administered by special education teachers, as having deficits in learning.

Table 1

Additional Pleasant View Elementary School Faculty Members

Pseudonym	Position
Mrs. Gates	William's first grade teacher
Mrs. Lawrence	Mae's kindergarten teacher
Mrs. Morrow	William's kindergarten teacher
Mrs. Rogers	Principal
Mrs. Sayers	A special education teacher
Mrs. Shile	A veteran paraprofessional
Mrs. Weigel	Speech and language teacher

Throughout the year Michael was a student in my third grade classroom, Mrs. Shile communicated information about Michael's homework and Michael's behavior through daily written notes that I read before they were sent home. Michael's special education teacher, Mrs. Purcell, also provided daily communication about Michael's behavior and academic progress through written emails and notes in a journal as well as through regular phone conversations with Lyn. Throughout Michael's third grade year, Lyn and I communicated on

a weekly basis.

The following year, Michael entered fourth grade, and Lyn enrolled William in kindergarten at Pleasant View Elementary School. Early in the year, Mrs. Morrow, William's kindergarten teacher, asked me to participate in a meeting with Lyn and Mrs. Taylor, the reading specialist at Pleasant View Elementary School, to discuss concerns held by both Mrs. Morrow and Mrs. Taylor about William's ability to maintain attention on classroom instruction. Mrs. Morrow invited me to participate in the meeting because she had learned from Mrs. Purcell and Mrs. Taylor that I maintained an ongoing relationship with Lyn and her children.

Mrs. Morrow also had concerns about William's reading achievement. William's baseline performance on the ISEL (Barr et al., 2002) was low and qualified him for the Pleasant View Elementary School reading support program early in his kindergarten year. Mrs. Morrow reported that William was not able to identify all of the letters in the alphabet and knew a very limited number of sight words. Lyn had already given her permission for William to receive reading support from Mrs. Taylor, the Pleasant View Elementary School reading teacher.

During the meeting attended by Mrs. Morrow, Mrs. Taylor, Lyn, and me, William's teachers shared their concerns about his attention and also concerns both teachers had about William's reading achievement. Mrs. Taylor expressed her opinion that William's inattention was interfering with his reading progress. During the meeting, Lyn provided a detailed account of her son's long and persistent history of ear infections as well as his past participation in speech and language therapy. Lyn told Mrs. Morrow that William's struggles

with attention and reading achievement may be related to his hearing problems.

Soon after the meeting, William was examined by an ear, nose, and throat physician. The physician reported that one of the tubes that had been placed in William's ears had been dislodged, and as a result, William experienced hearing loss. It was unclear how much instruction William had missed that year due to his hearing impairment. Lyn told Mrs. Morrow that William's inability to focus on instruction as well as his delays in reading achievement were a result of hearing loss, not symptoms of ADHD.

During the second semester of William's kindergarten year, a student teacher was assigned to my third grade classroom. During times when my student teacher assumed responsibilities for classroom instruction, I provided William with additional reading instruction at school. William and I worked together in his kindergarten classroom and, on occasion, in a small area outside of his classroom. Additionally, one of my high-achieving third graders met with William 10 minutes each day to review basic kindergarten sight words. In spite of the one-on-one intervention, William continued to demonstrate delays in emergent reading development at school. By the end of his kindergarten year, William was able to recognize a few sight words in isolation on flash cards; however, he was unable to read the same words in beginning-level guided reading books (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Moreover, William struggled to sustain attention on a reading task for more than a few minutes. During the second semester of his kindergarten year, William was qualified to receive speech and language services.

During the summer following William's kindergarten year, I tutored William in his home two or three times each week for 20-30 minutes each session. Lyn and her daughter,

Mae, usually joined William and me during the times I tutored William at the family's home.

I began each session by teaching William how to use basic reading behaviors, including getting ready to read, organizing materials, positioning the chair, listening, taking turns, and pacing. My decision to teach reading behaviors was based on my observations of William in his kindergarten classroom as well as on my initial observations of his home behaviors. During the first tutoring session, William's activity level was high. He left his seat often and moved constantly when he was on the seat. William struggled to ignore the television in the adjoining family room and the frequent conflicts between his siblings. He was unable to maintain attention on my reading instruction for more than a few minutes.

During each tutoring session, I provided William with instruction and practice of basic sight words as well as with instruction and practice of strategies to decode unfamiliar words. By the end of the summer, William could consistently read more than 30 isolated sight words; however, he did not demonstrate a consistent ability to read the same words in books. He could not yet read level B guided reading books (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996) with appropriate accuracy. William rarely persisted in his efforts to decode an unknown word; rather, after a second or two, he became frustrated and asked me to tell him the word.

Early in the fall of 2008, William's first grade teacher, Mrs. Gates, approached me with concerns about William's reading achievement. Mrs. Gates was also concerned about William's ability to maintain attention during instruction in her classroom. Following my conversation with Mrs. Gates, I began to provide William with supplementary reading instruction several days a week after school in my classroom. Occasionally, William asked to borrow informational books from my classroom library to read at home.

Lyn commented on how William and his father enjoyed reading the books I sent home: "He likes anything that's real. He likes real stuff. That's the kind of stuff he wants" (PFL1008). Gradually, I noticed an improvement in William's ability to sustain age-appropriate attention on reading tasks during our tutoring sessions; however, Mrs. Gates continued to express concerns about William's ability to attend to her instruction. Moreover, Mrs. Gates continued to have concerns about William's slow progress in reading development.

Early in the second semester of William's first grade year, I was invited to attend a meeting with Mrs. Gates, Lyn, Mrs. Weigel (the speech and language teacher), and Mrs. Taylor. The meeting was primarily focused on William's poor attention during instruction. Each of the teachers believed that William's inattention was interfering with his reading development. When one of the teachers suggested that Lyn consult with her pediatrician about William's lack of focus at school, Lyn stated that William's inattention at school was a result of hearing loss, not attention deficits. I suggested that, under my direct supervision, one of my high-achieving third grade students could provide William with additional tutoring to promote William's reading development before school each morning.

The following week, William began to receive 10 minutes of daily sight word practice with one of my third grade students. The effects of the new plan were immediate. William's teacher reported a steady increase in William's ability to read sight words in isolation as well as in texts. I continued to provide William with reading instruction several days a week after school throughout the remainder of the school year. Lyn and I had regular phone conversations about William's reading achievement.

Two weeks before the end of William's first grade year, Lyn informed me that she had obtained a prescription for medication to treat William's ADHD symptoms. Lyn told me that medicating William was the way to know whether or not William really had ADHD. However, Lyn asked me not to share this information with any of my colleagues at school. She told me that she wanted unbiased feedback from her son's teachers. I honored her request for confidentiality but encouraged her to notify the school nurse about the fact that William would be medicated at school. Lyn contacted the Pleasant View Elementary School nurse the following day. William's teachers noticed an immediate effect of the medication on William's ability to sustain attention on schoolwork. According to Mrs. Gates and Mrs. Taylor, William's ability to focus on classroom instruction and academic activities improved dramatically. Several days after William began taking medication for ADHD; Lyn informed all of the members of William's team of her decision. I had no involvement with William during his second grade year.

Several times during the 2008-2009 school year, when William was in first grade, Lyn expressed to me concerns she had about her older son, Michael. Early in the year, I met Lyn in the school parking lot after dismissal. Lyn cried as she related her attempts the previous evening to assist Michael with his homework. After three hours of attempting to complete the assigned work, she and Michael were both defeated. When I asked Lyn if she had contacted Michael's teacher, she replied, "No, I have to help him. That's my job" (PFL0908). I explained to Lyn that Mrs. Chandler, Michael's fifth grade teacher, would welcome an opportunity to meet with Lyn to discuss her concerns. Moreover, I assured Lyn that Mrs. Chandler would be willing to make adjustments to his homework program that would

promote Michael's ability to complete homework with a higher level of independence. Lyn was not comfortable initiating a conversation with Mrs. Chandler. She explained, "I don't want her to think of me as a complainer so early in the school year" (PFL0908). However, Lyn did follow through with my suggestion to speak with Mrs. Purcell, a special education teacher who had worked with Michael for several years. Lynn commented, "I've known Mrs. Purcell for four years. She knows where my head is at because she has a lot of the same issues going on in her own family with her son. Who better to understand me than Mrs. Purcell?" (PFL0908).

Several days later, I contacted Lyn and learned that Michael's homework program was modified. As a result of Lyn's conversation with Mrs. Purcell, Mrs. Purcell contacted Michael's classroom teacher, who made immediate modifications to Michael's homework program. Lyn reported to me that the modified homework program was working well for Michael and also for Lyn. I wondered how many weeks Lyn and her family would have suffered had it not been for our serendipitous encounter. I considered how many other parents were at home struggling to support their children's school achievement because they believed that is what good parents do.

During the spring of 2009, I approached Lyn with an invitation to participate in my study. Although I encouraged her to discuss my offer with Albert and her children, Lyn quickly agreed to participate in a multi-year project that would probe deep into her family's life.

I did not work with William during his second grade year; however, I provided both William and Mae with reading support during the following summer, in 2010. I picked up

William and Mae at their home twice each week and transported them to the local public library where I tutored each child separately in reading.

The focus of my work with William during the summer following his second grade year was on decoding, reading comprehension, and listening comprehension. William was always very eager for me to tell him what time we would complete our work together.

During my work that summer with Mae, following her kindergarten year, I used a Language Experience Approach (LEA) (Ashton-Warner, 1963; Stauffer, 1971, April) to increase Mae's reading motivation and exposure to printed language. Mae expressed interest in the LEA activities; however, it was challenging to maintain her attention during our work together. When Mae entered first grade in the fall, she did not demonstrate an ability to match letters and sounds. She did not consistently recognize any words by sight.

I did not work with Mae during her first grade year; however, I met with Mae four or five times each week during the summer following her year in first grade. Mrs. Purcell provided me with materials she used to promote Mae's reading development during the school year: five sight words, 19 letters, and seven diagraphs. Each time that summer, when I arrived at Lyn's home to tutor Mae, I invited William to read with me. I often brought books for William; however, each time I invited him to read with me, he declined.

During our tutoring session in the summer following Mae's first grade year, Mae and I worked together at a local bookstore, at Pleasant View Elementary School, and at Lyn's home at the dining room table. Based on recommendations by the neuropsychologist, I limited my sessions with Mae to no more than 30 minutes each session. However, I was pleasantly surprised that Mae was usually eager to work with me. Mae's ability to maintain attention on

the reading activities in which I attempted to engage her was inconsistent.

During our first visit to a local bookstore, I purchased a book about ballet for Mae. We read the book together during the first five tutor sessions. I used flash cards to promote Mae's automatic recognition of basic sight words in the ballet book. The sight words I selected were words commonly used in other beginning reader books that I used to promote Mae's reading achievement.

During the first half of each tutoring session with Mae following her first grade year, I focused my instruction on letter recognition, word recognition, phonemic awareness, and phonological awareness. Mae quickly demonstrated a consistent ability to accurately and automatically recognize four of the five sight words Mrs. Purcell asked me to work on with Mae. She often read "of" incorrectly until the beginning of August when she finally mastered that word. By the end of the summer, Mae could consistently read 25 basic sight words. On July 27, 2011, Mae independently read her first book.

I did not work with either William or Mae during the 2011-2012 school year; however, during the summer of 2012, I tutored Mae four or five times each week. I used a published reading program Mrs. Purcell had recommended. I allowed Mae to select the location of each tutoring session. Mae typically preferred to work at home at the dining room table; however, occasionally, we worked at the library.

During our first tutoring session, at the local public library, Mae signed up for the library's summer reading program. Children who participate in the summer reading program earn points for the number of minutes they read or number of pages they read according to their age and reading levels. William accompanied Mae and me to the library for the first

tutoring session; however, in spite of urging from me, he did not want to sign up for the summer reading program.

My preexisting relationship with Lyn, Michael, William, and Mae situates my study in a context of mutual interests. My basic understanding of the roles Lyn assumed in her children's reading development served as an underlying impetus for my rigorous examination of the beliefs that mediated the ways Lyn involved herself in her children's reading lives inside and outside of school.

Setting the Portrait Contexts

"The only way to interpret people's actions, perspectives, and talk is to see them in context" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997b, p. 11).

The portrait context serves as a point of reference for understanding what portrait actors say and do (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997c). Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997c) argued that portrait context is a holistic vantage point from which the portrait actors' histories and stories are revealed. During my study, I collected data in two primary contexts: in Lyn's home and in various classroom settings within Lyn's children's schools.

Home context

Lyn and Albert's home was located in a quiet neighborhood approximately one mile from Pleasant View Elementary School. Lyn drove William and Mae to school in the morning. William and Mae usually walked home together after school. Michael commuted to the Miller Middle School across town on a school bus.

Lyn and Albert were proud of the extensive renovations they had made on their home. Lyn maintained a yard filled with plants and flowers. The family spent extensive periods of time together at home outside during the summer months. A large above-ground pool was situated on a multi-level wooden deck in Albert and Lyn's back yard. Lyn and Albert constructed the deck. Michael, William, and Mae played together in a large tree house that featured a spiral staircase on the outside. Albert designed and constructed the tree house. A swing set and a sandbox occupied space under the tree house. The family used an outdoor grill to prepare meals during the summer. Numerous toys were visible in the front and back yards of the family home.

Many of the families in Lyn's neighborhood have elementary-aged children; however, children are not typically seen playing outside. I never observed children, other than Michael, William, or Mae, playing in the neighborhood or in neighbors' yards during the visits I made to Lyn's home prior to my study.

A large wooden table and chairs were situated in a spacious dining room immediately inside of the front entrance to Albert and Lyn's home. The dining room was a hub of activity that the family used for multiple purposes including dining, conversations, and arts and crafts projects. A large family room, where members of the Davis family met to watch television and play video games, was adjacent to the dining room. There was a large opening between the two rooms. The television in the family room was usually turned on during times when I conducted interviews and observations at Lyn's home and also during times when Lyn and I engaged in informal conversations in her home.

Lyn and Albert provided their children with regular family outings to local restaurants,

local entertainment venues, and to a lake house owned by Albert's parents in a neighboring state. Michael, William, and Mae enjoyed riding their bicycles and various motorized recreational vehicles around their neighborhood. During the summer, Lyn, Albert, and their children spent time each day in their swimming pool.

<div align="center">School context</div>

William and Mae attended Pleasant View Elementary School. The following statistics were reported on the 2011-2012 State Report Card for Pleasant View Elementary School:

- The student population was 469.

- Caucasian students comprised 86.4% of the Pleasant View population, while 2.1% of the Pleasant View students were Black, 7.2% were Hispanic, 1.3% were Asian, and 3.0% were Multi Racial.

- Students from low-income families accounted for 13% of the Pleasant View Elementary School population, including Lyn's family.

- Parent involvement at Pleasant View Elementary School was 100%.

- Results of the 2012 State Achievement Test for reading demonstrated that 92% of third, fourth, and fifth graders at Pleasant View Elementary School met or exceeded state standards.

Michael attended Miller Middle School, the local middle school. The following statistics were published on the state report card for the 2011-2012 school year:

- Student enrollment at Miller Middle School was 1,480.

- Caucasian students comprised 82.6% of the total student population, while 3.6% of

the students were Black, 8.2% were Hispanic, 0.3% were Asian, and 2.1% were Multi Racial.

- Students identified as being from low-income families comprised 13% of the total Miller Middle School student population.

- Parent involvement at Miller Middle School was 100%.

- Results of the 2011-2012 standardized state reading achievement tests for reading demonstrated that 92% of the students at Miller Middle School met or exceeded state standards.

Conclusion

The contexts in which Lyn and her children engaged in reading provided a foundation for understanding how Lyn's beliefs influenced her children's reading development and for understanding the roles Lyn assumed in Michael, William, and Mae's reading lives. In the following chapter, I explain how I used portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) to design my study.

CHAPTER 4

A METHODOLOGY OF GOODNESS

"The drawing of the portrait is placed in social and cultural context and shaped through dialogue between the portraitist and the subject, each one negotiating the discourse and shaping the evolving image" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997a, p. xv).

I describe the methodological structure of my study in this chapter. I begin with a thorough discussion of my research design. Next, I explain the plan I employed for collecting data over the course of 11 months. In the third section of this chapter, I describe the techniques I used to analyze the data. In the fourth and final section of this chapter, I explain the techniques and steps I employed to validate the data.

Design of My Study

"As one moves closer to the unique characteristics of a person or a place, one discovers the universal" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997b, p. 14).

I approached my study through a phenomenological lens that allowed me to probe the complex and little understood meanings of reading beliefs. Moreover, I employed portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) as a qualitative methodology that allowed me to enter and participate in the lives of the portrait actors in my study. Portraiture allowed me to challenge past research practices in which ethnographic researchers distanced themselves from the lives of research participants (Angrosino, 2008). My role as portraitist and "instrument of inquiry" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997b, p. 13) allowed me to assert my voice as

portraitist. Angrosino (2008) argued that the voice of the ethnographic researcher must remain at the forefront of the ethnography as a means of contextualizing the "interactions, relationships, and emotional states" (p. 164) with which the researcher enters the field. The methodology I employed in my study enabled me to focus my examination on beliefs, a less salient and little understood aspect of reading development.

<div align="center">Voices of portraiture</div>

"Voice is the individualistic impression of the researcher on the portrait" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 106).

Voice is the fundamental research tool portraitists use to collect and analyze the stories of the portrait actors (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Portraiture demands the constant presence of the portraitist's voice; however, Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) argued that the voice of the portraitist must be controlled and in harmony with the voices of the portrait actors. The portraitists' distinct voices coalesce to reveal a coherent "aesthetic whole" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997d, p. 33) that is represented in the completed portrait.

Voice of witness

The voice of witness (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) I employed in my study situated me in a position to observe the portrait actors' narrative and behavioral patterns while simultaneously allowing me to maintain my view of the developing "aesthetic whole" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997d, p. 33). Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) suggested that voice of witness allows the portraitist to observe habits, behaviors, and perspectives of the

portrait actors that often go unnoticed.

Voice of interpretation

The *voice of interpretation* (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) I employed in my study strengthened my stance as portraitist. During my study, I worked alongside the actors in a unified effort to co-construct a portrait that resonated the complex meanings of the actors' beliefs about reading. I aimed to produce a completed portrait rich with descriptive evidence that would allow the readers of my portrait to offer opposing hypotheses and draw differing interpretations (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

Voice of preoccupation

I approached my study with assumptions that Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) viewed as *voice of preoccupation*. My voice of preoccupation guided me from conception to completion of my study. Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) suggested that the portraitist's voice of preoccupation serves as a framework for defining and interpreting reality.

Voice of autobiography

My unique experiences and perspectives are reflected in my *voice of autobiography* (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997d) argued that the portraitist's voice of autobiography ensures a balance of a "self-possession and selfless" (p. 5) accounting of the portrait actors' lives. During my study, my voice of autobiography was transformed by my relationships and experiences with the portrait actors.

<u>Voice discerning other voices</u>

Listening *for* voice rather than listening *to* voice situates the portraitist in a stance of assertiveness (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997d). Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997d) argued that the nuances in the portrait actors' words and behaviors allow the portraitist to more deeply probe the meaning of the emerging portrait. A central purpose of my study was to probe the nuances of the actors' beliefs about reading, including the nature and origin of their beliefs.

<u>Voice in dialogue</u>

Voice in dialogue (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997d) is a convergence of the portraitist's voice and the voices of the portrait actors. Voice in dialogue reflects emerging relationships of trust, empathy, and intimacy among the portraitist and portrait actors (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). My relationships with the portrait actors in my study were strengthened by our mutual aim to promote Lyn's children's reading development in order for them to access all of their rights within each of their ecological environments.

Focusing the Lens of My Study on Goodness and Caring

"Goodness is imperfect and changing" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983, p. 24).

Portraiture is grounded in a search for *goodness* (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983). Goodness is not an idealized representation of people and their experiences; rather, goodness is characterized by "the mixture of parts that produce a whole … including measureable as well as less tangible, more elusive qualities that can only be discerned through close, vivid

description, through subtle nuances, through detailed narratives" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983, p. 23). Moreover, Lawrence-Lightfoot (1983) argued that a search for goodness is a search for balance that illuminates the full range of human emotions including strengths, weaknesses, capabilities, and vulnerabilities.

A search for goodness runs counter to a deficit view (Auerbach, 1989) of families that situates children and their families in positions of powerlessness and dependency (Rogers, 2003). Moreover, studies that examine differences in children's reading development often adopt a deficit view of parents based upon narrow assessments of families' strengths and capacities (Harry & Klingner, 2007). Misappropriation of blame often results in the perpetuation of children's learning problems (Kameenui, 1993). Gonzalez, Moll, and Amanti (2005b) argued that resiliency is a defining characteristic of families who have experienced significant challenges in their lives. Moreover, Gonzalez et al. (2005b) suggested that teachers can learn about their students' social lives when they establish relationships of trust with students' families. My interest in promoting the reading development of Michael, William, and Mae served as a basis for the establishment of trust with the portrait actors.

Shaping Relationships

"Empathy is seen as the channel of emotional resonance, the vehicle for gaining a deep understanding" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 147).

Empathetic regard (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) is a central tenet of portraiture. Empathy is the vehicle with which the portraitist develops a critical view of the portrait actors' stories (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Intimacy defines the "depth of

connection" (p. 147) among the portraitist and the actors. A mutual interest in the ways Michael, William, and Mae were developing as readers united the portrait actors and me in an intense and rigorous process of *human archeology* (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997b) as we searched for ways to better understand how our roles in Lyn's children's lives were influencing the children's reading development. Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997b) coined the phrase human archeology to "convey the depth and penetration of the inquiry, the richness of the layers of human experience, the search for ancestral and generational artifacts, and the painstaking, carful labor that the metaphorical dig requires" (p. 15).

Situating Portraiture in Sociocultural Inquiry

"The portraits are designed to capture the richness, complexity, and dimensionality of human experience in social and cultural context" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997b, p. 3).

Portraiture is situated in the rich tradition of sociocultural inquiry. According to Au (1997), "A basic tenet of sociocultural theory is that human activity, including literacy learning, can only be understood through the study of its social origins" (p. 183). Reading development evolves from young children's earliest encounters with spoken and written texts in social settings (Cooper, 1997). Hulit and Howard (1993) posited, "The single most important factor in the acquisition of reading skills is the child's home environment" (p. 251). The words parents use to engage children in their social communities are not arbitrary; rather, they are imbued with beliefs that reflect their unique experiences. Gonzalez et al. (2005a) suggested that children's school achievement can be enhanced when teachers understand their students' lives outside of school.

Searching for Transformation

"Making and finding meaning through art is a transformative experience" (Davis, 1997a, p. 35).

Transformation is central to portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). During a mutual search for meaning, the portraitist and the portrait actors may experience a shift in "self-understanding" (Davis, 1997a, p. 35) as they probe the deep meaning of their lives and search to incorporate new understandings into the historical contexts of their lived experiences. Schensul and Schensul (1992) argued that transformation should preserve individual and group identities; however, the boundaries that define the cultures within which the portraitist and the actors live may be altered. The familiar becomes strange (Heath & Street, 2008) as the portraitist's and the actors' views of themselves, their words, and each other are transformed by their mutual search for meaning.

Sketching the Portrait Canvas

"The only way to find a larger vision is to be somewhere in particular" (Haraway, 1988, p. 590).

The canvas for my study was shaped by my personal and professional experiences, my perspectives, and my preexisting relationships with all but one of the portrait actors. As portraitist of my study, I positioned myself inside the research study as an "instrument of inquiry" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997b, p. 13). During my study, I surpassed the traditional stance of research neutrality by developing intimate relationships with each of the portrait

actors. Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997e) argued that intimacy refers to a deep connection among the portraitist and the portrait actors. The establishment of intimate relationships with each of the portrait actors allowed me to co-construct a completed portrait that illuminates the meanings, natures, and origins of the beliefs Lyn held about reading and how Lyn's beliefs influenced her children's reading development.

Collecting the Data

"There is no particular moment when data gathering begins. It begins before there is commitment to do my study: backgrounding, acquaintance with other cases, first impressions" (Stake, 1995, p. 49).

The primary techniques I used to collect data during the 11 months of my study were interviews (Kvale, 1996) and ethnographic observations (Heath & Street, 2008). I collected artifacts (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984) to clarify and support the meaning of interview and observation data. I used field notes (Heath & Street, 2008) and conceptual memos (Heath & Street, 2008) to further clarify the meaning of data I collected from interviews, observations, field notes, and artifacts.

Three broad themes guided my study and my selection of data collection techniques:

1. examining beliefs about reading and reading development,

2. examining the nature and origin of beliefs about reading and reading development, and

3. examining relationships among reading beliefs, reading roles, and reading practices.

I developed the themes during the design phase of my study. During the first phase of data analysis, I classified data according to theme. During each subsequent phase of data analysis, I used the themes to draw out recurring patterns of meaning.

Interviews

"The way people talk about their lives is of significance, that the language they use and the connections they make reveal the world that they see and in which they act" (Gilligan, 1982, p. 2).

I employed in-depth interviewing (Seidman, 1998) as a principal mechanism for examining the portrait actors' beliefs about reading. Seidman (1998) argued that "a basic assumption of in-depth interviewing research is that the meaning people make of their experience affects the way they carry out that experience" (p. 4). During my study, I conducted multiple scheduled interviews with each of the portrait actors. Scheduled interviews were planned in advance to take place at a specified time and place for specified purposes.

Throughout the course of my study, I engaged in numerous informal conversations with each of the portrait actors within the contexts of our professional associations. I define informal conversations as unscheduled dialogue in which I engaged with one or more portrait actors in natural ecological environments

I obtained written permission from the portrait actors to document our informal conversations when I believed that the conversations held meaning that would allow me to answer my research questions. I did not document every informal conversation in which I

engaged with the portrait actors during my study. I documented five informal conversations with Lyn and two informal conversations with Michael. I did not document any of the informal conversations I had with William, Mae, or the teacher actors.

Approach to interviewing

I designed in-depth interviews to obtain "empathic access" (Kvale, 1996, p. 125) to the portrait actors' beliefs and experiences related to reading. Kvale (1996) characterized empathic access as a process during which an interviewer and an interviewee move beyond mere conversation to deep dialogue grounded in trust and themes of mutual interest.

Interview model

I adapted Seidman's (1998) in-depth interviewing model to fit the specific purposes of my study. Seidman's model is comprised of three in-depth interviews designed to elicit a reconstruction of the participants' experiences that are being examined. Each interview in Seidman's model is focused on a particular aspect of the participants' experience:

- Purpose 1: Focused Life History,
- Purpose 2: The Details of Experience, and
- Purpose 3: Reflection on Meaning.

My adaptation of Seidman's model reflects the specific purposes of my study:

- Purpose 1: Focused Reading History,
- Purpose 2: Details of Experience with Reading, and
- Purpose 3: Reflection on Meaning of History and Experience with Reading.

My stance as portraitist of my study positioned me side-by-side with the portrait actors in a concerted effort to co-construct a portrait of Lyn's particular beliefs about reading.

Model used to collect and organize interview data in my study

During my study, I conducted five scheduled interviews with Lyn, two scheduled interviews with each of Lyn's children, and three scheduled interviews with each of Lyn's children's teachers. Additionally, I conducted five unscheduled interviews with Lyn and two unscheduled interviews with Michael.

The purpose of the first scheduled interview with Lyn was to examine the meaning of her historical relationship with reading. During the second interview with Lyn, I examined the meaning of her beliefs about early reading development and the meaning of the beliefs she held about her children's early reading development. An additional purpose of the second interview was to examine the meaning of the beliefs Lyn held about the roles she assumed in her children's reading development.

During the third interview, I examined the meaning of Lyn's beliefs about how she used reading. An additional purpose of the third interview with Lyn was to examine the meaning of Lyn's beliefs about herself and her children as readers. A final purpose of the third interview with Lyn was to examine the meaning of Lyn's beliefs about the roles she played in her children's reading development.

The primary purpose of the fourth interview was to probe the meaning of Lyn's beliefs about how other people influenced her reading development and how she and other people influenced Michael's, William's and Mae's reading development inside and outside of school.

During the fifth and final interview with Lyn, I examined the meaning of Lyn's beliefs about her participation in my study. A secondary purpose of the fifth interview was to examine the meaning of Lyn's beliefs about her children's participation in my study.

I conducted three scheduled interviews with five of Lyn's children's teachers. First, I interviewed each of Lyn's children's classroom teachers. I interviewed Mrs. Taylor, the reading specialist at Pleasant View Elementary School who worked with William and Mae, as well as Mrs. Purcell, a special education teacher at Pleasant View who worked with Mae.

During the first interview with each of Lyn's children's teachers, I examined the teachers' beliefs about their historical relationships with reading. During the second interview, I examined the teachers' beliefs about reading development. I also examined the teachers' beliefs about their roles in Lyn's children's reading development. Finally, during the second interview, I examined the teachers' beliefs about Lyn's roles in her children's reading development. During the third interview, I examined the teachers' beliefs about how they work together with Lyn to promote her children's reading development. Finally, during the last interview with Lyn's children's teachers, I examined the teachers' beliefs about the similarities and differences in the ways the teachers read with Lyn's children and the ways Lyn reads with her children.

I conducted two scheduled interviews with each of Lyn's three children. During the first interview with each one of Lyn's children, I examined each of the children's beliefs about reading. A secondary purpose of the first interviews with Lyn's children was to examine the children's beliefs about themselves as readers. During my first interviews with Michael, William, and Mae, I examined the children's beliefs about the roles Lyn, Albert, and

other adults play in the children's reading lives.

During the second interviews with Lyn's children, I examined each of the children's beliefs about good readers. A secondary purpose of the second interview was to examine the children's beliefs about their own reading capacities.

I used a recording application on my cellular phone to document each of the interviews I conducted during my study. The recordings were stored in labeled files in my phone as well as in labeled files on my personal computer. I transcribed each recorded interview within a week of collecting the interview data. I coded all of the interview data during the summer following the conclusion of my study. A list of the final codes is shown in Appendix G.

<u>Ethnographic observation</u>

"Ethnographies provide the landscapes and details of worlds" (Purcell-Gates, 2004, p. 92).

During my study, I employed ethnographic observation to refine the portrait that began to emerge from initial interviews with the portrait actors in my study. Moreover, ethnographic observation afforded me opportunities to examine the meaning of the portrait actors' relationships with reading within the natural cultural contexts (Purcell-Gates, 2004) of their everyday lives. Lawrence-Lightfoot (1983) argued, "We have little understanding of how to interpret a behavior, an attitude, a value unless we see it embedded in a context and have some idea of the history and evolution of the ideals and norm of that setting" (p. 23).

Approach to conducting ethnographic observations in my study

I adopted an ethnographic approach to observation as a means of contextualizing the meanings of the portrait actors' beliefs about reading. Heath and Street (2008) argued that ethnographic researchers must maintain a "core concern for the integrity of human life" (p. 30) as they enter the research field to uncover the meaning that resides in the conversations and behaviors of the portrait actors. Moreover, researchers who employ an ethnographic approach must maintain a profound respect for the local knowledge of those being observed (Heath & Street, 2008).

Model used to collect and organize ethnographic observation data in my study

Portraiture shaped the ethnographic approach I used to collect observational data during my study. *Context* (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997c) was the reference point from which I observed the portrait actors as they engaged in reading practices. Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997c) argued that "the portraitist, then, believes that human experience has meaning in a particular social, cultural, and historical context" (p. 43). *Voice* (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) situated me as the instrument of research in my study and defined the lens through which I observed the portrait actors as they discussed and interacted with reading. Next, I positioned myself side-by-side with the portrait actors as they allowed me to observe them negotiating their relationships with reading and with each other.

Use of ethnographic observation in my study

During my study, I used digital photographs, audio recordings, and video recordings to

record my observations of Lyn, her children, and her children's teachers in multiple

ecological environments, including Lyn's home and classrooms in the children's schools.

The decision to use one recording tool over another or whether to use several tools during the

same observation was a collaborative decision reached by the portrait actors and me prior to

collection of observation data. Immediately following most observations, I used field notes

(Merriam, 1988) to clarify my interpretation of observation data. Merriam (1988)

characterized the research participant observer as a capable "human instrument" (p. 103)

whose aim it is to capture complex human interactions. I documented my field notes with an

audio recorder on my cellular phone. I transcribed, coded, and analyzed all documented field

notes.

I recorded my general reactions and questions that arose during interviews and

observations in "conceptual memos" (Heath & Street, 2008, p. 79). Heath and Street (2008)

argued that conceptual memos serve as a means of interpreting and analyzing descriptive field

notes. I documented my conceptual memos with a recording device on my cellular phone

immediately after I recorded field notes. I transcribed, coded, and analyzed all of my

conceptual memos.

My research design included formal and informal observations of the portrait actors. I

characterized *formal observations* as observations that were scheduled at times during which

the actors were engaging in events that were centered on reading. Formal observations in the

school settings included times during which Lyn's children were receiving reading instruction

from their teachers. I designed formal observations in Lyn's home to be scheduled at times

during which one or more of Lyn's children would be engaged in self-selected reading for

leisure or engaged in reading homework. I revised my plan to conduct formal observations at Lyn's home early in my study, following an interview with Lyn. Lyn stated that she would not force her children to read: "Whether they did it or didn't do it, it was purely up to them" (FL0112). Moreover, Lyn believed that forcing her children to read would discourage them from reading and would cause them to resent her (FL0312). Therefore, I revised my original data collection plan. I conducted formal observations of Lyn's children in their school settings; however, my observations of Lyn and her children in their home were informal. Informal observations of the portrait actors were scheduled during times when I did not know ahead of time whether or not Lyn or her children would be engaged in reading.

I conducted a total of six informal observations at Lyn's home during times when Lyn and at least one of her children were present. I documented observations in field notes. I also used field notes to document observations I made during interviews with the actors. I transcribed, coded, and analyzed all field notes. I also conducted a total of 10 observations in various settings in each of Lyn's children's schools during scheduled times when Michael, William, and Mae were directly engaged in literacy activities with their teachers. I conducted two observations of Michael in his classroom at Miller Middle School. He received whole group instruction from his teacher, Mrs. Hart, during both observations.

On two separate occasions, I observed William receiving reading instruction from his classroom teacher, Mrs. St. Pierre, in his classroom at Pleasant View Elementary School. During my first observation of William, he received small group instruction with three other students in his fourth grade classroom. During my second observation of William at school, he received literacy instruction in a whole group setting in his classroom.

I conducted six observations of Mae at Pleasant View Elementary School. First, I observed Mae in her classroom during times when she received individual reading instruction from her classroom teacher, Mrs. Collins. I also conducted two observations of Mae during times she received individual reading instruction from Mrs. Taylor, the Pleasant View Elementary School reading specialist. Finally, I conducted two observations of Mae during times she received reading instruction from Mrs. Purcell, one of the special education teachers at Pleasant View Elementary School. Mrs. Purcell delivered reading instruction to Mae and one other student during my first observation of Mae working with Mrs. Purcell. During my second observation of Mae receiving reading instruction from Mrs. Purcell, Mae received individual reading instruction.

<div align="center">Artifacts</div>

<div align="center">"In addition to what they say and how they behave, human beings make and use
things" (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984, p. 153).</div>

I collected artifacts during interviews and observations in my study: "*Artifacts* for literacy researchers usually mean physical evidence of literacy instruction, learning, or practice" (Purcell-Gates, 2004, p. 106).

Approach to collecting artifacts in my study

Artifacts are contextualized representations of people's everyday lives (Merriam, 1988). Marshall and Rossman (2006) argued that collection of artifacts "is an unobtrusive method, rich in portraying the values and beliefs of participants in the setting" (p. 107). In my

study, I focused my collection of artifacts primarily upon collection of digital photographs and video recordings to support interview and observation data.

Model used to collect and organize artifacts in my study

I used my cellular phone and a digital camera to document artifacts as well as experiences with the portrait actors. I generated electronic and hard copy photographs of each artifact, and I wrote a unique numeric code on the back of each photograph. I assigned unique file names to video recordings. The artifacts were organized in chronological order according to the date on which they were collected.

Use of artifacts in my study

The artifacts I collected during my study served as visual representations of the interview and observation data. During data analysis, I often reexamined artifact data in order to clarify the meaning of interview and observation data. Moreover, artifacts preserved my connection with the portrait actors after I had completed my collection of data, when my level of interaction with the actors had substantially decreased.

Searching for Meaning: A Process of Giving Shape to the Developing Portrait

"First, we listen for repetitive refrains that are spoken (or appear) frequently and persistently, forming a collective expression of commonly held views" (Davis, 1997b, p. 193).

A search for coherence defines the process of analyzing the themes and pattern in the developing portrait. Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997f) suggested that the portraitist's voice of

preoccupation is central to interpreting the meaning of the collected data. Throughout the reflexive process of analyzing the data I collected during my study, I often returned to the prologue of my paper to reread, revise, and reflect upon my own transformation as a means of balancing my voice with the voices of the actors.

<div align="center">Data analysis model</div>

In my study, I aimed to employ an analysis model that incorporated a simultaneous process of collecting, transcribing, coding, and analyzing qualitative data (Maxwell, 2005). I was usually successful at transcribing data within a week of the time it was collected; however, the demands of my personal and professional life negated my ability to simultaneously collect, transcribe, code, and analyze all of the data. I began the rigorous process of coding, classifying, categorizing, and analyzing data during the summer following the conclusion of my study and completed the process in the spring of the following year.

<div align="center">Data analysis techniques</div>

I employed a multi-step process to analyze the data I collected in my study. The process of transcribing data from interviews, observations, field notes, and conceptual memos was the first step in analyzing the data I collected during my study. During the second step of analysis, I created three spreadsheets, one for each predetermined theme. An example of a partial spreadsheet is shown in Appendix H. I used abbreviations to reference the theories:

- Bandura's (1997) theory of self-efficacy (SE),

- Bronfenbrenner's (1979) theory of human ecological development (HED),

- Funds of knowledge (FOK) theory (Gonzalez et al., 2005a), and

- Sociocultural (S) theory (Vygotsky, 1978).

The spreadsheets allowed me to reorganize and analyze the data in multiple ways. For example, I began by sorting the data by data type according to dates of collection. Later, I sorted the data by category codes (see Appendix I). I organized each spreadsheet into six labeled columns (see Table 2).

In my study, I employed Wiersma and Jurs's (2009) definition of coding as "the process of organizing data and obtaining data reduction. In essence, it is the process by which qualitative researchers see what they have in the data" (p. 238). Once I transcribed the data and prepared the spreadsheets, I moved on to the third step of my analysis, during which I retyped data from transcribed interviews, observation notes, field notes, and conceptual memos into the spreadsheets. I coded interview data first because I believed that the statements made by the actors during interviews would contain meaning about the nature and origin of the actors' beliefs. Moreover, I believed that my interpretation of the nature and origin of the actors' beliefs would clarify my interpretation of data from observations and field notes. I coded conceptual memo data last to situate my interpretation of interview, observation, and field note data in the perspective I held at the time I collected the data.

Occasionally, multiple themes were reflected in a single chunk of data. In those circumstances, I placed the data into the theme that I determined was most strongly reflected in the chunk of data.

I assigned a unique code for each category of meaning that I identified in data. As

Table 2

Organization of Data Into Spreadsheets

Column	Information Type
Column A	Date on which the data was collected
Column B	Code that identifies the portrait actor from whom the data was collected or the portrait actor to whom the data refers
Column C	Coded data type: - Interview (I) - Observation (O) - Field note (N) - Conceptual memo (C) - A "P" was placed in front of codes to indicate that the data was collected prior to the start of the study. I obtained permission to use data collected prior to the start of my study.
Column D	Page number of the transcription from which the chunk of data was copied (I define a chunk of data as one or more phrases or one or more sentences that express a connected thought.)
Column E	Theory or theories reflected in the data
Column F	Quotes (from portrait actors) or notes (from field notes or conceptual memos)
Columns G through R	Category codes

each new category of meaning emerged from the data, I entered the new category codes into separate columns on each of the four spreadsheets. Each time a new category emerged and was coded, I returned to previously coded data to determine whether or not the new category was reflected in that data. The vast majority of the data chunks fit into multiple categories.

During the fourth step of analysis, I created a spreadsheet for each category and retyped each chunk of data from interviews, observations, conceptual memos, and field notes onto the new spreadsheets. Retyping, instead of copying and pasting each chunk of data, strengthened my connection to the portrait actors' stories and the resonance of the "group voice" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 114) and allowed me to reanalyze my interpretation of the data. Through this reanalysis, I collapsed some of the data from multiple categories into a single category.

In the fifth step of analysis, I created a Microsoft Word document for each coded category. I reentered the most essential data from each of the spreadsheets that were separated into coded categories. The most essential data were data that most directly answered my research questions. The process of retyping the data multiple times served as a means of validating my interpretations.

Validation: Synthesizing the Parts Into a Believable Aesthetic Whole

"Validity is a goal rather than a product; it is never something that can be proven or taken for granted" (Maxwell, 2005, p. 105).

In the current section, I explain how I aimed to establish the trustworthiness and believability of my completed portrait. Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997d) argued that a believable

portrait is one that resonates with the portrait actors, the readers of the portrait, and the portraitist herself.

Validation approach

I approached my study by employing a methodology that situated me inside my study, alongside Lyn, her children, and her children's teachers in multiple contexts for an extended length of time. Eisenhart and Howe (1992) contended that "the internal validity of ethnographic research is judged to be strong when researchers spend long periods of time in the field so as to get to know participants, their views, and situations" (p. 647). Moreover, the length of my study allowed me to develop intimate relationships with each of the portrait actors in my study that may have increased the actors' willingness to share their private beliefs.

Validation model

The dimensions of portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997g) served as a model with which I aimed to establish the trustworthiness and believability of the completed portrait. Each of the four dimensions guided me as I pieced together patterns in the data into an "aesthetic whole" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997d, p. 33).

Dimension 1: Conception

Conception is represented in the construction of the "overarching story" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997g, p. 247). Moreover, conception focuses the portraitist's view on the patterns

and themes that emerge from the developing story.

Dimension 2: Structure

Structure refers to the formal framework on which my study is organized. Portraiture demands that the structure of the portrait is strengthened by clearly exposed themes (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997g).

Dimension 3: Form

Form "captures the emotion and movement" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997g, p. 254) of the emerging themes and patterns in the developing portrait. Form is the organic element with which the portraitist blends the aesthetic and scientific pieces of the developing portrait in order to present a completed whole.

Dimension 4: Narrative coherence

Narrative coherence is achieved when the completed portrait reflects a unified whole, and when the multiple parts of the portrait fit together in a manner that makes sense to the portrait actors, to the readers, and to the portraitist.

<div align="center">Validation technique</div>

During my study, I employed six of Maxwell's (2005) validity checks to establish the believability and trustworthiness of the completed portrait in my study.

Technique 1: Intensive, long-term involvement

My study was characterized by 11 months of "intensive, long-term involvement" (Maxwell, 2005, p. 110) with the portrait actors in multiple ecological settings. My study can be characterized as being extensive not only in terms of the length of time I spent in the field collecting data, but also in terms of the multiple ecological environments in which I collected data. I collected data in Lyn's home and in some of the settings in which Michael, William, and Mae work at school.

Technique 2: Collection of rich data

I collected "thick" (Geertz, 1973, p. 7), "rich" (Maxwell, 2005, pp. 110-111) data from each portrait actor during multiple in-depth interviews and observations in multiple ecological environments. Moreover, I collected artifacts to clarify the meaning of interview and observation data. Data I collected in field notes and conceptual memos further refined my interpretation of interview and observation data.

Technique 3: Triangulation

Employment of multiple data collection techniques, including interviews, observations, field notes, conceptual memos, and collection of artifacts, allowed me to identify and confirm patterns and tensions in the data.

Technique 4: Comparison

Comparison is the cornerstone of the processes I employed to analyze and validate

patterns and tensions in interview, observation, and artifact data. I began the intense and lengthy process of comparing data by transcribing interview and observation data. During transcription, the voices of the individual portrait actors were unified into a connected group. Next, I used a unique code to identify each pattern in the transcribed data. I organized the coded data onto spreadsheets. Each spreadsheet contained data with the same code. By retyping the data instead of copying and pasting it from the transcription documents onto the spreadsheets, I reexamined the meaning of the data. During the process of organizing the coded data onto spreadsheets, I identified tensions that existed among and within the actors. I organized data that illuminated tensions into separate documents by category. The process of separating the tensions into categories allowed me to more closely analyze the meaning in the tensions. Finally, I reentered essential data from each spreadsheet onto a summarizing document. I define *essential data* as data that most directly answers my research questions. The rigorous process of comparison I used to analyze and validate the findings in my study strengthens the trustworthiness and believability of my completed portrait.

Technique 5: Member checking

My research design included a plan to employ *checking* (Maxwell, 2005) to validate my interpretation of interview, observation, and artifact data. Michael, William, and Mae assented to member checks of some, but not all, of the interview data I collected from them. The adult actors refused my invitations to participate in member check interview by explaining that they trusted me and did not feel the need to review or discuss transcribed data.

<u>Technique 6: Searching for discrepant evidence and negative cases</u>

Throughout the process of collecting and analyzing data, I searched for discrepant or negative data. My use of this technique increased the likelihood that I would recognize evidence that challenged my initial interpretation of the meaning of the data. Maxwell (2005) argued that during analysis, it is critical to rigorously examine both data that support emerging themes and data that conflict with emerging themes.

Conclusion

"Any part of the whole must remain incomplete in its meaning and form. It must be in need of the whole. Otherwise it will be self-sufficient and closed" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997g, p. 280).

My research design is grounded in the humanistic theories that frame my study. Portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) united the actors and me in a mutual examination of the beliefs that shaped Lyn's children's reading development. Ethnographic observation (Heath & Street, 2008) provided me with access into the intimate lives of the portrait actors. My study was focused by a search for goodness (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983). In the following chapter, I unveil a completed portrait that illuminates the meaning of Lyn's beliefs.

CHAPTER 5

UNVEILING THE PORTRAIT

"I finally get to show someone what my life is outside of school" (FL0612).

I begin this chapter by unveiling four themes that were illuminated in the data I collected during my study. In the second section of this chapter, I describe Lyn's beliefs about reading and how her beliefs influenced the roles she assumed in her children's reading development. At the end of the second section, I present data that describes the nature and origin of Lyn's beliefs. In the third section of this chapter, I present data that describes Lyn's children's beliefs. In the fourth and final section of this chapter, I describe the children's teachers' beliefs.

Illuminating Themes in the Data

Three predetermined broad themes guided my study and my selection of data collection techniques:

1. examining beliefs about reading and reading development,

2. examining the nature and origin of beliefs about reading and reading development, and

3. examining relationships among reading beliefs, reading roles, and reading practices.

Three additional themes were illuminated in the data I collected during my study:

1. values,

2. goodness in the relationships among Lyn, her children, and her children's teachers, and

3. tensions in

    a. Lyn's beliefs about reading,

    b. the nature and origin of Lyn's relationship with reading and the nature and origin of the teachers' relationships with reading,

    c. Lyn's reading beliefs and the teachers' reading beliefs,

    d. Lyn's reading practices and the teachers' reading practices, and

    e. the children's home and school reading environments.

My study was focused on the actors' beliefs about reading; however, during my analysis of interview and observation data, values emerged as a particular type of belief held by the actors. Maio and Olson (1998) argued that values are "evaluative beliefs" (p. 294). Moreover, Maio and Olson contended that values motivate behavior. In this chapter, I discuss tensions that existed among the actors' beliefs, behaviors, and values. In the following section, I place the initial brushstrokes on the portrait canvas by describing Lyn's beliefs.

Lyn's Beliefs

"The only thing that makes me want to read now is the fact that I have to teach it to my kids, and I have to help them. That's the only thing" (FL0811).

I arrived at Lyn's home for our first interview on a warm summer morning early in August of 2011. Lyn greeted me at the door and ushered me into her dining room where she

and I sat down to begin the interview. Michael, William, and Mae greeted me from the

adjoining room where Michael and Mae were watching television and William was playing

games on the family's iPad. As the interview began, Mae situated herself on Lyn's lap briefly

before she departed moments later to take a shower upstairs. The children made no attempts

to interact with either Lyn or me during the remainder of the interview.

I began my first interview with Lyn by probing for information about the nature and

origin of her beliefs about reading. I asked Lyn to tell me how she learned to read. She

quickly recalled, "I remember my mom reading me books all the time when I was little"

(FL0811). Lyn quickly departed from her initial response about reading with her mother and

launched into a detailed description of her long-standing struggles with reading: "It's always

been a struggle for me. It was super hard for me, so I just didn't do it" (FL0811). During our

first interview, Lyn reported that she "still won't sit down and read a book" (FL0811). In

subsequent interviews, Lyn revealed intimate details about how her early reading experiences

at home with her mother and at school with her teachers shaped her beliefs about reading and

eventually influenced the roles she assumed in her children's reading development.

<u>The nature and origin of Lyn's beliefs</u>

"I knew in my heart of heart[s] I was not a good reader" (FL1111).

Lyn's fond recollections of reading with her mother did not influence Lyn's desire to

read independently. "I enjoyed more getting ready to than reading" (FL0112). Moreover,

Lyn did not share her family's love of reading. Lyn's self-professed dislike of reading

originated in her childhood in spite of the positive reading experiences she had at home with her mother. Lyn reported, "I've never been fond of reading my entire life" (FL1011) and, "I did not like reading growing up" (FL0112).

Lyn's experiences in school further isolated her from reading for enjoyment. Lyn believed that she was not afforded opportunities to choose books she enjoyed in school: "I didn't get the opportunity to get the books that I liked when I was little. I don't remember getting a whole lot of choices in what I was read" (FL0911).

Lyn stated that she began to struggle with reading as a young child, recalling, "I know it's always been a struggle for me" (FL0911) and, "I was a bad reader" (FL0911). During an interview, I asked Lyn how satisfied she was with the way her teachers promoted and influenced her reading at school. She responded, "I wasn't happy with it. They pushed me to read in school and I hated it" (FL0112). Lyn received extra reading support beginning in elementary school; however, the social ramifications of being removed from her regular education classes further promoted Lyn's negative beliefs about reading: "I was put off by reading because it made me look different. When I was taken out of class and taken to my reading class, everybody looked at me" (FL0112). She recalled, "It's like you're gone for an hour. You miss other things. I got to miss labs in school. I got to miss fun things, and it made me hate having to go there" (FL0911).

Lyn named Mrs. Black, a speech and language teacher with whom Lyn worked during her third grade year, as the only teacher with whom she remembered having positive reading experiences: "She made it fun. I never had to read in front of people" (FL0811). Lyn valued the time she spent reading with Mrs. Black; however, she reported that being removed from

her class was difficult. Lyn explained, "When I was taken out of class and taken to my reading class, everybody looked at me and said, 'She's a special one, you know. She's got problems.'"

Lyn's beliefs about her reading development

"I'm not gonna sit down and read a book, but for the kids, I think it's important" (FL1111).

Lyn's beliefs about her ability to read originated in her childhood experiences in school: "I felt I was a bad reader and I wasn't very smart" (FL0911). Multiple times during interviews and observations, Lyn articulated her belief that reading is not enjoyable, saying, "In my eyes reading, to me, is not fun" (FL0811). Moreover, Lyn did not value reading as a leisure activity. She stated, "I'm not gonna sit down and read a book" (FL0911).

Lyn believed that her poor reading skills created barriers between herself and other members of her social communities. During an interview, Lyn reported that she felt "out of the loop" and "intimidated" (FL1111) when she overheard the mothers of girls in Mae's dance class talking about books in a popular fiction series. She recalled, "All I could sit there and think is, 'I can't wait for the movie to come out 'cause I'm not gonna read all those books.' The intimidation of looking at those books, yeah right" (FL1111). Lyn wanted full access to the community of dance mothers; however, her belief that she was unable to read popular books kept her on the fringes of that community.

During an informal conversation following our final interview (CM0312), Lyn informed me that she had recently contacted a nearby community college to obtain

information about a nursing program. When Lyn learned that entrance into the program was contingent upon successful completion of a reading exam, she did not pursue the application process because she believed that a reading test would require her to get up in front of people and read out loud. I corrected Lyn's misconception by informing her that the required reading test would most likely be administered on a computer and that reading aloud in front of an audience was not typically required of college applicants. Lyn believed she had the capacity to be a successful nurse; however, she did not believe that she had the capacity to improve her reading skills enough to be accepted into the nursing program. At the conclusion of my study, Lyn had not applied for the nursing program.

During observations of Lyn and her children in their home, I noticed that Lyn frequently employed electronic devices, including her cellular telephone and an iPad, to engage in online, print-based activities, including Facebook and interactive games. Moreover, during a meeting I attended at Pleasant View Elementary School with Lyn, Mrs. Collins, and Mrs. Purcell in March of 2012, Lyn had responded positively to the teachers' suggestion that Mae listen to online stories at home on the family's iPad. During the meeting, Mrs. Collins and Mrs. Purcell showed Lyn how to access online books through the Pleasant View Elementary School website. Mrs. Collins, Mrs. Purcell, and I believed that Lyn's motivation to read with Mae would be strengthened if Lyn knew how to access electronic books on her iPad or on her home computer. Toward the end of my study, during a tutoring session with Mae at the local public library, I consulted with a librarian who taught me how to download electronic library books onto an iPad. I hoped that Lyn would be more motivated to read for pleasure and also to engage in reading with her children at home if she had access to

electronic books.

During a visit to Lyn's home following Mae's second grade year, I attempted to show Lyn what the librarian had taught me about downloading books to her iPad. When I encountered technical difficulties, Lyn remarked, "This is why I never go to the library" (FN0612). Technical difficulties, Lyn's belief that reading was not fun, and Lyn's belief that she was a bad reader seemed to be insurmountable barriers to my efforts to show Lyn that reading could be enjoyable.

Multiple times during my study, Lyn stated her belief that reading was a struggle because her reading comprehension was poor. Her comments included, "I don't read a whole lot only because it's hard for me to comprehend it. My reading is bad. My comprehension is bad" (FL0811); "I won't even think about reading the words because I know I can't even pronounce 'em" (FL0911); "I still can't read well" (FL0112); and, "I get very frustrated because I can't remember what I just read" (FL0312). I offered to provide Lyn with tutoring that could improve her reading comprehension; however, at the conclusion of my study, she had not accepted my offer. These findings support Dweck's (1986) argument that individuals with low self-efficacy often resist difficult tasks in favor of tasks with which they certain to be successful.

<u>Lyn's beliefs about her children's reading development</u>

Lyn valued reading and believed that her children's ability to establish themselves as members of the reading community would afford them opportunities that Lyn did not have. She stated, "I want them to learn how to read. I want my kids to be able to do things that I

didn't do" (FL0911). During an interview with Michael at home, he asked Lyn why she

expected him to read at home after he had read all day at school. Lyn replied,

> Because it's important for you to know that reading is something that I want you to excel at. 'Cause I'm not good. I didn't like to read. When I was little, I didn't like to read at all 'cause I was a bad reader and I wasn't very smart. You guys are all really, really smart. I want you guys to like to read, so Mom encourages it. The more you guys do it, the more you guys like it. (FL0911)

Moreover, Lyn believed that she should teach Michael, William, and Mae that reading is

central to school success: "I try to make it really important. I know if they don't, they're not

gonna do good in school" (FL0811).

Lyn believed that parents should begin to read to their children "at an early age"

(FL0911). She explained, "If they don't learn to read it when they're little, they're never

going to learn" (FL0911). Moreover, Lyn believed that children's interests should determine

which books they read at home and at school: "They should have all the choice, period"

(FL0911). Lyn reported that when Michael, William, and Mae were very young, they

initiated reading with their mother "95% of the time" (FL0911). Lyn believed that her

children were more likely to read books when they were afforded opportunities to select their

books:

> They're gonna listen and pay attention to me more if I'm reading what book they just picked out at the LRC because it's their interest. You have to give them books … that they like. When you're reading things you like more, you're getting more interested in it, and it's sparking your interest more with reading, and you wanna read more. You're learning more. (FL0911)

During our fifth interview, late in January of 2012, I asked Lyn how she promoted her

children's reading development before they entered elementary school. Lyn prefaced her

response to my question by explaining that when she was in school, teachers "pushed me to

read … and I hated it" (FL0112). In an effort to build positive reading experiences for her children, Lyn reported that she made reading fun by making "games out of it" (FL0112). However, Lyn left the choice of whether or not to engage in any reading activities, including reading games, reading homework, and self-selected reading, up to her children. Lyn commented, "Whether they did it or they didn't do it, it was purely up to them" (FL0112). Lyn valued reading; however, her negative experiences of reading at school transcended her desire to teach her children that reading is important. During another interview, Lyn explained her belief that her children's home and school environments should be separated:

> William is supposed to be reading 20 minutes every day. Does he read 20 minutes every day? Absolutely not. I let him read when he wants to read. I do not force it because if I force it, he's not gonna like it. To me, school is school. Home time is home time. (FL1111)

Later in the study, in February of 2012, I contacted Lyn by phone to arrange a time to conduct an observation at the family home when one or more of Lyn's children would be present. During our phone conversation, Lyn recounted a conversation during which Michael's classroom teacher informed Lyn that Michael was not completing his homework. Lyn told me, "I am not going to do homework. That's my family time" (FN0212). Lyn valued the time she spent with her children at home and in their recreational settings. She was not willing to jeopardize recreational time with her children by requiring them to complete homework that she believed would not be enjoyable for her or her children.

Lyn's interest in the books she read with her children at home influenced the extent to which she enjoyed reading with her children. She stated, "If it sparks my interest, I'm gonna be more excited. Everything is gonna be different than if I'm reading something that I don't

care about" (FL0911). During our second interview, Lyn explained how interest and

relevancy influence William's reading comprehension:

> He likes any factual book that's gonna give him more knowledge. You give him the story, he don't care about that. He's not gonna use that in the future. You give him a book about information, a year from now he's gonna tell you, 'Well, I know that tank.' He can't tell you about some story he read. (FL0911)

Lyn believed that parents should demonstrate interest in the books they read with their

children, explaining, "If you're not interested in it, you're not showing your children it's

interesting" (FL0911). Lyn believed that her interest in books she read with her children was

manifested in her reading voice:

> If it sparks my interest, I'm gonna be more excited. My tone of voice is gonna be different. My posturing is gonna be different. Everything's gonna be different than if I'm reading something that I don't care about, that I don't like. (FL0911)

During our fourth interview, Lyn distinguished entry into full-time school as the point

at which teachers begin to exert greater influence on children's reading development than

parents. Lyn commented, "When they're in that full-day school, that should be the most

important person with the reading because they're the ones who are seeing them the majority

of their day" (FL0112). Moreover, Lyn valued the time her children spent reading one-on-

one with their teachers at school because "they get more to excel with that one-on-one"

(FL0911).

Lyn placed high value on reading choice. During our second interview, Lyn

commented that the only negative aspect of her children's school experiences was that they

were not afforded enough opportunities to choose the books that they brought home from

school. Conversely, Lyn commented that books Mae selected at school were often books that

she could not read independently: "I would like to see a book that she could bring home that she could read 75% of the page instead of 5% of the page, not two grades ahead that she can't read" (FL0911).

Lyn believed that her children needed choice in the books they read; however, she also expected her children's teachers to provide them with books that they could read independently. When I asked Lyn if she thought that there were books at school that Mae could read and would hold her interest, Lyn replied, "I don't know. I haven't been through the library" (FL0911). Lyn held an unwavering belief that her children's teachers had primary responsibility for their reading development once Michael, William, and Mae entered elementary school.

During interviews, I probed Lyn's beliefs about her children's relationships with reading. Regarding Michael and William, Lyn stated, "Both the boys are very much into informational texts" (FL1111), and regarding William, she said, "He likes any factual book that's gonna give him more knowledge" (FL0911). However, during a subsequent interview, Lyn described William as a reluctant reader: "He doesn't like to read a whole lot. 'William, it's time to read,' and he gets a pouty face" (FL0312). Lyn explained how she convinced William to read by "making deals with him. He'll read a line, I'll read a line, so he doesn't think he's reading that much" (FL0312). Conversely, Lyn repeatedly characterized Michael as a child who voluntarily reads for enjoyment at home, explaining, "He really likes to read. I never have to tell him to read" (FL0312).

Lyn stated that Mae "likes to read. It's all about things that interest her" (FL1111). Moreover, Lyn believed that Mae's reading interests were based in part on her recreational

interests: "Is there a book on dance for Mae's age?" (FL0911). Lyn also stated that Mae enjoyed reading books about fairies, Barbie, and horses (FL1111). Lyn believed that Mae's interest in reading was influenced by her current reading level, stating, "If it's at her level, she is super excited to read about it" (FL1111). Data I collected during interviews and observations with William and Mae validate Lyn's beliefs about William and Mae's reading interests; however, data I collected during interviews with Michael demonstrate that Michael preferred reading fiction.

Lyn did not know how Michael, William, or Mae viewed themselves as readers. When I asked Lyn how her children viewed themselves as readers, she replied, "I would have absolutely no clue what they would say" (FL1111). Lyn reported that she rarely saw Michael, William, or Mae read books at home. She said, "They're off in their own. They're in their room, door closed. There's no one there to really watch 'em and make sure they're doing it how someone else would expect them to do it" (FL1111). Lyn engaged her children in numerous recreational social activities, including team sports and community events; however, during my study, I did not observe Lyn engage in reading practices with Michael or William. I observed Lyn reading with Mae briefly on a few occasions during observations at the Davis home. However, Lyn almost always joined Mae and me at the dining room table during tutoring sessions and several times during which Mae and I read together at Lyn's home.

In February of 2012, I arrived at Lyn's home to conduct an observation. I asked Mae if I could listen to her read a book out loud before she left for a dance class. Mae retrieved a bag with books from Mrs. Purcell. Lyn positioned herself behind Mae as Mae began to read

out loud. When Mae made an error reading a word, Lyn placed her finger on the misread word and prompted Mae to look at the first letter of the word. When Mae reread words correctly, Lyn acknowledged her daughter's effort with verbal praise. When Mae reread words incorrectly, Lyn either provided another prompt or told Mae the word. Lyn's decision about whether or not to engage in reading with her children at home was influenced by her children's ages, her children's reading abilities, and also by her children's reading choices, including the choice of whether or not to read. Data I collected during interviews and observations does not indicate whether or not gender exerted influence on Lyn's reading relationships with her children at home.

Toward the end of my study, in June of 2012, I arrived at Lyn's home to take Mae to the local public library for tutoring. Lyn, William, and Mae greeted me at the front door. Lyn and her younger children were eager to show me an experiment they had recently conducted together. Lyn had located and read about the experiment online. I watched with interest as Lyn, William, and Mae worked together and read directions in order to demonstrate how food coloring, oil, and other ingredients could be combined to create a colorful design.

Following the experiment, I provided Mae with the option of tutoring at home or at the library as planned. Mae indicated that she wanted to work at home. Lyn told William to read before she joined Mae and me at the dining room table. William ignored Lyn's instructions and left the dining room to search for ants to place in a new ant farm. William continued outside to collect ants without additional reminders from Lyn to read. Lyn did not make further attempts to engage William in reading. This observation supported Lyn's comments that Lyn valued her children's recreation time at home.   She was reluctant to engage them in

non-preferred activities, including reading, when Michael, William, and Mae were at home.

During the same observation, when I tutored Mae at the Davis home, Lyn was engaged in activities on her iPad, including reading Facebook postings, posting comments on Facebook, and playing online games, including Scrabble. However, Lyn's attention to my reading instruction was evident when Lyn corrected me after I misread "stick" for "sick" during a word-making activity with Mae. Following the tutoring session, Lyn told Mae to retrieve her reading log from the local public library. Lyn told me that she listened to Mae read the previous evening and had recorded the books they read together on the reading log. Mae followed Lyn's direction and brought the log to me. Entries had been made since my previous tutoring session with Mae.

I did not observe Lyn reading with either Michael or William at any point during my study. Lyn believed that her children didn't read in front of her because "they think that I'm checkin' up on them. They just don't like to do it in front of me" (FL1111). Lyn's belief that children should "have all the choice, period" (FL0911) included the choice not to read with their mother. Moreover, Lyn's belief that Michael and William preferred to read alone and not with their mother matched her sons' preferences to read alone. Lyn and Albert engaged in a wide variety of recreational activities, including community activities, with their children; however, the family did not value reading together as a leisure-time social activity.

Lyn's beliefs about her children's teachers

"Nothing is greater to a child, I think, than a teacher and the parent coming together for their sake. That's the biggest thing" (FL0312).

Lyn believed that intimate and enduring bonds are established when children read with their teachers at school: "The person who taught them to read, that's a bonding moment. That is giving them their reading 101 knowledge. They're gonna remember that those are the tools they're gonna use the rest of their life" (FL0112). Furthermore, Lyn valued the bond established between a child and a teacher as a key component of children's reading development. She commented, "If they don't bond with those teachers, when it comes to reading, you're not gonna have good readers" (FL0112). Statements Lyn made during her fourth interview supported her previously stated belief that teachers exert stronger influence on children's reading development after they enter school.

Lyn believed that strong partnerships among parents and teachers are central to children's emotional well-being and school success. She explained, "If teachers and parents would just come together, the amount of support the kids would feel would be astronomical" (FL0112), and, "If everyone can come together and be on the same page in a respectful way, it's tremendous amount of success for the kids" (FL0312).

Lyn believed that her communication with her children's teachers "is vital for my kids to learn" (FL0312). She stated,

> I let them know first and foremost, I'm a communicator. I want to know what's going on. I'm probably more aware of what's going on with my kids than a lot of other parents, but that's because I make myself known. (FL0112)

Lyn assumed responsibility for making initial contacts with Michael, William, and Mae's teachers: "For me, definitely starting off the year and letting 'em know, you're gonna hear from me. Get used to it" (FL0112).

Lyn expected her children's teachers to provide the information that Lyn needed to

promote her children's reading achievement. Lyn explained, "I know what I need to do as a mom. I don't know curriculum. I'm not a teacher. I didn't go to school for it. I'm not the professional. I need the guidance from their teachers" (FL0312). Throughout my study, Lyn expressed her belief that teachers exert strong influence on children's reading development once children enter school.

Lyn believed that the more teachers understood about children's lives outside of school, the more equipped teachers would be to promote learning in school: "My message to teachers is that all of these children have a life outside of school, and if they don't know about that life, if they don't take the time to get to know my family, that's detrimental to their learning. To me, that's part of their job" (FL0312). During an earlier interview, Lyn commented, "I think they need to know the style in which we run at home when it comes to how I teach my children" (FL0112). Lyn wanted her children's teachers to understand that Michael, William, and Mae may not complete reading homework assignments. Lyn believed that homework interfered with the leisure time she wanted to have with her children at home. She explained, "I'm not going to do homework. That's my family time" (FL0212). Lyn admitted to me that, in the past, she had completed Michael's homework when he was unable to complete it himself because she considers herself to be a "pleaser" (FL1111):

> Not wanting my children to fall behind, I would do the work. It took me a long time to come to them and say, 'Guess what? This isn't all my son's work.' I'm doing this. This is what he's done. The teachers are just gonna have to understand. (FL1111)

Lyn wanted to communicate with her children's teachers; however, she doubted her capacity to establish herself as an active participant in school meetings, saying, "They get overwhelming" (FL0911), and, "I'm a high school dropout. I went and got my GED. So, for

me, I just feel inadequate sitting there" (FL0312). Lyn was frustrated by teachers' use of professional jargon during school meetings: "If I don't know a word, I think to myself, 'Oh God, you're an idiot. They're all gonna look at you like you're crazy'" (FL0312). Moreover, Lyn was often confused by the way data about her children's school achievement were presented during meetings at school. She revealed her frustration saying, "Don't use all these big huge words and big huge graphs. I'm not gonna understand it" (FL0112).

Moreover, Lyn believed the ability to understand technical words that teachers use in meetings was limited to people who are in the education field or people with doctoral degrees. Lyn's comments regarding her belief included, "Maybe they understand what's goin' on because they understand the lingo" (FL0112); "I don't know what grade is for what letter" (FL0911); and, "I go into these meetings knowing I'm not a book smart person. I can't tell you what that word is that you just said" (FL0112). Regarding William's reading level, Lyn said, "I don't know where he's supposed to be" (FL0911). Lyn believed that parents and teachers "have to be on the same page. If you have two different teaching styles, it's not gonna work" (FL0112). Lyn's capacity to participate effectively in school meetings was impacted by her persistent belief that she was a bad reader and incapable of understanding school-based language.

Relationships among Lyn's beliefs and the roles she assumed in her children's reading development

"I have to get the words out to them" (FL0911).

Lyn believed that she had a responsibility to promote her children's reading

development. During an interview, she told Michael, "It's important for you to know that reading is something that I want you to excel at. The more I encourage it, then the more you guys do it, the more you guys like it" (FL0911). However, Lyn's beliefs were observable neither in her reading practices, nor in the roles she assumed in Michael, William, and Mae's reading development. Lyn was conflicted about her involvement in her children's reading development. She valued reading as being fundamental to her children's school success; however, she doubted her capacity to assume agency in her children's reading development. She commented, "I don't think I'm an A-plus mom. There is probably a lot more I could've done" (FL0112). The routines Lyn established at home for her children did not include reading. During our second interview, Lyn described the evening routine she established for her children when Michael, William, and Mae were very young, before they entered school:

> When they were little, it was kinda cuddle time. We did the whole dinner and fun play time. Then it was bath time, brush your teeth. Then, they would come sit down with me and … watch my nightly show, and they would sit and cuddle with me. (FL0911)

Lyn's articulated desire to promote her children's reading development superseded the lack of confidence she had in her ability to read and comprehend printed text. She reported, "I struggle sometimes reading with them because I don't want to mess with the words, but … you just do what you gotta do" (FL0811). Regarding reading guided reading books to her children, Lyn stated, "I had to read 'em. I had to read 'em to 'em because they couldn't read 'em all" (FL0911).

Lyn believed that her negative early reading experiences in school influenced the roles she assumed in her children's reading development. She remarked, "I don't do anything that I

did when I was a kid with my kids. I hundred and fifty percent have changed it" (FL1111). Lyn's persistent belief that her children should have "all the choice, period" (FL0911) about when to read, where to read, what to read, and whether or not to read was profoundly shaped by her memories of "being pushed to read" (FL0112) in school.

During our third interview, early in November of 2011, Lyn described aspects of her children's HLE (Weigel et al., 2005), saying, "I don't see them read a whole lot" (FL1111). She explained that Michael, William, and Mae "read on their own time" (FL1111). Moreover, Lyn reported that when her children read at home, "they are off on their own doing it. They're in their room, door closed" (FL1111). Lyn believed that her children "don't like to do it in front of me" (FL1111) because Michael, William, and Mae did not want their mother "checking up on them" (FL1111). Moreover, Lyn believed that her children preferred to read at home in their rooms because

> No one's there to bother them. No one's there to hear if they struggle on a word here or there, or if they're skimming through the pages like I used to do. I'd skip every other sentence just to get done with it. (FL1111)

Lyn believed that the decision to read on their own, away from Lyn, was a protective measure for the children because "there's no one there to really watch 'em and make sure they're doing it the way someone else would expect them to do it" (FL1111). The comments Lyn made during our third interview illuminate Lyn's adamant and persistent desire to spare Michael, William, and Mae the negative experiences she had with reading as a child: "If you have parents pushing their kids or even teachers, it's gonna get 'em down. You have to be positive" (FL0112). Lyn's recollections of being pushed to read in school exerted substantial influence on the HLE she established for Michael, William, and Mae.

Lyn employed an entertainment approach (Sonnenschein et al., 1997) to promoting her children's reading development at home, explaining, "I made it more fun. I made games out of it. I think my plan of totally making it fun and making it games is really spot-on for all kids" (FL0112). During an observation at Lyn's home in October of 2011, Lyn showed me two applications she had installed on her iPad to promote Mae's reading development. One of the applications featured a spelling game, and the second application featured a sight word game. Lyn commented that she and Mae played the games together at Mae's request. Lyn did not explain how she made reading fun for Michael or William. I did not observe Lyn playing learning games with Michael, William, or Mae at any time during my study.

In general, though, Lyn believed that children get bored by reading activities with words, stating, "It can't be a lot of things with words because that's gonna bore a kid" (FL0911). In a later interview, Lyn commented,

> I don't want them to really think that they're learning words, or learning sounds, or learning how to read, and I'm pushing them or nagging them. I want it to be fun. I play with my kids. I don't make it a study session like sometimes it is in school. (FL0312)

Lyn incorporated traditional approaches to promote her children's reading development when they were young. She reported, "When my kids were little, I did so many flash cards with reading at home and learning words" (FL0312). Lyn's reliance on flash cards and other skill-based reading strategies reflected findings by Stipek, Milburn, Clements, and Daniels (1992) that parents with low levels of education and parents with poor reading skills value a skill-based approach to reading more than parents with higher levels of education and parents with well-developed reading skills.

During my study, Lyn continued to purchase books and other literacy materials including iPhone applications, word games, and flashcards to promote her children's reading development at home and also to establish herself as an involved mother. Lyn shared, "I've ordered books through Scholastic and on the Internet, and I try to get things that I know were their age level that I can help with that to help promote their success" (FL0911). Lyn stated that is her responsibility to be an active partner in her children's reading development: "If I can do those here at home, that's my part. I don't have to put it on the teachers" (FL0911).

During our second interview, Lyn reported that she read guided reading books at home with Michael, William, and Mae during their early elementary years. Moreover, Lyn believed that reading books that teachers sent home with her children "mighta helped a little" (FL0911). During a previous interview, Lyn commented, "I try to make it really important" (FL0811). She said,

> If I can get them to like reading when they're little, then I know when they're older, they won't look at that book and say, 'I am not going to read that book.' They're going to be like, 'Yeah, a new book to read.' (FL1111)

Lyn's belief that it was her job to promote her children's reading development precluded her reluctance to read: "The only thing that makes me want to read now is the fact that I have to teach it to my kids, and I have to help them. That's the only thing" (FL0811). Lyn's reading beliefs were fraught with tensions that originated in Lyn's childhood reading experiences.

<u>Conclusion</u>

Lyn's fond memories of reading at home with her mother were overshadowed by her

negative reading experiences in school. During her early years in school, Lyn developed a belief that she was a bad reader. Her negative beliefs about her capacity to become a reader persisted into her adulthood and shaped her relationships with reading, including the roles she assumed in her children's reading development inside and outside of school. Unknowingly, Lyn ascribed to an entity theory (Dweck, 2000) that constrained her capacity to improve her reading. Multiple times throughout my study, Lyn reiterated her belief that she was a bad reader and that she could not comprehend what she read. By the conclusion of my study, Lyn had not accepted multiple invitations from me to provide her with tutoring that may have improved her reading comprehension, her reading confidence, and her relationships with reading.

Lyn doubted her own capacity to effectively promote Michael, William, and Mae's reading development; however, she valued her children's teachers as the people who would provide her children with the "reading 101 knowledge" (FL0112) they would need to be successful in school.

Lyn believed that reading was the fundamental tenet of school success as well as a necessary means of accomplishing necessary daily tasks. Lyn also believed that reading was a vehicle that connected members of social communities; however, she did not believe that she had the capacity to be a reader. Lyn believed that her children's teachers were more equipped than she was to promote Michael, William, and Mae's reading development. Lyn's perceived lack of capacity to read effectively separated her and her children from full membership in their social communities.

Lyn's Children's Beliefs

"I like books, and they make you smarter" (FW0312).

Lyn's statement, early during my study, that her children should be afforded with "all the choice, period" (FL0911) influenced my approach to interviewing and observing Michael, William, and Mae in their home setting. I afforded Lyn's children opportunities to accept or refuse every invitation to participate in interviews and observations. Moreover, I scheduled interviews and observations during times that Lyn and I believed that the children would be most comfortable. During every interview, I told Michael, William, and Mae that they could take movement breaks whenever they needed them.

Conducting formal interviews with Michael, William, and Mae in their home presented challenges in spite of my efforts to provide the children with comfortable interview and observation settings. Lyn's children were often easily distracted by sounds from the television, incoming phone calls, and conversations among family members. I often repeated and restated questions during interviews. In spite of the challenges, I completed all of the scheduled interviews. My observations of Lyn's children reading were limited to the school setting since Lyn told me early in my study that she did not schedule regular reading times for her children at home.

<u>Michael's beliefs</u>

"I'm always on the edge of my seat when I'm reading a book, no matter what kind it is"
(FM10312).

Michael's beliefs about reading

Lyn's oldest son, Michael, who was in eighth grade during my study, held salient beliefs about reading. First, Michael believed that reading was enjoyable. During our first interview in August of 2011, Michael reported that he enjoyed reading books that were funny, sad, suspenseful, or dramatic. Moreover, Michael identified a fiction novel as being his favorite book. He explained, "What I like about it, it's kinda like a, it's kinda like a drama kinda book like a suspense" (FM10811).

During the same interview, Michael reported that he usually read in his classroom at school, in the hallways at school when he was traveling between classes, and also on the school bus. Michael reported that he enjoyed reading with his teacher at school because "she really listens to understand about what I'm reading" (FM10811). Conversely, Michael reported that when he read at home, he preferred to read by himself in his room or in the basement when his family members were not present.

Michael believed that good readers complete books regardless of interest level. He described his own style, saying, "I usually push through the book and take my time. I just try to read it as much as I can" (FM10312). Michael characterized one of his classmates as a good reader because "he can stay with it. He can start any book and just won't leave it 'til he finishes it" (FM10312). Next, Michael believed that good readers "tell opinions about the book, like things they could do or could have done with the book" (FM10312). Finally, Michael believed that good readers can be identified by the way they sound and by the way they behave when they are reading: "They sound really clear when they are reading a book

out loud and when they're reading to themselves. They're usually that close and on the edge of their seats with the suspense" (FM10312). Michael characterized himself as a good reader, saying, "I tend to read a lotta books at school" (FM10312).

<u>Michael's beliefs about his reading development</u>

During his first interview, when I asked Michael if he was a reader, he replied, "Not so much. Usually, the only things I read are like those instruction manuals when I first buy a game that I don't know how to play. That's about all I read" (FM10811). However, during the same interview, during the second interview, and also during observations, Michael made numerous positive statements about books he reads at school and at home. Comments included, "I really love Silver Wing" (FM10911); "Now, I'm reading really complicated books like *Chasing Lincoln's Killer*. It's like over 200 pages long" (FM10911); and, "There's this one book that we're reading together right now. It's called *Four Perfect Pebbles*. We actually talked to … a Holocaust survivor" (FM10312). During my second interview with Michael, I asked him if he could become a better reader. Michael responded, "I am a pretty good reader, but I can be a better one" (FM10312). I probed deeper and asked Michael how he could become a better reader. He replied, "I take my time. When it's a good book, I try to push through it" (FM10312).

Michael named his first grade teacher, Mrs. Wilkinson, as the person who helped him learn to read. When I asked Michael how his mother helped him learn to read, he responded, "She doesn't really help. She tells me, 'Why don't you ever read a book?' I say, 'I do at school all the time'" (FM10811). When I asked Michael why his mother wants him to read at

home, he responded, "I have no idea" (FM10911). During Michael's second interview, I asked him how Lyn helped him become a good reader. He responded, "Usually when I was learning to read, she would sit with me and help me discuss what words, and help me figure out that word, or help me read, and says, 'That don't make any sense'" (FM10312). Michael believed that Mrs. Hart, his eighth grade teacher, helped him read by helping him with "a really hard word" (FM10811).

During my study, I did not observe Michael initiate reading at home; however, my observations of Lyn and her children were always conducted on the main level of the Davis home. It is possible that Michael read in his bedroom in the evenings when I was not there to observe.

Toward the end of my study, I invited Lyn and her children to accompany me to the local public library. During our library visit, Michael read several books with a military theme for a brief period of time (CM0312). Michael did not return to the library to check out books at any time during the remainder of my study.

William's beliefs

"I read books at school a lot. It's my favorite thing" (FW0312).

William's beliefs about reading

William, who was in fourth grade at the time of my study, held salient beliefs about reading. First, William characterized good readers as people who "can read … really good books that have like a lotta pages, like the whole page filled with words" (FW0312).

Moreover, William identified two children in his classroom as being good readers because "they're really, really smart, and they're good at reading books. I think they're really good readers because like every book that we read at school in our class, that we get from our teacher, Christopher and Lillian already read that book" (FW0312). William believed that his brother Michael was a good reader: "He is really good at reading books. Every day when he comes home from school, he has a good book, and he reads it" (FW0312). William believed that he was a good reader because he read a lot of books at school and also because he enjoyed reading books at school (FW0312).

Multiple tensions were evident in the data I collected during interviews and observations with William. During my first interview with William, he reported that his parents helped him learn to read when he was younger. I asked William how Lyn helped him learn to read. He responded, "She buys me books, and then she helps me, and then I have to read it to her" (FW0811). When I asked William if anyone else helped him learn to read he, replied, "No" (FW0811). However, later during the first interview, when I asked William how his teacher helps him learn to read, William responded, "She gets me guided reading books, and then she tells me to read it with a guided reading group" (FW0811). During a member check of the first interview, William stated that "nobody helps me learn to read. I read all by myself" (FW0811).

William's beliefs about his reading development

William's beliefs were shaped by his experiences reading at school. William reported that he was a reader "'cause I read a lot of books at school" (FW0811). Moreover, William

reported that he enjoyed reading for fun at home (FW0811). William identified "*Star Wars* books, army books, car books, dinosaur books" (FW0811) as his favorite reading topics. William stated that he enjoyed reading in his bedroom at home "because no one can bother me a lot" (FW0811). Furthermore, William reported that he also reads at school, remarking, "We're always reading" (FW0811). William believed that practice improved his reading skills: "When I'm getting ready for school, I'm reading books, and then I get better" (FW0811).

William believed that his time to read at home was limited. He reported, "I don't have enough time to read something. At home, I have chores, a lot of stuff, and I only get five minutes to read a book" (FW0312). I did not observe William completing chores during any of my observations at Lyn's home. William believed that he had more time to read at school than he had time to read at home. He said, "I have enough time to read at school. I read a lot of books at school. We're always reading" (FW0811), and, "That's when we have guided reading or read-to-self. So I can read all by myself good books and have enough time. They give you 30 minutes to read" (FW0312).

William reported that he did not enjoy reading at the local public library because "the place is so big, and they don't have my favorite books" (FW0312). Moreover, William stated that he did not have a need to go to the library because he has "tons of books" (FW0312) at home. When I asked William if I could see his books, he and Michael retrieved a tall basket full of books from a room upstairs in their home. The basket was filled with Michael and William's books. The boys explained that Mae's books were stored in her bedroom. Mae was not present during William's interview; therefore, I was not able to obtain her permission

to verify that she had books in her bedroom. Consequently, at that time, I did not verify William's claim that Mae stored books in her bedroom.

During an observation, I asked William how he felt about scheduling a time for his family to read together. William replied, "I like it 'cause then I get to have time with my family of everybody reading books 'cause I don't see my mom or dad reading any books" (FW0312). William believed that his parents didn't read "because they're adults and they're smart" (FW0312). Moreover, William remarked that when people become adults, "they're done 'cause then they have jobs to work" (FW0312). I did not observe William initiate reading at any time during my visits to Lyn's home during my study, nor did I observe him engage in reading that was initiated by Lyn, Albert, or other family members.

Mae's beliefs

"I'm getting gooder and gooder at it" (FM20811).

Mae's beliefs about reading

Mae, who was in second grade at the time of my study, expressed a dislike of reading during her first interview. "I don't really like to read much" (FM20811). However, later in the same interview, Mae reported, "I love to read. I like to read about animals" (FM20811). Also during her first interview, Mae told me about her favorite book that she had received from her maternal grandmother. I asked Mae why her grandmother had given her the book. Mae replied, "Because she loves me a lot. She cares about me a lot" (FM20811).

Mae believed that good readers engage in specific behaviors. She reported that good

readers "sound the words out. They look at, they point" (FM20312). Mae identified a child in her class as being a good reader because "when she got to first grade, she already knew how to read" (FM20312). Moreover, Mae believed that her brothers were good readers. She believed that William was a good reader because he read at home "every day" (FM20312). Moreover, Mae believed that Michael was a good reader because "he points" (FM10312) at words when he reads. Mae characterized herself as a good reader because "I sound the words out" (FM20312).

<u>Mae's beliefs about her reading development</u>

Mae reported that reading was difficult for her: "My reading's like hard. When I start to read, I forget the letters, the names, the sounds" (FM20811). However, Mae believed that she had a capacity to improve her reading skills. She explained, "I concentrate. I try my best so I can be a better reader" (FM20811).

<center>The nature and origin of Lyn's children's beliefs</center>

The children's responses to interview prompts that elicited information about their early reading experiences were vague and lacked detail. The responses Michael, William, and Mae provided to prompts about their current reading were more thorough.

<u>The nature and origin of Michael's beliefs</u>

Michael named his kindergarten teacher and Lyn as the adults who helped him learn how to read when he was young (FM10811). Michael could not recall how his kindergarten

teacher helped him learn to read; however, he stated that Lyn helped him "figure out" words and told him when the words he read out loud did not "make sense" (FM10312). During an interview, Michael stated that he liked to read funny books when he was first learning how to read in kindergarten; however, he could not recall titles of books he had enjoyed reading when he was young.

The nature and origin of William's beliefs

Tensions existed in William's beliefs about people who helped him learn to read. During his first interview, William reported that "just my dad and my mom" (FW0811) helped him learn to read when he was younger. Moreover, William believed that Lyn continued to help him read, saying, "She helps me with hard words that I don't know how to spell" (FW0312), and, "She buys me books, and then she helps, and then she gets me books, and then I have to read it to her" (FW0811). Later during William's first interview, he explained how his teacher, Mrs. St. Pierre, helped him read:

> She gets guided reading books and tells us to read it with a guided reading group. You read the book to each other, then we get a piece of paper, and we have to write down what happened in the story, beginning, middle and end. (FW0811)

William reported that he completed reading homework independently at home: "I read them by myself. I have to finish my guided reading books before I play" (FW0811). William did not explain why he completes his reading homework before he plays, whether Lyn requires him to do so or if his behavior is self- imposed. I did not observe William initiate reading or engage in reading at home during my study.

<u>The nature and origin of Mae's beliefs</u>

Mae identified Lyn, her kindergarten teacher, and me as the people who helped her get to be a better reader (FM21211); however, the vast majority of statements Mae made about the people who supported her reading development were focused on Lyn. Mae said, "When I have a very hard book at home, and I forget some of the word, my mom helps me" (FM20811). Mae described how Lyn helped her read. "She helps me do this," Mae explained as she chopped on her arm. "She helps me chunking. She helps me do … ack, pack." (FM20811). Mae stated that she read "every day when I get home" and that she "has a big stack of books at home" (FM21211) that Lyn purchased. Some of Mae's books were stored in a cabinet in the living room at the Davis home. Mae stated that she enjoyed reading *Junie B. Jones* books at home with her mom. I observed Mae initiate reading once during my study during an unplanned observation at Lyn's home when I presented her with a collection of early reader books (FM21111). Mae and I sat on a sofa in the living room at the Davis home and read one of the books together. Lyn sat next to Mae and observed.

<div align="center">Conclusion</div>

Consistencies and inconsistencies exist in the data I collected during interviews and observations with Lyn's children. It was often difficult to ascertain whether the children's statements reflected their own beliefs or the prevailing beliefs of the reading communities in which they lived.

William was consistent in his statements about reading as an enjoyable activity;

however, Michael and Mae made contradictory statements about their enjoyment of reading. Michael and Mae preferred to read at home; however, William preferred to read at school because he believed that there was not enough time to read at home. Lyn's sons enjoyed reading by themselves; however, Mae preferred to read with Lyn. Each of Lyn's children described themselves as good readers and explained why they are good readers; however, their descriptions varied. Moreover, Michael, William, and Mae identified specific behaviors in which good readers engage; however, the behaviors they identified also varied.

Inconsistencies among Lyn's children's responses to interview questions may be attributed to several factors. First, since Michael, William, and Mae knew that I was a teacher and that I enjoyed reading, they may have responded to questions in a way that they believed would please me. During visits to Lyn's home, I frequently observed all three children watching television and playing games on the family's iPad; however, I did not observe evidence of their professed enjoyment of reading.

Second, the children's ages as well as their reading skills may account for inconsistencies in their responses to interview questions. Considering Mae's young age and her reading skills, it stands to reason that Mae preferred to read with her mother. At the time of the study, Mae was not able to independently read books at her interest level. It also stands to reason that the children's concepts of what constituted a good reader would evolve with development. At the time of my study, Michael and William were not hindered by decoding as was their sister. Lyn's sons understood that people read to understand. Conversely, Mae read at the word level. She struggled to independently decode and recall simple sight words.

Third, Lyn's children's diagnosed attention deficits may have contributed to

inconsistencies in their responses to interview questions. Michael and William took medication to promote their attention; however, Lyn constrained use of the medication to times during which her sons were in school or when William was being tutored. Most of my interviews with Lyn's children were conducted during times when they were not medicated.

Lyn's Children's Teachers' Beliefs

"It all comes from being immersed in a literacy-enriched environment in the home and parents going out of their way to set up those experiences for kids" (TT0112).

The fundamental purpose of my study was to examine Lyn's beliefs. I examined Lyn's children's teachers' beliefs as a means of determining whether or not interconnections (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) existed among Lyn's beliefs and her children's teachers' beliefs.

Lyn's children's teachers' beliefs about early reading development

The beliefs of the teacher actors in my study reflect a vast body of research that demonstrates reading development begins with the literacy experiences children have with their parents at home. During my study, the teachers made copious statements that reflected their beliefs that reading originates in the early experiences young children have at home with their parents. Moreover, the teachers identified specific practices that they believed promote emergent literacy development (Neumann et al., 2009).

Mrs. Collins's beliefs

Mrs. Collins, Mae's second grade classroom teacher, believed that reading

development is grounded in children's early experiences: "It all starts in the early years with a lot of exposure to stories and reading and read-alouds and just building enthusiasm for books and a little bit of a base with their concepts about print and just a love of reading" (TC0112). Moreover, Mrs. Collins believed that good readers

> oftentimes have that literacy exposure from a very, very young age. I think even when they're toddlers; you give that exposure to books and hearing the voice, the reading voice, the rhythm, the intonation. I just think it starts from their very earliest years. (TC0112)

Mrs. Collins believed that teachers' early reading experiences exert influence on their teaching practice. She explained, "I think you draw upon your own experiences and you remember what worked for you as a reader, and as a learner, and what made sense to you" (TC1011).

Mrs. Hart's beliefs

Mrs. Hart, Michael's eighth-grade classroom teacher, believed that parents should read to their children from infancy: "I just think it's very important to start very early. I think even as a baby you can read nursery rhymes, just talking, just getting the words out there, reading stories" (TH0512). Moreover, Mrs. Hart believed that parents should model enthusiasm for reading. She explained, "It's so important to show enthusiasm, to show excitement about reading" (TH0512). Mrs. Hart suggested that parents promote reading as fun and enjoyable by "making reading a joyous time, letting kids explore words and print, hearing good literature, read aloud" (TH0512).

Mrs. Hart believed that many of her middle-school-aged students had lost interest in

reading:

> I think a lotta times by this age they've lost interest. They feel like, 'I'm not a good reader. I'm not ever gonna be a good reader. Why am I doing all this work? And who cares about this?' I think it's a little harder to motivate someone who's a little older to read. (TH0512)

Moreover, Mrs. Hart believed that "with younger kids, you can find a lot more fun activities that the kids would be interested in doing" (TH0512).

Mrs. Purcell's beliefs

During our first interview, Mrs. Purcell, the Pleasant View special education teacher who had extensive experience with the Davis children, made numerous statements that reflected her belief that parents exert a powerful influence on children's reading development from birth: "I think it starts young, in the early years, or even those early preschool years, basically when the child comes outta the womb" (TP0112). Mrs. Purcell believed that the ways that parents use language with their young children influences children's later reading achievement. She remarked, "I think that oral language is the foundation of reading. I think, likewise, parents need to be educated early on even beyond the reading about the importance of oral language, talking to your kids" (TP0112).

Moreover, Mrs. Purcell believed that reading is a socially situated phenomenon that is generationally influenced: "I think that it is somewhat social or experiential. If they weren't read to as kids that most likely they're not gonna read to their kids" (TP0112). Finally, Mrs. Purcell believed that parents' educational backgrounds influence children's early literacy development. She commented, "People that have an education, they may be valued that they

naturally have a richer vocabulary, so they're gonna share that with their own kids" (TP0112).

Mrs. St. Pierre's beliefs

Mrs. St. Pierre, William's fourth grade classroom teacher, believed that parents set the foundation for children's reading development:

> I think you read to children what you had read to you. Families that have always treasured good literature probably read good literature to their children. People who have not been read or exposed to good literature probably don't pick those books. (TSP0212)

Moreover, Mrs. St. Pierre believed that a child's early ability to understand that print holds meaning develops "only when you come from a family that reads" (TSP0312). Mrs. St. Pierre also believed that parents should "listen to the children as they reread their books at night because kids really benefit from that practice from reading" (TT0312). Mrs. St. Pierre believed that specific activities promote early reading development, such as "word games, rhyming, pointing at objects, loading lotta background knowledge into a child, exposing them to a lotta different things, having books available, doing a lotta reading, having lots and lots of conversations" (TSP0212).

Mrs. St. Pierre assumed responsibility for teaching William that reading can be fun and enjoyable: "Part of my job is to be a cheerleader for books, and to let him know, you can gain so much knowledge, you can be entertained" (TSP0212). She added, "I'm committed to saying, 'I'm gonna buy books,' and if it costs me hundreds of dollars every year, I'm okay with that 'cause I want this literature in the classroom" (TSP0312).

<u>Mrs. Taylor's beliefs</u>

Mrs. Taylor, the Pleasant View reading specialist, believed that parents' early relationships with reading influences children's reading development. Mrs. Taylor argued that children "really need to be immersed in a literacy environment in the home. It really has to start there with parents reading nightly to kids" (TT0112). Mrs. Taylor believed that reading practices originate in their early experiences reading with their parents. She remarked, "I think some parents know naturally what you do because of what they remember in their childhood days. I think parents, if they're not readers, they don't model that for their kids" (TT0112). Mrs. Taylor identified a number of ways that parents promote children's reading development, including "exposing kids to books, parents taking kids to story time at the library, singing, stories being read. Number one, read to their children" (TT0312). Moreover, Mrs. Taylor believed that parents "need to be partners in their children's education. I have 'em for maybe a half an hour daily if I'm lucky, and it can't just all happen here" (TT0312).

Further supporting her assertion that literacy begins at home, Mrs. Taylor expected that children arrive at kindergarten with specific skills including "being able to sing songs, have a feel for rhyming language, have an idea of how to handle a book, know how to turn pages, know how to look at pictures, and know how to retell a story" (TT0112). Mrs. Taylor believed that children who do not enter kindergarten having had rich literacy experiences with their parents are disadvantaged: "Without being read to a lot, possibly they weren't even talked to a lot, then not a lot of conversation going on. These kids are really at a disadvantage

walking in the door" (TT0112).

Mrs. Taylor believed that children who struggle to read can learn to enjoy reading. Moreover, Mrs. Taylor employed volunteers to provide Mae and other children at Pleasant View Elementary School with extra reading practice. Mrs. Taylor instructed volunteers to "read it like a mom, how you would want to … sit down and read it with your children, and some of the fun things you would talk about" (TT0112). Mrs. Taylor's suggestion that the volunteer should "read it like a mom" (TT0112) reflected her belief that mothers knew how to read to children in ways that promoted reading development.

Conclusion

Each of Lyn's children's teachers believed that reading development begins during infancy when parents engage their babies in language activities. The teachers valued reading out loud to children as a fundamental activity to which parents should expose their children from birth. Moreover, each of the teachers believed that parents exert substantial influence on children's reading development.

The nature and origin of Lyn's children's teachers' beliefs about reading and reading development

The teachers who participated in my study had diverse early reading experiences at home with their parents and at school with their teachers; however, each of the teachers valued reading-related experiences they had with their parents as children.

<u>The nature and origin of Mrs. Collins's beliefs</u>

Mrs. Collins, Mae's second grade teacher, valued early reading experiences she had at home with her mother and her siblings. Moreover, she believed her experiences were enjoyable because her mother was involved in her reading:

> I think back to my earliest experiences, which would be people reading aloud to me at home. We'd kind of make it a family thing. I would read, sit and read aloud, and my mom would listen to me, and then we'd talk about it. That always helped me. We kind of got a lot of enjoyment out of the different novels. (TC1011)

Mrs. Collins described her mother as being "excited about learning and reading, always eager to this day" (TC1011). Moreover, Mrs. Collins recalled that her mother took her and Mrs. Collins's younger brother to the local public library and enrolled her children in summer reading programs. She said that her mother "participated in our homework. She was very involved in school" (TC1011).

Mrs. Collins identified books and authors she enjoyed during her childhood. She recalled having a wide array of reading materials available in her childhood home. Mrs. Collins remarked, "We always had a lot of books around the house. My house, you ran to the encyclopedia and then my mom had the whole supplemental set of everything where you got a new book every couple months to add to the library" (TC1011).

Mrs. Collins characterized her early years in school as being taught to read with flashcards and phonics activities. She recalled, "What maybe we would call the anthology with very phonetic-based stories. I do not remember read aloud. We'd get new flashcards every week" (TC1011). Mrs. Collins regarded her first grade teacher as the teacher who "has influenced me more than anything" (TC1011). Moreover, Mrs. Collins reported that her

fourth grade teacher "got kids excited about everything … reading in particular" (TC1011).

Later in junior high school, Mrs. Collins recalled reading serial novels with her friends.

During our interview, Mrs. Collins identified specific novels and specific authors she enjoyed

as a child.

The nature and origin of Mrs. Hart's beliefs

Mrs. Hart, Michael's eighth grade teacher, valued her mother as the person who

exerted the most influence on her reading development, saying, "She was a very enthusiastic

reader, so it made it fun" (TH0512). Mrs. Hart believed that her mother "wanted to do

whatever she could to help me and to prepare me for school" (TH0512). She recalled,

> My mom made sure that I was able to buy things at the book fairs at school and was
> able to pick out things that I wanted to read, and then she'd make sure that we read
> them together. She would always practice with me up to middle school. I went to the
> library a lot, got books, went and listened to stories at the library. (TH0512)

Mrs. Hart believed that her parents' reading behaviors influenced her early reading. She

commented, "My parents always read the newspaper. I saw them always reading the

newspaper. They would read all the time" (TH0512). Further, Mrs. Hart said, "My parents

were always pretty encouraging of reading, so I started pretty early" (TH0512).

Mrs. Hart believed that her teachers influenced her reading development, saying,

"Teachers were very helpful in making sure we knew our letters early on" (TH0512). She

identified her kindergarten teacher as the teacher who most influenced her reading

development. Mrs. Hart recalled that, during her early years in school, she engaged in "a lot

of independent reading" (TH0512). Moreover, Mrs. Hart reported that her third grade teacher

"stressed that reading was very important and set some reading goals for us" (TH0512). Mrs. Hart believed she "always did well in school. I was always in accelerated reading classes. I've always enjoyed reading. I didn't struggle with reading. I didn't need incentives" (TH0512). Mrs. Hart did not identify specific authors or specific books she enjoyed as a child.

The nature and origin of Mrs. Purcell's beliefs

Mrs. Purcell believed that her early reading development was primarily influenced by her teachers at school:

> I'm not sure my parents did much to support my literacy development. My parents divorced twice, and there was a lot of chaos in my life. I never remember being read to by my parents, ever. I do not ever remember being read to as a kid. (TP1011)

However, Mrs. Purcell recalled, "I did have a library card, and in the summer, my mom would take us to the library" (TP1011).

Mrs. Purcell stated that her parents "didn't have the money to buy me books" (TP1011). However, Mrs. Purcell recalled that "we had *Encyclopedia Britannica*, and I loved looking through them" (TP1011). Mrs. Purcell also reported that "my grandparents used to get *National Geographic*, and we used to like looking at those" (TP1011).

Mrs. Purcell stated, "I never felt that I had a hard time learning to read" (TP1011). However, Mrs. Purcell recalled that upon entering fourth grade, "I always remember that I could never keep up with my peers, like to go on to the next level. I felt some … sense of shame … that I wasn't … advancing like the rest of my peers" (TP1011). Moreover, Mrs. Purcell believed that "test anxiety" (TP1011) contributed to her poor reading test scores.

Mrs. Purcell described how she was "ignited as a reader" (TP1011) in fifth grade: "We did some fun things. We put on plays, created our own scripts and performed them. My teacher just making it really engaging for me and that I wanted to do these things. It wasn't a chore" (TP1011). Mrs. Purcell reported that her love of reading was further strengthened in junior high school when her teacher engaged her in novel studies. She recalled, "I just loved … discussing those books" (TP1011). Moreover, Mrs. Purcell believed that her passion for reading was further fueled in high school when she and her classmates "were given ownership and power … to talk about our thoughts and ideas" (TP1011). Recalling a favorite high school teacher, Mrs. Purcell commented, "She was just a really great teacher that really made me love to read" (TP1011). Mrs. Purcell identified specific authors and books she enjoyed reading as a child.

The nature and origin of Mrs. St. Pierre's beliefs

Mrs. St. Pierre believed that she came from a "very literate family, so to be an early reader … was valued by my parents. We didn't have much money, but what money we did have, we spent on books" (TSP1211). Moreover, Mrs. St. Pierre characterized her childhood home as a place "where people were always reading and writing. We were always read to, picture books and chapter books. I lived in a house where people were always reading and writing, so it was just part of my natural development" (TSP1211). Mrs. St. Pierre recalled that her parents read for pleasure, "sometimes to the distraction of everything else. It took up a lot of time. My mom was somebody who devoured books. I remember my mom always reading to us" (TSP1211).

Mrs. St. Pierre identified her older sister as the person who exerted the most influence on Mrs. St. Pierre's reading, recalling, "We've always read the same books" (TSP1211). Mrs. St. Pierre described reading books with her sister as "a powerful bonding experience" (TSP1211).

Mrs. St. Pierre did not believe that any of her teachers exerted influences on her reading development or reading achievement when she was a child. She stated, "I think I was a problem to some teachers because I could read already" (TSP1211). Mrs. St. Pierre identified specific authors and books she enjoyed reading as a child.

<u>The nature and origin of Mrs. Taylor's beliefs</u>

Mrs. Taylor believed that the conversations she had with her parents and her younger brother at home set the stage for her early literacy development: "We did a lot of conversation in the home" (TT1111). Moreover, Mrs. Taylor stated that "my reading background started … in the home when my mother … read aloud to us" (TT1111). During our interview, Mrs. Taylor recalled that her mother read Bible stories out loud to her children on Sundays. She recalled, "It made me feel very special, so I looked forward to the time when she would read aloud to me" (TT1111). However, Mrs. Taylor suggested that her parents "weren't role models. We just never went [to the library]. It just wasn't what we did" (TT1111).

Mrs. Taylor believed that "among my peers, I was one of the better students, the more talented students" (TT1111). Moreover, Mrs. Taylor stated that she and her brother "knew we had to do well in school. Our job was going to school and doing well" (TT1111). Mrs. Taylor believed that her brother was very bright and set the pace for her in school: "I had to

get all As. I didn't have a choice. I was a star student. I was skilled at reading. I got all As all the way through elementary school" (TT1111).

Mrs. Taylor recalled her teacher reading out loud to the class, commenting, "I enjoyed that" (TT1111). In spite of Mrs. Taylor's belief that she had excellent reading skills as a young child, she also stated that she did not read outside of school except to complete school assignments because "I was also very busy with extracurricular things" (TT1111).

Mrs. Taylor reported that she began to read for pleasure during college. Later, when she had children, Mrs. Taylor believed that she "became a reader" (TT1111). Mrs. Taylor stated that her mother-in-law recommended and provided her with novels to read when she was a young wife and mother. Moreover, Mrs. Taylor identified specific books that she enjoyed reading during her childhood.

Conclusion

Each of Lyn's children's teachers valued reading out loud to children at a very young as an activity that set reading development in motion. The conversations in which I engaged with Lyn's children's teachers about their early experiences reading at home and at school were filled with emotion, especially when they reflected on their reading relationships with their mothers. Mrs. Collins and Mrs. Hart related fond memories of reading with their mothers from very young ages. Moreover, Mrs. Collins and Mrs. Hart credited their mothers for their reading success in school. Mrs. St. Pierre and Mrs. Taylor identified their parents as busy people who did not read with their children often; however, each teacher reported that the experiences they had reading with their mothers were very special. Mrs. Purcell's early

reading experiences at home were substantially different from the experiences of the other teachers in my study. Mrs. Purcell credited family dysfunction for her parents' lack of involvement in her literacy development; however, she was quick to defend her mother, and she explained that she believed that her mother did the best she could do given difficult family circumstances.

The teachers' school reading experiences were as diverse as were their early reading experiences reading at home. Mrs. Hart, Mrs. St. Pierre, and Mrs. Taylor recalled that they were successful readers throughout their school careers. Conversely, Mrs. Collins and Mrs. Purcell struggled with reading during their early years in elementary school. Their reports of feeling unsuccessful in reading evoked feelings of shame and embarrassment that were easily brought to the surface during our interviews. Mrs. Collins and Mrs. Purcell recalled teachers in their later elementary years who they believed contributed to their love of reading.

<div align="center">Lyn's children's teachers' current relationships with reading</div>

During my initial interviews with Lyn's children's teachers, I asked each teacher to tell me about her reading development. Unprompted by me, all but one teacher described her current relationship with reading. Mrs. Collins provided a rich description of her childhood relationship with reading; however, she did not divulge information about how she reads as an adult.

Mrs. Hart's current relationship with reading

Mrs. Hart reported, "Even kind of to this point, I'll grab a book just to relax … or just

to kind of enjoy myself and escape" (TH0512). Mrs. Hart did not identify specific books or specific authors she enjoys.

Mrs. Purcell's current relationship with reading

Mrs. Purcell reported that her leisure reading is limited to the summer months when she is not teaching. "I love mysteries, and I like some science fiction" (TP1011). Moreover, Mrs. Purcell identified specific novels and specific authors she enjoys. Mrs. Purcell reads to her own children, reporting, "Certainly we read to them every night, and now that they're older, they still like it when I read to them" (TP1011).

Mrs. St. Pierre's current relationship with reading

Mrs. St. Pierre stated, "I wish I had more time to read. I crave it" (TSP1211). Moreover, Mrs. St. Pierre reported that she and her husband "often read the same books and talk about 'em, which is really, really, really fun" (TSP1211). Mrs. St. Pierre identified specific novels and specific authors she enjoyed.

Mrs. Taylor's current relationship with reading

Mrs. Taylor stated that the vast majority of her reading "centers around professional reading" (TT1111). However, Mrs. Taylor reported, "I don't have time. I have stacks of reading teacher magazines that I've never read. I'm embarrassed" (TT1111). Mrs. Taylor identified several authors of professional books who "just impacted my thinking and who I am" (TT1111).

Conclusion

Lyn's children's teachers valued reading as an enjoyable leisure time activity. During

interviews, each of the teachers named numerous books read for pleasure.

Lyn's children's teachers' beliefs about the roles Lyn assumed in her children's reading development

"I think that they're a loving family and that they spend a lot of time together, but they don't spend time reading" (TSP0312).

Similarities and differences exist in the teachers' beliefs about the roles Lyn assumed

in her children's reading development.

Mrs. Collins' beliefs

Mrs. Collins believed that Lyn could be a "wonderful resource" (TC0112) to reinforce

reading skills that Mae learned at school. However, Mrs. Collins believed that Lyn may not

have understood how to best promote Mae's reading development. Mrs. Collins believed that

Lyn relied on skill-based activities to promote Mae's reading development at home:

> I've seen what [Lyn] has. It's a lot of phonics and spelling, skill-based-type apps. My guess would be there's maybe more comments and discussions of pictures and things, but I don't think that there's a lot of question-answer type format that we might do here at school. (TC0312)

Mrs. Collins suggested that teachers could show Lyn how to promote "real reading"

(TC0312), pondering, "I'm wondering if we sat down with her and showed her some apps of

more real reading" (TC0312). Mrs. Collins's recommendation to provide Lyn with the names

of reading applications was inspired by a conversation I had with Mrs. Collins, during which I

informed her that Lyn used applications to provide Mae with spelling and sight word practice at home.

Mrs. Hart's beliefs

Mrs. Hart believed that Lyn "certainly seems to care about what Michael is doing, and his reading, and his homework" (TH0512). However, Mrs. Hart was unsure about Lyn's involvement in Michael's reading development:

> I don't get the impression that she's as involved as I would like a parent to be. I don't know that she really promotes it and makes sure he's doing … 20 minutes of reading a day … or sits down with him to take the time to say, 'What kinds of books are you reading? What are you interested in? Can we go get some other book?'" (TH0512)

Moreover, Mrs. Hart did not believe that she and Lyn worked together to promote Michael's reading development:

> I just don't feel like there's the connection there with things getting done at home and things being done at school. I basically do my thing at school. She basically does her thing at home. If I give Michael homework to take home or things to read, very rarely does it ever come back. Unfortunately, I don't feel like we do work together to promote his reading development. (TH0512)

Mrs. Hart suggested reasons for Lyn's perceived lack of involvement in Michael's reading development:

> Maybe her parents never read to her. Maybe her parents weren't involved in what she did. Maybe she's just busy. Maybe she's more concerned about just having him having a good night and not stressing out and not pushing him to do things that cause a reaction. (TH0512)

Mrs. Purcell's beliefs

Mrs. Purcell believed that Lyn and Albert "provide experiences for the kids to build

background" (TP0112). Likewise, Mrs. Purcell reported that Lyn purchased books for her children. However, Mrs. Purcell believed that Lyn might not have understood how to use books to promote her children's reading development. She explained, "I'm sure that if Lyn reads, … she reads it possibly just page by page and doesn't ask those questions or doesn't model her thinking" (TP0312). Mrs. Purcell also commented, "Mom doesn't know how to have those conversations with her about books" (TP0112).

During several interviews, Mrs. Purcell wondered about the relationships among Lyn's childhood experiences with reading, Lyn's adult relationship with reading, and Lyn's role in her children's reading development. She wondered, "Maybe she was never read to as a kid. Maybe she doesn't feel like she's a good reader. She doesn't have the confidence" (TP0312). Mrs. Purcell also noted, "I'm not sure if reading is something she values for herself" (TP0112), and, "She is more comfortable having an iPhone and navigating that than having a book in her hand and sharing it and reading it" (TP0312).

Mrs. Purcell believed that reading is not a priority for Lyn or Albert: "I just think it's not a priority for them because otherwise I think that they would've done it over the years" (TP1212). Moreover, Mrs. Purcell reported, "We were sending home baggie books, and candidly, I asked, 'Mae, does anybody read these with you or do you read?' And she was quite honest in that regard and said, 'No.' According to Mae, nobody reads to her at home" (TP0312).

Mrs. Purcell believed that Lyn had a "big cross to bear with just her kids and their personalities, let alone their learning styles" (TP0312). Mrs. Purcell remarked that Lyn "does give everything over, the power so to speak, to the teachers" (TP0112). Mrs. Purcell's beliefs

about Lyn's ability to promote Michael, William, and Mae's reading development reflect her seven-year intimate relationship with Lyn, Michael, and Mae. Mrs. Purcell did not work with William. During our second interview, Mrs. Purcell described efforts she made to promote Michael's motivation to read. She believed that Michael was a reluctant reader who "shut down" (TP0112) when he could not comprehend information in texts. "So, we found magazines and different kinds of … books and articles that were interesting, that would motivate him and kinda bring him outta his shell" (TP0112). Mrs. Purcell believed that she needed to make extra efforts to engage Michael in texts that were considerate of his interests and emotional needs.

During our second interview, Mrs. Purcell spoke at great length about her work with Mae: "Mae is an extremely needy reader. It can be very disillusioning, working with kids who are so needy. The reading specialist and I talk almost every day about Mae" (TP0112). Mrs. Purcell identified motivation as a critical factor in Mae's reading development. She commented, "I really feel like that's the missing link. She doesn't have a buy-in. She's not excited about it" (TP0112). After I suggested that Mae would possibly be more motivated to read if she had more choice in her reading at school, Mrs. Purcell commented, "We'll get some books on gymnastics at her level, and ballet, and dance, and performing" (TP0112). Mrs. Purcell's knowledge of Michael and Mae's reading needs are illuminated in her comment that Lyn had a "big cross to bear" (TP0312).

Mrs. St. Pierre's beliefs

Mrs. St. Pierre believed that reading was not a priority for Lyn and her family: "I don't

think that's how they spend their time together in this family. No judgments attached to that. I just don't think that's how they spend their time" (TSP0312). Mrs. St. Pierre also commented, "From the conferences I have had with Lyn, I kinda get the impression that she is unwilling to do things at home that might cause conflict" (TSP0212), and added, "I'm not sure if she can see the connection that reading 20 minutes is gonna have a payoff here" (TSP0212).

Mrs. St. Pierre believed that William does not read at home: "I don't think he probably does read at home. I don't think there's a lotta follow-through. I just don't think that's where he is" (TSP0312). Mrs. St. Pierre accepted the decisions Lyn and William made about whether or not to read at home. She remarked, "I'm willing to accept that that's what they choose to do as a family. I need to be okay with that" (TSP0312). However, Mrs. St. Pierre believed that she could influence William's reading development during the time she worked with William at school, saying, "If he's gonna be a reader, I need to develop that at school" (TSP0312).

Mrs. Taylor's beliefs

Mrs. Taylor believed that Lyn read with Mae at home, reporting, "I do understand that she does read with her" (TT0312). However, Mrs. Taylor wondered about the reading experiences Michael, William, and Mae had at home with Lyn before they entered school: "I just don't know if she was the kind of mother that even read aloud all the picture books and things. I don't think she did or frequently as much as I know I've done with my children and grandchildren" (TT1111). Mrs. Taylor's comment was supported by Lyn's admission that

she didn't read to her children as often as she should have read to them: "I should have read to them every night before bed. But we did not as often" (FL0911). Moreover, Lyn commented, "Every day is good to do it" (FL0911).

Mrs. Taylor believed that Lyn was receptive to the recommendations teachers made about how to promote Mae's reading development at home. She explained, "Any time we have made recommendations, she has been open to them. She says, 'Yes, I think we can try that'" (TT0312). However, Mrs. Taylor was unsure about the extent to which Lyn followed through on the recommendations:

> There has been very little parent support at home or parent support following up and doing the school reading. There wasn't a lot of follow-through with the baggie books. Mae would very rarely bring her books back home or back from home. My gut tells me that there's probably not a lotta trips to the library, that maybe it's not a priority. (TT0112)

Mrs. Taylor expressed her disappointment at parents' lack of follow-through with reading homework: "I get disappointed when parents don't follow through" (TT0112). Mrs. Taylor believed that Lyn had a responsibility to prepare her children for school, saying, "I kinda feel that that's her role as a mom, to make sure those kids are prepared when they walk into school the next day, that they're prepared with the right kinds of materials" (TT0112). However, Mrs. Taylor believed that neither Lyn nor Albert was "comfortable with helping their kids with homework" (TT0112). Mrs. Taylor pondered the reason for Lyn and Albert's reluctance to help their children with homework, suggesting, "Maybe their experience with school was not good" (TT0112).

Conclusion

The teacher actors in my study valued reading as a critical aspect of overall school success. Moreover, Michael, William, and Mae's teachers were relentless in their efforts to promote Lyn's children's reading development. Each of Lyn's children's teachers assumed additional responsibility for Michael, William, and Mae's reading development at school because they believed that Lyn did not have the capacity to effectively promote her children's reading development outside of school. Conversely, the teachers believed that they had the individual and collective capacity to promote Michael, William, and Mae's reading development within the confines of the school settings.

The teachers' decision to absolve Lyn from responsibility for reading with her children at home was also influenced by their commonly held belief that Michael, William, and Mae's disabilities presented Lyn with challenges that negated her ability to engage her children in reading homework. Moreover, the teachers' decisions to provide Michael, William, and Mae with additional reading instruction at school were shaped by their common belief that it was neither in the best interests of Lyn's individual children nor in the best interests of Lyn's family to require Michael, William, and Mae to engage in school-related reading at home.

The teachers' beliefs about the roles Lyn was able to assume in her children's reading development corresponded with Lyn's belief that the time she spent at home with her family was her time and should not be interrupted with schoolwork. However well-intended Lyn's children's teachers may have been, their decisions may have fortified the boundaries that Lyn

had already established for her children's relationships with reading. Moreover, the teachers'

decision to assume all of the responsibility for the Davis children's reading development may

have further alienated Lyn and her children from their reading communities outside of school.

For Lyn, Michael, William, and Mae, reading was largely contained to their school

environments.

The interconnected beliefs of the actors in my study shaped their individual

relationships with reading and with each other. Lyn's belief that she was a bad reader with

poor reading comprehension reflected the argument of Lynch et al. (2006) that parents'

beliefs in their ability to effect change in children's lives influence the roles they assume in

children's reading development. Moreover, the extent to which parents view themselves as

agents of change exerts direct and indirect influence on children's reading development

(Bandura et al., 1996; Lynch, 2002). Lyn abdicated primary responsibility for promoting her

children's reading development to her children's teachers because she believed the teachers

were better equipped than she was to provide Michael, William, and Mae with the skills they

needed to become readers. Lyn's children's teachers willingly assumed additional

responsibility for Lyn's children's reading development, further strengthening Lyn's belief

that teachers are more competent in providing Michael, William, and Mae "their reading 101

knowledge" (FL0112).

I examined the beliefs of Lyn's children's teachers because the literature demonstrates

that the extent to which parents believe in their capacity to effect change in children's reading

development influences the relationships they have with their children's teachers (Schaefer,

1991, p. 241). Lyn believed that her children's teachers were better equipped than she was to

promote Michael, William, and Mae's reading development. Regardless of their shared belief that parents play important roles in children's reading development, each of the teacher actors in my study believed that Lyn was not able to effectively promote her children's reading development. Subsequently, each of Lyn's children's teachers altered their expectations of Lyn and her children. The teachers absolved Lyn of the responsibility for assisting Michael, William, and Mae with reading homework and, instead, increased the reading support they provided for Lyn's children at school. Moreover, the teachers absolved Lyn's children of completing reading homework. The teachers believed that the Davis children did not enjoy reading; therefore, it was unlikely that the children would initiate reading outside of the school setting.

I examined Lyn's children's beliefs in order to understand how Lyn's beliefs influenced Michael, William, and Mae's relationships with reading inside and outside of school. A number of studies demonstrate that a reciprocal relationship exists between reading beliefs and reading behavior (Bandura, 1997; Rokeach, 1985; Tesser & Shaffer, 1990); however, the beliefs of the actors in my study, especially the children's beliefs, were not consistently reflected in their reading practices.

In the next chapter, I provide a thorough discussion of the tensions and inconsistencies in beliefs and practices that characterize my study. Also in the next chapter, I assemble all of the parts of my study into an "aesthetic whole" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997d, p. 33).

CHAPTER 6

ASSEMBLING THE PORTRAIT PARTS INTO AN AESTHETIC WHOLE

"Portraiture strives to resonate beyond the particular that has so preoccupied science to the universal that echoes throughout art" (Davis, 1997a, p. 37).

I begin this chapter by recounting a conversation between Lyn and me in which the core of Lyn's beliefs about reading is illuminated. Next, I explain how my search for "goodness" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983, p. 23) was a unifying force in my efforts to create a believable portrait of Lyn's beliefs. After that, I discuss tensions within and among the actors regarding their reading beliefs and reading practices in multiple ecological environments. In the following section of this chapter, I discuss how the beliefs of several of the portrait actors shifted during my study. Next, I discuss the limitations of my study. I conclude the chapter by suggesting ways in which the findings of my study can be used to promote children's literacy development and also ways in which other researchers can use my study as a springboard for further examinations of how parent beliefs influence reading development.

Lyn's early experiences reading in school with her teachers shaped her relationship with reading and the roles she played in her children's reading development. Lyn's fond memories of listening to her mother read out loud to her as a child and Lyn's memories of her mother reading Christmas stories out loud to Lyn and other family members were blurred by her painful recollections of reading at school. For Lyn, reading became a means of accomplishing necessary tasks and certainly not a leisure activity. My findings support the

argument by Evans et al. (2004) that parents' beliefs are shaped by their memories of how they were supported during childhood by parents, teachers, and friends.

Efforts by Lyn's teachers to provide Lyn with additional reading instruction isolated her from her peers and also from reading. She recalled, "I was put off by reading because it made me look different. When I was taken out of class and taken to my reading class, everybody looked at me" (FL0112), and, "It's like you're gone for an hour. You miss other things. I got to miss labs in school. I got to miss fun things, and it made me hate having to go there" (FL0911). Throughout her life, reading was a barrier to Lyn's full membership in her cultural communities.

Statements that Lyn made during each of our interviews and observations illuminated beliefs that shaped her relationship with reading, especially statements that Lyn made during our third interview early in November of 2011. When I arrived at Lyn's home for the interview, Michael, William, and Mae were not home. Lyn invited me to join her on a comfortable sofa in the family room, adjacent to the dining room, where one or more of her children typically watched television or played video games. I began the interview by asking Lyn to explain the importance of reading in her life. Lyn's response reflected self-doubt about her capacity to promote Michael, William, and Mae's reading development:

> Like I said before, I'm not really a reader. I'm not gonna sit down and read a book, but for the kids, it's important. Do I read every day? Yes, I'm reading the stuff that the kids bring home from school. I'm helping them with their homework … I'm reading my mail … I do it every day, but do I do it by choice? Not really. (FL1111)

Moreover, Lyn's comments reflected vast differences in the ecological environments in which her children lived and learned. In the Davis home, reading was a means of accomplishing

necessary tasks. In their schools, Lyn's children experienced reading as an enjoyable means
of establishing connections with various social groups, including their teachers, their peers,
their families, and members of the broader communities in which the students lived.

The underlying origin of Lyn's determination to provide Michael, William, and Mae
with "all the choice, period" (FL0911) was illuminated in her response to one of my interview
questions. Lyn's belief that her teachers pushed her to read influenced her enduring
commitment to allow her children to determine when they read, where they read, and even
whether or not to read:

> So for the kids, with me not pressuring them … I don't care if it's homework or not.
> I'm not gonna make you sit here and read, because if I do it day by day, you are …
> gonna not only regret the things that I have done to you, it's gonna push you away
> from being a reader.… It's learning on your own and in your own time.… That's what
> I believe in.… I'm gonna give you a lot longer to learn it than everybody else …
> because I don't want you to hate me for it in the end. (FL1111)

Lyn doubted her capacity to promote Michael, William, and Mae's reading development as
effectively as the children's teachers were able to promote reading development at school;
however, Lyn realized her capacity to exert influence on her HLE.

Lyn viewed reading development as the pathway to her children's school success. "I
know if they don't, they won't do good in school. Everything's reading" (FL0811).
However, Lyn's reading experiences in school predisposed her belief in her capacity to
promote Michael, William, and Mae's reading development. "I don't think I'm an A-plus
mom.… I'm not going to push the issue. That's just not who I am. If I push my kids, my kids
are gonna hate it. They pushed me to read in school, and I hated it" (FL0112). Lyn's desire
to maintain loving relationships with her children presided over her willingness to place

demands on Michael, William, and Mae to read at home.

In the following sections of this chapter, I weave the unique and complex stories of each actor together into a portrait that resonates with a spirit of goodness and acceptance. During my study, I established and negotiated intimate relationships with Lyn, Michael, William, Mae, and the children's teachers; these relationships are the glue that binds the pieces of the portrait together. Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997e) argued that relationships are central to the creation of a portrait that will resonate with the portraitist, the portrait actors, and the readers of the completed portrait. As my relationships with the actors deepened during my study, I developed a sense of moral obligation to tell the stories of each actor in a way that would illuminate the goodness that I found in each of them.

My study was guided by one straightforward, albeit complex question: What are Lyn's beliefs about reading and reading development? Nine additional questions focused my study on the nature and origin of the actors' beliefs as well as the relationships among the portrait actors' reading beliefs and reading practices. In the current chapter, I synthesize interview, observation, and artifact data that I collected during my study into a portrait that presents a new perspective of reading development.

Illuminating Goodness in the Completed Portrait

"I love the fact that everybody around me is there to help my kids" (FL0312).

I begin this section by restating how *goodness* in portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997e) is distinguished from the traditional use of goodness. Portraiture is grounded in a search for goodness (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983). Goodness is not an idealized representation

of people and their experiences; rather, goodness is characterized by "the mixture of parts that produce a whole … including measureable as well as less tangible, more elusive qualities that can only be discerned through close, vivid description, through subtle nuances, through detailed narratives" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983, p. 23). Moreover, goodness is "a complex, holistic, dynamic concept that embraces imperfection and vulnerability" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997e, p. 142). Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997e) argued that a search for goodness is a search for balance that illuminates the full range of human emotions, including strengths, weaknesses, capabilities, and vulnerabilities.

<u>Goodness in Lyn</u>

In her enduring efforts to promote her children's reading development, Lyn demonstrated strength and self-efficacy by initiating and maintaining communication with her children's teachers. Lyn told me, "I make myself known" (FL0112). She regularly attended meetings at her children's schools and maintained organized documentation of her children's school records. Lyn believed that she promoted her children's reading development by explaining why it was important to read. During an interview, Lyn stated, "I hope that's what they take away from me, how much they need to read" (FL1111). Lyn's statement reflects her belief that she played an important role in her children's reading development.

Lyn held positive beliefs about her children's teachers in spite of the negative experiences she had with teachers during her own schooling. Lyn reported that "all the kids have gotten wonderful support in the schools" (FL0911). Moreover, Lyn believed that her children's teachers were "on my side" (FL1111) when she informed them that she was unable

to assist her children with homework.

Vulnerability characterized the roles Lyn assumed in Michael, William, and Mae's reading development. Lyn doubted her capacity to promote her children's reading development:

> I haven't been in school in years, and I didn't even do that good when I was in school. All of a sudden, I was back at school. I'm doing all this homework, and I don't have a teacher to tell me how to do it, and I have not one clue how to do it. So, it was frustrating for me. And I was just like, enough is enough. (FL1111)

Lyn relied upon her children's teachers to provide all of Michael, William, and Mae's reading instruction and reading practice at school. Lyn reported that she was relieved when she confessed to Michael's fifth grade teachers that she was doing Michael's homework because she believed that her son did not have the capacity to complete it independently: "They were really on my side when I told 'em that this is all I'm gonna do. I think they were surprised that I didn't come to them sooner" (FL1111). The negative experiences Lyn had with teachers during her own schooling did not interfere with the relationships she established with her children's teachers. Lyn believed that teachers at her children's schools understood and supported her. She was regularly involved in meetings at school during which her children's reading development was discussed even though she was often confused by language the teachers used.

The influence of parent involvement on reading development has been widely examined (Anderson, 2000; Hoover-Dempsey & Whitaker, 2010; Zellman & Waterman, 1998). *Parent involvement* is a term typically employed to describe observable transactions during which parents and children engage in school-based activities, including read-alouds

(DeLoache & DeMendoza, 2008) and shared readings (Fisher et al., 2008). Moreover, parent involvement is often measured by the frequency and extent to which parents comply with educators' requests to engage in school-based activities and also by the extent to which parents comply with school practices.

Lyn characterized herself as an involved parent; however, her reading beliefs and reading behaviors were not consistent with the social norms in her social communities. Reading was valued as a critical component of school success at Pleasant View Elementary School. The teachers who participated in my study believed that reading is fundamental to school success and that parents should read with their children at home. Moreover, many teachers at Pleasant View Elementary School participated in books clubs together. Parents facilitated before-school book clubs and book fairs for Pleasant View Elementary School students. The public library in the town in which the Davis family lived was situated in the heart of the town. The library was a year-round hub of activity that offered a plethora of reading-related activities for patrons of all ages. The mothers of children who attended dance lessons with Mae read and discussed novels in the waiting room of the dance studio. Lyn's involvement in her children's reading development did not reflect the "institutional standard" (Sheldon, 2002, p. 301) of parent involvement that has been established in the literature; however, the roles Lyn assumed in her children's reading development, as well as her reading beliefs, are salient parts of the completed portrait in my study.

In my study, I did not examine how Lyn's beliefs and behaviors influenced her children's reading development. Data I collected did not demonstrate whether or not Lyn's beliefs and behaviors influenced her children's reading development.

<u>Goodness in Lyn's children</u>

Data I collected during interviews and observations with Lyn's children reflect goodness in the children's beliefs that their reading development was supported by their parents and their teachers. Goodness also resonated in the children's beliefs that reading was a pleasurable activity over which they had choice at school and at home.

<u>Goodness in Michael</u>

Michael believed that Lyn supported his reading development when he was young. He reported that when he was learning to read, his mother "would sit with me and help me discuss what words, and help me figure out that word, or help me read, and says, that don't make any sense" (FM10312). Michael also believed that his teachers provided primary support of his reading when he became older: "You can always ask a teacher for help with almost anything" (FM10312). Michael expressed excitement about reading, saying, "I'm always on the edge of my seat when I'm reading a book, no matter what kind it is" (FM10312). Michael's beliefs that his teachers provided primary support of his reading development once he entered school corresponded with Lyn's beliefs that teachers provide children with "reading 101 knowledge" (FL0112).

<u>Goodness in William</u>

William believed that his parents, as well as his teachers, supported his reading development. He reported that Lyn "buys me books, and then she helps me, and then I have to read it to her" (FW0811). William also told me that his teacher helps him read: "She gets

me guided reading books, and then she tells me to read it with a guided reading group"
(FW0811). William believes that reading is an enjoyable activity; he explained, "I read books
at school a lot. It's my favorite thing" (FW0312).

Goodness in Mae

Mae believed that Lyn was the person who most supported her reading development:
"When I have a very hard book at home, and I forget some of the word[s], my mom helps me"
(FM20811). Mae reported, "I love to read" (FM20811). During my study, Mae identified
favorite books that she enjoyed reading.

Goodness radiated in Michael, William, and Mae's beliefs about the roles their mother
and their teachers assumed in their reading development. Each of Lyn's children believed
their mother and their teachers cared about them and supported them, not only as readers, but
as individual and unique learners in their home and school communities. Throughout my
study, Michael, William, and Mae demonstrated inconsistent beliefs and behaviors; however,
their reading beliefs and reading behaviors constitute salient parts of the completed portrait of
my study.

During my study, I did not examine how Lyn's children's beliefs and behaviors
influenced their reading development. Data I collected in my study did not demonstrate
whether or not Michael, William, and Mae's beliefs and behaviors influenced their reading
development.

Goodness in Lyn's children's teachers

Goodness resounded in the enduring efforts of the teachers to advance Lyn's children's reading development in spite of the challenges presented by the children's learning disabilities and Lyn's belief that her children should decide when to read. Each of the teachers was reflective in her efforts to understand how Lyn was involved in her children's reading development. Parent involvement is often based on measurable, school-related behaviors, including parents' attendance at school meetings, school conferences, and other school-based events (Nord, 1998). The teachers in my study did not believe that Lyn was involved in her children's reading development to the extent that she should be involved because Lyn did not regularly engage Michael, William, and Mae in reading homework. However, each of the teachers demonstrated willingness to support Lyn and her children by providing Michael, William, and Mae with additional support at school. The decision of the teachers to increase the amount of focused reading instruction Michael, William, and Mae received at school is supported by research that demonstrates that children who struggle to read benefit from increased instruction by qualified teachers at school (Dweck, 1986).

Goodness in Mrs. Collins

Mrs. Collins believed that Lyn was "just a wonderful source to be reinforcing skills and just reading with her kids" (TC0112). Mrs. Collins commented that Lyn was "always very positive about things. She is more than willing to let us do what we feel we need to do for her children. I appreciate that" (TT0312).

Mrs. Collins expressed her belief that homework was overwhelming for Lyn: "Lyn has said that at home the idea of homework is overwhelming and that William and Michael do not currently have homework" (TC0312). Mrs. Collins and other teachers at Pleasant View Elementary School worked together to find ways for Lyn to read with Mae at home. Mrs. Collins explained, "We talked in a team meeting earlier in the year about just giving some activities for home that they could and we kinda kept it more to math games … and apps on their iPad" (TC1211). In a later interview, she added, "We tried to remove the homework piece" (TC0312).

Mrs. Collins adjusted her expectations of Mae's ability to read at home, saying, "I feel that without medication after a long day of school and throw in cheerleading and dance and all of her activities, that asking her to engage in anything more literacy-related in the evenings would be very challenging" (TC0312).

Mrs. Collins took a physical approach to promoting Mae's reading development at school: "Sometimes I'll have her work at a desk nearby where I can see her reading, and I'll have her whisper read so I can hear her reading" (TC0112). During an interview, I heard Mrs. Collins tell Mae, "If you need me, I'm close" (TC0212).

Mrs. Collins acknowledged Lyn's family's need for ongoing support to keep Michael, William, and Mae engaged in reading. She remarked, "They just need that steady support … just to keep them engaged" (TC0312).

Goodness in Mrs. Hart

Mrs. Hart acknowledged the potential challenges Lyn faced helping Michael with

schoolwork at home: "It could be difficult for a parent to motivate someone at that level if they weren't a good reader" (TH0512).

Mrs. Hart assumed responsibility for assisting Michael and her other students with work that typically would be assigned for homework. She explained, "I just make sure that they're getting what they can get at school. I've made adjustments to our day so I can make sure that they're getting time to do some of that homework at school" (TH0512). Mrs. Hart believed that she could inspire Michael and her other students to read by "building relationships with those kids and letting them talk about what's on their mind and how they're feeling" (TH0512).

Goodness in Mrs. Purcell

Mrs. Purcell acknowledged Lyn's willingness to support her children's teachers' efforts to promote Mae's reading development, saying, "Mom was very understanding" (TP0412). Mrs. Purcell believed that "most parents want to do for their kids the best. Maybe the shelter, the food, the clothing is maybe what you're providing for your kids, and you don't have the resources, the energy to get out the baggie book" (TP1011). She remarked, "I try to always support the parents and not ever try to make them feel guilty or feel wrong because that's not gonna help the kid at all" (TP0112).

Mrs. Purcell believed that Lyn and her husband were unable to comply with homework requirements because they were "overwhelmed with lots of other things in their life" (TP0112). She noted, "We feel like we really can't put it onto the parents for that second reading piece. Mom would prefer that it would not be sent home" (TP1212).

Mrs. Purcell believed that she was responsible for providing Lyn and other parents with tools to promote their children's reading development: "I don't think we can blame parents. If we don't give them that information, and they don't have the skills or the resources or the motivation or whatever to seek it out, that's not necessarily their fault" (TP0112). She also said, "We have to keep looking at … what's gonna take to get her motivated to be a reader" (TP0312). By the conclusion of my study, Mrs. Purcell was still searching for ways to engage Lyn in Mae's reading development at home.

Mrs. Purcell demonstrated a strong commitment to Mae's reading development. In spite of a challenging teaching schedule, Mrs. Purcell initiated a plan to increase the amount of time she worked with Mae: "I had her in a group, and that wasn't really working, so I see her a half hour, five days a week. She just reads to me" (TP0112).

Goodness in Mrs. St. Pierre

Mrs. St. Pierre expressed her belief that Lyn's reluctance to insist that William complete reading at home may be an effort to avoid confrontation with William's older brother, Michael: "I think she's trying to avoid more chaos in her family, which I get. I think she may have some issues with explosive behavior from another child, and you don't want to add to that" (TSP0212). Mrs. St. Pierre added, "I'm willing to accept … what they choose to do as a family and not be critical of that, just support William at school" (TSP0312).

Mrs. St. Pierre explained her efforts to promote William's reading achievement at school: "What I do is just try to make sure I make every single second at school count and get as much reading in as I possibly can. I send home books that I think William will like and

might try to read on his own" (TSP0312). Mrs. St. Pierre's efforts to promote William's reading development by providing him with books that she believed would interest him matched Lyn's belief that children should be provided with texts that feature topics in which children are interested.

<u>Goodness in Mrs. Taylor</u>

Mrs. Taylor was appreciative of Lyn's involvement in school meetings as well as Lyn's willingness to support the teachers' efforts at school:

> I think she's a smart lady. She's been very good about coming in for those kinds of meetings. She's very appreciative of what we do. She is more than willing to let us do what we feel we need to do for her children. I appreciate that. (TT0312)

Mrs. Taylor suggested that Lyn and Albert "have a lot of things going on in their life. I don't judge parents. I get disappointed when parents don't follow through, but I understand. There's a lot of things they have to deal with" (TT0112). "Mae has always said that she had cheerleading and some other things to occupy her time, and I totally understand that" (TT0312). Mrs. Taylor posited that Lyn and Albert's school experiences influenced the ways they worked with Michael, William, and Mae at home, saying, "They're not comfortable with helping their kids with homework. Maybe their experience with school was not good" (TT0312).

Mrs. Taylor believed that she could "foster the wonderful connection" (TT0112) that Lyn and Mae have by removing homework demands and providing Mae with daily individual reading support at school. Mrs. Taylor solicited volunteers in the Pleasant View community to support Mae's reading development. She reported, "We set up parents that would come in

and reread other books with her to provide her that practice. We try to build the experience for them" (TT0112).

Mrs. Taylor assumed additional responsibility for promoting Mae's reading development: "We decided that that we're gonna take over the role and let her do what she wants to do with Mae at home to foster that wonderful connection that they have, and then we'll take care of reinforcing as much as we can here" (TT0112).

Lyn's children's teachers were unwavering in their efforts to promote Michael, William, and Mae's reading development and also unyielding in their efforts to respect the decisions Lyn made about the roles she wanted to assume in her children's reading development at home. In their relationships with Lyn, each of the teacher actors in my study assumed "the role of a warm-hearted and sympathetic friend" (Winnicott, 1964, p. 195). The teachers' concern for the overall well-being of Michael, William, and Mae, as well as the teachers' desires not to interfere with the general well-being of Lyn's family, mediated the approaches they took to promoting Michael, William, and Mae's reading development at school. Lyn's children's teachers adjusted their expectations of Lyn to engage her children in school-based reading activities, including homework, at home. Subsequently, they assumed additional responsibility for Michael, William, and Mae's reading development at school.

In my study, I did not examine how the teachers' decisions influenced Lyn's children's reading development. Data I collected during my study did not demonstrate if, or to what extent, the teachers' decision to absolve Lyn and her children from responsibility for reading at home and their decision to provide Michael, William, and Mae with additional reading instruction and reading practice at school influenced Lyn's children's reading

development. Regardless, the teachers' reading beliefs and reading behaviors comprise a

mixture of all of the parts of my study that make up the "aesthetic whole" (Lawrence-

Lightfoot, 1997d, p. 33) of the completed portrait.

<div align="center">Conclusion</div>

Goodness, as I employed it in my study as an imperfect and changing mixture of parts

that comprise the "aesthetic whole" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997d, p. 33) of the completed

portrait, was illuminated in the portrait actors' beliefs, behaviors, and relationships with each

other. Lyn's approach to promoting her children's reading development did not reflect

traditional views of parent involvement. Lyn regularly attended meetings and events at her

children's schools. She attended school book fairs at which she purchased books and other

literacy materials for her children; however, she did not regularly engage Michael, William,

and Mae in reading at home. Multiple times during my study, Lyn stated that she allowed

Michael, William, and Mae to choose whether or not to read at home because she believed

that pushing or forcing her children to read when they did not want to read would cause them

to hate reading and to hate her.

My study demonstrated that Lyn's school experiences exerted substantial influence on

her beliefs about reading. Moreover, the reading beliefs Lyn developed during her childhood

remained stable into her adulthood even though some of her beliefs were disparate from the

beliefs held by her children's teachers and other members of her social communities.

Regardless, Lyn's beliefs, behaviors, and relationships with her children and her children's

teachers comprise critical components of the mixture of parts that made up the "aesthetic

whole" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997d, p. 33) of the completed portrait.

Goodness was illuminated in the teachers' beliefs and behaviors. The teachers in my study responded to Lyn's decision to absolve her children from responsibility for completing reading homework by assuming additional responsibility for Michael, William, and Mae's reading development at school. Moreover, the teachers were consistent in their belief that the best way to promote Lyn's children's reading development was to maximize the children's reading experiences at school. As Mrs. St. Pierre reported, "What I do is just try to make sure I make every single second at school count and get as much reading in as I possibly can" (TSP0312). Mrs. St. Pierre's comment reflected her belief that she felt responsible for assuming additional responsibility for children whose parents, she believed, did not engage their children in school-based reading at home. Lyn appreciated the teachers' efforts. During an interview, Lyn commented, "I love the fact that everybody around me is there to help my kids" (FL0312). The teachers who provided Michael, William, and Mae with reading instruction worked in buildings in which cultures of caring had been established.

Lyn's children's teachers respected Lyn's decision to refrain from requiring her children to engage in reading at home. The teachers believed that placing expectations on Lyn to engage her children in reading at home would place stress on Lyn and her children and would exert negative influence on the Davis family's overall well-being. Lyn appreciated the teachers' acceptance of her decision not to engage her children in reading at home; however, the teachers' actions may have further strengthened Lyn's belief that she was not capable of assuming an active role in her children's reading development.

Goodness was illuminated in Lyn's children's acknowledgment of their mother's

persistent efforts to support their reading development at home. William reported, "When my mom says something like, 'No, that's not how you say it right,' she keeps tryin' like one or two hours" (FW0312). Moreover, Lyn's children believed that their teachers promoted their reading development at school.

Intricate patterns of respect and caring characterized the relationships among Lyn, Lyn's children, and Lyn's children's teachers. The portrait actors' beliefs reflected a range of strengths, weaknesses, and tensions that comprise the "aesthetic whole" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997d, p. 33) presented in the completed portrait of my study. However, questions remain about the long-term effects of the decisions Lyn and her children's teachers made about how to promote Michael, William, and Mae's reading development. In my study, I did not measure or examine Lyn's children's reading progress. It is possible that Lyn's decision not to engage her children in reading at home may have exerted negative influence on Michael, William, and Mae's reading development. Moreover, it is also possible that the decisions of the teachers to absolve Lyn from responsibility for engaging Michael, William, and Mae in reading at home may have exerted negative influence on the children's reading development. Finally, it is also possible that the teachers' decisions to excuse Michael, William, and May from completing reading homework may have impacted the children's reading development.

Illuminating Tensions Among the Portrait Actors' Beliefs and Practices

"Living with contradiction is one of the central conditions of human life" (Rudiak-Gould, 2010, p. 84).

Navigating tensions and contradictions is central to human relationships. Moreover,

children's reading development is influenced by tensions that exist among reading

stakeholders (Maniates & Mahiri, 2011). Purcell-Gates (1995), Rogers (2003), and Pennac

(1999) demonstrated the influence of tensions on children's reading development as well as

on family well-being. In my study, tensions and contradictions were demonstrated within and

among the portrait actors' beliefs, behaviors, and relationships with each other. In the

following section, I describe and discuss the tensions that were illuminated in my study.

<u>Tensions among Lyn's reading beliefs, reading practices, and reading roles</u>

Multiple tensions existed within and among Lyn's beliefs about reading, her reading

practices, and the roles she assumed in her children's reading development. Lyn was a self-

proclaimed reluctant reader: "I'm not just gonna grab a book and sit down. I don't consider

myself a reader. I don't put that on the top of my list" (FL1111). However, during

observations at Lyn's home, I observed her reading information from her children's schools,

doctors, and other agencies. Lyn also accessed the Internet to obtain information about

current events on local, state, national, and international levels. Lyn believed that real reading

was constrained to reading books. She did not believe that reading magazines or reading

electronic information was on a par with reading books.

Lyn wanted to promote her children's enjoyment of reading: "If I can get them to like

reading when they're little, then they're going to be like, 'Yeah, a new book to read'"

(FL1111). Lyn believed that children become good readers when their parents "read to 'em a

lot" (FL0911). However, Lyn acknowledged that she did not read with Michael, William, and

Mae on a regular basis before they entered school: "I didn't read very often with them"

(FL0911). During our second interview, in September of 2011, I asked Lyn to tell me about

her children's reading experiences before then entered school. Lyn referred to her children

collectively as she explained the Davis family nighttime routine during her children's early

years. She did not indicate that she differentiated her approach to promoting Michael,

William, and Mae's reading development when they were very young:

> When they were really little, it was kinda cuddle time. We did the whole dinner and, you know, fun play time. Then it was bath time, brush your teeth. And then they would come and sit down with me and I'd, you know, watch my nightly show … and they would sit and cuddle with me and then … tuck them in and that was it. Occasionally, we would sit and read a book, but it was always on the couch. (FL0911)

Later during my study, Lyn reported that she began reading to Michael, William, and

Mae when they were infants. She explained, "Two, three months old is when I started really

reading them books. Mae had a backwards schedule, so she was up all night, so what is there

to do but sit and read in my bed?" (FL0112).

Lyn believed that she should encourage her children to read at home. When Michael

asked Lyn why she asked him to read more when he came home from school, Lyn replied,

"It's good to sit down and read other than just at school" (FL0911). Lyn explained to Michael

that her encouragement of reading at home promoted the amount of time Michael, William,

and Mae read. She also believed that the more her children read by choice, the more they

would enjoy reading. Lyn was unwavering in her belief that Michael, William, and Mae

should have "all the choices" (FL0911) in reading.

Midway through my study, early in February of 2012, I arrived at Lyn's home late in

the afternoon to conduct an informal observation. Michael and Mae arrived home from

school shortly after I arrived. The children hung their backpacks on hooks Albert had

installed on the dining room wall. The children immediately assumed positions on separate pieces of furniture in the adjacent family room. Michael began playing a game on the family's iPad, and Mae turned on the television. Before turning her attention to me, Lyn directed Mae to get her backpack and bring it to the dining room table. Lyn told me that she wanted to check Mae's backpack to see if Mrs. Purcell had sent new books home for Mae to practice. Immediately following her first direction, Lyn told Mae to go into the kitchen and to make a snack before she had to leave for dance class. Lyn then directed Michael to go upstairs to take a shower. Michael complied immediately and left the dining room to follow his mother's direction. Mae went into the kitchen and returned with a snack, which she ate as she continued to watch television and while Lyn explained to me why William was not allowed to play video games at home during the next week. Mae did not retrieve her backpack as Lyn had requested, and Lyn did not provide Mae with additional reminders to do so.

William arrived home five minutes after his siblings arrived. Before hanging his backpack on a hook on the wall, William retrieved a blue pocket folder from the backpack and gave it to Lyn. Lyn immediately reminded William that he was not allowed to play video games as a consequence of inappropriate behavior he had displayed the previous day during a family outing. Following the reminder, Lyn asked William if he had brought home information about a class dinner theater, and William placed a piece of paper with information about the dinner theater on the table in front of Lyn. Lyn told Mae to go upstairs to get dressed for her dance class and then engaged William in a brief conversation about the costume he would wear for his part in the dinner theater. Following the conversation with his

mother, William began to watch television in the family room; he was joined by Michael and Mae a few minutes later.

Albert arrived home from work within an hour of my arrival and joined William and Mae on the sofa in the family room. Before Albert left to drive Mae to her dance class, Lyn told Mae to get her backpack. This time, Mae complied immediately and brought her backpack to Lyn. When Mae took out a new book Mrs. Purcell had given her to read at home, I asked Mae if I could hear her read. Lyn stood behind Mae as Mae began to read the book out loud to me. Each time Mae read a word incorrectly, Lyn placed her index finger on the word and gave her daughter clues about the word. Mae read out loud for a few minutes before she left for her dance class. During this observation, Lyn demonstrated a salient interest in Mae's reading.

Lyn believed that parents' interests in reading influence children's reading interests. She explained, "If you're not interested in it, you're not showing your children that it's interesting" (FL0911). Lyn demonstrated an interest in her children's reading development before they entered school, reporting, "We did flash cards and words" (FL0911); however, she reported that she did not read out loud to Michael, William, or Mae as often as she should have. Lyn continued to demonstrate interest in her children's reading development after they entered school by purchasing books and other literacy materials for Michael, William, and Mae to use at home: "I've ordered books through Scholastic and on the Internet, and I try to get things that I know were their age level that I can help with that to help promote their success" (FL0911). Lyn also considers her children's interests when she orders books for them to read at home.

During her second interview, Lyn provided extensive details about her children's

reading interests. She reported, "Both the boys prefer information" (FL0911). She also

referred to *The Spiderwick Chronicles* and books in the *Harry Potter* series as books in which

Michael is interested. Lyn reported that William enjoys reading books about volcanoes.

Regarding William, Lyn said,

> I let him read when he wants to read. I do not force it because if I force it, he's not
> gonna like it. If we wanna read this, we'll read this, but if I don't get to this, the
> teachers are just gonna have to understand. (FL1111)

Data from my interviews with Lyn demonstrated that tensions existed in Lyn's beliefs about

Mae's choices in books at school. Lyn believed that each of her children should have been

afforded opportunities to select books based on their interests; however, she also believed that

when Mae was at school, she "needs to be shown books and taken to places where they are at

her reading level. Pull her in that little area of the library. Show me level B books"

(FL0911).

When I asked Lyn if she had informed her children's teachers about Michael, William,

and Mae's reading interests, she replied, "I just didn't think it was my place. I didn't want to

step in" (FL0911). Moreover, Lyn did not believe that she was equipped to promote her

children's reading development at home: "I didn't go to school. I'm not a teacher. I'm not a

professional. I don't know if there's a professional way to sit down and do stuff" (FL0312).

Lyn believed that once children enter school, teachers exert the most substantial

influence on reading development. She explained, "When they're in that full-day school, the

teacher … should be the most important person with the reading because they're the ones who

are seeing them the majority of their day" (FL0112). However, Lyn believed that it is too

difficult for a teacher to attend to the interests of many children: "I don't have to put it on the teachers because when you have 23 kids and say we need to pick out this kind of book for you, I'm just one parent. All the parents could do that" (FL0911).

Lyn was conflicted in her efforts to comply with homework requirements from her children's teachers. Throughout her interviews, Lyn maintained her stance that neither parents nor teachers should force children to read. She believed that forcing children to read will push them away from reading (FL1111). Lyn explained, "If you have parents pushing their kids or even teachers, it's gonna get 'em down" (FL0112). Lyn articulated her belief as she discussed her reluctance to require William to complete his reading homework:

> William is supposed to be reading 20 minutes every day. Does he read 20 minutes every day? Absolutely not, because if I make him read 20 minutes every day, he is going to hate it. I let him read when he wants to read. (FL1111)

Throughout my study, Lyn made comments that demonstrated her desire to maintain communication with her children's schools and to promote completion of reading homework. She said, "If you're bringing me home guided reading, and they're supposed to read this story, it might not be what they're interested in, but they have to listen to it" (FL0911). She also remarked, "I agree with getting one book that, you know, you kinda gotta do for school" (FL0911), and, "I'm going through all the kids' backpacks and reading everything that's sent home from them" (FL1111).

<u>Tensions among Lyn's beliefs and her children's beliefs</u>

Multiple times during my study, Lyn stated that she did not enjoy reading. Conversely, during individual interviews and during observations, each of Lyn's children

made positive comments about reading. Michael stated, "I crave suspense and mystery books" (FM0412). William named *Star Wars*, army, and cars as favorite themes that he enjoyed reading for fun at school (FW0811). Mae reported, "I love to read about cats, baby kittens, mom cats, and big fluffy cats" (FM20811). Although each of Lyn's children reported that he or she read for enjoyment, I did not observe any of the children initiate reading during any of my observations in Lyn's home. I scheduled observations of Lyn's children in their school settings during times that the teachers would be engaging Michael, William, and Mae in reading activities. I did not observe Michael, William, or Mae engage in self-select reading during any of the observations at school.

<div align="center">Tensions among Lyn's beliefs and her children's teachers' beliefs</div>

Lyn and her children's teachers hold vastly different beliefs about reading as a leisure activity. Each of the teacher actors spoke fondly of childhood reading experiences with family, friends, and teachers. Mrs. Collins recalled ordering books from her school book fair: "Ordering some of those favorite authors was always a highlight in grade school" (TC1011). Mrs. Hart remembered reading activities in early elementary school as being "fun and interactive" (TH0512). Mrs. Purcell credited her fifth grade teacher with "igniting my passion for reading" (TP1011). Mrs. St. Pierre was introduced to "really, really good books" (TSP1211) during junior high school. She explained, "I remember reading *Lord of the Flies*, *The Great Gatsby*. I fell in love with those kinds of books" (TSP1211). Mrs. Taylor "loved reading. I can remember as a young child just reading in bed" (TT1111).

During interviews, four of the five teacher actors reported that they read for

enjoyment. Mrs. Hart stated, "I've always enjoyed reading. I'll grab a book just to relax or escape" (TH0512). Mrs. Purcell read for leisure during the summers when she was not teaching (TP1011). Mrs. St. Pierre reported, "I'm not a TV watcher. I prefer to read" (TSP1011). Mrs. Taylor enjoyed reading professional books. She reported that completing her graduate degree in reading "has changed my whole life and where I am, who I am now" (TT1111).

Conversely, Lyn did not read for enjoyment. During our first interview, Lyn explained why she did not enjoy reading: "The comprehension for me is horrible, so I never liked reading because of that" (FL0811). Lyn's perception of herself as a "bad reader" (FL0911) negated her desire to read for enjoyment. She explained, "I would love to sit down and read a book. I would love to sit and read novels. I want to read, but I can't because I can't comprehend 'em" (FL0811).

Lyn's beliefs about her ability to read and comprehend text influenced the expectations she held for her children to read at home. At the beginning of our second interview in September of 2011, Lyn situated the roles she played in her children's early reading development (before they entered elementary school) in her own relationship with reading: "I am not a huge reader. I should have read to them every night before bed, but we did not as often" (FL0911). Lyn's reluctance to engage in reading practice with her children influenced the extent to which Michael, William and Mae completed reading homework.

Tensions among Lyn's beliefs and the beliefs of her children's teachers were not evident in the relationships Lyn maintained with Michael, William, and Mae's teachers during the study. During her final interview, Lyn expressed her belief that her children's teachers

were supportive of Michael, William, and Mae: "I love the fact that everybody around me is there to help my kids" (FL0312).

Lyn's positive belief that her children's teachers were supportive were substantiated by the teachers' willingness to accept Lyn's decision not to request Michael, William, and Mae to complete reading homework and in the efforts the teachers expended to provide the children with additional reading support at school. During interviews and observations, all of the teacher actors explained why they altered their expectations and the strategies they used to compensate for the time they believed Michael, William, and Mae were not reading at home with Lyn.

Mrs. Collins believed that Mae's diagnosed attention deficits, as well as Mae's involvement with cheerleading and other extracurricular activities, constrained Lyn's ability to assist her daughter with reading homework: "Mae's time on task is very difficult to keep. It's difficult to keep her engaged. I don't think there's a lot of time for that. I know Mae's involved in a lot of outside activities. She has a very busy schedule" (TC0112). Mrs. Purcell and Mrs. Taylor shared in Mrs. Collins's belief that the demands of Mae's schedule made it difficult for Lyn to read with Mae at home. Mrs. Taylor believed that Lyn's work schedule and "other things going on in their lives that I think were, kind of, more important" (TT0112) influenced the extent to which Mae practiced reading at home. She noted, "There wasn't a lot of follow-through with the baggie books. Mae would very rarely bring her books back home or back from home" (TT0112).

Mrs. Hart and Mrs. St. Pierre expressed similar beliefs about Lyn's capacity to support Michael and William with the completion of reading assignments at home. Mrs. Hart

believed that Michael's disability "makes it hard" (TH0512) for Lyn to assist Michael with reading homework. Mrs. St. Pierre made statements that reflected the other teachers' beliefs about Lyn's capacity to read with her children at home: "From the conferences I have had with her, I kinda get the feeling that she is unwilling to do things at home that might cause conflicts. And probably trying to get William to read could be a messy situation" (TSP0212).

<div align="center">Tensions among Lyn's children's beliefs</div>

Each of Lyn's children made multiple statements about reading for enjoyment; however, tensions and contradictions were evident in belief statements Michael, William, and Mae made during interviews and informal conversations.

Michael

Early during his first interview, Michael stated, "I don't read a lot" (FM10811). However, as the interview progressed, Michael described the spaces in which he enjoyed reading at home: "I usually like to sit in the basement 'cause there's no one down there but me, and in my own room when no one's home" (FM10811). Later in the same interview, and also during his second interview, Michael named books that he had read home and at school. When I asked Michael if he was a good reader, he responded, "yeah" (FM10312). I probed deeper and asked Michael to explain how he knew that he was a good reader. He replied, "'Cause I tend to read a lotta books at school. I'm always … on the edge of my seat when I'm reading a book, no matter what kind it is" (FM10312). I wondered if Michael's use of the phrase "on the edge of my seat" was his language or if the phrase was modeled by Mrs. Hart

or one of his other teachers.

While Michael's report that he read "eight books a day" (FM10911) is most likely exaggerated, his claim that he did not read a lot was disputed in subsequent statements he made during interviews and informal conversations. Michael seemed to enjoy reading and was detailed in his retellings of books he discussed with me during multiple conversations throughout my study.

During an interview with Michael, I asked him to tell me how his mother helped him learn to read. Michael responded, "She doesn't really help. She tells me, 'Why don't you ever read a book?' I tell her I read all day in school, and then she expects me to come home and read more" (FM10911). I asked Michael if he knew why his mother wanted him to read after school. He replied, "I have no idea" (FM10911). I suggested that Michael talk to Lyn about her expectation that he read after school. Michael called Lyn into the room and asked her, "How come sometimes, right after school, when I … read all day at school, you ask me to read more when I get home?" (FM10911). Lyn responded, "It's good to sit down and read other than at school" (FL0911).

William

During my initial interview with William, he made statements that reflected his enjoyment of reading (FW0811). During a later interview, he said, "I do read a lot, and there's this cool book I really wanna get at the library" (FW0911). William reported that he preferred to read in his room at home, so no one could bother him (FW0811). William read the guided reading books that his teacher gave him to read for homework: "I have to finish my

guided reading book before I play" (FW0811). William's statement conflicted with Lyn's statements that she allowed her children "all the choice" (FL0911).

William believed in his capacity to become a better reader. He remarked, "I want to read harder books, so I can get smart about reading books" (FW0811). William believed that he was a good reader "because I read books at school a lot. I like to read books at school. It's my favorite thing" (FW0312).

During my second interview with William, I asked him if he ever read books at home. He responded, "I never get time to read" (FW0312). William explained that he didn't have time to read because he had to complete chores and because he attended a sleepover for three days. However, during the same interview, William told me that Albert was "starting to have time to read with me" (FW0312). William reported that it felt "awesome and fun" (FW0312) to read with his dad a book I had given him. Data I collected during interviews and observations at Lyn's home disputed William's statement that he never had time to read at home. William often played video games or watched television during times when I conducted interviews or observations in Lyn's home; however, I never observed him reading, for homework or for leisure.

Mae

During my initial interview with Mae, she stated, "I love to read" (FM20811). Mae made multiple statements about reading for enjoyment at home during interviews and informal conversations. She once noted, "I like to read about animals" (FM20811). Mae explained that her grandmother gave her a book about horses because "she loves me a lot.

She cares about me" (FM20811). Mae stated that she preferred to read at home with Lyn in her parents' bed. Further, Mae told me that sometimes she read alone at home, but her favorite place to read is in bed with her mom. During our second interview, Mae reported that she read *Junie B. Jones* books and princess books with Lyn at home.

Mae believed that reading was hard because she forgot the words, letters, sounds (FM20811). Moreover, Mae reported that other activities interfere with her ability to read at home: "I always forget because … a lot of work for my mom and me to clean up the house, go to ballet, go to cheer, and that's what I do" (FM20811).

Mae stated, "I don't like to read much" (FM20811). When I conducted a member check of my first interview with Mae, I asked her if she ever read for fun. Mae replied, "No" (FM20811). The meaning of the tensions in Mae's beliefs about reading were illuminated in statements Mrs. Collins made during an interview in January of 2012:

> She does, periodically, try to get chapter books in her bag because she wants to look like a reader. I will note that some of her good friends in the class are probably two of my … most advanced readers. She sees friends reading books like that. I think there's a little bit of pressure she's putting on herself. 'I wanna like them. I'm gonna grab a book they might read.' (TC0112)

By second grade, Mae understood what it meant to be a struggling reader, and she understood the effort it took to present herself as a competent reader to her friends. Mae's delays in reading were apparent every day in school when she was removed from her class to receive supplementary reading instruction, just as her mother had been when she was in school. Mae, like Lyn, had learned that reading was not fun.

Tensions among Lyn's children's beliefs and Lyn's children's teachers' beliefs

During the study, Lyn's children's teachers made statements that indicated their belief that Michael, William, and Mae were disinterested in reading. Regarding Michael, Mrs. Hart stated, "He seems excited, but oftentimes … I don't see him going to get another one without me saying, 'You need to get another book'" (TH0512). Conversely, Michael stated, "I tend to read a lotta books at school. I'm always on the edge of my seat when I'm reading a book, no matter what kind it is" (FM10312). Multiple times during interviews and observations, Michael expressed a desire to read; however, at no time during the study did I observe Michael read for enjoyment at home.

Mrs. Purcell commented on Mae's reading motivation: "She is not interested. She doesn't seem to care" (TP0112). Mrs. Taylor agreed with Mrs. Purcell's assessment of Mae's motivation to read, noting, "Mae would very rarely bring her books back home or back from home. She lost them or she didn't have time to read them" (TT0112). Mae acknowledged that reading was difficult: "My reading's, like, hard. When I start to read, I forget the letters, the names, the sounds" (FM20811). Moreover, during her first interview, Mae commented, "I don't really like to read much" (FM20811). However, during the same interview, Mae expressed an interest in reading and cared about her reading development. She remarked, "I like to read about animals. I love to read" (FM20811).

During an interview, Mrs. Collins reported that Mae had selected a chapter book to read in class. She recalled, "She was in the middle of the book. She had a bookmark, and she was kind of moving it down the rows like a reader" (TC0112). Mae wanted to establish herself as a member of her class reading community. Her teachers' beliefs that Mae was disinterested in reading and did not care about reading were influenced by the extent to which

Mae met homework expectations. Mae's capacity to complete reading homework was influenced by Lyn's beliefs that reading was not enjoyable, that her children should have all the choice in their reading, and that Michael, William, and Mae would hate her if she demanded that they read at home.

Mrs. St. Pierre believed William's slow reading progress was caused by his "aversion to print" (TSP0212). She remarked, "I don't think he's real interested in reading" (TSP0212). Multiple times during interviews and observations, William talked about reading for enjoyment at home and at school; however, there was only one occasion during which I observed William engaging with books. During our final interview in March of 2012, William stated, "pretty much I like books and they make you smarter" (FW0312). I asked William if he knew any good readers. He quickly identified two children in his class as good readers. William explained that one of the children, Christopher, was a good reader because "he's the only one who likes to read a lot" (FW0312). Moreover, William characterized Christopher as a good reader because "he reads books at the library and at his house" (FW0312). I asked William if he read books at the library. He explained that he read books at the Pleasant View Elementary School library; however, William stated that he did not read books at the local public library because "we don't go there a lot. I['ve] only been there like five times" (FW0312). I asked William if he would like to visit the local public library. He responded, "No, because we have tons of books. I have a whole … bucket upstairs filled with books" (FW0312). After our interview concluded, I asked William if I could see the bucket of books to which he had referred during the interview. William agreed and asked Michael to help transport a tall wicker basket of books from where it was stored upstairs to the dining

room in which William and I had met for our interview. The boys positioned themselves on the floor in the dining room next to the basket and showed me books that they enjoyed reading at home. William identified books about *Star Wars* and books about Legos as his favorite books to read. I asked William if he was a good reader. He told me that he was a good reader because "I like to read books at school, because it's my favorite thing" (FW0312). I probed deeper and asked William if he ever read books at home. He replied, "No … it's because I never get time to read" (FW0312). However, William quickly corrected his statement, adding, "but now I do with my dad" (FW0312). I asked William when he began reading with his dad. He replied, "It's because now he's starting to have time to read with me … now we're starting to read the Indian book" (FW0312). Several weeks earlier, during an after-school tutoring session in my classroom, I had given William two copies of *Indian in the Cupboard* and suggested that he and his dad might enjoy reading the book together. The following week, I asked William if he and Albert were still reading the book together. William reported that they were not. William demonstrated interest in books and reading; however, the support he needed to read at home was not available. The structure that characterized the school setting in which William read was vastly different from his HLE.

William, Michael, and Mae had access to books and other literacy materials in their home; however, the adult guidance that framed their school reading environment was absent in Lyn's home. Lyn admittedly did not engage her children in reading on a consistent basis. She was firm in her belief that her children should decide when and when not to read. On the few occasions during which I observed Lyn tell her children to read, the children did not follow their mother's direction, and Lyn did not redirect them.

<u>Tensions among Lyn's children's teachers' beliefs and teachers' practices</u>

Tensions within and among the teachers' beliefs and the teachers' practices were illuminated in interview and observation data. Michael, William, and Mae's teachers adjusted their expectations of the children to complete reading homework assignments based on their experiences, observations, and conversations with Lyn.

Mrs. Taylor believed that children's parents set the stage for reading success at home: "It really has to start there with parents reading nightly to kids" (TT0112). However, during my third interview with Mrs. Taylor, she stated, "Unfortunately, the expectation that I have for Lyn being a partner in Mae's reading at home at night, I kind of put that expectation to the side" (TT0312). She noted, "The reading log sheet was never signed by Mom, and it got to the point where I just didn't send books home" (TT0112). Mrs. Taylor also reported that Mae "would very rarely bring her books back home. She lost them or she didn't have time to read" (TT0112). Mrs. Taylor decided to provide Mae with daily individual instruction at school, saying, "We decided, whatever's gonna happen, it's gonna happen here" (TT0112). She acknowledged, "As teachers, we just do whatever we can here to fill in the gaps" (TT0312).

Mrs. Collins, Mrs. Hart, Mrs. Purcell, and Mrs. St. Pierre also believed that parents hold important roles in children's reading development; however, each of the teachers revised their expectations for Lyn to assist Michael, William, and Mae with reading homework. Mrs. Collins stated, "I know Lyn has expressed that … it's difficult to keep her engaged" (TC0112). In an effort to promote Mae's reading engagement at home, Mrs. Collins and another teacher at Pleasant View Elementary School provided Lyn with information about

reading websites and reading applications that Lyn would be able to install on the family's iPad. Mrs. Collins believed that Lyn would be more likely to engage Mae in electronic reading activities than she would traditional reading homework. However, Mrs. Purcell argued, "just because she has an iPad doesn't mean that that's gonna help her become a more experienced reader" (TP0312).

Mrs. Purcell also adjusted her expectations for Lyn to assist Mae with reading homework. She remarked, "Mom has shed lots of tears at meetings. Mom so much wants to be supportive. She buys things that she sees, like books. But whether or not that's something that's done systematically, routinely, and structured, I don't sense that" (TP0112). I observed Mrs. Purcell working with Mae and another student in December of 2011. When I returned to observe Mrs. Purcell working with Mae two months later, Mrs. Purcell was providing Mae with individual instruction in order to compensate for the reading support she believed Mae was lacking at home. Mrs. Purcell explained why she had discontinued her practice of giving Mae books to read at home: "It doesn't seem like Mae is reading them, and she's saying, 'Oh no, they're still in my locker … in my backpack'" (TP0112). I informed Mrs. Purcell that I had observed Lyn checking Mae's book bag during an observation at Lyn's home. Mrs. Purcell told me that she would begin to send books home with Mae again.

Mrs. St. Pierre believed that Lyn was unwilling to require William to complete reading homework as a means of avoiding conflict: "I could see William balking at that" (TSP0212). Moreover, Mrs. St. Pierre believed that Lyn's belief that her children should have choice in their leisure activities at home influenced William's completion of reading homework. She commented, "If you were choosing Tumblebooks or video games, he makes a pretty clear

choice" (TSP0212). Mrs. St. Pierre reported that she provided William with additional reading instruction, noting, "He gets more guided reading than most people" (TSP0212).

I asked Mrs. Hart to explain her beliefs about parent involvement after she commented, "I don't get the impression that she's as involved as I would like a parent to be" (TH0512). She responded, "I think that showing interest is really important. What are you working on at school? What is the homework you have? Do you have your homework done? Did you get your homework done?" (TH0512). Mrs. Hart explained that she provided her students with additional support because "Michael's not the only one in my class; many of them will not do homework" (TH0512). Moreover, Mrs. Hart described how she made efforts to compensate for her students' lack of homework completion: "I've made adjustments to our day so I can make sure they're getting time to do some of that homework at school so that they're getting time to do some of that practice and reading practice at school" (TH0512).

The decision of each of the teacher actors to provide Michael, William, and Mae with additional reading support was based on two primary beliefs. First, the teachers believed that Lyn and her children did not follow through with reading homework. Second, the teachers believed, for various reasons, that Lyn was not able to assist her children with reading homework.

Tensions among the actors' beliefs and practices

Data I collected during my study demonstrate that tensions exist within and among the actors' beliefs and practices. The most salient tension existed among Lyn's beliefs and her reading practices. Lyn believed that it was important for her children to read. During visits to

Lyn's home, I observed various reading materials including children's magazines, children's books, and reading activities on the family's iPad; however, the only time I observed Lyn initiate a reading event with her children was during our trip to the local public library when she and Mae looked at a book about roses. My research design included planned observations at Lyn's home to observe scheduled reading practices, including reading homework; however, early in the study Lyn informed me that she did not require her children to read; therefore, it would not be feasible to schedule observations to observe planned reading events. Lyn remarked, "I'm not going to do homework. That's my family time" (FL0212). This data was supported by comments from Lyn's children's teachers that Michael, William, and Mae did not complete reading homework. I did not examine whether or not Lyn's children completed other homework.

Tensions also existed among Lyn's children's beliefs and their reading practices. Throughout my study, Lyn's children reported that they enjoyed reading; however, I did not observe evidence of their beliefs during observations at Lyn's home. Lyn allowed Michael, William, and Mae to select activities during free time at home. The children consistently selected electronic activities, including television viewing, playing video games, and playing games on the family's iPad. The children did not select reading as a leisure activity during my observations in Lyn's home. During my study, I presented Lyn's children with books. I observed Mae initiate reading on one occasion when I presented her with a book (FM21111). During the same visit, I gave William a book; however, he did not initiate reading. I did not observe Michael reading the books I gave him.

Tensions among the ecological environments in which Lyn's children lived and learned

The elementary school attended by Lyn's children was situated in a largely middle- to upper-middle-class suburban community. Mrs. Morrow, a kindergarten teacher at Pleasant View Elementary School, reported that the vast majority of children entering kindergarten at Pleasant View Elementary School have been read to regularly by their parents at home. Moreover, Mrs. Morrow also stated that most Pleasant View Elementary School kindergarten students attended one or more years of preschool. Michael was the only child in the Davis family who attended preschool. Each of Lyn's children entered kindergarten with delays in reading development, according to assessments conducted by their classroom teachers and other educators at Pleasant View Elementary. Lyn's children entered Pleasant View Elementary School at a disadvantage because they lacked the school experience shared by most of their peers and also because their HLE was vastly different from the literacy environment of their school.

Reading for pleasure was a social norm established at Pleasant View Elementary School. Teachers at Pleasant View Elementary School read aloud to children every day. Moreover, teachers at Pleasant View Elementary School incorporated The Daily 5 (Boushey & Moser, 2006) approach to managing their literacy block. Teachers who used The Daily 5 approach taught children how to "read with someone" as a means of promoting the idea that reading is a social activity in which people engage for enjoyment. Teachers at Pleasant View Elementary School participated in book clubs together for professional development, as well as for enjoyment outside of the regular school day. Each year, a book fair was held at

Pleasant View Elementary School. Parents were encouraged to attend the book fair with their children at specified times during the school day, as well as at least one evening during the book fair. Lyn attended book fairs and purchased books and other literacy materials for her children. She wanted to be viewed as a respected member of the Pleasant View Elementary School community.

Reading for enjoyment was a socially situated norm engaged in by many teachers and students at Pleasant View Elementary School. Parent volunteers at Pleasant View Elementary School facilitated before-school book clubs during which students read and discussed books. Membership in the book clubs was not mandatory; rather, book clubs were offered as a social activity in which children at Pleasant View Elementary School participated for enjoyment. The Davis children never attended a book club at their school.

Reading was also valued by many people in the town in which the Davis family lived. The recently built local public library was situated in the center of town, within walking distance of the Davis family home and also in walking distance of Pleasant View Elementary School. Each year, at the end of the school year, a staff member of the local public library visited each of the town's six elementary schools to encourage children to enroll in the library's summer reading program. Children who participated in the library's summer reading program documented minutes they read during the summer in reading logs provided by the library. Children received prizes, including gift certificates to local restaurants and entertainment venues in the town, for completing and submitting reading logs. The names of children who participated in the local library summer reading program were published in one of the local public newspapers. The library also offered a summer reading club for adult

community members. A list of the books that middle school and high school students in the town were required to read over the summer was posted on the library's website.

In addition to the summer reading program, the local library offered a plethora of other activities for adult and child community members, including chess clubs; story time sessions for babies, preschool-aged children, and elementary-aged children; and special events associated with holidays. Additionally, the local public library facilitated a free online tutoring program for children who secure free library cards. Substantial concerted efforts were made by the local public school district, local business, and the local public library to engage adult and child community members in reading. Neither Lyn nor her children visited the local public library with any regularity even though the facility was located within walking distance of Lyn's home. My efforts to establish the library as an enjoyable venue for Lyn, Michael, William, and Mae were not successful. Neither Lyn nor her children visited the library again without me after I accompanied them there on one visit.

Lyn believed that reading was important; however, she did not regularly access the local community reading resources and supports that were available to her and her children. Lyn's decision to distance herself from reading ran counter to the social reading norms established in her local ecological environments. Lyn was actively involved in her children's sporting activities, as well as in other community events; however, she situated herself on the fringes of the literacy communities in which she and her family lived. Perhaps being a "bad reader" (FL0911) was more comfortable than the risks Lyn would have taken to establish herself and her children as fully functioning members of their reading community.

<u>Conclusion</u>

Multiple tensions existed within and among the actors who participated in my study. First, Lyn was trapped by tensions among her reading beliefs, her reading behaviors, and the positions she assumed in her children's reading development. She could not reconcile her firm belief that "everything's reading" (FL0811) with her equally firm belief that her children "should have all the choice, period" (FL0911) about what to read, where to read, when to read, and whether or not to read. Lyn believed that reading was the key to Michael, William, and Mae's school success; however, she also believed that requiring them to engage in reading at home would exert a negative influence on their relationships with reading. Lyn attempted to present herself as an involved mother by attending meetings and recreational events at her children's schools and also by purchasing books and other literacy materials; however, during my study, I rarely observed Lyn engage in reading practices with her children.

Second, tensions permeated the teachers' efforts to promote Michael, William, and Mae's reading development and their mutual desire to maintain caring, respectful relationships with Lyn and her children. Moreover, each teacher struggled to balance her reading beliefs with her expectations of Lyn and her children. During interviews, each of Lyn's children's teachers told me that she believed parent involvement was central to children's reading development; however, each of the teachers believed that Lyn did not have the capacity to promote Michael, William, and Mae's reading development at home. Therefore, despite their beliefs about parents' roles in reading development, the teacher actors

made conscientious decisions to absolve Lyn and her children from responsibility for engaging in reading homework.

Third, tensions existed among Lyn's children's reading beliefs and reading practices. During interviews, Michael, William, and Mae reported that they enjoyed reading; however, neither their teachers nor I observed behaviors that matched the children's beliefs. Moreover, Lyn reported that she did not often observe her children engage in self-selected reading at home.

Lyn and her children adopted the prevailing belief in their communities that reading was important; however, in spite of enduring efforts by the children's teachers to promote reading as an enjoyable practice, evidence of Lyn and her children's stated beliefs was not consistently demonstrated in the data I collected during my study.

In the following sections of this chapter, I discuss how the beliefs of several of the teachers in my study shifted and how my own beliefs were transformed during my study.

Examining Transformation and Shifts in the Portrait Actors' and the Portraitist's Beliefs and Behaviors

"First and foremost to parents is that they're not alone. There's tools out there for them" (FL0312).

Transformation, a central tenet of portraiture, is conceptualized as an "expanded vision" (Davis, 1997a, p. 36) that resonates past the particular to the universal. Moreover, Davis (1997a) suggested that transformation creates new reference points and new representations.

Transformation was not a goal of my study; rather, attention to transformation focused my study on changes that characterize "a person's evolving conception of the ecological environment, and his relation to it, as well as the person's growing capacity to discover, sustain, or alter its properties" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 9). During my study, I searched for transformation in the portrait actors' beliefs, behaviors, and relationships with each other. Moreover, I searched for transformation in my own beliefs, behaviors, and relationships with the portrait actors.

Illuminating transformation of Lyn's beliefs and behaviors

Data I collected during my study demonstrated shifts in Lyn's beliefs; however, transformation in Lyn's beliefs and behaviors was not apparent. For the purposes of my study, I employ *shift* to describe changes that did not necessarily result in substantial and enduring changes in behavior. Prior to my study, in the spring of 2010, during a phone conversation, Lyn compared herself to a deaf dog because she was confused by information shared by teachers and other school faculty members during a meeting at Pleasant View Elementary School. Lyn's comment reflected her lack of self-efficacy as a member of her child's educational team. Moreover, Lyn was intimidated by professional jargon teachers used during meetings at school. Early in my study, Lyn told me that she did not understand the information teachers gave her during a meeting: "I'm so lost in that meeting that I probably couldn't tell you the first one or two things that they talk about" (FL0911).

Midway through my study, during our fourth interview, Lyn commented that she often did not understand the language teachers used in meetings. She remarked,

> Don't use all those big huge words and big huge graphs. I'm in a room with eight different people and they all know what this one person's talkin' about. I'm not gonna speak up. I don't want to feel embarrassed. (FL0112)

However, by January of 2012, Lyn had begun to seek out my support and the support of a family member who was also an educator when she was confused by information presented in school meetings. Lyn explained, "I'll go ask you something, or I'll ask somebody who knows something about it, like my stepmom" (FL0112).

At the conclusion of my study, Lyn's belief about her capacity to participate in school meetings had shifted. She noted, "I know to ask for help. I'm getting better. I know when I go into a meeting, I'm not understanding something, I need to speak up. I need to help myself in that aspect" (FL0312). Moreover, Lyn developed strategies to obtain the information she needs to support her children's reading development: "I need to ask. I need to know, even if it's not during the meeting. I might call a half hour later. I need to know in layman's terms, what this is saying about my child" (FL0312).

Lyn's perspective of reading changed during my study. At the beginning of my study, Lyn defined reading as "sittin' on a couch reading a book" (FL0811). Moreover, Lyn demonstrated a narrow view of reading. She once commented, "I look through *People* magazine. It's not *reading* reading" (FL0811). Several months later, during our third interview, Lyn's beliefs about reading had changed. She noted, "Yeah, I guess I do a lotta reading 'cause I am on Facebook many, many times throughout the day" (FL1111). Moreover, Lyn's perspective of herself as a reader was broadened during my study: "I think it was wonderful. I mean, the things that I've gotten out of it with, just the things you've brought to my attention, like how I was as a reader" (FL1212). However, changes in Lyn's

beliefs were not illuminated in her reading behaviors.

Lyn was adamant in her belief that she wanted her children to read; however, during my study, she rarely initiated book reading with Michael, William, and Mae at home. I suggest that Lyn's negative beliefs about reading coupled with her belief that she was a "bad reader" (FL0911) and her belief that "it's hard for me to comprehend" (FL0811) superseded her capacity to read books with her children. I present suggestions to support Lyn and other parents who hold negative beliefs about reading as well as parents who struggle with reading in an upcoming section of the current chapter.

<u>Illuminating transformation of Lyn's children's beliefs and behaviors</u>

Transformation or shifts in Lyn's children's beliefs were difficult to identify due to the tensions and inconsistencies that characterized the data I collected during interviews and observations with Michael, William, and Mae. For example, during our initial interview, Michael responded, "Not so much" (FM10811) when I asked him if he was a reader; however, when I asked him to tell me about his reading, he talked at length and in detail about specific books he enjoyed reading at school and at home. Adolescent children Michael's age are developing a sense of themselves and who they are as learners and readers (Henk, Marinak, & Melnick, 2012).

Lyn's children were willing participants in interviews and observations during my study. I obtained written and verbal assent from Michael, William, and Mae prior to every interview and observation. On several occasions, I rescheduled interviews with William and Mae because they did not want to participate in the scheduled interview. It was often

challenging to obtain and maintain William and Mae's engagement during interviews. Lyn does not administer prescribed medication to improve her children's attention after school or on weekends unless they are being tutored. During interviews and observations, I restated and rephrased questions and prompts frequently in order to ensure that Michael, William, and Mae understood what I was asking them to discuss. Transformation in Michael, William, and Mae's reading beliefs and reading behaviors may be apparent over a longer period of time as they mature and also as they negotiate substantial differences in their home and school reading environments.

Reading was not a part of the Davis family's daily lives at home, so opportunities for me to observe Lyn's children reading at home were extremely limited. Consequently, it was not possible for me to observe changes in their reading behaviors at home. Moreover, my observations of Michael, William, and Mae at school were limited to times during which the children were receiving reading instruction from their teachers. I did not observe Lyn's children at times during which they were independently engaged in self-selected reading at school; therefore, I was unable to determine whether or not changes had occurred in their school reading behaviors.

<u>Illuminating transformation of Lyn's children's teachers' beliefs and behaviors</u>

Shifts in the beliefs of three of the five teachers who participated in my study were demonstrated; however, data I collected during my study did not demonstrate that transformation had occurred in the teachers' beliefs or behaviors. Data I collected during interviews with Mrs. Collins and Mrs. Hart did not demonstrate shifts in their beliefs or

practices.

Illuminating transformation of Mrs. Purcell's beliefs and behaviors

During her initial interview, Mrs. Purcell stated, "I think that nowadays, with computers and technology, I think there's less conversation going on in house" (TP0112). Mrs. Purcell's statement was based on her beliefs. She had not conducted home visits or home surveys with her students' families. Several months later, during her third interview, Mrs. Purcell's belief had shifted. She commented, "We can't make assumptions about what's going on at home because I do not know what's going on at home" (TP0312). Toward the end of the study, Mrs. Purcell acknowledged that her relationships with Lyn, Michael, and Mae were bounded within the setting of Pleasant View Elementary School. During our final interview, I suggested to Mrs. Purcell that home visits may provide her with a broader perspective of her students and their families. She replied, "If I get a classroom, I'll do a home visit. I'll follow your lead" (TP0312).

Illuminating transformation of Mrs. St. Pierre's beliefs and behaviors

Shifts in Mrs. St. Pierre's beliefs were demonstrated in the data; however, transformation of her beliefs and behaviors was not evident. During our third interview, Mrs. St. Pierre explained how her participation in my study provided her with an altered perspective of how to promote William's reading development: "Building confidence in him, I think you gave me that clue, turned him around in my room as a reader" (TSP0312). Moreover, Mrs. St. Pierre's beliefs about William as a reader shifted during my study. During

our second interview, Mrs. St. Pierre characterized William as a disinterested reader who

"almost has an aversion to print" (TSP0212). However, during our final interview, Mrs. St.

Pierre described William as "a different kid with a whole lotta different interests" (TSP0312).

By the conclusion of my study, Mrs. St. Pierre acknowledged that William enjoyed reading,

especially suspense and adventure stories.

<u>Illuminating transformation of Mrs. Taylor's beliefs and behaviors</u>

Shifts in Mrs. Taylor's beliefs were demonstrated in the data; however, transformation

was not apparent in her beliefs or behaviors. During her second interview, Mrs. Taylor

suggested that young children who struggle with reading in school have not had adequate

reading experiences at home:

> We find that their language is really limited because sometimes without being read to
> a lot, possible they weren't even talked to a lot … not a lot of conversation going on.
> So these kids are really at … a kind of a disadvantage walking in the door. (TT0112)

However, during her last interview, Mrs. Taylor acknowledged that her understanding of

students' HLEs was limited. Moreover, Mrs. Taylor recognized that teachers' perceptions of

parents' ability to promote reading development may not be accurate:

> What we think is happening at the home maybe isn't because what we assume parents
> know how to do is maybe, they don't. Right off the bat from … curriculum night is
> getting some reading tips to parents. I think we should do that more and we probably
> don't do it as much here. I probably dropped the ball on that too. (TT0312)

The conversations Mrs. Taylor and I had during my study prompted Mrs. Taylor to reconsider

barriers that interfere with parents' ability to promote their children's reading development at

home. Later, during our final interview, Mrs. Taylor talked about how the busy schedules of

adult members of her family influenced their HLEs, especially the time they had to read with their children. She remarked, "It's heartbreaking when you're missing out on that experience" (TT0312).

<u>Illuminating transformation in the portraitist's beliefs and behaviors</u>

My beliefs about reading development as well as my beliefs about parents' roles in children's reading development were transformed by the experiences I had as portraitist of my study. Portraiture is a "highly personal and artistic genre" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997b, p. 16) that situated me inside the study, side-by-side with Lyn and the other portrait actors in my study. Moreover, portraiture demanded that I expose and scrutinize my voice as well as the voices (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) that reflected the nature and origin of the actors' unique sociocultural histories. Davis (1997a) argued that when portraitists read their portraits, "they may begin to see themselves and their actions with a portraitist's eye or mental set" (p. 35).

My examination of the beliefs held by the actors in my study prompted me to reflect upon my past reading experiences from a new and broadened perspective. For the first time in my teaching career, I considered the nature and origin of my own beliefs about reading and how my beliefs shaped my reading instruction.

I was raised to be a reader. As a young child, I was flooded with oral stories of my paternal great-grandmother's childhood experiences as an immigrant. I have fond memories of my paternal grandfather bouncing me on his knee as he recited German nursery rhymes. I delighted in the bedtime stories my maternal grandmother created about a fictional character,

Maryanne. My mother always made sure I was able to purchase books from school book fairs. I saw the adult members of my family read. I recall eagerly anticipating times in school when my teachers would read aloud. I learned, early on, that reading was something people did for enjoyment. When I became a teacher, I assumed that most children, certainly the vast majority of children in the middle-class range, arrived at school with funds of reading knowledge (Gonzalez et al., 2005a) similar to my own funds of reading knowledge. Lyn reported fond memories of reading at home with her mother; however, her positive memories reading at home were overshadowed by her painful memories of reading at school with most of her teachers. Lyn's experiences reading in school were vastly different from my school reading experiences.

My experiences in my study transformed my perspective of parents' involvement in children's reading development. Lyn's beliefs about reading were not always reflected in her reading behaviors. Lyn regularly attended parent-teacher conferences and special education meetings. She maintained communication with her children's schools by using written correspondence. She attended school events, including fun fairs, book fairs, and celebratory events. She assumed active roles in her children's extracurricular activities, including roles in which she assumed leadership and organizational roles. She set up and managed concessions stands at Mae's cheerleading competitions. She designed and ordered team clothing for Mae's cheerleading team. And at the same time, Lyn was separated from full membership in her school and social communities because of her belief that she was a bad reader with poor reading comprehension. Moreover, Lyn's lack of confidence in her reading ability separated her from her children's reading lives. Lyn had "no clue" (FL1111) how her children viewed

themselves as readers. Lyn's sons often watched television and played video games in the family room adjacent to the dining room where Lyn and I typically conducted our interviews; however, both Michael and William preferred to read by themselves in their bedrooms. With the exception of our visit to the local public library and one observation at Lyn's home, the social reading behaviors Lyn demonstrated during my study were constrained to reading Facebook postings, emails, and text messages. Lyn read to get information she needed. She did not believe that reading was enjoyable.

During my study, I began to wonder about the parents of students I taught. Disparity between the ways in which Lyn presented herself as an involved parent in her communities and her involvement in her children's home reading practices is probably not unique. Parents who regularly participate in meetings, conferences, and book fairs at school may not consistently engage their children in reading at home. Moreover, parents may not believe they have the capacity to engage their children in school-based reading at home.

My assumption about the roles mothers in the middle-class range assume in their children's reading development was transformed by the experiences I had with Lyn and her children during my study. Lyn taught me that the beliefs and values typically held by teachers in the middle-class range do not necessarily match the beliefs and values of all Caucasian middle-class families with whom teachers work. Lyn valued the positions her children held in their sporting communities more than she valued the positions Michael, William, and Mae held in their reading communities. Moreover, Lyn helped me realize that parents' beliefs and values are not necessarily reflected in their behaviors. During my study, Lyn repeatedly stated her belief that reading is important; however, her involvement with reading and her

efforts to engage her children in reading did not reflect her belief about the importance of reading.

During my study, I sought out my parents, one of my siblings, my husband, and my children to tell me about their reading development. I asked friends to tell me about their childhood reading experiences. Each story was filled with meaning and powerful emotions. The beliefs adults and children hold about reading are rooted in their early reading experiences in multiple ecological environments. Children's early reading experiences either connect them to their social communities or distance them from their social communities. The disconnection Lyn experienced from reading during her childhood persisted in spite of her belief that "everything's reading" (FL0811).

Revealing Limitations of My Study

"Beyond the careful consideration of the parts and the whole that may be facilitated by a thoughtful schema, portraitists need to understand and embrace their own interpretations both all at once and in relation to the subjects or sites they represent" (Davis, 1997c, p. 281).

My efforts to identify and examine Lyn's reading beliefs were limited by four prevailing conditions. First and foremost, my preexisting relationships with all but one of the portrait actors (Mrs. Hart) influenced the teachers' decisions to participate in member checks of interview and observation as I had planned for in my research design. The adult actors in my study repeatedly declined my offers to provide them with copies of interview and observation transcripts and to meet with me following interviews and observations. Michael, William, and Mae agreed to member checks of the initial interviews; however, they declined

my invitation to read or listen to me read transcripts of subsequent interviews and observations. My interpretation of the meaning of data I collected in my study reflects the actors' trust in my judgment.

Second, my preexisting relationships with Michael, William, and Mae may have influenced their responses to interview questions. Lyn's children knew that I was a teacher who valued reading; therefore, they may have provided responses that they believed would please me.

Third, my observations of Lyn, Michael, William, and Mae in their home were limited to informal observations because early in the study, Lyn informed me that she did not schedule specific times to read with her children. She noted, "Whether they did it or didn't do it, it was purely up to them" (FL0112). My observations of reading events at Lyn's home were almost exclusively limited to my tutoring sessions with Mae. During my informal visits to Lyn's home, I often observed Lyn, Michael, William, and Mae transact with print during times they used their iPad; however, except for one observation during which Mae initiated reading with me, I observed neither Lyn nor her children initiate reading events at their home. Lyn and her children may have engaged in numerous reading events during times when I was not conducting informal observations. Lyn's decision to allow her children to choose when to read, where to read, what to read, and even whether or not to read was an unexpected, albeit compelling, finding of my study that illuminated the complexity of Lyn's beliefs.

Fourth, data I collected during interviews with Michael, William, and Mae were characterized by tensions and inconsistencies. It was challenging to determine whether the children's responses to interview prompts reflected their actual beliefs, their desires to please

me, or the beliefs of their dominant communities. Additional interviews, as well as increased opportunities to observe Michael, William, and Mae reading in multiple ecological environments, may have clarified the meaning of Lyn's children's reading beliefs. Moreover, the children's diagnosed deficits in attention influenced their ability to maintain attention during interviews. I conducted interviews with Lyn's children in their home when there was activity, and during times at which the television was typically on in the adjoining room. The children's diagnosed deficits in oral language development may have also influenced their ability to respond to interview prompts.

Fifth, data I collected from interviews with the portrait actors were self-reported. I did not conduct fidelity checks with the adult actors' parents or other adults whom the adult actors referenced during interviews.

The results of my study cannot be generalized to broader populations of parents; rather, the findings of my study serve as a starting point from which future researchers may examine the complex ways in which parents' beliefs influence children's reading development. The limitations of my study demonstrate the need for further examinations of parents' beliefs and how parents' beliefs influence reading development.

Implications of My Study

"I just don't think we know about some of the little kids that walk into our classrooms, what they are experiencing. It's a lot bigger than some people realize" (TP1011).

I approached my study as a practicing teacher with a compelling curiosity to know more about the ways parents influence children's reading development outside of school. I

believed then, as I do even more firmly now, that parents are wellsprings that impart the funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 2005) with which children arrive at school. I began my study with an assumption that parents held salient beliefs about reading; however, in spite of my long-standing relationship with Lyn, I knew little about her beliefs or, for that matter, the beliefs of other parents with whom I worked at school. The findings of my study are important because they demonstrate that parents' beliefs may be the key that unlocks the door to a more comprehensive understanding of how children develop as readers.

Lyn held salient beliefs about reading. Lyn believed that she was a bad reader because she had poor reading comprehension. Lyn also believed that reading was difficult and unenjoyable. These findings support Bandura's (1997) theory that self-beliefs influence learning and behavior. Reading efficacy has been shown to be a precondition of reading motivation (Schiefele, Schaffner, Moller, & Wigfield, 2012). My efforts to promote Lyn's personal enjoyment of reading by engaging her in reading at the local public library were unsuccessful. I was also unsuccessful in my attempts to provide Lyn with tutoring that may have improved her perceived poor reading comprehension. Lyn believed that she was a bad reader and that she would always be a bad reader; therefore, she engaged in reading largely as a means of getting things done: "The only thing that makes me want to read now is the fact that I have to teach it to my kids, and I have to help them. That's the only thing" (FL0811).

These findings support Dweck's (2000) argument that the beliefs people hold about themselves influence how they think, feel, and act. Moreover, Dweck argued that individuals, like Lyn, who adopt an "entity theory" (p. 2) of intelligence are threatened by challenges. Lyn elected to remain a self-perceived bad reader rather than risking the challenges she would

have likely encountered in tutoring. Lyn's beliefs about her reading skills negated her ability to read for enjoyment. Parents, like Lyn, who are reluctant readers may acquire an interest in reading with long-term individual tutoring by reading mentors. Family literacy programming can be an effective means of teaching parents how to promote their children's reading development (Di Santo, 2012).

One exception to Lyn's belief that reading is not enjoyable was her engagement with reading on Facebook. These findings demonstrate a need for studies that examine how social media venues may be used to promote the reading enjoyment of adults and children who do not enjoy reading in the traditional sense. Teachers need professional development to help them understand how rapid changes in technology are exerting substantial influence on the ways children and their parents read outside of school (Jackson et al., 2006) as well as the beliefs people hold about themselves and their positions in their ecological environments (Cupchik, 2011). Moreover, teachers need resources and information that will allow them to capitalize on families' uses of technology to engage parents and their children in enjoyable reading events at home.

Lyn's children's teachers valued reading as a source of enjoyment; however, Lyn's enjoyment of reading in school was confined to her experiences reading with a single elementary teacher:

> The only time I ever enjoyed [reading] was I had a reading teacher and speech teacher, and her name was Mrs. Black, from back in third grade. I would go with her all the time, and she made it really fun because it was one-on-one. I never had to read in front of people, so that's the only time I liked it. (FL0811).

These findings are important for several reasons. First, differences in parents' and teachers'

beliefs may create tensions that compromise their relationships. Tensions in parent-teachers relationships can interfere with children's reading development (Evans et al., 2004). Second, these findings also demonstrate a clear need for additional studies that dig deeper into parents' beliefs by examining the nature and origin of parents' reading beliefs. Little is currently understood about parents' reading beliefs. Even less is understood about how parents develop their beliefs about reading. Finally, these findings demonstrate that teachers should make efforts to understand children's beliefs about reading. All children do not value reading as a source of enjoyment. Lyn may have developed a more positive view of reading if more of her teachers had understood how to create an enjoyable reading environment at school for her as Mrs. Black did.

Lyn's early reading experiences in school exerted a powerful and enduring influence on her beliefs about reading: "They pushed me to read in school, and I hated it" (FL0112). Moreover, Lyn's beliefs about reading exerted substantial influence on her relationship with reading as well as the roles she assumed in Michael, William, and Mae's reading development. As a result of her early experiences reading in school, Lyn learned that reading was not enjoyable. These findings demonstrate a need for studies that examine ways to promote reading enjoyment in school, especially for children who struggle with reading or do not see their parents reading for enjoyment at home.

Teachers cannot assume that the value they place on reading is shared by all parents. Lyn believed that reading is important. "I know if they don't [read], they won't do good in school. Everything's reading" (FL0811). However, Lyn placed a higher value on her children's extracurricular activities than she placed on reading homework. Moreover, Lyn

was insistent on keeping home and school separate. Lyn may have been more likely to engage Michael, William, and Mae in reading outside of school if teachers had shown Lyn how to build reading time into the Davis family's life. For example, a bag of books could be kept in Lyn's car for Michael, William, and Mae to read while traveling to and from extracurricular activities. Teachers could have invited Lyn into their classrooms to demonstrate how to engage children in reading through discussion. Most importantly, Lyn needed to be shown how reading can be an enjoyable activity for children and adults.

Parents who assist their children with homework convey a message to their children that school is important (Cheung & Pomerantz, 2012). However, teachers cannot assume that all parents want to assist their children with homework or that all parents have the capacity to assist their children with reading homework. Lyn's belief that she did not have the capacity to assist her children with homework was the impetus for Lyn's children's teachers to assume all of the responsibility for Michael, William, and Mae's reading development at school. These findings are important because teachers' expectations exert direct influence on children's academic achievement (Hauser-Cram, Sirin, & Stipek, 2003; Sweet, Guthrie, & Ng, 1998).

The teachers in my study acted out of genuine concern and care for Lyn and her children. However, the teachers' decisions to excuse Michael, William, and Mae from reading homework as well as their decision to excuse Lyn from responsibility for engaging her children in reading homework may have exerted negative influence on Michael, William, and Mae's reading development. Moreover, the teachers' belief that if reading was going to happen, it would happen at school reflected the doubts the teachers had about Lyn's capacity to effectively promote her children's reading development. Lyn's belief about her capacity to

promote her children's reading development may have been strengthened if the teachers had provided Lyn with individualized training on how to engage Michael, William, and Mae in reading at home. The findings in my study demonstrate a compelling need for studies that examine how parents, especially parents who struggle with reading, respond to the approaches teachers take to promote the reading development of struggling readers. More studies are also needed that examine how teachers design reading homework for children who struggle with reading. Findings of my study also demonstrate the need for teachers to differentiate homework, especially for children who struggle with reading and children whose parents struggle with reading. It cannot be assumed that the HLEs of all children are conducive for school-based reading. Lyn needed substantial ongoing support from her children's teachers to comply with the teachers' initial requests to engage Michael, William, and Mae in school-based reading in her home. The decision of Lyn's children's teachers to assume additional responsibility for Lyn's children's reading development rather than working with Lyn to teach her how to promote Michael, William, and Mae's reading development at home may reflect increasing demands on teachers to promote the reading development of struggling readers. It cannot be assumed that teachers understand how to effectively teach parents how to promote children's reading development at home. Teachers need resources and professional development that will assist them in their efforts to engage parents and children in school-based reading activities in their HLEs, especially parents and children who struggle with reading and for whom reading is not enjoyable. Resources and professional development must be differentiated according to the ages, abilities, and experiences of the students and parents with whom teachers work.

Lyn's beliefs influenced Michael, William, and Mae's HLE. Lyn provided her children with books and other literacy materials at home; however, her decision to assign to her children "all the choice" (FL0911) about reading shaped the ways Michael, William, and Mae read at home. A vast body of literature demonstrates that children's HLEs exert enduring influence on children's reading development (Burgess et al., 2002; Phillips & Lonigan, 2009; Weigel et al., 2005); however, little is currently understood about the influence of parents' beliefs on children's HLEs. Lyn's beliefs shaped her HLE and consequently, the reading funds of knowledge (Gonzalez et al., 2005a) that Michael, William, and Mae brought to school. Findings from my study demonstrate a clear need for additional studies that examine parents' beliefs as a fundamental component of children's HLEs. Moreover, teachers must consider parents' beliefs about reading in their efforts to engage parents and children in reading at home because parents' enjoyment of reading influences children's reading development.

An unexpected and intriguing finding of my study was the influence of Lyn's beliefs on her children's teachers' beliefs and behaviors. The teacher actors in my study believed that it was important for children to read at home with their parents; however, their beliefs did not apply to the Davis family. The teachers' decision to absolve Lyn from the responsibility of engaging her children in reading homework was influenced by Lyn's clearly articulated belief that "school is school. Home time is home time" (FL1111). This finding demonstrates a compelling need to more closely examine the complex relationships that develop between teachers' reading beliefs and parents' reading beliefs. Moreover, I argue for additional studies that specifically examine how teachers' beliefs and practices may be influenced by their

relationships with parents in diverse demographic groups.

Lyn was a Caucasian, lower-middle-class mother who believed that she was involved in her children's schooling; however, multiple tensions existed between Lyn's beliefs and her children's teachers' beliefs. Moreover, tensions existed in Michael, William, and Mae's home and school reading environments. The vast majority of literature that examines children's HLEs is focused on minority, low-income families (Davis-Kean, 2005). The findings in my study demonstrate the need for additional studies that examine the HLEs of racially diverse, middle-class families, including Caucasian families. It cannot be assumed that the HLEs of Caucasian, middle-class families match school literacy environments or that Caucasian, middle-class families are more likely than families in other demographic groups to establish effective partnerships with teachers in school.

Lyn presented herself as a mother who wanted a partnership with her children's teachers; however, Lyn's beliefs created boundaries for her partnerships with Michael, William, and Mae's teachers. Lyn's belief that "school is school. Home time is home time" (FL1111) strengthened the barriers that separated her and her children from full membership in their reading communities inside and outside of school. The teacher actors in my study worked individually and collaboratively to partner with Lyn in order to promote Michael, William, and Mae's reading development; however, they were unsuccessful in their attempts to engage Lyn and her children in reading at home. Ditrano and Silverstein (2006) argued that family-school collaboration is central to children's school success; however, little is understood about how to foster strong parent-teacher partnerships. Great disparity in Lyn's children's home and school reading environments persisted through the conclusion of my

study in spite of initial efforts by Lyn's children's teachers to promote Lyn's reading engagement with her children. These findings are important because mismatches in children's home and school environments have been shown to promote mistrust and misunderstandings between parents and educators (Galper et al., 1997). Lyn's children's teachers placed high value on home reading practice; however, the teachers accepted Lyn's reluctance to promote her children's reading development; therefore, in efforts to promote Michael, William, and Mae's reading development, the teachers assumed additional responsibility for the children's reading development at school. These findings demonstrate that teachers need practical ways to learn about parents' beliefs.

Home visits (Stetson, Stetson, Sinclair, & Nix, 2012) are a means by which teachers and parents can engage in essential conversations (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003) that may yield critical information about parents' beliefs and children's HLEs; however, the time it takes teachers to prepare for and conduct home visits may present already overburdened teachers with an insurmountable barrier to meeting with parents and children in their home environments. Moreover, it cannot be assumed that parents will accept invitations to home visits. A small number of parents accept my annual invitations to visit them in their homes early in the school year. Lyn's willingness to meet with me in her home and share her intimate beliefs with me was grounded in mutual trust and respect that developed during our long-term relationship of nearly seven years. Teachers' ability to develop strong relationships with parents may be constrained by the relatively short time they work with individual families during the traditional school year. The findings of my study demonstrate a need for studies that examine the influence of mixed-age teaching (Diehl, Lemerise, Caverly, Ramsay,

& Roberts, 1998; Pratt, 1986) and other instructional models in which children and teachers are together for more than one traditional school year on parent-teacher relationships.

Face-to-face conferences at school are another means by which teachers can learn about parents' beliefs; however, teachers cannot assume that all parents are comfortable in school environments. Findings of my study demonstrate that parents need to be informed about the meaning of the professional jargon that teachers use during meetings with parents. Lyn's inability, at the beginning of my study, to understand the professional jargon used by teachers and other school staff members during meetings she attended at her children's schools may have strengthened her belief that she did not have the capacity to effectively promote Michael, William, and Mae's reading development. Findings of my study demonstrate a compelling need for teachers to be cognizant of the fact that parents may not understand the professional jargon that permeates parent-teacher conferences, especially conferences that are held to discuss the academic programs of children with special needs. Moreover, teachers must make concerted efforts to limit their use of professional jargon when engaging in conversations with parents. When it is necessary to use professional jargon during meetings with parents, teachers must ensure that parents are informed, in advance of meetings, how terms will be used and what they mean.

A fundamental aim of my study was to establish parents' beliefs as a key that may unlock the door to a more comprehensive understanding of how children develop as readers. Findings of my study demonstrate a clear need for additional examinations of parents' beliefs and the complex relationships among the reading beliefs of parents, children, and teachers. Additional studies may increase the current understanding of the ways parents' beliefs

influence the roles parents assume in their children's reading development and how the reading beliefs of parents, teachers, and children are related to reading development.

Researchers and scholars who examine the portrait I present in my study may reconsider how they examine the ways parents and HLEs influence children's reading development. I argue that future attempts to understand how children acquire the funds of knowledge (Gonzalez et al., 2005a) they bring to school include attention to parent beliefs. In my study, I demonstrated how one parent's beliefs exerted substantial influence on the HLE, and in turn on her children's reading development.

I hope that teachers who view the portrait I present here will reflect on their practice, and specifically on the ways they engage parents in children's reading development, especially parents of children who struggle to become readers. Lyn believed that "nothing is greater to a child, I think, than a teacher and the parent coming together for their sake" (FL0312). Her belief is worthy of careful consideration by every teacher.

Conclusion: Final Strokes on the Portrait

"I just hope that anybody who reads my study just really, really understands the messages that have come out through this and that it helps teachers and parents with the kids" (FL0312).

Lyn taught me, and hopefully many other teachers, researchers, and scholars, that her beliefs were influenced by her early experiences reading in multiple ecological environments. Moreover, the beliefs Lyn developed early on persisted in spite of prevailing norms in the communities in which she and her children lived and also in spite of Lyn's reported and observed desire to fit into her social communities.

The portrait I present here is completed but not complete. Seven fundamental questions remain unanswered:

1. Are Lyn's reading beliefs and reading practices malleable or fixed?

2. How could Lyn's children's teachers have more effectively engaged Lyn in her children's reading development?

3. How did teachers' decisions to absolve Lyn from responsibility for assisting Michael, William, and Mae with reading homework influence Michael, William, and Mae's reading development?

4. How did the teachers' decisions to absolve Michael, William, and Mae from completing reading homework influence the children's reading development?

5. Why did disparity exist between Lyn's children's professed enjoyment of reading and the reports of Michael, William, and Mae's teachers that the children are disinterested in reading?

6. Did gender influence Lyn's involvement in her children's reading development?

7. Who should determine how children develop as readers in each of their social communities?

My study was exploratory. With the exception of a single offer to provide Lyn with tutoring to improve her reading comprehension, I made no efforts to influence the reading beliefs or reading practices of the portrait actors. Throughout my study, Lyn was unwavering in her beliefs that home and school were separate environments and that children should have all the choices in their relationships with reading. Rarely during my study did I observe Michael, William, or Mae read voluntarily at home. Lyn's beliefs conflicted with her

children's teachers' beliefs that involved parents engaged their children regularly in reading outside of school. It remains to be seen whether or not Lyn's beliefs would shift if teachers showed Lyn how to promote her children's reading development at home and if they created a system with which Lyn and her children would be held accountable for completing reading homework.

During my study, I did not measure Lyn's children's reading development; therefore, the effects of the teachers' decisions to absolve Lyn from assisting her children with reading homework, as well as the teachers' decisions to absolve Michael, William, and Mae from completing reading homework, remain unknown. Also unknown is why Lyn's children's teachers' beliefs that Michael, William, and Mae were largely disinterested in reading contrasts starkly with the children's reports that they enjoyed reading.

Salient differences were demonstrated in the ways Lyn involved herself in her children's reading development. During my study, I did not observe Lyn initiate reading with either of her sons; however, on limited occasions, I observed Lyn read with Mae. The extent to which Lyn's children's genders influenced her involvement in their reading development was not demonstrated.

A compelling general question about reading development remained at the conclusion of my study. Who should have determined how Michael, William, and Mae developed as readers? Lyn and her children's teachers held a mutual belief that reading is important and that parents hold critical roles in children's reading development. However, substantial disparity existed in Lyn's beliefs and the teachers' beliefs in terms of how Lyn should be involved in Michael, William, and Mae's reading development at home. Lyn's children's

teachers wanted Lyn to initiate reading at home with her children. Conversely, Lyn maintained her firm belief that children should "have all the choice, period" (FL0911) in their reading. Lyn's beliefs about other parents' involvement in children's reading development and her involvement in her children's reading development were vastly different. The question of reading development ownership needs to be more critically examined.

Near the end of my study, I accompanied Lyn, Michael, William, and Mae to the local public library to secure library cards for Lyn and Michael. Prior to participating in my study, Lyn and William were the only members of Lyn's family who had library cards; however, Lyn's original library card had expired, and William had not used his library card to borrow books from the library in a very long time. I suggested to Lyn that Michael and William might enjoy reading at the library because, during interviews, each boy had identified quiet settings as favorite places to read. After Lyn and each of her children checked out books, I escorted the family to a quiet reading area of the library with several couches, a double fireplace, and a collection of magazines. On the way to the quiet reading area, Lyn remarked that she felt "intimidated" by the library setting (FL0312). "There are so many smart people here" (FL0312). Nevertheless, Lyn, her children, and I proceeded to the magazine section of the library. During our visit to the quiet reading area at the library, Lyn pointed out several magazines that she enjoyed reading for pleasure. I suggested to Lyn that she and I could return to the library some evening when Albert was available to stay with Michael, William, and Mae. Lyn agreed. We scheduled a time to go back to the library to enjoy quiet time reading magazines; however, on the day we planned to go, Lyn cancelled our appointment in order to take Mae to a doctor's appointment.

Data I collected during my study demonstrated that some of Lyn's fundamental beliefs about reading shifted; however, Lyn's changed beliefs were not evident in her reading behaviors at home or in her self-efficacy. At the conclusion of my study, Lyn had neither returned to the public library to read magazines nor to check out books. She had not accepted my offer to tutor her in reading. Moreover, Lyn continued to struggle with her own reading as well as with how to promote Mae's reading development. It may be that, for Lyn, the risk of repeating the negative experiences she had with reading instruction as a child was not worth the benefits that tutoring may have provided her.

During our fourth interview, Lyn stated that she often did not understand terms her children's teachers used during meetings at school. I asked Lyn if she asked teachers to provide clarification when she was confused by unfamiliar terms. Lyn responded, "I'm guilty of … I kinda sit back, and I listen to it. And I leave there not really knowing what kinda happened. I feel stupid" (FL0112). Lyn's lack of reading self-efficacy persisted throughout my study.

During our final interview in March of 2012, Lyn described her reluctance to ask teachers for clarification of information they presented during meetings about Michael, William's, and Mae's school achievement: "I guess by me asking if I don't know a word, I think to myself, 'Oh my God, you're an idiot. They're all gonna look at you like you're crazy'" (FL0312). Lyn remained an outsider in her children's reading development in spite of her statement toward the end of my study: "I know to ask for help. I'm getting better" (FL0312).

This completed portrait represents my interpretation of meaning that is contextualized

within the time and space of my study. The actors in my study will continue to add brushstrokes to this portrait as they negotiate their evolving relationships with reading. During our final interview, Lyn aptly synthesized her relationship with reading: "For me, it's a work in progress" (FL0312).

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APPENDIX A

TEACHER INVITATION AND CONSENT

Appendix A

Teacher Invitation and Consent

Date

Dear _____,

  I am one of your colleagues at _____ Elementary School in _____. I am currently conducting research in a doctoral program at Northern Illinois University. I am inviting you to participate in a nine-month long study. The purpose of the study is to examine influences that impact early reading development and early reading achievement.

  If you consent to participate in the study, I will ask you to complete three, 30-45 minute, audio-recorded interviews. I will also ask to observe you once while you teach a reading lesson in your classroom. I will use document the observation with written notes. After each interview and after the observation, I will ask you to show me student work that may include drawings, written report, stories, and completed worksheets. I will also ask you to show me books and other materials you use to teach reading. I will ask your permission to take digital photographs or make copies of the student work and teaching materials you show me. I will remove names and other identifiers from any items you show me before I take photographs.

  There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts associated with participation in the study. Participation in the study is voluntary. You may discontinue your involvement at any point without any penalties. Pseudonyms will be used to identify you and other participants in the study. Pseudonyms will also be used to disguise all other identifiers including the names of your school and the town in which you teach. You may request additional information regarding your rights as a research subject by contacting the Office of Research Compliance at Northern Illinois University at (815) 753-8588.

  Benefits of participating in the study may include an enhanced understanding of how to promote your students' reading development and reading.

  I will provide you with a written transcription of each interview and each observation. You may dispute and make changes to each transcription before I submit my final report to NIU. I will provide you with copies of each digital photograph I collect from you. I will destroy all copies of transcriptions and photographs you do wish to have used in the study.

  I will present the results of the study in written publications as well as in presentations to groups of educators and other educational stakeholders that may include local, state, and national groups.

  Your consent to participate in this project does not constitute a waiver of any legal rights or redress you might have as a result of your participation.

Any questions regarding this study should be addressed to:

Appendix A (continued)

Sue Sokolinski   Dr. Laurie Elish-Piper, Doctoral Dissertation Chair

(xxx) xxx-xxxx   (xxx) xxx-xxxx

xxxxxxxx@xxxxxxxx.net   xxxxxxxx@niu.edu

1. I agree to participate in the study and have received a copy of this consent form.

   Signature: _____   Date: _____

2. I agree not to disclose any information about my participation in the study with anyone

   other than the researcher.

   Signature: _____ Date: _____

3. I agree to be audio-taped.

   Signature: _____   Date: _____

4. I agree to be video-taped.

   Signature: _____ Date: _____

5. I agree to have digital photographs taken of student work and teaching materials I show

   the researcher.

   Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX B

STRUCTURE FOR CITING QUOTATIONS MADE BY
THE PORTRAIT ACTORS AND OTHERS TO WHOM I REFERRED IN THE STUDY

Appendix B

Structure for Citing Quotations Made by the
Portrait Actors and Others to Whom I Referred in the Study

Identifier Type Code	Identifier Type	Actor or Other Code	Name of Actor or Other	Month and Year in Which Data was Collected
F	Member of the Davis family	L M1 W M2	Lynn Michael William Mae	mmyy
T	Teacher	C	Mrs. Collins, Mae's second grade teacher	mmyy
		H	Mrs. Hart, Michael's classroom teacher	
		P	Mrs. Purcell, a Pleasant View teacher with whom Michael and Mae worked	
		SP	Mrs. St. Pierre, William's fourth grade teacher	
		T	Mrs. Taylor, the Pleasant View reading specialist with whom each of Lyn's children worked	
O	People other than the portrait actors to whom I refer in my study	D	Dan, a parent who attended Literacy in Families Empowers (LIFE)	mmyy
FN	Field notes			mmyy
CM	Conceptual memos			mmyy

APPENDIX C

PARENT INVITATION AND CONSENT

Appendix C

Parent Invitation and Consent

Date

Dear Lyn,

        As you know, I am a teacher at _____ and _____ (children's names) Elementary School and _____'s former third grade teacher. I would like to invite you and your children to participate in a research study I am conducting in my doctoral program at Northern Illinois University (NIU). I will also invite at least one of each of your children's teachers to participate in my study. The purpose of my study is to examine your beliefs about reading and also to examine how _____ (names of children) are learning to read.

        My study will begin late in June of 2011 and will last nine months. If you agree to participate in the study I will ask you to participate in five, 30 to 45 minute audio-recorded interviews between June 2011 and December 2011. Each interview will be scheduled at your convenience. After each interview I will ask you to meet with me for 15 to 30 minutes so that I can show you a written transcription of the interview. You can dispute or make changes to every transcribed interview. Meetings to review interview transcripts will be scheduled at your convenience. I will use an audio-recorder to document each interview review meeting. You may decline interviews or meetings to review interview transcripts without penalty. You may request original copies and revised copies of interview documents at any time during the study.

        If you agree to participate in my study I will also ask your permission to invite each of your children to participate in the study. If your children agree to participate in my study, I will ask each child for written permission to participate in two, 15 to 30 minute audio-recorded interviews. You may attend each of your children's interviews. I will ask for each child's written permission before each interview. Following each interview, I will ask your children to meet with me again for 15-30 minutes so that I can read the transcribed interview aloud. Your children may dispute or make changes to each interview. Your children may decline interviews or meetings to review interview transcripts without penalty. You may request copies of your children's interview documents at any time during the study.

        If you agree to participate in my study, I will ask at least one of each of your children's teachers to participate in my study. I will ask each teacher to participate in three, 30 minute interviews and to be observed once during a time that they are teaching your children during the school day. I will ask each of your children's teachers to show me samples of your children's written work that may include drawings, reports, stories, and completed worksheets. My purpose in asking your children's teachers to participate in my study is to better understand how your children learn to read in school.

        If you agree to participate in my study, I will also ask your permission to observe you and

Appendix C (continued)

your children during reading activities in your home and at other places where you read together that may include recreational settings such as the public library and restaurants. I will ask your permission to document observations with audio recorders, video recorders, or digital cameras. Before every observation I will ask each of your children for written permission to observe them. Following each observation, I will ask you and your children to listen to or view the recorded observations. You and your children may dispute or make changes to any recorded observation. You or your children may request copies of any recorded observation I collect of you and/or your children in your home or other settings outside of the children's schools at any time during the study.

During the study, I will ask you and your children to show me items that may help me understand your beliefs about reading and how your children are learning to read. Items I ask you to show me may include photographs, drawings, journals, notes, written correspondence between you and your children's teachers, examples of your children's schoolwork, school reports, and emails. You may refuse to show me any item that I request. I will ask you questions about every item you show me. You may respond to questions I ask you about items you show me in face-to-face conversations, in phone conversations, in emails, or in written surveys.

There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts associated with participation in my study. Participation in the study is voluntary and free of any costs. Refusal to participate in the study will not result in any penalty for you, your children. If you agree to participate in the study, you and/or your children may withdraw at any point in the study without penalty. I will use pseudonyms to identify you, each of your children, and each of your children's teachers in all documents in my study. I will also use pseudonyms to disguise other identifiers including the schools attended by your children and the town in which you and your children live. Information I collect from you and your children in your home and other during my study will not be shared with your children's teachers or other staff members at your children's schools without your written consent.

A benefit of participating in my study may be an enhanced understanding of how _____ (names of children) are learning to read and how you can help them learn to read.

I will present the results of my study in written publications as well as in presentations to groups of educators and other educational stakeholders including local, state, and national groups.

You may address questions you have about my study to:

Sue Sokolinski   Laurie Elish-Piper

Appendix C (continued)

(xxx) xxx-xxxx   (xxx) xxx-xxxx

xxxxxxx@xxxxxxx.net   xxxxxxxx@niu.edu

1. I agree to participate in the study.

    Signature: _____   Date: _____

2. I agree to be audio-taped.

    Signature: _____   Date: _____

3. I agree to be video-taped.

    Signature: _____ Date: _____

4. I agree to have digital photographs taken of items I show the researcher during the study.

    Signature: _____ Date: _____

5. I give my permission for my children to participate in the study.

    Signature: _____ Date: _____

6. I give my permission for my children to be audio-taped.

    Signature: _____ Date: _____

7. I give my permission for my children to video-taped.
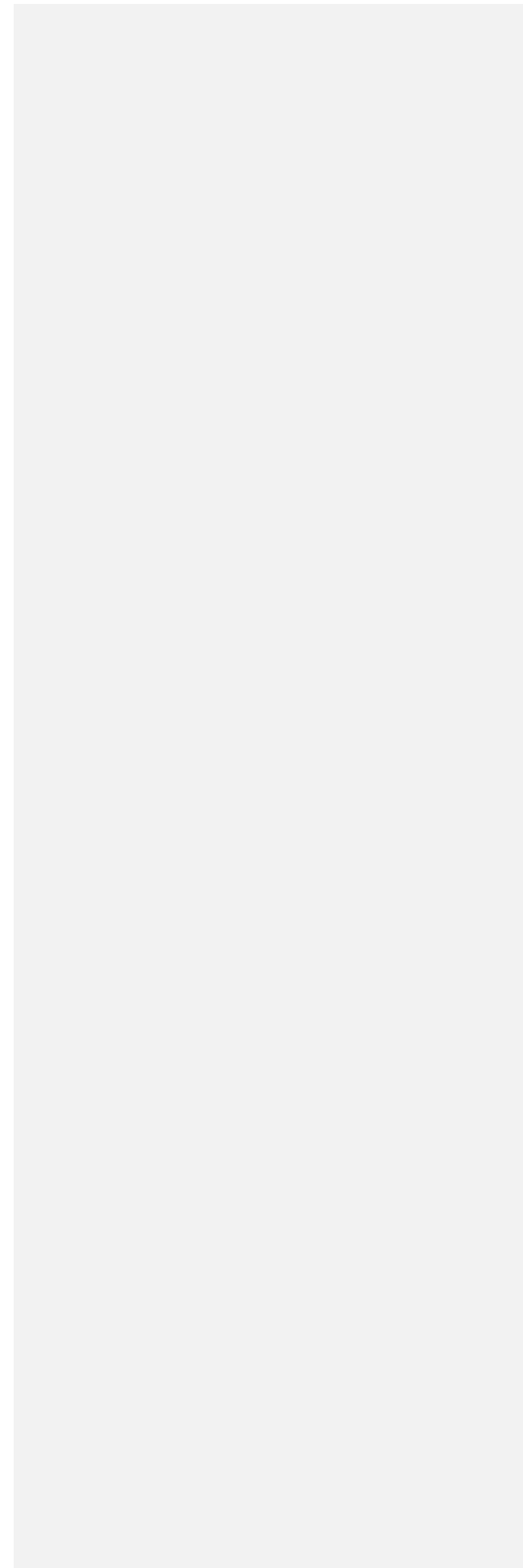
    Signature: _____ Date: _____

8. I give my permission for digital photographs to be taken of items my children show the researcher during the study.

    Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____

(Please print your name.)

APPENDIX D

CHILD ASSENT FOR INTERVIEWS

Appendix D

Child Assent for Interviews

Date:
Name:
Age:

Pre-Interview

"Your mother told me that it was ok for you to talk to me about reading. I would like to ask you a few questions to understand how you are learning to read. Is it ok for me to ask you questions about reading?" If "yes", continue. If "no", stop.

"It's ok to take your time to think after I ask a question. If you do not understand a question tell me to ask the question again. If you do not want to answer a question I ask just say 'pass' or 'I don't know'. If you want to take a break before I am finished asking you questions, you can tell me that you need a break. We will take a break if you want to and then finish our conversation after your break. You can tell me when you are finished taking a break and when you are ready to finish our conversation. You can stop talking to me any time you want to. If you want to stop talking to me tell me that you don't want to talk any more. Do you understand what I just told you?" If "yes", continue. If "no", restate the questions in this paragraph before continuing. If the child continues to demonstrate confusion or misunderstandings about what he/she is being asked to do after restating this paragraph then rephrase the directions until the child affirms that he/she understands the directions. Do not continue the interview until the child affirms that he/she understands what he/she is being asked to do. "Do you want to ask me any questions about what we will be doing?" If "yes", answer the questions before continuing. If "no", continue.

"I would like to use this machine to record our conversation so I can remember everything you say. Would you like me to show you how this machine works?" If "no", continue. If "yes" record a 1 minute conversation with the child and play it back. "Do you have any questions about how I will use this recorder? Is it ok with you that I record our conversation?" If "yes", conduct and record the interview. If "no", say "OK, I will not record our conversation. I will write down notes about what you say on this paper."

Begin the interview.

Post Interview

"Thank you for talking to me about reading today. Do you want to tell me anything else about reading?" If "yes", "OK, tell me more." After the child finishes talking, "Do you want to

Appendix D (continued)

tell me anything else about reading?" Continue the interview until the child responds "no" to the prompt. When the child is done giving information about reading ask "Do you want to ask me any questions?" If "no", continue. If "yes", answer the child's questions then continue.

"Thank you for talking to me about reading today." Would like to listen to the recording of our conversation? If "no", proceed to the next paragraph. If "yes", play the recording for the child then proceed to the next paragraph.

"After we are done today I will go home and listen to the recording. I will type everything I hear in the recording on a paper. I will come back in a few days and read the paper to you to be sure that I wrote what you meant to say. You can stop me at any time when I read the paper and tell me to change something you hear me read. You don't have to meet with me again if you don't want to. If you want to meet with me I will as you if it's ok to record our meeting with an audio-recorder. You can tell me if you don't want me to record our meeting. Do you understand what I just told you about meeting with me in a few days?" If "yes", proceed to the next paragraph. If "no", restate the information in this paragraph. If the child answers "no" again, rephrase the information in his paragraph until the child demonstrates understanding by answering "yes" to the question, "Do you understand what I just told you about listening to the recording of our conversation?"

1. I agree to be interviewed.

   Signature: _____   Date: _____

2. I agree to be recorded with _____ (audio-recorder, video-recorder, or digital

   camera) during the interview.

APPENDIX E

CHILD ASSENT FOR OBSERVATIONS
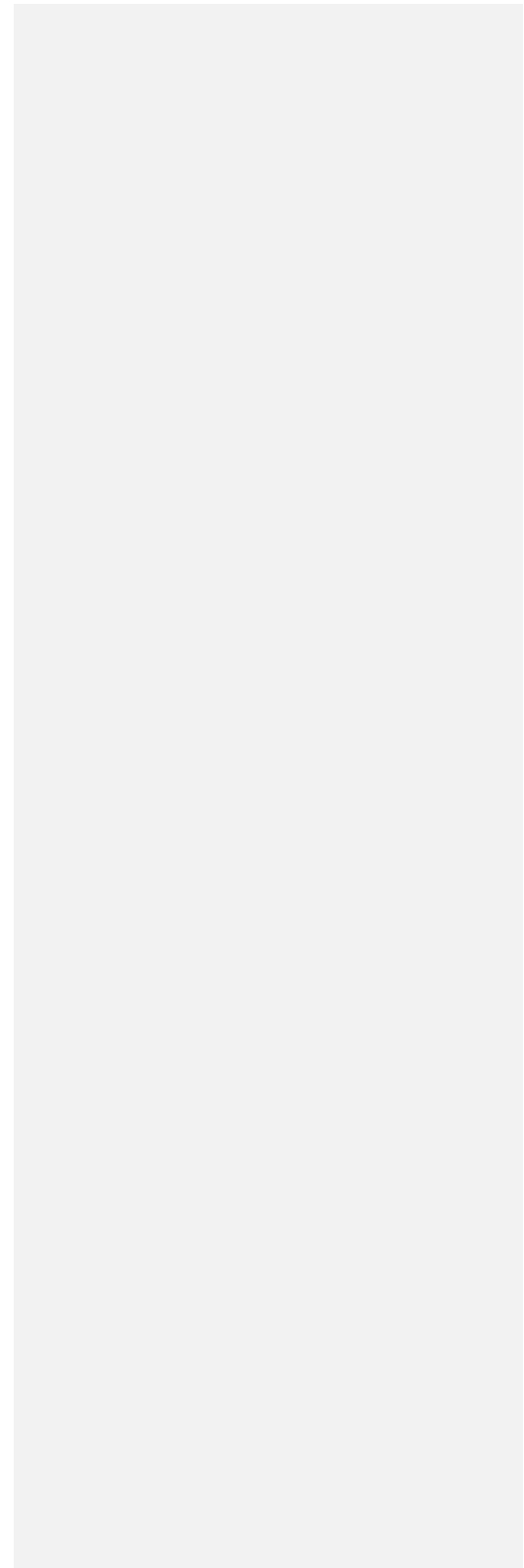
Appendix E

Child Assent for Observations

Date:

Name:

Age:

      "Your mother told me that it was ok to observe you while you _____ (describe the activity being observed) and to record you _____ (describe activity being observed) with a _____ (digital camera, video recorder, or audio-recorder). Is it ok that I observe you?" If "no", stop and say, "OK, I won't observe you." If "yes", say "Is it ok that I record you with _____ (audio-recorder, video-recorder, or digital camera) while you _____ (describe the activity being observed)?" If the child responds, "no", say "OK, I will observe you but I won't record you." If the child responds "yes", say "Do you want me to show you how the _____ (audio-recorder, video-recorder, or digital camera) works?" If "no", proceed to the next paragraph. If "yes", show the child how the recorder works then proceed.

      "You can tell me to stop observing you or to stop recording you any time you want. Do you understand everything that I just told you?"

1.   I agree to be observed.

    Signature: _____   Date: _____

2.   I agree to be recorded with _____ (audio-recorder, video-recorder, or digital camera) during the observation.

    Signature: _____   Date: _____

APPENDIX F

CHILD ASSENT FOR SOLICITATION OF ARTIFACTS

Appendix F

Child Assent for Solicitation of Artifacts

Date:

Name:

Age:

Pre Interview

"Your mother told me that it was ok for you to show me things that you think would help me understand how you are learning to read. Would you like to show me something that helps you learn to read or something you like to use when you read? If "no", stop and say, "OK, if you find something you would like to show me later, tell your mom and I will come back to look at what you found. If "yes", say "Your mom said it would be ok if I take pictures of _____ (name the item)." Is it ok with you that I take pictures of _____ (name the item)?" If "no", stop and say, "Ok, I won't take any pictures of _____ (name the item). Proceed to the next paragraph. If "yes", say, "Thank you. I will show you the pictures as soon as I take them. I will give you copies of the pictures if you tell me you want them.

Your mom also told me that it is ok for me to use this recorder (point to the audio-recorder or the video-recorder) while you tell me about _____ (name the item). Is it ok with you that I record our conversation?" If "no", stop and say, "Ok, I won't record our conversation. Proceed to the next paragraph. If "yes", say, "OK, you can (watch or listen) to the recording when we finish if you want to."

"After we are done today I will go home and listen to the recording. I will type everything I hear in the recording on a paper. I will come back in a few days and read the paper to you to be sure that I wrote what you meant to say. You can stop me at any time when I read the paper and tell me to change something you hear me read. You don't have to meet with me again if you don't want to. If you want to meet with me I will as you if it's ok to record our meeting with an audio-recorder. You can tell me if you don't want me to record our meeting. Do you understand what I just told you about meeting with me in a few days?" If "yes", proceed to the next paragraph. If "no", restate the information in this paragraph. If the child answers "no" again, rephrase the information in his paragraph until the child demonstrates understanding by answering "yes" to the question, "Do you understand what I just told you about listening to the recording of our conversation?"

Do you understand everything I just told you?" If "no", repeat and rephrase the information until the child responds "yes". If "yes", proceed to the interview prompt.

1. I agree to be interviewed.

    Signature: _____   Date: _____

Appendix F (continued)

2. I agree to be recorded with _____ (audio-recorder, video-recorder, or digital camera) during the interview.

    Signature: _____   Date: _____

3. I agree to have digital pictures of _____ (name the item) taken.

    Signature: _____   Date: _____

APPENDIX G

CATEGORY CODES

Appendix G

Category Codes

Code	Description
CA02	Reading is/is not fun and/or enjoyable.
CA04	Reading is a struggle.
CA05	What is reading?
CA06	Reading is important and or not important.
CA07	Reading is developmental.
CA09	Reading is a skill.
CA10	Reading interest is important.
CA11	Reading choice is important.
CA12	Participants' references to children
CA13	Participants' references to teachers
CA15	Reading originates from somewhere.
CA16	Parent roles
CA17	Reading is a practice.
CA18	Reading is social.
CA20	Reading has purpose.
CA21	Participants' beliefs about others' reading
CA22	Parent involvement
CA23	Home and school reading environments are distinctive.
CA24	Homework does and/or does not bridge home and school practices.
CA27	Participants' transformation/shifts
CA28	Participants' references to literacy legacies
CA29	Participants' references to families (their own and others)
CA30	Teachers' general beliefs
CA31	Participants' references to Lyn
CA32	Teachers' beliefs about parents
CA33	Home/school reading partnerships
CA34	References to use of technology in reading
CA35	Motivation and engagement
CA36	What is a good reader?
CA37	Participants' references to books and other literacy materials
CA38	Compelling quotes
CA40	Ownership and responsibility for reading
CA41	Direct references to reading

APPENDIX H

PARTIAL SPREADSHEET OF DATA ANALYSIS

Appendix H

Partial Spreadsheet of Data Analysis

Theme 2 - Examining the Nature and Origin of Beliefs About Reading and Reading Development

Date	Participant	Data Type	Page #	Theory	Notes	Category	Category	Category	Category
08012011	FL	I #1	3	FOK	"I remember my mom reading me books all the time when I was little"	CA15			
08012011	FL	I #1	8	FOK	"I just passed by in school."	CA15			
08012011	FL	I #1	8	FOK	doesn't recall early reading before school	CA15			
09142011	FL	I #2	3	S	children get to be good readers "mostly by their parents if they read to 'em a lot"	CA15	CA36		
09142011	FL	I #2	3	S	"If they (children) don't learn to read it when they're little they're never going to learn"	CA7	CA15	CA6	
09142011	FL	I #2	3	S	"If they show interest in books at an early age that's when you start it"	CA15	CA16	CA10	CA6
09142011	FL	I #2	5	S	"I mean we did the occasional but it wasn't every night like we should"	CA15			
09142011	FL	I #2	10	FOK	"I was a bad reader."	CA4	CA15		

APPENDIX I

CLASSIFICATION CODES

Appendix I

Classification Codes

Classification Code	Classification Code Description	Category Code	Category Code Description
C1	Participants' references to others Participants' references to books and other literacy materials	CA12 CA13 CA28 CA29 CA31 CA37	Participants' references to children Participants' references to teachers Participants' references to literacy legacies Participants' references to families (their own and others) Participants' references to Lyn Participants' references to books and other literacy materials
C2	The nature and origin of reading beliefs and reading behaviors	CA05 CA06 CA07 CA08 CA10 CA11 CA15 CA17 CA18 CA20 CA36	What is reading? Reading is important and or not important Reading is developmental Reading is a skill Reading interest is important Reading choice is important Reading originates from somewhere Reading is a practice Reading is social Reading has purpose What is a good reader?
C3	Ecological reading environments	CA23 CA24 CA33 CA41	Home and school reading environments are distinctive Homework does and/or does not bridge home and school practices Home/school reading partnerships Reading
C4	Parent influences, roles, and involvement in reading practices	CA09 CA16 CA22 CA35 CA40	Parent influence Parent roles Parent involvement Motivation and engagement Ownership and responsibility for reading

Appendix I (continued)

C5	Participants' beliefs	CA02	Reading is/is not fun and/or enjoyable
		CA04	Reading is a struggle
		CA21	Participants' beliefs about others' reading
		CA25	Participants' self beliefs about reading
		CA30	Teachers' general beliefs
		CA32	Teachers' beliefs about parents
C6	Miscellaneous	CA27	Participants' transformation
		CA34	References to use of technology in reading
		CA38	Compelling quotes