

AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS' SELF-EFFICACY, SELF-REGULATORY
COMPETENCE, AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN A SMALL-GROUP TUTORING
PROGRAM: A MIXED-METHODS STUDY

By

GRACE RHENAE HUXTABLE-MOUNT

A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

2012

© 2012 Grace Rhena Huxtable-Mount

To my husband Jason, for always encouraging and believing in me, and my daughter
Mya, who brings overwhelming joy into my life

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The road to completing this journey has been longer than initially expected, and there are many individuals who helped me finally make it through. I am so incredibly grateful for the love, support and encouragement of my husband, Jason Mount. He has always had an unyielding faith and assurance in my abilities, even at times when my confidence wavered. He has pushed me to dream bigger and aim higher, despite the realities around me. I also feel extremely blessed for the love, laughs, smiles and hugs, from my sweet daughter, Mya. Within an instant of her birth, everything else in life became secondary in comparison to the love I have for her and my desire to always do what is best for her. I hope that she will see this accomplishment as a testament that life is full of amazing possibilities, and that she is very capable of achieving great things.

I would like to acknowledge my parents, especially three women who have gone on to be with the Lord but had an incredible impact on my life: my mother, Pearl Brown-Huxtable; my aunt who raised me as her own, Margaret Huxtable; and my mother-in-law, Collye “Sue” Manning. They each served as a model of Godliness, strength, independence, and compassion for others. They showed me that there is invaluable power in knowledge and that an education is the key to achieving the American dream. I am grateful for the faith that they had in me and the love that they showed toward me. I hope that this and my future endeavors have made them proud.

I am also thankful for my siblings, extended family and friends who offered advice, shared their wisdom, and gave me tough love when I needed it the most. From beginning to end, they inspired me and helped nudge me along the way.

A great deal of appreciation is due to my professional family, the teachers and managerial staff at The Learning Experience of Jacksonville and at Huxtable Education

Group. They were incredibly supportive and diligent in seeing that things were taken care of which allowed me to take time off and focus on writing. I am appreciative of the dedication from the Huxtable staff members who served as research assistants and tutors in this study.

I want to express my gratitude to my committee chair, Dr. Linda Behar-Horenstein. Through all of my rough drafts, delays and distractions, she always inspired me and calmly provided feedback and encouragement which helped keep me on track. I would have been lost without her guidance. I am so thankful that she never gave up on me. I would also like to thank my committee members, Dr. Jean Crockett, Dr. Bernard Oliver, and Dr. Linda Eldridge. The time and effort you put into working with me is extremely appreciated. I also extend a special thank you to Dr. James Doud, who brought the doctoral program to Jacksonville and helped to make earning this degree a reality for me. I am thankful for the opportunity to learn from his years of wisdom and experiences in the field of education.

Finally, I would like to thank my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, for his word and for his unconditional and often undeserving love. I am thankful that within recent years I have had the opportunity to gain spiritual knowledge and growth that renewed my faith and helped me regain the confidence that I would finally complete my degree.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>page</u>
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	4
LIST OF TABLES.....	9
LIST OF FIGURES	10
LIST OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS.....	11
ABSTRACT.....	12
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION	14
Purpose of the Study	18
Research Questions	19
Significance of the Study	20
Limitations of the Study	21
2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	22
At-Risk African American Elementary Students	22
At-Risk Status	22
Students' Perceptions of School and Self.....	27
Effectiveness of Tutoring	32
Academic Impact.....	33
Social Impact	36
Social Cognitive Theory and Student Achievement	38
Academic Self-Efficacy.....	38
Self-Regulated Learning.....	40
Facilitation of Self-Efficacy and Self-Regulated Learning	42
Summary	45
3 METHODOLOGY	47
Research Design	47
The Setting	48
The Participants	49
Definition of Variables.....	51
Instrumentation.....	52
Reading Achievement	52
Self-Efficacy and Self-Regulation	53
Student Interviews.....	54
Data Collection	55

Quantitative Pre-Treatment Data.....	55
Quantitative Pre- and Post-Test Data.....	55
Qualitative Data.....	55
Observations.....	55
Student Interviews	57
Small-Group Reading Intervention (SGRI)	58
Tutor Qualifications, Training and Supervision	60
Data Analysis	62
Preliminary Analyses.....	62
Within-Group Pre-Test/Post-Test Analyses	62
Between-Group Pre-Test/Post-Test Analyses	63
Qualitative Analyses.....	63
Mixed-Methods Analysis	64
Verification.....	65
Role and Biases of the Researcher	66
4 RESULTS.....	70
Quantitative Findings.....	70
Preliminary Analysis.....	70
Research Question 1(a)	71
Research Question 1(b)	72
Research Question 1(c)	72
Research Question 1(d):	73
Research Question 1(e):	74
Research Question 1(f):	74
Qualitative Analysis	75
Research Question 2:.....	75
Research Question 3:.....	79
Mixed-Methods Analysis: Research Question 4	85
5 DISCUSSION	95
Summary of Findings.....	95
Research Question 1(a)	95
Research Question 1(b)	96
Research Question 1(c)	97
Research Question 2:.....	97
Research Question 3:.....	98
Research Question 4:.....	99
Reading Achievement.....	99
Self-Efficacy.....	100
Self-Regulated Learning	101
Limitations	102
Implications	103
Recommendations for Future Research	104
Conclusion.....	105

APPENDIX

A	STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE	107
B	STUDENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	112
C	UF IRB APPROVAL	114
D	DUVAL COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS RESEARCH APPROVAL.....	115
E	PARENTAL CONSENT FORM.....	116
F	STUDENT ASSENT SCRIPT	118
G	TUTOR TRAINING HANDOUTS	119
H	RESEARCH ASSISTANTS' MONITORING CHECKLIST	123
	LIST OF REFERENCES	125
	BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.....	133

LIST OF TABLES

<u>Table</u>		<u>page</u>
3-1	Demographic data of participants	68
4-1	Independent sample t-test of FCAT developmental scale scores (treatment vs. control).....	88
4-2	Dependent sample t-test on variable scores by time (pretest vs. posttest) for treatment only	88
4-3	Means and standard deviations of posttest scores by group (treatment vs control)	88
4-4	ANCOVA on reading achievement posttest scores by group (treatment vs control), after controlling for pretest scores.....	88
4-5	ANCOVA on self-efficacy survey posttest scores by group (treatment vs control), after controlling for pretest scores.....	89
4-6	ANCOVA on self-regulation survey posttest scores by group (treatment vs control), after controlling for pretest scores.....	89
4-7	Means and standard deviations for reading achievement, self-efficacy, and self-regulation at pretest and posttest for treatment and control	89
4-8	Comparisons of observed activities found among schools one, two and three ..	90
4-9	Table of themes found from student interviews	91
4-10	Meta-themes, formulated meanings, and corresponding examples of significant findings from students' perceptions of essential elements of small group tutoring	92
4-11	Frequency manifest effect sizes of student-generated essential elements of small group tutoring.....	93
5-1	Summary of tested measures showing areas of significant change in student performance after completing the reading intervention	106

LIST OF FIGURES

<u>Figure</u>		<u>page</u>
3-1	Diagram of research design	69
4-1	Tested quantitative measures for treatment and control groups and related qualitative meta-themes based on treatment group perceptions.....	94

LIST OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

LOW-INCOME	Qualification for free or reduced price lunch, which is determined using income levels reported to schools by parents
SELF-PERCEPTION	The way in which one views himself both internally and in relation to the surrounding external environment
SELF-EFFICACY	"Students' beliefs about their capabilities to perform academic tasks or to succeed in academic activities" (Usher & Pajares, 2006a, p. 7)
SES	Supplemental educational services refers to federally mandated tutoring that is offered to low-income students attending Title I schools not making Adequate Yearly Progress according to stipulations of No Child Left Behind. Tutoring must be conducted by state approved providers, is paid for using Title I funds, and must be offered to eligible students at no charge (U.S. Department of Education, 2007, 2009B).
SGRI	Small-group reading intervention is tutoring that is delivered in a small group format of one tutor with two to five students where intensive, individualized instruction that is focused on closing achievement gaps and providing strategies for success in reading
SRL	Self-regulated learning consists of "self-generated thoughts, feelings, and actions that are systematically designed to affect one's learning of important knowledge and skills" (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2007, p. 8)

Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School
of the University of Florida in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS' SELF-EFFICACY, SELF-REGULATORY
COMPETENCE, AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN A SMALL-GROUP TUTORING
PROGRAM: A MIXED-METHODS STUDY

By

Grace Rhena Huxtable-Mount

August 2012

Chair: Linda Behar-Horenstein
Major: Educational Leadership

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to test the impact of facilitating social cognitive development instruction in a small-group tutoring intervention that is designed to improve reading achievement and academic self-perceptions among at-risk African American students. Reading assessment scores, a modified version of the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire, observations and individual interviews were used to measure changes in students' reading achievement, academic self-efficacy, and meta-cognitive self-regulation as a result of the intervention. Collecting both quantitative and qualitative data permitted the exploration of various aspects of the tutoring intervention.

This study contributed to the research by providing an examination of the overall impact of small-group tutoring on reading achievement, self-efficacy, and self-regulated learning. While there were no within-group differences, there was a significant difference in reading achievement between treatment and control group. The findings from this study suggest that students who received tutoring had greater improvement in reading achievement than comparison students who did not receive tutoring. Through

mixed methods analysis of test scores, observations and interviews, several elements of the tutoring program were identified as being essential to the students' performance outcomes: (a) confidence building, (b) increased reading ability, (c) reading strategy focus, (d) demonstration of self-regulated learning, (e) tutor feedback, (f) access to help, (g) cooperative environment, and (h) making learning fun.

This study illustrated that tutoring focused on reading strategies, efficacy building discourse, and self-regulated learning strategies can be an effective resource in improving the reading achievement of low performing African American children from low income households. It also reveals that the test scores of African American students do not always coincide with their own interpretations of their academic success and capabilities. An overview of the findings and their relation to previous research is presented. Recommendations for practice and further research are presented for educators who seek to better serve this population in an effort to close the achievement gap.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

African American students are achieving higher scores in reading on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) than ever documented. However, the achievement gap between Black and White students continues to persist. Reading achievement scores of White students are above the national average, while the average scores of African American students consistently trail behind (Snyder, Dillow, & Hoffman, 2007).

Concern for how to close the achievement gap has led to implementing several interventions such as retention for students, intensive early reading programs and federally funded tutoring and after-school programs for minorities and students from poor families (Davison, Seo, Davenport, Jr., Butterbaugh, & Davison, 2004; Jimerson, Pletcher, Graydon, Schnurr, Nickerson, & Kundert, 2006; US Department of Education, 2009B). Research shows that more Black students are being retained than White students, proportionally. Drop-out rates are higher among Black students than students of other racial backgrounds (Jimerson, et al., 2006; Stearns, Moller, Blau, & Potochnick, 2007). Furthermore, African American students are participating in federally funded tutoring programs and school-based or center-based after-school programs at much higher rates than students of any other ethnicity (Carver, & Iruka, 2005; US Department of Education, 2007). Developing a greater understanding of how specific cognitive and social characteristics impact reading achievement among African American students could be helpful in identifying how to improve interventions.

According to Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory, both cognitive and motivational variables interact with the student's environment to influence academic

success. Research on social cognitive theory and an interest in the impact of cognitive and motivational factors on student achievement has led to the study of self-regulated learning and self-efficacy beliefs. Self-regulation involves the knowledge and use of cognitive strategies for planning, reflecting on and adjusting one's thinking and actions (Zimmerman, 2008). Academic self-efficacy is the judgment of one's perceived capabilities for learning or performing at specific levels of accomplishment (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 1996; Schunk & Pajares, 2002). Students' academic efficacy beliefs and perceived ability for self-regulation are directly related to scholastic achievement outcomes (Pajares, 2008). In a study of African American students living in poverty, Gutman and Midgley (2000) found that African American students with higher levels of academic self-efficacy had higher grade point averages than students with low levels of academic self-efficacy.

Research shows that remedial interventions, such as grade repetition, can lead to long term negative effects on a student's reading growth and overall academic trajectory (Griffith, Lloyd, Lane & Tankersley, 2010; Randolph, Fraser, & Orthner, 2004; Silbergliitt, Appleton, Burns, & Jimerson, 2006). Griffith and colleagues (2010) used national longitudinal data to conduct a study comparing the reading abilities of high school students who had been retained sometime between kindergarten and 8th grades with similar students who had not been retained. Their research shows that retained students had lower reading achievement and a lower reading growth rate than similar students who had not been retained. These differences grew and persisted throughout the course of these students' secondary school careers. Students with reading difficulties who continuously remain lower than their peers are likely to develop negative

academic and reading related self-perceptions (Chapman & Tunmer, 2003). This research emphasizes how students can be detrimentally affected when academic remediation lacks an instructional focus on self-regulatory skills and self-efficacious beliefs.

Acquiring self-regulated learning strategies is a strong predictor of actual academic performance; however, the effort to simultaneously improve students' self-efficacy beliefs may lead to greater utilization of cognitive strategies (Pajares, 2002). Whether these interventions are providing students with the necessary academic content, as well as the cognitive strategies and motivation required to persist through challenging experiences is still relatively unknown. Schunk and Zimmerman (2007) recommend that educators try to influence students' self-efficacy and self-regulation strategies to strengthen the development of literacy skills. They suggest using peer and adult models to explicitly teach self-regulated learning strategies and to serve as sources of self-efficacy information. This notion is supported by research generated directly from the voices of African American elementary and high school students. Studies showed that exposure to positive peer influences, empowerment to use self-management strategies, and the use of praise and encouragement were the most influential modes of promoting academic success for African American students (Tucker, Herman, Pedersen, Vogel, & Reinke, 2000). Special attention needs to focus on ensuring that educators implement intensive reading interventions and provide instruction that directly teaches African American students strategies for achieving success as well as avoiding failure. Bandura (1986) hypothesized that without a firm sense of self-efficacy, strong skill and ability may not be enough to achieve optimal

performance. Becoming more efficacious about learning will motivate students to implement self-regulated learning strategies that can empower them to become more involved and influential in their learning.

Current quantitative research on instruction, self-efficacy and self-regulation falls short of providing a clear picture of how African American students view the role that reading interventions can have on their academic self-perception. Very little research has taken a qualitative lens to explore students' views on the elements of learning experiences that are attributed to self-efficacy beliefs and the use of self-regulated learning skills. The available literature does not report if African American students have been given the opportunity to share their voices about how current interventions contribute to their actual academic progress and their beliefs about the potential for academic success. Usher and Pajares (2006a) found that African American students seem more likely to rely on social messages when forming their academic confidence. They also pointed out that more qualitative research is needed to understand how these students make appraisals of what constitutes as efficacy building information. Tucker and colleagues (2000) have shown that African American elementary students realize that academic competence, self-management skills, and believing in oneself are critical aspects of success in school. Therefore, more research is needed to gain perspective on how well interventions are working through the eyes of the students who are recipients.

The current knowledge base on tutoring is scant and lacks relevance to the specific needs of poor, under-achieving African American students. The literature does not show a link between interventions, such as small group tutoring, and their

effectiveness for increasing the academic performance, academic self-efficacy, and use of self-regulatory skills of poor African American students. There has been some research on the effectiveness of one-to-one, teacher-led or peer-led tutoring. However, in a meta-analysis of over 20 years of research on tutoring programs for elementary students at risk for reading failure, only two studies involved small group tutoring interventions (Elbaum, Vaughn, Hughes, & Moody, 2000). This study revealed that students receiving one-to-one tutoring in reading made slightly higher academic gains than students who did not, but the gains were not significant enough for students with severe reading difficulties to catch up with their higher achieving peers. This finding supports the need for further research on how interventions can impact student achievement

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study is to test the impact of facilitating social cognitive development instruction in a small-group tutoring intervention that is designed to improve academic achievement and academic self-perceptions among at-risk African American students. The research design of the study is an embedded mixed methods design. In this approach, reading ability and self-perception data will be collected. However, the primary purpose will be to measure changes in students' reading achievement, academic self-efficacy, and meta-cognitive self-regulation as a result of the intervention. Secondary qualitative data collection will occur during and after the tutoring intervention to explore the social and contextual factors that contribute to the students' experiences.

Collecting both quantitative and qualitative data will permit the exploration of various aspects of the tutoring intervention in order to answer different research

questions. Data collected for the quantitative research questions are designed to provide statistically valid conclusions about the effectiveness of the tutoring intervention, while qualitative research questions will provide insight about what the students experience during instruction. These data will contribute to the overall impact on reading achievement, self-efficacy, and self-regulated learning. The ultimate goal is to acquire a deep understanding of the instructional, motivational and cognitive elements that need to be in place to increase the achievement of at-risk African American elementary students.

Research Questions

- 1) What is the relationship between a small-group tutoring intervention and (a) reading achievement, (b) academic self-efficacy and (c) self-regulated learning in at-risk African American elementary students? To investigate this question, the following hypotheses will be tested:
 - a) Participation in a small-group tutoring intervention will lead to increased reading achievement in African American students.
 - b) Participation in a small-group tutoring intervention will lead to increased academic self-efficacy in African American students.
 - c) Participation in a small-group tutoring intervention will lead to increased self-regulated learning in African American students.
 - d) African American students that participate in a small-group tutoring intervention will have higher reading achievement than comparison students.
 - e) African American students that participate in a small-group tutoring intervention will have higher academic self-efficacy than comparison students.
 - f) African American students that participate in a small-group tutoring intervention will be more self-regulated learners than comparison students.
- 2) What are the observed instructional experiences of at-risk elementary-aged African American students in the learning environment of a small-group tutoring intervention?
- 3) How do students perceive the small-group tutoring intervention regarding its impact on: (a) reading achievement, (b) self-efficacy, and (c) self-regulated learning strategy development?

- 4) How do the students' experiences, together with the reading achievement, self-efficacy and self-regulated learning results, build students' reading skills?

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is its contribution to enhancing an understanding of how to provide academic interventions to effectively equip low-achieving African American students with skills necessary to achieve greater levels of academic success. Large numbers of African American students are participating in interventions geared towards closing the achievement gap in reading. This study will show the impact of a reading intervention using small group tutoring coupled with a motivational and cognitive focus. The study draws attention to the relevance of implementing teaching practices that encourage students to be more self-efficacious and self-regulated learners. The study will also add insight about the features of intervention programs that can have the greatest influence on African American student's acquisition and utilization of research-based strategies that have been proven to directly link to academic achievement.

This study will contribute to the literature in both school psychology and K-12 education that focus on meeting the needs of poor African American students. The findings from this study will be of value to educators seeking intervention strategies for poor African American students who are not performing academically at levels equal to their non-minority peers. The findings will also provide information for those interested in how to impact student learning beyond content mastery. Since the majority of the students participating in federally funded tutoring programs are African American children in elementary schools, policy makers and school personnel who select providers to offer supplemental educational services (SES) can use the results as a professional development tool and a means to encourage providers to improve the

quality of instructional services offered so that they better meet the needs of the population (U.S. Department of Education, 2009B).

Limitations of the Study

The mixed-methods nature of this investigation lends itself to the limitations of qualitative and quantitative methods, but limitations may be minimal due to data triangulation. Portions of the collected data are based on self-reported information from students. Some students may be more capable of articulating their sense of metacognition better than others. Also, the findings are based on the students' ability to verbally express their views and the researcher's ability to ensure that the students' voices are not lost in the discussion and inclusion of other existing research. Triangulation of the data using quantitative data, interviews, and observational field notes over time enhances the quality of the findings.

The personal interests of the researcher as the owner and creator of one of the participating SES providers may limit the open-endedness of the interview questions asked. The researcher's interest in improving the quality of tutoring currently being provided may cause other contributory factors to be overlooked.

Finally, all participants in this study are low-income, African American students from urban settings that are experiencing low academic achievement. Therefore, the findings of this study should not be generalized to all other populations of students or even African American students from middle class or wealthy families. These findings are relevant to a specific population that is at the greatest risk for failure according to their educational status.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

To provide background on what is known about elementary-aged, struggling African American learners and the impact that tutoring and social cognitive theory can have on at-risk populations, the literature review is divided into four sections. First, I describe characteristics of at-risk, elementary-aged African American students and identify factors that influence the development of their academic perceptions. In the second section, I examine the effectiveness of tutoring for at-risk elementary students. In the third section, I investigate the influence of social cognitive theory, specifically self-efficacy beliefs and self-regulated learning, on instructional practices and student achievement. Finally, I summarize the literature and discuss the possible implications for African American children at-risk for school failure.

At-Risk African American Elementary Students

At-Risk Status

The conception that African American children from low-income families are at risk for poor reading achievement is well documented. Also studies have shown the persistent achievement gap between Black and White students (Davison, Seo, Davenport, Butterbaugh, & Davison, 2004; Snyder, Dillow, & Hoffman, 2007; West, Denton, & Reaney, 2001). Low-income familial status has negative implications for academic achievement and social development. Children who experience living in low-income households have a school dropout rate five times greater than children from middle or high income households (Chapman, Laird, Ifill, & Kewalramani, 2011). When African American students of poverty begin school, frequently they have low performance in developmental school-readiness and language ability skills. A lack of

student readiness may be due to having a parent with a low educational level (Fram, Miller-Cribbs, & Van Horn, 2007; Qi, Kaiser, Milan, & Hancock, 2006; Rauh, Parker, Garfinkel, Perry, & Andrews, 2003).

African American students who attend high-poverty and high-ethnic minority schools often experience educational inequalities that facilitate increased risk factors for school failure (Fram et al., 2007). In a study of the educational experiences of 1,338 children attending 246 schools in the U.S. South, Fram and colleagues used data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study Kindergarten Cohort to compare students who attend high-poverty, high-ethnic minority schools with students who attend low-poverty, low-ethnic minority schools. Students were compared for differences based on race and income level. The researchers found that Black students were 3.8 times more likely than White students to attend a high-poverty school. On average, the mothers of children attending high-poverty, high-ethnic minority schools have lower levels of education. The finding suggests that these schools are more likely to have teachers with less experience and lower credentials. The teachers were less likely to use alternative, or individualized methods to assessing student learning. The researchers also observed that children in high-poverty, high-ethnic minority schools are typically placed in classes where high proportions of their classmates are reading below grade level. They found that children in these schools have lower gains in first grade reading skills. Consequently the results revealed that students who attended schools with a large quantity of poor children and higher proportions of ethnic minorities typically had mothers with less education and achieved lower test scores than students attending schools with fewer minority and poor children.

Studies illustrate the familial and school-based risk factors that contribute to school failure for many low-income, African American students. Often these students come from single-parent households where the primary caregiver has a low educational level (Fram et al., 2007, Qi et al., 2006). Research indicates that the combination of factors such as decreased oral language skills, differences in dialectal variation, fewer home literacy experiences as well as standardized test bias, a lack of quality academic instruction and low teacher expectations can increase the risk for school failure for African American students' in poverty (Gardner & Miranda, 2002; Washington, 2001).

Researchers have identified several factors that may contribute to a student's at-risk status. However, there is no consensus about the origin of, or solutions to the achievement gap that has existed between Black and White students for several decades. A number of remedial interventions such as referral for special education services, retention, and packaged reading programs have been implemented to close the achievement gap and remediate students who are at-risk for failure. However, these interventions can also have negative effects on the social, psychological, and academic well-being of African American students. For example, students who exhibit signs of low achievement or inappropriate social behaviors are frequently referred for intervention services. African American students are overrepresented in special education programs and are referred for these services at a disproportionate rate than their non-minority peers (Blanchett, Mumford, & Beachum, 2005; Gardner & Miranda, 2002). A meta-analysis of 44 studies on racial differences in referral rates for intervention or assessment suggests that African American students are deemed eligible for special education services at significantly higher rates than Caucasian students (Hosp &

Reschly, 2003). This finding is noteworthy because it suggests that these disproportional referrals may be due to bias or other factors, rather than a true indication of a student's capacity to learn. Furthermore, the literature suggests that students are often placed inappropriately, that the effectiveness of special education programs may only be differential rather than the solution for all referred students (Skiba, et al., 2005).

Research also shows that at-risk African American students are subjected to non-promotion, or retention, when signs of low achievement are evident. Although there are no significant academic benefits to retention, African American students experience significantly higher than average rates of retention (Silbergliitt, Appleton, Burns, & Jimerson, 2006; Stearns, Moller, Blau, & Potochnick, 2007). Peterson and Hughes's (2011) study on the differences between equally low-achieving students who were either retained or promoted showed that retained students actually received fewer academic intervention services during the year of retention than students that were promoted to the next grade level. In this case, retention, in and of itself, appeared to be the primary resource utilized as a means of increasing student achievement for struggling learners. However, in actuality, it caused the children to "be deprived of effective remedial services" and to receive fewer opportunities for additional help (p. 162).

In a longitudinal study of the effects of grade retention on reading performance, Silbergliitt et al. (2006) examined the reading growth of 147 students as they progressed from the first through the eighth grades. The researchers compared a group of retained students to a matched ability group of promoted students and a randomly selected control group. The longitudinal analyses resulted in three primary findings: (a) there was

no benefit or deficit in growth rate for comparison to retained students' prior growth rate, (b) there was no benefit or deficit in growth rate for retained students when compared to promoted students with similar ability, and (c) that the randomly selected group made significantly higher growth than the group of retained students. Although this study indicates that there is no deficit or benefit to retention, retained students will be overage, which may lead to other developmental and social negative effects. These results suggest that retention does not result in positive effects and is not a justifiable means of increasing students' academic growth.

"Besides their lower achievement rates..., retained students have lower self-esteem, are more pessimistic about their future, are less engaged with school, and have fewer bonds with teachers than do continuously promoted students" (Stearns et al., 2007, p. 231). Rather than facilitating a large number of overage students, researchers suggested the implementation of after school tutoring programs, summer programs, and research-based interventions that encourage both cognitive and social growth (Jimerson, Pletcher, Graydon, Schnurr, Nickerson, & Kundert, 2006; Silbergliitt et al., 2006; Stearns et al., 2007).

In addition to retention, remedial reading interventions are also utilized to close the achievement gap between Black and White students. However, the quantity and quality of research studies on the efficacy of reading interventions for Black students remains low. Lindo (2006) conducted an analysis of the proportion of reading intervention experiments, which focused on African American students that have been published in peer-reviewed educational research journals from 1994 to 2004. The researcher's findings indicated that the majority of experimental reading research published in peer-

reviewed educational journals do not use a significant proportion of African American participants and do not provide explicit outcome data according to race. Therefore, there is a lack of focus on determining which interventions are effective in significantly increasing achievement for African American students.

Lindo's (2006) study provides further evidence that there is a knowledge gap regarding the interventions or instructional methods that may positively impact the reading achievement of at-risk African American students. Lindo questions how educators can repeatedly use strategies and interventions without sufficient evidence of substantial improvements for the target population that has repeatedly been left behind. More experimental and exploratory research focused specifically on African American students is needed to build better understanding of how to accelerate the academic development of at-risk African American students. The research on remedial interventions, such as referral for special education services, grade retention, and reading interventions, supports further research on the implementation of alternative formulas for addressing the needs of at-risk African American youth.

Students' Perceptions of School and Self

Several social experiences that may influence young African American students' academic perceptions have been reported. Social exchanges that occur between student and teacher, student and student, student and parent, and parent and teacher all play a role in students' motivation, beliefs about themselves, and expectations of others. Both academic and nonacademic experiences contribute to how African American students' feel about school, their capacity for learning, and their academic achievement (Gutman & Midgley, 2000; Pershey, 2010).

Using participants as young as four years of age, researchers documented that children can express held beliefs about their cognitive competence and peer acceptance at school (Mantzicopoulos, 2004). In a study using 112 low-income preschool students, Mantzicopoulos examined ethnic differences in the self-perceptions of Head Start participants during their transition from preschool to kindergarten. As the researcher predicted, on average all students were overly optimistic about their cognitive competence and peer acceptance. They reported high self-perceived acceptance among their peers and thought highly of what they were capable of achieving academically. However, African American students perceived themselves as less cognitively competent than their Caucasian peers did during both Head Start ($ES = .25$) and kindergarten ($ES = .53$). There were no other studies, thus more research is needed to understand the differences among such young students similar socioeconomic levels.

Although some scholars have asserted that African American students do not aspire or strive to be successful in school due to fear of being perceived by peers as acting White (Ogbu, 2004), several studies support the premise that African American students are indeed enthusiastic and passionate about learning (Archer-Banks, 2007; Sankofa, Hurley, Allen, & Boykin, 2005; Tyson, 2002). In an ethnographic study, Tyson (2002) expressed the optimism and excitement found in African American students' attitudes toward school. Through interviews and observation data, Tyson's research indicates that these low-income, elementary-aged African American students were very eager to perform well in school and felt ashamed and disappointed when they performed poorly. Students encouraged each other's success and ridiculed one another

for academic failures. These findings show that African American students believe that they are capable of achieving school success and feel personally responsible for their achievement.

Tucker, Herman, Pederson, Vogel, and Reinke (2000) interviewed 22 elementary-aged African American students and 21 African American students that were in high school to determine students' perspectives on the problems that face African American students and the solutions to those problems. Thematic analysis showed that academic success can be: (a) improved when students actively participate in class and academic preparation, (b) promoted by positive peer influences, and (c) enhanced by self-empowering African American students through teaching self-management skills. Teacher praise and encouragement are also essential to African American students' active participation in class and completion of their school work. These themes suggest that African American students' academic success is influenced by peer affiliations, teacher affiliations, and self-guided beliefs and behaviors toward learning experiences. Although elementary and high school students reported that self-management and active participation are important elements of achievement in school, they stressed the function of teacher support as a mediating force in African American students' journey toward academic success (Archer-Banks, 2007).

The dynamic of the student and teacher relationship is a relevant factor in the development of academic self-perceptions and social development of at-risk African American students. Interactions that occur and relationships that develop between teachers and students can influence low-income, urban African American students' educational intentions to complete school and further their education, educational

commitment behaviors, and identification of the personal value placed on education (Somers, Owens, & Piliawsky, 2008). In a qualitative study, Howard (2002) shared urban African American students' descriptions of the pedagogical practices of effective teachers. The results revealed that African American students believe that good teachers are those who: (a) establish a family- or home-like environment at school, (b) display caring in a culturally connected way, and (c) provide students with verbal communication and affirmation. Although this study did not focus on academic achievement, the students' articulations indicated that African American students' levels of "engagement, effort and willingness to learn increased" when teachers' pedagogy was complimentary to students' cultural orientations (Howard, 2002, p.440). Furthermore, research shows that low-income African American students who report high levels of teacher support have higher academic achievement (Gutman & Midgley, 2000).

In a recent study on low-income ethnic minority students in grades 5 through 12, McMahon, Parnes, Keys & Viola (2008) examined relationships between school stressors, school belonging, and academic outcomes. School belonging, which was facilitated by interactions with peers and teachers, was associated with positive academic self-efficacy and school satisfaction. The findings proposed that school belonging was associated with a lower depressive state, positive affect, and a greater desire to engage in the learning process. The findings highlight the importance of establishing a learning environment for at-risk African American students, one that is psychologically safe and provides social support both from educators and peers.

The notion of utilizing peer relationships to facilitate learning among African American students is supported in research on students' learning preferences. Ellison, Boykin, Tyler & Dillihunt (2005) examined the learning preferences of 138 African American and Caucasian fifth and sixth graders that were from low socioeconomic status households. Students' learning preferences were evaluated using a measure of cooperative, competitive and individualistic learning styles. Although the results of their research showed that all students preferred cooperative learning, the preference for cooperative learning was stronger among African American students than Caucasian students. In complete contrast to Caucasian students, African American students strongly rejected the competitive and individualistic learning approaches.

In a similar study of learning and achievement preferences, researchers presented low-income Black and White fifth graders with four learning orientation scenarios involving high achieving students: a) individualistic, b) competitive, c) communal and d) vervistic (Boykin, Albury, Tyler, Hurley, Bailey, & Miller, 2005). The students were presented with all four scenarios and were then asked questions designed to assess their attitudes toward peers who became high-achievers by adhering to one of the four learning orientations. The researchers found that African American students reported attitudes toward communal and vervistic high achievers that were significantly more positive than White students. African American students showed an "overwhelming endorsement" for peers who obtained high achievement using "Afrocultural themes of communalism and verve, and clear-cut rejection of ones who achieved highly via the ostensibly Eurocultural themes of individualism and competition" (p. 347).

The factors purported to contribute to the achievement gap may be due in part to a lack of focus on identifying the individual needs of at-risk African American students and a lack of research on the implementation of interventions designed to help this population. It seems clear, however, that social and cultural factors play a role in African American students' perceptions and expectations about their academic competence and school in general. Research that is focused on interventions that combine commonly held learning preferences, positive peer affiliations, supportive teacher-student relationships, and effective instructional methods are needed to begin to build a better understanding of the practices and interventions that work best for urban African American students in elementary school.

Effectiveness of Tutoring

There have been several empirical studies on the efficacy of supplemental tutoring programs (Elbaum, Vaughn, Hughes, & Moody, 2000; Hock, Pulvers, Deshler, & Schumaker, 2001). Although private tutoring has often been thought of as a luxury that only more educated and financially equipped parents can provide their children, supplemental tutoring programs for low-income, at-risk students is an emergent trend. State education agencies and local school districts are allocating funds to provide remedial and preventative interventions for the neediest student populations. Furthermore, federal legislation established through the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) now requires school districts that receive Title I funding to provide free tutoring to low-income students who attend schools that need improvement. This legislation has resulted in thousands of poor African American students participating in tutoring programs across the nation. Many educators, scholars and the federal

government believe that tutoring can have tremendous influence on both the academic achievement and social development of at-risk students.

Academic Impact

In a study conducted by Osborn, Freeman, Burley, Wilson, Jones and Rychener (2007), researchers investigated the effects of tutoring on the reading achievement of elementary students with cognitive disabilities, specific learning disabilities, and students who were also receiving Title I services. The program consisted of a cohesive blend of one-to-one instruction with trained volunteer tutors that delivered scientifically-based instructional techniques and served as mentors to the participants. Pre- and post-test data compared reading scores of the participating students ($N = 63$) to a control group that did not receive one-to-one tutoring. The results revealed that students with cognitive disabilities, specific learning disabilities, and students receiving Title I services averaged gains in reading of more than one month for every month of the intervention. Furthermore, the participants outperformed non-participating comparison students at a statistically significant level (.05). This study demonstrated the impact of structured tutoring on increasing the achievement of students that face serious cognitive and economic challenges. Although the study did not separately evaluate the role that mentoring and relationship building may have played in the students' gains in reading, the results indicate that a holistic approach to tutoring can have a significant influence on academic achievement.

In a meta-analysis of 29 studies of supplemental reading interventions, Elbaum, Vaughn, Hughes, & Moody (2000) assessed the efficacy of one-to-one, adult-delivered reading interventions for elementary students at-risk for failure in reading. The study included 42 samples of at-risk elementary students ($N = 1,539$) and had a mean

weighted effect size of 0.41. Elbaum, Vaughn, Hughes, and Moody (1999) point out that in educational research involving at-risk students, an effect size of 0.25 is educationally and statistically significant, so an effect size of 0.41 is promising.

Several findings also resulted from this study. First, students who received one-to-one tutoring performed at a significantly higher level on reading achievement tests than students that did not participate. This finding justifies that there is a significant academic benefit to tutoring. A second finding resulted from a comparison of one-to-one interventions and small group interventions of 2 to 6 students. The overall effect size of -0.12 indicates that there is no difference in the academic benefit to students tutored one-to-one or in a small group. Furthermore, of all 29 studies included in the meta-analysis, only two contrasted one-to-one and small group reading interventions. An apparent lack of research on small group tutoring supports the need for the currently proposed study.

Although most empirical studies on supplemental tutoring focus on one-to-one interventions, several researchers have acknowledged a need to investigate small group tutoring based on the potential cost advantages, social benefits and the greater capacity to serve larger numbers of at-risk students (Elbaum et al., 2000; Foorman & Torgesen, 2001; Vaughn, Linan-Thompson, Kouzekanani, Bryant, Dickson, & Blozis, 2003). Recent research has examined reading instruction grouping for students with reading difficulties. One study examined the effects of three grouping formats (one-to-one, one-to-three and one-to-ten) on the reading achievement outcomes of second grade students at-risk for reading failure (Vaughn et al.). Findings indicate that both the one-to-one and one-to-three groups outperformed the one-to-ten group at the .05

significance level. Additionally, there were no statistically significant differences between the one-to-one and one-to-three grouping patterns. This research suggests that small group tutoring in reading may be equally powerful as one-to-one interventions in increasing student achievement.

In a similar study of group tutoring, O'Shaughnessy and Swanson (2000) compared two small group reading interventions representing two different approaches to reading instruction with a control group. The participants were students with reading disabilities who attended schools with 72.5% to 90% low-income family population. Students were instructed in groups of five by a paraprofessional who received specialized training on the instructional methods and objectives of the reading programs. The findings resulted in an average effect size greater than 1.00 for each reading intervention group across all reading and reading-related outcomes. The students who participated in both small group reading interventions achieved significant gains in reading skills in comparison to the control group. Although the study was limited by its short duration of only six weeks, the results indicated that small group tutoring can greatly impact learning.

In addition to having an immediate positive impact on student achievement, tutoring can also have more generalized effects. Research shows that at-risk students who receive direct strategy-use instruction from a trained adult can utilize learned strategies on their own (Hock, Pulvers, Deshler, & Schumaker, 2001; O'Shaughnessy & Swanson, 2000, Vaughn et al., 2003). In an investigation of an after-school tutoring program for at-risk students, Hock and colleagues found that students improved their test and quiz grades and maintained a high level of performance well after the strategic

tutoring had commenced. In another study of reading intervention effects, Vaughn et al. discovered that student gains in phoneme segmentation, fluency, and comprehension were maintained on a follow-up assessment that took place four to five weeks after the intervention had concluded.

Social Impact

Students participating in supplemental tutoring interventions can gain more than increases in academic achievement. Tutoring can also lead to social outcomes that may be critical in influencing the growth of at-risk learners. The relationship that develops and the social exchanges that occur between tutor and student can also impact the cognitive development and academic effort put forth by struggling learners (Babbit & Byrne, 2000).

Equally noteworthy is the type of learning that occurs in the dynamics of a group. Small group instruction allows students the opportunity to learn in conjunction with their peers in a collegial and supportive environment. Wanzeck, Vaughn, Kim, and Cavanaugh (2006) discovered that working with peers has a positive impact on students' social outcomes. Their study revealed that students with reading difficulties demonstrated increases in self-concept, perceived ability, self-esteem, and social status after participating in small group reading interventions.

High-risk students, such as low-income African American elementary students who struggle in reading can benefit from the cognitive and emotional support that the small group tutoring environment can provide (Foorman & Torgesen, 2001). Gardner, Nobel, Hessler, Yawn, and Heron (2007) state that,

Tutoring systems offer practitioners a robust and effective way...to learn. They provide students with and without disabilities additional opportunities to engage with instructional content that they might otherwise fail to master.

Tutoring systems promote knowledge acquisition, have a positive impact on how children view themselves, and may enhance maintenance and generalization. (p.79)

Several researchers have focused on the utilization of supplemental tutoring as a means of preventing school failure for at-risk students. Although there is ample research to support the efficacy of tutoring at-risk, struggling readers, the vast majority of this research has been conducted using first grade participants who are in the very early stages of literacy and social development (Elbaum et al., 2000, Slavin et al., 2009). Several studies validate the need for early intervention to prevent reading failure, but disregard at-risk pre-adolescent, intermediate students who are in the third through fifth grades. Based on recent results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), African American students in the fourth grade are reading well below the levels of their White peers (Snyder, et al., 2007).

Research shows that tutoring is effective as a tool for the prevention and remediation of student reading failure. However, more research is needed to show why tutoring works. There is little qualitative research that illustrates how at-risk children learn in the tutoring setting. There is also a need to investigate features of the tutor-student dynamic (Slavin, et al., 2011). Since tutoring programs are growing more rapidly as an intervention, mixed-methods research is needed to identify tutoring programs that increase achievement and build understanding of the nature of how tutoring can impact at-risk African American students in the intermediate grades. Acknowledging the combination of academic and social benefits of small group tutoring may lead to greater gains in overall cognitive growth for students at-risk for school failure.

Social Cognitive Theory and Student Achievement

Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory asserts that human achievement is developed and driven by internal and external forces. Critical to social cognitive theory is the triadic reciprocal interactions between personal, behavioral, and environmental factors. In regard to students, this concept refers to the interactions that exists between what students do, what they think and what happens in their environment to affect their social and academic growth. Students essentially shape and are shaped by their actions, thoughts and school environment. Within social cognitive theory, two significant factors that contribute to an individual's development are self-efficacy and self-regulated learning (Bandura, 1986; Bandura, 1997). Social cognitive theory is relevant to interventions for at-risk African American elementary-aged students due to its concentration on the combination of motivational, cognitive, and social elements of student development. The research on African American students' learning preferences and effective tutoring for at-risk minority students demonstrates that incorporating social cognitive theory tenets may facilitate interventions that are more appropriate in addressing these students' needs.

Academic Self-Efficacy

Academic self-efficacy refers to "students' beliefs about their capabilities to perform academic tasks or to succeed in academic activities" (Usher & Pajares, 2006a, p.7). Research suggests that self-efficacy for learning influences academic achievement, motivation, persistence, and engagement (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2003; Pajares, 2008; Schunk, 2003). When describing the significance of self-efficacy beliefs, Bandura declared that people's appraisals of their capabilities to deal effectively with different realities is pivotal to their self-perceptions of efficacy. What they choose to do,

the effort they invest, how long they persevere in the face of disappointment, and whether they approach tasks anxiously or self-assuredly yields much insight about efficacy beliefs, task performance and response to feedback.

Students make appraisals of their academic self-efficacy from their performance, vicarious experiences, persuasion from others, and physiological reactions (Schunk & Pajares, 2002). Self-efficacy beliefs are primarily enhanced when students encounter academic success or master new skills. Through observing and comparing their actions with those of teachers and peer models, students adjust their beliefs about what they are capable of doing. Additionally, encouraging feedback from teachers can raise students' self-efficacy beliefs. Finally, students' physiological state also informs students' self-efficacy. If students notice themselves sweating or feeling anxious about a particular experience, they may associate those signs with feelings of doubt in their ability to perform the task at hand (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2007).

Some children may report levels of self-efficacy beliefs that are higher than their actual performance (Bandura, 1997). Research shows that there is a correlation between African American students' self-perceptions of their academic capabilities and their actual scores on standardized tests (Pershey, 2010). Increased self-perceptions of ability correlate to increases in students' test scores. Students with higher self-efficacy may also exhibit effort more vigorously and with greater persistence than students with lower self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986). The exertion of effort facilitated by high self-efficacy is an influential factor in student achievement.

In a two-year study, Long, Monoi, Harper, Knoblauch and Murphy (2007) found that there was a consistent correlation between self-efficacy beliefs and academic

achievement among poor, urban African American students. Eighth grade students with higher academic self-efficacy beliefs were more likely to have a higher grade point average than students with less self-efficacious beliefs. This correlational study identified academic self-efficacy as a significant predictor of the academic achievement of impoverished African American adolescents.

Academic self-efficacy is considered a critical protective factor when students are faced with academic failure, transitions and challenges. Gutman and Midgley (2000) conducted an examination of the factors that may support the academic achievement of socio-economically disadvantaged African American fifth grade students who were making the transition into middle school. The strongest predictor of academic achievement was academic self-efficacy. Students who had higher academic self-efficacy had higher grade point averages across the middle school transition than their peers. This study demonstrates that poor African American students who are confident in their academic abilities may be better equipped to overcome challenging academic experiences than students who are less efficacious.

Self-Regulated Learning

Self-regulated learners are goal-oriented, organized, and self-reflective. Self-regulation involves using metacognitive processes to plan, set goals, organize and act in a manner that is self-reflective and self-evaluative (Pintrich, 2000). Self-regulated learners are intrinsically motivated and acknowledge their role in successes and failures. They utilize metacognition to monitor or modify their thinking and take some kind of action that modifies their learning behaviors (Dinsmore, Alexander, & Loughlin, 2008).

Social cognitive theory proposes that self-regulated learning consists of three major sub-processes: self-observation, self-judgment, and self-reaction (Schunk & Zimmerman, 1997; Zito, Adkins, Gavins, Harris & Graham, 2007). Self-observation involves students making an intentional effort to pay attention to specific aspects of their behavior. This helps students objectively identify their own behaviors that may be hindering or helping them academically. Secondly, self-judgment refers to students evaluating their performance based on fixed or normative standards. Students may judge themselves based on completing an assignment on time or by socially comparing their performance with their peers. Comparative self-judgments inform students about their progress. Finally, self-regulation involves self-reaction. Evaluative self-reaction refers to responding to the judgments of one's performance. Student's self-efficacy plays a role in the way students choose to react to their judgments of performance (Bandura, 2001). During this process, students appraise their skills and react in ways that mirror their confidence levels for accomplishing certain tasks. These learning sub-processes allow students to make decisions about their journey through their academic experiences.

Self-regulatory competence has been linked to academic achievement. Students with greater self-regulated learning skills and knowledge typically have higher achievement in school. In 1986, Zimmerman and Martinez-Pons developed a structured interview for evaluating student use of self-regulated learning strategies. For 13 out of 14 categories of self-regulated learning strategies, the high achievement group of students reported significantly higher strategy use than the low achieving group. Their

analyses indicated that students' achievement could be predicted with 93% accuracy based on their reported use of self-regulated learning strategies.

In another study of self-regulated learning, Perry, VandeKamp, Mercer and Nordby (2002) investigated the teacher to student interactions that fostered self-regulated learning using in-class observations and semi-structured interviews. Their research suggests that even in the early elementary school grades, students are capable of developing and engaging in self-regulatory behaviors such as questioning, clarifying, correcting, and evaluating oneself that may aid them in completing complex reading and writing tasks. Instruction that specifically models self-regulated learning strategies may increase students' use of those strategies and may ultimately increase students' academic achievement (Cleary, Platten & Nelson, 2008, Pajares, 2008). Similarly, research has shown that at-risk elementary-aged African American students who spend more time acquiring and practicing cognitive reading strategies will have higher reading achievement than their peers (Al Otaiba, Schatschneider, & Silverman, 2005).

Facilitation of Self-Efficacy and Self-Regulated Learning

When considering academic interventions for at-risk students, it is logical to focus on fostering self-efficacy and self-regulation simultaneously because they are reciprocal and have a bidirectional affect on each other (Bandura, 2001). Feelings of high self-efficacy promote the use of effective self-regulatory processes, and the implementation of self-regulatory skills in turn fosters increased self-efficacy beliefs. Likewise, students who do not have self-regulatory competence are less likely to feel confident in their capabilities. A lack of efficacious beliefs deters them from utilizing prescribed self-regulatory strategies. When students believe that they do not possess the capability to

master materials, it is unlikely that they invest the time and effort in goal setting or strategies required to succeed (Pajares, 2008).

Students develop self-regulatory competence via a series of non-linear levels. Schunk and Zimmerman's (2007) social cognitive model of the development of self-regulation is comprised of two levels that rely on social factors and two levels that are guided by the learner. In the observation level, students acquire self-regulatory skills from models and verbal instruction. In the emulative or imitative level, students demonstrate observed skills and are socially influenced by others' guidance and feedback. In the third self-controlled level, students begin to internalize learned skills and develop their own standards of learning. Finally, in the fourth level, students adapt skills and self-regulatory processes to better meet their individual needs. They also become self-efficacious about their ability to use skills in the correct contexts. Ultimately, students make progress toward self-regulation beginning with teacher or peer modeling, student observation, student imitation, student self-control, and finally to self-regulated use of learning strategies (Schunk & Zimmerman, 1997). They recommend the teaching of self-regulation strategies so that students understand how to apply these strategies.

Research shows that several instructional techniques can be applied to increase academic self-efficacy foster self-regulated learning among struggling students. Just as self-regulated learning is influenced by feelings of self-efficacy, self-efficacy is also enhanced by the acquisition and implementation of self-regulated learning strategies. Students' self-efficacy is highly correlated with self-regulated strategy use (Zimmerman

& Martinez-Pons, 1990). Students who set goals, plan, organize, transform information, and seek peer assistance also have increased self-efficacy.

Based on studies of reading achievement, self-efficacy and, self-regulated learning, scholars recommend that educators focus on using modeling, goal setting, feedback, self-evaluation, and cognitive strategy tools to promote self-efficacy and develop self-regulatory competence (Schunk, 2003; Schunk & Zimmerman, 2007; Zito, Adkins, Gavins, Harris, & Graham, 2007). Modeling and feedback are essential to students' progression through the levels of self-regulatory development (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2007). They are mechanisms by which teachers and peers encourage students to believe in themselves and demonstrate cognitive strategies that bring about actual and perceived success. By explicitly teaching students to be cognizant of their feelings about what they can achieve and the actions that they utilize in a given academic situation, teachers can improve student self-efficacy and self-regulatory competence (Zimmerman, Bonner, & Kovach, 1996). Margolis (2005) suggests that teachers help struggling students to learn to credit their successes on their effort, persistence, actions and strategy use. Bandura's (1986) description of the sources of students' self-efficacy appraisals and the self-regulatory sub-processes of self-observation, self-judgment and self-reaction support this assertion. Students can evaluate themselves and make more accurate judgments of their progress and capabilities when provided with strategies for self-reflection. Providing students with tools to build self-regulated learning strategies and self-efficacy brings at-risk students closer to the ultimate goal of academic success (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2007).

Summary

Although research does not support a singular cause of the persistent Black-White achievement gap, evidence demonstrates that African American students who come from low-income homes and attend high-poverty, high-minority schools are disadvantaged when compared to their more affluent, non-minority peers. Several remedial options such as retention, referral for special education services and reading interventions have been reported, however, they have not yet closed the gap. Although progress is being made through the identification of students' learning preferences, additional research is needed to determine whether teaching to learning preferences makes a difference. Furthermore, the fact that so few studies have been conducted on the effects of reading interventions for struggling, low-income African American students supports the need for this study (Lindo, 2006).

Like the communal learning preferences of urban African American students, activities that build self-efficacy and self-regulated learning are not grounded in competitiveness. These activities are focused on intellectual growth, self-reflection, and self-management using peers and teachers as vicarious models and sources of constructive feedback. Given the available literature which suggests that African American students benefit from learning in supportive social environments, small-group tutoring is a justifiable venue for implementing a strategic reading intervention. The research highly supports the power of modeling and social guidance as mechanisms to build self-efficacy and self-regulated learning. Additionally, the correlations between self-regulated learning and self-efficacy, and self-efficacy and academic achievement, reveal that a tutoring intervention based on enhancing reading achievement through principles of social cognitive theory may be appropriate and successful in increasing the

reading achievement of at-risk elementary-aged African American students and demonstrate progress toward closing the achievement gap.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

To provide a detailed description of the methods and procedures utilized in this mixed-methods study, this section begins with a review of the purpose of the study and an explanation of the research design. A discussion of the setting, participants, variables, and instrumentation follows. Detailed descriptions of the quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods used for data collection, data analysis, and data verification are presented next. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the role of the researcher and researcher bias.

Research Design

The primary purpose of this study is to test the impact of facilitating social cognitive development instruction in a small-group tutoring intervention to improve academic achievement and academic self-perceptions in at-risk African American students. The research design of the study is an embedded mixed methods design. According to Creswell (2008), an embedded research design involves collecting quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously with one form of data playing a supporting role to the primary form of data. The benefit of this design is that it combines the advantages of two research methodologies, allowing outcomes of an experiment to be tested for statistical significance, while also using qualitative methods to identify how individual participants experience the process. Reading ability and self-perception data will be collected with the primary purpose of measuring the change in students' reading achievement, academic self-efficacy, and meta-cognitive self-regulation as a result of the intervention. Secondary qualitative data collection will take place during and after the tutoring intervention to explore the social and contextual factors that contribute to

the students' experiences. By collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, I hope to explore aspects of the tutoring intervention, to gain an understanding of what the intervention can do, and go identify the experiences that lead up to the results. A diagram of the research design is presented in Figure 3-1.

This study is largely quantitative and includes a quasi-experimental within-group and between-group design to measure the efficacy of the tutoring intervention. In order to understand the students' perspectives as well as the processes that are experienced during the tutoring intervention, ethnographic methods rooted in a constructionist perspective will be utilized in the embedded qualitative aspect of the study. According to Creswell (2008), this type of embedded design is advantageous because it allows the researcher to examine features of an intervention that are not easily quantified.

The Setting

The study was conducted in a large urban school district in Northeast Florida where 41.2% of the students are White and 43.9% of the students are Black. Approximately 50% of the elementary students in the school district have been identified as low-income status based on eligibility for free or reduced price school lunch. According to national and statewide accountability data for the 2008-2009 school year, Black students and economically disadvantaged students in this school district were not meeting minimum reading proficiency goals in contrast to White, Asian and American Indian students.

Data were collected from students attending five Title I elementary schools that have been deemed in "Needs Improvement" status for two or more consecutive years during the spring of 2009. According to the state and federal education agencies' guidelines, schools failing to achieve Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under the federal

legislation of No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2002) are placed in “Needs Improvement” status. AYP refers to the amount of expected growth students should make from one year to the next. Within these five schools, the student population is predominantly African American (from 47%-97%) and low-income (from 74%-92%). To raise academic achievement, the school district is required by the federal government to offer tutorial services to struggling students via a private entity. Economically disadvantaged parents whose children attend these schools receive the option of enrolling their children in after-school tutoring in reading or mathematics.

This study focused on tutoring that is offered through one program provided to students attending each of the five schools whose parents have selected the Small-Group Reading Intervention (SGRI). Tutoring in the SGRI program is conducted after dismissal from the regular school day and takes place at each student’s school. Although many parents at these five schools enroll their children in after-school tutoring, several parents elect not to allow their children to receive these services.

The Participants

Homogenous case sampling was used in order to generate data from individuals who are demographically and educationally similar (Kemper, Stringfield, & Teddlie, 2003). Participants in the study consisted of 37 African American students in grades 4 and 5 who attend the five elementary schools described above. The students were selected based on meeting the eligibility requirements to participate in the Small-Group Reading Intervention (SGRI) tutoring program. The selection criteria for the participants included scoring a Level 1 or Level 2 on the 2008 administration of the FCAT, being from a low income home, and not being enrolled in any tutoring program. The experimental group consisted of 22 fourth and fifth grade students. The remaining 15

fourth and fifth graders made up the comparison group. The students ranged in age from 10 to 12, with a mean age of 11. Frequencies and percentages regarding demographic data are presented in Table 3-1.

Students in the tutoring intervention group were matched to comparison students who are similar in student demographics and recent achievement on state-wide standardized tests. Students in both groups are African American and are from economically disadvantaged families. All students were also performing below grade level in reading. Developmental Scale Scores on the Reading portion of the 2008 Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) were used to ensure that students in the experimental and comparison groups were matched by reading ability prior to the administration of the tutoring intervention. An independent samples t-test was employed to confirm that there were no statistically significant group differences between the experimental and comparison groups.

To recruit students to participate in the study, the researcher contacted the principal of each of the five schools and asked for assistance in identifying students who met the criteria of being below-average, African American fourth or fifth graders who qualify for free or reduced lunch who were not enrolled in an after-school tutoring program. The administrators at each school provided the researcher with a list of students who met the research criteria. To gain consent from parents, the researcher obtained permission from each school's principal to send the parental consent form home with the students for the parent to read, sign and return to the tutor at each school. Letters requesting permission for participation in the study were sent home with 58 students. Ultimately 42 of the 58 returned the signed parental consent form, but five

of those students did not complete the program or could not be reached for pre- and/or post testing; thus resulting in a sample size of 37 students. Randomization was not utilized for student assignment. Students were assigned to treatment and control groups on the basis of parents' desire to have their child remain after school and participate in the treatment group. Prior to the administration of the pre-test measures, the researcher or tutor read the assent script to each student.

Definition of Variables

The independent variable in this study is the Small-Group Reading Intervention (SGRI) tutoring program. Students in the SGRI group received after-school tutoring in reading in groups of four to five students. While using reading instruction as the primary focus, tutoring incorporated the use of exercises and discourse to build academic self-efficacy and self-regulated learning behaviors. Students in the comparison group received regular classroom reading instruction and did not participate in any tutoring beyond the school day.

The dependent variables measured in this study were (a) reading achievement, (b) academic self-efficacy and (c) self-regulated learning. Students' pre- and post-test scores in reading achievement on the Achieve Assessment Test (United Learning Center, 2002) were used to measure the change in reading achievement as a result of the SGRI tutoring program. Students' pre- and post-test scores on the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (Pintrich, Smith, Garcia, & McKeachie, 1991) were used to measure the change in students' academic self-efficacy and self-regulated learning as a result of the SGRI tutoring program.

Instrumentation

Reading Achievement

To assess the influence of the Small-Group Reading Intervention on reading achievement, the Reading/Language Arts portion of the Achieve Assessment Test (United Learning Center, 2002) was administered as a pre- and post-test measure. The Achieve Assessment Test is a multiple-choice assessment that was designed to be consistent with standardized, criterion-referenced tests and is complementary to national and statewide reading standards. The Reading/Language Arts portion of the Achieve Assessment Test contains 44 items that evaluate student knowledge in the areas of vocabulary, comprehension (main idea, supporting details, sequencing, compare/contrast, cause/effect, making inferences, drawing conclusions, author's purpose, plot, and summarizing), and reference skills. The Achieve Assessment is a curriculum based assessment used to test the specific instructional skills that students learn in the small group reading intervention. To administer this assessment, the examiner orally instructs students to read each selection and then answer the corresponding questions. Students answer all questions independently. Test completion may take 45 to 60 minutes.

Educational experts, university professors, classroom teachers, and professional test writers wrote items for the Achieve Assessment Test. Content-validity was evaluated by the test developers who used research to ensure that the content and nature of the test is age and grade appropriate. Reading passages were then tested with software to ensure that the readability level was appropriate for each grade level. Each item was pilot tested in seven Florida school districts comprised of urban, suburban, and rural students. Field tests were performed with a sample size of over

10,000 students of various racial, ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds who were in grades 1 through 11. Scholars at Middle Tennessee State University utilized the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software to check reliability of the assessment. Cronbach's coefficient alpha for the Achieve Assessment Test is .81.

Self-Efficacy and Self-Regulation

A modified version of the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) (Pintrich, et al., 1991) was used to assess students' motivation (academic self-efficacy) and learning strategies (self-regulated learning). The MSLQ is a self-report instrument designed to measure students' motivational beliefs and self-regulated learning in school-based contexts. Based on the social cognitive view of motivation and learning, this view advocates that students' beliefs and cognitions are relevant and significant in mediating academic achievement (Bandura, 1997; Duncan, & McKeachie, 2005; Pintrich et al., 1993). The Self-Efficacy subscale consists of 8 items that assess students' self-efficacy for learning. The Metacognitive Self-Regulation subscale consists of 12 items that assess student use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies. (Refer to Appendix A).

Tests of the reliability and validity of the MSLQ were conducted using 380 Midwestern college students, attending a 4-year university. The original instrument was analyzed using two confirmatory factor analyses to separately test motivation items and cognitive and metacognitive strategy items. After the factor analyses were conducted, computations were calculated for internal consistency estimates of reliability, correlations between each motivational and cognitive strategy scale and predictive validity between all subscales and students' grades (Pintrich et al., 1993). The internal

reliability coefficient alpha for the Metacognitive Self-Regulation subscale is .79. The internal reliability coefficient alpha for the Self-Efficacy subscale is .93.

Prior to the study the modified version of the two MSLQ subscales utilized in this study was pilot tested using 15 fourth and fifth grade students who had similar characteristics to the schools participating in the study (high African American population, high low-income population, in Needs Improvement status for 2 or more consecutive years).

Student Interviews

The researcher conducted semi-structured, open-ended interviews with each student who completed the SGRI tutoring program. The interview was comprised of questions regarding how the tutoring intervention has impacted the students' academic self-efficacy, self-regulation of learning, and reading achievement (See Appendix B). Some of these questions were loosely based on the MSLQ, the Self-Regulated Learning Interview Schedule (SRLIS, see Zimmerman & Martinez-Pons, 1986), and the self-efficacy interview protocol utilized by Henk and Melnick (1998). The SRLIS was designed to assess students' use of self-regulated learning strategies and contains free response questions that address 14 classes of self-regulated behaviors. Students were also asked to describe the tutoring environment, including the social and instructional interactions that took place between themselves, their tutor and their peers. Data from these interviews utilizes the students' voices to establish an understanding of how students experienced the intervention. The "particular focus [in open-ended interviews] is on how interviewees construct narratives of events...and people and the turn-by-turn construction of meaning" (Silverman, 2001, p.87).

Interview questions were pilot tested with the same students that participated in the pilot testing of the MSLQ instrument. Pilot testing was used to assess the clarity and appropriateness of the questions. Based on conclusions drawn from pilot testing the language, substance and length of the interview may need to be adjusted (Glesne, 2006).

Data Collection

Quantitative Pre-Treatment Data

Prior to administering pre-test measures, developmental scale score reports from the reading portions of the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test were collected on students in the experimental and comparison groups to ensure that students in both groups were at similar reading ability levels prior to the intervention.

Quantitative Pre- and Post-Test Data

Tutors administered the reading achievement test and the self-efficacy and self-regulated learning subscales of the MSLQ as the pre- and post-test measures over a period of one to two days. The tutors received extensive training on the administration of the measures from the researcher. She emphasized the importance of maintaining standardization in each administration of the measures. The pre-test measures were administered to students in the experimental and comparison groups prior to beginning the SGRI tutoring intervention. Post-test measures were administered after the SGRI tutoring intervention was complete.

Qualitative Data

Observations

Participant observations were utilized to collect first-hand accounts of the social and instructional interactions that took place between the students and the tutor and

between the students and their peers in the group. During observations, data were collected regarding the context of the tutoring environment. Participant observation of children required the observer to identify the surroundings of the child, the way in which activities were started, how the child became involved, how the child interacted with partners, and the roles of the individuals involved (Tudge & Hogan, 2005).

The researcher purposively selected three small groups of students from the SGRI experimental group to observe throughout the tutoring program. Each of the three groups was at a different school. Because all tutoring sessions were conducted at the same times but at various school sites, the researcher was responsible for conducting observations on one of the groups, and research assistants conducted observations on the two other groups. This method allowed the researcher to gather a greater amount of observational data. The research assistants were certified public school teachers who were not affiliated with the schools at which they were assigned to observe a small tutoring group. These teachers had previously worked for the researcher's tutoring company as program monitors for two years prior to this study's implementation. The researcher trained the research assistants on techniques for conducting participant observations. Research assistants were shown how to position themselves as an objective observer who has little to no interaction with the student participants except to conduct member checking to clarify their observation notes. They were asked to study and document the setting, the participants, and the events and interactions that took place between the tutor and the students and the students and their peers. They were also provided with examples of what detailed, descriptive field notes look like (Glesne, 2006).

Six to nine observations were conducted throughout the intervention for three out of the five tutoring groups for a total of 23 observations. Two to three observations were conducted at the beginning of the tutoring program, in the middle, and toward the end of the intervention. Each observation lasted 60 to 90 minutes. During the observations, the researcher took hand written notes to record a detailed, close to verbatim transcript of the observations. Field notes were descriptive and analytic to ensure accuracy, reflect on patterns and raise questions about the meaning of the interactions that are observed (Glesne, 2006). Reflective notes were utilized to record any personal thoughts and questions that arose during the observations. When necessary, the researcher used informal interviews with the students at the end of the tutoring session to clarify any questions that may have come up while data were being collected.

Student Interviews

The researcher individually interviewed all of the students in the SGRI tutoring groups at the end of the intervention. Students were asked a set of open-ended questions based on the students' perceptions of the social and instructional elements of the tutoring environment and how the intervention has impacted their self-efficacy, self-regulated learning, and reading achievement. The researcher also probed participants to elaborate when clarification of answers was necessary. Interviews took place at each student's school either after school or during a non-instructional period. All interviews were tape recorded by the researcher and transcribed to ensure accuracy. Transcription of the interview recordings was conducted by a program assistant from the University of Florida's College of Education. Each interview lasted approximately 12 to 18 minutes.

Small-Group Reading Intervention (SGRI)

Students were placed in a small-group of 4 to 5 students with similar learning needs. Students were tutored after school 2 times per week for 90 minutes each session, from February 2009 to April 2009, excluding school holidays. Students received 24 hours of instruction over a period of 9 to 10 weeks. Each small-group was assigned an experienced reading teacher tutor.

The Small-Group Reading Intervention (SGRI) provided tutors with daily lesson plans, teaching manuals, and consumable materials for the students. Lessons included reading instruction in building phonological awareness and fluency, and more extensive instruction in building vocabulary and comprehension using a variety of narrative and expository texts. Students were presented with strategies designed to help them make meaning from text and to become more fluent readers. Some of the reading strategies incorporated during the SGRI instructional program included clarifying, self-questioning, making predictions summarizing, and relating text to prior knowledge. These strategies were implemented in order to encourage the students to utilize a strategic approach to overcoming reading challenges (McCabe, 2006). The students were encouraged to determine which strategies work best for their unique learning styles.

In addition to focusing on reading instruction, the SGRI program called for students to be exposed to language and feedback from tutors that promoted the development of academic self-efficacy. Tutors verbally acknowledged students' successes in an effort to build students' sense of accomplishment. They also used tutor and peer modeling to provide students with demonstrations of what it looks and feels like to be successful with reading. Verbal persuasion was also used as a method to help students attribute successes in reading to specific behaviors that they displayed during

tutoring. Another means of promoting academic self-efficacy during the SGRI program was to draw attention to the students' physiological state or feelings related to the progress made regarding during reading activities (McCabe, 2006).

Tutors also facilitated instruction designed to build students' self-regulatory competence. The SGRI lessons incorporated tutor prompts to promote reflection. Prompts were also used to encourage students to think about and explain their strategy use or the tools they know to use to problem solve when faced with challenging texts, vocabulary or learning activities. At the end of lessons or at the end of each tutoring week, students could also evaluate their development of self-regulated learning strategies using a self-monitoring checklist.

Due to the reciprocal relationship between self-efficacy and self-regulation, activities to build self-efficacy and self-regulation were usually not exclusive. Throughout the program, tutors implemented various discourses, strategies, and activities to build self-efficacy and promote self-regulated learning by encouraging students to (a) set goals, (b) become self-reflective and self-evaluative, (c) learn and utilize new skills and strategies, and (d) use strategic outcome planning and monitoring (Eisenberger, Conti-D'Antonio, & Bertrando, 2005; Zimmerman, Bonner, & Kovach, 1996). In addition to providing targeted reading instruction, the SGRI program's focus was to provide instructional elements of social cognitive theory that allowed students to observe, emulate, and adopt self-regulated learning strategies while also acknowledging growth for improved academic self-efficacy (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2007). The small group tutoring environment allowed participants to received constant feedback from tutors and peers. Please refer to Appendix G for examples of prompts and handouts provided to

tutors to help them build self-efficacy and self-regulatory competence during the SGRI lessons.

Tutor Qualifications, Training and Supervision

All SGRI tutors were certified elementary school teachers, experienced in working in Title I populations with at-risk students. Tutors were recruited through recommendations from principals, fellow teachers. Tutors participated in four hours of training regarding policies, practices, instructional methods, testing procedures, classroom management, and record keeping. Training also consisted of explaining, modeling, and role-playing each lesson component and essential self-efficacy building practice, and learning how to teach self-regulatory strategies. When students had been placed appropriately in a small group, each group was assigned one tutor who consistently provided instruction throughout the duration of the intervention. Follow-up training was conducted during the course of the intervention. Also, assistance was available when SGRI staff recognized the need, and when tutors requested.

The fidelity of the SGRI tutoring program was evaluated using tutor logs of attendance, progress through lesson plans, student progress monitoring, progress reports, and through monitoring by the SGRI program support team and the researcher. Tutors were required to take attendance daily and track the progress made through each of the lesson plans. Records helped guide decisions relating to the intensity of the treatment. Attendance records also guided the researcher in identifying students who did not complete the entire program.

Tutors were also required to administer brief progress monitoring assessments to each student after every five lessons. The results were used to create progress reports for the school, the parents, and the SGRI staff regarding the student's progress toward

increasing reading achievement scores. Tutors were expected to use the progress monitoring results to reflect on their practice and adjust their methods to better meet student needs.

Another essential method of addressing concerns about the implementation of the SGRI tutoring program was the utilization of two research assistants as a program monitoring team. These research assistants were certified teachers that did not teach in any of the schools where SGRI was being implemented. They had previous experience as program monitors who were employed by the researcher's tutoring company for two years prior to the SGRI program. They participated in the same training that was provided to the tutors, but they were also instructed, but they were also instructed to monitor and supervise the tutors. Because they also attended the tutor training, they were made aware of the social cognitive elements, including strategy instruction, goal setting, reflection, modeling, and positive feedback, which were expected to be evident in the SGRI lessons conducted by the tutors. The monitoring team used a checklist to observe the following: tutors keeping students focused and on-task, following lesson formats, incorporating self-efficacy and self-regulation building activities, managing student behavior, maintaining a positive and encouraging presence and using the entire 90 minutes for SGRI tutoring. Monitors were encouraged by the researcher to immediately make corrections, when necessary, and to model appropriate behaviors as needed. Tutors were given brief oral or written feedback that either informed them of changes that needed to be made or encouraged them to continue with the great job that they were doing. Please refer to Appendix H to see the observation checklist that was

used by the research assistants who took observation notes and monitored the tutoring program.

Data Analysis

This section will explain how data were analyzed during this study using quantitative analyses, qualitative analyses, and mixed methods analysis. The level of significance for each statistical test was set at $\alpha=.05$.

Preliminary Analyses

An analysis of pre-treatment reading achievement levels was conducted to identify differences in the experimental group and comparison group prior to any pre-testing. An independent samples t-test comparing mean scores of the experimental group and comparison group using their 2008 developmental scale scores from the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) was conducted. These results showed that there were no significant differences in reading ability between the experimental and comparison groups prior to the intervention.

Within-Group Pre-Test/Post-Test Analyses

Dependent samples t-tests were used to examine whether students who participated in the SGRI made significant gains on the dependent variables (reading achievement, self-efficacy, and self-regulated learning). The t-test is appropriate when two observations (pre- and post-test) are made on each participant. The t-test provided information on whether the difference between pre- and post-test scores was due to chance or to a true difference in scores that may be a result of the SGRI tutoring intervention (Shavelson, 1996).

Between-Group Pre-Test/Post-Test Analyses

To examine the differences in scores on the dependent variables between the experimental group and comparison group, one-way analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used with pre-test scores set as the covariates. The purpose of conducting the ANCOVA was to remove variability due to individual differences between the treatment and comparison groups by adjusting post-test scores according to differences in pre-test scores (Dooley, 2001). The ANCOVA “uses individual differences to reduce the size of the error term” and is also considered to be more powerful than the one-way ANOVA for between-subjects designs (Shavelson, 1996, p. 504).

Effect sizes were interpreted using Cohen’s (1988) benchmarks for effect sizes where .20 is considered small, .50 is medium, and .80 is considered large.

Qualitative Analyses

Data collected from student interviews and tutoring observations were analyzed using iterative and inductive ethnographic procedures. The goal of ethnographic data analysis is to bring “order to the data. . . by looking for patterns, categories, descriptive units and themes” (Pole & Morrison, 2003, p. 78). Open coding was used to conduct a line-by-line exploration of the semantic relationships that exist within the data. During coding, small units of text were labeled semantically. The constant comparative method was implemented to identify differences and similarities found in the codes in order to group codes and build evidence to establish overarching perspectives and taxonomies (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Spradley, 1979). Using Creswell’s (2008) suggestions for thematic data analysis as a guide, the data were analyzed for themes and descriptions relating to (a) the setting and context, (b) participant’s perspectives, (c) processes, (d) activities, (e) strategies, and (f) relationships and social structures. The

analysis progressed from narrow domain specific contexts to broader themes that provided a holistic conception of the students' experiences and the environment of the Small-Group Reading Intervention (SGRI) tutoring program.

The researcher shared summaries of field notes with students who participated in the SGRI tutoring program to verify that the account of their experiences was accurate. The researcher also shared all interview protocols and observation notes with an external auditor who was also a doctoral student and a research assistant. The external auditor identified codes and common themes. This was done to ensure agreement that the researcher's codes had been applied accurately. Agreement was found to be consistent between the researcher and external auditor.

Mixed-Methods Analysis

In order to discover whether themes were correlated with significant findings relating to reading achievement, self-efficacy and self-regulated learning, data transformation was conducted on the interviews and observations. The qualitative data were quantitized. To quantitize the qualitative data, data from emergent themes found from the coding process were converted into frequency counts and frequency manifest effect sizes (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Onwuegbuzie & Teddlie, 2003). Frequency manifest effect sizes can be used in mixed methods research to establish the commonality of a theme's presence within the data. According to Onwuegbuzie & Teddlie (2003), this kind of effect size uses percentages to represent specific counts or frequencies in which meaningful statements or observations were present within the qualitative data set. Frequency manifest effect sizes are calculated into percentages by dividing the number of participants who cite a theme by the total number of participants. Using a graphic flow chart to create a matrix for data display, the distributions of themes

were correlated to the reading achievement, self-efficacy and self-regulated learning scores of students who participated in the SGRI tutoring program.

Verification

The verification of inferences prior to generating final conclusions regarding the data is critical. In mixed-methods research, the process of validating the accuracy of deductive and inductive conclusions is referred to as either legitimization or inference quality (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003). Data were verified quantitatively via the inclusion of descriptive and numerical information regarding the number of participants, sampling procedures, pilot testing, and reliability and validity of the measures being utilized in the study.

In qualitative research, it is important to discuss trustworthiness, which refers to implementing several procedures that will ensure the accuracy of findings and interpretations. The researcher established the trustworthiness of the data in several different ways including data triangulation. Multiple data sources, observation field notes and student interview protocols, were used together to build and justify themes. Data triangulation also occurred through the development of the matrices, which displayed the correlation among reading achievement, self-efficacy, and self-regulation scores with the themes derived from observations and interviews.

Other forms of ensuring trustworthiness included spending prolonged time in the field, member checking, using an external auditor, clarifying researcher bias, and using rich, thick descriptive language to convey findings (Creswell, 2003; Glesne, 2006; Onwuegbuzie & Teddlie, 2003). Throughout the course of the study, the researcher conducted several observations of student participants during the beginning, middle and ending phases of the SGRI tutoring program. In addition to several observations, the

researcher spent prolonged time in the field by interviewing each participant in an open-ended fashion.

The researcher also established trustworthiness by asking students to participate in member-checking, during which time they were asked to determine if the researchers' descriptions were accurate. An external auditor provided another check of accuracy. The auditor reviewed codes and notes to corroborate the codes and themes identified by the researcher. Finally, thick, detailed descriptions of the setting, participants, methods and the role of the researcher, which can be found in other sections of this chapter, enable the reader to determine the credibility and transferability of the information presented.

Role and Biases of the Researcher

Clarifying the position and potential biases of the researcher is an essential element of ensuring the trustworthiness of the research. The researcher must remain reflective of her personal history, her role throughout the process, and her interpretations of the findings (Creswell, 2008). In this section I will discuss my own biases and the strategies that will be implemented to keep them from having an influence in the study.

My professional experience includes working as an elementary teacher. I have taught second, third, fifth and sixth grades primarily in urban schools with high populations of at-risk, minority students from low-income families. I am also the owner of the tutoring company that offers the intervention being implemented. Essentially, I am an African American educator whose personal and professional experiences have led me to become an individual who deeply wants to see an end to the achievement gap

between low-income minority children and their more affluent, non-minority counterparts.

I remained objective by focusing on the participants' responses and the details of my field notes. I maintained a passive, unobtrusive position during observations, and I strived to ensure that the students were not made aware of or influenced by my position with the tutoring company. When I came across uncertainties, I searched for an answer within the data and avoided generating my own conclusions. In order to separate my own questions and assumptions, I maintained a reflexive journal of notes taken before, during and after interviews or observations. These reflexive notes also served as a source for clarifying ideas, recording my feelings and generating new questions to ask the participants. The ultimate purpose of a reflexive journal is to promote the trustworthiness of my interpretations (Glesne, 2006). I consistently reflected on the idea that reality is socially constructed, and that often times the greatest meaning is derived from what is taken for granted (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). This belief system helped me to maintain an objective search for the taken for granted, less obvious aspects of what I saw and heard during this investigation.

Table 3-1. Demographic data of participants

Characteristic	N	%
Male	17	45.9
Female	20	54.1
Fourth Grade Students	16	43.2
Fifth Grade Students	21	56.8
Control	15	40.5
Treatment	22	59.5

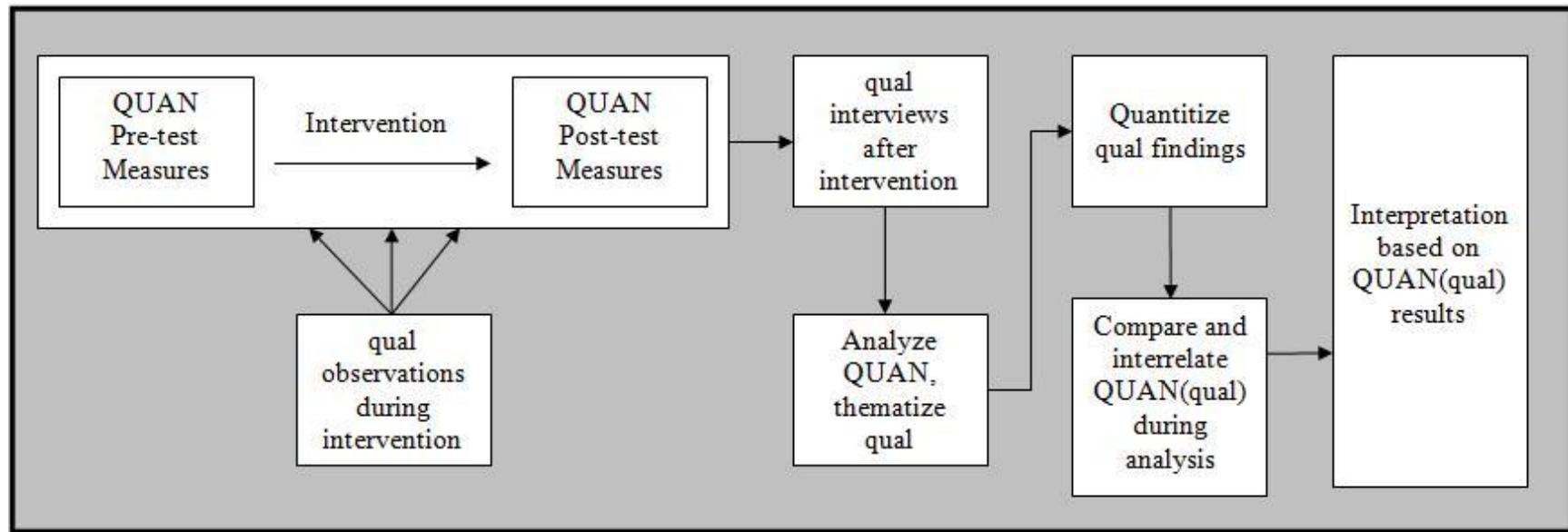


Figure 3-1. Diagram of Research Design

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

The quantitative findings generated from reading achievement tests and self-efficacy and self-regulated learning questionnaires are described in the first section of this chapter. The qualitative findings obtained from small group observations and student interviews are described in the second portion of this chapter. In the final section of this chapter, findings pertaining to mixed-methods are presented.

Quantitative Findings

The following research question was explored using quantitative analysis: What is the relationship between a small-group tutoring intervention and (a) reading achievement, (b) academic self-efficacy and (c) self-regulated learning in at-risk African American elementary students? To investigate this question thoroughly and to assess the impact of the reading intervention, the following hypotheses were tested:

- a) Participation in a small-group tutoring intervention will lead to an increase in reading achievement among the African American student participants.
- b) Participation in a small-group tutoring intervention will lead to an increase in academic self-efficacy among the African American student participants.
- c) Participation in a small-group tutoring intervention will lead to an increase in self-regulated learning among the African American student participants.
- d) African American students that participate in a small-group tutoring intervention will have higher reading achievement than comparison students.
- e) African American students that participate in a small-group tutoring intervention will have higher academic self-efficacy than comparison students.
- f) African American students that participate in a small-group tutoring intervention will be more self-regulated learners than comparison students.

Preliminary Analysis

To determine if there were statistically significant differences in the FCAT developmental scale score by group (treatment and control) prior to the beginning of the

treatment, an independent sample t test was conducted using an alpha level of 0.05. Levene's Test for Equality of Variances was not significant, indicating that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was met. There were 15 students in the control group and 22 students in the treatment group. The result of the t-test was not statistically significant, $t (35) = -0.79$, $p = .434$, $d = -0.27$, 95% CI [-237.15, 104.10], suggesting there were no statistically significant differences in FCAT developmental scale scores between the groups (treatment vs. control). The mean difference was -66.52 with a 95% confidence interval of -237.15 and 104.10 points. Students in both groups were on the same academic level in reading prior to the implementation of the small group reading intervention. Results of the t test are presented in Table 4-1.

Research Question 1(a)

What is the relationship between a small-group tutoring intervention and reading achievement in at-risk African American elementary students? Research question 1(a) addresses Hypothesis 1, which investigates within-group results: Participation in a small-group tutoring intervention will lead to increased reading achievement in African American students. To investigate hypothesis 1, and to determine if there were statistically significant differences in reading achievement scores by time (pretest vs. posttest), for treatment only, a dependent sample t test was conducted using an alpha level of 0.05. The dependent sample t-test was not statistically significant, $t (21) = -0.91$, $p = .375$, $d = 0.18$, 95% CI [-7.34, 2.89], suggesting that there were not a statistically significant differences in reading achievement scores by time (pretest vs. posttest). The mean difference was -2.23% with a 95% confidence interval of -7.34 and 2.89 percentage points. The researcher fails to reject the null hypothesis. The students in the treatment, who participated in the small

group reading intervention, did not show a significant increasing in reading at the conclusion of the program. Results of the dependent sample t-test are presented in Table 4-2.

Research Question 1(b)

What is the relationship between a small-group tutoring intervention and self-efficacy in at-risk African American elementary students? Research question 1(b) addresses Hypothesis 2, which investigates within-group results: Participation in a small-group tutoring intervention will lead to increased academic self-efficacy in African American students. To investigate hypothesis 2, and to determine if there were statistically significant differences in the self-efficacy survey scores by time (pretest vs. posttest), for treatment only, a dependent sample t test was conducted using an alpha level of 0.05. The dependent sample t-test was not statistically significant, $t(20) = -0.45$ $p = .658$, $d = 0.13$, 95% CI [-5.38, 3.47], suggesting that statistically significant differences in self-efficacy survey scores by time (pretest vs. posttest) were not found. The mean difference was -0.95% with a 95% confidence interval of -1.31 and 5.84 points. The researcher fails to reject the null hypothesis. The students in the treatment, who participated in the small group reading intervention, did not show significant improvement in their individual self-efficacy beliefs at the conclusion of the program. Results of the dependent sample t-test are presented in Table 4-2.

Research Question 1(c)

What is the relationship between a small-group tutoring intervention and self-regulated learning in at-risk African American elementary students? Research question 1(c) addresses Hypothesis 3, which investigates within-group results: Participation in a small-group tutoring intervention will lead to increased self-regulated

learning in African American students. To investigate hypothesis 3, and to determine if there were statistically significant differences in the self-regulation survey scores by time (pretest vs. posttest), for treatment only, a dependent sample t test was conducted using an alpha level of 0.05. The dependent sample *t*-test was not statistically significant, $t(19) = 0.07$, $p = .943$, $d = 0.00$, 95% CI [-4.16, 4.47], suggesting that there were no statistically significant differences in self-regulation survey scores by time (pretest vs. posttest). The mean difference was 0.15% with a 95% confidence interval of -4.16 and 4.47 points. The researcher fails to reject the null hypothesis. The students in the treatment group, who participated in the small group reading intervention, did not show a significant increasing in self-regulation at the conclusion of the program. Results of the dependent sample t-test are presented in Table 4-2.

Research Question 1(d):

What is the relationship between a small-group tutoring intervention and reading achievement in at-risk African American elementary students? Research question 1(a), part 2 addresses Hypothesis 4, which investigates between-group results: African American students that participate in a small-group tutoring intervention will have higher reading achievement than comparison students. To investigate hypothesis 4, and to determine if there were statistically significant differences in posttest reading achievement scores by group (treatment vs. control), after controlling for pretest scores in reading, an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted using an alpha level of .05. Levine's Test for Equality of Variances was not significant, indicating that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was met. The results of the ANCOVA were statistically significant, $F(1, 34) = 5.74$, $p = .022$, $\eta^2 = .14$, suggesting that differences by group exist, after controlling for pretest. The treatment group ($M =$

52.59, SD = 12.22) had a statistically higher mean reading achievement score on the posttest than the control group ($M = 38.40$, SD = 15.60). An effect size of .14 indicates a small strength of the relationship between the variables. Means and standard deviations are presented in Table 4-3 and the results of the ANCOVA are summarized in Table 4-4.

Research Question 1(e):

What is the relationship between a small-group tutoring intervention and self-efficacy in at-risk African American elementary students? Research question 1(b), part 2 addresses Hypothesis 5, which investigates between-group results: African American students that participate in a small-group tutoring intervention will have higher academic self-efficacy than comparison students. To investigate hypothesis 5, and to determine if there were statistically significant differences in posttest self-efficacy survey scores by group (treatment vs. control), after controlling for pretest self-efficacy survey scores, an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted using an alpha level of .05. Levine's Test for Equality of Variances was not significant, indicating that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was met. The results of the ANCOVA was not statistically significant, $F (1, 31) = 3.94$, $p = .056$, suggesting that differences by group did not exist, after controlling for pretest. Means and standard deviations are presented in Table 4-3 and the results of the ANCOVA are summarized in Table 4-5.

Research Question 1(f):

What is the relationship between a small-group tutoring intervention and self-regulated learning in at-risk African American elementary students? Research question 1(c), part 2 addresses Hypothesis 6, which investigates between-group results: African American students that participate in a small-group tutoring intervention will be

more self-regulated learners than comparison students. To investigate hypothesis 6, and to determine if there were statistically significant differences in posttest self-regulation survey scores by group (treatment vs. control), after controlling for pretest self-regulation survey scores, an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted using an alpha level of .05. Levine's Test for Equality of Variances was significant, indicating that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was not met. The F statistic is robust against violations of normality and in situations where the variance is unequal provided group sizes are similar (Stevens, 2002). In this case, the ratio of largest to smallest group was >1.5 ($20/11 = 1.82$); therefore, caution should be used in interpreting significant findings. The results of the ANCOVA were not statistically significant, $F(1, 28) = 2.09, p = .159, \eta^2 = .07$, suggesting that differences by group do not exist, after controlling for pretest. Means and standard deviations are presented in Table 4-3 and the results of the ANCOVA are summarized in Table 4-6.

Descriptive statistics were also calculated for reading achievement, self-efficacy, and self-regulation at pre and posttest for treatment and control groups. For control, the students' scores on all three measures decreased from pretest to posttest. For treatment, the scores in reading and self-efficacy increased from pretest to posttest. The results are presented in Table 4-7.

Qualitative Analysis

Research Question 2:

What are the observed instructional experiences of at-risk elementary-aged African American students in the learning environment of a small-group tutoring intervention? Multiple sessions of the small group reading intervention were observed at three different schools at several different times throughout the tutoring intervention

(beginning, middle, and end). Observations lasted for 60 to 90 minutes of the tutoring session. At the first school, observations were held for six sessions. At the other two schools, observations were held for eight sessions. Approximately four to five students were involved in the tutoring sessions; however, students were sometimes absent, altering the number of students present. Students were both male and female.

The students at school one sat in a semicircle around the tutor and participated in reading and writing activities. Throughout all sessions, the tutor offered strategies for better reading and reviewed strategies that were previously discussed in order to keep them fresh in the students' minds. Several different reading styles were used. Sometimes the tutor read, so the student would have someone to model after. On other occasions, the students read to practice inflection, fluency, and other good reading strategies. They often stopped to summarize what they had read and to clarify their comprehension of the text. During the sessions, if students offered incorrect answers, the tutor encouraged them to keep trying and suggested other strategies to use that might allow them to find the correct answer, such as going back to the text to reread, using the glossary, or another helpful strategy. The tutor led many lessons, but also allowed other students to often lead the lessons; asking peers to answer comprehension questions and having the group follow along as the student tutor read the story. The tutor constantly encouraged and praised all students. The tutor offered high fives for correct answers. Throughout the sessions, they worked on many different lessons, such as similes and metaphors, prefixes and suffixes, and fact and opinion. Sessions often ended with the tutor praising the students for a good session and stating that she enjoyed their time together.

The students at school two sat in a semicircle around the tutor and participated in reading and writing activities. Prior to each session, students were given snacks as an extra incentive. The tutor frequently discussed strategies to improve reading and asked for input from the students. Some of the strategies they spoke about included making predictions, asking questions, paying attention to the headings, and looking at the pictures to aid in comprehension. The students sometimes worked in groups and sometimes worked independently. Some students were more engaged than others and the tutor attempted to keep their attention by physically engaging the students. During one session, she had the students act out the vocabulary words. The children and tutor often laughed together and seemed to enjoy the tutoring sessions. The tutor constantly offered praise and encouragement. When students made mistakes when reading aloud, the teacher offered encouragement by saying things like, "You don't have to read fast to be the best." As the sessions went on, one student seemed to consistently act out and be off task. The tutor addressed these actions by firmly, but kindly, reprimanding her. During one of the sessions, the tutor worked one on one with this student, while the other students in the group worked quietly and independently. The tutor was still available to answer any questions members of the group may have had. During another session, the student and tutor worked on forming complete sentences. The lesson was conducted as a game and the student seemed to greatly enjoy it. By the end of the game, the student had mastered the ability to form complete sentences and was rewarded with a candy bar. The tutor then pulled another student aside to work one on one. The other students seemed to work well without assistance. Students worked on different lessons throughout the tutoring session, such as synonyms and antonyms, fact

and opinion, and using context clues. For the last three sessions the same student seemed to remain distracted, but her attention was drawn back during the last session with the use of a game. Sessions seem to be organized and overall productive.

The students at school three sat in a classroom with the tutor in an authoritative position, but not always in a semicircle. They had snacks before beginning every lesson. Not all students in the classroom were involved in the tutoring session. The tutor was not the same throughout all the sessions. For the fifth session, there was a different tutor and it was run differently than the other sessions. In the fifth session, only two students were present. The session began by reviewing previous material. They moved on to comparing and contrasting and the students discussed the reading strategies they used, such as chunking, sounding out, and using context clues. The tutor read aloud from the book and then the students read aloud. The student's reading was praised and they were reminded of good reading strategies. When students were able to sound out a word on their own, the tutor offered a fist pump. One student was clearly discouraged but continued on because of the constant encouragement. Students were given praise and encouragement throughout this session.

During the majority of the other sessions, however, there was minimal interaction between the tutor and the students. Typically, the students read silently and then answered questions that the tutor asked. The tutor's voice typically had a monotone quality, and she rarely made eye contact with the students. When a question was answered the tutor replied with "great" or "okay" and then read the responses from the teacher's manual. On a few occasions, the tutor made an effort to smile and seemed enthusiastic about the students successfully answering questions, but this was not

consistent. Students seemed to frequently be off task, and the tutor did not seem to pay attention to their poor behavior. At one point, a student raised his hand for three to five minutes, and the tutor never noticed because she was too engrossed in her own work. After a few sessions, the researcher tried to explain to the tutor the proper formatting of a guided tutoring session. The researcher spoke with the tutor and gave examples of the types of dialogue and tutor to student interactions that promote self-efficacy and the development of self-regulated learning, but there was little change in her approach to the tutoring sessions that took place after these discussions. Comparisons of the themes from the three schools are presented in Table 4-8.

Research Question 3:

How do students perceive the small-group tutoring intervention regarding its impact on: (a) reading achievement, (b) self-efficacy, and (c) self-regulated learning strategy development? The 22 students who participated in the small group reading intervention were each interviewed individually by the researcher at the conclusion of the tutoring program. Through open coding, semantic relationships found throughout the students' responses to each interview question resulted in 22 themes. The constant comparative method was implemented to identify differences and similarities found in the codes in order to group codes into larger clusters and build evidence to establish overarching perspectives and taxonomies (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Spradley, 1979). Based on frequency counts and an evaluation of the complementariness of the themes, eight overarching meta-themes were established and defined from the interview data. These meta-themes include: (a) confidence building, (b) increased reading ability, (c) reading strategy focus, (d) demonstration of self-regulated learning, (e) tutor feedback, (f) access to help, (g) cooperative

environment, and (h) making learning fun. This section uses the students' voices to illustrate the themes found from each interview question and explain the students' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the SGRI tutoring program.

When asked to describe their overall feelings about the small group reading intervention, students frequently expressed feelings that tutoring was fun. They stated they had a good experience with their tutor ($N = 8$). A few students went on to describe their tutor as being a good teacher or doing a good job with helping them read better.

Interview question 2 asked, "How did you feel about working with your tutor?" The participants stated that they enjoyed working with their tutor ($N = 17$) and that the tutor helped them learn ($N = 7$). Participant 3 felt that the tutor helped with getting "better and better at reading," while participant 15 stated that the tutor helped them with better reading, more focus, and better comprehension of reading. Participant 20 said that the tutor made the subject fun, which helped make understanding the material easier. Participant 14 said that even though they did a lot of work, working with the tutor was still fun.

Students were asked to describe the most helpful aspects of the small group reading program. In response to this question, participants stated that help was available ($N = 8$), and the reading activities were helpful ($N = 7$). Some also stated that the tutoring program helped them become better readers ($N = 5$). Participant 6 said that if they needed help all they had to do was ask for it. Participant 9 said that the different reading activities they did were helpful, particularly summarizing the text into paragraphs. Participant 13 said that learning the main idea of the story was the most

helpful reading activity. Participant 4 said that even though they practiced reading at home, the after-school tutoring offered additional extra help.

Almost all students concurred that being in the tutoring program helped them to think or learn in new or different ways. When asked to describe the types of activities that the tutor implemented to facilitate their learning of new things, the students' responses included rereading the text ($N = 7$) and learning through playing games ($N = 6$). Participant 1 said that when they did not understand something the tutor would go back in the text and reread with them to help the students understand. Participant 8 also said that the tutor would sometimes just tell the students to go back in the text and reread to find the answers. "We used to take turns reading like a passage ,and like if we had messed up on a passage she'll try to help us correct the word. And then we'll go back over it and help everybody else doing the same thing," explained Participant 12.

Interview question 7 asked, "How do you feel about how well you can read?" As well as, "Do you think you are a good reader?" The students' unanimous response was that they all believe that they are good readers ($N = 22$). Participant 2 said, "Now I'm reading confidently." Participant 1 said, "Yes, I am a better reader, and I can tell because I can read faster and more fluently than before." Participant 3 said, "I am a good reader, and I put more expression into my reading...I know I can do it and that is all that matters." Participant 22 said, yes, "I am a good reader, and now I can read faster than before."

Students were also asked to describe how they feel inside when they read. Seven participants responded that they feel happy or good inside when they read. Participant 1 said that although reading out loud causes nervousness, "I actually do good." In

response to this question, participant 7 said, “I feel happy. I already know the stuff about reading and I was improving.” Participant 2 said, “I guess we got confident in ourselves.”

Interview question 9 asked, “Did your tutor help you to feel better about how well you can read?” and, “What kinds of things did she do to help you?” Eighteen participants responded that the tutor helped them feel better about reading. Participants 1 and 14 expressed feeling better about how they read because they felt comfortable around the tutor. Participant 12 said the tutor would make the students comfortable by reminding them to relax.

During the interviews, students were asked to compare the way they used to read with how they read after the completion of the small group reading intervention. Six participants said that they used to stumble over words when they would read, but they no longer do now. Six participants also stated that they read faster now. Participant 3 said, “I used to stumble on words I didn’t know and then skip over them, but now I look them up in the dictionary so that I can comprehend the word.” Participant 12 said, “I used to struggle on words but I can read faster now.” Likewise, participant 13 said, “I used to read slow and skip over words, but I don’t do that now.” Participant 22 agreed that before tutoring, “I was reading kind of slow and couldn’t really understand.” This student went on to say that the tutor helped him understand what he was reading.

In an effort to gather information about students’ use and knowledge of self-regulated learning strategies, students were asked “What kinds of things do you do when you are confused by a word or a story that is difficult to understand?” and, “What kinds of things do good readers do when they are faced with a word or a story that is difficult to understand?” Participants responded that they would look up the meaning of

the word (N= 6). One student said, "I'll probably look it up in the dictionary." Participant 22 said, "Um, I use dictionaries and also a thesaurus. I use the thesaurus because if it's a word that I don't know maybe if I look in the thesaurus I might find another word that means that word." When participant 11 was asked what they thought a good reader would do if they didn't understand something, the response was, "I'd try to find the meaning of the word." Another student stated, "Before I ask anyone or go to my teacher I'll probably like figure it out because I can...I have like a five hand [finger] rule that if I can't read like five words or something, then I'll either put the book back or ask a question to my neighbor or my teacher."

Interview question 12 asked, "What kinds of things do you do to prepare for a test or difficult assignment?" In response to question 12, the only consistent theme identified was, "I study." Twelve participants noted that they study to prepare for a difficult test or assignment. One student responded that they prayed to prepare, and another student said they try to focus on the positive.

Students were asked, "Do you believe that you can successfully read difficult stories or books?" and, "Can you explain why you feel that way?" Eighteen participants replied that they felt capable of reading a difficult book. Participant 4 said the more I practice at home with my parents, the better I get at reading. Participant 20 stated that, "Reading is my favorite subject and I understand it more now." Participant 23 said, "I try to read ahead so that I can better understand what I am reading later."

Interview question 14 asked, "How well do you think you will do in reading and in school this year?" and, "How has tutoring affected your grades at school?" Eighteen participants responded that tutoring has helped their grade, and seven participants

believe they will get either an A or B in reading during this school year. Participants 1 and 14 believed that they will do better than they did before tutoring. Participant 15 said, "I think I'll do terrific, get straight As or either As and Bs." There were no responses that indicated that the students would perform worse in reading than they had prior to their participation in the small group reading intervention.

When asked to describe how they know when they are doing well in school or specifically in reading, seven participants replied that their teacher tells them when they are doing well in school. Participant 3 said that the teacher will tell you when you have done well in school, however, in response to the question about reading the reply was I don't know. Participant 17 said that the teacher always gives us compliments and the reading teacher will give a thumbs-up.

Interview question 16 asked, "What was it like to work with the other students in your tutoring group?" and, "How did it feel to be in the same group as other students?" Seventeen of the students agreed that working in groups was fun or good, and six participants specified that other participants in the group helped them. Participants 1 and 2 both felt like the group was fun, citing that they felt as though all the members of the group were friends. Participant 15 said it was fun. She stated that all the other students in the small group "were my best friends," and they would help.

To get an understanding of the impact of working with a similar group of students, participants were asked to share their perspectives on how the others in the group affected their learning process. Thirteen participants responded that others in the tutoring group helped with answering their questions. Both participants 5 and 6 said of the others in the group, "I think they helped me." Participant 2 said it helped to practice

reading in a group so, "I don't get nervous." Participant 9 said, "I helped them and they helped me."

Interview question 18 asked, "How do you think tutoring would have been if you had worked one-on-one with the tutor instead of being in a small group?" Of the participants, the majority ($N = 16$) preferred to work in a group opposed to one on one with a tutor. Participant 5 said, "I really liked it when we were in groups." Participant 13 preferred working in groups because, "I'm used to hanging around kids, not adults." The themes identified from participant interviews are presented in Table 4-9. Table 4-10 was created to provide the meaning of each meta-theme along with a representative example of a significant statement made by participants in relation to each meta-theme.

Mixed-Methods Analysis: Research Question 4

The purpose of collecting both quantitative and qualitative data was to explore and identify the elements of an after school tutoring program that contributed to students' reading assessment scores, feelings of self-efficacy and self-regulated learning behaviors. This section addresses the final research question of this study.

Research Question 4: How do the students' experiences, together with the reading achievement, self-efficacy and self-regulated learning results, build students' reading skills? The small group after school tutoring intervention resulted in the participants performing significantly higher in reading achievement than the students in the comparison group who did not receive after school tutoring. The intervention, however, did not yield significant growth over comparison students in the areas of academic self-efficacy and self-regulated learning skills according to quantitative measures. Using codes and themes found within the observation data and student

responses to interview questions, several essential elements were identified as contributing factors to these results.

During the mixed methods analysis, data transformation was conducted by quantitizing the qualitative data. Themes generated from the interview questions were quantitized and translated into frequency manifest effect sizes. These frequency manifest effect sizes were calculated as percentages by dividing the number of participants who cited a theme by the total number of participants included in the qualitative data set. The analysis revealed the percentage of students in the treatment group who made at least one statement relating to each theme identified from the interview process. A total of eight meta-themes were identified as being essential elements that contributed to the quantitative results of this investigation. These meta-themes include: (a) confidence building, (b) increased reading ability, (c) reading strategy focus, (d) demonstration of self-regulated learning, (e) tutor feedback, (f) access to help, (g) cooperative environment, and (h) making learning fun. Support for these meta-themes was based on the magnitude of their manifest effect sizes and by evidence of their presence in the observation data. The students' reading achievement scores appear to compliment the students' self-reported perceptions of the tutoring program, showing that the significant improvement over the comparison groups' reading scores ($p = .022$) were influenced by all eight meta-themes. Please reference Table 4-10 for detailed meanings of each meta-theme and examples of significant statements made by participants in relation to each meta-theme. Table 4-11 provides a data display of the quantitized meta-themes with each corresponding frequency manifest effect size.

Unlike the complimentary elements of the qualitative and quantitative data on reading achievement, the self-efficacy and self-regulated learning data collected from the student participants resulted in conflicting results. While the students reported that the tutoring program increased their reading ability (manifest effect size = 90.90%) and that they were more confident in their feelings about their reading abilities due to the tutoring program (manifest effect size = 90.90%), the quantitative self-efficacy data revealed that they did not score significantly higher than comparison students who did not participate in after school tutoring ($p = .056$). Students also expressed that they were more self-regulated learners because of the reading strategy instruction received (manifest effect size = 86.36%) although their responses to the self-regulation questionnaire did not support these claims. Their responses also indicated increased knowledge of or utilization of self-regulated learning behaviors (manifest effect size = 86.36%).

This examination of the quantitative and qualitative results of this study indicate that there is a contradiction between students' self-perceptions about their abilities and the way in which they respond to formal assessments of reading, self-efficacy, and self-regulated learning. Figure 4-1 was designed to illustrate the disconnection found within the relationship between participants' quantitative outcomes in reading, self-efficacy and self-regulated learning and the eight meta-themes that were identified as essential elements of the small group after school reading intervention.

Table 4-1. Independent Sample t-Test of FCAT Developmental Scale Scores (Treatment vs. Control)

Variable	Treatment		Control		T	Df	P	Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD				
FCAT	1114.59	273.98	1048.07	211.91	-0.79	35	.434	0.27
DSS								

Table 4-2. Dependent Sample t-Test on Variable Scores by Time (Pretest vs. Posttest) for Treatment Only

Variable	Pretest		Posttest		T	P	Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			
Achievement Scores	50.36	13.24	52.59	12.22	-0.91	.375	0.18
Self-Efficacy Survey Scores	41.52	7.70	42.48	6.66	-0.45	.658	0.13
Self-Regulation Survey Scores	58.45	11.23	58.30	13.00	0.07	.913	0.00

Table 4-3. Means and Standard Deviations of Posttest Scores by Group (Treatment vs Control)

Variable	Treatment		Control	
	M	SD	M	SD
Reading	52.59	12.22	38.40	15.61
Self-Efficacy	42.48	6.66	37.69	11.18
Self-Regulation	58.40	13.00	50.64	17.74

Table 4-4. ANCOVA on Reading Achievement Posttest Scores by Group (Treatment vs Control), after Controlling for Pretest Scores

Variable	df	SS	MS	F	p	η^2
Covariate	1	2442.55	2442.55	20.24	.000	0.37
Posttest achievement score	1	692.78	692.78	5.74	.022	0.14
Error	34	4102.37	120.66			
Total	36	8341.03				

Table 4-5. ANCOVA on Self-efficacy Survey Posttest Scores by Group (Treatment vs Control), after Controlling for Pretest Scores

Variable	df	SS	MS	F	p	η^2
Covariate	1	205.50	205.50	2.92	.097	0.09
Posttest self-efficacy survey score	1	276.83	276.83	3.94	.056	0.11
Error	31	2180.51	70.34			
Total	34	58744.00				

Table 4-6. ANCOVA on Self-Regulation Survey Posttest Scores by Group (Treatment vs Control), after Controlling for Pretest Scores

Variable	df	SS	MS	F	p	η^2
Covariate	1	1200.50	1200.50	6.51	.016	0.19
Posttest self-regulation survey score	1	382.25	382.25	2.09	.159	0.07
Error	28	5160.25	184.29			
Total	31	102543.00				

Table 4-7. Means and Standard Deviations for Reading Achievement, Self-efficacy, and Self-regulation at Pretest and Posttest for Treatment and Control

Variable	Pretest		Posttest	
	M	SD	M	SD
Reading Achievement				
Treatment	50.36	13.24	52.59	12.22
Control	42.20	14.31	38.40	15.61
Self-efficacy				
Treatment	41.55	7.51	42.48	6.66
Control	45.14	6.16	37.57	10.75
Self-Regulation				
Treatment	58.67	10.99	58.30	13.00
Control	56.49	11.33	50.64	17.74

Table 4-8. Comparisons of Observed Activities Found among Schools One, Two and Three

Theme	School 1	School 2	School 3
Sit in semicircle	Yes	Yes	Yes
Snacks	Yes	Yes	Yes
Review test scores	Yes	Yes	No
Set reading/learning goals	Yes	Yes	No
Tutor uses verbal praise and encouragement	Yes	Yes	Yes
One on one time with tutor	Yes	Yes	No
Students lead lessons	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tutor high fives students	Yes	Yes	Yes
Review previous work	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tutor encourages students to check their work	Yes	Yes	No
Tutor offers constant attention to the students	Yes	Yes	No
Do group work	Yes	Yes	No
Tutor physically engages students	Yes	Yes	No
Reading Strategies/lessons			
Chunking/break it down	Yes	Yes	Yes
Repeatedly discuss reading strategies	Yes	Yes	No
Picture walk	Yes	No	No
Making Predictions	Yes	Yes	Yes
Track with their pencil	Yes	Yes	No
Group work	Yes	Yes	No
Main Idea	Yes	Yes	Yes
Summarizing	Yes	Yes	Yes
Building Fluency	Yes	Yes	No
Work on cause and effect	Yes	Yes	No
Work on fact and opinion	Yes	Yes	No

Table 4-9. Table of Themes found from student interviews

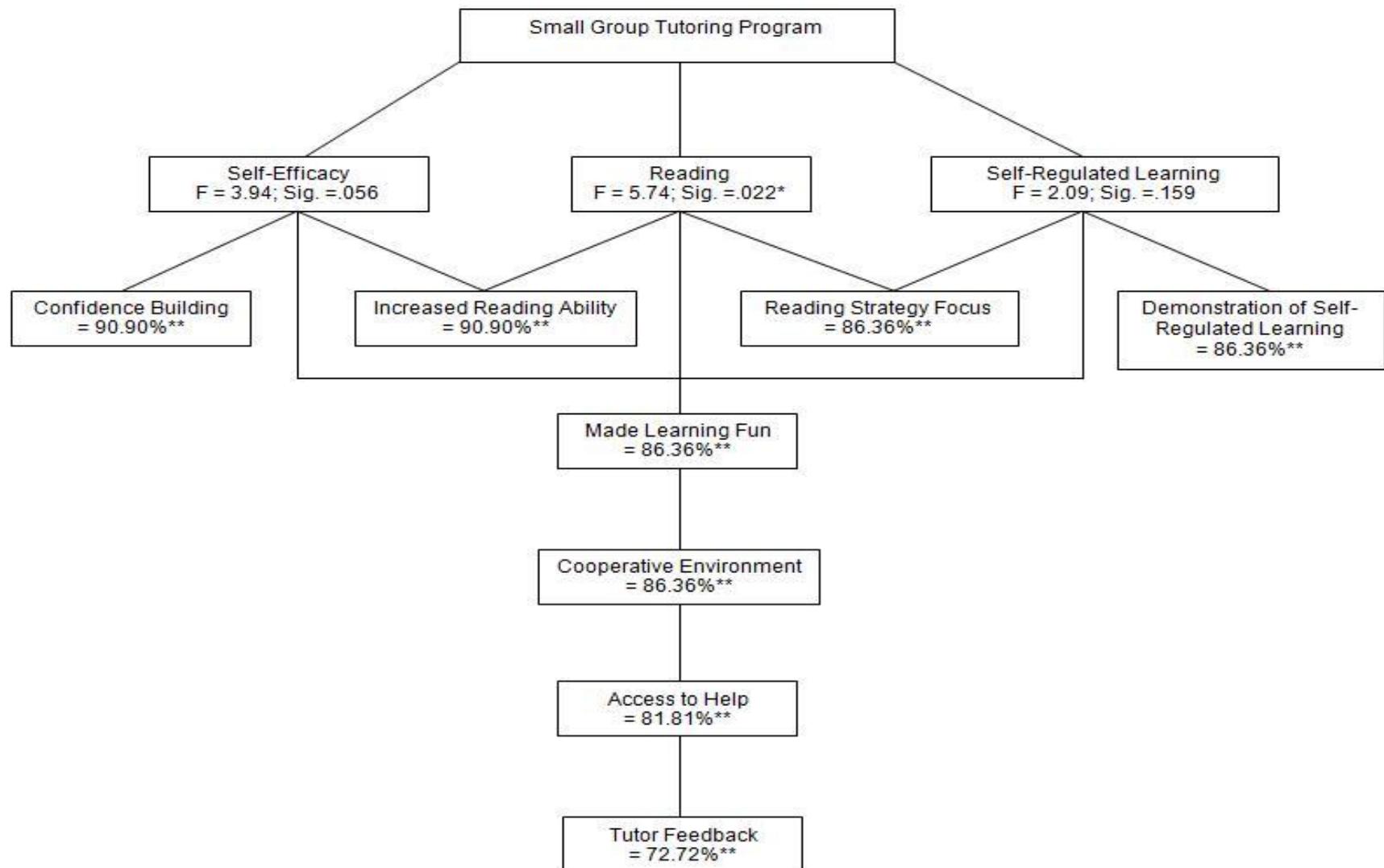
Interview Topic	Theme	Frequency
Overall experiences in the tutoring program	It was fun	8
Feelings about working with your tutor	Helped me learn	7
	Enjoyed working with the tutor	17
Most helpful things about the tutoring program	Help was available	8
	Reading activities	7
Activities that tutor implemented to increase new learning and to clarify understanding	Reread the text	7
	Played games	6
Feelings about personal reading abilities	I am a good reader	22
Feelings about the practice of reading	Happy/good	7
Tutor's contribution to feelings about reading	Tutor helped me feel better about	18
Comparison of previous reading abilities with post-tutoring abilities	I read faster now	6
	I used to stumble over words	6
Strategies implemented when faced with challenging reading tasks	I look up the meaning of the word	6
Strategies implemented to prepare for a test or difficult assignment	I study	12
Feelings about being able to read difficult texts	Yes, I can read a difficult book	18
Effect of tutoring on grades in reading	I will get an A/B in reading	7
	Tutoring helped my grade	18
How progress is reading is judged	My teacher tells me	7
Feelings about working in a collaborative group	Others in the group helped me	6
	Group was fun or good	17
How learning was affected by being in a group	They helped me with my questions	13
Tutoring preference: one-on-one or small-group	I like working in groups	16

Table 4-10. Meta-Themes, Formulated Meanings, and Corresponding Examples of Significant Findings from Students' Perceptions of Essential Elements of Small Group Tutoring

Meta-Theme	Formulated Meaning	Examples of Significant Student Statement
Confidence Building	Tutoring included activities and language from tutor that encouraged them to believe that they have high reading ability	"She used to tell us to stop thinking negative like we can't do it." "She'll tell you...like you can do it and also she's confident in you that you can do it."
Increased Reading Ability	Students perceived themselves to be better at reading based on evidence from grades, teacher feedback, and personal assessments	"I really have learning a lot and I really think that whatever comes my way, I can do it." "I used to read real bad because I used to struggle on words but now I can read faster and still if I mess up on a word I'll still be able to go back and then do it again even better."
Reading Strategy Focus	Instruction focused on specific skills and strategies targeted at reading development	"Sound it out, look at punctuation, um, look at like the quotation marks and look at...and just visualize and focus on the main idea." "We used a book and we had went back and draw underline some key words." "We were doing lessons about reading and how you read better like comprehending bigger words and understanding what passages we had read." "I look in the dictionary and then I try to like get somebody to help me out to um, comprehend the word." "I reread the story before I start and take my test."
Demonstration of Self-Regulated Learning	Students felt equipped with strategies and techniques for independent problem solving	"When I read sometimes I can see it happening in my head so when I go to answer the questions I can be like Oh that's what I visualized." "When I didn't understand something "she'll put it in a different way, she say it in different ways to um, so I can know."
Tutor Feedback	Tutors provided correction in a constructive manner and provided praise for student accomplishments	
Access to Help	Students had a sense of security and an assurance that assistance would be available from the tutor or peers when needed	"If we really needed help all we had to do was ask." "We used to take turns reading like a passage and like if we had messed up on a passage she'll try to help us correct the word and then we'll go back over it and help everybody else doing the same thing."
Cooperative Environment	Students enjoyed and described having a preference for working and learning from and with peers	"They listened a lot so they probably caught on to a lot of things that I didn't catch on or we caught on together. So they were always helping, you know, ... they would just politely tell you, 'Oh can we go back and look at it again'." "They actually, um, made me feel good because I felt that I wasn't the best reader in there, and obviously I probably wasn't. But I believed in myself, and they actually helped me get to where I am now."
Making Learning Fun	Tutoring made students feel that receiving instruction and learning about reading can be an enjoyable experience	"Well it was fun. I really enjoyed doing it because I learned more."

Table 4-11. Frequency Manifest Effect Sizes of Student-Generated Essential Elements of Small Group Tutoring

Meta-Themes	Frequency Manifest Effect Sizes
Confidence Building	90.90%
Increased Reading Ability	90.90%
Reading Strategy Focus	86.36%
Demonstration of Self-Regulated Learning	86.36%
Making Learning Fun	86.36%
Cooperative Environment	86.36%
Access to Help	81.81%
Tutor Feedback	72.72%



*Denotes significant at $p \leq .05$

**Denotes Frequency Manifest Effect Size

Figure 4-1. Tested Quantitative Measures for Treatment and Control Groups and Related Qualitative Meta-themes Based on Treatment Group Perceptions

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate the application of Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory to African American students in a small group tutoring intervention. The research was concerned with testing the impact of facilitating social cognitive development instruction in a small group tutoring intervention that was designed to improve reading achievement and academic self-perceptions among at-risk African American students. The purpose of this chapter is to summarize these findings, describe the implications of the study, and provide suggestions for further research.

Summary of Findings

Research Question 1(a)

What is the relationship between a small-group tutoring intervention and reading achievement in at-risk African American elementary students? The reading achievement results of this study demonstrated that low performing African American students who participated in a small group reading intervention outperformed comparable students. The students who did not participate actually suffered a significant decrease in reading achievement between pretest and posttest. The results imply that at-risk African American students do indeed benefit from the extra help outside of the regular school day. Students who receive additional instruction in an after school, small-group environment have an increased chance of improving their performance in reading over those students who do not take advantage of or have access to such opportunities.

Research Question 1(b)

What is the relationship between a small-group tutoring intervention and self-efficacy in at-risk African American elementary students? The self-efficacy questionnaire results did not indicate that the small-group reading intervention caused a significant change in students' feelings about their academic capabilities. The students in the treatment group reported feelings of high self-efficacy even prior to the small group reading intervention. The lack of a significant change in their self-efficacy may be due to the fact that their pretest scores were relatively high to begin with. There appeared to be a ceiling effect that may have impacted the students' self-efficacy post test results. It is not enough for students to simply feel good about or have confidence in their abilities. Self-efficacy must be coupled with the active implementation of self-regulated learning skills in order to truly impact academic performance (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2007). These data support the need for both. Students not only need to have positive thoughts about their ability to learn, they must also have the necessary skills to problem solve and overcome academic challenges.

Another point to draw attention to is that there was slight improvement in the participating students' self-efficacy in comparison to students who did not receive tutoring. The results also reveal that the students who did not receive any after school tutoring actually decreased in their self-efficacy regarding their academic abilities from pretest to posttest. On the basis of these findings, it can be suggested that participating in small-group tutoring may help to both maintain and prevent a loss of a student's positive outlook regarding reading abilities in low performing African American upper-elementary school students.

Research Question 1(c)

What is the relationship between a small-group tutoring intervention and self-regulated learning in at-risk African American elementary students? The quantitative portion of the study indicates that the small-group reading intervention did not have an impact on African American students' self-regulated learning. As suggested by Winne & Perry (2006), there can be great difficulty in accurately measuring the self-regulated learning behaviors of young children. Some students did not respond to each survey item, which could signify that the students may not have completely understood the self-regulated learning portion of the questionnaire. Although the survey was modified specifically for this age group and had been previously implemented on a younger age group, a survey that asks children to decide whether or not a statement describes them may cause some confusion because young children may not be able to differentiate whether a characteristic describes them in one particular instance or overall. (Winne, Jamieson-Noel, & Muis, 2002).

Research Question 2:

What are the observed instructional experiences of at-risk elementary-aged African American students in the learning environment of a small-group tutoring intervention? The observations conducted on three out of the five tutoring groups revealed that the tutoring program contained several elements of instruction including goal setting, focusing on specific reading strategies, and opportunities to teach and learn from peers. Observations that took place throughout the tutoring intervention verify that the participants received explicit instruction in several areas of literacy including vocabulary, fluency and reading comprehension. All three observed tutors consistently offered students verbal praise and encouragements throughout the lessons. Two out of

the three tutors also provided constant attention and frequent one-on-one time with each student in the group. The tutoring elements observed in this study are consistent with several studies utilizing research based instructional strategies which resulted in gains in academic achievement (Osborn, et al., 2007; Van Keer, 2004; Vaughn et al., 2003).

The observations also show that there were some inconsistencies with how the tutoring program was implemented. One tutor in particular chose to focus heavily on independent practice rather than facilitating cooperative work, unlike the other observed tutors. The students in this group had lower post test scores in reading achievement than the other groups of students. This difference in implementation may have had a negative impact on this group's post intervention results.

Research Question 3:

How do students perceive the small-group tutoring intervention regarding its impact on: (a) reading achievement, (b) self-efficacy, and (c) self-regulated learning strategy development? The students' perceptions of the small-group reading intervention revealed that it was a very positive experience for them. They repeatedly acknowledged how their tutor and their peers in the group made working on their reading skills an enjoyable experience. Tutors were described as being good at teaching reading strategies that made them read better and offering help in a way that was understandable whenever they needed it. Students expressed a clear preference for working in a group with peers rather simply working one-on-one with the tutor. Access to help from their peers and the opportunity to sometimes teach their peers were among the common themes that contributed to their belief that tutoring helped them become better readers.

The participants expressed with definitive confidence that they were good at reading and that their reading skills had improved as a result of the tutoring program. Several students described the reading strategies they learned that will help with reading challenging texts and decoding difficult vocabulary words. Students expressed statements that exhibit an improved ability to regulate their own learning processes in order to solve problems that may come up. Student gave numerous examples of how they have learned to either change their thought process or alter their actions in order to decode long words, read challenging texts or prepare for an upcoming test.

Based on this data it is evident that the students belief that the tutoring intervention, the tutor as an individual, and the peers within the group all had a positive impact on their reading ability, self-efficacious feelings about reading, and their ability to be more self-regulated in their learning.

Research Question 4:

How do the students' experiences, together with the reading achievement, self-efficacy and self-regulated learning results, build students' reading skills?

There was minimal agreement between the students test scores on reading achievement, self-efficacy, and self-regulated learning and their self-described and observed experiences during the small-group reading intervention.

Reading Achievement

Participants in the small group tutoring intervention showed significant gains in reading achievement in comparison to similar students who did not receive after school tutoring. Observation and interview data indicate several themes that made an impact on the students' improved reading outcomes. These themes include learning reading strategies and skills, tutor feedback, access to help from the tutor and peers, the

opportunity to work cooperatively in a group, being in a setting where learning is fun and developing a sense of increased reading ability.

The cooperative working environment of the small group appeared a key factor in improving the students' reading achievement. Several students stated that they believe they learned more and have become a better reader from having the opportunity to work with their peers during tutoring.

During the post-intervention interviews, participants expressed that the tutoring program made them more equipped to be better readers and earn better grades in reading. When asked to compare their current reading ability with how they read prior to completing the tutoring program, students stated that they have less difficulty with challenging words. Students also claimed that tutoring helped them to become more fluent and expressive with their reading. Observation data corroborate these statements, showing that the tutors providing instruction which implemented several reading strategies, such as chunking to decode large words making predictions to mentally prepare for reading a new text, and repeated readings to build fluency were frequently being reinforced during tutoring sessions. These results indicate that tutoring can be an effective intervention tool when seeking to increase reading performance for low performing, low income African American fourth and fifth graders.

Self-Efficacy

There was a disconnection between the self-efficacy questionnaire data and the students' oral descriptions of how tutoring impacted their academic self-perceptions. Although the numerical data indicate a slight, but not significant, change in students' self-efficacious feelings, the majority of the students describe feelings of high confidence in their reading abilities. Furthermore, the students' reports of high self-

efficacy did not yield higher scores in reading achievement upon completion of the tutoring program. Although the students who were tutored performed significantly better in reading in comparison to students who were not tutored, individually they did not have a dramatic increase in reading achievement.

The African American students in this study may have judged their academic performance using their own standards and may view grades or test scores as a less meaningful indicator of success as their own attitudes or feelings. Another possibility is that the students felt so good about their reading abilities that they did not put the necessary effort into achieving a good score on the test (Pershey 2010). Students with high academic self-perceptions and self-efficacy typically outperform students with low self-efficacy. However, having overly high confidence in oneself may lead to an unfortunate contradiction between feelings and actual performance (Long, et al., 2007).

Self-Regulated Learning

The area of self-regulated learning resulted in another incongruity between students' test scores and their self-reported feedback at the conclusion of the small-group reading intervention. Students' questionnaire results did not indicate significant improvement in self-regulation behaviors although the students reported that their use of self-regulated learning behaviors had improved. More noteworthy is the fact that students' reports of increased self-regulated learning behaviors did not equate to improved reading ability upon completion of the tutoring program. Although the students who were tutored performed significantly better in reading as compared to students who were not tutored, they did not individually have a dramatic increase in reading achievement, which was the goal of the tutoring program.

Limitations

Results from this evaluation must be interpreted with caution due to several limitations. Although comparison students were matched with participating students and were found to be on a similar reading level using FCAT scores, neither random nor systematic assignment was not utilized. Participation in an after school tutoring program requires that the students be present. Therefore some students were placed in the treatment group because they had no transportation to get home afterwards or their parents did not send them to school regularly. Thus, the sample size of the treatment group had to be reduced because some children moved out of the area and could not be located for post testing.

Secondly, sample size affects the generalizability of the research findings. Small sample size, which is apparent in the current study, is a limitation of this research. This study's design, due to its mixed methods nature, must be subjected to the scrutiny of both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. For instance, the data from the questionnaire revealed that there was a slight increase that was approaching significance in self-efficacy for those students who received tutoring. The increase may have been significant if the sample size were larger. Another potential limitation relating to the questionnaire was the wording of some of the questions. On the self-regulatory competence portion of the questionnaire, two items were required to be reversed scored. It is possible that the wording of a statement such as those made in items 9 and 16 may have been misunderstood by the student participants.

Furthermore, due to the time and effort required to interview each student who participated in the intervention and to conduct numerous observations on multiple small groups of students, a large sample size was not realistic for this mixed methods

research. The results are only generalizable within the context of remediation for low income, low performing African American elementary students.

Implications

The current research has theoretical and practical implications that contribute to the literature regarding reading achievement, self-efficacy and self-regulated learning in under-achieving African American elementary students from low income homes. This finding revealed that small-group tutoring in an after school setting is an appropriate means of increasing reading achievement with this population of struggling students.

This study is consistent with Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory. This theory posits that academic self-efficacy and self-regulated learning are critical to students' academic success and that instruction can be facilitated to increase these areas among students. The students' reading scores and perceptions of their reading abilities and self-regulation habits emphasize that these feelings and behaviors can be taught through small-group tutoring. Typically, high academic self-perceptions are correlated with higher academic performance (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2007). The study at hand cannot statistically support this proposition.

African American children participate in after school programs that are federally funded, school-based, or operated by private organizations more than children of any other ethnicity (Carver, & Iruka, 2005; US Department of Education, 2007). Although the federal government has allowed states to be waived from Supplemental Educational Services (SES), the mandatory tutoring requirement of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), some states, including those granted a waiver, may still offer after school tutoring using Title I funds. The waiver from the U.S. Department of Education specifies that states and districts strive to implement systems that could close the achievement gap, improve

equity, and facilitate capacity-building efforts involving interventions that focus on the lowest performing schools (US Department of Education, 2012). Findings from the present study support the need for SES and other forms of after school tutoring to continue to be available to this population of students. The data indicates that the reading achievement of low-income, at-risk African American students attending low-performing schools can improve from receiving small group tutoring in an after school environment. According to the African American students in this study, this format of tutoring caused them to acquire reading strategies, feel capable of overcoming reading difficulties, and have access to much needed help. They reported that being in a small tutoring group with their peers contributed to their success in reading, which was evident in the fact that students who did not experience small group tutoring performed significantly lower in reading.

Recommendations for Future Research

Research shows that students with high academic self-efficacy tend to perform better on academic tasks, like tests and school grades, than students with low academic self-efficacy. Further research needs to be done to investigate why African American students may have high academic self-efficacy but their test scores do not reflect high ability. It is essential that educators learn how these students truly feel about standardized tests in order to have an increased chance of closing the achievement gap.

Mixed methods analysis of students' attitudes and perceptions of standardized reading assessments along with their relationship to how students perceive their own reading abilities is an area lacking in research. In American society, it is common practice to conduct annual standardized tests and dissect the data according to how

students from various racial groups and income levels out rank each other (Snyder, Dillow, & Hoffman, 2007). The same effort should be put into large scale interviews and other qualitative measures that could shed light on why the academic self-perceptions of some African American children do not match their academic performance.

Furthermore, there needs to be more research regarding methodological practices for evaluating self-regulation in elementary aged students. We know that self-regulated learners are typically able to attain higher academically. However, in order to know whether or not our instructional practices are effective, we need to be sure that we are accurately evaluating students' use of self-regulation behaviors.

Conclusion

Three major conclusions emerged from this exploratory analysis of the observations, student interviews, reading achievement pre- and post test scores, and self-efficacy and self-regulated learning questionnaire in relation to the after school tutoring intervention for low performing 4th and 5th grade African American students from low income homes. 1. Participating in small group tutoring where specific reading strategy instruction is implemented results in significantly improved reading achievement. 2. Based on students' self-reported descriptions of self-efficacy and self-regulated learning development, tutor interactions that involve explicit praise, encouragement, and constructive feedback lead to improved reading achievement. 3. Peer support and interaction in the small group tutoring environment has a positive impact on students' perceived and actual ability in reading, use of cognitive reading strategies, and overall enjoyment of reading.

Table 5-1. Summary of Tested Measures Showing Areas of Significant Change in Student Performance After Completing the Reading Intervention

Variable	Within or Between Group	Significant Change	P value
(a) Reading	Within	No	.375
(b) Self-Efficacy	Within	No	.658
(c) Self-Regulation	Within	No	.913
(d) Reading	Between	Yes	.022*
(e) Self-Efficacy	Between	No	.056
(f) Self-Regulation	Between	No	.159

APPENDIX A STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Part A.

Verbal Instructions: I'd like to read some statements to you about how you think you are doing in reading. I'll read each statement and I want you circle the number that best describes how you feel. The bigger the number, the more the statement describes you. The smaller the number, the less it describes you. There are no right or wrong answers, so just answer as best as you can.

1. I believe I will receive an excellent grade in my reading class.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Doesn't describe me at all	Kind of doesn't describe me		Kind of describes me		Describes me very well	

2. I am sure I can understand the hardest things that I will have to read in my reading class.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Doesn't describe me at all	Kind of doesn't describe me		Kind of describes me		Describes me very well	

3. I am very sure that I can understand the information taught in my reading class.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Doesn't describe me at all	Kind of doesn't describe me		Kind of describes me		Describes me very well	

4. I am very sure that I can understand the most challenging material my teacher gives me to do in my reading class.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Doesn't describe me at all	Kind of doesn't describe me		Kind of describes me		Describes me very well	

5. I am very sure that I can do an excellent job on the assignments and tests in my reading class.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Doesn't describe me at all	Kind of doesn't describe me		Kind of describes me		Describes me very well	

6. I believe that I will do well in my reading class.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Doesn't describe me at all	Kind of doesn't describe me		Kind of describes me		Describes me very well	

7. I am sure I can learn the skills that are taught in my reading class.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Doesn't describe me at all	Kind of doesn't describe me		Kind of describes me		Describes me very well	

8. Thinking about how difficult my reading class may be, thinking about my teacher, and thinking about my own reading skills, I think I will do well in my reading class.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Doesn't describe me at all	Kind of doesn't describe me		Kind of describes me		Describes me very well	

Part B.

Verbal Instructions: Now I'd like to read some statements to you about the learning strategies and study skills you use in school. I'll read each statement and I want you to circle the number that best describes how you feel. The bigger the number, the more the statement describes you. The smaller the number, the less it describes you. There are no right or wrong answers, so just answer as best as you can.

9. During my reading class, I often miss important points because I'm thinking of other things.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Doesn't describe me at all		Kind of doesn't describe me		Kind of describes me		Describes me very well

10. When reading for school, I make up my own questions to help me focus when I'm reading.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Doesn't describe me at all		Kind of doesn't describe me		Kind of describes me		Describes me very well

11. When I get confused about something I'm reading for school, I go back and try to figure it out.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Doesn't describe me at all		Kind of doesn't describe me		Kind of describes me		Describes me very well

12. If my reading assignments are hard to understand, I change the way I am reading.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Doesn't describe me at all		Kind of doesn't describe me		Kind of describes me		Describes me very well

13. Before I study something new for school, I often skim it to see how it is organized.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Doesn't describe me at all	Kind of doesn't describe me	Kind of describes me		Describes me very well		

14. I ask questions to make sure I understand the reading assignments for school.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Doesn't describe me at all	Kind of doesn't describe me	Kind of describes me		Describes me very well		

15. I try to change the way I study in order to match my class and the way my teacher teaches.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Doesn't describe me at all	Kind of doesn't describe me	Kind of describes me		Describes me very well		

16. There are many times when I have read something for school but I don't know what the story was all about.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Doesn't describe me at all	Kind of doesn't describe me	Kind of describes me		Describes me very well		

17. I try to think about what I am reading and figure out what I am supposed to learn from it instead of just reading it over again.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Doesn't describe me at all	Kind of doesn't describe me	Kind of describes me		Describes me very well		

18. When I study something for school, I try to figure out what I don't understand.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Doesn't describe me at all	Kind of doesn't describe me	Kind of describes me		Describes me very well		

19. When I study something for school, I set goals for myself so that I know what I should be doing every time I study.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Doesn't describe me at all	Kind of doesn't describe me	Kind of describes me		Describes me very well		

20. If I get confused about something in my reading class, I make sure I figure it out later.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Doesn't describe me at all	Kind of doesn't describe me	Kind of describes me		Describes me very well		

APPENDIX B STUDENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The interview questions will be asked orally and student answers will be audio taped. Confidentiality will be protected and consent will be obtained prior to the interview.

Verbal Instructions: Today I am going to ask you some questions about reading, school and the tutoring program that you recently finished. This is not a test. I just want to know what your thoughts are.

- 1) Can you tell about me your experiences in the tutoring program?
- 2) How did you feel about working with your tutor?
- 3) Do you think tutoring has helped you to think or learn in different ways?
 1. Can you describe those ways that tutoring has helped you think or learn?
- 4) Can you describe the types of activities that your tutor did to help you learn new things?
 1. What kinds of things did your tutor do when you did not understand something?
- 5) How do you feel about how well you can read?
 1. a. Do you think you are a good reader?
 2. b. What makes you say that?
- 6) How do you feel inside when you read?
 1. a. Did you feel any other ways when you read when you were in tutoring?
- 7) Did your tutor help you to feel better about how well you can read?
 1. a. What kinds of things did she do to help you?
- 8) How would you compare the way you used to read with how you read now that you have finished tutoring?
- 9) What kinds of things do you do when you are confused by a word or a story that is difficult to understand?

1. What kinds of things do good readers do when they are faced with a word or a story that is difficult to understand?
- 10) What kinds of things do you do to prepare for a test or difficult assignment?
- 11) Do you believe that you can successfully read difficult stories or books?
 1. Can you explain why you feel that way?
- 12) How well do you think you will do in reading and in school this year?
 1. How has tutoring affected your grades at school?
- 13) How do you know when you are doing well in school?
 1. How do you know when you are doing well in reading?
- 14) What was it like to work with the other students in your tutoring group?
 1. a. How did it feel to be in the same group as other students?
- 15) How did the others in your tutoring group affect your learning?
- 16) How do you think tutoring would have been if you had worked one-on-one with the tutor instead of being in a small group?
- 17) What were the most helpful things about the tutoring program?
- 18) What were the least helpful things about the tutoring program?

APPENDIX C UF IRB APPROVAL



PO Box 112250
Gainesville, FL 32611-2250
352-392-0433 (Phone)
352-392-9234 (Fax)
irb2@ufl.edu

DATE: May 15, 2008

TO: Grace R. Huxtable-Mount

Jacksonville, FL

FROM: Ira S. Fischler, PhD; Chair
University of Florida
Institutional Review Board

SUBJECT: Approval of Protocol #2008-U-0499

TITLE: African American Students' Self-Efficacy, Self-Regulatory Competence, and Academic Achievement in a Small-Group Tutoring Program: A Mixed Methods Study

SPONSOR: None

I am pleased to advise you that the University of Florida Institutional Review Board has recommended approval of this protocol. Based on its review, the UFIRB determined that this research presents no more than minimal risk to participants. Given your protocol, it is essential that you obtain signed documentation of informed consent from the parent or legal guardian of each participant. When it is feasible, you should obtain signatures from both parents. Enclosed is the dated, IRB-approved informed consent to be used when recruiting participants for the research.

It is essential that the parents/guardians of your minor participants sign a copy of your approved informed consent that bears the IRB approval stamp and expiration date.

If you wish to make any changes to this protocol, ***including the need to increase the number of participants authorized***, you must disclose your plans before you implement them so that the Board can assess their impact on your protocol. In addition, you must report to the Board any unexpected complications that affect your participants.

If you have not completed this protocol by **May 14, 2009**, please telephone our office (392-0433), and we will discuss the renewal process with you. It is important that you keep your Department Chair informed about the status of this research protocol.

ISF:dl

APPENDIX D
DUVAL COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS RESEARCH APPROVAL



1701 Prudential Drive
Jacksonville, FL 32207
www.dreamsbeginhere.org
904 390 2000

August 4, 2008

Ms. Grace Huxtable-Mount
Huxtable Education Group
[REDACTED]

Jacksonville, Florida [REDACTED]

Dear Ms. Huxtable-Mount:

Your request to conduct research in Duval County Schools has been approved. This approval applies to your project in the form and content as supplied to this office for review. Any variations or modifications to the approved protocol must be cleared with this office prior to implementing such changes.

Participation in studies of this nature is voluntary on the part of principals, teachers, staff, and students. Our approval does not obligate any principal, teacher, staff member, or student to participate in your study. A signed copy of this letter must accompany any initial contact with principals, teachers, parents, and students.

Our approvals for research run through June 30th of each school year. If your research will extend beyond that date, you will have to submit an application again at the appropriate time. You will be required to supply copies of signed consent and assent forms at that time. If there have been no changes to the approved protocol you may refer to the previously submitted paperwork.

Upon completion of the study, it is customary to forward a copy of the finished report to the Office of Instructional Research and Accountability, 1701 Prudential Dr., rm. 322, Jacksonville, Florida 32207. This office also shall be notified, in advance, of the publication of any reports/articles in which Duval County is mentioned by name.

If you have questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to call me or Jeff Dryden at 858-1460.

Sincerely,

Timothy Ballentine
Executive Director
Instructional Research and Accountability

APPENDIX E PARENTAL CONSENT FORM

Parental Consent Form

Dear Parent/Guardian(s),

I am a graduate student in the Department of Educational Administration and Policy at the University of Florida, conducting research on the effectiveness of an after-school tutoring program under the supervision of Dr. Linda Behar-Horenstein. The purpose of this study is to identify how students' reading achievement, feelings about their reading abilities and their learning behaviors are affected by being in a small-group tutoring intervention. The results of the study may help teachers and tutoring companies better understand students' needs and allow them to design better practices for reading instruction. These results may not directly help your child today, but may benefit future students. With your permission, I would like to ask your child to volunteer for this research.

Students who participate in a Supplemental Educational Services tutoring program will be compared with similar students who do not participate in the Supplemental Educational Services program. Before tutoring begins, students will be asked to complete a reading test and answer 20 questions about their feelings about how well they read and the learning strategies that they use. They will not have to answer any question they do not wish to answer. Either a tutor or I will administer the reading test and questionnaire to your child.

Students who participate in the tutoring program will receive about 24 hours of tutoring in reading between October of 2008 and January of 2009. Students will be placed in small-groups, and will be tutored twice per week for 90 minutes each day. Tutoring will take place after-school, at your child's school with a certified teacher.

Tutors will teach students vocabulary and comprehension strategies that are designed to help students read better and make them feel more confident about reading. During the tutoring program, I will observe some of the students and take notes about what is happening in the tutoring sessions. At the end of the tutoring program, all students will complete the reading test and questionnaire again.

I will also interview each child who completed the tutoring program to learn more about their thoughts about tutoring. With your permission, your child will be audio taped during the interview. Only the researcher will have access to the tape to help verify information. At the end of the study, the tape will be erased.

Although the children will be asked to write their names on the tests for matching purposes, their identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. I will replace their names with code numbers. Results will only be reported in the form of group data.

Approved by
University of Florida
Institutional Review Board 02
Protocol # 2008-U-0499
For Use Through 05/14/2009

Participation or non-participation in this study will not affect the children's grades or placement in any programs. You and your child have the right to withdraw consent for your child's participation at any time without consequence. There are no known risks or immediate benefits to the participants. As compensation for participation, your child will be offered a small snack, such as crackers, cookies or fruit snacks, every testing or tutoring session that your child participates in.

Group results of this study will be available in June of 2009 upon request. If you have any questions about this research protocol, please contact me at [REDACTED] or my faculty supervisor, Dr. Behar-Horenstein, at [REDACTED]. Questions or concerns about your child's rights as a research participant may be directed to the IRB02 office, University of Florida, Box 112250, Gainesville, FL 32611, (352) 392-0433.

Sincerely,

Grace R. Huxtable-Mount

I have read the procedure described above. I voluntarily give my consent for my child, _____, to participate in Grace Huxtable-Mount's study of the effectiveness of an after-school tutoring program. I have received a copy of this description.

Parent / Guardian Date _____

2nd Parent / Witness Date _____

Approved by
University of Florida
Institutional Review Board 02
Protocol # 2008-U-0499
For Use Through 05/14/2009

APPENDIX F STUDENT ASSENT SCRIPT

Student Assent Script

Hi. My name is Grace and I am a student at the University of Florida. I am trying to learn about students' thoughts and feelings about reading and tutoring. If you decide to be in my study, you will be asked to do a series of activities, including some reading activities and answering some questions about your feelings about learning, tutoring and the learning strategies you use. There are no known risks to participation. You do not have to be in this study if you don't want to, and you can quit the study at any time. If you don't like a question, you don't have to answer it. Other than me, no one will know your answers, including your teachers or your classmates. Also, this will not affect your grades in school. Your [parent / guardian] said it would be OK for you to participate. Would you be willing to be a part of this study?

Approved by
University of Florida
Institutional Review Board 02
Protocol # 2008-U-0499
For Use Through 05/14/2009

APPENDIX G TUTOR TRAINING HANDOUTS

Selected Learning Strategies for Reading

1. Clarifying difficulties encountered. Slowing down to read more carefully, checking back and rereading when text meaning is unclear.
2. Self-questioning. Questions that students can ask themselves to understand the material at a deeper level, such as “Why is that true?”
3. Predicting what will come next. Stopping to anticipate what the author will say or conclude next before reading a text passage.
4. Summarization. Paring down passages to their core meaning by eliminating trivial or redundant information and inventing a topic sentence.
5. Relating text to prior knowledge. Relating ideas in text to previously stored information, often in the form of analogies, examples, extensions and comparisons.
6. Muscle-Reading provides students with a technique for extracting information from extended passages and textbooks before, during and after reading.
7. Self-Instructed Reading
8. Stop and Think
9. Requesting Help
10. Accepting Feedback

Teacher (Student) Feedback Prompts to Promote Self-Efficacy

<u>Category</u>	<u>Examples</u>
Enactive Mastery (accomplishment)	"You were able to..." "You got..." "You now understand..." "Now you have the knack of..." "You have the skill to..."
Vicarious Experience (modeling)	"Watch me (Oscar) as I (he)...You can also do this, just as I (Oscar) did." "Did you see what I (Oscar) did? You can do the same thing, just as I (Oscar) did." "Notice how I (Oscar)...You have the ability to do this, just as I (Oscar) did." "Listen while I (Oscar)...You can also do this, just as I (Oscar) did." "Try to remember what I am (Oscar is) about to do. You will be able to do the same thing."
Verbal Persuasion (attribution)	"Because you...you were able to..." "And that helped you..." "As a result of...you were able to..." "Remembering helped you..."
Physiological/Affective State (feeling)	"You must feel great..." "Did you realize you smiled to yourself?" "Do you know you did not fidget?" "How did you feel when...?" "You must feel proud."

From McCabe (2006). Convincing students they can learn to read:Crafting self-efficacy prompts

Prompts for Reflection

It was more difficult than I thought it would be to...

After I set my goals, it was hard for me to...

My goal for next week is...

The most encouraging thing for me was...

I discovered the reason why I was making certain grades is...

This week was special for me because I am getting better at...

I was surprised to learn that... helped me to...

It was hard for me to...

Prompts for Helping Students Explain Their Strategy Use

Three strategies that I used today are...

I learned that I need a better strategy for...

Here are two strategies that worked and this is how I used them...

Monitoring Checklist

Name _____

Date _____

	Yes	Sometimes	No
As I read, I checked my understanding by			
relating what I was reading to what I already know			
picturing the story in my mind			
making predictions			
summarizing what I understood			
asking myself questions			
stopping and clarifying what I read before reading on			
other strategy:			

Summary of my strategy use: _____

APPENDIX H

RESEARCH ASSISTANTS' MONITORING CHECKLIST

Observation Checklist

School _____ **Date** _____

Tutor Name _____

Name of Curriculum _____ **Level** _____

Observation Key: 1 = Evident 2 = Not Evident 3 = Not observed on this visit

Planning & Preparation	#	Instruction & Environment	#
Are instructor and students signing in on attendance sheet?		Is instructor delivering differentiated, explicit instruction?	
Is there evidence that pacing guide is being followed?		Is instructor displaying positive attitude?	
Is instructor using any materials other than those for SGRI?		Are students on task?	
Is there evidence of self-efficacy building conversation taking place?		Is tutor providing opportunities for students to demonstrate SRL?	
Are all students present in Active / Approved status?		Is the setting appropriate for learning?	
Does Instructor have all materials?: <input type="checkbox"/> SLP Copies <input type="checkbox"/> Diagnostic Report Copies <input type="checkbox"/> Progress Monitoring Records <input type="checkbox"/> Completed Progress Reports <input type="checkbox"/> Texts for each student <input type="checkbox"/> All Instructor Texts		Does the tutor use tutoring time efficiently and keep students focused?	

General Comments:

Keys to Effective Tutoring

- Close coordination with Classroom Teacher leads to greatest gains in student achievement
- Teach at student's instructional level
- Constantly evaluate student progress and provide meaningful feedback
- Keep students engaged and motive
- Tutors should ask more questions and allow students to do most of the talking
- SCAFFOLDING!!!

Expert Tutor Behaviors	Novice/Ineffective Tutor Behaviors
• Provide specific procedures, concepts, strategies & facts	• Provide long explanations
• Ask open-ended questions & allow more opportunities for student talk	• Talk more, and students talk less
• Use scaffolding to vary the level of assistance given	• Tend to quickly tell the answer when students don't know
• Provide immediate and relevant feedback	• Provide inappropriate or vague feedback

Expert Tutors...

- Access prior knowledge
- Prepare students for difficult vocabulary
- Make connections between text and the world
- Provide numerous opportunities for practice
- Prompt students to explain their thinking
- Clarify progress for students
- Summarize at the end of tutoring sessions

Tutor Motto: Ask More, Tell Less

LIST OF REFERENCES

- Al Otaiba, S., Schatschneider, C., & Silverman, E. (2005). Tutor-assisted intensive learning strategies in kindergarten: How much is enough? *Exceptionality*, 13(4), 195-208.
- Babbit, S., & Byrne, M. (2000). Finding the keys to educational progress in urban youth: Three case studies. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 43(4), 368-378.
- Baker, J. A. (1998). The social context of school satisfaction among urban, low-income, African-American students. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 13(1), 25-44.
- Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York: W. H. Freeman and Company.
- Bandura, A. (2001). Social cognitive theory: An agentic perspective. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52, 1-26.
- Bandura, A., Barbaranelli, C., Caprara, G.V., & Pastorelli, C. (1996). Multifaceted impact of self-efficacy beliefs on academic functioning. *Child Development*, 67, 1206-1222.
- Berger, P., & Luckmann, T. (1967). *The Social Construction of Reality*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Blanchett, W. J., Mumford, V., & Beachum, F. (2005). Urban school failure and disproportionality in a post-Brown era: Benign neglect of the Constitutional rights of students of color. *Remedial and Special Education*, 26(2), 70-81.
- Boykin, A. W., Albury, A., Tyler, K. M., Hurley, E. A., Bailey, C. T., & Miller, O. A. (2005). Culture-based perceptions of academic achievement among low-income elementary students. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 11(4), 339-350.
- Carver, P.R., & Iruka, I.U. (2006). *After-School Programs and Activities: 2005* (NCES 2006-076). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.
- Chapman, C., Laird, J., Ifill, N., & Kewalramani, A. (2011). *Trends in high school dropout and completion rates in the United States: 1972-2009*. (NCES 2012-006). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2012/2012006.pdf>

- Chapman, J. W., & Tunmer, W. E. (2003). Reading difficulties, reading-related self-perceptions, and strategies for overcoming negative self-beliefs. *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, 19, 5-24.
- Cleary, T. J., Platten, P., & Nelson, A. (2008). Effectiveness of the self-regulation empowerment program with urban high school students. *Journal of Advanced Academics*, 20(1), 70-107.
- Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences* (2nd ed.). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Creswell, J. W. (2008). *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Creswell, J. W., Plano Clark, V. L. (2007). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Davison, M.L., Seo, Y.S., Davenport, Jr., E.C., Butterbaugh, D, & Davison, L.J. (2004). When do children fall behind? What can be done? *Phi Delta Kappan*, 752-761.
- Dooley, D. (2001). *Social Research Methods* (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Duncan, T. G., & McKeachie, W. J. (2005). The making of the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire, *Educational Psychologist*, 40(2), 117-128.
- Eisenberger, J., Conti-D'Antonio, M., & Bertrando, R. (2005). *Self-Efficacy: Raising the bar for all students* (2nd ed.). Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education, Inc.
- Elbaum, B., Vaughn, S., Hughes, M.T., & Moody, S.W. (1999). Grouping practices and reading outcomes for students with disabilities. *Exceptional Children*, 65(3), 399-415.
- Elbaum, B., Vaughn, S., Hughes, M.T., & Moody, S.W. (2000). How effective are one-to-one tutoring programs in reading for elementary students at risk for reading failure? A meta-analysis of the intervention research. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 92(4), 605-619.
- Ellison, C. M., Boykin, A. W., Tyler, K. M., & Dillihunt, M. L. (2005). Examining classroom learning preferences among elementary school students. *Social Behavior and Personality*, 33(7), 699-708.

- Foorman, B. R., & Torgesen, J. (2001). Critical elements of classroom and small-group instruction promote reading success in all children. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice*, 16(4), 203-212.
- Fram, M. S., Miller-Cribbs, J. E., & Van Horn, L. (2007). Poverty, race, and the contexts of achievement: Examining educational experiences of children in the U.S. south. *Social Work*, 52(4), 309-319.
- Gardner, R., & Miranda, A. H. (2002). Improving outcomes for urban African American students. *Journal of Negro Education*, 70(4), 255-263.
- Glesne, C. (2006). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction* (3rd ed.). Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Griffith, C. A., Lloyd, J. W., Lane, K. L., Tankersley, M. (2010). Grade retention of students during grades K-8 predicts reading achievement and progress during secondary schooling. *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, 26, 51-66.
- Gutman, L. M., & Midgley, C. (2000). The role of protective factors in supporting the academic achievement of poor African American students during the middle school transition. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 29(2), 223-248.
- Henk, W.A., & Melnick, S. A. (1998). Upper elementary-aged children's reported perceptions about good readers: A self-efficacy influenced update in transitional literacy contexts. *Reading Research and Instruction*, 38(1), 57-80.
- Hock, M. F., Pulvers, K. A., Deshler, D. D., & Schumaker, J.B. (2001). The effects of an after-school tutoring program on the academic performance of at-risk students and students with LD. *Remedial and Special Education*, 22(3), 172-186.
- Hosp, J. L., & Reschly, D. J. (2003). Referral rates for intervention or assessment: A meta-analysis of racial differences. *The Journal of Special Education*, 37(2), 67-80.
- Howard, T. C. (2002). Hearing footsteps in the dark: African American students' descriptions of effective teachers. *Journal of Education for Students Placed At Risk*, 7(4), 425-444.
- Jimerson, S. R., Pletcher, S. M. W., Graydon, K., Schnurr, B. L., Nickerson, A. B., & Kundert, D. K. (2006). Beyond grade retention and social promotion: Promoting the social and academic competence of students. *Psychology in the Schools*, 43(1), 85-97.
- Kemper, E. A., Stringfield, S., & Teddlie, C. (2003). Mixed methods sampling strategies in social science research. In A. Tashakkori & C. Teddlie (Eds.), *Handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioral research* (pp. 273-296). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

- Lindo, E. J. (2006). The African American presence in reading intervention experiments. *Remedial and Special Education*, 27(3), 148-153.
- Linnenbrink, E. A., & Pintrich, P. R. (2003). The role of self-efficacy beliefs in student engagement and learning in the classroom. *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, 19, 119-137.
- Long, J. F., Monoi, S., Harper, B., Knoblauch, D., & Murphy, P. K. (2007). Academic motivation and achievement among urban adolescents. *Urban Education*, 42(3), 196-222.
- Mantzicopoulos, P. (2004). I am really good at puzzles, but I don't get asked to play with others: Age, gender, and ethnic differences in Head Start children's self-perceptions of competence. *The Journal of Genetic Psychology*, 165(1), 51-65.
- Margolis, H. (2005). Increasing struggling learners' self-efficacy: What tutors can do and say. *Mentoring and Tutoring*, 13(2), 221-238.
- McCabe, P. (2006). Convincing students they can learn to read: Crafting self-efficacy prompts. *The Clearing House*, 79(6), 252-257.
- McMahon, S. D., Parnes, A. L., Keys, C. B., & Viola, J. J. (2008). School belonging among low-income urban youth with disabilities: Testing a theoretical model. *Psychology in the Schools*, 45(5), 2008.
- No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. (2002). Public Law 107-110.
- O'Shaughnessy, T.E., & Swanson, H.L. (2000). A comparison of two reading interventions for children with reading disabilities. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 33(3), 257-277.
- Ogbu, J. U. (2004). Collective identity and the burden of "acting White" in Black history, community, and education. *The Urban Review*, 36(1), 1-35.
- Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Teddlie, C. (2003). A framework for analyzing data in mixed methods research. In A. Tashakkori & C. Teddlie (Eds.), *Handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioral research* (pp. 351-383). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Osborn, J., Freeman, A., Burley, M., Wilson, R., Jones, E., & Rychener, S. (2007). Effect of tutoring on reading achievement for students with cognitive disabilities, specific learning disabilities, and students receiving Title I services. *Education and Training in Developmental Disabilities*, 42(4), 467-474.
- Pajares, F. (2002). Gender and perceived self-efficacy in self-regulated learning. *Theory Into Practice*, 41(2), 116-125.

- Pajares, F. (2008). Motivational role of self-efficacy beliefs in self-regulated learning. In D. Schunk & B. Zimmerman (Eds.), *Motivation and self-regulated learning: Theory, research and applications* (pp.111-139). New York: Taylor & Francis Group.
- Perry, N. E., VandeKamp, K. O., Mercer, L. K., & Nordby, C. J. (2002). Investigating teacher-student interactions that foster self-regulated learning. *Educational Psychologist*, 37(1), 5-15.
- Pershey, M. G., (2010). A comparison of African American students' self-perceptions of school competence with their performance on state-mandated achievement tests and normed test of oral and written language and reading. *Preventing School Failure*, 55(1), 53-62.
- Peterson, L. S., & Hughes, J. N. (2011). The differences between retained and promoted children in educational services rendered. *Psychology in the Schools*, 48(2), 156-165.
- Pierson, L. H., & Connell, J. P. (1992). Effect of grade retention on self-system processes, school engagement, and academic performance. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 84(3), 300-307.
- Pintrich, P. R. (2000). The role of goal orientation in self-regulated learning. In M. Boekaerts, P. R. Pintrich, M. Zeider (Eds.), *Handbook of self-regulation* (pp. 451-502). San Diego, CA: Academic.
- Pintrich, P. R., Smith, D. A. F., Garcia, T., & McKeachie, W. J. (1991). *A manual for the use of the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ)*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, National Center for Research to Improve Postsecondary Teaching and Learning.
- Pintrich, P. R., Smith, D. A. F., Garcia, T., & McKeachie, W. J. (1993). Reliability and predictive validity of the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ). *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 53, 801-813.
- Pole, C., & Morrison, M. (2003). *Ethnography for Education*. Berkshire, England: Open University Press.
- Qi, C. H., Kaiser, A. P., Milan, S., & Hancock, T. (2006). Language performance of low-income African American and European American preschool children on the PPVT-III. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools*, 37, 5-16.
- Randolph, K. A., Fraser, M. W., Orthner, D. K. (2004). Educational resilience among youth at risk. *Substance Use & Misuse*, 29(5), 747-767.
- Rauh, V. A., Parker, F. L., Garfinkel, R. S., Perry, J., Andrews, H. F. (2003). Biological, social, and community influences on third-grade reading levels of minority head start children: A multilevel approach. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 31(3), 255-278.

- Sankofa, B. M., Hurley, E. A., Allen, B. A., & Boykin, A. W. (2005). Cultural expression and Black students' attitudes toward high achievers. *The Journal of Psychology*, 139(3), 247-259.
- Schunk, D. H. (2003). Self-efficacy for reading and writing: Influence of modeling, goal setting, and self-evaluation. *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, 19, 159-172.
- Schunk, D. H., & Pajares, F. (2002). The development of academic self-efficacy. In A. Wigfield & J. Eccles (Eds.), *Development of achievement motivation* (pp. 15-31). San Diego: Academic Press.
- Schunk, D. H., & Zimmerman, B. J. (1997). Social origins of self-regulatory competence. *Educational Psychologist*, 32(4), 195-208.
- Schunk, D. H., & Zimmerman, B. J. (2007). Influencing children's self-efficacy and self-regulation of reading and writing through modeling. *Reading and Writing Quarterly*, 23, 7-25.
- Shavelson, R., (1996). *Statistical Reasoning for the Behavioral Sciences* (3rd ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Ally & Bacon.
- Silbergliitt, B., Appleton, J. J., Burns, M. K., & Jimerson, S. R. (2006). Examining the effects of grade retention on student reading performance: A longitudinal study. *Journal of School Psychology*, 44, 255-270.
- Silverman, D. (2001). *Interpreting qualitative data: Methods for analyzing talk, texts, and interaction* (2nd ed.). London: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Skiba, R. J., Poloni-Staudinger, L., Simmons, A. B., Feggins-Azziz, L. R., & Chung, C. (2005). Unproven links: Can poverty explain ethnic disproportionality in special education?. *The Journal of Special Education*, 39(3), 130-144.
- Slavin, R. E., Lake, C., Chambers, B., Cheung, & Davis, S. (2009). Effective reading programs for the elementary grades: A best-evidence synthesis. *Review of Educational Research*, 79(4), 1391-1466.
- Slavin, R. E., Lake, C., Davis, S., Madden, N. A. (2011). Effective programs for struggling readers: A best-evidence synthesis. *Educational Research Review*, 6, 1-26.
- Snyder, T. D., Dillow, S. A., & Hoffman, C. M. (2007). *Digest of Education Statistics 2006* (NCES 2001-017). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Somers, C. L., Owens, D., & Piliawsky, M. (2008). Individual and social factors related to urban African American adolescents' school performance. *High School Journal*, 91(3), 347-358.

- Stearns, E., Moller, S., Blau, J., & Potochnick, S., (2007). Staying back and dropping out: The relationship between grade retention and school dropout. *Sociology of Education*, 80, 210-240.
- Teddlie, C., & Tashakkori, A. (2003). Major issues and controversies in the use of mixed methods in the social and behavioral sciences. In A. Tashakkori & C. Teddlie (Eds.), *Handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioral research* (pp. 3-50). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Tucker, C. M., Herman, K. C., Pedersen, T., Vogel, D., & Reinke, W. M. (2000). Student-generated solutions to enhance the academic success of African American youth. *Child Study Journal*, 30(3), 205-221.
- Tudge, J., & Hogan, D. (2005). An ecological approach to observations of children's everyday lives. In S. Greene & D. Hogan (Eds.), *Researching children's experience: Approaches and methods* (pp. 102-122). London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Tyson, K. (2002). Weighing in: Elementary-aged students and the debate on attitudes toward school among Black students. *Social Forces*, 80(4), 1157-1189.
- U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, Policy and Program Studies Service, State and Local Implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act, Volume I-Title I School Choice, Supplemental Educational Services, and Student Achievement, Washington, D.C., 2007.
- U.S. Department of Education (2009B). *Supplemental educational services: Non-regulatory guidance*. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/suppsvcsguid.pdf>
- U.S. Department of Education (2012). *ESEA Flexibility*. Retrieved from <http://www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility/documents/esea-flexibility.doc>
- United Learning Center. (2002). *Achieve Assessment Test*. Murfreesboro, TN: United Learning Center.
- Usher, E., & Pajares, F. (2006a). Inviting confidence in school: Invitations as a critical source of the academic self-efficacy beliefs of entering middle school students. *Journal of Invitational Theory and Practice*, 12, 7-16.
- Usher, E., & Pajares, F. (2006b). Sources of academic and self-regulatory efficacy beliefs of entering middle school students. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 31, 125-141.
- Van Keer, H. (2004). Fostering reading comprehension in fifth grade by explicit instruction in reading strategies and peer tutoring. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 74, 37-70.

- Vaughn, S., Linan-Thompson, S., Kouzekanani, K., Bryant, D.P., Dickson, S., & Blozis, S.A. (2003). Reading instruction grouping for students with reading difficulties. *Remedial and Special Education*, 24(5), 301-315.
- Wanzek, J., Vaughn, S., Kim, A., Cavanaugh, C.L. (2006). The effects of reading interventions on social outcomes for elementary students with reading difficulties: A synthesis. *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, 22, 121-138.
- West, J., Denton, K., & Reaney, M. L. (2001). *The kindergarten year: Findings from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998-1999*. U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.
- Winne, P.H., Jamieson-Noel, D. L., & Muis, K. (2002). Methodological issues and advances in researching tactics, strategies, and self-regulated learning. In P. R. Pintrich & M. L. Maehler (Eds.), *Advances in Motivation and Achievement: New Directions in Measures and Methods*, Vol. 12, (pp. 121-155). Greenwich, Connecticut: JAI
- Winne, P. H., & Perry, N. E. (2006). Learning from learning kits: gStudy traces of students' self-regulated engagements with computerized content. *Educational Psychology Review*, 18, 211-228.
- Zimmerman, B. J. (2008). Investigating self-regulation and motivation: Historical background, methodological developments, and future prospects. *American Educational Research Journal*, 45(1), 166-183.
- Zimmerman, B. J., Bonner, S., & Kovach, R. (1996). *Developing self-regulated learners: Beyond achievement to self-efficacy*. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.
- Zimmerman, B. J., Martinez-Pons, M. (1986). Development of a structured interview for assessing student use of self-regulated learning strategies. *American Educational Research Journal*, 23(4), 614-628.
- Zimmerman, B. J., Martinez-Pons, M. (1988). Construct validation of a strategy model of student self-regulated learning. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 80(3), 284-290.
- Zito, J. R., Adkins, M., Gavins, M., Harris, K. R., Graham, S. (2007). Self-regulated strategy development: Relationship to the social-cognitive perspective and the development of self-regulation. *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, 23, 77-95.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Grace Rhenae Huxtable-Mount has a Jamaican family heritage. She was the baby of four children and one of the youngest among a close-knit extended family of numerous aunts, uncles and cousins. She was born in Freeport, Bahamas where her family lived prior to immigrating to the United States when she was a toddler. As a child and into adolescence, she babysat children from her church and spent time volunteering and working in childcare and in the pediatric wing of a local hospital. It was these experiences that established her passion for working with children.

Although she was raised in a household where no one had completed a high school education, she was taught by her family that an education was essential and was the key to a better life. She was told that God had a plan for her, and that she needed to do her best in school. After graduating from Boyd Anderson High School in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Grace went to the University of Florida to complete the Pro-Teach program and earn her Bachelor of Arts and Master of Education degrees in elementary education. During her undergraduate years, she was accepted into the University Scholars Program and conducted research on how African American students deal with race in the college setting. Grace was also a member of Kappa Delta Pi and Epsilon Iota honor societies. From 2000-2003, she was an active member of the Minority Student Education Guild, where she served as Vice President and President, helping expose minority students to the UF campus and volunteering at the Boggy Creek Gang Camp for chronically ill children.

Upon graduating from the University of Florida, Grace began her career teaching third grade at Centennial Place Elementary School in Georgia. She later relocated to Jacksonville and married her husband, Jason Mount, also a Florida Gator, in 2005.

During that same year, Grace and Jason established their educational services company, Huxtable Education Group. They provide academic tutoring for low income students in several school districts. While managing the tutoring company in 2008, Grace earned her Specialist in Education degree in educational leadership from the University of Florida. In 2009, Grace opened The Learning Experience Academy of Early Education in Jacksonville, which provides care and preschool education for children under the age of 5. In 2011, she had the honor and privilege of being Jacksonville's Women in Business Awards' Franchisee of the Year and was recognized by The Learning Experience franchise with their annual Leadership Award. Earning her PhD in educational leadership has been the crowning moment of her career.

Grace has a daughter named Mya, who is an adorable and incredibly sweet little girl. Grace and her family currently reside in Jacksonville where they continue to operate Huxtable Education Group and The Learning Experience. They are avid Gator football fans and will always cherish and support the University of Florida.