PARENTAL EFFICACY: A CROSS GRADE LEVEL ANALYSIS

OF A SUBURBAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

by

RICHARD CRAIG BARLOW

(Under the Direction of C. Thomas Holmes)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship of efficacy and parental academic assistance in a suburban elementary school. The study was devised to look at differences in efficacy that might exist between mothers and fathers. The grade level of the child was also included in the study. The population of families used in this particular study was not typical of other schools in the area surrounding the school. The socio-economic status of the families was very high. Less than 3 % of the students participated in the free/reduced lunch program.

The data collected indicated that the parent group investigated had a high sense of parental efficacy. Few significant differences were noted based on the gender of the parent or the grade level of the child represented.

Eight recommendations were made based on the results collected:

1. More research should be completed on parental efficacy.
2. Research on parental efficacy should be completed with specialized parent/family groups such as: single parents, grandparents acting as parents, and foster parents.

3. Research should be completed on families of various ethnic and cultural backgrounds to determine if any variances occur in parental efficacy.
4. Research should be completed on the efficacy beliefs of low-income families to determine if any similarities might exist with families in this particular study.
5. A study of efficacy as it relates to child rearing would be helpful in determining parent preparation classes for pre-school programs.
6. An understanding of collective or neighborhood efficacy might be helpful in understanding how young people in particular areas are affected by crime and violence.
7. Research could be reviewed and examined to look at possible research implications for future studies in the efficacy of Hispanic American families.
8. The finding that the educational background of the parent might have an impact on efficacy leads to further research in this area. Hoover-Dempsey (1992) suggested that the probability of the parent's own positive schooling experience contributes to their feelings of efficacy for their children would lead a researcher to conclude that further investigation might be necessary.

INDEX WORDS: Efficacy

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the most important people in my life:

- My wife, Kimberly, who gave up much to see this completed. You were a wonderful supporter and research assistant!
- My children, Kara and Kessler, who continuously encouraged me to keep working. You mean the world to me!
- My parents, William and Betty Barlow, who believed that I could do this from the start.

"Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom:

and with all thy getting get understanding."

Proverbs 4:7 (KJV)

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The process of parenting in today's society is a very complex task. Time constraints, both on children and parents, make this process much more difficult. Most parents want to be involved in their children's lives in a positive way. The modeling of appropriate social and language functioning is critical throughout children's lives (Caldwell, 1989; Swick & Broadway, 1997). If psychologists are interested in understanding the reasons why children select some activities and avoid others, why they succeed in some academic pursuits and fail at others, or why they are filled with either anticipation or panic at the thought of doing this or that task, then researchers should quite carefully investigate the things and ways that students believe about themselves (Pajares & Schunk, 2002).

In a discussion of indicators of engaged, effective learning, Jones, Valdez, Nowakowski, and Rasmussen (1995) described characteristics of students who were responsible for their own learning. One characteristic was a student's ability to shape and manage change, in other words, self-direction. Covey (1989) recognizes the importance of self-directedness, which he calls proactivity, by including it as one of the habits characterizing highly effective individuals:

> It means more than merely taking initiative. It means that, as human beings, we are responsible for our own lives. Our behavior is a function of our decisions, not our conditions. We can subordinate feelings to values. We have the initiative and the responsibility to make things happen. (p. 71)

Children look to parents for leadership in dealing with personal, peer, and school pressures (Pipher, 1996). Parents have to be intimately involved in helping their children through times of intense change in self-social relationships (Swick, 1993). The completion of homework assignments gives parents an opportunity to be involved in their child's academic progress. Parents' consideration of children's homework and their involvement in that work was based on

their understanding of children's characteristics and their own abilities (Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Burow, 1995). Most parents derived strong personal meaning from their efforts to help their children; their successes and failures in helping with homework were important to them, and they seemed to consider successful efforts a significant part of being a "good" parent for their elementary children (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1995).

Parents who received specific instructions for working with children at home reported valuing these instructions highly and appeared to have more efficacy and knowledge in promoting children's school learning (Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Brissie, 1992). Because children become developmentally more independent of their parents as they move into adolescence, and because schools tend to assume a more distant relationship with parents as students move from elementary to middle to high school (Epstein, 1986), many parents' abilities and opportunities to influence children's homework performance seem likely to diminish over time (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1995). Given the apparent importance of careful student attention to homework in the secondary years, school interventions to increase parents' and students' success with homework, during the elementary years, take on even more significance (Cooper, 1989; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1995).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Limited information exists about the variances of parental efficacy among elementary school parents in a suburban setting. The influence of efficacy on academic achievement also has had limited evaluation.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Parental involvement has a tremendous impact on the success of public education (Henderson, 1995). Parents contribute to the academic success of their children by volunteering

in classrooms, assisting with homework, and providing academic encouragement for their children. A measure of efficacy would be helpful in guiding a school's efforts to provide staff development for parents in improving parenting strategies related to academic outcomes. This study might also produce useful information for the development of parenting workshops and summer training opportunities. Information garnered could provide assistance for teachers in preparing parent involvement plans for their particular classroom. Guidance programs, which already include parent outreach activities, could use efficacy research in the preparation of guided lessons and activities. Administrative teams could include research and data gathered from this study in the development and preparation of parent/student handbook materials for the academic year.

The work of Local School Councils, mandated through the A+ Education Reform Act (Jacobson, 2001), could be more clearly focused based on the information retrieved through the data survey process of the survey instrument included in this study. Finally, parents could use this information in considering their role in their child's academic growth, social development, and preparation for future learning. An awareness of the impact of efficacy on various grade levels might actually encourage parents to become, or stay, actively involved throughout their child's school years.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Do parents of children in different grade levels have different levels of efficacy on behalf of their children?
- Do mothers and fathers have different levels of efficacy for their children?
- Do parents feel that they know how to help their children in school?
- Do parents feel that student motivation to do well in school is dependent upon parents?

- Do parents feel that other children provide influence on their child's academic progress?
- Do parents feel that teachers provide influence on their child's academic progress?
- Do parents feel that they are successful in assisting their child academically?

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Efficacy: The belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the sources of action required to manage prospective situations (Bandura, 1986a).

JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

An understanding of parental efficacy might be helpful in understanding why a number of children develop into healthy, well functioning individuals despite major life adversity (Hoeltje, Zubrick, Silburn, & Garton, 1996). The determination of variance in parental efficacy would be useful to help teachers and administrators plan more effectively in planning parental involvement programs. Parental efficacy has been found to be related to volunteering, educational activities, and telephone calls (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1992). This construct may contribute to the decisions that parents make in relation to their children's schooling. Hoover-Dempsey et al. (1992), note in previously administered surveys that "findings suggest that the construct of parent efficacy warrants further investigation." (1992, p. 291) Although it is not surprising that parental involvement is linked to parental efficacy, little research has been completed to show a grade-by-grade analysis of the efficacy construct among parents.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- This study is limited to one suburban elementary school.
- The findings of this study can be generalized only to the population being studied.
- This school has a very low free/reduced lunch population and consists of parents in a very high-income level.

- The survey for this study was completed at an after school program for parents and could therefore not be completely representative of the entire parent population of the school.

ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The remainder of the study includes:

Chapter 2 – The Review of the Literature

Chapter 3 – Methodology

Chapter 4 – Analysis of the Data

Chapter 5 – Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter provides a review of literature on parental involvement and efficacy. The material is presented in six major categories: historical influences related to parent involvement, current influences related to parental involvement, legislation and policy issues related to parental involvement, self-efficacy, child efficacy, teacher efficacy, and parental efficacy.

OVERVIEW

Parent involvement is the participation of parents in every facet of the education and development of children from birth to adulthood, recognizing that parents are the primary influence in children's lives. Parent involvement takes many forms, including the parents' shared responsibilities in decisions about children's education, health and well-being, and the parents' participation in organizations that reflect the community's collaborative aspirations for all children (National PTA, 2000). The National PTA organization recognizes that parents have a right to the following: clear, correct and complete information about the school and the child's progress; confidentiality of information about the child; clear understanding of the process to gain access to the appropriate school official; sensitivity to ethnic differences, and observing the child at school. Becher (1984) stated that a research review by the National Institute of Education concluded that "extensive, substantial, and convincing evidence" suggests that parents play a crucial role in achievement and competence in children. Kellaghan, Sloane, Alvarez, and Blume (1993) noted in a survey of the research literature that the home environment is a most powerful factor in determining the number of years of schooling they will receive. Thirty years of research show that increased parent involvement in children's learning is linked to achieving a high-quality education. According to the U.S. Department of Education, controllable home

factors account for many of the differences in average student achievement (U.S. Department of Education, 1994). Belter (1997) proposed that school systems and school boards across the country need to listen to parents and then, with parents, make decisions that benefit children. Belter (1997) also stated that maximizing parental input and official responsiveness, choosing the best alternatives for good of the whole, and using available options for individually responding to a child's needs increases a school's effectiveness.

HISTORICAL INFLUENCES OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Families in the 17th and 18th Centuries western cultures were traditional patriarchal structures, which spent little time developing, and supporting children (Coontz, 1995; Seitsinger, 1998). In the late 19th Century, as the beginnings of current day public school education were developing into the Common School reform movement, family structures shifted away from the dominant patriarchal mode. Men left the farm and the village to work in larger offices or factories. The rise in public education filled the gap in training once provided by the central family. The family was no longer the central locus of production or learning (Schneider & Coleman, 1993; Seitsinger, 1998). Even though learning began to move away from the family unit, the basic family structure remained intact up through the 1960's. At its most popular and stable period the American family with children living with biological parents and siblings comprised 64% of all familiar living arrangements (Coontz, 1995; Seitsinger, 1998).

Furukawa (1994) defines the traditional family as one "in which children live with both biological parents and, if siblings are present, with only full siblings. This family has no other persons present in the household and the parents are married." Children had a 51% chance of living in a traditional family setting in 1995. Of every 100 children born today, 12 are born out of wedlock and 40 are born to parents who will divorce before the child is 13 (McLaren, 1989;

Seitsinger, 1998). Kohn (1963) asserted that social class is the most powerful variable underlying parents' influence on their children, especially related to child rearing and school work.

CURRENT INFLUENCES OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Hester (1989) stated the common wisdom is that parental involvement and strong schools are inseparable—that you cannot have one without the other. Hester (1989) also indicated a strong link between parental involvement and student achievement. Across a range of studies, there has emerged a strong conclusion that parental involvement in child and adolescent education generally benefits children's learning and school success (Chavkin & Williams, 1993; Eccles & Harold, 1993; Epstein, 1989, 1991, 1994; Hess & Holloway, 1984; Hobbs et al., 1984; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; U.S. Department of Education, 1994).

Henderson (1995) found that programs designed with strong parental involvement produce students who perform better than otherwise identical programs that do not involve parents as thoroughly, or that do not involve them at all. Henderson contended that children, whose parents help them at home and stay in touch with the school, score higher than children of similar aptitude and family background whose parents are not involved.

In the mid 1960s, Coleman (1988) conducted a study to determine which factors significantly impacted student achievement. Coleman's research looked at the influence of per-pupil spending, school size, teacher experience, and teacher level of education completed. While several school factors proved to have modest effect on student performance, the influence of family background seemed to be the strongest influencer. Coleman (1988) found a statistically significant relation of the child's own family background characteristics to his achievement, a

relation stronger than that of any school factors. Coleman's research led to other studies related to parental involvement.

Homework has been shown to offer parents a direct link to their child's education. Epstein (1985) found that student achievement and students' attitudes and behaviors improved when teachers communicated with parents about specific ways they could help their children learn at home. In addition, Earth (1979) has documented the importance of individualized communication about children's progress. Parents who received these communications were more effective reinforcers of positive school behaviors. Ho and Willms (1996) suggested that making certain that homework is completed, discussing the specifics of assignments and papers, explaining the assignments, checking accuracy, and actively helping children complete assignments have all been found to be related to children's academic performance. If a parent is not familiar with the content of the schoolwork (as might be the case with immigrant parents or students from families of generational poverty), the acts of asking questions about an assignment and examining completed work still underscore the importance attached to skill development.

Varied researchers (e.g., Eccles & Harold, 1994; Grolnick, Ryan, & Deci, 1991; Hoover-Dempsey & Walker, 2001; Zimmerman & Martinez-Pons, 1990) have suggested that student's explicit and implicit invitations to parental homework involvement likely emanate from five primary sources: the child's press for independence, valuing of parental help, explicit help-seeking, general level of academic performance, and difficulty with day-to-day homework. During the elementary school years, when the press for independence is typically low, many parents work hard to balance their children's needs with their own ideas about what their children should and should not try to accomplish on their own (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2001; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1995). According to Stodolsky (1985), children are more likely to ask

for assistance in subjects areas, like math, that they might find more difficult and when new material is presented (Paris & Newman, 1990). Zimmerman and Martinez-Pons (1986) also found that students who didn't need academic assistance might also seek help. They found that high-achieving 10th graders were four times more likely to seek assistance from parents than were their lower-achieving peers. According to Hoover-Dempsey and Walker (2001), the relationship notwithstanding, explicit help seeking across grade levels appears to increase levels of parental involvement.

Parents act as a key partner to the success of the school if they use the informality of the home setting to reinforce academic concepts and skills. Coleman (1991) stated that antagonistic, unpleasant contacts between the school and parents are a result of passivity on the part of the school. If the school waits for parents to initiate contact, the contact is likely to be about a problem and potentially antagonistic. Based on Coleman's findings, schools that initiate positive contact should increase positive relationships with parents. Family status variables (income, education, ethnicity, marital status) seem to be tied to parental involvement (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). Hess and Holloway (1984) confirmed other researchers, such as Coleman, in relation to the connection of family economic status to parental involvement. Building relationships that help bridge the social divide with parents can help build stronger involvement in a school. Social capital among parents, once created, will not always reinforce school goals.

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) note that family status variables do not fully explain decisions of parents to become involved in their child's school:

> Status does not determine parents' thinking, actions, or influence related to their involvement in children's schooling (e.g. Brofenbrenner, 1992; Slaughter-Defoe, 1995). Even as it may define limits around family resources and may predispose certain attitudes and approaches, status requires activation (Lareau, 1987, 1989) parental choices and activities that put into action intentions for their children and children's schooling. Predispositions grounded in status do not always result in

> easily predictable outcomes. They do not, for example, appear to determine the value parents put on education, their wishes to be involved or their involvement in children's school progress, their interest in having their children succeed in school, or their aspirations for their children's achievement (Chavkin and Williams, 1993; Clark, 1983, 1993; Delgado-Gaitan, 1990; Eccles and Harold, 1993, 1994; Lareau, 1989; Lee, 1985; Lightfoot, 1978, 1981; Moles, 1993; Saxe, Guberman, and Gearhart, 1987; Scanzoni, 1985; Spenser, 1985; Spencer and Dornbusch, 1990; Stevenson, Chen, and Uttal, 1990). They do not explain many parents' abilities to nurture positive educational outcomes in spite of difficult and presumably discouraging circumstances. (Brody and Stoneman, 1992; Clark, 1983) (p. 4)

A strong body of parents is a force in the community that will often act in accord with the school (Coleman, 1991). Hoover-Dempsey and Walker (2001) note that children's general level of academic performance has been related both positively (e.g., Clark, 1993; Dauber & Epstein, 1993; Delgado-Gaitan, 1992) and negatively (Baker & Stevenson, 1986; Clark, 1993; Eccles & Harold, 1993; Pratt, Green, MacVicar, & Bountrogianni, 1992) to levels of parental involvement in children's education. Reflecting on the directional variability of this relationship, Grolnick and Slowiaczek (1994) suggested that involvement varies in accordance with the child's general level of academic performance, increasing in response to poor performance, and leveling off or decreasing in the wake of good performance.

LEGISLATION AND POLICY ISSUES RELATED TO PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

In the fall of 1994, the Congress of the United States passed the Improving America's Schools Act (National Education Goals Panel, 1998). This act, which originated as "Goals 2000" (1998), was first proposed during the Bush Administration to the National Conference of Governors in Charlottesville, Virginia. One of the governors actively involved in the leadership of this meeting was Governor Clinton of Arkansas. After the 1992 election, President Clinton continued the push to pass this legislation with two important additions to the original six goals:

safe and drug-free schools and parental involvement. Learning compacts or pledges are now required in all schools receiving Title I funding. The U.S. Department of Education (Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 1998) description of learning compacts related to parental involvement includes the following details: It is a voluntary agreement between the home and school. The agreement can define goals, expectations, and shared responsibilities of schools and parents as equal partners for student learning. Parents commit, for example, to setting aside study time, seeing that homework is completed, monitoring television viewing, and making sure that children get to bed and school on time. Schools that welcome and organize volunteers to help in different ways are more likely to support parent organizations and parent representatives on decision-making committees.

The Department of Education's National Family Involvement Initiative, designed to work in conjunction with the Goals 2000 (National Education Goals Panel, 1998) legislation, aimed to increase partnerships between families and schools. Originally, the initiative planned to focus on parents, giving minimal attention to teachers. According to Terhanian (2000), this imbalance led to an agreement that concluded it seemed unfair to give teachers the additional major responsibility for parent involvement without providing assistance. The wording of the legislation states:

> By the year 2000, every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children. All teachers will have access to pre-service teacher education and continuing professional development activities that will provide such teachers with the knowledge and skills needed to teach and increasingly diverse student population with a variety of educational, social, and health needs. (Terhanian, 2000, pp.1-6)

While most of the National Education Goals (1998) focused on a particular outcome or result, such as student achievement, graduation from high school or adult literacy, Goal 8 of the Educate America Act called on states and school districts to develop programs and policies that

increase family-school partnerships, that in turn, help improve student achievement. Many of the other goals in this legislation provided content for parental involvement. For example, parents are essential in getting children ready for school (Goal 1), or for encouraging their children to meet the high standards necessary to achieve mastery of science, math and other subjects (Goals 3 and 5).

Other aspects of legislation also affected parental involvement policies and their implications. Congress passed the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (Zirkel, 2000), also known as the Buckley Amendment, in 1974. Some 30 years later, few parents are familiar with this legislation. Parents have, by law, the right to see all of the records related to their child. If parents believe that information contained in records is inaccurate, they have the right to challenge this information. A hearing can be scheduled if the material is not changed in the records. Some schools suggest that parents review records before a parent-teacher conference, following discipline or academic problems, and whenever a child changes grades, schools, or school districts.

A report by the National Education Goals Panel (1998) concluded that primary school parents are more involved in every aspect of their children's schooling than are middle school parents. Parents are eager for their children to have school-based after-school and summer opportunities. More than half of the parents reported that they had no input at all about such topics as what subjects were taught, how much time was spent on these subjects, or teacher hiring and salary determination. Eighty-eight percent of parents read together at home with their child at least weekly; about one in three parents also signed agreements with their child's teacher to support learning both in the classroom and at home. Forty percent of parents had never been invited to observe in their child's classroom (National Education Goals Panel, 1998).

The Novato Unified School District (1996) included a component in their parental involvement policy providing appropriate training for parent volunteers. The plan also encouraged parents to develop leadership skills by participating on school site leadership teams and other parent organizations. A respect section is also included for administrators which includes: respect for the diversity of all children, including student's various learning styles, cultural and economic backgrounds, and varying teaching methods to help each child achieve success. Parents are also asked to show respect by supporting school rules and goals by upholding rules of discipline; respecting the diversity of other parents and children, including various learning styles, cultures, and economic backgrounds; and respect the values of other parents. Another component of this policy requires parents to read school communications and volunteer in classrooms.

District 300 in Carpentersville, Illinois, used a CORE (Citizens Organized for Responsible Education,) group to allow parents to become more involved in the local school system (Cavarretta, 1998). Many of the original group members participated on school improvement teams and had been trained in collaboration. The training enabled many of the parents of diverse backgrounds to unite for common purposes regardless of local site issues. Cavarretta (1998) found that for some participants, political advocacy led to joining school improvement teams. For others, involvement on school improvement teams precipitated political advocacy. The fact that CORE exists "is a powerful testament to the commitment stakeholders made to protect our model of shared decision making" (Cavarretta, 1998, p. 15). Winning elections and referendums represented difficult and complex work for the group. The district's decision to forge parent involvement partnerships between home and school reflects the nationwide trend to grant parents and community members the power to influence the educational process directly.

SELF-EFFICACY

Efficacy affects many aspects of local schools, particularly the relationship of parents, teachers, students, and academic outcomes. Bandura (1977) defines self-efficacy as the belief in one's capabilities to perform the course of actions necessary to achieve a desired outcome. Efficacy in dealing with one's environment is not simply a matter of knowing what to do or a fixed act that one does or does not have in one's behavioral repertoire. Efficacy involves a generative capability in which cognitive, social, and behavioral sub skills must be organized into integrated courses of action to serve innumerable purposes (Bandura, 1986a). It also involves skill in managing aversive emotional reactions that can impair the quality of thinking and action. There is a marked difference between possessing knowledge and skills and being able to use them well under taxing conditions (Bandura, 1993).

An increase in efficacy contributes to a minimizing of self-doubt (Bandura, 1993). Most courses of action are initially shaped in thought. Those who doubt their efficacy visualize failure scenarios and dwell on the many things that can go wrong. It is difficult to achieve much while fighting self-doubt (Bandura, 1993). Self-efficacy is a significant determinant of performance that operates partially independent of underlying skills (Bandura, 1986a; Locke, Frederick, Lee, & Bobko, 1984; Schunk, 1984).

Though rooted in the social system in which one operates, self-efficacy is essentially about a person's personal judgment of his or her ability (Bandura, 1997; Lorsbach & Jinks, 1999; Williams, 2000). Self-efficacy is dependent on elements of the environment that often determine how goals and expectations are created and maintained (Lorsbach & Jinks, 1999; Williams, 2000). Efficacy and outcome judgments are differentiated because individuals can believe that a particular course of action will produce certain outcomes, but they do not act on that belief

because they question whether they can actually execute the necessary activities (Bandura, 1986a). People tend to avoid tasks and situations they believe exceed their capabilities but they undertake and perform assuredly activities they judge themselves capable of handling (Bandura, 1977). The self-efficacy construct is believed to encompass a personal competence/capability component that interacts with outcome expectancies. Thus, expectations alone will not produce desired performance if capabilities are insufficient (Loup, 1994). Expected outcomes are also partially separable from self-efficacy judgments when extrinsic outcomes are fixed to a minimum level of performance, as when a designated level of productivity produces a fixed pay but better performance brings no additional monetary benefits (Bandura, 1986a).

Judgments of efficacy determine how much effort people will expend and how long they will persist in the face of obstacles or aversive experiences. The stronger their perceived self-efficacy, the more vigorous and persistent are their efforts (Bandura, 1986a). When beset with difficulties, people who are plagued by self-doubts about their capabilities slacken their efforts or give up altogether, whereas those who have a strong sense of efficacy exert greater effort to master the challenge (Bandura & Cervone, 1983, 1986; Brown & Inouye, 1978; Schunk, 1984; Weinberg, Gould, & Jackson, 1979).

According to Bandura (1995), people's beliefs concerning their efficacy can be developed by four main forms of influence: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and physiological and emotional states in judging their abilities.

Mastery experiences can lead to a strong sense of self-efficacy. These experiences provide the most authentic evidence of whether one can muster whatever it takes to succeed (Bandura, 1982; 1995; Biran & Wilson, 1981; Feltz, Landers, & Raedar, 1979; Gist, 1989). Success in an endeavor tends to bolster efficacy, while failure tends to decrease the amount of efficacy

experienced by an individual. Changing life circumstances influence the ability of a person to continue to experience positive outcomes in tasks. A sense of efficacy requires experience in overcoming obstacles through perseverant effort. Some difficulties and setbacks in human pursuits serve a useful purpose in teaching that success usually requires sustained effort (Bandura, 1995).

Mastery is closely related to the perception of one's ability to accomplish a task. Bandura (1977) proposed that expectations of personal mastery affect both initiation and persistence of coping behavior. The strength of people's convictions in their own effectiveness is likely to affect whether they will even try to cope with a given situation. Some people regard ability as an acquirable skill that can be increased by gaining knowledge and competencies (Bandura, 1993). Some children realize that learning by mistakes is part of the process leading to mastery in situations. Errors are part of the overall process of mastery learning. Other children view ability to achieve mastery as inherent in nature.

Salomon (1984) found that children with a high perceived self-efficacy as learners were associated with a high investment of cognitive effort and better learning from instructional media children consider difficult, but it was associated with less investment of effort and poorer learning from media they believe to be easy. Schunk (1984) concluded that children's academic learning through self-regulated instruction revealed that perceived self-efficacy contributed to development of cognitive skills. This development was effected directly by sustaining perseverant effort in the face of difficulties (Bandura, 1993; Schunk, 1984). After a strong sense of self-efficacy is developed through repeated successes, occasional failures are unlikely to have much effect on judgments of one's capabilities (Bandura, 1986a).

Vicarious experiences can lead to the creation or strengthening of efficacy beliefs. Seeing people similar to themselves succeed by perseverant effort raises observers' beliefs that they, too, possess the capabilities to master comparable activities (Bandura, 1995; 1986; Schunk, 1987). By the same token, observing others fail despite high effort lowers observers' judgments of their own efficacy and undermines their level of motivation (Bandura, 1995; Brown & Inouye, 1978). Bandura (1986b) stated that the capacity to learn by observation enables people to acquire rules for generating and regulating behavioral patterns without having to form them gradually by tedious trial and error. Many activities such as swimming or driving a car must be learned through the process of observing those who have mastered the task. These activities could prove dangerous or fatal if learned simply through trial and error (Bandura, 1986a). The impact of modeling of beliefs of personal efficacy is strongly influenced by perceived similarity to the models. The greater the assumed similarity the more persuasive are the models' successes and failures (Bandura, 1995). Even when it is possible to establish new patterns of behavior through other means, the acquisition process can be considerably shortened through modeling (Bandura, 1986a). A significant model in one's life can help instill self-beliefs that will influence the course and direction that life will take. Part of one's vicarious experience involves the social comparisons made with other individuals (Pajares, 1997).

Social persuasion can be given verbally to persuade people that they possess the capabilities to master given activities. These people are likely to mobilize greater effort and sustain it than if they harbor self-doubts and dwell on personal deficiencies when problems arise (Bandura, 1995; Litt, 1988; Schunk 1989). It appears, according to Bandura (1995), it is more difficult to instill high beliefs of personal efficacy by social persuasion alone than to undermine them. Unrealistic boosts in efficacy are quickly disconfirmed by disappointing results of one's efforts.

In general, the stronger individuals' self-efficacy beliefs, the higher the goals they are willing to set for themselves, and the higher is their commitment to meeting those goals (Bandura, 1989a; Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Brissie, 1987). People who have this orientation tend to commit to the achievement of goals, visualize paths to success, and are efficient in analytical thinking (Bandura, 1989a). They tend to respond to difficulties or failures in the particular domain with increased effort, partly because they believe failure is due to insufficient effort rather than lack of ability (Bandura, 1989a).

Individuals low in self-efficacy for a given task tend to believe that they cannot cope with difficulties. They tend to avoid situations in the area, slacken their efforts, or stop trying altogether when they are involved in activities related to the area of difficulty (Bandura, 1989a; Bandura 1989b; Schunk, 1989). Low efficacy individuals will tend to avoid difficult tasks, which they believe will exceed their abilities (Bandura, 1989a; 1989b), and when difficulties emerge, they tend to focus on their deficiencies, the difficulty of the task, or the "adverse consequences of failure"(Bandura, 1989b; Grusec, 1992). Parents with low efficacy in a given domain who experience failure will experience drastically reduced motivation to be involved (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997).

CHILD EFFICACY

The role of the child/student in school partnerships has been addressed in a few studies that have asked students directly about how they view the connections of their families and schools and how they participate as partners (Ames, Khoju, & Watkins, 1993; Dornbush & Ritter, 1988; Epstein, 1992). Students at all grade levels report that they want their families to be more involved and that they are willing to be the communicators and to conduct important exchanges with their families about schoolwork and school decisions (Connors & Epstein, 1994; Epstein &

Harrick, 1991). Earlier studies show that when they know their families are involved, students report that their schools and families are more similar, that their teachers and parents know each other, that they do more homework on weekends, and that they like school better (Epstein, 1982). Students have expressed interest in being more active participants in roles typically related to parents and their involvement such as parent/teacher conferences (Connors & Epstein, 1994). Cowen et al. (1991) suggested to the extent that one's efficacy views shape behaviors in diverse situations, a generalized measure of children's perceived self-efficacy could have fruitful applications. The effect of life stressors has been studied in relation to the impact of making life choices (Cowen et al., 1991).

> Self-efficacy beliefs influence students' behavior in a number of ways. First, they influence the choices that students make: students engage in tasks about which they feel confident and avoid those in which they do not. At lower levels of schooling, this can be a moot issue, for students often have very little choice over the activities in which they must engage. As they get older, however, they have greater control over course and activity selection, and their confidence influences these decisions. Self-efficacy beliefs also help determine how much effort students will expend on an activity and how long they will persevere—the higher the sense of efficacy, the greater the effort expenditure and persistence. This function of self-efficacy beliefs helps create a type of self-fulfilling prophecy, for the perseverance associated with high self-efficacy leads to increased performance, which, in turn, raises sense of efficacy, whereas the giving-in associated with low self-efficacy limits the potential for raising confidence. Self-efficacy beliefs also affect behavior by influencing students' emotional reactions. Students with low self-efficacy can come to believe that things are tougher than they really are, a belief that fosters anxiety, stress, and a narrow vision of how best to solve a problem. High self-efficacy, on the other hand, creates feelings of serenity in approaching difficult tasks, increases optimism, lowers anxiety, raises self-esteem, and fosters resilience. (Pajares & Schunk, 2002, p. 18)

An understanding of child efficacy would be helpful for parents, teachers, and others involved in a child's learning.

TEACHER EFFICACY

Rand Corporation researchers, who used two Likert-type items to measure the construct, conducted the earliest studies of teacher efficacy. The researchers defined teacher efficacy as the "extent to which the teacher believes he or she has the capacity to alter student performance" (McLaughlin & Marsh, 1978). The researchers demonstrated a relationship between teacher efficacy and successful program implementation (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977). Gibson and Dembo (1984) defined teacher efficacy as a multidimensional construct composed of two relatively independent dimensions: personal teaching efficacy and teaching efficacy. Deemer (1999) stated that personal teaching efficacy involves teachers' evaluations of their own capabilities to bring about student learning. The other dimension, teaching efficacy, reflects the degree to which teachers believe other educators can control the learning environment despite influences such as family background, IQ, and school conditions.

Hoover-Dempsey et al. (1992) suggested that teacher efficacy and teacher's perceptions of parental efficacy were both positively linked to teacher reports of parent involvement in homework, educational activities, volunteering, and conference participation. Teacher efficacy was also positively linked to teacher perceptions of parent efficacy. Riley (Terhanian, 2000) believed parents and teachers, the two most important groups of adults who can influence the course of education in this nation seemed to be talking past each other. Teachers felt overwhelmed, frustrated and perplexed that so many parents were not hooked into the lives of their children. Parents, who felt a real respect for the work of teachers, had trouble understanding how they fully link up with teachers to help their children learn.

PARENTAL EFFICACY

Henderson and Burla (1994) determined that several parental involvement factors which influence achievement could include the following: establish a daily family routine (including regular bedtimes and times to study), monitor out-of-school activities (particularly television viewing), model the value of learning, self-discipline and hard work (especially through the use of newspapers, encyclopedias, and other home educational tools), express high, but realistic, expectations for achievement (and reward success with special recognition), encourage child development and progress in school (by helping with homework, maintaining dialogue with teachers), stimulate reading, writing, and discussions among family members (including mealtime discussions, bedtime stories, and letters to relatives), and facilitate use of community resources (such as libraries, museums, sports programs, music lessons, and cultural events). Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) contends that three factors influence a parent's decision to become involved in their child's education: the parents' construction of his or her role in the child's life, the general invitations or demands by the child or his/her school, and the parents' sense of efficacy for helping his or her child succeed in school.

The parents' role construction appears important to the involvement process primarily because it appears to establish a basic range of activities that parents will construe as important, necessary, and permissible for their own actions with and on behalf of their children (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). Roles generally are considered to be sets of expectations held by groups for the behavior of individual members for example, a family's expectations for a mother's behavior, a community's expectations for the behavior of schoolchildren's parents, or sets of behaviors characteristic of individuals within a group. A group such as fathers of school-age children or mothers of high school students would also be examples (e.g., Babad, Birnbaum,

& Benne, 1983; Biddle, 1979; Forsyth, 1990; Gross, McEachern, & Mason, 1958; Wheelan, 1994).

According to Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997), the overall value of multiple invitations, opportunities, and requests presented by children and their schools appears to lie in the welcoming and proactive demand they create for parents' involvement. The extent to which parents believe themselves to be invited to participate actively in the educational process will exert important influence on their basic decisions about involvement.

Parental efficacy about children has an effect on parental involvement. This involvement might include school based (field trips, fundraising, volunteering) or home based (homework supervision, school related discussions, providing enrichment activities). The actual decision on behalf of the parent to become involved, at home or school, is impacted by the efficacy that they have for their children's ability to succeed at school. As applied specifically to the issue of parent involvement, the construct of efficacy raises the question: do parents believe that, through their involvement, they can exert a positive influence on children's educational outcomes (Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler, 1997)? Parents' sense of efficacy for helping children succeed in school has been set within the general body of literature examining the power of self-regulation or thoughts about one's own role and influence in a situation in determining one's behavior choices with that situation (Bandura, 1977, 1986; Grusec, 1992).

> Applied to parental involvement in children's education, self-efficacy theory suggests that parents will guide their actions (i.e. make their involvement choices) by thinking through, in advance of their behavior, what outcomes are likely to follow the actions they might take. They will develop goals for their behaviors, based on these anticipations, and will plan actions designed to achieve these goals. Their goal setting process will be influenced by their own appraisals and estimates of their capabilities in a situation; for example, the stronger their perceived self-efficacy in the situation, the higher the goals they will set and the firmer will be their commitments to realizing their goals (Bandura, 1989). Of critical importance to understanding the varied involvement choices that

> individuals make is the fact that self-efficacy beliefs are concerned not with skills "but with beliefs about what one can do with the sub skills one possesses" (Bandura, 1986). Findings that persons with apparently lower resources and skills (e.g. lower income parents, parents with relatively low levels of education) can and do act efficaciously and effectively in involvement activities intended to help their children gain school-related skills make sense in this context (Clark, 1983; Scott-Jones, 1987; Segal, 1985). (Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler, 1997, p. 11)

To say that family practices and processes make a significant contribution to child learning does not imply that non-process family factors (such as family income, family size, structure, genetic make-up, and parents' education) are somehow unimportant. Indeed Milne (1989) reported that research consistently shows that both males and females from single-parent families performed less well than those from two-parent families. Benson, Buckley, and Medrich (1980) report in a University of California study that parent inputs do reduce the proportion of low achievers, but they do not overcome the disadvantages of low income. Clark (1993) noted in a study of Los Angeles elementary school students that home process variables, parental responsibility variables, and family background circumstances worked together to shape student achievement patterns. O'Neil (1992) proposed in a study at the City University of New York that average IQ scores of low-income preschoolers were boosted by nearly seven percentage points for each day of the week that a mother read to her child. Finn (1998) contended that parents could be encouraged to be in-school participants by visiting the school, attending school events, performances, and athletics. Parents could also be encouraged to initiate contact with teachers and administrators. It is also interesting to note that although many researchers claimed that parental involvement increased student achievement, Steinberg (1996) found only a small correlation of achievement with parents' attendance at school programs, conferences, and extracurricular activities. The author noted that teachers pay more attention to students whose parents are involved in the school, which may in turn explain the relationship.

SUMMARY

The review of literature related to parental involvement and parental efficacy suggests that more research is needed to determine not only the impact of parental efficacy, but also the variances that might exist in grade levels at a particular school. These variances might occur between different grade levels and be impacted by the gender of the parent.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research procedures that were used in this study, an explanation of data collection, a discussion regarding variables that were considered, and a description of the instrument used to collect information for the research. This chapter is organized in the following sequence: (a) methodology, (b) re-statement of the purpose, (c) null hypothesis, (d) research design, (e) population sample, (f) instrumentation, (g) data collection, (h) statistical treatment, and (i) summary.

Parental efficacy has an impact on the success of children. Little information exists which shows correlations of efficacy based on the gender of the parent and the grade level of a child. The researcher was seeking to add to the body of literature related to parental efficacy by conducting a study of parents in a suburban elementary school setting to look at correlations. These correlations dealt with parental expectations, efficacy, and relationship of parents to at-home academic work, such as homework.

This study used quantitative methods to gain more understanding of parental efficacy related to academic outcomes. The method used to look at these measures was a questionnaire that was cross-sectional in design and collected data at one point in time to examine attitudes, beliefs, opinions, and practices related to efficacy (Creswell, 2002). Data were gathered by a questionnaire given out to 3 groups of parents representing parents in grades levels Kindergarten-5th grade. These questionnaires were distributed at an after-school presentation designed to give information to parents about the academic curriculum to be introduced to their

children during the school year. Quantitative measures were used to look for relationships among the variables. The results of this research could be statistically analyzed for further information.

The questionnaire contained 23 questions and was developed using a 6-part Likert scale which included response choices ranging from agree very strongly to disagree very strongly. For the purpose of scoring, each item on the Likert scale was assigned a numerical value ranging from 1 (disagree very strongly) to 6 (agree very strongly). Negatively worded items were scored in reverse order.

RESTATEMENT OF THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Parental involvement has a tremendous impact on the success of public education. Parents contribute to the academic success of their children by volunteering in classrooms, assisting with homework, and providing academic encouragement for their children. A measure of efficacy would be helpful in guiding a school's efforts to provide staff development for parents in improving parenting strategies related to academic outcomes. This study might also produce useful information for the development of parenting workshops and summer training opportunities. Information garnered could provide assistance for teachers in preparing parent involvement plans for their particular classroom. Guidance programs, which already include parent outreach activities, could use efficacy research in the preparation of guided lessons and activities. Administrative teams could include research and data gathered from this study in the development and preparation of parent/student handbook materials for the academic year.

The work of Local School Councils, mandated through the A+ Education Reform Act (Jacobson, 2001), could be more clearly focused based on the information retrieved through the data survey process of the survey instrument included in this study. Finally, parents could use

this information in considering their role in their child's academic growth, social development, and preparation for future learning. An awareness of the impact of efficacy on various grade levels might actually encourage parents to become, or stay, actively involved throughout their child's school years.

NULL HYPOTHESES

H1: There is no statistically significant difference in the levels of parental efficacy among parents of children in different grade levels of an elementary school.

H2: There is no statistically significant difference in the levels of parental efficacy between fathers and mothers of students in elementary school.

RESEARCH DESIGN

An empirical research study in which the variables were assigned and not manipulated was used in this study. Quantitative methods were used in the data collection and analysis of the variables was completed after the collection of data. Descriptive statistics are used when the purpose of the research is to describe the data that are collected (Weinberg & Goldberg, 1996).

POPULATION SAMPLE

The population used for this study was a group of parents from a suburban elementary school. The population selected for this study was all parents of Riverside Elementary School, Suwanee, Georgia. The sample population was parents who attended curriculum nights at Riverside Elementary and therefore might not be representative of all parents. The questionnaire was distributed to parents who represented 1570 students and the pool of potential parent respondents was approximately 3000. 1280 parents were asked to identify their gender and complete the questionnaire based on the child whom they were representing on the particular night that the research was conducted. The parent population of Riverside Elementary School represented an

affluent neighborhood with a very low number of free and reduced lunch students. The neighborhood population represented approximately 88% Caucasian, 5% Asian, 3% African American, 3% Hispanic American, and 1% other. The majority of families lived in two parent homes. Standardized test scores of students were routinely above average for state, county, and area standards. The school was 4 years old and was accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

INSTRUMENTATION

The questionnaire was a modified version of Hoover-Dempsey's (1992) *Parent Efficacy for Helping Children Succeed in School Scale/Thinking About Helping My Child* and Hoover-Dempsey et al. (1995) *Thinking About My Child's Homework Scale (TAMCH).* The *Parent Efficacy for Helping Children Succeed in School Scale/Thinking About Helping My Child (Table 1)* was developed during a study of relationships among teacher efficacy, parent efficacy, and parent involvement in elementary schools. The *Scale* was originally administered to 390 parents from four elementary schools. Alpha reliability for the scale with this sample was .81, as reported by Hoover-Dempsey et al. (1992). The researcher for this study used this scale to construct questions 1-11 for the *Thinking About Helping My Child Scale.* The *Thinking About My Child's Homework Scale (TAMCH)* was developed during a study of children's and parents' perceptions of parents' involvement in children's homework (Table 1). The TAMCH was divided into three subscales. This study was employed by Hoover-Dempsey (1995) with a socio-economically diverse sample of 20 fourth grade children and their parents. The alpha reliability for subscale 1 was .84. Questions 12 –17 on the *Thinking About Helping My Child* were developed from TAMCH subscale 1. Alpha reliability for TAMCH subscale 2 was .75. Questions 19-22 on the *Thinking About Helping My Child* survey were developed from TAMCH

Table 1

Alpha Reliability for Selected Scale Items

Hoover-Dempsey Original Scale	Alpha Reliability	*Thinking About Helping My Child* Question Number
Parent Efficacy for Helping Children Succeed in School/Thinking About Helping My Child	α=.81	Questions 1-11
Thinking About Helping My Child Scale	α=.84	Questions 12-17
Thinking About Helping My Child Scale	α=.75	Questions 19-22
Thinking About Helping My Child Scale	α=.80	Questions 18 & 23

subscale 2. Alpha reliability for TAMCH subscale 3 was .80. Questions 18 and 23 on the Thinking About Helping My Child were developed from TAMCH subscale 3.

DATA COLLECTION

The survey was distributed to parents by certified classroom teachers after a brief introduction via closed circuit television by the researcher. Surveys were collected and returned to the researcher by the classroom teachers. A training meeting was conducted with teachers prior to the survey being distributed and collected.

STATISTICAL TREATMENT

Since the data collected for this research was collected in an empirical study, a t -test was used to look at variances of efficacy rates between fathers and mothers. An ANOVA (analysis of variance) was used to look at variances among the six different grade levels represented (K-5th). The use of ANOVA reduced the likelihood that significant differences found between group means were due to chance (Crowl, 1993). The use of ANOVA allowed the researcher to examine differences among the same groups of subjects with respect to more than one variable, as well as the interaction of variables.

VARIABLES

Independent variables include the grade level of the child that the parent represents. The gender of the parent is also an independent variable. The dependent variable determined by the study would be the efficacy rate of parents related to the various aspects of the questionnaire.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to look at variances that might exist between fathers and mothers of children in various grade levels in a suburban elementary school. The data determined was useful in looking at methods to increase more significant parental involvement.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to examine the efficacy of parents in a suburban elementary school. The data were collected and analyzed to determine relationships. This chapter contains the analysis in table and narrative format.

The survey was given to 1280 of the 3000 parents of students attending a suburban elementary school. Of that number, 1250 were completed correctly and returned. The return rate of usable surveys was 41.6% (of the 3000 potential parents). A detailed description of the survey population is included in Table 2.

There were a total of seven research questions and two hypotheses tested in this study. All were analyzed utilizing a test of variance with $p<.05$ as the level of significance. The questions and hypotheses tested are listed below:

1. Do parents of children in different grade levels have different levels of efficacy on behalf of their children?
2. Do mothers and fathers have different levels of efficacy for their children?
3. Do parents feel that they know how to help their children in school?
4. Do parents feel that student motivation to do well in school is dependent upon parents?
5. Do parents feel that other children provide influence on their child's academic progress?
6. Do parents feel that teachers provide influence on their child's academic progress?
7. Do parents feel that they are successful in assisting their child academically?

H1: There is no statistically significant difference in the levels of parental efficacy among parents of children in different grade levels of an elementary school.

H2: There is no statistically significant difference in the levels of parental efficacy between fathers and mothers of students in elementary school.

This chapter is organized into two sections: findings and analysis of the data and summary.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Additional tables related to efficacy (A1-A34) are referenced in this chapter and are found in Appendix A. Seven research questions and two hypotheses were considered in the analysis of the data. The research questions, hypotheses, and information collected are listed below.

Research Question 1: This question examined differences in efficacy based on the grade level of the child represented by the parent. An analysis of variance was used on each of the 23 items on the parent survey to determine whether a statistically significant difference existed between the efficacy of parents in different grade levels at a suburban elementary school. The significance level was set at $p < .05$. A statistically significant difference was found in Question 1 from the survey. The question stated: "I know how to help my child do well in school." A p value of .04 was found for this item based on the grade levels represented by the parents. The efficacy total for this item was found in Table 3. A statistically significant difference was found in Question 13 from the survey. The question stated: "My child does well in school." A p value of .00 was found for this item based on the grade levels represented by the parents. The efficacy total for this item was found in Table 3. A statistically significant difference was found in Question 14 from the survey. The question stated: "My child tries to do his/her homework correctly." A p value of .02 was found for this item based on the grade levels represented by the parents. The efficacy total for this item was found in Table 3. A statistically significant difference was found in Question 18 from the survey. The question stated: "I help my child with reading homework." A p value of .00 was found for this item based on the grade levels

Table 2
Survey Population Totals

	K	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
Gender=F	179	184	159	127	145	110
Gender=M	77	88	53	42	52	34
TOTAL (F+M)	256	272	212	169	197	144

represented by the parents. The efficacy total for this item was found in Table 3. A statistically significant difference was found in Question 22 from the survey. The question stated: "I understand what my child is supposed to do in his/her homework." A *p* value of .006 was found for this item based on the grade levels represented by the parents. The efficacy total for this item was found in Table 3. A statistically significant difference was found in Question 23 from the survey. The question stated: "I help my child with math homework." A *p* value of .00 was found for this item based on the grade levels represented by the parents. The efficacy total for this item was found in Table 3. A statistically significant difference was found in Theme 4 from the survey. The questions in Theme 4 were a compilation of questions 18 and 23. A *p* value of .00 was found for this item based on the grade levels represented by the parents. The efficacy total for this item was found in Table 3.

Research Question 2: This question examined the differences in efficacy that might exist based on the gender of the parent surveyed. A statistically significant difference was found in Question 15 from the survey. The question stated: "When my child has homework to do, he/she finishes it all." A *p* value of .006 was found for this item based on the gender represented by the parents. The efficacy total for this item was found in Table 3. A statistically significant difference was found in Question 18 from the survey. The question stated: "I help my child with reading homework." A *p* value of .001 was found for this item based on the gender represented by the parents. The efficacy total for this item was found in Table 3. A statistically significant difference was found in Question 20 from the survey. The question stated: "I know what kind of help my child needs." A *p* value of .00 was found for this item based on the gender represented by the parents. The efficacy total for this item was found in Table 3. A statistically significant difference was found in Question 23 from the survey. The question stated: "I help

Table 3
Efficacy Totals for Questions 1-23 and Themes 1-4 (Grade/Gender Summary)

Question	Category	F	*p*
1	Grade	2.34	.04*
	Gender	.015	.90
	Grade/Gender	1.29	.28
2	Grade	1.50	.19
	Gender	1.77	.18
	Grade/Gender	1.29	.27
3	Grade	1.40	.22
	Gender	.295	.59
	Grade/Gender	.961	.44
4	Grade	1.50	.18
	Gender	.86	.35
	Grade/Gender	1.14	.33
5	Grade	.66	.65
	Gender	2.5	.11
	Grade/Gender	.35	.88
6	Grade	1.76	.12
	Gender	.46	.48
	Grade/Gender	.66	.65
7	Grade	.66	.65
	Gender	2.5	.11
	Grade/Gender	.35	.88
8	Grade	1.53	.18
	Gender	.21	.64
	Grade/Gender	.88	.49
9	Grade	.42	.83
	Gender	1.27	.26
	Grade/Gender	.79	.56

**p<.05*

(Table 3-Continued on pg. 37)

Table 3-Continued
Efficacy Totals for Questions 1-23 and Themes 1-4 (Grade/Gender Summary)

Question	Category	F	*p*
10	Grade	1.16	.32
	Gender	.06	.80
	Grade/Gender	.18	.97
11	Grade	1.24	.29
	Gender	2.65	.10
	Grade/Gender	1.34	.25
12	Grade	.42	.84
	Gender	3.82	.05
	Grade/Gender	.96	.44
13	Grade	4.92	.00*
	Gender	.001	.98
	Grade/Gender	.33	.90
14	Grade	2.81	.02*
	Gender	.07	.79
	Grade/Gender	2.09	.06
15	Grade	2.16	.06
	Gender	7.57	.006*
	Grade/Gender	1.52	.18
16	Grade	1.07	.37
	Gender	.53	.47
	Grade/Gender	2.05	.07
17	Grade	1.53	.18
	Gender	1.09	.30
	Grade/Gender	.80	.55
18	Grade	23.78	.00*
	Gender	11.67	.001*
	Grade/Gender	.99	.42

*$p<.05$

(Table 3-Continued on pg. 38)

Table 3-Continued
Efficacy Totals for Questions 1-23 and Themes 1-4 (Grade/Gender Summary)

Question	Category	F	*p*
19	Grade	1.64	.15
	Gender	1.61	.20
	Grade/Gender	2.92	.01*
20	Grade	.94	.45
	Gender	13.73	.00*
	Grade/Gender	.81	.54
21	Grade	1.00	.41
	Gender	.29	.59
	Grade/Gender	.66	.65
22	Grade	3.28	.006*
	Gender	.92	.34
	Grade/Gender	.70	.62
23	Grade	5.52	.00*
	Gender	6.09	.014*
	Grade/Gender	3.25	.006*
Theme 1	Grade	1.17	.32
	Gender	.013	.91
	Grade/Gender	.96	.44
Theme 2	Grade	1.58	.16
	Gender	1.64	.20
	Grade/Gender	1.18	.32
Theme 3	Grade	1.80	.11
	Gender	2.67	.10
	Grade/Gender	1.33	.25
Theme 4	Grade	16.52	.00*
	Gender	.32	.571
	Grade/Gender	2.09	.064

*$p<.05$

my child with math homework." A *p* value of .006 was found for this item based on the gender represented by the parents. The efficacy total for this item was found in Table 3.

Research Question 3: This question dealt with a parent's feelings about their ability to help their child in school. A statistically significant difference was found in Question 19 from the survey. The question stated: "I know how to help my child with his/her homework." A *p* value of .01 was found for this item based on the gender represented by the parents. The efficacy total for this item was found in Table 3. A statistically significant difference was found in Question 23 from the survey. The question stated: "I help my child with math homework". A *p* value of .006 was found for this item based on the gender represented by the parents. The efficacy total for this item was found in Table 3. Themes 1, 3, and 4 dealt with questions related to parents' feelings about helping their children. No statistically significant differences were found in the themes 1, 3, or 4. Tables A28, A30, and A31 show the efficacy details of these themes.

Research question 4: This question related to a student's motivation to do well in school and was tied to the parent's influence on this motivation. Theme 1 dealt with this influence. No statistically significant differences were found in Theme 1 or any of the individual question items in this theme. Theme 1 totals are described in Table 3.

Research question 5: This question related to the parents' perception of the influence that other children have on the academic progress of a child. Question 10 of the survey stated: "Other children have more influence on my child's motivation to do well in school than I do." Table 3 shows that no statistically significant differences were found in this item.

Research question 6: This question related to the parents' perception of the influence that other children have on the academic progress of a child. Question 6 of the survey stated: "Most

of a student's success in school depends on the classroom teacher, so I have only limited influence." Table 3 shows that no statistically significant differences were found in this item.

Research question 7: This question relates to a parent's perception that they are successful in assisting their child academically. Since this question sought similar information as research question 3, similar results were found. A statistically significant difference was found in Question 19 from the survey. The question stated: "I know how to help my child with his/her homework." A *p* value of .01 was found for this item based on the gender represented by the parents. The efficacy total for this item was found in Table 3. A statistically significant difference was found in Question 23 from the survey. The question stated: "I help my child with math homework". A *p* value of .006 was found for this item based on the gender represented by the parents. The efficacy total for this item was found in Table 3. Themes 1, 3, and 4 dealt with questions related to parents' feelings about helping their children. No statistically significant differences were found in the themes 1, 3, or 4. Tables A28, A30, and A31 show the efficacy details of these themes.

There were two hypotheses tested in this study. Both were analyzed utilizing a $p < .05$ significance level. Respondents were divided into two groups based on gender (mothers/fathers) and the grade level of the child (K, 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5) that they represented during the survey. A Bonferonni post hoc test was used as needed to make a statistical determination of variance. A Sheffé test was also completed as needed. The results of the Sheffé tests are found in Appendix A.

Hypothesis 1: *There is no statistically significant difference (significant at the $p < .05$ level) in the levels of parent efficacy among parents of children in different grade levels of an elementary school.*

Table 3 reports the parent totals for efficacy related to the questions 1 through 23 on the survey instrument. Item numbers 1, 13, 14, 18, 22, 23, and Theme 4 show statistically significant differences. The significance levels (expressed as *p* values—or the probability that outcomes such as those could have occurred by chance) were obtained by comparing means through an ANOVA. The significance level was set at $p<.05$. The other items/themes listed among the survey results do not show statistically significant differences.

Hypothesis 2: *There is no statistically significant difference (significant at the p <.05 level) in the levels of parent efficacy between fathers and mothers of students in elementary school.*

Table 3 reports the parent totals for efficacy related to the questions 1 through 23 on the survey instrument. Item numbers 15, 18, 20, and 23 show statistically significant differences. The significance levels (expressed as *p* values—or the probability that outcomes such as those could have occurred by chance) were obtained by comparing means through an ANOVA. The significance level was set at $p<.05$. The other items/themes listed among the survey results do not show statistically significant differences.

Scheffé tests were completed for questions in the survey showing statistical significance. A Scheffé was completed for questions 13, 15, 18, and 23. The results of the Scheffé tests are summarized in tables A14, A17, A21, and A27 in appendix A.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to determine the variance of efficacy, if any, for parents in a suburban elementary school. The survey instrument was designed to determine if mothers and fathers in the school would have significantly different efficacy for their children. The survey instrument was also designed to determine if efficacy beliefs varied between grade levels. Based on the results collected in this study, few statistically significant differences exist in efficacy

between parents/grade levels at this particular school. Parents, both mothers and fathers, consistently exhibited high efficacy for their children throughout all of the grade levels surveyed.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter summarizes a study of parental efficacy in a suburban elementary school. Conclusions are also included and recommendations for future study. Information included in this chapter is drawn from the data included in chapter four of this study. The chapter is divided into three sections: 1. Summary of the study; 2. Conclusions drawn from the study; 3. Recommendations and implications for future study.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship of parental efficacy as it related to a suburban elementary school. The study also examined parents' attitudes related to helping their children academically. Parent-school relationships could be affected by a better understanding of parental efficacy. Some evidence that parent efficacy beliefs may be important in parent behaviors and child outcomes are reported in Baumrind's work (1971, 1973) on parenting styles, which established clear linkages between patterns of parenting behaviors and patterns of children's social and cognitive development (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1992). An understanding of efficacy as it relates to parents could help schools understand the relationship of parents to the outcomes produced by students. The efficacy of the parents in this particular study focused on parent involvement in academic assistance. These parental efficacy beliefs will influence parents' decisions about the avenues and timing of efforts to become involved in their children's education. For example, parents with a strong sense of efficacy are more likely than low-efficacy parents to help their children resolve a misunderstanding with the teacher because they believe that they are capable of offering and helping their child to act on appropriate guidance (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1992). Although parent efficacy is likely only one of several

contributors to parents' involvement decisions (Bandura, 1986), it appears, based on the results of this survey, to be a strong influence that might be linked to the high level of education and income of most of the parents in the neighborhood that this particular school serves. With this stated, the sense of efficacy of this particular group of parents would seem to "function as an important set of proximal determinants of human motivation, affect, and action" (Bandura, 1989a, p. 1175).

This study gathered information through a survey instrument including 23 questions related to parental efficacy. A six point Likert-scale response was used for each item. These questions were derived from several surveys created by Hoover-Dempsey et al. (1992). The survey was divided into four basic themes based on the original survey instruments. The scale's grounding in related literature and its earlier successful use with other parent populations support its validity.

The sample population for this study came from the population of parents of a suburban elementary school. Parents who attended an after school parent event were asked to complete the survey instrument. Of the 1280 surveys distributed, a total of 1250 usable survey instruments were returned. Parents were asked to identify the grade level of the child they represented and the parent's gender.

A better understanding of parental efficacy could be beneficial in understanding parental involvement efforts and the impact that parents have in a school.

CONCLUSIONS

Some implications can be drawn from this survey used, however, the generalization of the results should consider the limitations mentioned in Chapter One of this study. The study was completed in one elementary school in a suburban, affluent neighborhood. The average home

value in the neighborhood exceeds $200,000.00 and most families are two-parent families. The average number of students in the school who qualify for free/reduced lunch is less than 3%. Most parents in the school's population have completed college, graduate, or post-graduate degrees. Parent *efficacy* may differ from parent *education*, however, higher levels of education may give parents a higher level of skill and knowledge. Efficacy--a set of attitudes about one's ability to get necessary resources and offer effective help--increases the likelihood that a parent will act on his or her knowledge (or seek information when available resources are insufficient) (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1992). The number of surveys returned, 1250 or 41.6% of the total parent population, is indicative of a high level of support and cooperation among the general parent population. Parents completing these surveys were in attendance at the school's annual Curriculum Night, which was established to keep parents informed of the expectations that the local school had in relation to the curriculum. The parent attendance at this event, 1280 of a possible 3000 parents, was indicative of a large amount of parent support. According to some researchers, parent contact and volunteer activities might not be associated with better academic progress by students and may actually be related to problems with the school (Barton & Cooley, 1992). The attendance of parents at this particular event might not be related to high efficacy. Volunteering to assist in classrooms may also not be associated with high efficacy.

> Classroom volunteering, for example, may be linked to efficacy, because the decision to volunteer requires some sense that one has educationally relevant skills that can and will used effectively. Similarly, the experiences implicit in classroom volunteering may offer parents new and positive information about their effectiveness with their own child. The decision to engage in educational activities with one's children at home may reflect a sense of personal efficacy; in like manner, the activities undertaken may show up, from the parent's perspective, in improved school performance that, in turn, may enhance parent efficacy. The negative relationship between efficacy and telephone calls to and from the school signal child difficulties. Lower efficacy parents, less certain of their ability to exert positive influence on their children's learning, may seek

Table 4
Efficacy Percentage Totals for Questions 1-23 (*Strongly Agree* + *Agree*)

Question	Percentage of *Strongly Agree* and *Agree*
1	86%
2	61%
3	76%
4	81%
5	76%
6	58%
7	84%
8	76%
9	81%
10	66%
11	83%
12	54%
13	86%
14	85%
15	86%
16	83%
17	88%
18	78%
19	86%
20	70%
21	76%
22	87%
23	75%
AVERAGE of Items 1-23	77.47% (total)

> contact more often. Similarly, more school-initiated calls may signal to the parent that he or she is offering the child less than adequate help.
>
> (Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Brissie, 1992)

In contrast, the percentage of parents who chose *strongly agree* or *agree* on the survey was indicative of high efficacy among the parent population (see Table 36). Little variation occurred in the responses based on the gender of the parent or the grade level of the child represented. The results of the survey did indicate a very high level of efficacy for the parents in this particular school.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made based on the findings and conclusions of this study:

1. More research should be completed on parental efficacy.
2. Research on parental efficacy should be completed with specialized parent/family groups such as: single parents, grandparents acting as parents, and foster parents. This research would be meaningful in determining the specific needs of these particularly disassociated groups. Evidence has emerged of an association between children's generalized self-efficacy (GSE) and their adjustment and functioning including adaptive child attributes, positive family functioning, and the availability of external support systems (Hoeltje, et al., 1996). To date, there is a lack of data on the sources of children's GSE beliefs. This is an important field of research, especially in light of the suggested role of self-efficacy in resilient outcomes such as changes in family dynamics (divorce, family changes, etc.).
3. Research should be completed on families of various ethnic and cultural backgrounds to determine if any variances occur in parental efficacy. Bracey (1996) raised important cautions about appropriate interpretations of some efficacy studies noting that some of the data appear to suggest that United States parents' effort beliefs actually parallel their ability beliefs. Studies

that research the relationship of other ethnic and/or cultural groups would be helpful in building an increased understanding of efficacy.

4. Research should be completed on the efficacy beliefs of low-income families to determine if any similarities might exist with families in this particular study. Clark's (1983) and Segal's (1985) work with low-income families implied that low-income parents of similar status varied considerably in beliefs about parents' home-support roles and their involvement decisions.
5. According to Coleman (2000), high parenting self-efficacy seems to be strongly associated with the parental capacity to provide an adaptive, stimulating, and nurturing child-rearing environment. A study of efficacy as it relates to child-rearing would be helpful in determining parent preparation classes for pre-school programs.
6. An understanding of collective or neighborhood efficacy might be helpful in understanding how young people in particular areas are affected by crime and violence. Wright and Cullen (2001) have completed some initial research in this area. The concept of "parental efficacy" is used to highlight the crime reducing effects associated with parents who support and control their youth. The results show that support and control are intertwined and that parental efficacy exerts substantive effects on adolescent delinquency for the sample as a whole and across varying age groups (Wright & Cullen, 2001).
7. The Hispanic-American population is increasing in the United States. Despite efforts to improve the educational status of minority students in the United States, Hispanic-American children are not doing as well in school as their European-American counterparts. However, some Hispanic children are doing well in school. Research initiated by Okagaki and French (1995) could be reviewed and examined to look at possible research implications for future studies in efficacy as it relates to this sub group.

8. Studies of parent efficacy have found that sex, marital status, employment status, and family income were not necessarily related to efficacy (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1992). The finding that the educational background of the parent might have an impact on efficacy leads to further research in this area. Hoover-Dempsey (1992) suggest that the probability of the parents own positive schooling experience contributes to their feelings of efficacy for their children would lead a researcher to conclude that further investigation might be necessary.

A continued look at efficacy could lead to positive outcomes for schools and those who work with children. Efficacy, whether self-efficacy or general efficacy, contributes to the eventual success of the process of schooling.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
EFFICACY TABLES

Table A1
Efficacy Totals for Q1 (Grade/Gender)

Source	MS	Df	F	p
Grade	1.13	5	2.34	.04*
Gender	.007	1	.015	.90
Grade x Gender	.618	5	1.29	.28
Error	.48	1235		
Total		1247		

*p<.05

Table A2
Efficacy Totals for Q2 (Grade/Gender)

Source	MS	Df	F	p
Grade	2.15	5	1.50	.19
Gender	2.53	1	1.77	.18
Grade x Gender	1.84	5	1.29	.27
Error	1.43	1223		
Total		1234		

*p<.05

Table A3
Efficacy Totals for Q3 (Grade/Gender)

Source	MS	Df	F	p
Grade	1.65	5	1.40	.22
Gender	.347	1	.295	.59
Grade x Gender	1.13	5	.961	.44
Error	1.18	1232		
Total		1244		

*p<.05

Table A4
Efficacy Totals for Q4 (Grade/Gender)

Source	MS	Df	F	p
Grade	.87	5	1.50	.18
Gender	.49	1	.86	.35
Grade x Gender	.66	5	1.14	.33
Error	.58	1230		
Total		1242		

*p<.05

Table A5
Efficacy Totals for Q5 (Grade/Gender)

Source	MS	Df	F	p
Grade	1.89	5	.66	.65
Gender	7.18	1	2.5	.11
Grade x Gender	1.00	5	.35	.88
Error	2.87	1232		
Total		1244		

*p<.05

Table A6
Efficacy Totals for Q6 (Grade/Gender)

Source	MS	Df	F	p
Grade	2.31	5	1.76	.12
Gender	.60	1	.46	.48
Grade x Gender	.87	5	.66	.65
Error	1.31	1233		
Total		1245		

*p<.05

Table A7
Efficacy Totals for Q7 (Grade/Gender)

Source	MS	Df	F	p
Grade	1.89	5	.66	.65
Gender	7.18	1	2.5	.11
Grade x Gender	1.00	5	.35	.88
Error	2.87	1232		
Total		1244		

*p<.05

Table A8
Efficacy Totals for Q8 (Grade/Gender)

Source	MS	Df	F	p
Grade	1.29	5	1.53	.18
Gender	.18	1	.21	.64
Grade x Gender	.74	5	.88	.49
Error	.84	1228		
Total		1240		

*p<.05

Table A9
Efficacy Totals for Q9 (Grade/Gender)

Source	MS	Df	F	p
Grade	1.50	5	.42	.83
Gender	4.49	1	1.27	.26
Grade x Gender	2.79	5	.79	.56
Error	3.53	1230		
Total		1242		

*p<.05

Table A10
Efficacy Totals for Q10 (Grade/Gender)

Source	MS	Df	F	p
Grade	1.38	5	1.16	.32
Gender	.08	1	.06	.80
Grade x Gender	.21	5	.18	.97
Error	1.17	1229		
Total		1241		

*p<.05

Table A11
Efficacy Totals for Q11 (Grade/Gender)

Source	MS	Df	F	p
Grade	.57	5	1.24	.29
Gender	1.22	1	2.65	.10
Grade x Gender	.62	5	1.34	.25
Error	.46	1229		
Total		1241		

*p<.05

Table A12
Efficacy Totals for Q12 (Grade/Gender)

Source	MS	Df	F	p
Grade	.43	5	.42	.84
Gender	3.91	1	3.82	.05
Grade x Gender	.96	5	.96	.44
Error	1.02	1203		
Total		1215		

*p<.05

Table A13
Efficacy Totals for Q13 (Grade/Gender)

Source	MS	Df	F	p
Grade	2.79	5	4.92	.00*
Gender	.00	1	.001	.98
Grade x Gender	.19	5	.33	.90
Error	.57	1225		
Total		1237		

*p<.05

Table A14
Scheffé Follow-up of Q13

Grade	0	1	2	3	4
1	-.04				
2	-.20	-.16			
3	-.26*	-.22	-.06		
4	-.30*	-.26*	-.10	-.04	
5	-.18	-.14	.02	.07	.11

Table A15
Efficacy Totals for Q14 (Grade/Gender)

Source	MS	Df	F	p
Grade	1.44	5	2.81	.02*
Gender	.04	1	.07	.79
Grade x Gender	1.07	5	2.09	.06
Error	.51	1206		
Total		1218		

*p<.05

Table A16
Efficacy Totals for Q15 (Grade/Gender)

Source	MS	Df	F	p
Grade	1.17	5	2.16	.06
Gender	4.12	1	7.57	.006*
Grade x Gender	.83	5	1.52	.18
Error	.54	1209		
Total		1221		
*p<.05		1220		

Table A17
Scheffé Follow-up of Q15

Grade	K	1	2	3	4
1	-.19				
2	-.25*	-.06			
3	-.23	-.04	.02		
4	-.23	-.04	.03	.01	
5	-.09	.10	.17	.15	.14

Table A18
Efficacy Totals for Q16 (Grade/Gender)

Source	MS	Df	F	p
Grade	.54	5	1.07	.37
Gender	.27	1	.53	.47
Grade x Gender	1.04	5	2.05	.07
Error	.51	1212		
Total		1224		

*p<.05

Table A19
Efficacy Totals for Q17 (Grade/Gender)

Source	MS	Df	F	p
Grade	.81	5	1.53	.18
Gender	.57	1	1.09	.30
Grade x Gender	.42	5	.80	.55
Error	.53	1229		
Total		1241		

*p<.05

Table A20
Efficacy Totals for Q18 (Grade/Gender)

Source	MS	Df	F	p
Grade	19.72	5	23.78	.00*
Gender	9.68	1	11.67	.001*
Grade x Gender	.82	5	.99	.42
Error	.83	1216		
Total		1228		

*p<.05

Table A21
Scheffé Follow-up of Q18

Grade	K	1	2	3	4
1	.03				
2	.18	.15			
3	.34*	.30*	.16		
4	.86*	.83*	.68*	.52*	
5	.77*	.73*	.59*	.43*	-.09

Table A22
Efficacy Totals for Q19 (Grade/Gender)

Source	MS	Df	F	p
Grade	.73	5	1.64	.15
Gender	.71	1	1.61	.20
Grade x Gender	1.29	5	2.92	.01*
Error	.44	1223		
Total		1235		

*p<.05

Table A23
Efficacy Totals for Q20 (Grade/Gender)

Source	MS	Df	F	p
Grade	.56	5	.94	.45
Gender	8.01	1	13.73	.00*
Grade x Gender	.48	5	.81	.54
Error	.59	1226		
Total		1238		

*p<.05

Table A24
Efficacy Totals for Q21 (Grade/Gender)

Source	MS	Df	F	p
Grade	1.04	5	1.00	.41
Gender	.30	1	.29	.59
Grade x Gender	.67	5	.66	.65
Error	1.03	1215		
Total		1227		

*p<.05

Table A25
Efficacy Totals for Q22 (Grade/Gender)

Source	MS	Df	F	p
Grade	1.62	5	3.28	.006*
Gender	.45	1	.92	.34
Grade x Gender	.34	5	.70	.62
Error	.49	1218		
Total		1230		

*p<.05

Table A26
Efficacy Totals for Q23 (Grade/Gender)

Source	MS	Df	F	p
Grade	4.78	5	5.52	.00*
Gender	5.28	1	6.09	.014*
Grade x Gender	2.82	5	3.25	.006*
Error	.87	1203		
Total		1215		

*p<.05

Table A27
Scheffé Follow-up of Q23

Grade	0	1	2	3	4
1	.05				
2	.18	.12			
3	.25	.20	.07		
4	.48*	.43*	.31	.23	
5	.50*	.45*	.33	.25	.02

Table A28
Efficacy Totals for Theme 1 (Grade/Gender)

Source	MS	Df	F	p
Grade	53.82	5	1.17	.32
Gender	.58	1	.013	.91
Grade x Gender	43.95	5	.96	.44
Error	45.87	1170		
Total		1182		

*p<.05

Table A29
Efficacy Totals for Theme 2 (Grade/Gender)

Source	MS	Df	F	p
Grade	20.42	5	1.58	.16
Gender	21.25	1	1.64	.20
Grade x Gender	15.30	5	1.18	.32
Error	12.96	1179		
Total		1191		

*p<.05

Table A30
Efficacy Totals for Theme 3 (Grade/Gender)

Source	MS	Df	F	p
Grade	10.23	5	1.80	.11
Gender	15.23	1	2.67	.10
Grade x Gender	7.59	5	1.33	.25
Error	5.70	1200		
Total		1212		

*p<.05

Table A31
Efficacy Totals for Theme 4 (Grade/Gender)

Source	MS	Df	F	p
Grade	41.31	5	16.52	.00*
Gender	.80	1	.32	.571
Grade x Gender	5.24	5	2.09	.064
Error	2.50	1197		
Total		1209		

*p<.05

Table A32
Scheffé Follow-up of Theme 4

Grade	0	1	2	3	4
1	.73				
2	.34	.26			
3	.57*	.50	.23		
4	1.32*	1.25*	.98*	.75*	
5	1.23*	1.15*	.89*	.65*	-.09

Table A33
Efficacy Totals for Questions 1-23 (Grade Level Comparison)

Question	p
1	.04*
2	.19
3	.22
4	.18
5	.65
6	.12
7	.65
8	.18
9	.83
10	.32
11	.29
12	.84
13	.00*
14	.02*
15	.06
16	.37
17	.18
18	.00*
19	.15
20	.45
21	.41
22	.006*
23	.00*
Theme 1	.32
Theme 2	.16
Theme 3	.11
Theme 4	.00*

*p<.05

Table A34
Efficacy Totals for Questions 1-23 (Gender Comparison)

Question	p
1	.90
2	.18
3	.59
4	.35
5	.11
6	.48
7	.11
8	.64
9	.26
10	.80
11	.10
12	.05
13	.98
14	.79
15	.006*
16	.47
17	.30
18	.001*
19	.20
20	.00*
21	.59
22	.34
23	.014*
Theme 1	.91
Theme 2	.20
Theme 3	.10
Theme 4	.571

*p<.05

APPENDIX B
SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Thinking About Helping My Child

CHECK ONE: I am a mother _____ or father_____

Please base your response for the child you are representing at tonight's Curriculum Night. If you have other children at Riverside, you will be asked to fill out another survey for your other children during their Curriculum Night.

Please CIRCLE the number that most closely matches your response to each question. (There are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers here; we just want to know what you think. If you are not certain about some items, just circle the answer that seems like the most accurate one to you right now.)

		Agree Very Strongly	Agree	Agree just a little	Disagree just a little	Disagree	Disagree very strongly
1	I know how to help my child do well in school.	6	5	4	3	2	1
2	My child is so complex, I never know if I'm getting through to him/her.	6	5	4	3	2	1
3	I don't know how to help my child make good grades in school.	6	5	4	3	2	1
4	I feel successful about my efforts to help my child learn.	6	5	4	3	2	1
5	A student's motivation to do well in school depends on the parents.	6	5	4	3	2	1
6	Most of a student's success in school depends on the classroom teacher, so I have only limited influence.	6	5	4	3	2	1
7	I don't know how to help my child learn.	6	5	4	3	2	1
8	If I try hard, I can get through to my child, even when he/she has difficulty understanding something.	6	5	4	3	2	1
9	I make a significant difference in my child's school performance.	6	5	4	3	2	1
10	Other children have more influence on my child's motivation to do well in school than I do.	6	5	4	3	2	1
11	My efforts to help my child learn are successful.	6	5	4	3	2	1
12	Homework is easy for my child.	6	5	4	3	2	1
13	My child does well in school.	6	5	4	3	2	1
14	My child tries to do his/her homework correctly.	6	5	4	3	2	1
15	When my child has homework to do, he/she finishes it all.	6	5	4	3	2	1
16	My child does good work on his/her homework assignments.	6	5	4	3	2	1
17	My child tries hard to do well in school.	6	5	4	3	2	1
18	I help my child with reading homework.	6	5	4	3	2	1
19	I know how to help my child with his/her homework.	6	5	4	3	2	1
20	I know what kind of help my child needs.	6	5	4	3	2	1
21	It's hard for me to help my child with his/her homework.	6	5	4	3	2	1
22	I understand what my child is supposed to do in his/her homework.	6	5	4	3	2	1
23	I help my child with math homework.	6	5	4	3	2	1

APPENDIX C
COVER LETTER

Dear Riverside Parent:

The research project for this questionnaire is entitled: "Parental Efficacy: A Cross Grade Level Analysis of a Suburban Elementary School".

PRIMARY RESEARCHER:
Craig Barlow, 5445 Settles Bridge Road, Suwanee, GA 30024, PHONE: 678-482-1000.
FACULTY ADVISOR:
Dr. C. Thomas Holmes, 313 Rivers Crossing, 808 College Station Road, Athens, GA 30602-4808, PHONE: 1-706-542-4058.

Participation in this study is voluntary and any participant is free to withdraw from this questionnaire at any time. The purpose of this research is to collect and study information related to parents and their involvement in their child's academic progress.

Participation in this survey should take less than 30 minutes. No reasonably foreseeable risks or discomforts should occur during the completion of this questionnaire.

The results of participation in the completion of this questionnaire will be anonymous. No personally identifiable information should be added to this questionnaire. Anonymity will be guaranteed since no information is requested regarding identification of the subject. You may ask questions or provide comments to the researcher by calling: Craig Barlow, 678-482-1000, Monday-Friday, 8:00 AM- 3:00 PM.

Your completion of this questionnaire implies that you agree with the following statement:

"I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this cover letter prior to completing this questionnaire."

Sincerely yours,

Craig Barlow

APPENDIX D
PERMISSION LETTER FOR SURVEY

Chris A. Joseph, PhD
Human Subjects Office
University of Georgia
606A Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center
Athens, GA 30602-7411

Dear Dr. Joseph:

The research project "Parental Efficacy: A Cross Grade Level Analysis of a Suburban Elementary School" conducted by Richard Craig Barlow is approved.

Statement of the problem: Little literature exists on the cross grade level relationship between mothers and fathers related to efficacy. Limited information exists on variances between grade levels of children and their parents.

Subjects or population for the study: K-5 parents of Riverside students.

Researcher's purpose in conducting the study: Addition to the literature in the area of parental efficacy and the future planning of parent involvement.

Dates research will be conducted: August 2003 to no later than October 2003.

It is understood that the research and the researcher must: protect the rights and welfare of all human subjects, inform students and/or parents that they have the right not to participate in the study, and adhere to board policies and applicable laws which govern the privacy and confidentiality of students records.

The research in this study will be conducted within and by school personnel.

Sincerely,

Colin Martin, Ph.D.
Director
Research and Accountability
Gwinnett County Public Schools