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PRESCHOOL: A MIXED-METHODS STUDY**

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READ-ALOUDS FOR SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING IN PRESCHOOL: A
MIXED-METHODS STUDY

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

to the faculty of the

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SPECIALTIES

of

THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

at

ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY

New York

by

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Date Submitted March 21, 2024

Date Approved May 17, 2024

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ABSTRACT

READ-ALOUDS FOR SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING IN PRESCHOOL: A MIXED-METHODS STUDY

Sara C. Kanner

Covid-19 has caused a rise in mental health issues, and focusing on social-emotional learning can help students learn the skills they need to lead healthy, successful lives. Teaching social-emotional skills in pre-K and kindergarten can provide students with these important skills in their formative years. In this convergent mixed-methods design study, the researcher explored the self-efficacy beliefs and attitudes of teachers towards using classroom read-alouds to teach social-emotional learning, and how those teacher self-efficacy beliefs and attitudes relate to the amount of time they spend on classroom read-alouds for social-emotional learning. Guided by Social Learning and Self-Efficacy theories, the researcher surveyed and interviewed pre-K and kindergarten general education teachers who were recruited through snowball sampling methods. To analyze survey data, descriptive statistics were used and then regression analyses were run to measure the predictive ability of self-efficacy beliefs and attitudes on the amount of time. To analyze interview data, a two-cycle coding method was used to look for patterns and themes. Attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs toward social-emotional learning was not found to predict the amount of time teachers spent reading read-alouds for social-

emotional learning. However, teachers discussed how their attitudes affect the way they conduct read-alouds and in turn affects their students. Implications for practitioners include an honest understanding of how their attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs can affect their teaching practices, as well as inspiring practitioners to increase their awareness of their practices while reading aloud so that they can make the most of their classroom read-alouds to enhance their students' social-emotional skills. Implications for policymakers include the importance of professional development geared toward teaching practitioners how to incorporate read-alouds for social-emotional learning into their classrooms, as well as funding for high-quality read-aloud books for classrooms.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to all my wonderful family members. You are the best!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This enormous undertaking was only possible with the help, support, and encouragement of many people.

I would like to thank the members of my dissertation committee for all their help and guidance. Thank you Dr. Midgette, my dissertation chair, for all of your feedback, suggestions, and support. Thank you, Dr. Waterman, for your expert advice regarding my survey and analyses. Thank you, Dr. Johnson, for your detailed editing of my manuscript. I could not have done this without all of your help!

I would also like to thank Dr. Deborah Sturm for her expert editing of my first three chapters. Additionally, Mrs. Rachel Rubinstein was an incredible help with sending out my survey.

I would like to thank my family and friends for all of their encouragement and support. I would not have managed this without all of you!

A special thank you to my father, Dr. Charles Kanner, for cheering me along, and to my sister, Esther, for always being there for me.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Background

Preschool teachers aim to provide their students with the tools they need to succeed as they begin their career in school and life. Helping children to develop healthy social and emotional skills is crucial in any program for children (Britt et al., 2016). Social-emotional learning is especially important at the preschool level; significantly, all 50 states have preschool standards for social-emotional learning, while only some states have standards for social-emotional learning in older grades (Dusenbury et al., 2018). According to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), social-emotional learning covers five domains, which are “self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making” (CASEL, 2022).

A joint position statement between the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education (NAECS/SDE), states that early childhood education can teach social and emotional skills that can help children be successful both academically and socially (NAEYC & NACES/SDE, 2002). Preschool children who participated in a program where social-emotional learning was integrated into literacy instruction were found to have increased social competence and slower growth in aggressive behavior as compared to the control students, as well as math and reading improvements for students identified as behavioral risk (Jones et al., 2011). Preschool children with higher levels of regulated behavior had less aggressive behavior in preschool and had higher levels of attention during instruction (Fantuzzo et al., 2007).

Preschool emotional and behavioral problems are correlated with lower engagement in kindergarten (Searle et al., 2014). A review of 12 meta-analyses on the effectiveness of social-emotional learning programs found positive scores on student attitudes, positive social behavior, academic performance, and a reduction in problem behaviors (Durlak et al., 2022). Children's scores of a more positive sense of self, more self-control, and better decision-making skills relate to positive youth development (Guerra & Bradshaw, 2008).

In our ever-changing, fast-paced world, there are so many challenges and difficult situations that children face that can threaten their emotional and mental health. Children need appropriate emotional skills to deal with these challenging situations. There is an increase in the number of children who face inconsistent care arrangements, abuse, neglect, or who have witnessed rage and violence (Hyson, 2004). A survey of more than 1,000 children ages two to three found that about a quarter of the children had experienced a potentially traumatic event by the age of two or three, and these experiences were more common (49%) among children living in poverty (Statman-Weil, 2015).

Covid-19 was a difficult time that affected society at large, with governments issuing travel restrictions, lockdowns, quarantines, and social distancing (Sharma et al., 2021). During Covid-19, people faced many worries and fears, such as fears for the physical health of family members, loneliness from pandemic restrictions, and mental health concerns (Rosen et al., 2023). A screening program with over one and a half million participants was conducted by Mental Health America (MHA) to identify mental health issues as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic (2021). They found that 35% of the people they screened had depression and 20% had anxiety from January through

September 2020. They also found that youths ages 11-17 who took the screening test were more likely than other age groups to receive a score of moderate to severe symptoms of anxiety and depression (Mental Health America, 2021). Since Covid-19, there has been an increase in the risk of youth suicide (Eunice Kennedy Shriver I National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2022).

Covid-19 has not only affected adults and adolescents but has also caused high rates of social-emotional or mental health issues for children (Barnett & Jung, 2021). Therefore, it is in this context of uncertain, difficult times that the importance of the social-emotional health of young children continues to grow.

Statement of the Problem

In 2021, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP), and the Children's Hospital Association (CHA) joined together to declare a national state of emergency regarding children's mental health as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), being a mentally healthy child refers to appropriately reaching developmental and emotional milestones, and learning the social skills and resilience necessary to survive and thrive in the face of challenges (CDC, 2022). A child can strengthen his mental health through having caring relationships and being in a safe and supportive environment. It is normal for children to struggle with emotions and behavior as they grow up, at times with stronger or weaker mental health. Between the years 2013 to 2019, 9.4% of children between the ages of three to 17 years in the United States were diagnosed with anxiety (CDC, 2022). One of the many suggestions of the CDC for schools to help improve their

students' mental health is to provide prevention programs that can improve students' mental health.

These statistics and recommendations are from before Covid-19. The CDC conducted more surveys and studies to look at the effect of Covid-19 on mental health. The Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, which is prepared by the CDC, describes a survey that was conducted in June 2020 which found that there were elevated levels of poor mental health and suicide ideation in June 2020, and the results were that participants reported feelings of anxiety or depression was 30.9%, which was three times as prevalent as reports from the middle of 2019 (Czeisler et al., 2020).

A study done by reviewing studies covering over 130,000 children and adolescents looked at life during lockdown caused by Covid-19 and found that children and adolescents had higher levels of depression, fear, anxiety, and irritability, as compared with rates before the pandemic (Sharma et al., 2021).

A survey by the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) surveyed parents of preschool children to study the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. The researchers concluded that the pandemic resulted in lost learning opportunities for children, and that parents reported high rates of social-emotional or mental health issues for their children (Barnett & Jung, 2021). Another survey study looked at the social-emotional health of young children during the Covid-19 lockdown in Finland, and the parents reported a decrease in the children's prosocial behavior as compared to before Covid-19 (Linnavalli & Kalland, 2021).

Tracey et al. (2022) found that both parents and schools felt that children lost out on their social-emotional well-being as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The negative social and emotional effects of the Covid-19 pandemic also caused students to struggle academically, as Spiteri et al. (2023) explained in a review of many studies about the impact of Covid-19 on children's learning. The researchers found that the pandemic caused tension, loneliness, distress, which in turn caused children to feel stress and burnout, which affected children's level of engagement in learning (Spiteri et al., 2023).

Similarly, Knudson and Cantor (2020) explain that for students to succeed academically, their physical safety and social and emotional needs must be met. The Covid-19 pandemic caused disruptions for many in these areas, and therefore created academic challenges for students.

Kanwal and Farooq (2022) surveyed preschool teachers and parents who reported that during Covid-19, children had mood swings, depressive and aggressive feelings, and discipline issues which indirectly affected their academic performance. The loss of normal social interaction caused many emotional health problems, which in turn created academic challenges.

As young children's social-emotional well-being is increasingly challenged in the face of many difficulties, the need for an increase in social-emotional health continues to grow.

Purpose of the Study

An important method that can be used to help children develop social and emotional skills is to teach these skills through interactive read-alouds (Britt et al., 2016). Interactive read-alouds refer to when the teacher reads aloud to the students and actively engages the students in conversation and supports the students' sharing of ideas (Lennox,

2013). Harper (2016) explains that reading high-quality literature that focuses on social-emotional learning can help children learn emotional vocabulary, how to be sensitive to others, and learn resilience and coping skills. It can encourage students to share and discuss personal issues and challenges, and help children who are experiencing emotional distress (Harper, 2016).

Conducting interactive read-alouds in the classroom for social-emotional learning requires minimal preparation and read-alouds are already an integral part of a preschool classroom. Therefore, it can be relatively simple for teachers to conduct interactive read-alouds to address social and emotional learning, such as when students exhibit inappropriate behaviors (Britt et al., 2016).

There is much research done on the effectiveness of using read-alouds in the classroom. Less research has been done specifically on the topic of using read-alouds for social and emotional development (Britt et al., 2016). Since Covid-19 has caused an increase in social-emotional and mental health issues in children (Barnett & Jung, 2021), there is a need to study this area. This study will look at the self-efficacy beliefs and attitudes of preschool teachers toward using read-alouds for teaching social and emotional skills, as no research focuses on the self-efficacy beliefs and attitudes of preschool teachers on this topic. Additionally, this study will address how the self-efficacy beliefs and the attitudes of the teachers affect their read-aloud practices in their classrooms. Therefore, the purpose of this mixed-methods study is twofold: one, to look at the attitudes and beliefs that preschool teachers have towards using read-alouds for teaching social and emotional skills, and two, how their attitudes and beliefs shape their

practices. Practices are defined as the amount of time the teachers spend reading read-alouds for social-emotional learning.

Raising awareness as to whether and how teachers conduct read-alouds for social-emotional learning will encourage teachers to reflect on their practices and make changes for the benefit of their students. Incorporating social-emotional learning into classroom read-alouds is an easy way to modify the curriculum without necessarily investing in a social-emotional learning program (Britt et al., 2016). Helping teachers understand the importance of social-emotional learning in the preschool years and how learning these skills at a young age can even impact academic achievement in kindergarten (Nix et al., 2013) is an important goal of this study. Social and emotional skills are skills that can assist children their whole life, and this study hopes to encourage teachers to do their utmost to ensure that each student has the tools they need to succeed.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is the Social Learning Theory by Albert Bandura (1977b). Bandura's theory states that people learn from one another through observing behavior and through modeling (Bandura, 1977b). People learn through observing others' behaviors, attitudes, and the results of others' behaviors. In this study, I will look at the attitudes and teacher-efficacy beliefs of teachers towards read-alouds used for social-emotional learning that teachers are modeling for their students and that the students observe.

Bandura's Theory of Self-Efficacy (1977a) also plays an important role in this study. Bandura states that self-efficacy refers to one's belief in his ability to complete an action necessary to produce certain results (Bandura, 1977a). Self-efficacy beliefs are

formed from a person's past experiences in a specific domain, through observing what other people can accomplish, and from considering one's physiological state while one is engaged in a specific task which enables one to think about one's abilities (Grusec, 1992). Bandura (1997) describes teacher efficacy, an offshoot of self-efficacy, as a teacher's perception of his or her ability to influence student outcomes, even among difficult students. Teacher efficacy includes whether a teacher feels capable of successfully performing the required duties of a teacher, such as planning and delivering instruction and managing the class (Bandura, 1997).

In this study, I will look at how the teachers' attitudes and beliefs about what they feel they can accomplish shape their practices regarding using read-alouds for social-emotional learning. I will explore how these two factors play a role in how teachers conduct read-alouds for social-emotional learning. Understanding the reasons why a teacher will or will not conduct a read-aloud to teach social and emotional skills will help teachers understand their practices and make appropriate changes.

This study fits within this theoretical framework because in this study, the researcher will look at teachers' attitudes and teacher self-efficacy beliefs concerning teachers' read-aloud practices for social and emotional learning. Social Learning Theory states that students learn through observing a model (Bandura, 1977b), which in this case is the teacher modeling attitudes and behaviors. Bandura's Self-Efficacy theory, and specifically teacher efficacy, will be used to evaluate how teachers perceive their ability to conduct read-alouds for social-emotional learning. The data in this study will be collected to look at teachers' attitudes and teacher efficacy beliefs and how they relate to how teachers conduct read-alouds for social-emotional learning.

This study will use a mixed-methods design, which means the researcher will collect both quantitative and qualitative data. The framework for this study will be used to analyze the quantitative data because the researcher will use correlational and regression analysis to look at correlations between these three factors and teachers' read-aloud practices to teach social-emotional learning. The qualitative phase of the study will ask the participants about these three factors and code the data for themes that will emerge from the exploration. The two databases will be integrated by analyzing the results of each phase and then by comparing the results to look at the similarities and differences. The convergent mixed-methods design will allow the researcher to obtain a broader view of read-alouds used for social-emotional learning through Social Learning Theory and Self-Efficacy Theory, as gathering both qualitative and quantitative data provide a stronger understanding of a problem than using one form of data alone (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Understanding participants' attitudes and practices through Social Learning Theory and self-efficacy beliefs through Self-Efficacy Theory are best captured through both forms of data. There are studies that use quantitative methods to guide Social Learning Theory (Kim et al., 2008; Triaga 2014) and Self-Efficacy Theory (Anderson & Olivier, 2022; Underwood, 2022), as well as studies that use qualitative data to guide Social Learning Theory (Botes et al., 2022; Gerik, 2022) and Self-Efficacy Theory (Bayraktar, 2013; Fernandes, 2017). Therefore, to fully understand the nature of the problem through Social Learning Theory and Self-Efficacy Theory, a mixed-methods study design was chosen.

Significance of the Study

Children today are faced with environmental threats such as divorce, violence, and other adult-like stressors in our fast-paced world (Hansen & Zambo, 2007).

According to the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (2022), there has been an increase in the risk of youth suicide since Covid-19. One of the many suggestions of the CDC for schools to help improve their students' mental health is to provide prevention programs that can improve students' mental health (CDC, 2022).

Therefore, this study is important as helping teachers learn more about using interactive read-alouds to promote social-emotional health can hopefully serve as a prevention for greater emotional and mental health issues. Additionally, such activities will give students important social and emotional tools that they can use, such as emotional vocabulary (Harper, 2016), which can also assist in their positive emotional health.

In a joint position statement between the NAEYC and NAECS/SDE (2002), they state that early childhood education can teach social and emotional skills that can help children be successful both academically and socially. Therefore, understanding what factors affect teachers' read-aloud practices for social-emotional skills can help teachers refine their practices so that children can be taught these skills so they can succeed in life.

This study will fill a gap as based on current mental and emotional statistics cited above, there is a need to teach social and emotional skills that can prevent mental and emotional issues (CDC, 2022). This study will focus on teachers' attitudes, teacher self-efficacy beliefs, and read-aloud practices for social and emotional learning. It will explore how attitude and teacher self-efficacy beliefs towards reading aloud for social-emotional learning predict and relate to how much time teachers spend reading read-

alouds for social-emotional learning. This study will help preschool teachers look critically at their particular classroom practices and understand what factors affect the decisions they make. Teachers will come to understand that their attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs can all affect their read-aloud practices, and they can begin to make conscious decisions that will be beneficial for their students' growth and development. This study will also highlight for teachers how their beliefs can impact their practices in other areas, besides read-alouds and social-emotional learning. An important long-term goal of the study is that teachers should reflect and consciously consider the decisions they make and whether they can change their practices in ways that can help their students.

Implications

Practitioners. An important implication for practitioners is an honest understanding of how their attitudes and beliefs can shape their practices and where their current practices are. It is the hope that this research will inspire practitioners to put more intentionality and focus as they conduct read-alouds to teach social and emotional skills.

Policymakers. An important implication for policymakers is the understanding that social-emotional learning is crucial to children's growth and development, and there is a need for professional development sessions focusing on how teachers can teach social and emotional skills to their students. Elias (2019) discusses the factors that schools need to consider and keep in mind if suddenly all schools would adopt social-emotional learning into their curricula tomorrow. Elias (2019) explains the importance of investing in school staff learning about social-emotional learning, and providing ongoing professional development to support this. Policies that ensure that there is professional

development focusing on teachers' practices that encourage teaching social-emotional skills through classroom instruction can help teachers learn how to incorporate teaching social-emotional skills in their classrooms.

Future Research. This study will provide direction for future research as once the teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and practices regarding read-alouds for social and emotional learning are understood, research can be done on how to best support preschool teachers in using read-alouds for social and emotional learning in their classrooms. Future research can also focus on what read-alouds teachers are reading for social-emotional learning, and how to help teachers in selecting and teaching read-alouds for social-emotional learning.

Research Questions

- What are the self-efficacy beliefs, attitudes, and practices of preschool teachers towards using read-alouds for social/emotional development? (Quantitative)
- What is the relationship between the self-efficacy beliefs and attitudes of teachers towards read-alouds for social-emotional learning and the amount of time teachers spend on classroom read-alouds for social-emotional learning?

The null hypothesis, in connection with the quantitative question, is that there is no correlation between teachers' attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs towards teaching social and emotional learning through read-alouds and the amount of time teachers spend teachers spend on read-alouds for social-emotional learning.

- How do their self-efficacy beliefs and attitudes impact their read-aloud practices? (Qualitative)

Definition of Terms

Social and emotional learning- the way process through which people learn skills and attitudes to manage emotions, achieve personal goals, create supportive relationships, show concern for others, and make appropriate and caring decisions. This includes learning in five domains: “self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decisions-making” (CASEL, 2022).

Attitude- the degree to which a person has a favorable or unfavorable evaluation of a behavior (Ajzen, 1991).

Self-efficacy beliefs- One’s confidence and beliefs in his ability to perform a behavior (Bandura, 1977a).

Teacher efficacy or Teacher self-efficacy- A teacher’s perception of his or her ability to influence student outcomes, even among difficult students. Teacher efficacy includes whether a teacher feels capable of successfully performing the required duties of a teacher, such as planning and delivering instruction, and managing the class (Bandura, 1997).

Preschool- Pre-k and kindergarten, where children are between the ages four through six.

Read-aloud/classroom read-aloud- An instructional practice where a teacher reads from a selected book out loud to the classroom students.

CHAPTER 2 THEORY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

Social Learning Theory

The theoretical framework that guides this study is the Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977b). Bandura's theory states that people learn from one another through observing behavior and through modeling (Bandura, 1977b). People learn through observing others' behaviors, attitudes, and the results of others' behaviors. Social learning theory includes four components that play a role in observational learning. First, the observer has to pay attention to what is being modeled, and this is based on a few factors, such as how interesting the behavior is to the observer. Second, the observer has to retain what was observed. Third, the observer has to convert the symbolic representations that he observed into motor actions. Last, the observer has to be motivated to act and copy the behavior (Bandura, 1969).

Ozer (2022) describes Bandura's Bobo doll experiment which took place between the years 1961 and 1963. Bandura found that children who watched an adult hitting an inflatable doll called Bobo were more likely to later on play aggressively with the doll than children who watched an adult who was not aggressive with the doll. This showed that observing behavior plays a large role in whether observers imitate the behavior. The children who watched aggressive play with the doll were more likely to imitate it, and this was without receiving reinforcement for the behavior. This is important as children observe their teachers' behaviors and attitudes, and may come to imitate them. Teachers need to be aware of their own attitudes and behaviors and what they are modeling for their students.

Grusec (1992) explains some of the important points of Bandura's Social Learning Theory and explains that learning occurs both through observing a behavior and by observing the consequences of the behavior. Bandura (1965) describes the role of vicarious reinforcement in this theory, which is that observing the model receive reward or punishment for a behavior can affect whether the observer will engage in the behavior. Another important point is that the characteristics of the one modeling the behavior can impact whether the observer will copy the behavior. Mischel and Grusec (1966) explain that models with social power can have a greater degree of influence on whether their behaviors will be copied by others, and Bandura et al. (1963) similarly explain that models with greater rewarding power can have a greater degree of influence on whether their behaviors will be copied by others.

Social Learning Theory is an appropriate choice for this study because when a teacher reads books out loud to teach social-emotional skills, the teacher is modeling the read-aloud and skill. Teachers can teach social and emotional skills to their students through the students observing their behavior (Joshith, 2012). The teacher needs to be aware of the attitudes that he may portray and that the students may observe and learn from. Teachers have to be aware of what kinds of practices they are engaging in so that they can ensure that they are modeling behaviors and attitudes that they want their students to observe and learn. Additionally, since the characteristics of the model can add to the likelihood that the observers will copy the behavior (Bandura et al., 1963; Mischel & Grusec, 1966), the teacher in an early childhood classroom, who is the authority with power, can greatly influence his students as he models behaviors. Conducting a read-aloud to model social-emotional learning and skills by the teacher can encourage students

to imitate the behavior. This theory highlights the need for teachers to be aware of what they are modeling and understand their attitudes, practices, and self-efficacy beliefs about conducting read-alouds for social-emotional learning.

Social Learning Theory and Education. Bandura's Social Learning Theory relates well with education. This theory focuses on the important role of observation and modeling in the learning process. Other studies and articles in the field of education use Social Learning Theory to specifically emphasize the role of observation and modeling in social learning (Deaton, 2015; Grimshaw, 2022; Hill et al., 2009; Kaliappen et al., 2021).

Self-efficacy Theory

An important theory discussed by Bandura (1977a) is Self-efficacy. This refers to one's confidence and belief in his ability to perform a behavior (Bandura, 1977a). Self-efficacy beliefs are formed from a person's past experiences in a specific domain, through observing what other people can accomplish, and from considering one's physiological state while one is engaged in a specific task which enables one to think about one's abilities. When people have a negative belief about their ability to perform in a specific situation, they may become distracted from performing effectively by becoming preoccupied with their thoughts and by becoming emotionally aroused (Grusec, 1992).

Self-efficacy can direct a person's behavior. Self-efficacy beliefs are created and shaped through one's experience, and they in turn can shape a person's behavior (Grusec, 1992). According to Bandura (1977a), a person may know that certain actions result in desired outcomes, but this information doesn't help him when he doesn't believe that he can produce those actions. Therefore, self-efficacy beliefs can be an important

determinant of human behavior. They will help a person decide whether he should continue to pursue something when faced with adversities.

Bandura (1977a) further explained his self-efficacy theory by stating that self-efficacy is determined through mastery experiences, vicarious learning, verbal persuasion, and physiological state. Mastery experiences refer to one's perceived success or failure of past experiences. Vicarious learning refers to learning from others' behaviors. Similar to the Social Learning Theory discussed above, watching whether another receives a consequence as a result of a behavior can affect an observer's belief as to whether the observer can perform a similar behavior with a similar result. Verbal persuasions refer to the idea that one's self-efficacy beliefs can be lowered or raised based on the feedback received from others. Last, physiological state refers to the idea that one's physical or emotional reactions can affect one's belief of efficacy surrounding an action, where high levels of arousal can cause one to feel less likely to expect success.

Self-Efficacy Theory and Education. Bandura's self-efficacy theory relates well to education as Bandura (1997) describes teacher efficacy as a teacher's perception of his or her ability to influence student outcomes, even among difficult students. Teacher efficacy includes whether a teacher feels capable of successfully performing the required duties of a teacher, such as planning and delivering instruction and managing the class. A teacher's self-efficacy beliefs can affect their learning environment, where teachers who believe that they can help their students learn successfully will create learning environments that will enable their students to succeed academically (Bandura, 1997). Thus, teacher efficacy takes the concepts of self-efficacy and applies them to a classroom environment.

Numerous studies in education use Self-efficacy theory. There is research on the self-efficacy of students (, see Ngoc Truong & Wang, 2019; Won et al., 2017) and research on the self-efficacy of teachers (, see Aydin, 2019; Devi & Ganguly, 2022; Gurvitch & Metzler, 2009). Research on teacher self-efficacy shows that teachers with higher levels of self-efficacy showed more support to their students (Guo et al., 2012), and have been shown to cope better with different problem behaviors in the classroom, such as social rejection and low achievement (Almog & Shechtman, 2007). Findings of a pilot study done by Epstein and Willhite (2015) suggest that preschool teachers pass their strong feelings of self-efficacy and belief in themselves over to their students so that their students feel successful. Teachers with higher levels of self-efficacy have a greater belief in the power of education and the ability to educate students (Brady & Woolfson, 2008).

Self-efficacy theory and specifically teacher efficacy play an important role in this study as the self-efficacy beliefs of teachers towards using read-alouds for social-emotional learning will be studied. Understanding that teachers' experiences can create their self-efficacy beliefs and in turn, their self-efficacy beliefs can shape their practices (Rimm-Kaufman & Sawyer, 2004), is an integral concept behind this study. Encouraging teachers to be aware of their self-efficacy beliefs and how those beliefs can relate to their practices is an important implication of this study.

Connection to Current Study

The study design is a mixed-methods study that uses a convergent design that will look at both quantitative and qualitative data. The data from each part will be analyzed by comparing the data with each other to look for similarities and differences (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Therefore, this study will provide a qualitative view alongside the

quantitative view of the importance of teachers being aware of what they are modeling for their students.

Social Learning Theory and Self-Efficacy Theory guide the literature review as the review will discuss research about teachers' attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs about read-alouds and social-emotional learning, as well as articles describing teachers' read-aloud practices in their classrooms. Most importantly, some articles describe teachers read-aloud practices for social and emotional learning in the classroom. The way which teachers model read-alouds and teach social-emotional skills may be impacted by their own attitudes, teacher self-efficacy beliefs, and personal experiences. Therefore, the review will focus on teachers' attitudes and teacher self-efficacy beliefs about read-aloud and social-emotional learning, as well as their current practices related to read-alouds and social-emotional learning.

Review of Related Literature

This literature review will be divided into three parts. It will begin with a robust discussion of social-emotional learning, specifically in the preschool context. I will then discuss teachers' attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs towards social-emotional learning, and then move on to a discussion about the importance of read-alouds for social-emotional learning in preschool.

Social-emotional Learning

Defining Social-emotional Learning. According to the CASEL framework (2023), there are five domains in social-emotional learning. Self-management refers to managing one's emotions, managing stress, and feeling motivated to accomplish personal goals. The second domain is self-awareness, which refers to being aware of and

understanding one's emotions and how they influence one's behavior. This includes feelings of self-efficacy, identifying one's personal identity, and understanding one's values, thoughts, and beliefs. Next is social awareness, which refers to understanding the perspectives of other people, including those from diverse backgrounds. It also refers to showing concern for others. The fourth domain is relationship skills, which include creating and maintaining healthy relationships with others. It includes knowing how to communicate effectively, collaborating with others, and knowing how to resolve conflicts. The final domain is responsible decision-making, which refers to making responsible decisions about one's behavior. It includes anticipating the consequences of one's actions and understanding one's role and ability to affect one's well-being and the well-being of others through one's decisions.

I chose this framework for my study as it is a comprehensive framework that covers all the domains of social-emotional learning. The CASEL framework is used by many schools in different states and countries in developing their learning standards and competencies (CASEL, 2023). For example, in a review done by Dusenbury et al. (2020) of the social-emotional learning frameworks used by 18 different states, 12 used frameworks that directly aligned with CASEL's framework. I, therefore, chose this acknowledged and wide-ranging framework to define social-emotional learning.

History of Social and Emotional Learning. According to Osher et al. (2016), while interest in social and emotional development has existed since the early twentieth century, it soared in popularity in the 1990s. An important event leading up to this dramatic increase is a group of educators created a social-emotional learning program that they ran in two schools in New Haven, Connecticut, and saw a decline in behavior

problems, plus an increase in the students' academic performance (CASEL, 2022). In 1996, ideas about social and emotional skills became popular and available to the wider public through the publication of Daniel Goleman's *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ* (Osher et al., 2016; Hoffman, 2009), and in 1997, from Elias et al.'s *Promoting Social and Emotional Learning: Guidelines for Educators* (Hoffman, 2009). Another important event in the history of social-emotional learning is the organization CASEL was created in 1994 (under the name Collaborative to Advance Social and Emotional Learning). It was created by a group of researchers, educators, and practitioners to focus on addressing students' social and emotional needs. Their mission is to ensure that social and emotional learning is a part of classroom education (CASEL, 2022).

Today, social-emotional learning can take on different forms in schools. There are many programs available for schools to implement, for example RULER (Brackett et al., 2019), where students learn to recognize, express, and manage their own emotions. Aside from a schoolwide social-emotional learning program, teachers need to integrate social-emotional principles throughout the school day, as teachers need to ensure they are meeting their students' social and emotional needs so that the students can thrive (Todd et al., 2022).

Today, many states have learning standards for social-emotional learning, and all 50 states have preschool standards for social-emotional learning (Dusenbury et al., 2018).

Importance of Social-emotional Learning in Preschool. Social-emotional learning is especially important in the formative, preschool years. A child's social and emotional skills that he develops early on in life can affect his future well-being and

ability to function in school and form successful relationships late in life (Durlak et al., 2011). According to Jones et al. (2011), students who participated in an integrated social-emotional and literacy program had greater social competence and a slower growth in aggressive behavior as compared to the control group. A study on the *You Can Do It!* social-emotional learning program on kindergarten and first grade students found that as compared to the control group, the group which received the social-emotional intervention improved in their social-emotional competence, social skills, their ability to manage their emotions, and engage in classroom learning (Ashdown & Bernard, 2012). Students need to learn how to regulate their emotions when faced with intense situations, such as when facing peer conflict (Harper, 2016). Learning skills to regulate emotions in order to build appropriate social skills will help students interact with peers, teachers, and their families (Denham et al., 2003).

Studies indicate that social-emotional learning is especially beneficial in the formative preschool years (Gunter et al., 2012; Kunduraci & Tozduman, 2022; Timmons et al., 2021), as the proper social-emotional skills can give students skills to use in the present and for the rest of their lives. These three studies, which looked at whether the social-emotional learning taught to preschool students provided helpful social-emotional skills, will be explained here in more detail.

A quasi-experimental study by Gunter et al. (2012) was done to study an intervention titled Strong Start Pre-K. Gunter et al. (2012) describe that sometimes, children may internalize behavior, but this can cause children to develop emotional and behavioral disorders with long-term issues. One way to address this issue to provide children with social-emotional learning experiences, where they can learn to

acknowledge and take charge of their emotions. While all children can benefit from social-emotional learning, specifically young children benefit from social-emotional learning. The Strong Start Pre-K program includes structured lessons to teach social-emotional skills that include literature to teach social-emotional skills in each lesson. There were 52 preschool students in two treatment groups and 32 students in a control group. In one treatment group the teacher conducted ten lessons on social-emotional learning, and in the second treatment group the teacher conducted two additional booster lessons. The results were that there was a decrease in internalizing behavior in both treatment conditions. Social-emotional learning in preschool can help children learn important skills that they need for life.

A second study is a qualitative study conducted by Timmons et al. (2021). The researchers studied the effects of Covid-19 and remote learning on students in grade kindergarten through grade 2 with 25 teachers who worked in grades K-2, and 11 parents who had a child in grades kindergarten through 2. One of the themes that emerged from the coded semi-structured interviews was the impact of Covid-19 and remote learning on the social and emotional learning of the students. Many of the teachers and parents focused on the fact that social interactions are very important in the primary grades, and students, especially in kindergarten, need social interaction for their development. Additionally, many students don't have a safe, positive, or nurturing home environment and now that learning is remote, the teachers cannot provide them with this need. It is clear from this study that social and emotional interactions and learning are of utmost importance in primary classrooms.

In a third study, Kunduraci and Tozduman (2022) conducted a correlational survey study to look at the relationship between self-regulation, emotion expression, and leadership skills in preschool children. There were 323 children between the ages of three and five who participated in the study. The study found a significant correlation between leadership, emotion expressiveness, and the self-regulation skills of preschool students. An implication of this study is the importance of teaching children self-regulation skills, skills to express their emotions in healthy ways, and leadership skills, as this helps them both in preschool and later on in life.

Associated with Academic Success. Another three studies looked at how learning social and emotional skills can even affect students' academic levels. In a study by Nix et al. (2013), 356 children from low-income families received the Head Start REDI (Research-based, Developmentally Informed) intervention compared to the regular Head Start program. The intervention studied whether focusing on social-emotional skills and literacy skills will affect the students academically and behaviorally once they enter kindergarten. An important finding of this study is that developing social-emotional skills in preschool affected the students' reading achievement and learning engagement in kindergarten (even after accounting for gains in literacy skills). This study highlights the importance of teaching at-risk children social-emotional skills to ensure that the students can succeed even academically in school.

Durlak et al. (2011) conducted a meta-analysis to look at 213 school-based social and emotional learning programs that involved 270,034 students in kindergarten through high school. They found that compared to controls, the students in the social and emotional learning programs showed significant improvement in social and emotional

skills, behavior, and academic performance. An important point to note from this meta-analysis is that social and emotional learning is associated with significant gains in academic performance.

O'Connor et al. (2017) reviewed research on social-emotional learning and social-emotional programs to answer a few questions regarding social-emotional learning. They found positive impacts both socially and academically from six meta-analyses done between the years 2008-2014 on social-emotional learning programs. Some of the positive academic outcomes included improved grades and test scores, increased problem-solving skills, and higher teacher-rated academic competence.

Teachers' Attitudes and Self-efficacy Beliefs Can Impact Practices

A central point of this study is that the attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs of teachers are important as they can affect teachers' classroom read-aloud practices. The teachers' read-aloud practices can in turn affect the students. Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977b) explains that people can learn through observing a model's behavior, and this is important as a teacher's behavior, such as their read-aloud practices, can have an impact on their students. Teachers' beliefs and attitudes are closely related to their classroom practices, and therefore, understanding teachers' attitudes and beliefs is important to understanding teachers' and students' classroom experiences (Rimm-Kaufman & Sawyer, 2004).

Self-efficacy of Teachers. Self-efficacy is defined in this study as one's confidence and belief in his ability to perform a behavior (Bandura, 1977a). Teacher efficacy refers to a teacher's perception of his or her ability to influence student outcomes, even among difficult students (Bandura, 1997). Zee and Koomen (2016)

summarize 40 years of quantitative research about teacher self-efficacy, which refers to the self-efficacy beliefs of a teacher. The synthesis of the results is that teachers with high levels of self-efficacy, especially those with more experience, were better able to cope with problem behaviors, were able to use student-centered classroom behavior practices, and had fewer conflict relationships with students. In terms of achievement, teacher self-efficacy was found to be more important at the elementary level than at the high school level.

Self-efficacy beliefs of teachers can impact their classroom practices (Guo et al., 2012; Subramaniam et al., 2023). This is important in this study because the actions and attitudes that teachers model are observed by their students, and according to Bandura's Social Learning Theory, the students can learn from them and imitate them (1977b).

Teachers' self-efficacy beliefs about Social-emotional Learning. The self-efficacy beliefs of a teacher play a role in how the teacher implements social-emotional learning in the classroom (Thierry et al., 2022). In one study, teachers who reported lower levels of self-efficacy also reported using fewer warm/supportive social-emotional learning strategies (Deng et al., 2021). In a research brief written for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Durlak (2013) lists 23 factors that influence the implementation of evidence-based programs for children and youth. Three of the practitioner characteristics are whether the practitioner understands the need for the program, the benefit of the program, and the self-efficacy beliefs of the practitioner. Teachers will implement social-emotional learning programs more carefully when they have a positive attitude toward

the program and when they are confident that they have the skills and knowledge to do so, meaning they have strong self-efficacy beliefs.

Heo et al. (2014) conducted a study with 256 Korean early childhood educators serving children below the age of six who answered a survey that assess their perceptions of the importance and implementation of strategies to address social-emotional learning. An important finding of this study is that the teachers' importance perceptions, which may be linked to self-efficacy of the teachers, were the most influential predictor of their reported implementation. Therefore, self-efficacy of the teachers plays an important role in educators implementing strategies for social-emotional learning.

Improvements in levels of teacher efficacy are associated with teachers' reports of improvements in classroom and student outcomes (Jennings et al., 2013). This was also confirmed in a study by Eckart (2022), who looked at self-efficacy beliefs of 93 teachers toward implementing social-emotional learning in the classroom. The study found that there was a positive correlation between teachers' reported efficacy toward social-emotional learning and social-emotional learning practices in their classrooms.

Attitude. Attitude in this study is defined as the degree to which a person has a favorable or unfavorable evaluation of a behavior (Ajzen, 1991).

Teachers have the power to affect their students through the emotional attitudes that they show their students, which is the conclusion reached by Humphries et al. (2014) after conducting a study to look at the influence of both teachers and mothers on the social and emotional abilities of African American preschool students. Humphries et al. (2014) found that a positive emotional tone created by teachers in the classroom was associated with the children's social and emotional competence in school. This study

shows how the emotional tone created by the teacher, meaning how a teacher feels and expresses that to the students, can affect the students' social-emotional abilities. Teachers have the power to affect their students through the attitudes that they show their students. Similarly, Morris et al. (2013) found that the emotional climate of a preschool classroom, which is mostly created by the teacher, influences the children's understanding of emotions and their behavior.

Teachers' attitudes in the social-emotional domain are closely related to their practices, which is clear from a study by Arbeau and Coplan (2007) that looked at 202 kindergarten teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and responses toward the behavior of different hypothetical children (aggressive, prosocial, shy, and unsociable). They found a consistent pattern of results across the four kinds of behaviors. For example, teachers were most positive in both attitude and response to hypothetical children who displayed prosocial behavior and also had the most negative attitude and response toward aggressive children. One implication of the study is that since teachers play an important role in the lives of young children, their beliefs and attitudes that can contribute greatly to their behaviors can have a large impact on how children adjust to school. The awareness that teachers, through their attitudes and beliefs toward the social needs of the children, can potentially have long-term positive effects on the children can help teachers realize that they can use their attitudes and beliefs toward behaviors to help them choose appropriate practices to deal with their students. This is important as in this study, I will study how the attitudes of teachers towards social-emotional learning affect their read-aloud practices.

Another study that concluded that teachers' beliefs about emotions are related to their social-emotional teaching practices was by Zinsser et al. (2014), who conducted a mixed-methods study to look at preschool teachers' beliefs about social-emotional learning and the relationship to observed emotional support. There were 32 preschool teachers who participated in the study. The researchers found that the teachers' beliefs about emotions were related to their social-emotional teaching practices. Specifically, they found teachers who were highly supportive of their students' social-emotional growth were focused on including social-emotional learning into daily activities and their interactions with their students through modeling and coaching, while those who were moderately supportive relied heavily on social-emotional curricula during prescribed times of the school day.

Teachers' Attitudes about Social-emotional Learning. Several studies have been conducted to look at teachers' attitudes toward social-emotional learning. It is important to note what teachers' attitudes currently are towards social-emotional learning overall before conducting a study to look at their attitudes towards using read-alouds for social-emotional learning.

Several studies were conducted at the elementary, middle, or high school level. Kim and Hong (2019) found that most teachers they surveyed rated integrating emotions and feelings into the teaching of literacy as extremely important or important. Bridgeland et al. (2013) found that in a sample of more than 600 teachers, 76% of the teachers said they believe it is very important for schools to promote social and emotional skills as part of students' school experience, and another 17% stated that it is fairly important. Another result of interest from this survey is that 44% of teachers surveyed said that they did not

receive training in teaching social and emotional skills. In another study, Atwell et al. (2021) found that 56% of teachers stated that they believe building social and emotional development is equally important to developing students' academic skills.

Preschool Studies. Two studies looked specifically at preschool teachers' attitudes toward social-emotional learning. Ferreira et al. (2021) conducted a qualitative study with 13 Portuguese preschool teachers who taught children ages three to five years old. They found that the participants understood social-emotional learning similar to the way CASEL (2023) defines social-emotional learning (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making). However, even though the teachers were knowledgeable about social-emotional learning, they had limited number of activities to teach social and emotional learning in their classrooms. The implementation of social-emotional learning depended a lot on whether the individual teacher was interested in social-emotional learning. This is important as it shows that teacher preparation programs should include the topic of teaching social-emotional skills to students.

Liesch et al. (2022) conducted a study to look at pre-k teachers' perceptions of social and emotional learning. They conducted a survey where 22 participants answered the Teacher Social and Emotional Learning Beliefs Scale (Brackett et al., 2012). This scale looks at three scales: commitment to teaching social-emotional learning, comfort teaching social-emotional learning, and the perceived school culture of support for social-emotional learning. The researchers found that more educated and more experienced teachers scored higher on the Teacher Social and Emotional Learning Belief Scale, as they had hypothesized.

Importance of Read-Alouds for Social-emotional Learning in Preschool

Effective Preschool Read-Alouds. Read-alouds play an important role in a preschool classroom. There has been much research done on different kinds of read-alouds and how to conduct effective read-alouds. McGee and Schickedanz (2007) discuss that the way read-alouds are conducted is important and can make a difference in how effective the read-aloud will be. Lennox (2013) describes interactive read-alouds as the teacher reading aloud to the student while encouraging the students to participate and share. These read-alouds are referred to as interactive or dialogic read-alouds. Teachers must encourage students' analytic talk by making predictions, connections, and inferences, and children learn how to do this by watching how teachers model these skills.

Brooke and Bramwell (2006) describe dialogic reading (a particular type of shared book reading) as a technique where the teacher reads a book multiple times with children in small groups. The teacher asks planned questions and answers the students in a way that encourages the students to say more. Multiple readings of the same book encourage children to ask more questions and talk more about the story. Teachers and students interacting during dialogic reading creates many opportunities for the students to develop emergent literacy skills.

Fisher et al. (2004) discuss the many benefits of read-alouds: teachers can model reading strategies and help students develop vocabulary and print concepts. The researchers wondered whether it was enough if teachers just read a story or if there are certain procedures that teachers should use to create an effective read-aloud. After gathering data from many teachers, Fisher et al. (2004) found that all the expert teachers

chose books that were appropriate developmentally, socially, and emotionally for their students; practiced the book before the lesson; had a clear goal for the read-aloud; the teachers modeled fluency while reading; the teachers used expression while reading; the teachers stopped to question the students during the read-aloud and encourage student participation; and last, teachers connected the read-aloud to reading or writing that was going on in the classroom.

These studies highlight the point that interactive read-alouds with the children as active participants are necessary for the children to benefit from the read-aloud. Teachers have to realize that interactive read-alouds are an instructional activity that require proper planning if they are to succeed.

Preschool Teachers' Read-aloud Practices. A number of studies look at how often read-alouds are conducted in preschool classrooms. In 1993, Hoffman et al. conducted a survey to look at read-aloud practices and found that on the day the survey was filled out, in 84% of 66 kindergarten classrooms a read-aloud was conducted. Jacobs et al. (2000) conducted a study to assess how often teachers read aloud to their students. There were 216 kindergarten teachers who responded to the study. Participants answered eight questions on a questionnaire to rate about how often in the last 10 days they read aloud to their students. The mean for reading aloud to kindergarten was five days out of the last ten days, and it decreased as the grade level went up. It is clear from this study that kindergarten teachers read to their students quite often. Ross (2017) surveyed 56 kindergarten teachers and found that 80% of them reported that they read aloud every day or several times a day. As for how many minutes they spent reading aloud, 57% of these teachers spent zero to 15 minutes on a read-aloud, while 39% reported they spent 16 to

30 minutes on a read-aloud. Damber (2015) conducted a study in 39 preschools in Sweden to look at how often read-alouds were performed and concluded that read-alouds occurred about once each day.

Aside from how often read-alouds occur in preschool, studies looked at how they are conducted. Damber (2015) found read-alouds were often conducted without prior planning, and books were randomly chosen. Alatalo and Westlund (2021) studied Swedish preschool teachers' read-aloud practices and concluded that teachers reported large classes and requirements to teach academic subjects as some of the deterrents to planning and conducting read-alouds. Teachers that received professional development reported having daily read-alouds followed by a discussion of the text.

A study by Deshmukh et al. (2022) looked at the conversations created by teachers' questions during shared book readings in prekindergarten and kindergarten classrooms. There were 93 teachers who participated in the study and read a read-aloud to their class. The researchers found that teachers do respond to their students during the read-aloud and provide challenge and support, however, scaffolding strategies that encourage reasoning and prediction skills were not used very often. In another study on scaffolding strategies during read-alouds, Pentimonti and Justice (2010) studied low and high-level scaffolding support that preschool teachers used during read-alouds. They found that 96% of the scaffolding support strategies used by preschool teachers during read-alouds were low-level supports (generalizing, reasoning, and predicting), while 4% of the strategies used were high support scaffolding strategies (co-participating, reducing choices, eliciting). Interestingly, teachers reported using high-level scaffolding support strategies more often than they actually did.

Read-alouds Used for Social-Emotional Learning. There is a limited amount of research done on using read-alouds for social-emotional learning. A search for peer-reviewed articles about read-alouds and social-emotional learning in five databases from the years 1990 to 2015 only yielded 10 results (Britt et al., 2016). Although this is already a few years ago, it is interesting to note that even though social-emotional learning became quite popular in the late 1990s (Osher et al., 2016), there were still few articles during the years 1990 and 2015 that addressed both read-alouds and social-emotional learning.

Benefit of Read-alouds for Social-Emotional Learning. Teachers can use read-alouds to teach children the appropriate word for an emotion, and the children can now label and express how they are feeling (Harper, 2016). During read-alouds, children are exposed to picture books that have illustrations of facial expressions and children learn to identify emotions through the book. These books can also model for children how to manage their own strong emotions and invite discussion about personal issues. Children who listen to stories of others who struggle through similar experiences can identify with the characters, and learn strategies to cope and solutions to their problems. It can help students deepen their understanding of others (Harper, 2016).

Tominey et al. (2017) and Doyle and Bramwell (2006) write how teachers can help children learn about their feelings through read-alouds. Children can learn new vocabulary words as they learn about different emotions. Children can learn about the emotions of the characters in a story, and this can help children deal with their own emotions. Kinsner and Parlakian (2021) write how read-alouds can be used to teach social and emotional learning to children by providing a safe way to explore feelings and

process a new experience, such as the loss of a pet. Rizzuto and Steiner (2022) explain that it is important to learn from the character's thoughts and feelings in stories besides for the storyline because exploring the internal workings of characters can help children learn the social world.

Doyle and Bramwell (2006) state an important point: teachers should not feel that academic goals and social-emotional goals conflict with each other, but rather, teachers should blend social-emotional learning and emergent literacy learning together, for example through read-alouds. During an interactive read-aloud, the children learn social skills such as listening to others, taking turns, and speaking appropriately. Children also learn emotional vocabulary. Britt et al. (2016) write that during an interactive read-aloud, children can learn about how punctuation, quotations, and illustrations add to the meaning of the story.

These articles clearly explain how read-alouds can be a great tool to teach students about social and emotional skills. As read-alouds are a part of preschool classroom, teachers may find it simple to conduct an interactive read-aloud to address social-emotional learning, perhaps after observing inappropriate behavior (Britt et al., 2016). This approach doesn't require heavy training, and it can also help improve the students' literacy skills as well (Britt et al., 2016). Storey (2019) promotes embedding social-emotional learning into English Language Arts lessons, as this doesn't require overburdened teachers to teach another subject, yet allows the teachers to teach the material from a social-emotional learning perspective. Although following a social-emotional learning program can benefit the students, it requires training for the teachers,

and therefore using interactive read-alouds to teach social and emotional learning is a relatively simple tool that can provide children with important skills for life.

Literature used for Social-emotional Learning. Children’s literature can be used to teach valuable social-emotional skills. Kara-Soteriou and Rose (2008) explain how children’s literature can be used to teach children about positive character traits such as perseverance, cooperation, and other social-emotional skills. The two authors (a literacy education professor and first grade teacher respectively) developed a unit for second grade students and younger to address positive character traits after witnessing students hurt each other’s feelings. They chose to use literature as the characters in the stories can model positive behaviors that teachers want students to copy. Additionally, literature helps children deal with their emotions and encourages them to develop positive character traits. Following the unit, the students in Rose’s (then) second grade class exhibited acceptable methods to resolve conflicts with peers. There were fewer negative interactions between students in the class.

Studies have been done at elementary and high school levels that showed how literature can be used to teach social-emotional skills, specifically feeling empathy (Baxter, 2020; Gordon, 2019).

Gordon (2019) conducted a qualitative study in which multicultural interactive read-aloud books were read to third-grade students. The results showed that the multicultural read-alouds and discussion experiences can potentially positively impact the students’ ability to feel empathy, which according to CASEL (2023), comes under the “social awareness” category of domains of social-emotional learning. The students also gained in their emotion vocabulary and understanding of emotions. Similarly, a study

done with high school-age students found that independent reading time helped the students develop empathy and perspective-taking skills from the reading (Baxter, 2020). The study also found that books can help students deal with trauma and other struggles.

Sullivan and Valadez (2022) conducted a study to look at Caldecott Award-winning texts from the years 2016-2020 to investigate their inclusion of social-emotional learning in the text and pictures using CASEL's five competencies. The researchers created an evaluative instrument to study the five Caldecott Award-winning books between the years 2016-2020. They found that each of the five books included at least some of the social-emotional competencies in the text and/or illustrations, with only one book including each of the competencies. However, two of the texts, which were both multicultural texts, contained the largest number of social-emotional learning competencies. This study shows that there is literature that has instances of social-emotional competencies and it can be used in classrooms to teach these competencies.

Several articles review read-aloud books that teachers of preschool or kindergarten classes can use to teach specific social and emotional skills (Ableser, 2008; Britt et al., 2016; Gunn et al., 2022; Harper, 2016; Ho & Funk, 2018; Willis & Schiller, 2011).

Read-alouds to Promote Resilience. Picture books can be used to explore crises that occur in the world, and allow teachers to model how to respond to others experiencing crisis, as well as send messages of hope and resilience to students (Crawford et al., 2019). Resilience connects to self-management, one of the five domains of social-emotional learning according to CASEL (2023). Walker et al. (2020) discussed developing resilience in children and young adults who have incarcerated parents through

using read-alouds. The authors list and describe a number of books about children with incarcerated parents that promote resilience, and describe how the books can be read as a read-aloud with questions being asked about key points in the story. Resiliency can be strengthened through supportive communities (Masten, 2014 as cited in Brendtro, 2015), and using a read-aloud strategy with a group of students is a strategy that can help create a sense of community. Children, especially those facing difficult circumstances, can connect to the characters in the story, and learn resiliency through reading about the characters' thoughts and actions.

Lacina et al. (2016) state that teachers can teach students skills to develop resilience through reading and discussing children's literature. Read-alouds help children connect to the characters in the books that may have similar life experiences to them. By exposing children to rich literature with well-developed story lines and characters, children can be better equipped to deal with the conflict in their lives.

Teachers Conducting Read-alouds for Social-Emotional Learning. Chen and Adams (2023) found that preschool teachers used book reading to teach social-emotional learning remotely during Covid-19 to increase the social-emotional skills of their students.

Schultz and Baczek (2020) conducted an action research study with each of their fourth-grade classes on read-alouds used to promote social and emotional learning. They saw that their students were lacking social-emotional skills such as resolving conflicts and building empathy. A total of 36 students participated in their classroom study. The teacher-researchers administered a survey to their students asking them to report on their social-emotional skills before the intervention. Then, the teacher-researchers read to their

students from a read-aloud book that focused on social-emotional skills for 25 minutes a day for 15 weeks. Following the intervention, the students answered the same survey again to see if they reported an increase in their social-emotional skills. On average, the students scored higher for each question in the post-survey than in the pre-survey. An important limitation of this action research study which the researchers point out is that they did not test the statistical significance of the increase in how the students rated their social-emotional skills in the post-survey. However, this survey is important as it shows that there is a practical significance to this topic as the students did rate themselves to be more proficient in their social and emotional skills. It shows that this topic needs to be further researched and addressed.

Densmore-James and Yocum (2015) discuss the idea that students have a lot on their minds- challenges that can occur daily, personal struggles, and fears. If these issues are left unaddressed, they can sit on the students' minds and can make it challenging for the students to learn. Densmore-James and Yocum (2015) therefore discuss different strategies that teachers can use in the classroom to help increase students' emotional health. One strategy they describe is through read-alouds. Read-alouds provide a platform for students to communicate and discuss important topics, such as challenges that they experienced. In order to help the students develop emotional intelligence and the skills necessary to cope with life, teachers have to use strategies that encourage students to express themselves, empathize, and make connections.

Britt et al. (2016) highlight important aspects of how teachers should conduct interactive read-alouds to address social and emotional learning. Teacher should review the text in advance and decide where to pause and what questions to ask. Open-ended

questions that focus on the character's feelings should be asked. The teacher should have a clear purpose for selecting the text, and convey that to the students. Additionally, the teacher should practice reading the text beforehand so he can read it fluently. Using a variety of expressions and different tones of voice for different characters can enhance the students' comprehension and add to the enjoyment of the read-aloud.

Social-emotional Learning Programs using Read-alouds. Some social-emotional learning programs use read-alouds as part of their method to teach social-emotional skills. For example, two pilot studies done on social-emotional learning programs that both use read-alouds as a central part of the social-emotional learning program.

There are some challenges that teachers may face when conducting interactive read-alouds for social and emotional learning, as Dermata (2019) concluded from a pilot study. Dermata (2019) explains that through picture books, children can express their feelings, talk about a character's feelings, learn about emotion from characters' expressions, and discuss ways to resolve conflict in a story. Dermata (2019) introduced a program in Greece titled "My BEST (a Book-Based Emotional Social Thinking) friends, the books", where the goal is to use high-quality picture books and a dialogic teaching environment where students can express their thoughts on social and emotional topics. The program will be used to explore how preschool children understand the representation of social and emotional skills found in picture books. The researcher conducted a qualitative pilot study to try a part of the program with preschool children. One conclusion the researcher made was that when designing activities based on discussions, it is important to formulate the questions that will be addressed to the

students. Another challenge is for the teacher to take a step back and allow the children to talk and express their thoughts freely. When teachers are aware of the challenges they may face when conducting read-alouds for social-emotional learning, they will be able to do their best to overcome the challenges.

A study done by Daunic et al. (2013) looked at a social-emotional literacy intervention to help children who are at risk for emotional and behavioral disorders titled Social-Emotional Learning Foundations (SELF). The researchers developed this curriculum, which includes read-alouds for social-emotional learning, and piloted it in this study with 8 teachers and 26 students in the experimental group, and 10 teachers and 23 students in the control group. All students in the study were identified as at risk for behavioral issues. The SELF curriculum covers self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management, and responsible decision-making. The curriculum begins with a read-aloud related to the social-emotional topic being taught, as well as group discussions and activities such as role-play. The researchers found a significant positive treatment effect on the Behavior Regulation Index of the BRIEF (Behavior Rating Inventory of Executive Function Teacher Form). The results provide evidence that integrating social-emotional learning with literacy instruction may be a possible strategy to help social and academic outcomes of children at behavioral risk. Importantly, teachers in the experimental group reported this program to be engaging for students and very possible to implement during kindergarten literacy instruction.

These two studies show that read-alouds for social-emotional learning play an important role in these social-emotional learning programs, and the positive results found in the second study sound promising, but of course require future testing.

In summary, the above literature describes the importance of social-emotional learning in a preschool classroom and how read-alouds can be used as a tool for teaching social-emotional skills. Additionally, teachers' attitudes and teacher-efficacy beliefs can impact teachers' classroom practices, specifically how they implement social-emotional learning in the classroom. This study will build on the literature by examining what are preschool teachers' attitudes, teacher-efficacy beliefs, and current practices for read-alouds teaching social-emotional learning. Additionally, this study will look at whether teachers' attitudes and teacher-efficacy beliefs towards using read-alouds for social-emotional learning predicts the amount of time they spend reading aloud for social-emotional learning.

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODS

Research Questions

- What are the self-efficacy beliefs, attitudes, and practices of pre-K and kindergarten teachers towards using read-alouds for social/emotional learning?
(Quantitative)
- What is the relationship between the self-efficacy beliefs and attitudes of teachers towards read-alouds for social-emotional learning and the amount of time teachers spend on classroom read-alouds for social-emotional learning?

The null hypothesis in this study is that none of the variance in the amount of time teachers spend reading read-alouds for social-emotional learning is explained by the self-efficacy beliefs and attitudes of pre-K and kindergarten teachers towards using classroom read-alouds to teach social-emotional skills.

- How do their self-efficacy beliefs and attitudes shape their read-aloud practices?
(Qualitative)

Research Design and Data Analysis

This study uses a mixed-methods design. This is because both quantitative and qualitative data provide different views on the topic, and therefore a more complete understanding of this topic can be reached as a result of using both forms of data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

This study uses a convergent mixed-methods design. In this design, the researcher collects both qualitative and quantitative data separately, analyzes them separately, and then integrates the data by comparing the data to see if the findings are similar or different (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In this study, I conducted a survey to collect

quantitative data to see if and how attitude and self-efficacy beliefs relate to the teachers' read-aloud practices.

I also conducted semi-structured interviews to learn in detail what are the attitudes, self-efficacy beliefs, and practices of pre-k and kindergarten teachers towards read-alouds used for social-emotional learning.

In the convergent mixed-methods design, the assumption is that while each method of data collection and analysis gives different types of information, the results should be the same (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In this research design, the researcher used a side-by-side comparison to compare both forms of analyzed data to look for similarities and differences (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Variables

Independent Variables. The independent variables in this study are the self-efficacy beliefs and attitudes of teachers towards using read-alouds for social and emotional learning in the classroom. I define self-efficacy beliefs according to Bandura (1977a), who states that self-efficacy refers to one's confidence and beliefs in his ability to perform a behavior. Attitudes are defined as the degree to which a person has a favorable or unfavorable evaluation of a behavior (Ajzen, 1991).

Dependent Variable. The dependent variable in this study is the amount of time and how often teachers conduct read-alouds to teach social-emotional learning. Time will be studied in terms of how often teachers and for how long teachers conduct read-alouds for social-emotional learning.

To study these three variables, I collected both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data on the variables were collected through a survey. The level of significance that will be used to accept or reject the hypothesis is $p=0.05$.

The researcher also collected qualitative data to study the constructs, which were then transcribed and analyzed for themes and patterns using coding. Saldaña (2021) states that coding is a “cyclical act”, and that further cycles of coding are important to deepen the understanding of the data. Therefore, the researcher conducted two rounds of coding on the data (Saldaña, 2021). The researcher first used In Vivo coding to develop the first round of codes, and then pattern coding to help group the initial codes together (Saldaña, 2021). (Both forms of data collection will be described in greater detail in a later section.)

Reliability and Validity/Trustworthiness of the Research Design

In the convergent mixed-methods design, the validity and reliability are established by ensuring that each form of data has reliability and validity (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Additionally, it is important for the researcher to ensure that the same constructs and concepts are being measured and studied in both phases of the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Otherwise, it would not make sense to compare both data sets in the analysis when integrating the data.

In order to ensure the reliability and validity of the study, a number of important steps were taken during each form of data collection. To increase the validity of the qualitative phase, the researcher used low inference descriptors, which refers to using the participants actual quotations in the analysis (Johnson, 1997). Another step that the researcher took is that the researcher was reflexive and understood her own biases and

feelings about the topic, and tried to keep her own biases and feelings out of the study (Johnson, 1997).

For the quantitative phase, validity of the survey refers to the idea that the survey must measure what it intends to measure, and this can be verified through pilot testing the survey through cognitive interviews items (Desimone & Le Floch, 2004). Also, it is important to conduct cognitive interviews to ensure that the participants understand the questions the same way that the researchers meant them to be understood, and that the questions are not leading or miss out on asking about important aspects of the topic at hand (Desimone & Le Floch, 2004). During the cognitive interviews, the researcher gave the survey to three participants and had them “think aloud” as they answered each question. This provided the researcher with valuable information on whether questions were clear and how teachers interpreted the terms in the survey items (Desimone & Le Floch, 2004). The researcher conducted two rounds of cognitive interviews. First, the researcher gave the survey to two participants, after which the researcher revised the survey to ensure each question is worded clearly. Then, the researcher gave the survey to a final participant to ensure that the survey is understood the way the researcher would like it to be understood.

To ensure the reliability of the semi-structured interviews, the researcher was the sole researcher for this project. This is to ensure that there will be reliability through one researcher reporting all of the qualitative data. Additionally, to ensure reliability the researcher checked the transcripts for accuracy and the codes were cross-checked with another researcher.

The reliability of the survey was measured through completing a factor analysis for the three constructs being measured by the survey (attitude, self-efficacy beliefs, and time). Once the scales were created, the researcher calculated Cronbach's Alpha for each scale to ascertain that it is at least .7. This is to ensure that there is high internal reliability of the survey questions. The results are discussed in Chapter 4.

Sample and Population

Sample

For this study, the researcher used a nonprobability sample of pre-K and kindergarten teachers using a snowball sampling method (Huck, 2012) to recruit participants for interview and survey data collection. For the quantitative phase, the researcher conducted a survey with 47 pre-K and kindergarten teachers. For the qualitative phase, the researcher conducted interviews with 4 teachers, two who teach pre-K and two who teach kindergarten, and who also have participated in the quantitative phase. This is because the researcher will compare the data from both datasets, and the more they are similar, the better the comparison (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Participants in this study were general education classroom pre-K/pre-K age and kindergarten teachers. To select participants for the quantitative phase, I used two phases: in the first phase, I sent the link for the survey to all the pre-K and kindergarten general education teachers that I know. I asked at least seven people (all who either work in a school or know pre-K/kindergarten teachers) that I know that live in different states (four in different cities or communities in New York, two in different cities in New Jersey, and one in Maryland) to send it via WhatsApp groups, texting, or email to pre-K/kindergarten teachers they know/work with, or other people in their respective communities who can

forward it to teachers that they know. I asked the participants of my survey to send the survey to any other general education pre-K/kindergarten teachers that they know. I waited at least two weeks, and since there were only a few survey responses, I moved onto a second phase of collecting survey data, which was by spreading the link for my survey by posting it on four Facebook groups for preschool educators. These were: Preschool Teachers (47,600 members); Pre-k, Kindergarten, and 1st Grade Teachers Group (11,200 members); and Preschool Teachers Tips and Activities (12,200 members). I also asked that viewers/participants of the survey pass it on to any other general education pre-K or kindergarten educator that they know.

For the qualitative phase, the researcher chose participants using convenience sampling (Huck, 2012). The researcher used convenience sampling to recruit participants for the semi-structured interviews. The first two pre-K and the first two kindergarten teachers to respond to the survey question that they agree to be interviewed by sending an email to sara.kanner20@my.stjohns.edu, or who agreed without sending the email, were selected for the semi-structured interviews. These teachers were part of the larger quantitative sample and also completed the survey.

Population

As I did not use random sampling procedures, the results are not able to be generalized to the population of pre-K and kindergarten educators. However, the snowball sampling procedure provided a sizeable sample of participants, which provided ample data for this study.

Instruments

In this study, I used a survey to collect data on the participants' attitudes, self-efficacy beliefs, and practices that relate to their read-aloud practices. The survey, created on Survey Monkey, has a total of 9 survey questions. It begins with an explanation as to what "social-emotional learning" and "read-alouds" mean so that the participants understand what the researcher is referring to by using those terms. It then asks two demographic questions (level of education and years of teaching experience). Next, it asks the participants about their read-aloud practices for social-emotional learning. Questions include select from a list of choices to answer how often and for how much time do they conduct read-alouds for social-emotional learning. The survey has the participants rate their level of agreement (Strongly agree, Agree, Don't agree or disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree) on attitude statements about using read-alouds for social-emotional learning. There are also questions that have the participants rate their level of agreement (Strongly agree, Agree, Don't agree or disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree) to statements of self-efficacy beliefs about using read-alouds for social-emotional learning.

The researcher developed this instrument with four questions adapted with permission from the Teacher SEL Beliefs Scale (Brackett, 2012). As mentioned above, the researcher used cognitive interviews to improve the validity of the survey by ensuring that the questions would be understood the way the researcher intends for them to be understood and that the questions are clear (Desimone & Le Floch, 2004).

The researcher conducted a confirmatory factor analysis to ensure that each of the survey items measure the constructs that they intended to measure. Then, Cronbach's alpha was calculated to ensure that there is reliability of the scales in my survey.

Part 1 of the survey asks demographic questions: what grade level the participant teaches, number of years of teaching experience, highest level of education, and whether the teacher teaches pre-K/pre-K age or kindergarten. Descriptive statistics using SPSS was run on this data.

Part 2 of the survey asks participants about the amount of time they spend on read-alouds for social-emotional learning. Part 3 of the survey asks participants about their attitudes towards using classroom read-alouds for social-emotional learning, and Part 4 asks participants about their self-efficacy beliefs related to using classroom read-alouds for social-emotional learning.

Procedures for Collecting Data

Both forms of data were collected at the same time. For the quantitative data, the survey data were collected electronically through Survey Monkey, as the link emailed to teachers opens up a survey on a website. When the participant finished the survey, it was automatically recorded and the researcher had access to the completed survey. This is because it is a convenient, easy, and quick way to collect survey data from participants who live in all different geographic locations. Also, using an online survey reduces data entry errors (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

For the qualitative data, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with four teachers, two who teach pre-k and two who teach kindergarten. The interviews were semi-structured, and the researcher followed an interview protocol to ensure that the

researcher asked each participant the same question. The researcher used an interview protocol based on Creswell and Creswell (2018) (see Appendix F). All the interviews were recorded (with the permission of the participants) so that the researcher was able to look back at the participants' responses. Participants were asked a number of questions about their attitudes, self-efficacy beliefs, and read-aloud practices (see Appendix F). The researcher defined self-efficacy beliefs and read-aloud so that the participants understand the terms before answering the questions. The interviews took place through Webex. The researcher recorded each interview (with participants' permission) and then transcribed the interviews.

The qualitative data semi-structured interviews were done by the sole researcher of this project. This was to ensure that there was reliability through one researcher reporting all of the qualitative data. Additionally, to ensure reliability the researcher checked the transcripts for accuracy and the codes were cross-checked with another researcher.

The researcher was reflexive about her biases and did her utmost to keep them out of the study to ensure validity.

Data Analysis

The researcher analyzed each form of data separately. The, the two forms of analyzed data were compared to look for similarities and differences (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The data analysis is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1*Summary of Mixed Methods Design*

Research Questions	Methodology	Data Source	Data Analysis
1) What are the self-efficacy beliefs, attitudes, and practices of pre-k and kindergarten teachers towards using read-alouds for social/emotional learning?	Quantitative	Survey	Frequency and regression analysis in SPSS
2) What is the relationship between the self-efficacy beliefs and attitudes of teachers towards read-alouds for social-emotional learning and the amount of time teachers spend on classroom read-alouds for social-emotional learning?	Quantitative	Survey	Frequency and regression analysis in SPSS
3) How do their self-efficacy beliefs and attitudes impact their read-aloud practices?	Qualitative	Interviews	In Vivo and Pattern coding (Saldaña, 2021)

Quantitative Data Analysis

The researcher first ran descriptive statistics using SPSS to calculate frequency on all of the variables in the study, including whether the teacher teaches pre-k or kindergarten, level of education, years of teaching experience, self-efficacy beliefs, attitudes, and time. As mentioned previously, the researcher conducted a confirmatory

factor analysis to ensure that each of the survey items measure the constructs that they intend to measure. The researcher calculated Cronbach's alpha to ensure that there is reliability of the scales.

The researcher used simultaneous multiple regression to see if there was a significant predictive relationship between the two independent variables (self-efficacy beliefs and attitudes) and the dependent variable (time spend reading read-alouds for social-emotional learning), and the R^2 and how much of the variance in read-aloud practices for social-emotional learning is explained by any of the above factors. The researcher ran regression analyses using simultaneous multiple regression to see whether the two independent variables (self-efficacy beliefs and attitudes) plus the covariate independent variables (level of education, years of experience, and grade taught) were significant predictors of the dependent variable (amount of time teachers spend on read-aloud practices for social-emotional learning). The researcher ran three separate regressions, one for each time question from the survey. This is described in more detail in Chapter 4. The R^2 is the percentage of variability in the dependent variable that can be explained by the independent variables.

The researcher calculated an F test using SPSS to look at whether the models were significant. Beta weights were calculated and examined to determine the degree to which each factor in the model predicted the dependent variable (amount of time teachers spend on read-alouds for social-emotional learning).

Qualitative Data Analysis

The interview transcripts were analyzed through coding. The codes were grouped together in categories to help the researcher find themes in the data (Saldaña, 2021).

The researcher prepared the transcripts by separating the text into short paragraph-length units with a line break between them whenever the topic or subtopic seemed to change (Saldaña, 2021). This was to help the researcher notice codes in each unit of text. Additionally, as the researcher prepared the transcripts for the coding process, the researcher pre-coded by highlighting or bolding significant passages that seemed important (Saldaña, 2021).

The researcher coded the data in two cycles, as there can be much more to learn from the data by coding it multiple times (Saldaña, 2021). First, the researcher used In Vivo coding to develop initial codes. Then, the researcher coded the data a second time using Pattern Coding (Saldaña, 2021). The goal of a second cycle of coding is to develop categories and themes from the codes developed in the first cycle (Saldaña, 2021).

In Vivo coding was used as the first cycle of coding because in In Vivo coding, the actual terms used by the participants are used as the codes. This is important in this study as this study aims to understand the participants' perspectives on the topic (Saldaña, 2021). Then, pattern coding was used for the second cycle of coding. Pattern codes are used to identify a theme or explanation. They take a lot of information from the first cycle of coding and combine it into more meaningful units of analysis (Saldaña, 2021). The researcher used pattern coding to categorize the first round of codes into themes.

When writing up the analysis of the categories and themes, the researcher used specific quotes, examples, and details directly from the participants in order to provide evidence for the themes. The researcher analyzed the themes from the interviews and

looked for patterns in the data, meaning similarities and differences between the views of the participants.

Data Integration

The researcher used a side-by-side comparison to compare the two data sets. This means that the researcher first reports one set of data and then present the other set and explain how it is the same or different (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The researcher will report the quantitative statistical results and then discuss the qualitative results and whether they are the same or different.

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

This chapter presents the findings from this study. The chapter begins with the purpose of the study, a review of the research questions, and an overview of the methods used in this study. Then, quantitative demographic data are summarized, followed by quantitative and qualitative analyses organized by each research question. Last, the findings from quantitative and qualitative analyses are merged and explained in a side-by-side comparison (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this convergent mixed-methods study was to explore and understand the relationship between attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs of pre-K/ pre-K age and kindergarten teachers towards reading read-alouds for social-emotional learning and the amount of time they spent on read-alouds for social-emotional learning.

Research Questions

The following three research questions guided this study:

RQ 1: What are the self-efficacy beliefs, attitudes, and practices of pre-k and kindergarten teachers towards using read-alouds for social/emotional learning?

(Quantitative)

RQ 2: What is the relationship between the self-efficacy beliefs and attitudes of teachers towards read-alouds for social-emotional learning and the amount of time teachers spend on classroom read-alouds for social-emotional learning?

The null hypothesis in this study is that none of the variance in the amount of time teachers spend reading read-alouds for social-emotional learning is explained by the self-

efficacy beliefs and attitudes of pre-K and kindergarten teachers towards using classroom read-alouds to teach social-emotional skills.

RQ 3: How do their self-efficacy beliefs and attitudes impact their read-aloud practices?

(Qualitative)

Descriptive statistics addressed the first and second research questions, and qualitative analysis addressed the third research question.

Overview of Methods

A convergent mixed-methods research design was chosen for this study since both quantitative and qualitative data provide different views on the topic, and therefore, a more complete understanding of this topic can be reached as a result of using both forms of data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In this design, qualitative and quantitative data were collected separately, analyzed separately, and then integrated by comparing the data to see if the findings are similar or different (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Data Collection Process

Data collection began after securing IRB approval. The researcher then conducted three cognitive interviews to ensure that the questions were clearly worded and the participants understood the questions the way they were intended to be understood (Desimone & Le Floch, 2004). After the survey wording was finalized, quantitative data were collected through surveys sent out via a link to a Survey Monkey survey. Data were collected through an online survey as it is a convenient, easy, and quick way to collect survey data from participants who live in all different geographic locations. Additionally, using an online survey reduces data entry errors (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). During the first two weeks of data collection, the researcher sent the survey to general education pre-

K age/pre-K and kindergarten teachers using the snowball sampling method (Huck, 2012). After about two weeks, the survey was also sent to the following 4 Facebook groups: Reading For All; Preschool Teachers; Preschool Teacher Tips and Activities; and Pre-K, kindergarten, and First-grade Teachers Group. The researcher continued with snowball sampling methods until the conclusion of the data collection process. The survey consisted of nine questions. The survey began with obtaining informed consent, and then asked demographic questions (pre-K age/pre-K or kindergarten teacher, years of experience, highest awarded degree). The next part asked three questions about how much time teachers spend on read-alouds for social-emotional learning. The following part asked teachers to rate their agreement/disagreement on a five-point Likert-scale to nine attitude statements towards using read-alouds for social-emotional learning. The last part of the survey asked participants to rate their agreement/disagreement on a five-point Likert-scale to eight statements about their self-efficacy beliefs towards using read-alouds for social-emotional learning. Finally, participants were asked if they wanted to partake in a follow up interview. The survey is in Appendix E.

The quantitative data were coded using SPSS Version 29.0. Descriptive statistics were calculated for each variable in the study. Tables are presented below with this data.

The researcher conducted interviews using a semi-structured interview protocol to ensure that the researcher asked each participant the same questions. The interview protocol was based on Creswell and Creswell (2018), which began with recording the time, date, and names of the interviewer and participant (see Appendix F). Interviews were transcribed and coded to find themes. Care was taken to ensure that the researcher remained reflexive and aware of her biases throughout this process, as the researcher's

personal biases can impact the analysis of qualitative findings (Johnson, 1997). The researcher used low inference descriptors, which in this study was In Vivo coding, so that the analysis focused on the actual words of the participants (Johnson, 1997).

Participants

There were 49 completed surveys, but two of them were discounted as the participants skipped questions. Since the issue of missing data was able to be solved by deleting only a small part of the sample, the researcher chose to delete these cases, as this is a simple way to avoid the issue of missing data (Schafer & Graham, 2002). Therefore, 47 completed surveys were used in this study. There were 18 pre-K/pre-K age teachers (38.3%) who participated in the study, and 29 kindergarten teachers (61.7%) who participated in this study. Most teachers in the study (95%) had at least 1 year of teaching experience. Table 2 shows the demographic data of teachers who participated in this study.

Table 2

Demographic Characteristics of Teachers

Characteristic	<i>n</i>	%
Grade taught		
Pre-K/pre-K age	18	38.3
Kindergarten	29	61.7
Years teaching		
Less than 1 year	2	4.3
1-3 years	9	19.1
4-7 years	9	19.1

Characteristic	<i>n</i>	%
8-10 years	6	12.8
10+ years	21	44.7
Highest awarded degree		
High school diploma/GED	14	29.8
Associate's degree	4	8.5
Bachelor's degree	9	19.1
Master's degree	20	42.6
Doctorate	0	0

Note. *N* = 47

Quantitative Data Analysis

RQ 1: What are the self-efficacy beliefs, attitudes, and practices of pre-k and kindergarten teachers towards using read-alouds for social/emotional learning?

(Quantitative)

Quantitative data were collected through a survey created by the researcher, with four items adapted with permission from the Teacher SEL Beliefs Scale (Brackett, 2012). Cronbach's alpha was calculated to ensure reliability for the main constructs used in the study, namely attitude, self-efficacy belief, and time. The results were as follows: for attitude, Cronbach's alpha was .882; for self-efficacy beliefs, Cronbach's alpha was .890; and for time, Cronbach's alpha was .638. Since Cronbach's alpha for time was less than .7 for time, the researcher decided not to use time as a scale. Instead, a separate simultaneous multiple regression would be used for each of the 3 time questions.

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was run using AMOS Version 29.0 to look at the model. The researcher only used attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs in the model, as a scale for time was not created since the Cronbach's alpha for time was less than .7. The standardized regression weights for each item are listed in Table 3. Although one self-efficacy variable has a standardized regression weight of 0.95, the researcher decided not to delete it from the model as deleting it made no difference to the model fit.

The correlation between attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs obtained through CFA was .66.

Table 3

Results from Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) for Attitude and Self-Efficacy Belief

Item	Standard Regression Weight
Factor 1: Attitude	
All pre-K and kindergarten teachers should utilize classroom read-alouds to teach social-emotional skills.	0.64
Classroom read-alouds are an important tool for teaching social-emotional skills to my students.	0.76
I believe pre-K and kindergarten teachers should choose classroom read-alouds with social-emotional themes as often as they can.	0.75
It is important to network with other pre-K and kindergarten teachers in order to discuss classroom read-alouds used for social-emotional learning.	0.61

Item	Standard Regression Weight
Classroom read-alouds are an easy way to discuss social-emotional skills with my students.	0.66
It is important to point out social-emotional skills that come up while I read books aloud to my students.	0.54
I believe it is important to learn more about using classroom read-alouds to teach social and emotional skills to my students.	0.73
I enjoy teaching social-emotional skills through classroom read-alouds.	0.71
Classroom read-alouds are an easy way to teach social-emotional skills to my students.	0.79
Factor 2: Self-efficacy beliefs	
I am comfortable providing instruction on social and emotional learning through classroom read-alouds.	0.50
I feel confident in my ability to provide instruction on social-emotional learning through classroom read-alouds.	0.57
I believe through instructing students on social-emotional learning using classroom read-alouds that I am capable of giving them important skills for life.	0.76
My efforts teaching social-emotional skills through classroom read-alouds teaches my students important social and emotional skills.	0.90
Through classroom read-alouds focusing on social-emotional skills I can give my students social-emotional skills for life.	0.95

Item	Standard Regression Weight
My efforts teaching social-emotional skills through classroom read-alouds contributes to my students' abilities to overcome challenging home/community conditions.	0.73
My efforts teaching social-emotional skills through classroom read-alouds prevents problem behaviors among my students.	0.46
I believe through instructing students on social-emotional learning using classroom read-alouds that I am capable of teaching them the tools they need to succeed in school and life.	0.74

Although the standardized regression weights load well (mostly between 0.4 and 0.9) and the correlation between attitude and self-efficacy belief factors is moderate to strong (.66), the model fit is poor, with a comparative fit index (CFI) of 0.671 and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) of 0.184. The poor model fit will be discussed in the limitations section in Chapter 5.

Attitudes

To answer the research question about teachers' attitudes towards read-alouds, the survey asked the teachers to rate their agreement or disagreement on a five-point Likert-type scale to nine attitude statements. Table 4 summarizes the participants' responses.

Table 4*Attitudes Towards Read-alouds for Social-emotional Learning*

Item	Percentage (n)				
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
All pre-K and kindergarten teachers should utilize classroom read-alouds to teach social-emotional skills.	51.1 (24)	42.6 (20)	6.4 (3)		
Classroom read-alouds are an important tool for teaching social-emotional skills to my students.	51.1 (24)	46.8 (22)	2.1 (1)		
I believe pre-K and kindergarten teachers should choose classroom read-alouds with social-emotional themes as often as they can.	31.9 (15)	61.7 (29)	6.4 (3)		
Classroom read-alouds are an easy way to discuss social-emotional skills with my students.	36.2 (17)	63.8 (30)			
It is important to point out social-emotional skills that come up while I read books aloud to my students.	55.3 (26)	40.4 (19)	4.3 (2)		

Item	Percentage (<i>n</i>)				
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I believe it is important to learn more about using classroom read-alouds to teach social and emotional skills to my students.	44.7 (21)	34.0 (16)	19.1 (9)	2.1 (1)	
I enjoy teaching social-emotional skills through classroom read-alouds.	40.4 (19)	48.9 (23)	8.5 (4)	2.1 (1)	
Classroom read-alouds are an easy way to teach social-emotional skills to my students.	40.4 (19)	53.2 (25)	6.4 (3)		

Note. “Strongly disagree” is included to show that it was a survey option, although no participant selected it.

For every question about participants’ attitudes, no participant selected “Strongly disagree.” There were two statements where one participant answered “Disagree.” Most participants selected “Strongly agree” or “Agree” for all the attitude statements. The percentage of participants that selected “strongly agree” for each statement range from 31.9% to 55.3%, and for “agree”, from 34% to 63.8%. The data shows that most surveyed teachers have positive attitudes towards read-alouds for social-emotional learning.

Self-efficacy Beliefs

To understand teachers' self-efficacy beliefs towards using read-alouds for social-emotional learning, survey participants were asked to rate their agreement or disagreement on a five-point Likert-type scale to 8 self-efficacy belief statements. Table 5 summarizes the participants' responses.

Table 5

Self-efficacy beliefs Towards Read-alouds for Social-emotional Learning

Item	Percentage (n)				
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I am comfortable providing instruction on social and emotional learning through classroom read-alouds.	34.0 (16)	53.2 (25)	10.6 (5)	2.1 (1)	
I feel confident in my ability to provide instruction on social-emotional learning through classroom read-alouds.	25.5 (12)	57.4 (27)	14.9 (7)	2.1 (1)	
I believe through instructing students on social-emotional learning using classroom read-alouds that I am capable of giving them important skills for life.	48.9 (23)	42.6 (20)	8.5 (4)		

Item	Percentage (n)				
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
My efforts teaching social-emotional skills through classroom read-alouds teaches my students important social and emotional skills.	44.7 (21)	51.1 (24)	4.3 (2)		
My efforts teaching social-emotional skills through classroom read-alouds contributes to my students' abilities to overcome challenging home/community conditions.	31.9 (15)	53.2 (25)	14.9 (7)		
My efforts teaching social-emotional skills through classroom read-alouds prevents problem behaviors among my students.	27.7 (13)	44.7 (21)	21.3 (10)	6.4 (3)	
I believe through instructing students on social-emotional learning using classroom read-alouds that I am capable of teaching them the tools they need to succeed in school and life.	25.5 (12)	55.3 (26)	19.1 (9)		

Note. “Strongly disagree” is included to show that it was a survey option, although no participant selected it.

No participants selected “Strongly disagree” to answer any of the statements. There were five times where a participant chose “Disagree” for a statement. Most participants chose “Strongly agree” or “Agree” for all of the self-efficacy belief statements. The percentage of participants who chose “Strongly agree” for each question ranges from 31.9% to 55.3%. The percentage of participants who chose “Agree” for each question ranges from 34.0% to 63.8%. The data show that most participants have positive self-efficacy beliefs about reading aloud for social-emotional learning.

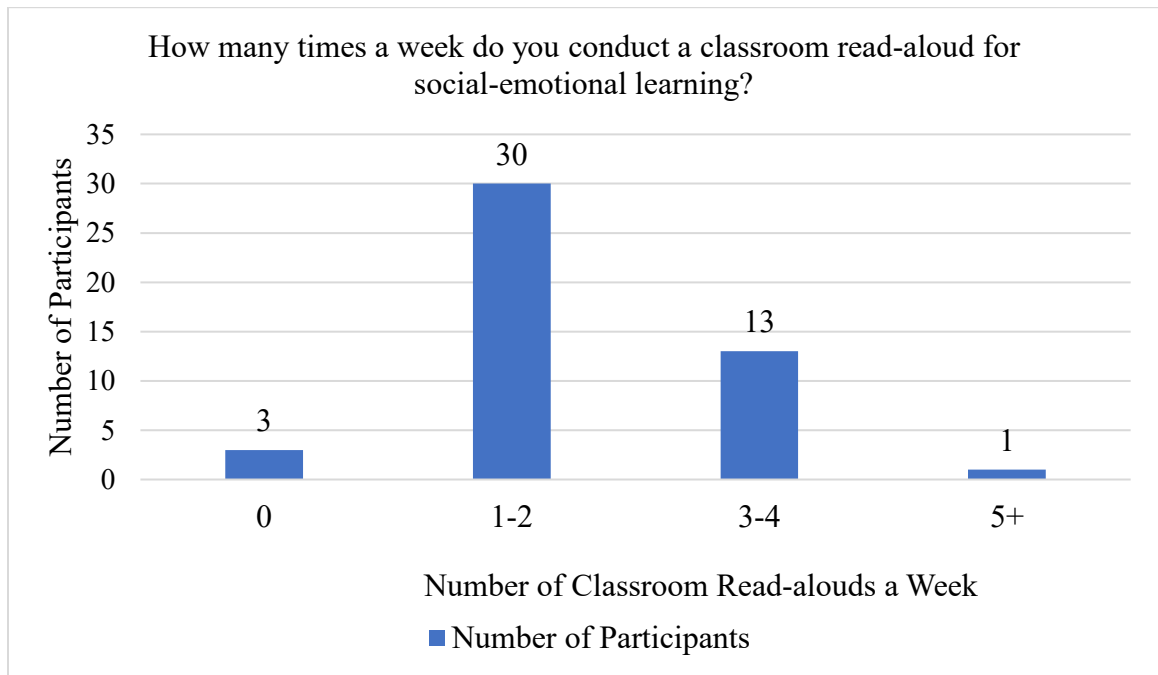
Practices

To measure read-aloud practices for social-emotional learning, survey participants were asked three questions about their read-aloud practices. Figures 1-3 summarize participant responses.

Figure 1 shows that when asked how many times a week they conduct a classroom read-aloud for social-emotional learning, 3 teachers (6.4%) chose 0 times, 30 teachers (63.8%) said 1-2 times, 13 teachers (27.7%) chose 3-4 times, and 1 teacher (2.1%) chose 5+ times per week.

Figure 1

Number of Classroom Read-Alouds a Week for Social-Emotional Learning

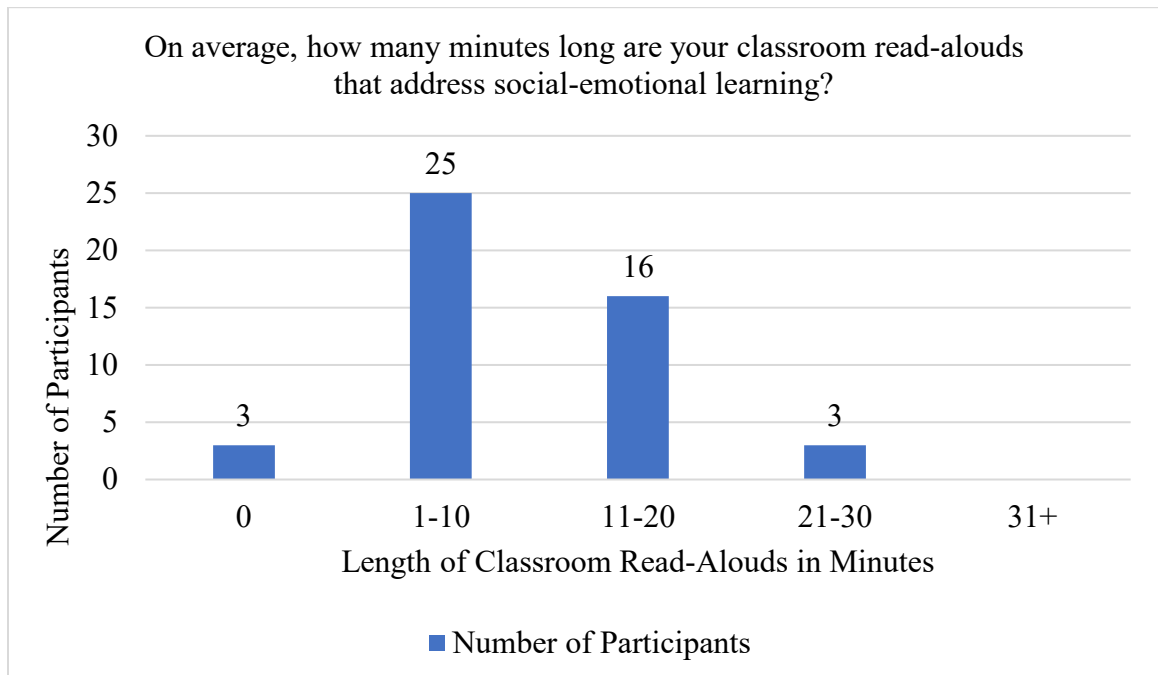


The above data show that 91% of surveyed teachers conduct between 1-4 classroom read-alouds for social-emotional learning each week. This shows that most pre-K/pre-K age and kindergarten teachers do conduct read-alouds for social-emotional learning each week.

As depicted in Figure 2, when asked about the length in minutes of their classroom read-alouds that address social-emotional learning, 3 teachers (6.4%) chose 0 minutes, 25 teachers (53.2%) chose 1-10 minutes, 16 teachers (34.0%) chose 11-20 minutes, and 3 teachers (6.4%) chose 21-30 minutes.

Figure 2

Length of Read-Alouds in Minutes

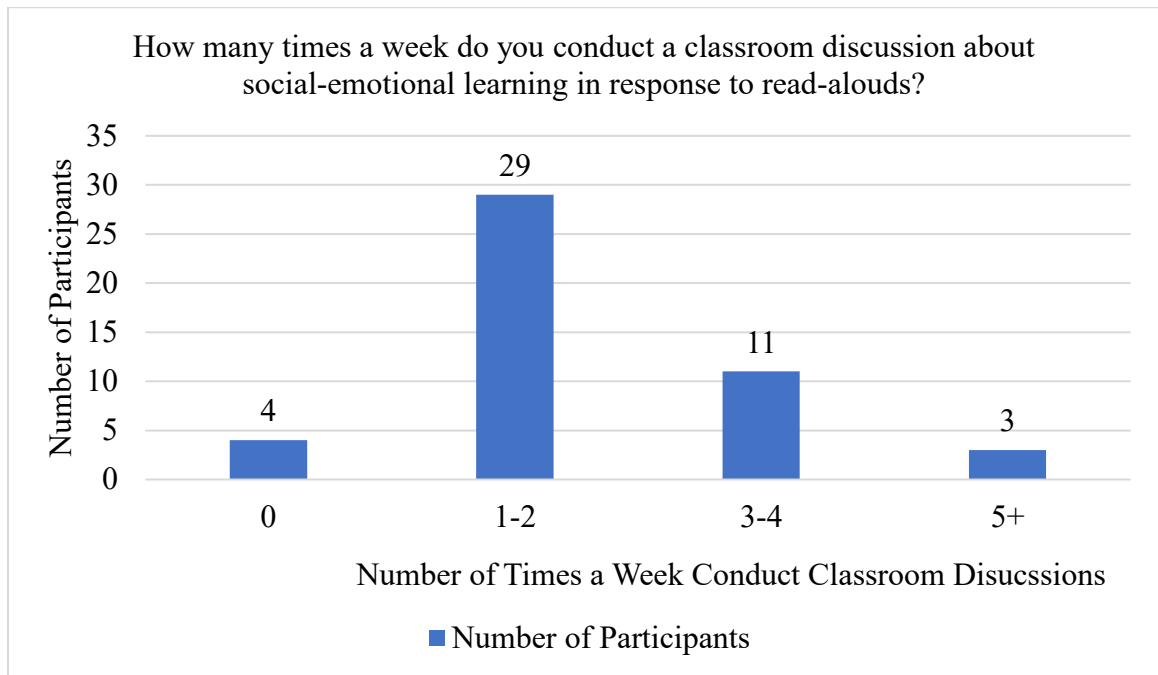


The results show that 53% of surveyed teachers said their read-alouds for social-emotional learning are 1-10 minutes long, while 34% spend between 11 and 20 minutes on their classroom read-alouds for social-emotional learning. About half of the surveyed teachers only spend 1 to 10 minutes on a read-aloud for social-emotional learning, which is not so long.

As shown in Figure 3, when asked how many times a week they conduct a classroom discussion about social-emotional learning in response to read-alouds, 4 teachers (8.5%) chose 0 times, 29 teachers (61.7%) chose 1-2 times, 11 teachers (23.4%) chose 3-4 times, and 3 teachers (6.4%) chose 5+ times.

Figure 3

Number of Classroom Discussions a Week in Response to Read-Alouds



In terms of classroom discussion in response to read-alouds for social-emotional learning, 61% of surveyed teachers conduct discussions 1 to 2 times a week, while another 23% conduct discussions 3-4 times a week. Therefore, 85.1% of teachers conduct between 1 to 4 discussions about social-emotional learning in response to a read-aloud each week, which is the majority of participants.

The data show that most teachers have positive attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs towards read-alouds for social-emotional learning, and most teachers conduct read-alouds and discussions for social-emotional learning each week.

RQ 2: What is the relationship between the self-efficacy beliefs and attitudes of teachers towards read-alouds for social-emotional learning and the amount of time teachers spend on classroom read-alouds for social-emotional learning?

The null hypothesis in this study is that none of the variance in the amount of time teachers spend reading read-alouds for social-emotional learning is explained by the self-efficacy beliefs and attitudes of pre-k and kindergarten teachers towards using classroom read-alouds to teach social-emotional skills.

Simultaneous multiple regression was calculated to answer this research question. The researcher computed a scale for attitude and for self-efficacy beliefs in SPSS using the survey data. No scale was created for time as Cronbach's alpha was .638, which is less than .7. Therefore, simultaneous regression was run three times to look at whether the independent variables (attitude and self-efficacy beliefs) and the covariates (grade taught, years of experience, and highest awarded degree) predicted each of the three questions for time. The three questions for time are as follows:

1. How many times a week do you conduct a classroom read-aloud for social-emotional learning?
2. On average, how many minutes long are your classroom read-alouds that address social-emotional learning?
3. How many times a week do you conduct a classroom discussion about social-emotional learning in response to read-alouds?

The results of the simultaneous regression for the first- and second-time variable (how many times a week teachers conduct a read-aloud for social-emotional learning and for how many minutes long) was that the model was not significant, as in each case the p value was greater than .05 ($p = .117$ and $p = .298$ respectively). The results of the F tests for the first two questions for time were as follows: $F(5, 41) = 1.891$ and $F(5, 41) = 1.264$

respectively. These values are below the critical value (2.45) on the F-table for the degrees of freedom (5 and 41).

For the third time variable, which was how many times a week did the teacher conduct a classroom discussion about social-emotional learning in response to a read-aloud, the model was significant ($p= 0.021$). The F value was $F(5, 41) = 2.997$, which according to the F table is above the critical value, 2.45, for the degrees of freedom (5 and 41). However, none of the individual variables came out as significant predictors for the dependent variable. The value of R is .517 and the value of R^2 is .268. This means that the variables all together in this middle account for 26.8% of the variance in the number of classroom discussions teachers conduct each week in response to read-alouds for social-emotional learning.

Table 6 summarizes the data for this simultaneous multiple regression.

Table 6

Simultaneous Multiple Regression for Discussions Following Read-Alouds

Variable	Beta	SE	β	p	95% CI	
					<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
Attitude	0.010	0.03	0.07	.696	-0.052	0.077
Self-efficacy beliefs	0.05	0.03	0.28	.139	-0.016	0.113
Grade taught	0.28	0.20	0.19	.164	-0.119	0.679
Highest degree	-0.15	0.08	-0.27	.064	-0.303	0.009
Years of teaching experience	0.10	0.08	0.18	.232	-0.063	0.253

Note. N=47. p is set at .05.

To rule out collinearity, tolerance values and the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) were calculated. However, based on these values, there is no multicollinearity, as the tolerance values are between .508 and .965, and the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) is between 1.036 and 1.970.

When analyzing and the regression data, the only model that was significant was the time variable of how many classroom discussions teachers conducted each week about social-emotional learning following a read-aloud.

Qualitative Data Analysis

RQ 3: How do their self-efficacy beliefs and attitudes impact their read-aloud practices?

The qualitative data were gathered from four semi-structured interviews. Two of the interview participants were pre-K teachers and two were kindergarten teachers. Participants had all completed the survey and agreed to a follow-up interview. All the interviews took place through Webex. Each participant agreed to be recorded for the interview through Webex.

Two participants are pre-K/pre-K age teachers and two teach kindergarten. No other demographic data were gathered from the participants.

The researcher used Webex's transcribe feature as a basis for the transcription and retyped them in Microsoft Word in password protected documents and without participants' names to protect participants' identities. The researcher then listened to the recordings multiple times and edited the transcripts until they were accurate. While working on the transcription, the researcher highlighted phrases or words that seemed significant in preparation of coding (Saldaña, 2021).

Once the transcripts were ready, the researcher separated the text by adding line breaks whenever the topic seemed to change (Saldaña, 2021). In Vivo coding was used for the first cycle of coding. The researcher highlighted all the words and phrases that captured the essence of what the participant was saying (Saldaña, 2021). Then, the researcher typed all of those codes onto a separate document and alphabetized them to search for connections between the codes. Pattern coding was used for a second cycle of coding, because the goal of second cycle coding is to develop categories and themes from the codes developed in the first cycle (Saldaña, 2021). This helped combine the data into themes. As a result of the analysis, three themes were identified: (1) “Very Good Tool”, (2) Teacher as a Role Model (3) Importance of Age. The following sections detail each theme.

Theme 1: Very Good Tool

All the interview participants discussed their read-aloud practices and their positive attitudes toward using read-alouds for social-emotional learning. None of the participants had a negative attitude toward read-alouds for social-emotional learning. All participants emphasized that read-alouds are a “very good tool” (Participants 2 and 3) for teaching social-emotional skills. “I think read-alouds are very helpful” (Participant 1); “I think it’s a very good tool...it’s a very effective tool” (Participant 2); “I think it’s a very good tool to bring out a lot of... important things” (Participant 3); and Participant 4 described read-alouds as “usually pretty helpful.”

The participants focused on different aspects of read-alouds that make it an effective tool in their classrooms. Participants 1 and 4 both described read-alouds as “objective.” They focused on the idea that teaching social or emotional skills through

read-alouds allows the teacher to point something out in a way that “brings... awareness out of, like, a story” and “doesn’t make anyone feel single out” (Participant 1). “It’s easier to refer back to these things...and then they could apply it more...it’s a good reminder for them to do that, the right, expected thing” (Participant 4). Participant 4 also stated, “for the kids to get the lesson without it being, like, direct...” This allows teachers to teach a social-emotional skill without directly stating that children in the class have to work on these skills.

Read-alouds are an excellent tool to teach children social-emotional skills (Britt et al., 2016; Roberts & Crawford, 2008). As participants mentioned, teachers can select books that discuss the specific skill that students need to learn (Britt et al., 2016).

Read-alouds are a great tool to teach the students many social-emotional skills. Participants 2 and 3 focused on read-alouds as an “amazing way to get the message across” (Participant 3). “I think they get really good lessons, lessons for life...from what we learned” (Participant 3). Participant 4 stated, “usually like it’s a good way to get a lesson to hit home.” Participant 2 specifically described how read-alouds are more helpful than telling stories, because “they see more pictures... they see the facial expressions that also show how the character is feeling.” Participant 1 added, “I think it helps them be more aware of, like, you know, their emotions and social behavior.”

As discussed previously, Harper (2016) explains that children can learn to identify different emotions through the facial expressions of characters in picture books and learn coping strategies and solutions to their own problems. Teachers can use read-alouds to help children learn about their feelings (Tominey et al., 2017; Doyle & Bramwell, 2006).

Theme 2: Teacher as a Role Model

All four participants discussed the idea that their feelings and actions about read-alouds affect how they conduct the read-aloud and also affect their students. All the participants stated that the way they feel about the read-aloud or the way model the read-aloud has an impact on their students. “When I’m excited and into the book... or if, like, I’m into the conversation and they’ll get excited about it too” (Participant 1). “The more tone you change in the book, the more you act...and emotion while you’re reading the book, the more it gets students to get very involved” (Participant 2). Participant 3 explained, “If I’m confident about it, then it goes over well.” Participant 4 described, “Usually how, um, dramatic I get is usually how much it goes into them”, and, “If I agree with the topic, I’m more passionate about it and then it gets to them more... so I try to find the ones [read-aloud books] that are gonna, like, reach them the most.”

Participants 1, 2, and 4 focused more on how their positive attitude and enthusiasm when modeling the book affects the students. Participant 3 focused on how if she is confident, meaning has a more positive self-efficacy belief towards read-alouds for social-emotional learning, the book will go “over well.” Participant 4 explained that when she agrees with the topic, she is therefore more passionate about it, and it therefore affects the students more.

This finding relates well with the Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977b) that states that people learn from one another through observing behavior and through modeling (Bandura, 1977b). This theme shows that these participants are very aware that the way they feel about read-alouds for social-emotional learning, impacts how they model the read-aloud, and, the way they model the read-aloud impacts how the students

will react to the read-aloud. This also fits with Mischel and Grusec's (1966) point that models with greater social power can have a greater degree of influence on whether their behavior will be copied by others. This finding corroborates Rimm-Kaufman and Sawyer's (2004) statement that teachers' beliefs and attitudes are closely related to their classroom practices, and therefore, understanding teachers' attitudes and beliefs is important to understanding teachers' and students' classroom experiences.

Participant 3 focused on how if she is confident, meaning has a more positive self-efficacy belief towards read-alouds for social-emotional learning, the book will go "over well." This response also fits well with Self-efficacy Theory, the second theory which guides this study, which refers to one's confidence and belief in one's ability to perform a behavior (Bandura, 1977a). A teacher's self-efficacy beliefs can affect their learning environment, where teachers who believe that they can help their students learn successfully will create learning environments that will enable their students to succeed academically (Bandura, 1997).

Keller et al. (2016) reviewed the concept of teacher enthusiasm. They define teacher enthusiasm as a combination of how the teacher feels about the subject and how the teacher acts when teaching the subject. Frenzel et al. (2009) found a positive relationship between teachers' enthusiasm for a subject and level of enjoyment, and Sablan (2022) found that teacher enthusiasm promotes student engagement. It is clear from participant responses that the participants feel that the greater the enthusiasm they model, the more the read-aloud will affect the students.

Theme 3: Importance of Age

All four participants discussed how age is an important factor in relation to read-alouds for social-emotional learning. Participants 1 and 3 described how read-alouds are a very appropriate medium to teach skills, as children this age “are little sponges...they, like, soak up everything...kids love it” (Participant 1). “Especially this age, where they’re, you know, they’re ready to listen...they love, you know, stories...” (Participant 3).

Participants 2 and 4 cautioned about choosing appropriate books for this age. “I think the more that books are relatable...they can actually relate to it” (Participant 2). Participant 2 described how people are more relatable than characters or animals, and the importance of choosing books with “their, um kind of atmospheric culture definitely helps also, because then they can say, oh, that happened to me at home” (Participant 2). Participant 4 describes how a book has to “be explained and on their level, make sure they are clear”, as she described a story she once heard where the children “missed the whole point of the lesson” because they didn’t understand a key vocabulary word. “It has to be, like, age appropriate, like, if sometimes... it’s above them, they they, they miss the point” (Participant 4).

Research shows that choosing the proper book helps towards creating a successful read-aloud experience, and teachers should choose from a variety of different genres (Lennox, 2013; Shedd & Duke, 2008). Ensuring that you prepare properly for a read-aloud can help it be a successful experience (Shedd & Duke, 2008; Barclay, 2014), for example, to prepare which vocabulary words the teacher will explain to the students (Shedd & Duke, 2008; Barclay, 2009) Additionally, selecting books that reflect the

values and interests of the students can add to the success of a read-aloud (Shedd & Duke, 2008).

This theme shows that the teachers who were interviewed in this study had an awareness that read-alouds are appropriate for pre-K and kindergarten age children, and that the teacher has to ensure that the books are age-appropriate. This theme was unanticipated, as the participants were not asked any question specifically about read-alouds and students' ages. However, it fits well with teachers' read-aloud practices. The interviewed teachers have an awareness of the importance of age-appropriate read-aloud classroom practices.

Integrated Findings

Quantitative results found that most of the surveyed pre-K/pre-K age and kindergarten teachers read classroom read-alouds for social-emotional learning between 1-4 times a week that are between 1 and 20 minutes long. Most teachers conduct discussions following read-alouds for social-emotional learning between 1 and 4 times a week. Qualitative results showed convergence as the interviewed teachers spoke about books they read and discussions they had for social-emotional learning. For example, Participant 1 described, "We read one of the books, Madeleine and the tea party... and then I said is, is the character acting in a nice way or not nice way?" Participant 4 described, "I read it and we discuss it afterwards and then, like, they usually put their input in..." The teachers clearly conduct read-alouds with discussion in their classrooms.

Interestingly, although it wasn't a question asked on the interview protocol, all interviewed teachers discussed the age of the students in relation to read-alouds for social-emotional learning. Interviewed teachers had an understanding as to the

appropriateness of read-alouds for pre-K or kindergarten age, or cautioned about choosing read-alouds that are at the students' age level and understanding. This also fits with the quantitative findings that most surveyed teachers conduct read-alouds for social-emotional learning every week, if not multiple times a week, as the teachers are aware of the age-appropriateness of read-alouds for social-emotional learning.

Quantitative survey results showed that most participants chose "Strongly agree" or "Agree" for the attitude and self-efficacy statements, meaning that most teachers have positive attitudes and positive self-efficacy beliefs towards read-alouds for social-emotional learning. Qualitative findings converged with the quantitative results, as all interview participants reported a positive attitude toward read-alouds for social-emotional learning, describing how it is a "very good tool" to teach social-emotional skills. Teachers described different aspects of read-alouds as a great tool to teach social-emotional skills, such as how the pictures of facial expressions in read-alouds help students understand characters' feelings, and the idea that read-alouds can be used to teach social-emotional skills without singling out a student and making the student feel bad. Two interview participants reported a positive belief in their abilities to conduct read-alouds for social-emotional learning. The other two participants answered the question by discussing positive aspects of read-alouds, and I did not press them. Both forms of data showed that teachers have positive attitudes and positive self-efficacy beliefs towards read-alouds for social-emotional learning.

Quantitative findings show no clear predictive relationship between attitude and self-efficacy beliefs towards read-alouds for social-emotional learning and the amount of time teachers spend on read-alouds. Therefore, I cannot reject the null hypothesis.

However, the regression model for classroom discussions following read-alouds was significant, and showed that 26.8% in the variance of how many classroom discussions teachers conduct after a read-aloud can be explained by the model, which includes attitude, self-efficacy beliefs, grade taught, years of experience, and highest awarded degree. None of these individual factors were found to be significant predictors of classroom discussions. The limitations section further on will discuss some important limitations about the study design.

Although quantitative data did not show that attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs have any impact on read-aloud practices, qualitative analysis showed how attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs impact the quality of read-alouds for social-emotional learning. Data analysis revealed that the participants believed that their feelings affect how they conduct read-alouds and impacts their students. When teachers model the read-aloud with greater enthusiasm, “the more it gets the students to get very involved.” Participants stated, “When I’m excited and into the book...or if, like, I’m into the conversation and they’ll get excited about it too”; “If I’m confident about it, then it goes over well”; and “If I agree with the topic, I’m more passionate about it and then it gets to them more.”

Participants understood how their attitude, enthusiasm, and confidence impact how they model the read-aloud and how the students will accept it.

Summary

As discussed in the quantitative and qualitative findings, pre-K/pre-K age and kindergarten teachers conduct classroom read-alouds and discussions for social-emotional learning at least every week. Teachers overall have positive attitudes and positive self-efficacy beliefs towards read-alouds for social-emotional learning. Based on

this study's findings there is no predictive relationship between the attitude and self-efficacy beliefs of teachers and the amount of time they spend on read-alouds for social-emotional learning. Teachers discussed different positive aspects of using read-alouds for social emotional learning as well as the importance of how the teacher models the read-aloud, as it affects the students' attitude and enthusiasm.

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

This chapter summarizes the quantitative and qualitative results, followed by a discussion of both. It will discuss implications for teaching and policy and provide a direction for future research.

Overview of Study

In our ever-changing, fast-paced world, there are so many challenges and difficult situations that children face that can threaten their emotional and mental health. There is an increase in the number of children who face inconsistent care arrangements, abuse, neglect, or who have witnessed rage and violence (Hyson, 2004). Recently, Covid-19 has caused an increase in social-emotional and mental health issues in children (Barnett & Jung, 2021). As young children's social-emotional well-being is increasingly challenged in the face of many difficulties, the need for an increase in social-emotional health continues to grow. Reading high-quality literature that focuses on social-emotional learning can help children learn emotional vocabulary, how to be sensitive to others, and learn resilience and coping skills (Harper, 2016). It can encourage students to share and discuss personal issues and challenges, and help children experiencing emotional distress (Harper, 2016).

This convergent mixed-methods study looked at both quantitative and qualitative data to gain a better understanding of pre-K/pre-K age and kindergarten teachers' attitudes, self-efficacy beliefs, and practices in regard to read-alouds for social-emotional learning.

Quantitative survey results showed that most teachers reported positive attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs towards read-alouds for social-emotional learning, with most

teachers selecting “Strongly agree” or “Agree” on the survey questions about attitude and self-efficacy beliefs. When asked about their read-aloud practices, most teachers conduct between 1 and 4 read-alouds for social-emotional learning each week that are between 1 to 20 minutes long. Most teachers conduct between 1 to 4 classroom discussions a week following read-alouds for social-emotional learning.

Simultaneous multiple regression done with each of the three-time variables had only one significant model: with the number of classroom discussions a week following read-alouds for social-emotional learning. However, none of the individual variables were found to be significant predictors in the model.

Qualitative data analysis revealed three themes from the participants’ responses. Participants discussed their positive attitudes towards read-alouds for social-emotional learning, describing it as a helpful tool to teach social-emotional skills. Participants described their understanding that the way in which they model the read-aloud affects how well it is accepted by the students. Last, participants discussed the importance of age and understanding that read-alouds are an appropriate choice for this age students, yet teachers have to choose books that are on the students’ level of understanding.

Merging quantitative and qualitative data provided greater insight into understanding the topic at hand (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The following section reviews the study’s findings and discusses the relationship with prior research.

Integrated Findings

Attitudes and Self-efficacy Beliefs

A significant finding in this study from survey results is that most pre-K/pre-K age and kindergarten age surveyed teachers have positive attitudes and self-efficacy

beliefs towards read-alouds for social-emotional learning. Qualitative data revealed that teachers have positive attitudes towards read-alouds for social-emotional learning as they feel it is an effective tool to teach social-emotional skills. Two interview participants stated they have positive self-efficacy beliefs towards reading aloud for social-emotional learning, while the other two participants didn't discuss their self-efficacy beliefs.

This relates well to previous research. Zinsser et al. (2014) looked at preschool teachers' perceptions about social-emotional learning and found that teachers highly value social-emotional skills. Steed et al. (2022) surveyed preschool through second grade teachers about their perceptions of how effective their classroom social-emotional approaches, and most educators rated their classroom approach to social-emotional learning as effective. Buchanan et al. (2009) surveyed kindergarten through eighth grade teachers about social-emotional learning and found that 98.9% of respondents believe social-emotional skills are important in school and life.

Survey data showed that most teachers conduct read-alouds and discussions each week to address social-emotional learning. Qualitative data showed that teachers do conduct read-alouds with discussions for social-emotional learning and are aware of age-appropriate practices when it comes to read-alouds for social-emotional learning.

These results make sense when looking at previous research: Ross (2017) surveyed 56 kindergarten teachers and found that 80% of them reported that they read aloud every day or several times a day. As for how many minutes they spent reading aloud, 57% of these teachers spent zero to 15 minutes on a read-aloud, while 39% reported they spent 16 to 30 minutes on a read-aloud. Damber (2015) conducted a study

in 39 preschools in Sweden to look at how often read-alouds were performed and concluded that read-alouds occurred about once each day.

These findings are encouraging, as teachers feel positively about read-alouds for social-emotional learning, believe in their abilities to conduct them properly, and are conducting read-alouds and discussions for social-emotional learning.

Attitudes, Self-efficacy Beliefs, and Time

Although teachers reported positive attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs, regression analysis did not show that attitudes or self-efficacy beliefs predicted the amount of time teachers spend on read-alouds for social-emotional learning. This will also be addressed further in the limitations section.

The null hypothesis fails to be rejected as attitude and self-efficacy beliefs individually did not create any variance in the amount of time teachers spend reading aloud for social-emotional learning.

It is possible that the sample was too small to see a predictive relationship between attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs with time. Additionally, perhaps this points to the fact that many teachers do not conduct read-alouds often enough because they feel the pressure to complete their academic curricula (Fox, 2013; Ledger & Merga, 2018).

Although the data showed that most teachers conduct at least one read-aloud a week for social-emotional learning, it is possible that teachers feel pressured to cover academic content and do not conduct more read-alouds, which may be why attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs do not predict time. Teachers have to realize that through read-alouds for social-emotional learning, they are providing skills that can help their students navigate their lives successfully. Additionally, read-alouds can be used to teach both academic

skills as well as social-emotional skills simultaneously, so that teachers can complete academic content as well as provide their students with invaluable skills. For example, through dialogic read-alouds, students can increase their emergent literacy skills (Brooke & Bramwell, 2006), and the teacher can incorporate a social-emotional discussion based on the read-aloud as well.

Discussions with Read-Alouds for Social-Emotional Learning

Although attitudes and self-efficacy individually did not predict the amount of time spent on read-alouds for social-emotional learning, there was one significant regression model, which is that the five variables (attitude, self-efficacy beliefs, grade taught, highest degree, and years of teaching experience) together significantly predict the number of classroom discussions conducted following classroom read-alouds for social-emotional learning. However, none of the individual variables were significant predictors. In this significant model, 26.8% of the variance in classroom discussions for social-emotional learning is attributed to the model. Therefore, the importance of classroom discussion with and following read-alouds for social-emotional learning is examined.

Read-alouds and discussion have the power to enable students to share their ideas, feelings, and understand multiple perspectives (Worthy et al., 2012). Discussions in connection with read-alouds focus on the understanding that it is not the teacher who possess all the answers, but the students have important perspectives that they can share that can come out through reading and discussing a book (Wiseman, 2011).

Reading a book to teach social-emotional skills is important, but incorporating discussion and students' voices will greatly enhance the read-aloud experience, and most

importantly, students' social-emotional skills. Discussion is an important aspect of read-alouds for social-emotional learning, as it helps improve students' social and emotional skills. This is apparent from two similar studies. Lin et al. (2022) conducted a study where students were divided into three groups: Collaborative Social Reasoning (CSR), where they had discussions about stories related to complex social and moral issues; Read-Aloud (RA), where they just read the same story but did not have the discussions; and Regular Instruction (RI). The results showed that students in the CSR group were less aggressive and more socially accepting of their classmates than the students in the other groups. Students in the CSR group also reported an improved ability to work with peers in groups and have positive relationships.

A similar study with a shared-book reading intervention on preschool students had an intervention group that read a book and discussed the events, beliefs, and social-emotional outcomes of the story, while the comparison group had discussions on the text that focused on the plot and characters. The results found that the intervention group used more emotion terms and were able to connect thoughts and emotions more than the comparison group (Bergman Deitcher et al., 2020).

Read-alouds with discussions for social-emotional learning gives students the opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings. Verden and Hickman (2009) found that read-alouds and discussions helped students with emotional and behavioral disorders identify with positive role models and reflect on similarities between the stories and themselves, which can positively influence the students' behaviors.

Book discussions invite students' questions and comments and provide a space for children to discuss "the gray" (Triplett & Buchanan, 2005). Children today experience

so many difficult experiences and read-alouds with discussion afford children the opportunity to explore issues in a safe way. Discussion should be an inseparable part of a read-aloud for social-emotional learning.

Teacher as a Role Model

Although quantitative results showed that attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs had no impact on read-aloud practices, qualitative results revealed that participants discussed how their attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs impacted the quality of their read-aloud practices for social-emotional learning. Participants spoke about how the way they model the read-aloud for social-emotional learning has an impact on their students. The positive attitude and enthusiasm that they show when modeling the book affects the students. Interview participants in this study described how it affect their students' excitement, their involvement, and how well the message reaches their students. This finding is encouraging and important, as when teachers are aware of the connection between their attitudes and enthusiasm for read-alouds and how it affects their students, they will hopefully put in effort to ensure that they model the read-aloud in a way that it will best reach their students.

This finding relates well with the Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977b) that states that people learn from one another through observing behavior and through modeling (Bandura, 1977b). This theme shows that these participants are very aware that the way they feel about read-alouds for social-emotional learning impacts how they model the read-aloud, and, the way they model the read-aloud impacts how the students will react to the read-aloud. This also fits with Mischel and Grusec's (1966) point that models with greater social power can have a greater degree of influence on whether their

behavior will be copied by others. This finding corroborates Rimm-Kaufman and Sawyer's (2004) statement that teachers' beliefs and attitudes are closely related to their classroom practices, and therefore, understanding teachers' attitudes and beliefs is important to understanding teachers' and students' classroom experiences.

The teachers interviewed in this study demonstrated an understanding that the way they model a read-aloud and the enthusiasm they show, affect their students. Keller et al. (2016) reviewed the concept of teacher enthusiasm. They define teacher enthusiasm as a combination of how the teacher feels about the subject and how the teacher acts when teaching the subject. Frenzel et al. (2009) found a positive relationship between teachers' enthusiasm for a subject and level of student enjoyment, and Sablan (2022) found that teacher enthusiasm promotes student engagement. It is clear from participant responses that the participants feel that the greater the enthusiasm they model, the more the read-aloud will affect the students. Once the teachers are aware of this connection, they will hopefully continue to be mindful of how they conduct read-alouds for social-emotional learning so that the read-aloud social-emotional message will reach the students.

Implications for Teachers

This study has a few important implications for teachers. First, this study reminds teachers to reflect on their current attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs for social-emotional learning, whether it is through read-alouds or other methods. The way in which teachers model read-alouds for social-emotional learning affects their students. Teachers should be aware of their own attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs, whether it is about read-alouds for social-emotional learning or about a different topic. Teachers should understand that

their attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs affect the way they act, and through their actions affects their students. Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977b) that states that people learn from one another through observing behavior and through modeling (Bandura, 1977b), as was clearly pointed out by teachers in this study. The attitude and level of enthusiasm teachers show as they model read-alouds affect their students.

Second, this study reminds teachers to reflect on their current practices for social-emotional learning. Teachers are encouraged to use read-alouds as a tool to teach social-emotional skills, as it is an easy way to teach these skills that can easily be incorporated into the curriculum without necessarily investing in a social-emotional learning program (Britt et al., 2016). As discussed by interview participants, read-alouds can be used to teach social-emotional skills in an indirect way so that students do not feel singled out.

Third, discussions should be a part of read-alouds for social-emotional learning. Read-alouds and discussion have the power to enable students to share their ideas, feelings, and understand multiple perspectives (Worthy et al., 2012). It affords students the opportunity to discuss difficult issues (Triplett & Buchanan, 2005). Discussion with read-alouds helps students develop social-emotional skills (Bergman Deitcher et al., 2020; Lin et al., 2022).

Implications for Policymakers

An important implication for policymakers is the understanding that social-emotional learning is crucial to children's growth and development, and there is a need for professional development sessions focusing on how teachers can teach social and emotional skills to their students. Elias (2019) discusses the factors that schools need to consider and keep in mind if suddenly all schools would adopt social-emotional learning

into their curricula tomorrow. Elias (2019) explains the importance of investing in school staff learning about social-emotional learning and providing ongoing professional development to support this. This study showed that teachers have positive attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs towards using read-alouds for social-emotional learning. Teachers believe in its importance and in their abilities to use read-alouds to teach social-emotional learning. Therefore, it is important that there are policies in place that ensure that there is professional development focusing on teachers' practices that encourage teaching social-emotional skills through classroom instruction that can help teachers learn how to incorporate teaching social-emotional skills in their classrooms.

Read-alouds are routinely used in classrooms for young children (Britt et al., 2016), and therefore, with professional development focusing on topics such as text selection, discussion, teacher talk, etc., teachers will be able to integrate social-emotional learning into their classrooms.

Additionally, schools need funding to purchase high quality read-aloud books for teachers to use. Several articles review read-aloud books that teachers of preschool or kindergarten classes can use to teach specific social and emotional skills (Ableser, 2008; Britt et al., 2016; Gunn et al., 2022; Harper, 2016; Ho & Funk, 2018; Willis & Schiller, 2011). Teachers need access to high quality literature so they can use the books to help them teach social-emotional skills to students.

As Arnold and Sableski (2023) state, "Meaningful discussions occur in the context of strong community, thoughtful and intentional book selection, and a compassionate, committed teacher." Proper professional development and funding for appropriate read-aloud books can help make this happen.

Social-emotional learning should be incorporated in every classroom.

Policymakers should ensure that although academic goals are important, social-emotional learning should also be addressed and be a part of classroom curriculum. Professional development can address ways to add it to existing curriculum, such as through read-alouds, so that teachers don't feel overburdened while trying to include another subject into their curricula.

Recommendations for Future Research

In the future, this study should be done on a larger sample of teachers, which may show whether there is a predictive relationship between attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs towards read-alouds and the amount of time teachers spend reading aloud.

Additionally, this study could be repeated with a special education population, as disadvantaged children in inclusive settings can benefit from a well-planned read-aloud that addresses social-emotional learning, language, and literacy skills (Al Otaiba, 2004). It is important to look at the attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs of special education teachers towards read-alouds for social-emotional learning, as well as their classroom practices, so that special educators can understand how their attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs towards read-alouds for social-emotional learning impact their practices.

Future research could look at the relationship between teachers' attitudes, self-efficacy beliefs, and read-aloud practices for social-emotional learning and students' social-emotional skills. Such a study would look at how teachers' attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs towards read-alouds for social-emotional learning, and their actual practices, affect their students social-emotional skills. This is important, as an essential goal of read-alouds for social-emotional learning is that it should aid the students in

developing social-emotional skills. Previous research has shown that a social-emotional read-aloud intervention helped increase students' social-emotional skills (Schultz & Baczek, 2020). Now that this study showed that teachers understand that the way they conduct read-alouds affects their students, this future study would look at how teachers' attitudes, self-efficacy beliefs, and read-aloud practices affect the students' social-emotional skills.

Last, future research could study what holds teachers back from conducting read-alouds for social-emotional learning. This study showed that although teachers had positive attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs towards read-alouds for social-emotional learning, there was no predictive relationship between attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs and the amount of time teachers spend on read-alouds for social-emotional learning. Therefore, it is important to study which factors impede teachers from conducting read-alouds for social-emotional learning in order to help teachers overcome the obstacles.

Limitations of the Study

There are a number of limitations in this study. First, the sample size of the survey was small. Although the initial goal was 100 participants, the researcher only received 47 responses. It is possible that there may have been correlations and a predictive relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and attitudes with each of the time variables, but this may not have been apparent because of the small sample size.

Another limitation of this study due to the small sample size is the model fit for CFA was poor. Since this is an exploratory study, the researcher still used the model for the study. However, a larger sample size would most likely have helped the model fit for the CFA.

The researcher had planned to create a time construct, but since Cronbach's alphas was below .7, the researcher did not create the construct and instead used each of the three-time questions separately. This may have happened because there were only three questions for time, and had there been four questions, the Cronbach's alpha may have been greater and at least .7.

Additionally, although the researcher used cognitive interviews to try and clarify the survey questions, it is a self-report measure where participants may not have understood something the way I meant it to be understood. For example, when I wrote in the survey, "Are you a general education classroom teacher?" I intended my sample to include lead teachers and not assistants, but I know of an assistant who filled it out as she thought it applied to her.

This study used non-random sampling procedures, specifically snowball sampling (Huck, 2012), to recruit participants. This limits the ability to generalize the study to the greater population of pre-K/pre-K age and kindergarten teachers.

This study focused only on general education and not special education, and including special education may have impacted the findings.

Conclusion

Addressing children's social and emotional health is an important aspect of any program for children (Britt et al., 2016). Teaching social-emotional skills through read-alouds is a simple way to incorporate social-emotional learning in the classroom. To gain a deeper understanding of this important topic, this study looked at pre-K/pre-K age and kindergarten teachers' attitudes, self-efficacy beliefs, and practices regarding read-alouds for social-emotional learning. As this study showed, read-alouds are used in pre-K/pre-K

age and kindergarten classrooms to teach social-emotional learning, and teachers mostly have positive attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs towards read-alouds for social-emotional learning. Attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs toward read-aloud for social-emotional learning did not predict the amount of time teachers spend reading aloud, which may point to the fact that some teachers feel pressured to cover academic content (Fox, 2013; Ledger & Merga, 2018) and do not conduct read-alouds for social-emotional learning. Most importantly, this study showed that teachers are aware that their attitudes affect the way they model the read-aloud, which in turn affects their students. It is the hope that teachers will take this understanding and apply it to other areas of their teaching practice so that they can be role models that help their students succeed.

APPENDIX A IRB APPROVAL

* External Email *



Federal Wide Assurance: FWA00009066

Nov 3, 2023 8:45:47 AM EDT

PI: Sara C. Kanner
CO-PI: Ekaterina Midgette
The School of Education

Re: Expedited Review - Initial - **IRB-FY2024-83** *Read-alouds for Social-Emotional Learning in Preschool: A Mixed-Methods Study*

Dear Sara C. Kanner:

The St John's University Institutional Review Board has rendered the decision below for *Read-alouds for Social-Emotional Learning in Preschool: A Mixed-Methods Study*. The approval is effective from November 3, 2023 through November 1, 2024.

Decision: Approved

PLEASE NOTE: If you have collected any data prior to this approval date, the data must be discarded.

Selected Category: 7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies. (NOTE: Some research in this category may be exempt from the HHS regulations for the protection of human subjects. 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) and (b)(3). This listing refers only to research that is not exempt.)

This protocol is approved contingent on removing the following for the consent form, "or Marie Nitopi, IRB Coordinator, nitopim@stjohns.edu 718-990-1440." Marie is retired and no longer there.

Sincerely,

Raymond DiGiuseppe, PhD, ABPP
Chair, Institutional Review Board
Professor of Psychology

APPENDIX B SURVEY PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM



Survey Participant Consent Form

Dear Participant:

You have been invited to take part in a research study to learn more about the relationship between self-efficacy and attitude towards read-alouds used for social-emotional learning and the amount of time spent on these read-alouds. This study will be conducted by Sara C. Kanner, Department of Education Specialties, St. John's University, as part of her doctoral dissertation work. Her faculty sponsor is Dr. Midgett, Department of Education Specialties.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following: Take part in a survey, and if you are interested, in a follow up interview to help the researcher understand pre-k and kindergarten teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and attitudes towards using read-alouds to teach social-emotional learning, as well as how much time they spend reading aloud to their students to teach social-emotional learning. Your answers to the surveys will be recorded through Survey Monkey. The survey is completely anonymous. The survey should take no more than 8 minutes to complete.

At the completion of the survey, you will be asked if you are interested in taking part in an interview, and if you are interested, you should send an email to me at sara.kanner20@my.stjohns.edu stating that you are interested in participating in an interview. Should you participate in an interview, the answers to the interview questions will be recorded in writing as well as videotaped. Participation in this interview will involve a minimum of twenty minutes of your time to complete. You will be asked to provide contact information so that I can contact you in the event that you will be selected for an interview.

Federal regulations require that all subjects be informed of the availability of medical treatment or financial compensation in the event of physical injury resulting from participation in the research. St. John's University cannot provide either medical treatment or financial compensation for any physical injury resulting from your participation in this research project. Inquiries regarding this policy may be made to the principal investigator or, alternatively, the Human Subjects Review Board (718-990-1440).

Although you will receive no direct benefits, this research may help the investigator understand the how teachers' attitudes and self-efficacy about read-alouds for social-emotional learning can affect the amount of time teachers spend reading aloud for social-emotional learning. This can help increase the teachers' awareness of factors that can affect how often they read-aloud for social-emotional learning.

Confidentiality of your research records will be strictly maintained by keeping the survey responses completely anonymous, the survey data stored in a password protected file, and the survey data will be stored in a password protected computer.

In the event that you consent to an interview and are selected for an interview, your name and any identifiers will be replaced with a number. Interview documentation will be stored in a locked file and in a password protected computer. Interviews will be recorded through a virtual password-protected platform, Webex. Your responses will be kept confidential with the following exception: the researcher is required by law to report to the appropriate authorities, suspicion of harm to yourself, to children, or to others. Your responses will be kept confidential by the researcher.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without penalty. For interviews, questionnaires or surveys, you have the right to skip or not answer any questions you prefer not to answer.

If there is anything about the study or your participation that is unclear or that you do not understand, if you have questions or wish to report a research-related problem, you may contact Sara C. Kanner, at sara.kanner20@my.stjohns.edu, St. John's University 8000 Utopia Parkway, Queens NY, 11439 or the faculty sponsor, Dr. Ekaterina Midgette, at midgette@stjohns.edu, St. John's University, Sullivan Hall 420, 8000 Utopia Parkway, Queens NY, 11439.

For questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the University's Institutional Review Board, St. John's University, Dr. Raymond DiGiuseppe, Chair digiuser@stjohns.edu 718-990-1955.

You have received a copy of this consent document to keep.

By filling out the survey responses, you are agreeing to participate in the survey.

By sending an email to sara.kanner20@my.stjohns.edu and stating that you are willing to be interviewed, you are agreeing to participate in an interview.

APPENDIX C INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM



Interview Participant Consent Form

Dear Participant:

You have been invited to take part in a research study to learn more about the relationship between self-efficacy and attitude towards read-alouds used for social-emotional learning and the amount of time spent on these read-alouds. This study will be conducted by Sara C. Kanner, Department of Education Specialties, St. John's University, as part of her doctoral dissertation work. Her faculty sponsor is Dr. Midgett, Department of Education Specialties.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following: Take part in a follow up interview to help the researcher understand pre-k and kindergarten teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and attitudes towards using read-alouds to teach social-emotional learning, as well as how much time they spend reading aloud to their students to teach social-emotional learning.

At the completion of the survey, you will be asked if you are interested in taking part in an interview, and if you are interested, you should send an email to me at sara.kanner20@my.stjohns.edu stating that you are interested in participating in an interview. Should you participate in an interview, the answers to the interview questions will be recorded in writing as well as videotaped. Participation in this interview will involve a minimum of twenty minutes of your time to complete. You will be asked to provide contact information so that I can contact you in the event that you will be selected for an interview.

Federal regulations require that all subjects be informed of the availability of medical treatment or financial compensation in the event of physical injury resulting from participation in the research. St. John's University cannot provide either medical treatment or financial compensation for any physical injury resulting from your participation in this research project. Inquiries regarding this policy may be made to the principal investigator or, alternatively, the Human Subjects Review Board (718-990-1440).

Although you will receive no direct benefits, this research may help the investigator understand the how teachers' attitudes and self-efficacy about read-alouds for social-emotional learning can affect the amount of time teachers spend reading aloud for social-emotional learning. This can help increase the teachers' awareness of factors that can affect how often they read-aloud for social-emotional learning.

In the event that you consent to an interview and are selected for an interview, your name and any identifiers will be replaced with a number. Interview documentation will be stored in a locked file and in a password protected computer. Interviews will be recorded through a virtual password-protected platform, Webex. Your responses will be kept confidential with the following exception: the researcher is required by law to report to the appropriate authorities, suspicion of harm to yourself, to children, or to others. Your responses will be kept confidential by the researcher.

If there is anything about the study or your participation that is unclear or that you do not understand, if you have questions or wish to report a research-related problem, you may contact Sara C. Kanner, at sara.kanner20@my, St. John's University, Sullivan Hall 420, 8000 Utopia Parkway, Queens NY, 11439.

For questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the University's Institutional Review Board, St. John's University, Dr. Raymond DiGiuseppe, Chair digiuser@stjohns.edu 718-990-1955.

You have received a copy of this consent document to keep.

By sending an email to sara.kanner20@my.stjohns.edu and stating that you are willing to be interviewed, you are agreeing to participate in an interview.

APPENDIX D EMAIL FOR RECRUITING PARTICIPANTS

Are you a pre-k (or pre-k age) or kindergarten general education classroom teacher?

You are invited to take part in a short survey to help me gather data on pre-k and kindergarten teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and attitudes towards using read-alouds to teach social-emotional learning, as well as how much time they spend reading aloud to their students to teach social-emotional learning.

The survey has 23 questions and should take no more than 8 minutes to complete.

You will receive no direct benefit for completing this survey, although this research may help me understand how teachers' attitudes and self-efficacy about read-alouds for social-emotional learning can affect the amount of time teachers spend reading aloud for social-emotional learning.

Confidentiality of your survey results will be strictly maintained. Additionally, this survey is completely anonymous.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without penalty. You have the right to skip or not answer any questions you prefer not to answer.

At the conclusion of the survey, you will be asked if you are interested in taking part of an interview to understand pre-k and kindergarten teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and attitudes towards using read-alouds to teach social-emotional learning, as well as how much time they spend reading aloud to their students to teach social-emotional learning. If you are interested, you will be instructed to send an email to sara.kanner20@my.stjohns.edu to let me know. Should you participate in an interview, the answers to the interview questions will be recorded in writing as well as videotaped. Participation in this interview will involve a minimum of twenty minutes of your time to complete. You will be asked to provide contact information so that I can contact you in the event that you will be selected for an interview.

Confidentiality of your research records will be strictly maintained by keeping the survey responses completely anonymous. Survey data will be stored in a locked file on a password protected computer. In the event that you consent to an interview and are selected for an interview, your name and any identifiers will be replaced with a number. Interview documentation will be stored in a locked file. Interviews will be recorded through a virtual password-protected platform, Webex.

If you have any questions or comments related to the study, please send them to the investigator, Sara C. Kanner at sara.kanner20@my.stjohns.edu.

Attached is the participant consent form for more information.

Here is the link to the survey:

Please forward this email to all pre-k or kindergarten general education teachers that you know!

THANK YOU!!

Sara C. Kanner, PhD candidate

St. John's University

APPENDIX E SURVEY

Survey

Welcome!

This anonymous survey is about read-aloud practices of general education Pre-K (or Pre-k age) and Kindergarten educators (the year before and two years before first grade). Your feedback will help me and other educators learn more about attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs towards reading aloud for social-emotional learning and will hopefully provide insight into educators' teaching practices! Thank you for taking the time to fill out the survey!

Please take the time to read the consent form on the next page.

Please see attached consent form.

1. Do you agree to participate in this survey?

Yes

No

2. Are you a general education classroom teacher who teaches pre-K/pre-K age students or kindergarten students? (This refers to teaching students two years before or the year before first grade.)

Yes

No

The following definitions can be useful to understand the terminology used in the survey:

Social-emotional learning- learning which covers any of the following five domains:

“self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making” (CASEL, 2022). These five domains include the important social and emotional skills necessary to live a healthy life, such as understanding and managing

one's emotions, creating supporting relationships with others, and making responsible decisions.

Classroom read-alouds- When a teacher reads a selected book out loud to the class.

Preschool- pre-K and kindergarten teachers

Part 1: Demographic Data

3. What age/grade students to you teach?

Pre-K/pre-K age

Kindergarten

4. **How many years of teaching experience do you have?**

Less than 1 year

1-3 years

4-7 years

8-10 years

10+ years

5. What is your highest awarded degree?

High school diploma/GED

Associate's degree

Bachelor's degree

Master's degree

Doctorate

Part 2: Read-Aloud Practices

6. How many times a week do you conduct a classroom read-aloud where you address an aspect of social-emotional learning?
- 0
 - 1-2
 - 3-4
 - 4+
7. On average, how many minutes long are your classroom read-alouds that address social-emotional learning?
- 0 minutes
 - 1-10 minutes
 - 11-20 minutes
 - 21-30 minutes
 - 30+ minutes
8. How many times a week do you conduct a classroom discussion about social-emotional learning in response to read-alouds?
- 0
 - 1-2
 - 3-4
 - 4+

Part 3: Attitudes:

9.	Strongly agree	Agree	Don't agree/disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
All pre-K and kindergarten teachers should utilize classroom read-alouds to teach social emotional skills.					
Classroom read-alouds are an important tool for teaching social-emotional skills to my students (adapted with permission from Bracket, 2012).					
I believe pre-K and kindergarten teachers should choose classroom read-alouds with social-emotional themes as often as they can.					
It is important to network with other preschool teachers in order to discuss classroom read-alouds used for social-emotional learning.					

Classroom read-alouds are an easy way to discuss social-emotional skills with my students.					
It is important to point out social-emotional skills that come up while I read books aloud to my students.					
I believe it is important to learn more about using classroom read-alouds to teach social and emotional skills to my students (adapted with permission from Brackett, 2012).					
I enjoy teaching social-emotional skills through classroom read-alouds.					
Classroom read-alouds are an easy way to teach social-emotional skills to my students.					

Part 4: Self-efficacy Beliefs:

10.	Strongly agree	Agree	Don't agree/disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<p>I am comfortable providing instruction on social and emotional learning through classroom read-alouds (adapted with permission from Brackett, 2012).</p>					
<p>I feel confident in my ability to provide instruction on social-emotional learning through classroom read-alouds (adapted with permission from Brackett, 2012).</p>					
<p>I believe through instructing students on social-emotional learning through classroom read-alouds that I am capable of giving them important skills for life.</p>					

<p>My efforts teaching social-emotional skills through classroom read-alouds teaches my students important social and emotional skills.</p>					
<p>Through classroom read-alouds focusing on social-emotional skills I can give my students social-emotional skills for life.</p>					
<p>My efforts teaching social-emotional skills through classroom read-alouds contributes to my students' abilities to overcome challenging home/community conditions.</p>					
<p>My efforts teaching social-emotional skills through classroom read-alouds</p>					

prevents problem behaviors among my students.					
I believe through instructing students on social-emotional learning through classroom read-alouds that I am capable of teaching them the tools they need to succeed in school and life.					

11. Are you interested in taking part in an interview through the virtual platform Webex to further discuss reading read-alouds for social-emotional learning? The interview will take a minimum of 20 minutes to complete.

Yes

No

If yes:

Interview Consent Form

Please send an email to sara.kanner20@my.stjohns.edu and state that you are willing to participate in an interview.

Thank you so much for taking the time to answer this survey!

Feel free to forward the link to the survey to any general education classroom teacher

who teaches pre-K/pre-K age students or kindergarten!

Reference: Brackett, M. A., Reyes, M. R., Rivers, S. E., Elbertson, N. A., & Salovey, P. (2012). Assessing teachers' beliefs about social and emotional learning. *Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment*, 30(3), 219–236.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0734282911424879>

APPENDIX F SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Directions: Introduce myself. Explain what the study is about and the goals of the study.

Ask again for consent to be interviewed prior to recording the interview.

Name, date, and time of the interview.

The following definitions can be useful to understand the terminology used in the interview:

Social-emotional learning- learning which covers any of the following five domains:

“self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making” (CASEL, 2022). These five domains include the important social and emotional skills necessary to live a healthy life, such as understanding and managing one’s emotions, creating supporting relationships with others, and making responsible decisions.

Classroom read-alouds- When a teacher reads a selected book out loud to the class.

Ice Breaker: What is the most recent book that you read-aloud to your class?

1. Can you describe your classroom read-aloud practices for social-emotional learning?
2. How do you describe your attitude toward using read-alouds for social-emotional learning?
3. What is your belief in your ability to effectively teach social-emotional skills through classroom read-alouds?
4. How do you feel your attitudes and beliefs in your abilities affect your classroom read-aloud practices for social-emotional learning?

5. Elaborate how your classroom read-aloud practices for social-emotional learning may impact your students.
6. Is there anything about read-alouds related to social-emotional learning that you would like to add?

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