

ABSTRACT

SULLIVAN, CARA CONSTANTINE. A Case Study of the Impact of Class Size on Teacher Efficacy. (Under the direction of Kenneth H. Brinson, Jnr.)

This study focused on small and large class sizes and the impact these classes had on four teachers' self-efficacy during the 2011-2012 school year, and was conducted in a suburban elementary school. The study was qualitative and used triangulation of data sources to determine whether teachers had high or low efficacy levels, depending on their small or large class sizes. Two of the teacher participants were kindergarten teachers teaching small class sizes (nineteen to twenty students each), and two of the teacher participants were first grade teachers teaching large class sizes (twenty-four students each). All four teacher participants were female with experience teaching both small and large class sizes in their past years of classroom teaching.

This study used data collected from interviews, observations, and journal entries of each of the four teacher participants. Common to all four teacher participants, twelve important trends emerged from the data collected. The participants' data were compared and categorized according to positive or negative thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and actions in each trend.

After comparing all four teacher participants' data and identifying their statements, actions, and writing as positive or negative, it was determined that both teacher participants in the small class sizes displayed high (positive) teacher efficacy levels, and both teacher participants in the large class sizes displayed low (negative) teacher efficacy levels. The results of this study target the importance of school administrators to create teacher in-service workshops focusing on strategies to help teachers who teach large size classes. Learning and practicing efficient ways to implement curriculum, conduct assessments, effectively teach

small groups, manage behavior, and utilize teacher assistants and parent volunteers would be helpful strategies for school administrators to offer to teachers prior to the year's beginning. Extending teachers intensive training on how to manage large class sizes may help with teacher retention, as teachers may have more self-confidence, feel better about their teaching, and display successful and positive attitudes towards their students which may encourage them to continue teaching in the classroom and continue in the education field in general.

A Case Study of the Impact of Class Size on Teacher Efficacy

by
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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
North Carolina State University
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education

Educational Administration and Supervision

Raleigh, NC

2012

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is the culmination of unknown hours of research, interviews, sleepless nights, frustration, and excitement. Many people, in addition to myself, have endured these sleepless nights and frustration, and to all of them I'm truly thankful. None of this would have been possible without the support and help of my mother, Dr. Rosalie Constantine, who has been the driving factor behind my work at North Carolina State University. It is through her modeling, perseverance, and success that I have had the courage to write this dissertation. My mother is the most influential person in my life and I'm proud to share this dissertation with her.

I also dedicate this dissertation to my husband, Kevin, who has felt every bump in the road of my program. He is the most motivated person I know (working towards his Physician's Assistant Master's degree) and he (and our wonderful dog Winston) has been my rock during these past years of work at NCSU.

My father Francis and my brother Chris have been my cheerleaders during my program at North Carolina State University. They both encouraged me and gave me confidence to finish, even when I felt like throwing in the towel.

Lastly, I'd like to dedicate this dissertation to my oldest and dearest friend, Gretchen Ruprecht. Gretchen has been my go-to person during these years, giving me confidence when I've needed it most. Gretchen is a successful reading teacher and she has taught me how to live life to the fullest and enjoy it, also while pursuing the most difficult degree of all.

BIOGRAPHY

The author of this study, Cara Constantine Sullivan, was born and raised in Erie, Pennsylvania. Her parents, Francis J. and Rosalie P. Constantine, instilled upon her the importance of education from an early age. Cara graduated from Edinboro University of Pennsylvania with Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education in 1999. In 2001, Cara graduated from Edinboro University of Pennsylvania with Master's of Education degree in School Leadership and Supervision.

After graduate school, Cara moved to North Carolina to teach elementary school. She taught in the Raleigh area, and then moved into school administration. She has thoroughly enjoyed the field of school administration.

During her time as an elementary school teacher, Cara met and married her husband, Kevin Sullivan. Kevin is a medically-retired US Air Force C-130 navigator who attends the East Carolina University Physician's Assistant program and will graduate in 2012.

Cara's parents and brother Chris were the driving force in Cara's thirst for education. Chris taught Cara to always set high goals and the art of competition. Cara's entire family encouraged her to reach for the top during her entire life and she knew she would not stop until she received her Doctorate in Education.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The completion of this doctoral study has been influenced by many intelligent, motivated, and encouraging individuals. First I would like to thank Dr. Kenneth Brinson, Jnr., the chairperson of my committee. Dr. Brinson took the time to first help me through my courses at North Carolina State University, and then to serve as chair of my committee throughout my entire dissertation process. Dr. Brinson has guided me tremendously in every way imaginable as my dissertation chair, helping me through every bump in the road. He has encouraged me and has had faith in me when I lost faith in myself. He is truly an inspiration and I am thankful for his unending faith in me.

I would also like to thank Dr. Lance Fusarelli, Dr. Kevin Brady, and Dr. Ellen McIntyre for their dedication and willingness to serve on my dissertation committee. Dr. Fusarelli, Dr. Brady, and Dr. McIntyre have given incredible insight into my topic and study, helping me to think of other sides of my study, including new research avenues to take for each chapter written.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement

The issue of class size is an important one in many elementary schools. Teachers must find ways to teach students to the best of their abilities, regardless of the number of students in the class. Teaching large or small classes places differing demands on teachers, as these educators strive to reach each individual student so that students can reach academic and personal success.

There is no exact number of a large or small class size. The studies (including Prichard's 1999 "Reducing Class Size, What Do We Know?" and "Smaller Classes Benefit Burke County" in 2004) that have been conducted regarding class size include classes ranging from thirteen to twenty-three students. In this study, the researcher will define a "large class size" as one classroom of twenty-four or more students in one grade with one full-time teacher, and a "small class size" as one classroom of twenty or fewer students in one grade with one full-time teacher. A class size of twenty-one, twenty-two, or twenty-three students will be defined as a "mid-sized class" of students.

Class size refers to the actual number of students in one teacher's classroom for whom the teacher is responsible. To calculate the pupil-teacher ratio of a school, the number of pupils enrolled is divided by the number of teachers in the school. Lower-performing students are likely to be in schools with larger classes that have smaller teacher-pupil ratios (Achilles, 1997).

Each teacher possesses his/her own personal teacher satisfaction level when teaching in either large or small classes. According to Linda B. Koutoufas, an elementary school teacher in Virginia Beach, Virginia, “Too many teachers leave education because of low pay, overwhelming workloads, and a lack of respect for the profession. I have had as many as 36 first graders in my class, and as few as 22. Believe me, no new study is needed to tell you that 22 is better” (Sack, 1999, p. 22).

This quotation about teacher satisfaction aligns with the issue of personal teacher efficacy. Personal teacher efficacy can be defined as how a teacher feels about his/her teaching (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998).

Teachers are more inclined to stay in the profession if they are compensated appropriately, and if they feel they are well-respected. Teachers’ perceptions of their own worth may decrease when teachers decide that they are being taken advantage of, possibly resulting in a decrease in performance.

A continuing effort to improve teacher quality by raising standards, developing successful recruitment strategies, helping to prepare new teachers, and providing opportunities for professional development to current teachers is being made by administrators in schools. Teacher quality is directly linked to personal teacher efficacy. Teacher quality and teacher efficacy both address the ways teachers perceive themselves as they teach, and both teacher quality and teacher efficacy possess the ability to increase and decrease within teachers. Developing mentoring programs and making wise use of federal grants may help to improve teacher quality (Riley, 1999). This researcher will investigate the

relationship between class size and personal teacher efficacy, and address how they relate to teacher quality and retention.

Research Question

The central question for guiding this research is: Does class size impact a teacher's sense of personal teacher efficacy, and, if so, what kind of impact does class size have on that teacher's personal teacher efficacy?

The purpose of this case study is to determine whether small class size impacts personal teacher efficacy. According to Pritchard in 1999, class size reduction improves student achievement. However, the researcher will intensely study the effect that class size may have on personal teacher efficacy. Teacher efficacy is defined as how a teacher feels about his or her teaching (Tschannon-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). Determining if there is a relationship between class size and how teachers feel about their teaching could help to increase teacher awareness of how their feelings about teaching are demonstrated to their students while teachers instruct. This could make teachers more aware of how their attitudes affect their students when learning. This study could also increase school administrators' awareness of teacher satisfaction and help administrators implement strategies to improve their schools.

History/Background/Rationale

Administrators have a constant challenge to keep the teachers in their schools teaching to the best of their abilities in positive learning classrooms/communities. It is

important for administrators to support positive morale in schools, which may include teachers having positive classroom experiences in order for them to believe in themselves. Administrators may be able to maintain higher school morale with a positive climate and culture with teachers who are happy with their performances in the classroom.

It may be especially important, in the early elementary grades, for teachers to be satisfied with the way they teach. Children in grades kindergarten, first, and second thrive on positive reinforcement and have a thirst for teachers to believe in their successes. If children are motivated by their teachers' attitudes, they may begin to feel important, causing them to even then become more successful.

With class size initiatives on the rise in school systems across America, there are two sides to the class size debate. However, the Tennessee Project STAR study (Pritchard, 1999) focused on student achievement and suggested that smaller classes improve student achievement. The STAR (Student Teacher Achievement Ratio) study involved 7,000 students in Tennessee, randomly placing students and teachers in different class sizes. This student focused on student achievement and found that students in smaller sized classes significantly outperformed their peers (Agron, 1999).

Since smaller classes improve student achievement, the researcher is investigating a possible link between the size of teachers' classes in relation to how he/she feels about his/her teaching (teacher efficacy). There may or may not be a relationship between class size and teacher efficacy. If a relationship is found in this study, it could explain possible impact on teacher retention.

Significance of the Study

Educators should have the best interest of each child in mind. Examining how class size affects personal teacher efficacy is imperative. Class size has an impact on all students and teachers, thus affecting how teachers must best meet the needs of each individual child. The elementary students of today will be the productive citizens of tomorrow, and this affects our entire society. Providing students with the best education possible should be the top priority.

Researchers (Achilles 1997; Pritchard 1999; Sack 1999) have been studying class size and how it affects student achievement in the classroom. However, in this study, the researcher will delve deeper into the possible link between class size and personal teacher efficacy. The researcher will study whether or not small classes impact teacher satisfaction and the way teachers feel about their teaching, including positive aspects as well as negative aspects.

Contribution to Theory and Practice

Research shows that the smaller the class size, the better the academic success of students (Pritchard, 1999), therefore creating more productive citizens. As this study will examine whether or not class size has an impact on personal teacher efficacy, the information that results may allow administrators to be more inclined to find and implement different strategies to better meet the needs of the teachers (if needed) in order to ultimately retain teachers.

A deeper awareness and appreciation may be recognized in teachers' recognition of their own attitudes and feelings about class size and teacher efficacy in this study. From this information, teacher in-service and professional development can focus on the teacher needs. This study on personal teacher efficacy may serve to inform educators about teachers' personal satisfaction in their positions, and reasons why these levels of satisfaction exist.

Administrators need to keep the morale of their schools positive in order to keep a climate in which the teachers, parents, and students like being there. A positive climate includes teachers being satisfied in their career choices, thus trickling down into the classroom. Hence, in the classroom, teachers who are happy are likely to transfer their positive energy to their students who in turn transfer *their* positive energy to their parents. This provides a positive learning environment for all involved in the classroom, and may help the teachers to have positive teacher efficacy and remain in the teaching profession. This is an administrator's goal—to keep all in the classroom satisfied and content to keep class and school morale at a positive level, and to keep harmony in the school.

Summary of Chapter One

Teachers must find ways to teach their students to the best of their abilities, no matter their class sizes. Teachers are expected that their students grow both in academics and socially by the end of each school year. A teacher's class size may be small or large, however the responsibility of the success of the students remains the teacher's prime responsibility. In this study, class size is defined by the researcher as the actual number of students in one

teacher's classroom for whom the teacher is responsible. A small class size is determined by the researcher to be twenty or fewer students with one full-time teacher, and a large class size is determined by the researcher to be twenty-four or more students with one full-time teacher.

Personal teacher efficacy is defined in this study as how a teacher feels about his/her teaching (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). In this qualitative case study, the researcher will investigate the relationship between class size and teacher efficacy by exploring the research question "Does class size impact a teacher's sense of personal teacher efficacy, and, if so, what kind of impact does class size have on that teacher's personal teacher efficacy?"

This study may help teachers to recognize a deeper awareness and appreciation of their own attitudes and feelings about class size and teacher efficacy. Administrators may implement teacher in-service workshops and professional development activities to help teachers to focus on classroom needs.

This study is presented in five chapters. The first chapter introduces the study, states the problem, significance of the study, and the study's contribution to theory and practice. The second chapter summarizes relevant literature in the areas of class size and teacher efficacy and the relationship between the two. The third chapter explains the methodology of the study, including the study design, the population sample, explanation of the study criteria, data gathering, analysis of data, human subjects information, subjectivity statement, and study limitations. The fourth chapter analyzes and discusses the findings of the study. The fifth chapter summarizes and draws conclusions from this study and recommends further research, based upon the findings of this study on the impact of class size on teacher efficacy.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Much research (Achilles 1997; Pritchard 1999) has been conducted on class size and its relation to student achievement. Some research shows that teachers who teach smaller class sizes have increased student test scores (Pritchard, 1999). Other issues that have surfaced in the research of smaller classes is that smaller classes promote more parental involvement, better teacher organization, and fewer discipline disruptions than in larger classes.

In the 1970s, Gene Glass and Mary Lee Smith researched class size and concluded that learning improved in smaller classes in “Smaller is Better” (Viadero, 2001). However, they deduced that the benefits are not noticed unless the classes are reduced to fifteen or fewer students. Herbert Walberg, a professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago, believes the study’s findings were controversial because it included both mixed grade levels and classes with too many mixed variables (Viadero, 2001).

The restructuring of classes by reducing class size is pertinent to the learning of students. There has been much research completed concentrating on state-funded programs to reduce class size in order to raise student achievement (US Dept. of Education, 1999). In 1985, Tennessee launched a class size reduction initiative, labeled Project Student/Teacher Achievement Ratio (STAR). In addition to the STAR study, at least twenty other states have followed the Tennessee study, including California, Indiana, Maryland, North Carolina, Wisconsin, and Ohio (U.S. Department of Education, 1999).

North Carolina Studies

Two important studies were conducted in North Carolina in 1991. In Burke County, the school board, citizens, and educators began a study to reduce class sizes to fifteen in first grade, followed by second and third grades in subsequent years (Finn, 1998). The goal of this study was to increase reading and math achievement. Approximately \$1.2 million dollars was allocated to this study annually (Class Size Reduction Policy Brief #23).

According to “Smaller Classes Benefit Burke County (NC) Students” in *The Center for Public Education* in 2004, the superintendent of Burke County NC schools, David Burleson, stated that the teacher/student ratios in first through third grades averaged twenty-four students per teacher. Burleson and the school district formed a committee to study the issue of class size in the district, which had several tasks: to examine the research on class size and student achievement, to evaluate classroom space within the district itself, and to determine the needs of the faculty and staff. Upon review, the committee recommended that a pilot program be implemented for first graders in the 1991-1992 school year, and the success of the pilot program prompted the district to continue pilot programs in the second and third grade levels as well.

During this Burke County study, the demographics of the district changed drastically. The English as a second language population went from almost non-existent to fifteen percent of the school. The percentage of students on free and reduced lunch also increased fifty percent to make a total free and reduced lunch rate of fifty-eight percent in the elementary school (“Smaller Classes Benefit Burke County,” 2004).

The test scores in this district have increased, despite the change in demographics, however. The district is making Adequate Yearly Progress in meeting the No Child Left Behind requirements, and the study has shown that teachers with fewer students spend six percent more time on instruction in the classroom than do teachers in larger size classrooms. Along with the smaller classes came the support of administrators, teachers, students, and parents. Parents have more opportunity to be involved in the classrooms and they have increased the attendance rate for parent-teacher conferences to ninety-nine percent (“Smaller Classes Benefit Burke County,” 2004).

Burke County faced an obstacle of limited space and funding for more space while studying the smaller classes. Burke County used mobile units, a state bond, and a local one-cent sales tax for school expansion to overcome their obstacle of space and funding for more space. The junior high school was also reconfigured and turned into a middle school, freeing up more space for the elementary school (“Smaller Classes Benefit Burke County,” 2004).

This class size reduction program was funded by state, national, and local funds. Originally, the funding came from the district’s operating budget contingency funds. The district also eliminated teacher assistant positions in grades first through third and used those funds for the class size reduction program. Federal class size reduction funds and low-wealth district funds were also used to fund the program. The Burke County school board was also active in funding and supporting this class size reduction program (“Smaller Classes Benefit Burke County,” 2004).

The Burke County study has had such an overall success in reducing class sizes, that they are researching the reduction of class sizes in fourth and fifth grades by using Title I

funds. According to Burlison, “The best thing to come out of this is that students are treated as individuals. Teachers get to really know their students, have the time to individualize lessons, and are better able to meet individual students’ needs. Students most at risk have benefited the most from reduced class size” (“Smaller Classes Benefit Burke County,” 2004).

A second North Carolina study of importance took place in Oak Hill Elementary School in Guilford County. The purpose of the study was to reduce class sizes to improve student achievement. In this study, another school in the county was visited by Oak Hill Elementary School teachers to observe already-established small classes. Researchers and/or consultants also met with first grade teachers to provide individualized suggestions and instruction to better help them to determine ways to teach in small classes (“Class Size Reduction: A Review of the Literature,” 2001).

In this Oak Hill study, classes in kindergarten through third grades were reduced to fifteen students per class. At Oak Hill Elementary School, seventy-eight percent of the students were in the subsidized lunch program. Matched comparison groups were used (Finn, 1998). This initiative was termed “Success Starts Small” (U.S. Department of Education, 1998).

The results of both North Carolina studies found that small classes out-performed larger classes in academic achievement. Also, teachers in small classes spent significantly more time on task and less time on discipline or organizational matters as compared to teachers in the larger classes (Finn, 1998).

Tennessee Project STAR

According to Pritchard's (1999) findings in "Reducing Class Size," the state of Tennessee conducted the first major study of class size in 1985. Named Project STAR (Student/Teacher Achievement Ratio), the study contributed largely to later research on class size reduction. In this study, seventy-nine schools were chosen to participate in a four-year longitudinal observational study of kindergarten, first, second, and third grades. Included in these seventy-nine schools were three hundred classrooms and seven thousand students. There were three different kinds of classrooms to which students and teachers were randomly assigned: classes of thirteen to seventeen students with one teacher, classes of twenty-two to twenty-five students with one teacher, and classes of twenty-two to twenty-five students with one teacher and one full-time instructional aide.

According to the "Class Size Effects in the Primary Grades: Research in Tennessee," published by Colorado Department of Education in 1996, Project STAR included a "within-school" design. Each of the seventy-nine participating schools was required to include at least fifty-seven students at the appropriate grade levels, containing at least one of the three different types of classes. This design "reduced major sources of possible variation in student achievement attributable to school effects (i.e., community demographics, principal leadership, instructional materials, etc.)" (1996).

To measure the student achievement, each year researchers for Project STAR collected results from student achievement data from standardized tests, curriculum based tests, and measures of self-concept and motivation (Black, 1999). These standardized tests included different parts of the Stanford Achievement Test (for kindergarten through third

grades), STAR's Basic Skills Criterion Test (for first and second grades), and, for third grade, Tennessee's Basic Skills Criterion Test ("Class Size Effects," 1999).

The results of the Tennessee study in 1989 were clear. Students in the classes with thirteen to seventeen students significantly outperformed their peers in the larger classes on the standardized and curriculum-based reading and math tests (Agron, 1999). In addition, according to Pritchard (1999), a smaller proportion of students in the thirteen to seventeen student classes were retained, and there was earlier identification of special educational needs of students. Also according to Pritchard (1999), there were no significant academic achievement differences in the larger classes of students with or without an instructional aide. Black (1999) reported that this study also showed similar results for males and females, significantly greater academic benefits for minority students and students attending inner-city schools, and lasting benefits into the high school years.

The STAR study additionally showed that teachers in small classes have more time to spend on individualized instruction and less time on organizational tasks and managing the classroom. This study found that child behavior is directly affected by class size, and children in smaller classes are more likely to be engaged in work and less likely to be disruptive in class. Children in small classes were found to participate in class as well (Barnett, Schulman, and Shore, 2004).

The STAR study began the initiative for reducing class sizes. In the STAR study, smaller class sizes demonstrated increased student achievement. In current schools, teachers who teach smaller classes should have a higher student success rate, which may increase a teacher's self-perception of how he/she feels about how he/she teaches.

Additional Studies

Shortly after the Tennessee Project STAR study was completed, Tennessee launched the Lasting Benefits Study (LBS), which determined if the results of STAR affected students in their later years of schooling. All of the students who participated in Project STAR resumed regular class sizes beginning in the fourth grade, and the LBS tracked these students' gains and assessed their performance, as measured by standardized achievement tests, in later school grades. The LBS used the Tennessee Comprehensive Achievement Program (TCAP) to measure the students' academic achievement, an instrument that the state of Tennessee requires to be administered from second grade through eighth grade and at tenth grade. Results of the analyses of STAR students in their fifth and sixth grade years showed that the classes with fewer students in the earlier grades consistently did better academically than their counterparts in the larger classes ("Class Size Effects," 1996).

Tennessee's Project STAR and Lasting Benefits Study proved to be beneficial. Researchers who organized Project STAR made it the longest-lasting experimental study that has ever been conducted on the effects of small class sizes in regard to student achievement. In the October 1995 issue of *Teacher Magazine*, Debra Viadero quotes Frederick Mosteller, a Harvard University statistics professor, regarding the STAR study: "This is one of the great experiments in education in United States history. It definitely answers the question of whether reduction from this size to that size does make a difference, and it clearly does" (Viadero, <http://www.edweek.org/tm/articles/1995/10/01/02small.h07.html?r=1048375963>).

According to Leahy in "A Survey of Selected Teachers Opinions to the Effects of Class Size on Student Achievement among Middle School Students" in 2006, a study in

Chicago was conducted of first grade students in 1992 which reduced class sizes to fourteen to twenty-five students, assessed these students using standardized reading assessments, and compared results to those in large class sizes of twenty-five students or more. Leahy reported that researchers discovered that children in smaller classes received more individual attention from teachers, and students paid more attention to work. The depth of the curriculum was greater and discipline issues decreased (2006).

In addition to Leahy's report on class sizes and discipline, according to Zahorik in "Reducing Class Size Leads to Individualized Instruction" in 1999, smaller class sizes have fewer discipline problems and there is less difficult behavior. Zahorik reports that misbehavior is more noticeable in smaller class sizes when it does occur, and teachers are able to deal with it immediately before it becomes a larger problem. Discipline issues are reduced (if not totally eliminated) in small class sizes, and this leads to more time available for instruction (1999).

In 2009, Mathews' article, "Better Teachers, Not Tinier Classes, Should Be Goal," reported that the Center for Public Education investigated nineteen class size studies. Two interesting conclusions were found. The first conclusion was that most of the studies conducted focused on kindergarten, first, second, and third grades, and most of the beneficial effects of the smaller class sizes seemed to happen in those early elementary years as students were learning to read. A second conclusion was that these studies showed little effect from reducing class sizes unless the number of students was twenty or fewer (2009).

History of State Sponsored Programs

According to the U.S. Department of Education (1999), there are at least twenty states that have implemented class size reduction programs to benefit students.¹ More recently, four additional states have added programs to reduce class sizes. Iowa has created the Class Size/Early Intervention Program to reduce class sizes in kindergarten through third grade. This program reduces classes to seventeen students for basic skills instruction (U.S. Department of Education, 1999). Maryland established the Maryland Learning Success Program, which is an initiative to reduce class sizes in first and second grades (1999). The state of Minnesota expanded its class size reduction program in 1999 significantly, and added more than one hundred million dollars over two years to annual funding levels of ninety million dollars (1999). In addition, the state of Washington has allocated one million dollars for its class size reduction initiative, labeled “Great Start,” to help improve reading achievement and instruction in the early grades. This state has reduced first grade class sizes to fifteen or sixteen students in one-third of its elementary schools. Therefore, eight hundred fifty students in fifty-seven first-grade classrooms are being taught in small classes. The teachers in these schools receive training on how to teach reading, and they meet regularly with each other to help improve their teaching approaches, and also to discuss teaching strategies that work most effectively with their students (1999).

¹ There are current programs in Arizona, California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming (U.S. Department of Education, 1999).

Cost

There are many ongoing costs and factors in the implementation and upkeep of a class size reduction program. The cost for initial average class size varies greatly among school districts. Those districts with initially lower class sizes will more than likely need less money for the implementation of a class size reduction program than those districts that contain larger class sizes (“Class Size Reduction,” 1997).

Class size reduction programs may be implemented with state funding, and funds may be allotted (in some districts) if the school’s classes stay at or below twenty students. Keeping within these parameters assuring that classes are actually at or below twenty students per class, may cause an increase in the cost of the reduction program, due to the addition of more classrooms and teachers (“Class Size Reduction,” 1997).

Districts that pay higher teacher salaries will also have higher class size reduction costs. The salary schedule of each district and the experience level of the teachers determines the cost of teachers hired for class size reduction programs. Over time, teacher costs will also increase as the newly hired teachers move up the salary scale in the district (“Class Size Reduction,” 1997). The largest portion of increased spending on education has been used to hire more teachers (Monk, Nakib, Odden, & Picus, 1995).

Other ongoing costs reported by districts include costs for utilities, custodial services, substitute teachers, and clerical services (“Class Size Reduction,” 1997). These costs can average up to ten percent of teacher costs, or a range of three thousand to five thousand dollars per classroom per year.

In March 1999, the United States Department of Education proposed a federal initiative of \$1.2 billion for class size reduction. If schools in a local education agency (LEA) remain within the parameters of below the eighteen student-per-classroom rule, states would receive money and would be required to allocate one hundred percent of the federal funding they receive directly to local education agencies who would be eligible for the funding. Eighty percent of the eligibility would be based on poverty and twenty percent on school enrollment. Recruiting, hiring, and training of certified teachers would take eighty-two percent of the money, while professional development and teacher testing would utilize fifteen percent. The remaining three percent would be used for local administration (Robelen, 1999).

According to a *U.S. News & World Report* news poll conducted in 1997, "Poll Says Public Would Pay for Smaller Classes," the majority of Americans think that reducing class sizes is important. The Americans polled would support and vote for a political candidate who advocates raising taxes to help pay for implementation of class size reduction programs in kindergarten through third grades.

In California, many cost issues have emerged. Approximately \$771 million allocated in the first year of implementation covered incentive funding of \$650 (since raised to \$800) for each primary-grade student in a class of no more than twenty students. Class sizes are about one teacher to nineteen students to ensure remaining under the cap, which increases costs by as much as twenty-one percent. If the class size *averaged* twenty, per-pupil costs for the average district would be \$630, according to the Legislative Analyst, who estimates a

long-run per-pupil cost of about \$1,020 or a statewide annual total of at least \$1.3 billion (Class Size Reduction Policy Brief #23).

The state of California allocated \$200 million for the first year of program implementation. Actual expenditures were about \$500 million. The average first-year cost of \$28,000 per new classroom jumped to an estimated \$73,000 for completing grades kindergarten through third reductions, since districts needed to purchase portables or build additions (Class Size Reduction Policy Brief #23).

Under California's legislation, districts must use existing funds to provide staff development ("staff development" encompasses not only in-service but also pre-service development for teachers hired on emergency permits) specific to smaller classes. With so many inexperienced and/or uncredentialed teachers, the need for support is great (Class Size Reduction Policy Brief #23).

There are ways to contain the costs of reducing class size. Reducing class sizes for students achieving below grade level and combining individual tutoring with classes reduced to fifteen students for language arts/reading instruction is one way. Policies can set class size reduction goals as a means of improving achievement, and then can encourage local creativity in reaching those goals. Schools can combine new funding with a reallocation of existing funds and can make new schedules, devising an array of small-class arrangements (Class Size Reduction Policy Brief #23).

Title I funds can also be used to help reduce class size. This redistribution of resources was used in the North Carolina studies in both Guilford County and Burke County to help reduce class sizes. In addition, creative scheduling can be completed to reduce class

sizes for a portion of the school day. For example, with parallel block scheduling, half the class is taught reading and math and the rest of the class is taught specialty classes (art, music, computer lab) in larger groups (Class Size Reduction Policy Brief #23).

Teacher Benefits

According to Pritchard (1999), teachers benefit from smaller class sizes. Management problems are reduced in smaller class settings, and teachers are able to focus on academics rather than on classroom management. Also, a small class setting makes it difficult for the teacher to overlook the needs of an individual student, whereas meeting the needs of individual students may cause problems in a classroom full of twenty-four or more students.

Teacher-student instructional interactions are enhanced in smaller classes as well. Teachers are able to use a wider variety of instructional approaches and assignments in smaller classes. There is more classroom space with which to work when there are fewer desks in a room, making it easier for the teacher to monitor the students while in their seats. Teachers get to know their students better when there are fewer students in the classroom, and they in turn have more time to work with students' parents. This could lead to parental interest in the schooling of their children, creating increased parent participation in the classroom. When teachers teach in smaller classes, they can teach differently (by using different grouping techniques) from the way they must teach in larger classroom settings. Teachers also are better able to identify students' needs with fewer students in the classroom

(Riley, 1998). Teachers could provide individual attention to each student, and could effectively cover more material in the classroom.

According to “Small Class Size Still Matters as Deficits and Tougher Standards Loom” in 2002, some school leaders are paying more attention to lowering class size as a result of President George W. Bush’s No Child Left Behind plan, which grades schools on student performance. Improved student behavior, more efficient classrooms, and higher test scores in Indiana have been reported after reducing class sizes, as has less teacher absenteeism in Nevada.

The Non-Impact of Small Class Sizes

Although there were studies conducted on the benefits of small class sizes, Eric Hanushek argues that there is no systematic relationship between resources and student outcomes. In 1989, Hanushek reexamined 152 studies that used the student-teacher ratio in order to estimate what impact (if any) spending money and resources had on the outcome of the students. Hanushek found that only 27 of the studies he reexamined were statistically significant, and of these 27, only 14 had a positive affect on student outcomes, and 13 found a negative affect on student outcomes (Picus, 2000).

School administrators also reflect another side to small class sizes as evidenced by Hallinan’s 1985 study. School administrators reason that small class size is only one of several contributing factors that affect the quality of classroom instruction. Due to cost, building size, etc., school administrators may believe that teachers can effectively teach researched techniques and strategies in any size classroom (Hallinan, 1985).

Roger Shouse and Lawrence J. Mussoline researched school restructuring in disadvantaged schools. Restructuring is defined by Shouse and Mussoline as organizational practices such as cooperative learning, cross-disciplinary team-teaching, and heterogeneous grouping (Mussoline & Shouse, 2001). These restructured schools have changed their patterns of roles, rules, and relationships within schools. In these restructured schools, there is a structural shift away from rigid, bureaucratic, and centralized administration. There is also a professional shift to teachers assuming more responsibility for student learning, professionalism, and caring attitudes towards students and colleagues. Finally, the third shift in restructured schools is the shift in instructional individual change to cooperative activities and to developing “thinking skills,” (Shouse & Mussoline, 2000). With these new criteria in place, Shouse and Mussoline found that students in socio-economically disadvantaged schools benefit academically with traditional practices, or “non-restructuring” of the schools. It was concluded that, in these non-restructured schools, for three years, there was no significant difference in math achievement scores than in those restructured schools. Furthermore, schools that had been restructured for fewer than three years had significantly lower math achievement scores. Shouse and Mussoline concluded that restructuring of schools poses issues and risks for economically disadvantaged schools (Shouse & Mussoline, 2000).

According to Mussoline and Shouse in “School Restructuring as a Policy Agenda: Why One Size May Not Fit All” in 2001, school restructuring takes place in both public and private (Catholic) schools. In private (Catholic) schools, the schools take on a normative approach, relaying the idea that schools can be supportive, collegiate, and moral. However, in

public schools, restructuring takes the technical approach, relaying the idea that schools should replace their “traditional” practices in curriculum and instruction with more integrated, constructivist, and cooperative methods (2001).

Teacher Efficacy

Background. Albert Bandura introduced his concept of self-efficacy in 1977 at Stanford University (Schwarzer & Fuchs, 1995). He found that a strong sense of personal efficacy is related to more social integration, better health, and higher achievement. If people believe that they can solve problems by taking action themselves, they become more likely to do so and are more committed to the decisions they make. The way people feel, think, and act is determined by their self-efficacy, and a low sense of self-efficacy can result in low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, helplessness, and the feelings of pessimistic thoughts about accomplishments and personal development. However, a high sense of self-efficacy can result in choosing to perform more challenging activities, setting higher goals and achieving these goals. When problems occur with individuals with high senses of self-efficacy, they tend to recover more quickly and return to achieving their goals (Schwarzer & Fuchs, 1995).

According to Hoy (2000) in “Changes in Teacher Efficacy During the Early Years of Teaching,” teacher efficacy has been identified as one of the few teacher characteristics linked to student achievement. This was confirmed according to a study by the Rand Corporation between the years 1972 and 1975 (Hoy, 2000). In 1976 and 1977, the Rand Corporation conducted two more studies that were funded by the federal Elementary and

Secondary Education Act, and they determined to be Rand Analysis' most powerful teacher attribute (Constantine, 2005).

According to Berman and McLaughlin (1977), in the 1976/1977 studies, two questions were asked to determine if control of teachers' behavior is determined by outside factors, or whether it comes from within: Question 1: "When it comes right down to it, a teacher really can't do much because most of a student's motivation and performance depends on his or her home environment." Question 2: "If I really try hard, I can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated students" (Constantine, 2005). The second question presented was labeled "self-efficacy" by Bandura (1986).

Since these conducted studies, teacher efficacy has been linked to many significant variables such as student motivation, teachers' classroom management strategies, teachers' referrals of students to special education services, time spent teaching specific subjects, and teachers' adoption of new practices. Mastery experiences during the teachers' student teaching placements and their induction year of teaching also contribute to the teachers' self-efficacy. Bandura's theory of self-efficacy states that efficacy must be influenced early in the learning stages (such as in the first years of teaching) and this may be significant in the long-term teacher efficacy development (Hoy, 2000).

According to Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) in "Teacher Efficacy: Capturing an Elusive Construct," student behavior in the classroom directly relates to teacher efficacy. Teacher efficacy affects the goals teachers set for themselves and in the classroom and their ambition levels as well as their invested efforts in teaching. Teachers with stronger senses of efficacy tend to show superior levels of organizing and planning in the classroom, and they

also tend to be more experimental with new teaching methods, better meeting the needs of the students in their classes. Teachers with stronger senses of teacher efficacy also tend to exhibit persistence in the classroom when faced with obstacles, and they tend to be less critical of students when they make mistakes while working. They are more capable to work with struggling students and to be less inclined to refer students to receive special education services. Teachers with a greater sense of teacher efficacy demonstrate a greater commitment to teaching and greater enthusiasm for teaching, and are more inclined to be retained as teachers (Tschannen-Moran, 2001).

In “A Reliability Generalization Study of the Teacher Efficacy Scale and Related Instruments,” Robin K. Henson (2001) described teacher efficacy as an important variable in the effectiveness of teachers, related consistently to positive teaching behaviors and student outcomes.

Personal teacher efficacy. Personal teacher efficacy can be defined as how a teacher feels about his/her teaching (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). A relatively limited amount of research has been conducted on class size and teacher efficacy. “Reducing class size is a major accomplishment during lean times,” states Karen DeVries (p. 1) deputy superintendent of an elementary school. “It shows our commitment to programs that increase teacher efficacy, which ensures the steady achievement gains we’re seeing in the elementary schools” (“Class sizes reduced in fourth, fifth grades,” 2004). Teacher efficacy depends upon the teacher and how he/she handles situations, and teacher efficacy differs according to different teaching settings and activities that are taught (Constantine, 2005).

Teachers are being forced to cope with, and attempt to educate, an increasing number of students who have discipline problems and are uninterested in school. In some areas, schools have difficulty attracting and retaining teachers primarily for this reason and teachers in all areas are finding their jobs more and more difficult and stressful (Buckingham, 2003).

Buckingham (2003) believes that fewer students in a class could make teaching much easier. Reducing class sizes might be justifiable if it can be shown that the increased cost of reducing class size is offset by the decreased cost of teacher attrition, stress and sick leave. Classroom teachers find small classes to be overwhelmingly popular.

Teacher efficacy encompasses the confidence teachers have to successfully achieve their goals related to classroom instruction. Teacher efficacy also looks at management of the classroom, reflective teaching, engaging other stakeholders in the educational process as well as students, and also observes other related areas that contribute to the growing understanding of what makes teachers successful (“Teacher Efficacy,” 2003).

According to Allen (2002) in “Teaching Makes a Difference,” an effective teacher has a solid knowledge of the subject matter being taught, strong math and verbal skills, and the ability to respond to the individual learning needs and special circumstances of students in the classroom. He states also that there are many factors that influence student achievement, the third most influential factor being the size of the class (8%). He reports that the most influential factor is the students’ home and family life (49%), and the second most influential factor is the qualifications of the teacher (40%), and “other school factors” is ranked at 3% (Allen, 2002).

Bandura developed his own Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (Appendix B) that determined that teachers' sense of self-efficacy is not always the same across the many types of jobs these teachers are asked to do (Hoy, 2000). Bandura's instrument's intent is to show an array of teachers' efficacy beliefs without being too narrowed or too specific. This scale has thirty questions and seven subcategories: Efficacy to Influence Decision Making, Efficacy to Influence School Resources, Instructional Self-Efficacy, Disciplinary Self-Efficacy, Efficacy to Enlist Parental Involvement, Efficacy to Enlist Community Involvement, and Efficacy to Create a Positive School Climate. Each of the questions included in the subcategories are measured by a scale with nine numeric and five nominal choices:

Table 2.1 Bandura's Teacher Self Efficacy Scale (Hoy, 2000)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Nothing	Nothing	Very little	Very little	Some influence	Quite a bit	Quite a bit	A great deal	A great deal

On this scale, a higher numeric number indicates a greater teacher efficacy score (Hoy, 2000).

According to Huitt (2000), there are eight dimensions of teacher efficacy (Table 2). Each of these eight dimensions is labeled and described in detail as to how teachers feel in relation to their teaching. The first dimension of teacher efficacy is "a sense of personal accomplishment." In this dimension, the teacher must view his or her work as meaningful and important. The second dimension is "positive expectations for student behavior and

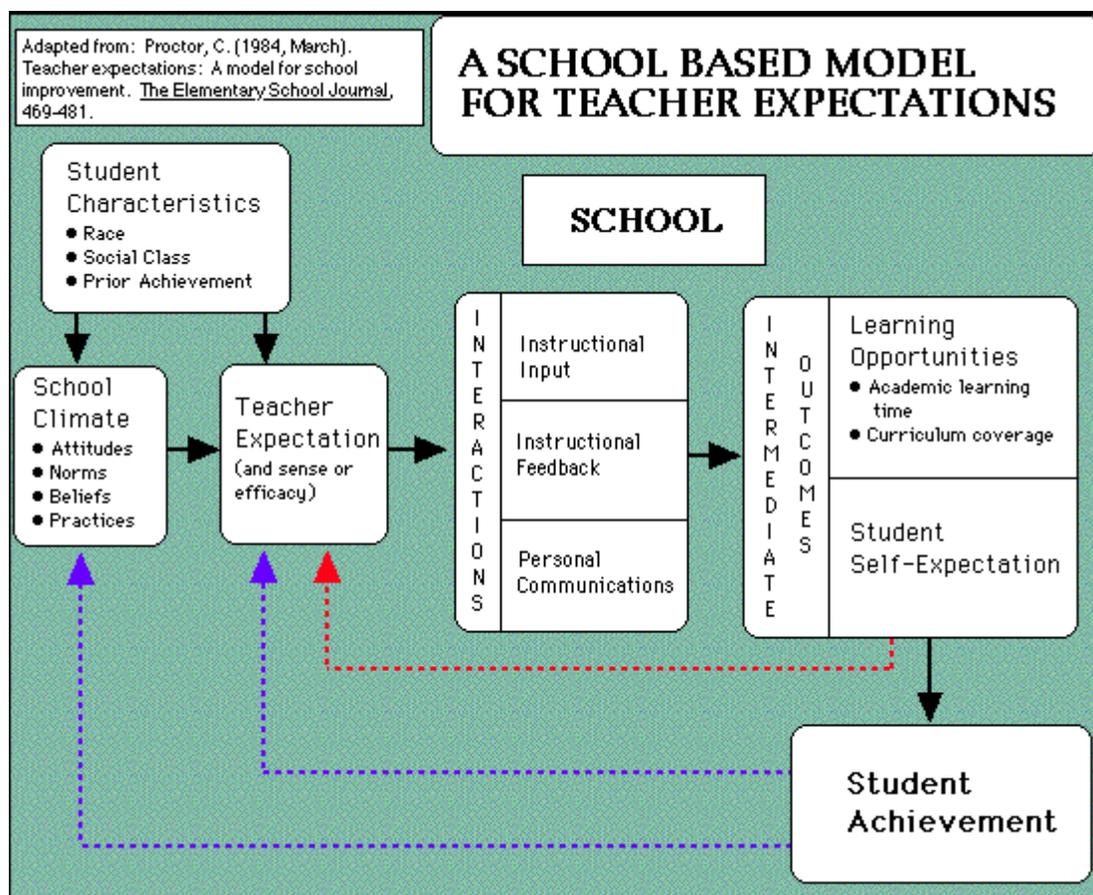
achievement,” and in this dimension, the teacher must have the expectation that all students will progress. The third dimension is “personal responsibility for student learning.” In this dimension, the teacher focuses on accountability, accepting it and showing a willingness to examine his/her performance. The fourth dimension is “strategies for achieving objectives,” which means that the teacher plans for student learning, setting goals for him/herself, and identifies strategies to achieve these goals. The fifth dimension, “positive affect,” indicates how the teacher feels about his/her teaching, about him/herself, and about the students. The sixth dimension is “sense of control,” which is described as the teacher believing he/she can influence student learning. The seventh dimension, “sense of common teacher/student goals,” specifies that the teacher join with students to accomplish set goals. The eighth dimension is “democratic decision making,” and it involves students in making decisions regarding goals and strategies.

Table 2.2 Dimensions of Teacher Efficacy (Huitt, 2000)

DIMENSIONS OF TEACHER EFFICACY	
1. A sense of personal accomplishment	The teacher must view the work as meaningful and important.
2. Positive expectations for student behavior and achievement	The teacher must expect students to progress.
3. Personal responsibility for student learning	Accepts accountability and shows a willingness to examine performance.
4. Strategies for achieving objectives	Must plan for student learning, set goals for themselves, and identify strategies to achieve them.
5. Positive affect	Feels good about teaching, about self, and about students.
6. Sense of control	Believes (s)he can influence student learning.
7. Sense of common teacher/student goals	Develops a joint venture with students to accomplish goals.
8. Democratic decision making	Involves students in making decisions regarding goals and strategies.

The goal of reducing class size is to ultimately increase student achievement. Teacher efficacy plays a part in this goal because teachers teach students to be successful in their academics. The success of the students may be related to the success of the teacher as well. As Table 3 illustrates, teacher efficacy plays a part in student achievement (Huitt, <http://chiron.valdosta.edu/whuitt/col/teacher/tcheff.html>, 2000).

Table 2.3 A School Based Model for Teacher Expectations (Huitt, 2000)



There are variables which may influence an individual's behavior (Rawlinson, 2005). "According to Bandura, cognitive/personal variables, environmental variables and the demonstration of behavior work in interaction with one and other and each operate together to produce change." (p. 63). Class size is one of the environmental variables that is within students' environment which can influence behavior. According to Rawlinson, environmental variables and cognitive/personal variables (self concept) can shape and affect each other. Rawlinson states that intervention within the classroom environment could be a

powerful catalyst in producing change in an individual's self concept, which could produce change in the behavior an individual demonstrates (p. 64).

A teacher's training and professional development may be linked to teacher efficacy. A teacher may feel in control of his/her professional life if the teacher training received is deemed successful and worthwhile. The quality of a teacher's work is directly linked to the control of that teacher's professional life (Constantine).

A 1975 poll cited by Hallinan in 1985 found that teachers favored lowering class size in order to create better teacher morale and job satisfaction. Teachers believe that lower class sizes reduce their class work load, result in fewer discipline issues, and allow for more individualized student instruction (p. 72). Poll results further indicate that students' attitudes toward learning become positive in smaller classes resulting in higher student academic achievement (p. 72).

Cognitive Perceptual Theory

“Cognitive perceptual theory is designed to help us understand the sense that we have made of our life experiences. Cognitive perceptual theory (CP) is a theory of personality designed to explore the interrelationship between autobiographical memory and personality” (Bruhn, <http://www.athealth.com/consumer/farticles/Bruhn.html>, 1990).

People remember the way they were raised and have very different memories from their siblings. Even children who grew up in the same household have memories of their parents in very different roles and ways. The mind's perception of such roles/ways causes

people to perceive things in life differently. This is a personality difference among people (Bruhn, 1990).

Adults' perceptions of life can be altered depending on what kinds of conditions they were exposed to as children. Adults who have grown up with attention deficit disorder, allergies, and/or unfair treatment as children have feelings about life that may be different than adults (even their siblings) who grew up in the same areas/houses due to different body conditions. People's memories of their lives reveal what is expected of key events that happen in their lives. These expectations influence people's perceptions in the present (Bruhn, 1990).

Summary of Chapter Two

In the 1980s, much research was conducted to discover whether class size played a role in student achievement. One major study was conducted in Tennessee, Project STAR (Student/Teacher Achievement Ratio), which found that students in smaller classes (with thirteen to seventeen students) significantly performed better than their peers who were in larger class sizes, as shown by results of standardized reading and math assessments (Agron, 1999).

Reducing class sizes can be costly, and funding is a major factor in reducing numbers of students in school districts. These costs will increase as new teachers climb the salary ladder in the school districts, which could be a problem for districts operating with minimal funds ("Class Size Reduction," 1997).

However, there are several ways to reduce costs and still have small class sizes for students achieving below grade level. The use of tutoring in small classes for instruction is one way. To reduce cost, Title I funds can also be used to reduce class sizes, as can creative scheduling (Class Size Reduction Policy Brief #23).

Teacher efficacy is referred to as how a teacher feels about his/her teaching (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). Teachers with a greater sense of efficacy show an increased commitment to and enthusiasm for teaching, and are more likely to stay in the teaching profession (Tschannen-Moran, 2001).

Chapter Three will describe the methodology in this study. The population sample will be defined, the study criteria will be outlined and explained, data gathered will be described, as will the analysis of data. Human subjects will be discussed, as will subjectivity and limitations to the study.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Studies have been conducted on class sizes that have lowered class sizes to various numbers. There is not an exact and consistent definition including a set number of students included in large or small classes. Studies have been conducted on small classes, which have included twenty-three to thirteen students in one classroom (Pritchard, 1999). In this study, the researcher will define a “large class size” as one classroom of twenty-four or more students in one grade with one full-time teacher, and a “small class size” as one classroom of twenty or fewer students in one grade with one full-time teacher.

According to Pritchard’s (1999) findings in “Reducing Class Size,” when classes are reduced to fewer than twenty students, student academics improve. Regardless of the size of their classes, teachers face the issue of educating each student on an individual level. These teachers have demands placed upon them as they strive to reach each child in order to achieve student academic achievement and personal teacher success.

This qualitative case study researched whether or not class size impacts personal teacher efficacy. Teacher efficacy is defined as the way a teacher feels about his/her teaching (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). Four teacher participants were involved in this study: two who teach in a small class sizes and two who teach in a large class sizes. The four participants were selected in order to cross-analyze data involving large and small class sizes. In this in-depth case study analysis, each teacher was observed and interviewed separately by the researcher. Data was collected and analyzed separately. The data from the

teachers was then cross-analyzed according to trends that emerged. A qualitative research methodology was chosen for this study in order to best collect and understand the teachers' thoughts and feelings about their personal teacher efficacy.

This qualitative case study focused on the following central research question: Does class size impact a teacher's sense of personal teacher efficacy, and, if so, what kind of impact does class size have on that teacher's personal teacher efficacy?

Population Sample

The four participating teachers in this study were selected from the same school, a single-track year round suburban elementary neighborhood school in a school district in a southeastern state. Selection was based upon grade level and years of teaching experience. The four participants were teaching in the same school to keep the demographics of the study aligned. The participating elementary school (hereafter referred to as "Elementary School," or "ES") is located in a growing city, and currently has an approximate enrollment of 800 students in the 2011-2012 school year. ES currently includes grades kindergarten through fifth, with twenty-four students or fewer in each classroom in grades kindergarten, first, second, and third. There are approximately 120 students in kindergarten, approximately 144 students in grade one, approximately 144 students in grade two, and approximately 120 students in grade three. There are thirty-two full-time classroom teachers in grades kindergarten through fifth at ES.

In the 2011-2012 school year, in kindergarten, there are six full-time classroom teachers, with approximately 19-20 students in each class. In first grade, six full-time

classroom teachers are teaching with 24 students in each class. In second grade, six full-time classroom teachers are teaching with 23-24 students in each class. In third grade, five full-time classroom teachers are teaching with 24 students in each class. In fourth and fifth grades, four full-time classroom teachers are teaching with 27-32 students in each class.

In each kindergarten class, a full-time teacher assistant is utilized for approximately four hours per day as well. The teacher assistant is not with students during lunch (thirty minutes per day), recess (thirty minutes per day), and during their special area classes (such as art, music, and physical education, forty-five minutes per day). The teacher assistant is also not in the classroom for about twenty additional minutes per day due to serving lunch duty in the cafeteria. The full-time teacher assistants in kindergarten begin and end the day with the students.

In each first and second grade class, a part-time (half-day) teacher assistant is included in each of these class sizes for approximately two hours per day. The first grade teacher assistants are shared among first grade teachers, and the second grade teacher assistants are shared among second grade teachers. Each teacher assistant shares her time between two or three classrooms. First and second grade teacher assistants are not with students during lunch, recess, and during their special area class times.

All teacher assistants are used for monitoring, meeting with small groups of students in reading, writing, math, social studies, and/or science to reinforce already taught skills, copying paperwork, filing, working on bulletin boards, creating appropriate elementary-age activities, and assisting the classroom teacher in various other ways.

In 2012, the state Teacher Working Conditions Initiative results were publicized, and ES was among these results. The Teaching Working Conditions Initiative is a series of questions sent out to all teachers in the state, and results are tabulated and compared against individual schools, counties, and state. At ES, 81% of teachers responded to the survey, in the school district almost 86% of teachers responded to the survey, and in the state just over 86% of teachers responded to this survey. In this survey, teachers at ES were asked certain questions regarding their satisfaction in their school in the following areas: time, facilities and resources, decision-making, leadership, and professional development. In most of those areas, ES scored at or above both the county and state average in teacher satisfaction. At times, teachers responded “strongly disagree” which raises their teacher non-satisfaction rate (NC’s Teacher Working Conditions Initiative, 2012).

Study Criteria

The researcher conducted an in-depth case study to determine if class size affects teacher efficacy. This case study served to examine whether or not a small or large class size has an impact on the way four particular teachers feel they teach, and the effects upon their personal teacher satisfaction.

The four teachers in this study (“Ms. Adams”- small class, “Ms. Bender”- small class “Ms. Cook”- large class and “Ms. Decker”- large class) were chosen according to the following criteria:

- teach in kindergarten, first, or second grade.
- have four or more years education experience and/or have tenure in North Carolina.

- teach in a traditional school (“traditional” is a school that is not year round or charter school, and students attend 180 days a year) or single-track year round school (“single-track year round” is a school that follows only one track of the year round calendar, and that has nine weeks of instruction followed by three week breaks).
- teach with a either a half-day or full-day teacher assistant.
- teach full time (arrives prior to students’ arrival and leaves after students depart at the end of the regular school day).
- do not include a special education cluster (“cluster” refers to a group of special education students placed in a teacher’s classroom to be included in daily activities).
- have taught in both a large (24 or more students) and a small (20 or fewer students) class size, both for an entire year, previously.

The difference in criteria between Ms. Adams/Ms. Bender and Ms. Cook/Ms. Decker was that Ms. Adams/Ms. Bender taught in small class sizes (20 or fewer students) and Ms. Cook/Ms. Decker taught in large class sizes (24 or more students). All other variables remained the same.

Explanation of Criteria

Grade and tenure. As most class size literature suggests, reducing class size is most effective when implemented in early grades (kindergarten, first, and second). Therefore, the teachers were chosen from these grades. It is important to this study that the teachers have had experiences teaching for four or more years and/or have received tenure in North Carolina so that they have a knowledge base of what to expect while teaching. This length of teaching experience should allow the teachers to be more aware of their curriculum, and behavior management practices should be familiar. Having taught for four or more years is important because teachers are more familiar with the background of the workings of the

district, and implies that they are aware of methods of teaching, curriculum, and classroom management skills, which will add to the reliability of study.

Traditional/Single-track year round school. The teachers chosen for this case study were teaching in a traditional or single-track year round school setting. As this study's aim is to represent the "norm" this eliminated multi-track year-round and charter schools as case study sites. The school site chosen had a full time principal and assistant principal, and followed what most adequately represents elementary schools.

Teacher assistants. The teachers selected to participate in this study each had either full-time or part-time teacher assistants. Teacher assistants are becoming more prevalent in schools across this southeastern state, and monies are allotted to hire these assistants in grades kindergarten, first, and second. Therefore, as this study took place in such a state, the teachers selected had full-time or part-time teacher assistants.

Full-time teachers. The teachers were full-time teachers, meaning that they were the primary teachers of all-day classrooms from the time the students arrived in the morning until they left in the afternoon. This demonstrated teacher familiarity of the classroom climate, academics, and discipline.

Special education clusters. The classrooms selected did not include special education clusters of five or more special education students (within one classroom). On some grade levels, special education students are grouped, or clustered, into one classroom and receive special education services (extra support in the subjects of reading, writing, and math). In clustered classrooms, the special education teacher enters the classroom for most of the school day, or team teaches with the regular classroom teacher in order to meet the

special education students' needs. Many times, there is only one classroom per grade level with a special education cluster of students. In this study, two classrooms on the same grade level are needed for comparison; therefore, the researcher chose a classroom without a special education cluster to keep the study standard. However, although there are no special education clusters within this study, each small and large classroom did include one, two, or three identified special education students who received special education services outside of the regular classroom on a daily basis.

Teacher class sizes. Ms. Adams and Ms. Bender were teaching in small class sizes (20 or fewer students) at the time of the study but have previously taught in a large (24 or more students) and a small class for at least an entire school year at one time in her teaching career. Ms. Cook and Ms. Decker were teaching in large class sizes (24 or more students) at the time of the study but have also previously taught in a small (20 or fewer students) and a large class size for at least an entire school year at one time in her teaching career. The teachers have had experience teaching in both class sizes so they have an understanding of how teaching in each class type is different and similar. All teacher participants have similar education status: none have completed the National Board Certification, nor have they completed a Master's degree in education for this study.

Data Gathering

This study is an in-depth case study of two teachers of small classes and two teachers of large classes in one elementary school. The researcher conducted at least two interviews with each teacher and two observations of each teacher to determine whether or not the

teachers' small or large class size had an effect on their personal teacher efficacy. The participants in this study kept a journal for reflection which the researcher collected on a weekly basis.

Interviews. The researcher met with the participating teachers, separately, at the school directly after school had concluded for the day or in the hour directly prior to school beginning. The researcher interviewed each participant to determine if the teachers show a correlation between their small or large class size with their own personal teacher efficacy. At least two semi-structured interviews were conducted between the researcher and each teacher, with questions focusing on each teacher's class size and how they feel about their teaching (Appendix A). Semi-structured interviews were created in order to direct the teachers. Questions were open-ended in order to provide for exploration opportunity. After the initial analysis of data, other issues to explore arose and the researcher focused the next interviews on these issues, using adapted questions from Bandura's instrument (Appendix B) and from Tschannen-Moran's instrument (Appendix C).

Prior to the first interview and observation, the researcher established a rapport with all teacher participants. The first interview questions asked about the teacher and how she became involved in education, and these questions helped to create a comfortable atmosphere for the teacher and researcher. With each following observation and interview, the teacher participants and the researcher became more familiar with each other. This created a more valid study. Reliability and generalizability are not large concerns in qualitative research, as the research questions in this study are not generalizable to the larger population (Creswell, 1998)

The first and second interview questions, “What is your background?” and “What events led you into education?” allowed the researcher to gather background information from the participant, helping to create a comfortable atmosphere. The third interview question, “How academically successful do you feel your students are and why?” directly related to teacher efficacy. The participant was asked this question to consider how she felt about the level of success of the students. The fourth question, “To what do you attribute this success or lack of success?” asked the participant to examine *why* she *feels* her students were or were not successful. The fifth question, “How much control do *you* feel you have over your students’ academic success?” delved directly into efficacy. This question asked the participant if she felt that she had any control over the students’ successes. The sixth question, “Considering the number of students in your class, explain why you feel you are able or unable to give each student individual attention” investigated if teachers felt they had appropriate skills to teach each individual student. This question opened the participant to discuss topics regarding attitudes and feelings of effectiveness during teaching.

After the first interview, the interview questions following were created according to where the last interview concluded (Appendix D). The interviews were scheduled periodically between the conducted observations. Each interview concluded after the information provided by the participants reached the point of saturation. This design optimally had the researcher visiting the teachers on a weekly schedule for at least ninety school days.

Each interview with each teacher was tape-recorded. As the study progressed, the researcher found it necessary to communicate with the teachers on occasion to fill any gaps

from the interviews. Directly after the conclusion of each hour-long interview, the researcher had the interviews transcribed verbatim on a personal computer. The interviews were analyzed according to common trends that emerged. With these trends, the researcher analyzed and coded each transcribed interview, and determined whether the information received was compelling enough to suggest a relationship between small or large class size and personal teacher efficacy exhibited by the teachers.

The researcher completed a contact summary form for each interview that was conducted. Using this form helped the researcher to keep track of each interview and aided in the retaining of details in each interview session (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Observations. The researcher conducted this qualitative study over the course of half the school year (approximately ninety school days). During this time frame, the researcher met with and observed all classroom teacher participants while they were separately teaching. This allowed the researcher to become familiar with the teachers' styles of teaching, knowledge of curriculum, and management of discipline. During this time of observation, the researcher observed in the classroom for at least one hour (or more), two times, totaling at least two hours of intense classroom observation time. The researcher designated one hour (or more) for each observation to allow adequate time to capture the essence of the classroom and to observe how the teacher interacts with the students. This time period gave the researcher time to observe different behaviors in the classroom to collect as data. Directly after the observations, the researcher typed up all field notes taken and put the notes into narrative form to be used as data. These data allowed the researcher to

view the climate of the classroom, the teachers' attitudes and dispositions, and how the teachers reacted to events in their classrooms.

Journals. The researcher distributed one journal to each participant to be kept for documentation two to three times per week (days selected were determined by participants). The provided journal was a soft-cover spiral-bound notebook with at least one hundred pages of lined paper. Each participant dated and recorded in the journal her classroom experiences and how she felt about the classroom activities that had occurred during the days. Each entry was dated and collected (by hand) by the researcher at the end of each school week. The purpose of these journal entries was to accurately describe the participants' thoughts and feelings about their classes that they were teaching on a regular basis.

Analysis of Data

Analysis of the data collected was an ongoing process. The data were analyzed directly after it was gathered to ensure familiarity in the mind of the researcher. The researcher examined all of the data as a whole to determine whether or not it suggested a relationship between small class size and personal teacher efficacy. As suggested in Chapter Two, small classes have a positive impact on student achievement. Therefore, the findings from the data collected from Ms. Adams and Ms. Bender were constantly compared to the findings of Ms. Cook and Ms. Decker regarding small class size and teacher efficacy relating to small class size.

The researcher had each interview transcribed into Word documents, and transcribed the observations and journal entries into Word documents as well. As the researcher

transcribed, she looked for general positive and negative phrases and/or words (examples of positive: happy about, comfortable with, excited about; examples of negative: frustrated with, angry about, anxious about, overwhelmed with) in the data. The researcher then highlighted the positive and negative phrases and/or words (positive phrases/words were highlighted in green and negative phrases/words were highlighted in yellow). This helped to identify key words relating to class size and teacher efficacy. As this coding was taking place, trends began to emerge that were common in the participants' data. The researcher looked at these trends and documented them in tables. The researcher created four different tables, one for each participant, which were separated into the trends that emerged in their data, and then reviewed the positive and negative phrases/words in each participant's table.

If there were more positive than negative phrases and/or words in the trends that arose regarding the class size's impact on teacher efficacy, the researcher determined that the teacher had a high (positive) sense of teacher efficacy in her classroom. If there were more negative than positive phrases and/or words in the trends that arose regarding the class size's impact on teacher efficacy, then the researcher determined that the teacher had a low (negative) sense of teacher efficacy in her classroom. Occasionally, participant data showed an equal number of positive and negative phrases and/or words in a trend, which the researcher referred to as a "balance" of positive and negative efficacy for the trend, and did not categorize the trend as solely positive or solely negative.

The researcher reported all of the results from the observations, interviews, and journal entries taken in Chapter Four. The trends that resulted from the data sources are represented in table form to show comparisons of each participant clearly. One year after

this study is completed, all data including transcripts, field notes, and taped interviews, will be destroyed.

Reliability of the Research

According to Golafshani's *Understanding the Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research* (2003), qualitative research is philosophical in nature and focuses on detailed interviewing which results in a different type of knowledge [than quantitative research]. Qualitative research uses methods such as interviews and observations that embrace the researchers' involvement and role within the research. The researcher is directly involved and immersed in the research. According to Golafshani, the underlying focus of qualitative research is that change happens in the real world and therefore, a qualitative researcher should be present during these changes in order to record the events before and after the changes may occur. Golafshani also suggests that the qualitative researcher's credibility depends on the efforts and ability of the researcher (2003).

Validity of the Research

The researcher fully immersed herself into the school data, interviews, observations, journals, and any other forms of data that were collected during this study. The researcher showed validity in this study by experiencing events first-hand. The researcher intimately described these experiences through the researcher's own lens. In this study, the researcher is the sole person who was accurately able to judge the credibility of the results found in this study.

The narrative presented in this study gives insight into the professional lives of four teachers in their small or large class sizes in a clear and detailed manner. The researcher shows clearly the thoughts and feelings of the teacher participants to connect class size with teacher efficacy. Others reading this study, who may be in similar situations regarding class size and teacher efficacy, may gain insight from the data and results discovered from this research. The convergence of multiple data sources, or triangulation, will be used extensively in this study.

Human Subjects

The researcher sought approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) in order to protect the teacher participants in this study (Appendix E). The researcher provided the university with an Informed Consent form (Appendix F) from the IRB to show full consent for this study.

The identity of the teachers was protected, as were their positions as teachers in the school district and school at which the study took place. The teachers had full anonymity in this study, and neither personal nor professional information of theirs was revealed. Any information that might reveal their true identities (taken in field notes, observations, interviews, and journal entries) was changed in order to protect the participants. The participants in this study were assured confidentiality, and they were aware of this from the beginning of this study. All teacher participants had the opportunity to have any information they gave stricken from record, or if they asked that the tape-recorder be turned off at any point during any interviews the researcher complied.

Subjectivity

The researcher works with students on a daily basis. The benefits and drawbacks of both a small and large class size have been experienced by the researcher. The researcher has seen the academic benefits of a small class size on students, and has experienced frustration with behavior and academics while involved in both a small and large class size in the researcher's career in education.

The researcher believes that all students can learn, despite the size of the classroom in which curriculum is taught. The researcher upholds the belief that teachers should keep a positive classroom atmosphere, no matter the class size, in order to promote positive attitudes within each student, and in order to anticipate the successfulness of students who believe they can achieve success.

The participants in this study were informed that the focus of this study was on class size and teacher efficacy. On the Institutional Review Board Informed Consent Form given to each participant prior to conducting the study, the participants were notified that the researcher would be determining if there is a relationship between class size and teacher efficacy, and that they may become more aware of their own attitudes and feelings through their introspection of the collection of their data sources.

Though the researcher possesses these biases, this study was conducted in a professional manner and with objectivity. The researcher looks at research and this study through a critical lens, and attempted to look past these biases in order to conduct a reliable and valid study.

The researcher standardized the conditions of the study. First, the researcher was the sole observer and interviewer. Each piece of data was collected solely by the researcher conducting the study. Second, the instrumentation used for each interview was the same for all participants, including the same questions, to keep the study matched. Third, the location of the study remained the same for all participants, and each observation and interview took place in the participant's respective classrooms. Finally, as it is noted that the researcher does possess biases in this study, the researcher established a professional yet comfortable rapport in the first interview (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000).

Building a rapport during the first interview with each participant helped the researcher to obtain as much information as possible from all participants in the study. The researcher also obtained as much information as possible to anticipate any extraneous events that may have possibly affected the study (example: school strikes). The researcher's design of this study was an appropriate and proper design to control these threats to validity (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000).

Limitations of the Study

The researcher was limited to several factors in this study. First, the site at which the study took place was chosen out of convenience. The researcher had direct access to the school chosen and had opportunities to interview and observe the teachers participating in the study on a regular basis. However, besides collecting data from the participants during the study, the researcher did not have a personal relationship with the participants throughout the duration of the study.

Second, the researcher took a purposeful sample, which was limited to four participants. The participants served to represent a majority of teachers who teach in either a large or small class size. The study site had many small and large class sizes, and having only four participants accurately demonstrated teachers' feelings to represent the feelings of other teachers in the school. The researcher selected four participants only, due to researcher time constraints, ease of control of the study, and the ability to narrow and focus on in-depth information from both participants.

Third, the state in which this study took place is a rapidly growing state and the school site at which the study took place was filled with a changing population, through no control of the researcher. This factor did not happen to affect the class sizes in the study, and therefore did not affect the researcher's results. It must be noted that there was no control of the fluctuation of the size of the classroom during the study, due to this growing and changing population.

Finally, it must be noted that there are other outside influences that affect teacher efficacy, but the researcher concentrated solely on class size. These other influences may be extra duties with which the participating teachers may be involved, and induction programs through which the participating teachers may have gone prior to teaching elementary school. Recognizing and putting aside these outside factors allowed the researcher to be more able to delve deeper into the relationship between class size and teacher efficacy.

The researcher's study was designed to accommodate the schedule and demographics of the researcher in order to conduct the most reliable and valid study possible. Any changes

that occurred during the course of the study were recognized, noted, and taken into careful consideration while findings were analyzed.

Summary of Chapter Three

This chapter described in detail the qualitative methodology in this study. Also defined and explained were the population sample, study criteria, data gathered, and analysis of data. In addition, human subjects, subjectivity, and limitations to the study were explained in this chapter. Chapter Four will present and explain the analysis of data collected in this study.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

This qualitative study includes four teacher participants, two teaching in small class sizes and two teaching in large class sizes. The first teacher, Ms. Andrea Adams, teaches in a small kindergarten class of twenty students. The second teacher, Ms. Rebecca Bender, teaches in a small kindergarten class of nineteen students. The third teacher, Ms. Heidi Collins, teaches in a large first grade class of twenty-four students. The fourth teacher, Ms. Samantha Decker, teaches in a large first grade class of twenty-four students.

The researcher conducted two interviews, two observations, and collected weekly journal entries from each participant in the duration of this study. All four participants were observed on the same two days. The first observation was conducted on December 12, 2011 and the second observation was conducted on March 6, 2012. All four participants were observed in a combination of two subjects: literacy, math, science, and/or social studies.

Interview dates for each participant were different, as they were interviewed in their classrooms either directly before or after school. Ms. Adams's first interview was held from 4:30-5:30pm on December 7, 2011; Ms. Bender's first interview was held from 7:30-8:30am on December 12, 2011; Ms. Cook's first interview was held from 4:30-5:30pm on December 6, 2011; Ms. Decker's first interview was held from 4:30-5:30pm on December 8, 2011. Ms. Adams's second interview was held from 4:30-5:30pm on March 7, 2012; Ms. Bender's second interview was held from 7:30-8:30am on March 2, 2012; Ms. Cook's second

interview was held from 4:30-5:30pm on March 6, 2012; Ms. Decker's second interview was held from 4:30-5:30pm on March 5, 2012.

This chapter will review the data the researcher collected from each of the three data sources: interviews, observations, and weekly journal entries. This chapter is sectioned into four detailed parts to describe each participant. In each participant's section, the educational history of the participant, classroom arrangement, and trends from each of the data sources are described in detail. The twelve trends in all four teacher participants' data are the following: ability to work with individual students and/or small groups, academics/assessments/report cards, discipline, self-reflection, teacher assistants, teacher retention, thoughts/feelings/attitudes at the end of a day, class size effect on personal teacher efficacy/attitudes, student enjoyment, trust of students/parents/school administrators, parent involvement, and thoughts on control over academic success of students. An additional trend in both Ms. Adams' and Ms. Bender's (teachers of small class sizes) data is large class size thoughts, as both teacher participants have taught large class sizes in their past years in education, and both compared their current small class sizes to past large class sizes. Two additional trends in both Ms. Cook's and Ms. Decker's (teachers of large class sizes) data were small class size thoughts and small leveled math groups. Both Ms. Cook and Ms. Decker have taught small class sizes in the past, and compared their current large class sizes to small class sizes they have taught in previous years. Both teacher participants also teach math in homogenous leveled smaller groups which is reported in the data sources. A summary concludes Chapter Five, with the data analysis summarized.

Description of Ms. Adams

Ms. Andrea Adams is a female teacher who is thirty-three years old. She grew up in a mid-southern state and attended a small college for pharmacy and eventually changed her major to education. She grew up wanting to become a teacher but enjoyed science throughout high school which is why she began her college career in pharmacy. After being bored in her pharmacy program, she changed her major to biology pre-med, decided that was not the direction she wanted to follow, and finally changed her major to education. She knew she loved children and a good friend of hers convinced her to go into education. Thus she completed her education degree with a minor in chemistry.

Ms. Adams has solely been a kindergarten teacher since the start of her teaching career, and this is her tenth year in education. She is the teacher of a small class size (twenty students) and has not taught a class this small in seven years. Ms. Adams has a full-time teacher assistant who is in her classroom approximately four hours per day. She has eleven boys and nine girls in her kindergarten class.

During the first and second researcher observations of Ms. Adams, her classroom was set up in a semi-organized fashion. In the front of this kindergarten classroom was a large white board with the class word wall and a number chart hanging above it. The marker tray on the white board was filled with books for student use. An American flag and a state flag hung in the front of the classroom on the top of the large white board. In the shared reading/writing front carpeted corner of the classroom was a wooden rocking chair for student and teacher use.

On one side of the classroom were twenty built-in wall cubbies, full with student back-packs, jackets, books, and changes of clothes. Colorful curtains were hanging over the tops of the cubbies to shield the many puzzles, games, cleaning wipes, hand sanitizer, tissues, plates, crates, plastic bags, books, and curriculum resources on the shelves. There was a student sink, paper towel dispenser, and drinking fountain next to the cubbies. One-fourth of the classroom was tile and three-fourths was carpet.

On the opposite wall of the classroom were three student desktop computers with keyboards, a printer, and a small television/VCR combination. A television was hanging from the corner of the classroom. On this wall were many posters: months of the year, numbers 1-100, days of the week, learning centers, emotions, 21st Century learning skills, calendar, job chart, letters in sign language, class pledge, colors, birthdays, Pledge of Allegiance, and shapes. Student work was also displayed on this wall. Student stockings hung on the wall for the holiday season. A Smartboard was mounted on this side wall as well.

The back wall of the classroom was a wall of windows. The windows showed a view of the early elementary age playground and had an outside door that led out to the playground. A large rolling cart with stuffed animals on the top of it was near the back wall, and a student bathroom was built into the back corner of the classroom. A full-size teacher desk and teacher assistant desk were positioned in the back of the classroom, both with many papers and boxes on the tops of them. A tall filing cabinet was near the teacher desk. A kidney-shaped reading table was located in the back of the classroom in front of the large windows.

On many of the classroom walls were labels on items for students to use as a resource, such as *television*, *door*, *colors*, and *clock*. Student work was displayed throughout the classroom.

In the middle of the classroom on a square table sat a pet guinea pig in a cage, next to an easel for shared writing. Students sat at tables in the middle of the classroom. There were two rectangular tables with four seats each, two rectangular tables with three seats each, and three small square tables with two seats each. Each table had a pencil bin on the top. Student learning centers were labeled throughout the classroom: Puppets, Social Studies, Language Arts, Listening, Art, Library, Writing, Magnets, Blocks, Manipulatives, Housekeeping, and Read the Room.

Ms. Adams: Trends from Interviews, Observations, and Journals

Ability to work with individual students/small groups. The first trend in this study is the ability to work with individual students and/or small groups. In the first interview, Ms. Adams displayed only positive teacher efficacy. All of her responses to the interview questions regarding her ability to work with students on an individual basis or in small groups were positive. She stated that she is able to work with students needing extra assistance on a daily basis, and that she is able to get to know each of her students by having daily conversations. This helps her to get to know where they are performing both academically and socially. Ms. Adams stated in her first interview, “I love that I’m able to actually meet with them [students] and I know the children so much better this year. I really feel like I can give them more of my attention, too.”

In the second interview, Ms. Adams displayed positive teacher efficacy in the area of ability to work with individual students and/or small groups. She included statements about how her kindergarten students are an older group and she is able to work with her lower students on a regular basis due to the fact that she has quite a few higher level students. In addition, she has two students who are much higher than the rest and she is able to pull them quite often in small groups to extend their thinking. Ms. Adams also discussed that she has parent volunteers and a teacher assistant in her classroom during her literacy block which makes small group meetings more frequent, enabling her to individually conference with each student on a daily basis. She is able to pair her students frequently and meet with these pairs in order to assess progress as well.

In her second interview, Ms. Adams had few negative remarks regarding her ability to work with individual students and/or small group and indicated that it is difficult to reach all needs in math because she does not have a teacher assistant or parent volunteers in her classroom during math time. During this time, she finds it difficult to challenge her higher-level students because she is the only adult in the classroom and kindergarten students are not completely independent.

In both the first and second observations, Ms. Adams displayed positive teacher efficacy in the area of ability to work with individual students and/or small groups. During the researcher's observations, she walked around to every center group and conference for one to two minutes per student. She encouraged students to come to her to show her their work individually and complimented them on their progress. During math, she took the time

to meet with each table of students, checked their math progress, and asked questions about their math work.

Ms. Adams's journals displayed positive teacher efficacy in the area of ability to work with individual students and/or small groups. In her journal entries, she wrote about her ability to meet with students independently and feels that this is the first year she is able to meet the needs of each student. She feels she is able to meet with each reading group a few times during the week and have time to pull individual students in literacy, and that because of all of this individual/small group attention, they are ready to move on to first grade. Ms. Adams wrote in a journal entry, "I feel like I have been able to meet with them [students] all so much that they are ready [for first grade]. I think I have given them all such a good start, because I have had so much time to meet with them." Ms. Adams addressed the subject of writing and that, due to the amount of time she has to conference independently with each student, students have a better understanding of editing in writing. With fewer students she is able to spend a few minutes with nearly each student each day in writing, and some students she conferences with more than once a day. She feels she is able to move around the classroom to keep students on-task due to fewer students demanding her attention.

Ms. Adams reflected one negative comment in her journal entries in the area of ability to work with individual students and/or small groups. She is less comfortable with the time she is able to spend with individual students in math due to the fact that she is the only adult in the classroom and is without her teacher assistant or a parent volunteer. She feels she is unable to differentiate as much in math as she can in literacy.

Academics/Assessments/Report Cards. The second trend in this study is academics, assessments, and report cards. In the first interview, Ms. Adams displayed positive teacher efficacy. Ms. Adams discussed that her students are performing very well on their assessments this year and she is able to know right away who is struggling with each objective at all times. One-third of her class (approximately seven students) was above grade level at the time of the first interview. She has time to meet with struggling students and pull them one-on-one to teach/re-teach objectives in order for them to achieve success. Regarding a struggling student, Ms. Adams stated, “Today I pulled a student one-on-one because he’s the only one that was still struggling with this particular objective. I was able to actually give him almost fifteen minutes of individual attention which is unheard of!” She also discussed kindergarten assessments and that if she were teaching a larger class, it would take her many weeks to assess due to the length of each assessment as well as the fact that there are fourteen assessments that must be conducted individually. She commented that she would be very stressed during assessment times. For students who have difficulty focusing during large group assessments, she pulls small groups and gives the assessments to afford them the opportunity to do their best work. If students do not score well on assessments, Ms. Adams looks back on her teaching and tries to determine why this has happened. She believes it does not happen frequently this year due to her ability to meet with each student on a regular basis, as she can predict which students will perform well or poorly on each assessment.

Regarding report cards, Ms. Adams feels that fewer students means less time taken away from her personal life, and stated, “Less children means less time for me spent away from my family!” She feels that she is able to write detailed report card comments and finish

her report cards in a good amount of time due to the small number of students in her class. She compared writing report cards for a large class and remarked that comments tend to be more group-based than individually based. Due to only having twenty students in her class, Ms. Adams is able to complete her assessments late in the quarter and work on a few report cards each night successfully.

Ms. Adams stated negative comments regarding academics, assessments, and report cards during her first interview. Her negative comments centered around the number of assessments that must be conducted individually with each student and the time involved with each assessment. During her second quarter, she began assessing in the fifth week of school because there were so many kindergarten assessments to complete. Reading assessments take the most time (one student took sixteen minutes for one assessment) and the whole group assessments are difficult for some students, resulting in Ms. Adams pulling small groups which occasionally takes more effort from the teacher. Ms. Adams exhibited frustration when she discussed students not showing their full potential on the kindergarten assessments. She reflected on completing report cards which must be done during her at-home family time (report cards are only done in second and fourth quarter for kindergarten, however). She showed frustration when discussing assessing for report cards, as these assessments take away from her teaching time. Due to completing report cards at home and late at night, she spends some school days exhausted.

In her second interview, Ms. Adams exhibited positive teacher efficacy in the area of academics, assessments, and report cards. Her positive comments began by discussing that all of her students are on or above grade level in almost every area. She works with a group

of higher-level students on first grade math due to their advanced abilities. Her students are all performing very well both academically and socially. Ms. Adams feels very good about the success of her students. Due to her student success and small class size, she is able to work on activities she has never been able to work on with prior classes. She is excited about extending the curriculum for her higher-level students, and she has a student who attends first grade reading and math groups. She is able to delve into word study and reading response journals with her students, which she has not typically been able to do in kindergarten (most years she only teaches phonics). She uses her teacher assistant as an asset and her students have been showing excitement with the material they are learning in kindergarten.

Ms. Adams discussed few negative comments in her second interview in the area of academics, assessments, and report cards. She has had to focus her time and energy on one student who has trouble with counting, and on student who has trouble with number sets in math. She admitted that she was extremely stressed at report card time, as the end of the quarter was fast approaching. She feels like she is cheating her students due to all of the assessments they must complete. She discussed the time crunch for assessments, report cards, and the fact that report cards must be completed during her own personal time. She feels that she is not only teaching and assessing, but also tying shoes, emailing parents, mentoring teachers, helping with extra-curricular school activities, and beginning her Master's degree.

In her journals entries, Ms. Adams displayed negative teacher efficacy in the area of academics, assessments, and report cards. She is very overwhelmed with the amount of instructional time that is taken away to complete the required kindergarten assessments, even with a smaller class size. Both second and fourth quarters are the most overwhelming to her,

due to the individual assessments and report card writing. Literacy assessments for each student take a lot of her time. She discussed in depth the comments she must address on each report card (reading, writing, math, science, social studies, personal social development, work habits, areas for improvement, interventions), all of which must be completed during her personal, unpaid time. She also stated that using the Smartboard in the classroom takes a lot of extra planning time, and it is difficult to share one Smartboard with one hundred twenty-four kindergarten students. Ms. Adams has one student who qualifies for the academically gifted program at her school, and this program requires quite a bit of paperwork for her to finish prior to the quarter's end. Ms. Adams also expressed her displeasure for sharing materials with other kindergarten teachers, as some academic materials needed for assessing get lost within the grade level and she is without resources.

Discipline. The third trend in this study is discipline. In the first interview, Ms. Adams displayed overwhelmingly positive teacher efficacy in this area. She believes that it is much easier to control her class with fewer students, and sets her expectations high from the first day of school. In her first interview, Ms. Adams commented, "We spent a lot of time with behavior early on in the year, and I try very hard to let them know what my expectation is and I don't waver from that expectation. They've learned that." She has had very good success with behavior this year. Last year her kindergarten class of twenty-four students had approximately seven challenging students, whereas this year she only has three which she believes is much more manageable. She does not use behavior contracts because they are not needed with her small class. With fewer students, she has time to redirect those needing extra

redirection, and the consequences she uses with her students work. Parents in her class are supportive of behavior consequences given in the classroom. Ms. Adams feels less frustrated because of fewer behavior issues, and because she is afforded the time to discipline when necessary. If a behavior incident occurs, Ms. Adams has time to approach the student, discuss the infraction, help him/her self-reflect, and come up with a plan to change the behavior so it does not happen again. She also makes it a priority to discuss with the students that their behavior at school may be different from what they are allowed to do at home, which helps them to make better choices in school. Ms. Adams believes she has a strong sense of the decision-making skills of five year old children, and she helps them to become responsible for their actions in positive ways.

Ms. Adams has few discipline issues in her small class, which is aligned with Zahorik's report in Chapter Two that discipline issues are reduced, if not eliminated, in smaller class sizes (1999). Ms. Adams has the ability to be proactive and has time to discuss proper behavior with her students, which decreases discipline issues in her small class.

Ms. Adams had few negative comments in the first interview regarding discipline. She mentioned that correcting behaviors does take time away from teaching, and that she does have two students this year who struggle with focus. She gives these students consequences and meets with them individually in order to curb their negative behaviors.

In the second interview, Ms. Adams showed positive teacher efficacy in the area of discipline. Her small class as a whole is doing very well, discipline-wise. She has much success with her most challenging student when she removes him from the whole group and he works independently on kindergarten tasks. After Ms. Adams conferences with him about

his behavior and changes he needs to make, and when he is ready to make good choices, he is welcomed to rejoin the class. The rest of the students in her small class know to ignore this particular student's negative behavior, and they have taken their positive cues from Ms. Adams.

The negative comments that Ms. Adams made in the second interview regarding discipline were that the class had a difficult time during a recent field trip and assessments were approaching, as was the end of the quarter. Her behaviorally-challenged student had some meltdowns recently, and she had a difficult time reaching his parents regarding a discipline issue. Ms. Adams commented, "Parents just acknowledge that there are issues and tell me they are having the same issues at home. I'm not really getting anything from them."

In the first observation, Ms. Adams showed overwhelmingly positive teacher efficacy in the area of discipline. The small kindergarten class environment was positive, relaxed, and students worked consistently. Students had a strong work ethic, as they stayed on-task and completed their work as Ms. Adams encouraged them with supportive, positive words. Ms. Adams modeled good behavior when students acted inappropriately, and she orally recognized students doing the right actions so their peers would follow good examples. When one student was modeling good behavior, Ms. Adams commented to her class, "I like how Johnny is just smiling!" Ms. Adams never raised her voice at the kindergarten students, and she consistently smiled at them. Ms. Adams reminded students of her expectations and the students met these expectations. They moved quietly throughout the classroom and used good manners as they talked to their teacher and to each other. Ms. Adams used affectionate terms towards the students, such as *sweetie*, *dear*, and *sweetheart*. She constantly explained

to the students what she liked about their behavior and they in turn modeled positive behavior for her and for each other.

Ms. Adams had few instances of negative teacher efficacy during the first observation. She had to redirect one student who was off-task on the carpet, and at one point during the observation, the same student was off-task for about fifteen seconds until he finally redirected himself and chose the correct activity. This same student ran around the carpet area and sang songs until Ms. Adams asked him firmly to sit down.

In the second observation, Ms. Adams displayed only positive teacher efficacy in the area of discipline. During this observation, all students were on-task and completing their work, as directed by Ms. Adams. If needed, Ms. Adams redirected students quietly and discreetly. The teacher assistant in the classroom was also positive towards the students, giving them positive encouragement and praise. Students sat quietly on the carpet during the lesson, raised quiet hands, whispered to friends when appropriate, and followed all directions given by Ms. Adams. Ms. Adams selected students making positive choices to come to the Smartboard and model work for their peers.

In her journal entries, Ms. Adams displayed positive teacher efficacy in the area of discipline. She believes that having fewer students has helped with fewer discipline issues. Ms. Adams commented in a journal entry, “With less students, there are less people to be off-task, making noise, or moving around. Therefore we can progress faster.” She stated that in previous years, she had added an extra behavior piece to her discipline plan in her classroom to curb inappropriate behavior. However, this year with her small class size, this is

unnecessary due to having fewer students. She reported that her behavior incentives have been going well with her class and all students have achieved their incentives.

Ms. Adams's one negative journal entry regarding discipline was regarding the fact that four students did not receive their behavior incentives one week, which was the worst the class behavior had been in a while.

Parent involvement. The fourth trend in this study is parent involvement. In the first interview, Ms. Adams demonstrated positive teacher efficacy in the area of parent involvement. She discussed that she has a lot of parent involvement in her small class size and she receives anything she asks for from the parents in her class. She uses parents to work with students in her class and parents present academics to the students in different, student-friendly ways, which Ms. Adams believes is beneficial for the students. Having parents help in the classroom allows students to receive more small group and/or individual attention. Ms. Adams commented in her first interview, "I like to get in two volunteers a day during our center time which is about an hour. I think the more one-on-one attention we can give students, the way better results we get."

Ms. Adams expressed few negative comments in the area of parent involvement in the first interview. She does not have as many parent volunteers as in previous years and believes this is due to the economy and the fact that many parents are working more now than in the past. This also may be due to the fact that many of the students in her class are the youngest in the family, so parents are not staying at home with younger siblings. She is a

little sad that not as many parents volunteer in her classroom this year, as the students could get even more individual attention with more parent involvement.

In the second interview, Ms. Adams expressed overwhelmingly positive teacher efficacy in the area of parent involvement. For any students who have parent support lacking at home, Ms. Adams is fortunate to have a fifth grade student come into her classroom to help twice a week and pull kindergarten students to work on a task with either a small group or individual students. The fifth grade student enjoys helping in kindergarten, and the kindergarten students enjoy meeting with a “big” kid. The teacher assistant also pulls small groups and meets with students individually on certain concepts if parents are unable to help at home. Ms. Adams finds this very helpful to the entire class and to the parents. She also sends books home with students every night and they are instructed to read the books to their parents for homework. Students receive rewards for doing this. However, if they have a lack of support at home, the fifth grade buddy, teacher assistant, or parent volunteers intervene to help the students during the school day. Ms. Adams also sends home math homework as needed, and most parents help their children with this at home. Ms. Adams is very happy with the support of her parents this year and communicates with them regularly.

Ms. Adams made two negative comments regarding parent involvement in her second interview. She stated that it is sad that she can only do what she can with the parents she has in her classroom. She also commented that she tries to contact parents as much as possible, but if they do not respond to her initiatives, she can only do so much to work with them.

In her journal entries, Ms. Adams exhibited a balance of positive and negative teacher efficacy in the area of parent involvement. Regarding the positive, she was very excited and

happy that she was able to meet with all of the parents in her classroom in just seven days. Regarding meeting with all parents in just seven days, Ms. Adams wrote in her journal, “This made me very happy considering that is unpaid time I am spending at school!” She commented that regarding conferences and report cards, fewer students gives her much extra time. Regarding the negative, Ms. Adams commented that she is annoyed that basically all of the parent conferences must be conducted during her personal unpaid time which is stressful for her.

Self-reflection. The fifth trend in this study is self-reflection. In the first interview, Ms. Adams presented positive teacher efficacy. “I actually spend a good bit of time in the car to and from work thinking about my teaching. I reflect daily and then I’ll try to re-teach if needed.” She reflects daily and finds this to be very rewarding, as she can review lessons that went well or need to be changed to meet the needs of her students. She then will re-teach if necessary the next day.

In her journals, Ms. Adams made one negative comment regarding self-reflection. She commented that the end of the quarter was approaching and she was ready for a break.

Student enjoyment. The sixth trend in this study is student enjoyment. In the first interview, Ms. Adams showed only positive teacher efficacy regarding student enjoyment. She believes she can make learning fun for her small class of kindergarten students. She believes she creates activities that are fun and challenging for her students, and they do not always know they are learning, but instead think they are just working on fun activities. Ms.

Adams keeps her students happy and actively engaged in educational learning. Ms. Adams discussed the following in her interview:

I think I can make learning fun for my students. At this age, a lot of times they don't even know they are learning because we're doing it through song or reading a story, and there is so much they can learn through this but they don't know that. The more fun you can make it for them, the more they're going to learn because they're actively engaged.

In the second interview, Ms. Adams showed overwhelming positive teacher efficacy in the area of student enjoyment. She stated that she positively motivates students who are unmotivated by capturing their interests and creating math problems, reading books, etc. that involve the students' interests. She brings in her own football team materials to help include real-life experiences into her lessons, and brings in live materials (such as worms) for science lessons. She feels that using these tangible items is helpful in creating student enjoyment within her small class of kindergarten students. Ms. Adams is happy with the kindergarten schedule this year; kindergarten lunch is later in the day so that students are able to work in a long literacy block without interruption, therefore getting more literacy work completed each morning. Ms. Adams feels that this contributes to student enjoyment because kindergarten students are fresh in the mornings and work harder. She discussed that her students smile, hug her, participate, and laugh a lot when they are in school, which makes her happy. "They're smiling when they're here. They seem to be happy. I get lots of hugs, which is really good," (Ms. Adams). Ms. Adams feels that it is a positive sign that her students like

school because of the way they participate (even when their answers are incorrect) and behave in class.

In her second interview, Ms. Adams had few negative comments in the area of student enjoyment in her classroom. She discussed that she has one student who frequently gets grumpy during the school day due to the length of the day. She also believes that by the afternoon, the students are tired and they've been pushed all day long with no down time; the only complaint she hears from her students is that they are tired. She also discussed that lice has been an issue in her class this year so she has been standoffish about receiving hugs from her students (however, this has been corrected since the second interview and there is no longer an issue with lice).

In both the first and second observations, Ms. Adams displayed only positive teacher efficacy in the area of student enjoyment. She smiled frequently, as did the students. Ms. Adams was comfortable and positive during all student interactions. The kindergarten students smiled frequently and happily completed their work, hummed, smiled during work times, and talked nicely to their friends during appropriate times. Ms. Adams was friendly and encouraging all throughout the observations. She had a calming presence with the students, which created a calm classroom atmosphere. Ms. Adams complimented students who were working appropriately and behaving, and students followed suit and complimented each other. They worked hard to meet her expectations and did so happily. Student participation was positive and appropriate. Ms. Adams was patient with the students and used wait-time to give directions, praising students for using good behavior. When correcting

answers on student work, Ms. Adams explained the correct answers nicely and in positive ways, letting students know that their answers were valid but needed to be changed.

Teacher assistants. The seventh trend in this study is teacher assistants. In the first interview, Ms. Adams exhibited overwhelmingly positive teacher efficacy in this area. She discussed how confident and comfortable she is with her full-time teacher assistant. Her teacher assistant works with the kindergarten students both individually and in groups, just as Ms. Adams does. Ms. Adams trusts her teacher assistant to monitor the students and to keep them under control. Ms. Adams commented the following in her first interview:

The nice thing about having a teacher assistant is that I can feel comfortable walking away with one child or with a small group and know that the rest of my class isn't going to get out of control because she can be there to monitor them. And in kindergarten that's really important.

Ms. Adams finds it helpful that she is oftentimes able to split the class so that half of the students are being taught by her and the other half by the teacher assistant. Ms. Adams treats her teacher assistant just as she would another teacher in the classroom, and this is how the students see her teacher assistant as well.

In her first interview, Ms. Adams had one negative about having a teacher assistant. At the time of this first interview, her teacher assistant was being pulled to help with student assessments in other parts of the school. This was difficult for Ms. Adams, as she believes her teacher assistant is very valuable in her classroom.

In the second interview, Ms. Adams displayed positive teacher efficacy in the area of teacher assistants. She discussed that she and her teacher assistant are very similar in their ways of teaching and disciplining. This is the first year she has worked with her teacher assistant; in the past her teacher assistant was in a special education classroom (which means she is new to the regular education classroom). Ms. Adams feels comfortable enabling her teacher assistant to pull small groups and individual students for remediation or challenge work. She commented that she loves having her teacher assistant in the classroom. Her teacher assistant takes the initiative to keep her eye on students who may be struggling and helps them when needed, without direction from Ms. Adams. Between her teacher assistant and herself, they meet and conference with each student every day.

In her second interview, Ms. Adams also had some negative comments about having a teacher assistant in her classroom, most of which stemmed from the kindergarten schedule. Her teacher assistant is pulled from the classroom for lunch duty daily which means she misses Ms. Adams' planning time. This puts a strain on Ms. Adams because she is unable to discuss lessons with her teacher assistant, as there is no other time during the day for them to discuss and plan together. Ms. Adams does not feel it is right to keep her teacher assistant after school or have her come to school early to discuss plans for the day so they find small amounts of time during the day, with students present, to debrief lessons. Since her teacher assistant is pulled for lunch duty during Ms. Adams' planning period, she is unable to make necessary copies for students which is difficult for Ms. Adams. She must make copies herself or send her teacher assistant to make copies during instruction time.

In the first and second observations, Ms. Adams displayed positive teacher efficacy in the area of teacher assistants. Even though the teacher assistant was absent during the first observation, the classroom still ran very smoothly without student chaos. In the second observation, the teacher assistant walked around the classroom and monitored the students, helping wherever needed. She took the time to meet with students and discuss their work, asking questions and praising them for their progress.

In her journal entries, Ms. Adams displayed positive teacher efficacy in the area of teacher assistants. She remarked that she had been preparing materials for the week and it did not take her as long as she had thought. She had anticipated preparation taking longer due to having a new teacher assistant (and all routines were being taught to her), however all went smoothly. She attributed this to the small class size, as she can do much of the planning during her planning period. Ms. Adams discussed that she was happy to only have twenty students because there are fewer messes for her and her teacher assistant to clean up. Ms. Adams loves having her teacher assistant in the classroom, and wrote the following in a journal entry:

My TA is awesome and has been a huge help this year. Besides other duties around the school (lunch, morning, afternoon, PLT coverage, etc.), she pulls small groups for reading/math, helps grade papers, files paperwork, is our class nurse, cleans anything/everything daily, makes copies/prepares examples and other materials, pulls high students to ask (prepared by me) comprehension questions, and keeps me organized.

Ms. Adams is thankful for her teacher assistant because having another pair of hands in the classroom frees her to teach and plan for the individual needs of her small class size.

In her journal entries, Ms. Adams had few negative remarks regarding her teacher assistant. One day, her teacher assistant was not in the classroom and five students spilled their water cups during a science lesson, which frustrated Ms. Adams because she had to clean up the water by herself. She also noted one week that she was out sick for one day and her teacher was out sick two days that same week, which was difficult for her.

Teacher retention. The eighth trend in this study is teacher retention. In the first interview, Ms. Adams displayed only positive teacher efficacy in this area. She discussed that she plans on staying in the classroom, and has debated this for the past two years. At the time of the first interview, she could not decide in what she would like to get a Master's degree, but noted that she definitely wants to stay in education.

In the second interview, Ms. Adams displayed positive teacher efficacy in the area of teacher retention. She stated that she really does enjoy her job and plans to stay in the classroom for a while. She loves working with students, seeing their light bulbs turn on, and noted that her small class size has definitely helped her to enjoy this year more (especially after a difficult year last year with a large class size). Ms. Adams discussed that she does not see herself leaving the education field, however if class sizes are not regulated (as in other states), it will be difficult for her to continue in education, as she just cannot see herself completing as much with a larger class size as can with her small class size. She likes

teaching and really enjoys her job. “I like teaching. I really enjoy it. It’s different every day. I get to be my boss a little bit. I really enjoy being in the classroom” (Ms. Adams).

In her second interview, Ms. Adams also discussed a few negative thoughts on teacher retention. Ms. Adams stated, “There are drawbacks, but there are drawbacks to any job out there.” She has thought about leaving the classroom, and if she ever does, she would most likely do something in the field of educational psychology where she could still interact with students but on a different level. She stated that pay could possibly be a factor in leaving education at some point, as could the fact of having a very large class size. She noted that if she starts to dislike teaching, she would turn to a new field or job.

In her journal entries, Ms. Adams displayed positive teacher efficacy in the area of teacher retention. She decided to pursue a Master’s degree in reading and is excited to begin this program. It will enable her to continue working with children and will strengthen her reading teaching skills. Ms. Adams wrote in a journal entry, “My small class this year has helped keep my enjoyment and desire to be in the classroom. I have been able to do so much more with them and have had a great year.”

Ms. Adams made one negative remark about teacher retention in her journal articles. She feels that she does not like the growing class sizes and she would be tempted to move out of the classroom if classes grow too large.

Control over academic success of students. The ninth trend in this study is the participants’ control over academic success of students. In the first interview, Ms. Adams displayed positive teacher efficacy in this area. Ms. Adams remarked, “I think that I’m

probably the single most significant person in their life academically this year.” She introduces the students to all of the new things they learn in kindergarten and they make much growth in one year. This year with her small class size, in the second quarter she is seeing growth that many years she does not see until the third or fourth quarter. She is able to spend more time with each student, and is able to spend less time disciplining them. She is able to curb inappropriate behavior right when it starts due to her small class size. Ms. Adams reiterated that she is the most important person in her students’ lives, and the more time she can spend with them academically, the more they will achieve academically. Routines and expectations are set from the first day of school, and Ms. Adams feels that she can give her students the tools they need to control their own behavior. When students meet their goals, it makes Ms. Adams very happy. When she has taught concepts that they understand, she is able to move them on to the next concepts and build on them. She is pleased and thrilled with her students and herself when her students meet benchmarks. Because of her small class size, she is able to know and control where each student is academically, and help them catch up or extend their thinking on a daily basis.

In her first interview, Ms. Adams had one negative comment in the area of control over academic success of students. She does not feel that she can control the class sizes in her school, as the students are divided by the school administration on each grade level, allotting similar numbers of students to each teacher. She stated that the principal does what is possible to keep class sizes small, but the numbers are ultimately set by the state.

In the second interview, Ms. Adams displayed only positive teacher efficacy in the area of control over academic success of students. She stated that her students are mature,

and they are able to work more independently than classes she has taught in the past due to their maturity and the fact that there are fewer of them. She does not have to repeat directions as she has in the past. The class has a Smartboard and Ms. Adams can control how much or little the students can do with the Smartboard. Ms. Adams feels that her experience in teaching kindergarten is helpful with feeling control over her class, as she knows how to teach, what to teach, and how to reach each student.

In her journal entries, Ms. Adams showed a balance of positive and negative teacher efficacy in the area of control over academic success of students. She remarked that since she has a smaller class, it is easier for her students to pay attention. In addition, it is easier for her to pay attention to them due to there being fewer students in the classroom. Her negative comment was that she felt out of control one week because she, her teacher assistant, and many students were absent and it was difficult to teach any new concepts that week.

Thoughts/Feelings/Attitudes at the end of a day. The tenth trend in this study is the thoughts, feelings, and attitudes of the participants at the end of a typical school day. In the first interview, Ms. Adams displayed overwhelmingly positive teacher efficacy in this area. Regarding her feelings at the end of a typical day, Ms. Adams commented the following:

I am very, very happy and I know so many people that are unhappy in their job and I love my job. I know we'll never make tons of money or anything like that, but I really do love my job. I'm very happy I went into education.

She believes part of the reason why she loves her job and is happy at the end of the day is because she has been teaching kindergarten for years, knows the expectations, knows how to teach, and all of these contributing factors make it easier for her at the end of the day. This year with her small class size, she feels the best about her teaching, more so than she has ever with past classes. She attributes this to her small class size, the positive behaviors of the students, and the make-up of the students in her class. She is excited to come to work each morning and is ready to see her kindergarten students each day. She is not exhausted at the end of the school day, and feels that her small class size impacts instruction, as well as her emotional status. She prefers a small class size to a large class size.

In the second interview, Ms. Adams displayed overwhelmingly positive teacher efficacy in the area of thoughts, feelings, and attitudes at the end of a school day. She described that she is able to do a lot with her students this year due to her small class size, which makes her a positive teacher. She is happy that she can make a personal connection to each child in her class, know them well, and know where they are academically. Ms. Adams is able to spend more time with each student due to her small class size, and feels pretty good at the end of the school day. Ms. Adams discussed, "I feel like I've accomplished something and the students are usually leaving with more than they came in with." She's not exhausted when she goes home from school and likes her job.

In her second interview, Ms. Adams' one negative comment regarding her thoughts, feelings, and attitudes at the end of a school day center around being tired. Ms. Adams commented, "I'm tired, but I think it's because I've got so much else going on. I don't necessarily think it's because of the school day."

In her journal entries, Ms. Adams displays positive teacher efficacy in the area of thoughts, feelings, and attitudes at the end of a school day. She feels that, since she has a small class size, she is able to better meet the individual needs of all of her students. During the holidays, her holiday stress is relieved because of her students' good behavior. She is able to work on fun activities with her class because of their positive behavior choices. When working on fun holiday crafts, she has much help from parents, which relieves her stress during what could be a very busy and stressful holiday season.

Ms. Adams noted few negative feelings in her journal entries in the area of thoughts, feelings, and attitudes at the end of a school day. She feels that the holiday craft activities are stressful, and it did not help that her teacher assistant was out sick for two days and she did not have her extra pair of hands; some parents did not show up to volunteer as they had planned.

Trust of students/parents/school administrators. The eleventh trend in this study is trust of students, parents, and school administrators. In the second interview, Ms. Adams displayed positive teacher efficacy in this area. She described that her students trust her and she trusts them to do their best work. She gives them clear expectations and they work hard to meet her expectations. She creates relationships with the students in her small class and really talks to them about how they are feeling, issues they may be having at home or with friends, and simply takes the time to get to know them so that they feel comfortable coming to her. Ms. Adams explained that she dialogues with parents frequently and trusts them to work with their children at home in order to support her in the classroom. "I do feel like I can

trust all the parents in here, that they are doing their best for their child” (Ms. Adams). She truly believes parents are doing their best with their children at home (even if their best is a bit different from what she would do). Ms. Adams follows through with discipline, and communicates with parents when needed, which also strengthens the parent/teacher bond.

Ms. Adams feels mostly supported by the administrators in her school, as long as the administrators know what issues may be addressed prior to them getting out of hand. This year, Ms. Adams and the other teachers on her grade level have sat down quite frequently and talked about issues, which she expressed has been extremely beneficial. Ms. Adams commented the following:

We’ve talked more this year with our administrator than we ever have before. We’ve actually had quarterly meetings to go over how things are going. It’s been nice because we’ve been able to get out some issues of things that have been going on between the grade level and administration, so that’s been nice.

Ms. Adams feels that she has always been supported by her administrators, and feels that they trust her to do her job in the classroom in return.

In her second interview, Ms. Adams had a few negative comments regarding trust of students, parents, and school administrators. She has one parent who she has trouble trusting because sometimes the parent is overly friendly and other times she is overly critical. Ms. Adams is working on trying to figure out this parent’s habits so she can make their relationship stronger. She also commented that, while the administrators are trusting of her, there is a large push for data and they are not as open to looking at other areas (besides data) that could be important to student achievement. She feels that there is such a push for

academics that sometimes administrators forget that these children are only five years old and they may not be developmentally ready for some of the concepts they are expected to learn. She believes that if the students are not developmentally ready to learn concepts, they will not understand, will become frustrated, and then will not enjoy school. Ms. Adams decided that she believes the administrators have a tough job to do and she does not want to do their job.

Class size effect on personal teacher efficacy/attitudes. The twelfth trend in this study is the class size effect on personal teacher efficacy and the attitudes of the participants in relation to their class sizes. In the second interview, Ms. Adams showed only positive teacher efficacy in this area. Ms. Adams excitedly explained that she had a better year this year than she has had in many years of teaching and commented, “I’m leaving every day pretty happy!” She is sure that the small class size has something to do with her positive attitude about teaching. She explained that she is not exhausted and pulling her hair out each day out of frustration. She discussed that her small class size is definitely contributing to her liking what she is doing.

In her journal entries, Ms. Adams displayed only positive teacher efficacy in the area of class size effect on personal teacher efficacy and attitudes. She explained that having fewer students means that she spends less money on her class, which makes her happy. One of the parents in her class overspent on materials for the first student learning experience (party) because she based her calculations on the number of students in previous years; the learning experiences work out to be less expensive due to fewer students. Ms. Adams spends

less money out of pocket for day-to-day class activities which means she is saving money. Ms. Adams feels less stressed this year because she is able to manage classroom materials well, and makes sure they are used appropriately since there are fewer students in her class. Ms. Adams wrote the following:

I am noticing this year that managing class activities has been easier. There is so much more I can do with the students just because there are fewer of them. It's easier to manage the materials as well, and to make sure everyone is using them appropriately.

Activities do not take as long, and she can still meet the needs of her students, ensuring that they understand important concepts. When students pass out materials for holidays, they do not need help with each other's names because there are fewer of them. They work calmly and quietly while passing out important materials. Ms. Adams attributes her more manageable year to the smaller class size, and she is very happy with her small class size.

Large class size thoughts. The thirteenth trend in this study was Ms. Adams' thoughts on large class sizes. Ms. Adams is teaching a small class size, however mentioned large class sizes that she has taught in the past and compared them to her small class size this year. The researcher did not rate this trend as positive or negative teacher efficacy due to its neutrality. In the first interview, Ms. Adams discussed that when she taught a large class size in the past, some of her students performed poorly on assessments and they had slipped through the cracks. There were twenty-five other students vying for her attention and she did not get to meet the needs of all students. When working on report cards with a large class in

the past, she did not put as much into writing the comments because she was so tired from writing all report cards.

In the second interview, Ms. Adams discussed that when she taught a large class in the past, her efforts went into teaching small groups and she did not have time to get to students individually. She discussed that if her class were bigger this year, she'd have a higher stress level because of all the assessments that must be completed at the end of the quarter. When teaching a large class size in the past, she took all report cards home and completed them, which took a lot of time away from her family. She wishes she could have a small class size every year, as she has seen a big difference between her class this year and in previous years with large classes.

In her journal entries, Ms. Adams remarked the following:

For the past several years my class was so large that it seemed like all I had time to do was pull my lowest students because I had to get them to grade level. And I barely had time for that.

She had spent two full weeks in previous years conducting parent conferences after school until 6:00pm. She added that the more students she has had in the past, the more varying ability levels. The more she should be differentiating, but the less she is able due to having more students asking questions or needing help during independent times. This is frustrating to Ms. Adams.

Staff development ideas. Ms. Adams suggested staff development ideas that may be helpful to those teachers teaching small class sizes. She believes she and other teachers could

benefit from higher-level workshops which would explain how to teach students who are performing above grade level. She suggested offering workshops that focus on how to educate autistic children, explaining that teaching autistic children is very hands-on and would give kindergarten teachers many developmentally appropriate activities to use. Autistic activities would teach hands-on, structured, and visual learning activities that would help teachers in small classes. Ms. Adams commented in her second interview, “Conferencing workshops would be helpful because I had the time to do more independent conferencing with students this year.” This is because in small class sizes, the teacher has time to discuss more independent strategies in reading, writing, and math. It would be helpful to know what types of questions to ask students, and types of questions for parents to ask students to dig deeper into the minds of all students.

Summary of Ms. Adams

Ms. Adams is a female kindergarten teacher of a small class size of twenty students in a suburban elementary school, and this is her tenth year in education. After analyzing her interviews, observations, and journal entries, the researcher concludes that Ms. Adams expressed overall positive teacher efficacy in each of the trends that emerged in this study. This data shows that Ms. Adams’s small class size contributes to her overall positive personal teacher efficacy.

Description of Ms. Bender

The second teacher participant, Ms. Rebecca Bender, is a female teacher who is forty-eight years old. She is a kindergarten teacher in a small class size of nineteen students. She was raised in the Midwest and was the youngest of four children. Her mother was a teacher and her father was a chemical engineer. When attending college, she entered as a music major but switched to education as she was drawn to children and her comfort was in education. Ms. Bender taught in the Midwest for five years, married, and began a family of her own. After her second child was born, she stopped teaching and moved to the southeastern state in which she currently resides. When her youngest child began kindergarten, Ms. Bender went back to teaching; thus she has been teaching for ten years. During her ten-year break while raising her own children, she taught preschool for six years.

Ms. Bender went into education in college after deciding that music majors had too many extra-curricular activities in the evenings. She knew she wanted to be a mother and spend time with her family, and spending extra hours performing in music would not afford her the opportunity to spend time with her family, raise her children, and be a large part of their lives. She researched engineering, however decided against that major due to long work hours as well. Ms. Bender traveled around the United States with her family, camped through the national parks, visited museums, and had time to do all of these activities due to her natural choice of going into education (she had summers off).

Ms. Bender has solely been a kindergarten teacher since the start of her teaching career, and this is her tenth year in education teaching kindergarten. She is the teacher of a small class size (nineteen students). Ms. Bender has a full-time teacher assistant who is in her

classroom approximately four hours per day. She has eleven boys and eight girls in her kindergarten class.

During the first and second researcher observations of Ms. Bender, her classroom was set up in a student-friendly fashion. In the front of this kindergarten classroom, a large white board was mounted on the wall and there were labeled shapes drawn on it with writing editing directions. A red and green paper chain was displayed. There was an alphabet chart located above the white board, and a bulletin board with a flower canvas and ladybug border to the left of the white board. On the top of the white board were an American flag and a state flag. A kidney-shaped reading table was also in the front of the classroom, with four individual desks nearby.

Along the side wall of the classroom was a wall of cubbies. Nineteen of these cubbies were filled with backpacks, coats, and lunchboxes. The shelves above the cubbies were full of games, puzzles, extra construction paper, magnets, scales, cleaning supplies, craft boxes, books, learning materials, manipulatives, math series, and language arts basal readers. There was a student sink, paper towel dispenser, and drinking fountain to the left of the cubbies. One-fourth of the classroom was tile and three-fourths was carpet.

The opposite side wall of the classroom boasted a word wall, list of clubs (Shoe Tying Club, 100s Club, AaBbCc Club), alphabet chart, numbers 1-100 chart, calendar, money chart, Judy clock, Introduction to Non-fiction chart, Four Seasons chart, list of specials, and picture schedule. There were several additional posters located around the classroom: Feelings, Colors, Months, Holidays, Classroom Rules, Bloom's Taxonomy, Kids

are Special, Counting 1-20, and 21st Century Learning. An open student-carpet area was located on the side of the classroom, along with a large wooden rocking chair.

In the back of the classroom was a full-size teacher desk and a teacher assistant desk, both covered with papers, manipulatives, and other student resources. Near these two adult desks were three student desktop computers with keyboards, a printer, one overhead projector, a small television/VCR combination, and a large television mounted in the corner of the classroom. Labels were on many classroom objects, such as *computers, television, closet, days of the week*. On top of a large rolling cabinet on the side of the classroom sat a large globe of the world. The back wall of the classroom was a wall of windows enabling a view of the playground with a door leading outside to the playground. A student bathroom was built into in the back corner of the classroom.

In the middle of the classroom was one rectangular table with four seats, three rectangular tables with three seats each, one rectangular table with two seats each, two square tables with one seat each, one square table with two seats each, and one small desk with one seat. Individual pencil boxes sat on the tops of each table, and each student chair had a chair pocket on the back to hold student supplies. Also in the middle of the classroom were the housekeeping center and puppet show center, and bookshelves with a selection of children's books were positioned throughout the classroom.

Ms. Bender: Trends from Interviews, Observations, and Journals

Ability to work with individual students/small groups. The first trend in this study is the ability to work with individual students and/or small groups. In the first interview, Ms.

Bender displayed only positive teacher efficacy in this area. Ms. Bender feels that she is able to give her students more individual attention because there are fewer of them in class. She teaches whole group lessons and then has time to walk around her class and reach every student individually. She believes that the lower number of students makes it possible to give a higher amount of minutes spent with each one. Ms. Bender commented, “To be able to spend a while minute with them, talking to them, there’s actually a lot you can say in one minute.” Ms. Bender feels that she is able to take the time to get to know the personalities of her students because there are fewer of them, and she can better assess what their strengths are and what their life paths may be one day in society.

In the second interview, Ms. Bender showed overwhelmingly positive teacher efficacy in the area of ability to work with individual students and/or small groups. “When they’re in the small group and you can really give them the attention and support to do all the different strategies, and you don’t have to worry about the behaviors of the other kids sitting around” (Ms. Bender). She discussed that with her small class she is able to break students into small groups of only three or fewer, which allows each student to be able to meet in reading groups at least four times each week for thirty minutes each meeting. Ms. Bender, her teacher assistant, and/or parent volunteers meet with groups to give students small group instruction. Very few behavior issues arise when these groups are meeting, as the groups discuss proper behavior before meeting and proper behavior is reinforced throughout the school day. Ms. Bender noted that she does have two reading groups that just have one student each in them, which allows for individual instruction. Regarding math, Ms. Bender feels that she is able to meet students where they are academically, as she also meets with

small groups and students on an individual basis (depending on their needs). She also explained that she is able to meet the needs of every student in science and social studies.

Ms. Bender had two negative comments regarding her ability to work with individual students and/or small groups of students in her first interview. She discussed that one student is reading above grade level but his reading pace is very slow, which is frustrating to her. She also addressed the issue of the science curriculum and that it is watered down for the students and she would like to focus her small groups on special 21st Century skills in science to better meet the needs of her kindergarten students. However, this is not possible which frustrates Ms. Bender.

In the first observation, Ms. Bender displayed only positive teacher efficacy in the area of ability to work with individual students and/or small groups. She walked through the classroom during independent work time and monitored what the students were doing. The teacher assistant and parent volunteer had pulled small groups in math, as did Ms. Bender, and she was able to see almost every child in a small group.

In the second observation, Ms. Bender displayed only positive teacher efficacy in the area of ability to work with individual students and/or small groups. Ms. Bender was able to meet with four guided reading literacy groups, and her teacher assistant was able to meet with two. During this guided reading group time, two reading groups were pulled (six students altogether) and the remaining thirteen were at their seats working independently. Between meeting with each guided reading group, Ms. Bender walked around the class with her stamp pad and stamped correctly edited student work. After meeting with one reading group in particular, Ms. Bender pulled a student who struggled in the group and worked with

her one-on-one to help her understand the concept she had struggled with in the group. While meeting in each group, Ms. Bender asked students higher level thinking questions, was kind, patient, and listened to each student, giving positive feedback when necessary.

In her journal entries, Ms. Bender displayed only positive teacher efficacy in the area of ability to work with individual students and/or small groups. On one day, she had two students absent which made her class total seventeen students. She remarked that she had fifteen extra minutes after her writing conferences, and ten extra minutes after meeting with reading groups due to the absent students. In that time she spent fifteen minutes working with individual students, and the remaining ten minutes conducting a read aloud with her class. Ms. Bender believed that with fewer students, she is able to individualize instruction, and wrote, “With less kids, I have the time to individualize spelling words to the words they need or are trying to use.” She expressed that she is happy with her small class size because she can fit in all (small) reading groups and can teach appropriately, and reflected that with fewer students it is easier to target students who need help questioning or presenting and work with them more intensely.

Academics/Assessments/Report cards. The next trend in this study is academics, assessments, and report cards. In the first interview, Ms. Bender showed overwhelmingly positive teacher efficacy in this area. Ms. Bender discussed her high expectations of having 100% of her kindergarten students at or above grade level, even though her school recommends setting the expectation between 90-95%. She feels that she has always been

successful at having students meet their goals and looks at each student individually instead of as a class. Ms. Bender commented the following:

I always look at each child individually and what they already know when they come into kindergarten and what is their next step. When I give a whole class assignment, each child has their own expectations of where their success will be in that assignment.

They assignments she gives are typically at the higher end of the spectrum so the higher level students are challenged; the average students may not completely understand every aspect, but they are working on the steps in the process. With every math problem Ms. Bender assigns, she is looking to see growth in different ways from each student. She discussed that (during this first interview) she did not have any students below level, but did have two who were at the bottom-end of average whom she spends extra time teaching. Also at this time, she had ten students who were above-level and seven who were on-level. Ms. Bender discussed that during assessments, she discovers teachable moments that she can address with the students after the assessments. Ms. Bender talked about how her students are so creative and she discusses academics with them not just in the classroom, but also while walking in the hallway or playing outside at recess in order to learn what they actually know.

Ms. Bender had few negative comments regarding academics, assessments, and report cards during the first interview as well. She commented that the kindergarten assessments are all one-on-one and are a very slow process. She expressed frustration when discussing students who perform well during class work but do not perform well on the formal assessments. She also expressed frustration about taking the time to do all the

assessments one-on-one, and having administrators walk through her classroom and thinking she is not doing what she is supposed to be doing; however, she is doing what is right for her students.

In the second interview, Ms. Bender displayed positive teacher efficacy in the area of area of academics, assessments, and report cards. She discussed that she began the year with a huge range of students, some starting at age four, some having no concept of letters or sounds, and some reading. Currently all of her students are reading and writing, and she was excited that they recently sustained writing for about forty-five minutes. She excitedly remarked that they are amazing writers and readers. In math, her students are really thinking about the problems they do, and processing through them. Ms. Bender is very excited about their progress. At the time of this second interview, Ms. Bender had one student who was on grade level in reading and math, and the rest were above grade level (with eight students much higher in reading and four students much higher in math). She is very excited about this progress and explained that she moves students forward to the next levels when they are ready. At times, she even moves the students forward when they are not ready for the next step, as they can still practice the steps and will know where they need to be at some point. Ms. Bender thinks it is important to have fun with her students while teaching them academics, and loves teaching subtraction and addition word problems so she can see their minds processing through difficult problems. Ms. Bender feels that she could tell anyone how each student is performing on the assessments without them even taking the assessments, because she knows their skills intimately. Ms. Bender is excited to meet with parents and conference with them about their children's progress and success.

In her second interview, Ms. Bender expressed few negative comments about academics, assessments, and report cards as well. She explained that she still has a difficult time with the retelling part of the reading tests, and she comment that she feels report cards are “redundant, redundant, redundant” (Ms. Bender). They are redundant because she teaches all the necessary material and knows where the students are academically, then must give the formal assessment, document it in her grade book, document it in a computer app supported by the county, document it on the county profile card, and finally document it on the report card in both number grades and comments. All of this redundancy takes away from her instruction, planning, and/or family time which is frustrating for Ms. Bender.

In the first observation, Ms. Bender displayed only positive teacher efficacy in the area of academics, assessments, and report cards. During a lesson on the carpet, the students expressed excitement about seeing elves at home and in the classroom (observation was near holidays), and Ms. Bender used their excitement to teach academic concepts. Students worked together to help each other sequence correctly, and Ms. Bender fostered their imaginations by coupling their creativity with academic concepts.

In the second observation, Ms. Bender displayed only positive teacher efficacy in the area of academics, assessments, and report cards. Ms. Bender walked around to the students and complimented them on their academics. “Great work, Johnny! Don’t forget to use capital letters and edit your work” (Ms. Bender). She praised them individually and reminded them to use their editing tools to edit their work. Students continually worked in their centers together and helped each other with their academics, the entire time being praised and taught by Ms. Bender.

In her journal entries, Ms. Bender showed positive teacher efficacy in the area of academics, assessments, and report cards. She remarked that with fewer students, she has time to create personal spelling word lists for each student. She also expressed satisfaction because with fewer students, she can conduct fewer (informal) assessments. Ms. Bender wrote the following:

With less children, I do less assessments because I can work closer with them, I get to know them better. I see them on a daily basis. I see them more so I don't need to do as many formal assessments or process checks. Less time on strategically collecting data means more time learning, interacting, and collecting data through teachable moments. They just happen.

Ms. Bender believes that with less formal data collection, she actually has more data and a better understanding of where her students are academically with more time to teach them.

Ms. Bender feels that she is able to focus on higher level skills with her students because she is only teaching nineteen students. Ms. Bender is also excited that three kindergarten classes can fit into one classroom to utilize the Smartboard, which is possible because of the small kindergarten class sizes (logistically it would not be possible with larger classes). Ms. Bender feels that she is still behind in grading student work, however with her small class size she is further ahead than in previous years (which she claims is a psychological bonus!). Ms.

Bender enjoys the fact that eleven of her students have learned the joy of solving complex math problems, and only a few are at grade level (the rest are above) due to her small class size. She believes that her small class size allows her to reach the No Child Left Behind goal of 100% of students on or above grade level; she is proud of herself.

Ms. Bender had few negative comments in her journal entries regarding academics, assessments, and report cards. She struggles with completing report cards during her planning time, which means planning time gets pushed to class time; teaching time suffers because she cannot work on report cards during her personal, at-home time. It is also frustrating to Ms. Bender that, during assessment time, she is unable to introduce new core material to the students, and that time spent grading student work is completed during her personal time.

Discipline. The next trend in this study is discipline. In the first interview, Ms. Adams showed positive teacher efficacy in this area. Ms. Bender discussed that (since the interview took place during the holiday season) she believed that the book Elf on a Shelf helped her students to have better behavior. Behavior is reinforced at home with this book and stuffed animal and good behavior at home carries over into the classroom. Ms. Bender commented that she has five students during this holiday season who are more antsy than normal, but that she and her teacher assistant keep good control over them by placing them at the same table with constant adult supervision, reminding them of strategies to keep their bodies in a calm state. Ms. Bender believes that the positive behavior of her students directly relates to them socializing in creative and developmentally appropriate ways (such as in a housekeeping center), as they practice hands-on learning. Ms. Bender commented “There’s a lot I can do to get children to follow class rules.” She works with students individually and gives them their own set of behavior expectations (one student imagines a hula hoop on the floor and he cannot leave the hoop). They have freedom to work in their own spaces, either

sitting, standing, etc. (one even sits in a trash can which strengthens his core muscles). Ms. Bender prides herself on creating a sense of community and belonging, and her students are very accepting of each other. She feels that making these adjustments for her students is possible when teaching a small class size. Ms. Bender believes that her students go home each day feeling loved and that they are responsible for how good they act in the classroom. She likes that her students are intrinsically motivated to work hard and behave, and she fosters this through conversations she has with them. She enjoys when her students are proud of themselves, and she enjoys taking the time to conference if there is a behavior issue and talk about what the correct thing to do would be, recognizing good feelings of success when possible. Ms. Bender works with her small class to understand that the feelings they get when they work hard are something to be proud of and embrace, and then they strive to have those feelings over and over again. Ms. Bender believes that when her students feel good about themselves, they perform better in the classroom and they work harder at keeping their behavior positive.

Ms. Bender's use of positive behavior management and few behavior issues are aligned with Zahorik's report referenced in his article "Reducing Class Size Leads to Individualized Instruction" in Chapter Two. In 1999, Zahorik reported that smaller class sizes have fewer discipline problems and there is less difficult behavior; misbehavior is more noticeable in smaller class sizes when it does occur, and teachers are able to deal with it immediately before it becomes a larger problem. Ms. Bender was able to deal with behavior issues, often before they escalated, because she spent time conferencing with them and discussing appropriate choices when necessary.

In the first interview, Ms. Bender discussed some negative comments regarding discipline. She finds it frustrating that after a three-week break, the students need to be re-taught school and classroom rules and procedures, and that the last week before a break, the students have more behavior issues due to over-excitement. She discussed that during that last week she is sometimes spending more time trying to keep students in line behaviorally, which affects her instruction time. Ms. Bender expressed that during the week before holiday break, some of her students come into the classroom in the mornings bouncing and screaming about the “Elf on the Shelf” and how their stuffed animals moved during their night at home; Ms. Bender has a difficult time controlling their excitement. Ms. Bender discussed how the students are so technologically savvy, and commented, “I’ve noticed, especially with the onset of technology, is children’s behaviors are more impulsive and self-centered and each year it grows exponentially. I don’t think they’re learning how to manage and control themselves.” At home, when children get excited, parents look towards giving them video games or electronic devices to quiet them down, instead of teaching them to slow down, monitor their bodies, and control their excitement. She feels this carries over into the classroom and makes discipline more difficult. Ms. Bender also believes that when there is a full moon, students are not at their behavior best.

In her second interview, Ms. Bender displayed positive teacher efficacy in the area of discipline. She began by discussing her most challenging behavior student, who is a unique child but often says inappropriate comments; however, Ms. Bender found that he enjoys writing so he now uses his voice to write down his comments instead of saying them aloud. This is helping the student tremendously and Ms. Bender is noticing a positive behavior

change in him. Ms. Bender communicates with this student's mother on a daily basis and updates her on his behavior each day; the parent is very supportive. Ms. Bender discussed that there are always some negative behavior leaders in the class, and she works with them to stay calm and manage their bodies so that their peers do not follow negative choice patterns. She finds that separating students from the class to work on their own often helps them to focus and make positive behavior choices. Ms. Bender commented, "When you have those kids who just shout out constantly, if there are only a couple of them you can get them calmed down when you have space to move them around the room. That's really nice." One of her students has severe ADHD and is not medicated, but has a large work space he uses to complete all of his work. During whole group read-alouds, he sits at his table and works on art projects while listening to the books Ms. Bender reads. Sitting separately and working creatively while listening has helped this student to be happier, more focused, and on-task. Ms. Bender discussed that at this point of the school year (end of second quarter), students are working independently and behavior is mostly not an issue. However, a parent in her class suggested using behavior charts for the students with a treasure box for rewards. Ms. Bender was not supportive of this at first because she wants her students to do well because they want to, not because they will receive something for their good behavior. However, she agreed to have her teacher assistant keep track of the charts to appease the parents. Eventually, Ms. Bender removed the behavior charts (but kept the treasure box) because they were not helping her students, but were hindering their behavior instead. She feels good about this decision, as students are no longer comparing themselves to each other. Regarding the prize box, during the week if any students have difficulty with manners, Ms. Bender

writes their names on paper and at the end of the week the class discusses lessons on proper manners. Ms. Bender discussed her class rules and the fact that they are positive for her class to follow, but that they do not necessarily fit in with the “no-wiggling, no-talking-in-the-hallway” rules that the school administrators would like to see. However, her students are nice to each other and Ms. Bender keeps them all safe. She reiterated that she has wiggly, talkative, characters in her class, but no serious behavior issues (no meanness, aggression, willful defiance). She feels good about this.

Ms. Bender discussed some negative comments about discipline in her second interview as well. She talked about her student who makes inappropriate comments, and that she is working hard with the parents for them to see that the comments he makes are socially unacceptable and not to foster these comments at home; parents are beginning to see that his comments are not funny and are beginning to be on board with Ms. Bender, but this is a long and frustrating process for Ms. Bender. She is trying to teach the student and the parents that some actions are tolerated at home but not at school. Ms. Bender also discussed the negativity of the behavior chart that the parents wanted her to use in class, and how it took away the creativity of her students. It made her more active students sad and hindered their work and behavior, and she took away the behavior charts so that students could better focus on their behavior with their own individual expectations set by Ms. Bender.

In the first observation, Ms. Bender showed positive teacher efficacy regarding discipline. She redirected student behavior in a kind, patient voice, and quietly removed inappropriate objects from students’ hands when necessary. When students became too excited, Ms. Bender asked them to breathe deeply and to sit cross-legged to settle themselves

down. When students sat on the carpet, they were moving their bodies but all stayed on-task. Ms. Bender modeled positive behavior and recognized certain students for showing good behavior. She used Santa as a positive motivator for them to behave on the carpet. She asked students questions to be sure their behavior was appropriate. “Johnny was touching that and it wasn’t the right choice. Should you touch it too?” (Ms. Bender). She led the students in reciting their “Good Manners” class pledge.

Ms. Bender had few negative actions in her first observation regarding discipline. One student was continuously making a loud noise with his mouth and she firmly asked him to stop. She had to continuously tell her students to sit on the carpet and calm down, as they were very excited about seeing the Elf (on the Shelf) in the school. She was slightly frustrated about this behavior. One student was completely off-task and was twirling on the carpet; Ms. Bender did not address this behavior.

In the second observation, Ms. Bender showed positive teacher efficacy in the area of discipline. She consistently redirected student behavior in a respectful, calm, kind, matter-of-fact manner. She redirected several students with a “look” which prompted them to get back on-task. Students were active in her class but not inappropriate, and Ms. Bender reminded students to do their work appropriately (which they did).

Ms. Bender had few negative actions in her second observation. Three students were off-task during different times in their literacy block, and students occasionally interrupted her reading group lessons. While students did talk to each other throughout their center work, only three students were off-task (but were not addressed by Ms. Bender).

In her journal entries, Ms. Bender displayed positive teacher efficacy in the area of discipline. She commented about her class being talkative, not mean or bad, but just talkative in general, and was thankful that she only has nineteen of them. When three of her more challenging students were absent, she felt as though half her class was absent. She commented that during a lesson, half the class was great and there were just two who had difficulty with behavior, and made a comment again that she is so happy that she only has nineteen children. She expressed happiness in having extra room in the classroom and wrote, “Having the room to be able to separate children is priceless. I can’t imagine having five more children in here” (Ms. Bender). On one day she only had seventeen students which she positively explained made it quieter and even more manageable. She expressed excitement and happiness on the day when all of her students made a trip to the treasure box, as she was able to help those who hardly ever receive a reward to finally receive one.

Ms. Bender displayed few negative comments in her journals regarding discipline. One day was particularly difficult, as she had a class of over-excited students, impulsivity, and had to write many notes home to parents regarding behavior. She expressed that all she wants to do is go home. She also expressed frustration as behaviors had not improved all week, and assessments were drawing near. Some of these behaviors were over-excitement, anticipation (before holidays), demanding, stealing, screaming, retaliation, and high noise level. After the students came back from their winter break, even four of Ms. Bender’s “perfect” students were acting up and she was frustrated that she had to teach rules and procedures again to her class.

Parent involvement. The next trend in this study is parent involvement. In the first interview, Ms. Bender displayed overwhelmingly positive teacher efficacy in the area of parent involvement. She talked about how having a smaller class size helps with conferences, as she truly gets to know her students and tell parents exactly who their child is and where he/she is performing in each subject. Parents know that she is working hard to get to know their children and to be sure their children are successful. She discussed having parent volunteers in her class, and that she is very protective of her parents meaning that she does not let them do too much. There comes a time in December when parents are stretched thin at home and Ms. Bender tells them not to come in to help in the classroom, but to get all of their home activities completed (and this way, they don't cancel on her, as well!). She invites parents in to the classroom to help with learning experiences (parties) and tells them that the learning experiences are experiences they will share with their children and remember for the rest of their lives. Ms. Bender enjoys when parents come in during reading time, and commented, "I always want parents to come in for reading time. And I actually give them an informal reading group. They have the children read, they correct them in whatever manner they as a parent correct." Ms. Bender explained that when parents help in the classroom, they feel great. They get to know the students in the class, are able to work with many different students, can see how the students grow, and it makes them feel like they are a large part of the classroom. Ms. Bender finds it amazing that the parents are so involved and interested in the lives of the students in the classroom, and are happy with the students' successful outcomes at the end of the school year. Ms. Bender also discussed that she leaves volunteer times open to parents so they can come in when their schedules allow. She encourages

parents to volunteer when they are able because she knows how important their children are in their lives. Ms. Bender enjoys having flexibility in her classroom, and the parents enjoy this as well.

Ms. Bender discussed few negative comments regarding parent involvement in her first interview. She talked about having some parents who really do not want anything to do with volunteering in the classroom, some who are too busy to help, and some who want to come in daily and run the classroom; all of these things make it hard for Ms. Bender. She remarked that if parents come in too frequently to help, they get burned out very quickly.

In the second interview, Ms. Bender displayed only positive teacher efficacy in the area of parent involvement. She explained that one of her students is from a different culture, and his mother does not foster independence with him at home. Therefore, at school, Ms. Bender gives him many independent tasks and celebrates when he completes them on his own, and his peers celebrate his accomplishments with him as well. The class helps him to work hard and be proud of his accomplishments. Ms. Bender feels great that she took a struggling, dependent little boy and has created a strong, independent kindergartener in her class. He is taking these independent tasks home with him and is showing his mother that he is capable of working hard and doing his own work. Regarding this child, Ms. Bender commented, "It's always finding another minute, another thirty seconds to make him work his own brain, make him proud of the fact that he can do it by himself." Ms. Bender discussed that if parents are not supportive at home with reading, she has fifth grade students read with these students during arrival time in the mornings to practice their reading.

In her journal entries, Ms. Bender showed a balance of positive and negative teacher efficacy in the area of parent involvement. Regarding the positives, she discussed that with only having nineteen students, she only has to check nineteen students' breathing (one student has asthma and parent would like Ms. Bender to check his breathing periodically throughout the day). She is excited that holiday activities that the students complete are driven by the parents, which is helpful to her. She also explained that parent conferences this year are taking approximately seven hours of her personal time, which is much better with a small class size (twenty minutes multiplied by nineteen students). She values the importance of parent conferences, and wrote, "Conferences are SO important. I'm always glad for less children at conference time!"

The negative comments Ms. Bender made regarding parent involvement in her journal entries all centered around time. The holiday activities take time, which is time away from instruction. Parent conferences take time and she would like to see a day or two of the allotted county teacher workdays dedicated to parent conferences, as she would love to spend at least thirty minutes with each parent but does not have the time outside of the school day for that. She does not want to give away her family time to her school parents, as it is not fair to her own personal children. While preparing for these parent conferences, Ms. Bender is still expected to plan, teach, grade, progress monitor, etc., which is frustrating to Ms. Bender.

Self-reflection. The next trend that emerged in this study is teacher self-reflection. In the first interview, Ms. Bender displayed only positive teacher efficacy in this area. She discussed that she feels she is doing a good job when her students achieve to their potential,

have a positive attitude, and are proud of themselves. She does most of her self-reflecting early in the morning when she wakes up. Ms. Bender commented the following:

I wake up at 4:00 in the morning and lay in bed until 5:00. I just think about them [students]. That's where most of my self-reflecting happens. I call it soaking. Some people soak in the tub at night, I soak in my bed in the morning.”

During this time, she feels good as she thinks about things that are going well. She thinks about students who need to be pushed further or how to help those struggling, and thinks of strategies to make these students successful. She doesn't always stick to her lesson plans because she changes things while she is reflecting in the mornings.

In her journals entries, Ms. Bender displayed a balance of positive and negative teacher efficacy in the area of self-reflection. Regarding the positive, Ms. Bender reflected that she is happy to give her students gifts which are tokens of her love for them. She believes that parent volunteers take more responsibility and take helping the class seriously. Those parents who willingly come in on a regular basis to help are the ones who really are dedicated and serious about helping the students in the classroom. Ms. Bender calls those parents who come in routinely her “parental” right hand and relies on them to help her. Ms. Bender reflected that she believes the fewer the classroom volunteers, the closer relationships they have with the kindergarten students. She enjoys fostering these relationships, supporting parents and students to be as successful as possible. Ms. Bender reflected that she has great co-worker support. There is one kindergarten teacher with whom she works very well, and they interact with each other's classes on a regular basis. Ms. Bender enjoys that each class

of students has a third important person in their lives and feels that the support she and the other teacher give to each other is essential to the benefit of both classes.

Regarding the negative in the area of self-reflection, Ms. Bender believes that each year more end of semester responsibilities are given to teachers. She struggles with doing assessments, writing report cards, and prioritizing what needs to be done; the first thing to go is instruction which makes her sad. Ms. Bender feels that her after-work hours need to go towards saving money and working a second job for extra income to support her own family, which is difficult. When she gives her students tokens of her love, finding items that cost less than \$40 is also difficult. She reflects that she wishes she had more parent volunteers to come in and help with her class.

Student enjoyment. The next trend that emerged in this study is student enjoyment. In the second interview, Ms. Bender displayed only positive teacher efficacy in this area. She discussed that she feels her small class of students wants to learn, and she does not want to stop them. When they arrive in kindergarten, they have been told they will be learning and see what their parents have learned, and decide that's what they'd like to do as well. Their family members are positive role models to these students, and they work hard because they have the love and desire to learn as much as they can in school. Ms. Bender believes she fosters this love of learning. She explained that one student had to leave school due to illness and cried because she didn't want to leave her teacher and classmates. Ms. Bender discussed the following:

A student went home sick and she was crying. When her mom was talking to her, she wanted to be in school, not that she didn't feel good. She said she didn't want to stay home. It does make you feel awesome.

Parents have written Ms. Bender notes telling her that their children enjoy her class so much that they'd like to attend school on weekends as well as week days. This makes Ms. Bender feel on top of the world.

In the first observation, Ms. Bender showed only positive teacher efficacy in the area of student enjoyment. During this observation, she was comfortable and student-centered. She chose positive student leaders, and students complimented each other during their learning process. One student commented to another, "You did a great job on your picture!" It was evident that they frequently give compliments to each other on a regular basis. The students were happy and excited, as was Ms. Bender. Ms. Bender gave much positive praise to her students all throughout the observation, such as "That's so nice of you, Johnny!"

In the second observation, Ms. Bender showed only positive teacher efficacy in the area of student enjoyment. Students were lying on the floor and reading, engaged and happy in their work. The classroom atmosphere was comfortable, positive, and happy. Students and Ms. Bender frequently smiled, laughed, and talked while they worked. The classroom noise level was at about a medium level; not too loud and not quiet, but the students were getting their work completed. Students had the autonomy to work on their own or with others during this observation, and they were encouraged by Ms. Bender to help each other needing help. Ms. Bender complimented one student on doing the right thing, and gave him a stamp pad and stamp to check his peers' work that was edited correctly; the student was very proud of

himself. Ms. Bender was very positive in every interaction she had with her students. It was evident that the students love Ms. Bender, as they shared much information with her and were excited about learning new things in her class. Ms. Bender touched her students on the shoulder or arm when it was their turn to give their answers.

Teacher assistants. The next trend in this study is teacher assistants. In the first interview, Ms. Bender displayed positive teacher efficacy in this area. Her full-time teacher assistant is highly educated and knows much about the unique needs of students, particularly because her own child has unique needs. Ms. Bender has helped her teacher assistant learn how to be an effective part of the education process. Ms. Bender feels that her teacher assistant is able to take a lead role teaching a small group of students, as Ms. Bender knows that she can present the information to her teacher assistant to bring to the students and she would be comfortable and able to teach them appropriately. Ms. Bender discussed that her teacher assistant is an asset to the classroom of nineteen students. Her teacher assistant has a gift for seeing connections, and connects to the students well. Ms. Bender does not have her teacher assistant make photocopies, as she believes her teacher assistant is more valuable teaching small groups in the classroom. Ms. Bender commented the following:

She will always gravitate towards the lower children to start giving them extra support. Or to the children who need that extra learning in how to sit. She's really great with the kids who are disorganized and helping them organize.

Ms. Bender expressed few negative comments regarding her teacher assistant in the first interview. She feels that her administrators are uncomfortable with allowing her teacher

assistant to teach small groups, however she has this happen anyway because she believes it is best for her students. She finds this difficult, because she has been reprimanded for having her teacher assistant take on too much of a “teacher” role in the classroom, and for being too educationally productive.

In the second observation, Ms. Bender displayed only positive teacher efficacy in the area of teacher assistants. The teacher assistant came into the classroom during the observation and worked with three students who had gotten themselves off-task, and she worked on their reading with them. As soon as she began working with these students, they were on-task, listening, and learning. She was a positive presence in the classroom and the students respected her.

Teacher retention. The next trend in this study is teacher retention. In the second interview, Ms. Bender displayed a balance of positive and negative teacher efficacy in this area. Regarding the positives, Ms. Bender talked about how students from past classes continue to stop by her classroom each morning and say hello to her, giving her hugs to start her day on a positive note. She loves that the parents see their children happy and are proud of her children for making such progress in her kindergarten classroom; she loves this satisfaction part of her job. Ms. Bender described that she has a very fulfilling job, and she is amazed that she helps her students to realize how much power they have over their own lives and learning. Ms. Bender commented, “I did decide to do my Master’s in reading, but not to get out of the classroom.” She struggled with this decision, as one factor was money (she

needs more money at this point in her life), respect, and being the best mother she can be to the four children of her own.

In the second interview, regarding the negatives in the area of teacher retention, Ms. Bender commented the following:

There's so much disrespect for educators and so, when I think about it, I know my salary's not going up, I know insurance will continue to go up. I know we have retirement right now but they are going to start cutting that to save money.

She sometimes feels that education is a dead end job. She decided to work on her Master's degree in reading, but this was not her first choice. This choice was due to the fact that she will be able to continue spending time with her own family while working in this program. She also expressed dissatisfaction regarding the state curriculum that allows for students to only meet minimum expectations, and she is worried about not being able to challenge her higher-level students with this new state curriculum that is being adopted in the 2012-2013 school year.

In her journal entries, Ms. Bender displayed positive teacher efficacy in the area of teacher retention. She wrote about how she is choosing to work on her Master's degree in reading, and toyed with administration, business law education, and psychology. Ms. Bender would like to stay in the classroom because, "I love the children. I do a good job--I make a difference with kids and parents. Twenty students is not stressful." The Master's program she chose is a one year, online program, which means her home life will only suffer for three weekends at a time (during school breaks). The majority of her program work will be done in the classroom, as she will conduct research on different strategies, implement them, and

observe how her students respond to these strategies. With a small class, Ms. Bender believes that she can focus on new strategies and their outcomes, and she is better able to keep records and entertain new ways of doing things. Behavior, room for students, time, and assessments are all areas that make a huge difference in her teaching, and she believes she can find the time and energy to learn new ideas in each of these areas. With working on this degree, she also has time to be a mother to her own four children. Ms. Bender remarked that her small class of kindergarten students are independent at this point of the school year, know the rules and expectations of the classroom and school, and are on their way to being first graders. Ms. Bender feels that her Master's program will only affect her kindergarten students for one quarter, but her learning will improve her teaching. She discussed that her small class this year was the deciding factor on keeping her in the classroom. She feels she is good at teaching kindergarten, and she loves the children. Ms. Bender also remarked that with small class sizes, she'd like to see respect come back to the education profession. She also hopes that older people (after they've made money) will make career changes to education because of the joy children bring. She believes that as long as small class sizes are continued and a reality, stress remains manageable.

Ms. Bender discussed few negative comments in her journal entries regarding teacher retention. She feels that she needs more money, because pay has stayed the same in her county, life expenses have gone up, insurance has gone up, and student expenses have gone up. However, she fears starting something new. She is nervous about beginning a Master's degree in reading, but reiterated that she needs to earn more money. She is worried about the

field of education in the long run, and fears the removal of medical benefits and retirement. She fears for whomever chooses education in the future.

Thoughts on control over academic success of students. The next trend to emerge in this study is thoughts on control over academic success of students. In the first interview, Ms. Bender displayed only positive teacher efficacy in this area. She believes she is a powerful influence on student achievement (otherwise she believes she should find another job). She believes she is a powerful influence and commented the following:

I think I'm a powerful influence because of the way I get them to understand that learning feels good. I get them to know that I love them and I always will, and they keep coming back year after year after year.

She believes that with a small class size, she is better able to get to know children in her school and show them that she cares.

In the second interview Ms. Bender displayed positive teacher efficacy in the area of thoughts on control over academic success of students. She discussed that it is a wonderful feeling knowing she is a positive force in the learning of her students, and she loves having a positive attitude. "Perseverance is a big part in wanting to learn and to intrinsically help them see how huge that reward is." She believes that perseverance is a big part in students' wanting to learn and being intrinsically motivated, and she helps her students to see how huge the reward of being motivated really is. She loves that her students are willing to work hard to feel good about themselves.

Ms. Bender expressed a negative comment regarding her thoughts on control over academic success of students in her second interview as well. She stated that when the students arrive in kindergarten, there are some who do not want to try, which she finds frustrating.

Thoughts/Feelings/Attitudes at the end of a day. The next trend in this study is the thoughts, feelings, and attitudes of the participants at the end of a school day. In the first interview, Ms. Bender displayed positive teacher efficacy in this area. She believes that after a good day at school, she can go home and have a good day with her own children. Ms. Bender remarked the following:

At the end of the day, I can go home and be mom. I'm happy, the kids are happy.

There were just hugs walking out the door and I have energy. I can go to [my own kids'] football games, I can go run carpool.

She feels healthy and good at the end of the day, which she believes helps her to be a better teacher.

Ms. Bender expressed few negative comments about how she feels at the end of a school day in her first interview as well. She discussed that she does not like the three week breaks between quarters, as she has to re-focus her energy on her own children and her school students which is confusing for her.

In the second interview, Ms. Bender displayed overwhelmingly positive teacher efficacy in the area of her thoughts, feelings, and attitudes at the end of a day. She enjoys celebrating the small moments as well as the big moments with her students, and each

student's success is a celebration. She makes her students feel awesome about themselves, and this makes her feel great. At the end of a day, Ms. Bender commented that she is "not exhausted, but in love." She cannot wait to see her students the next day. She feels fortunate in her small class size to really get to know her students, and to get her students through struggles that they have in the classroom. Her students love learning, trust her, and she trusts them. She does not find school stressful, and thinks that at this point in the year is when she would sign up to be in education again for the rest of her life. She feels that having a small class size gives her a chance to target specific students so they do not fall through the cracks, and this gives her a positive feeling. She expressed that she loves talking about her class.

In the first observation, Ms. Bender displayed only positive teacher efficacy in the area of thoughts, feelings, and attitudes at the end of a school day. She told her class to clean up after themselves because "the cleaning crew only dusts, mops, and vacuums certain times per week" (Ms. Bender). Having fewer students in her classroom makes clean-ups easier and less work, meaning she is less tired at the end of a school day.

In her journal entries, Ms. Bender displayed only positive teacher efficacy in the area of thoughts, feelings, and attitudes at the end of a school day. She wrote, "My smaller class enables teachers to see so much more: eating play dough, wet pants, who plays with who, instigators, learning disabilities in quiet, polite children, and food allergy/asthma reactions." This makes it easier for her during the day and creates for a positive teacher attitude.

Trust of students/parents/school administrators. The next trend in this study is trust of students, parents, and school administrators. In the first interview, Ms. Bender

displayed only negative teacher efficacy in this area. She discussed the administrators at her school in relation to her teacher assistant. She feels that the role she would like her teacher assistant to play (teaching reading groups) is not the role the administrators are comfortable with her playing. Ms. Bender also expressed that the administrators conduct random walk-through observations, and any times the teacher assistant is seen being educationally productive, the administrator(s) reprimand Ms. Bender. Ms. Bender finds this frustrating and difficult.

In the second interview, Ms. Bender displayed only positive teacher efficacy in the area of trust of students, parents, and school administrators. She discussed that her students love learning and they trust her. She trusts them in return and does not feel stressed at school.

In her journal entries, Ms. Bender displayed only positive teacher efficacy in the area of trust of students, parents, and school administrators. She discussed that the administrators surprised her and her kindergarten team with student formal test scores, which were very positive. Ms. Bender wrote, “Yahoo! Principal, Vice Principal, and [resource teacher] had us all met and surprised us with comparing our test scores. We are at 95% or higher meeting benchmarks, with all of us making very good growth!” Ms. Bender attributes these successes to small class sizes.

Class size effect on personal teacher efficacy/attitudes. The next trend in this study is class size effect on personal teacher efficacy and attitudes of participants. In the first interview, Ms. Bender displayed only positive teacher efficacy in this area. Ms. Bender remarked, “Because of my small class size, I can get to the students more and can stay more

on top of the discipline. I can go home, I can be healthy and exercise.” With her small class size, she does not have the active stress of *wanting* to reach every student because she is easily able to do so. Ms. Bender always feels great about herself because her students are successful, and she goes home feeling great. She exercises, stays healthy, and has good eating habits because she is successful in school, and comes to school the next day in a positive mood. She feels this is an upward spiral that just keeps feeding itself positively. The kindergarten students in her small class work on modeling social interactions and interactive play (21st Century skills) which can be focused on in the smaller classes. Ms. Bender feels the nineteen students in her class are full of magic and work very hard (and added that fewer than nineteen students, such as sixteen students, would be an even better class size).

In the second interview, Ms. Bender displayed only positive teacher efficacy in the area of class size effect on personal teacher efficacy and attitudes. She discussed that having a smaller class size is nice with the amount of paperwork teachers must complete. She feels amazing when her students depend on her and when she can depend on them to do independent work. Ms. Bender feels great when she gives her students affirmation during reading groups, and noted that even when they interrupt her while she is teaching a small group, she still listens to them and celebrates their successes. She feels that her small class is able to focus on relationships because of the fewer number of students. Regarding these relationships, Ms. Bender remarked in a happy and positive manner, “It’s all about the relationships!”

In her journal entries, Ms. Bender displayed overwhelmingly positive teacher efficacy in the area of class size effect on personal teacher efficacy and attitudes. She discussed that

twenty or twenty-four students does not seem like a big difference, but when she thinks of assessments, report cards, parents conferences, student learning conferences, and physical room, it seems like a huge difference. Ms. Bender wrote, “having less kids seems to lead to peace of mind and joy of teaching.” She expressed that she went to the store to purchase her small class gifts, and left spending under \$20 which was a first. With fewer students, time is saved while teaching handwriting. She has room in her classroom to give her highly distracted student his own table, room to give a very active child his own area, room to have a sitting area, room to spread out and organize students with personal book boxes, mail boxes, crayon boxes, and an extra chair and spot at each table for her to sit in while she works with each table. Ms. Bender explained that she had a positive administrative observation one day. She explained that with a small class size, it is easier for her to see what is lost after a break, and easier to group students for focus lessons. A small class size enables Ms. Bender to keep only four students to a table (at a maximum), allows for time to wash their hands, and allows the ability to be more aware of student habits, which keep her classroom healthier. On one day, she expressed that she only had sixteen students in school due to illness, and compared this to the one year when she taught a class of only sixteen students. During that year, she found it easy for students to recognize each other’s names, and found it less stressful, easy to teach how to cut and fold, easy to teach poetry, students had higher-level persevering skills, and she could help 100% of the students reach success. She was excited about teaching that year due to her even smaller class size. Ms. Bender noted that this year her small class size has amazing moments, and she is able to derail behaviors before they start, she can dig deeper academically, and she is able to extend to higher levels

of thinking. Ms. Bender wrote that, “Small classes rock! Room to separate, time to wash hands, if they’re healthy, I’m healthy! If I’m healthy, I teach! If they’re healthy, they learn! We’ve had a great week.”

Ms. Bender made few negative comments in her journal entries in the area of class size effects on personal teacher efficacy and attitudes. She commented that teaching is an expensive habit, that she had lice and illness in her room, and that at this point in the year with four of her own children at home, she has little time to de-stress.

Large class size thoughts. The next trend in this study was Ms. Bender’s thoughts on large class sizes. She is teaching a small class size, however mentioned large class sizes that she has taught in the past and compared them to her small class size this year. The researcher did not rate this trend as positive or negative due to its neutrality. In the first interview, she talked about having taught twenty-eight kindergarten students one year, and that it was a very time-consuming process. “When I had twenty-eight students, the first quarter in parent/teacher conferences, when parents walked in I completely went blank on who the child was. I couldn’t pull their face, I couldn’t pull their personality” (Ms. Bender). She had a difficult time narrowing the students’ academics and personality because she had so many in her class. In her class of twenty-eight students, the behavior was less manageable and the amount of independent time given to each student was low. With a large class size, she felt unhealthier, stressed, and spent time trying to get her energy up with vices such as caffeine, sugar, chocolate, etc.

In her journal entries, Ms. Bender discussed her previous large class size as well. She loves that this year she has more room and students can be messy or disorganized in their own space; this luxury did not occur when teaching a large class size. Ms. Bender wrote, “The more kids, the less time I have to teach them.” In the past with large class sizes, Ms. Bender has had migraine headaches, and has been sick often. She cannot imagine having ten more students in her class as the upper grades currently have.

Staff development ideas. In the second interview, Ms. Bender suggested some staff development ideas that may be helpful to those teachers teaching small class sizes. She believes she and other teachers could benefit from a workshop for teachers to learn to teach kindergarten students at whatever levels they enter, and to recognize learning disabilities as they show themselves in kindergarten. She believes teachers could benefit from learning about teaching students with learning disabilities (including ADHD), addressing the differences between teaching those with disabilities and those without. Teaching teachers how to work with parents of students with disabilities would be helpful in these workshops. Ms. Bender also suggested a workshop on the following:

“What really makes a difference and moves the kids ahead socially, emotionally, and academically. And socially, emotionally in kindergarten makes a bigger difference than academically. Because if their social and emotional pieces are there, they want to learn and will pick up on whatever you put in front of them because they’re driven to it.

Summary of Ms. Bender

Ms. Bender is a female kindergarten teacher of a small class size of nineteen students in a suburban elementary school, and this is her tenth year in education. After analyzing her interviews, observations, and journal entries, the researcher concludes that Ms. Bender expressed overall positive teacher efficacy in each of the trends that emerged in this study. This data shows that Ms. Bender's small class size contributes to her overall positive personal teacher efficacy.

Description of Ms. Cook

The third teacher participant, Ms. Heidi Cook, is a female teacher who is twenty-six years old. She is a teacher in a large class size of twenty-four students. She was raised in the county in which this study takes place and is a product of the public school system. She attended a local university and began her college career in middle school mathematics education. In her sophomore year, Ms. Cook entered into the elementary education program and graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education with a concentration in mathematics.

Ms. Cook knew she wanted to be a teacher from the time she was a young child. When she was young, she used to go to a nearby school during the summers and help the teachers set up their classrooms. She would take the teacher manuals that they threw away and use them with the overhead projector her grandfather bought for her when she played "school" with her younger brother and sister. It was a natural choice for Ms. Cook to go into education, and teaching elementary students is her passion.

Ms. Cook student taught in kindergarten and fourth grade, and then began teaching at the study site in first grade. She has taught both large and small classes in her previous years of teaching. Ms. Cook has solely been a first grade teacher since the start of her teaching career. She is the teacher of a large class size (twenty-four students). Ms. Cook has a part-time teacher assistant who is in her classroom approximately two hours per day. She has thirteen boys and eleven girls in her first grade class.

During the first and second researcher observations of Ms. Cook, her classroom was set up in a very organized, student-centered fashion. In the front of this first grade classroom was a large white board mounted on the wall with the class schedule, job chart, number chart 1-120 (counting by 10s), and a helping hands tree attached. There was a kidney-shaped reading table in the front of the classroom near the front door. An open student-carpet area was located in the front of the classroom, along with a large wooden rocking chair.

On one side of the classroom was a wall of student cubbies with twenty-four book bins, backpacks, coats, and books in them. On top of those cubbies were shelves that housed games, puzzles, cleaning supplies, books, classroom resources and materials, craft boxes, calculators, construction paper, etc., and the shelves were covered with colorful hand-made curtains. Also on this wall was a sink, paper towel dispenser, and drinking fountain. On the opposite wall of the classroom was a word wall, three student desktop computers with keyboards, a printer, and a television mounted in the corner of the classroom.

On the back wall of the classroom was a wall of windows overlooking the school parking lot with a back door leading out to the parking lot. A student bathroom was also in

the back corner of the classroom, along with a full-size teacher desk and teacher assistant desk.

Located throughout the classroom on the walls were several posters: Daily 5, colors, classroom pledge, classroom rules. There were also classroom work samples on the walls, along with a math bulletin board housing shapes, a literacy bulletin board with Higher Order Thinking Skills, and a calendar bulletin board with the calendar, weather, days of the week, and numbers.

In the middle of this first grade classroom were five spread out classroom tables with chairs: one small square table seating two students, three rectangular tables seating four students each, and two rectangular tables seating five students each. There were three comfortable chairs for student reading, four book cases with student literature, a large track-out cart, a tall filing cabinet, mini-refrigerator, microwave, and globe of the world. Three-fourths of this classroom was carpeted; one-fourth was tile near the sink. A classroom library was located on bookshelves, with books that were labeled and organized in bins.

Ms. Cook: Trends from Interviews, Observations, and Journals

Ability to work with individual students/small groups. The first trend in this study is the ability to work with individual students and/or small groups. In the first interview, Ms. Cook displayed negative teacher efficacy in this area. She discussed that she is frustrated, as she has seven students who have PEPs (Personalized Education Plans created for students who have not met benchmarks), and that she wishes she could meet with them every day but she is unable to meet their needs because she does not have enough time. Ms. Cook stated,

“With the amount of kids that I have, there’s just not enough time to give everybody.” She tries hard every day to meet their needs but with that many low-achieving students, she simply cannot. She tries in subsequent days to meet individually with these students and work on their interventions, but this does not always happen either. She does try to meet with them in small groups when possible, but stated that they are at such different levels that it is difficult to group them. Ms. Cook discussed that with the number of students she has, there is just not enough time to give each student what they need; she tries to touch base with each student each day, but this doesn’t necessarily happen. She would like to spend two minutes per child, but this would work out to over an hour a day with twenty-four students, and then she would like to spend seventy minutes of intervention (ten minutes for seven students) per day as well and her literacy block is only an hour and a half. She tries to meet with students when they first arrive at school, but it does not always work. Ms. Cook feels frustrated this year, more than any other year, with her large class size and number of low-level students. She feels stressed because she works hard for the lower-level students to succeed but feels guilty for missing the higher-level students in the process.

In her first interview, Ms. Cook shared few positive comments regarding ability to work with individual students and/or small groups. When she does not have time to meet with students for interventions, she tries to buddy them up with peers who are successful in certain objectives, partner with reading buddies, or even work with parent volunteers. Ms. Cook feels that these additional resources are helpful. Ms. Cook talked about her students who are on-grade level and that they are right where they should be at the time of this first interview. She likes the literacy program that the school is using, as it is differentiated for

each student and students are able to read books that are appropriate for them. Students who are on and above grade level are required to be more independent and do not receive as much one-on-one time with her.

In the second interview, Ms. Cook displayed negative teacher efficacy in the area of ability to work with individual students and small groups. She discussed that she is unable to give each student individual attention, or even small group attention, on a daily basis. Ms. Cook stated, “I can give them all individual attention maybe throughout the week, but there’s no way to be able to with that amount of kids. There’s just no way.” She is frustrated that time is such an issue; she would like to meet with each student, even just for a minute in each subject, but this is not possible due to the number of students and time she has to teach. She expressed frustration with the number of low students she has in her class this year. She continues to try to meet with students during morning arrival time and implement their interventions, but this is stressful due to the demanding time of day and Ms. Cook has other obligations each morning (looking through student folders, etc.). Ms. Cook thinks that if there were more technology or hands-on activities, coupled with more teacher/teacher assistant help and time, she would be able to reach more students on an individual or small group basis. She thinks that a better schedule with longer blocks of time in first grade would be helpful as well.

Ms. Cook discussed one positive comment in her second interview in the area of ability to work with individual students and/or small groups. She has begun using her iPad and now uses appropriate apps with her low-level students. She finds that these apps keep them encouraged and they want to keep playing them, and they are learning in the meantime.

She believes that giving her students technology interventions is beneficial because they stay on-task and are using good phonics tools to help them in reading.

In the first observation, Ms. Cook displayed positive teacher efficacy in the area of ability to work with individual students and/or small groups. She met with a student in the back of the classroom and reviewed his word study words with him, and she happily took over reading for the student when he was ready. Students were spread out all over the classroom and worked on their holiday projects in groups. Ms. Cook walked around to each group and helped them if they needed her help. In one group of girls, she questioned them on their work and told them they were smart girls.

Ms. Cook had few negative actions during the first observation in the area of ability to work with individual students and/or small groups. She was helping one group of students (working on their holiday projects) and another whole group ran up to her and interrupted her teaching moment with her first group. In addition, while she was reading with an individual student, three students talked over Ms. Cook to get the attention of a peer and interrupted her small group instruction.

In the second observation, Ms. Cook displayed only negative teacher efficacy in the area of ability to work with individual students and/or small groups. In her forty-five minute literacy block, she was only able to meet individually with eight students out of twenty-four in her large class size.

In her journal entries, Ms. Cook displayed negative teacher efficacy in the area of ability to work with individual students and/or small groups. Ms. Cook expressed that it is hard finding time to meet with students, and wrote, “Today it was hard finding time to meet

with students during reading and writing. I feel as though I'm always trying to meet with all students below benchmark and often neglect the higher students." She is frustrated at the gap in levels of her class; she has students who are on second grade level, and some who are not even meeting kindergarten benchmarks. Ms. Cook runs out of time trying to meet each student's needs, as she has over an hour of interventions she must complete each day. In writing one day, it was hard for her to get all of her students to edit their writing. One week, she struggled with meeting each child in reading, as she couldn't seem to find enough time. She feels as if she must choose either reading or writing to focus on for the week; if she meets with each student in reading each week, she is unable to meet with them in writing that same week. On one particular day, Ms. Cook met with about ten students in writing, and then had to meet with her seven low-level students for interventions, which was frustrating for her. She explained that with outside distractions and schedules, there just does not seem to be enough time. She needs a longer period in the morning to better meet the students' needs.

Ms. Cook expressed few positive comments in her journal entries in the area of ability to work with individual students and/or small groups. One day, she felt she was able to work with most of her literacy groups, and found that if she spends less time giving whole group instruction she is able to give more small group or individual instruction, allowing for more direct instruction based on appropriate student levels. She begged for, and received, more help from the school for her lowest student, which relieves a lot of stress, allowing Ms. Cook to work with other groups. She is also excited because her grade level is receiving help with the higher level students so Ms. Cook feels she does not need to meet with them as often (only once per week), as they are being pulled five times per week for thirty minutes. Ms.

Cook has also found that adding a writing component to the literacy program has helped with classroom noise and stress, and it helps because it gives her more time to meet with students.

Academics/Assessments/Report cards. Another trend in this study is academics, assessments, and report cards. In the first interview, Ms. Cook displayed negative teacher efficacy in this area. Ms. Cook discussed that she feels badly that her higher-level students are neglected academically, and stated, “I feel as though some of the higher kids are, I mean it’s bad to say, being neglected. Or don’t get as much one-on-one.” She gives her students differentiated work but believes it is not enough, as she must give her seven lower-level students daily interventions. She is very concerned about one student in particular, who is not meeting even kindergarten benchmarks, which is stressful for Ms. Cook. She struggles with balancing working on prospective Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) for students, collecting data, and working with students who receive Occupational Therapy (OT). She feels she is trying to do the best she can, but with seven students with PEPs, it is very hard. She discussed that when other students come into her class and partner with her students to read, called “Reading Buddies,” she feels like she is babysitting and she could be getting more beneficial work completed with her own students. Other activities, such as school lockdown drills, interfere with her teaching which she finds difficult. Ms. Cook discussed that she is starting her midyear assessments, and she is getting help from other teacher assistants in the building for one portion of the assessments. However, she must do all reading, writing, and math assessments by herself which is stressful and frustrating. She needs at least thirty minutes to assess each student in her class and does not know when she

is supposed to find time to instruct. Ms. Cook spends time trying not to get overwhelmed by the number of assessments she must complete for twenty-four students. She learned a new writing strategy from a fellow teacher and liked it, however had to stop using this new strategy because it took time away from her reading assessments. She spends time every Friday progress monitoring her low-level students in order to chart their progress. Ms. Cook feels that by the time she assesses mid-quarter, it's time to assess for end of the quarter as well.

In her first interview, Ms. Cook had positive comments regarding academics, assessments, and report cards as well. When she thinks about her low-level students achieving success, she feels really excited and even started crying when her lowest-level student read his first book. She had taught him some sight words and he read his first book aloud to the class. She feels as though he learned to read through motivation. At the time of the first interview, ten to twelve students were on grade level, and five were above; they have all made growth, however, and the majority of her class is on or above grade level (seventeen) which makes Ms. Cook feel happy. Ms. Cook also discussed the reading program she uses and commented, “[The reading program] allows kids to work on their end stamina and build. I’ve seen a lot more confidence in children with it.” She included that, during the reading program, the majority of her students are focused and quietly reading.

In the second interview, Ms. Cook displayed overwhelmingly negative teacher efficacy in the area of academics, assessments, and report cards. She explained that she has resources in place for the higher-level and lower-level students, but that it is difficult for her to reach the middle-level students. Because of her requirements for progress monitoring and

giving the lower-level students interventions on a daily basis, she finds it hard to get to the middle-level students each day. It is difficult for her to depend on others to come into her classroom or pull out small groups or individual students, as they are not always on-time or their pull-out schedules are changed (meaning pull-outs are cancelled on certain days). Ms. Cook discussed her lowest student and commented the following:

I have one child that is so below grade level that I cannot give him the amount of support to allow him to make the growth he needs to make, which is frustrating. I've actually been very emotional about it because I have a special place for this child in my heart and so it's just sad.

She had to fight for him to receive special education testing (she thinks he has a learning disability) but because he is a student whose first language is not English, this was a battle for her. She discussed her frustration with another student in her class who has a learning disability and is pulled for special education services daily, but his parents will only allow him to receive services for a limited amount of time per day, despite Ms. Cook's recommendation for more time. She wishes that those students who are not making adequate growth could receive more appropriate services for their needs (as she is unable to meet their needs with twenty-four students in her class) which would enable her to work more with the middle-level students.

Ms. Cook discussed report cards and shared that they are "excessive" and frustrating. She struggles with the comments, as they are very time consuming. She struggles with collecting data for students with PEPs and IEPs on a daily and weekly basis. She also uses a computer program to print out student performance, but believes this is all too much with the

number of students she has in her classroom. She cannot find enough time to collect all of this data and still teach her class. When completing report cards, Ms. Cook begins three weeks prior to the quarter's end, which gives her enough time to write report card comments, but she has little time to teach due to administering assessments. Report cards must be completed outside of the school day, and she spends about eight extra hours a week during the weeks she works on report cards. She is frustrated with the report card computer program as well, as it often shuts down at night or on the weekends and she is unable to retrieve her report cards to work on them. Ms. Cook discussed how her large class size affects her data collection, and brought up time as an issue again. She wants to give her lower-level students the chance to make as much growth as possible, which means she assesses them last so they have the opportunity to show larger amounts of success.

Ms. Cook shared few positive comments in her second interview in the area of academics, assessments, and report cards. Ms. Cook is proud of her students and commented, "I think that everybody is still making growth which is what we want to see." She enjoys having seventeen students on grade level, and she has eight or nine above grade level in reading and in math. She feels comfortable with the academic growth of her students; even though some are not meeting benchmarks, they are still growing and learning. Ms. Cook wishes she could give them more time, but they are still learning, working hard, and making growth in class.

In her journal entries, Ms. Cook displayed negative teacher efficacy in the area of academics, assessments, and report cards. She expressed on one day when she spent the first thirty minutes of school trying to complete all of the students' interventions with

differentiation. Ms. Cook struggles with the large class size in this regard, and wrote the following:

Today I spent the first thirty minutes of school trying to complete all my interventions with my class. Also comes the large amount of differentiation. This is where I struggle most with the large class size. I was unable to finish all of my interventions in that time.

During her Word Study time, she ran out of time before she could explain all the directions and give out differentiated sets of words. Ms. Cook expressed dissatisfaction with progress reports and mid-quarter interim reports for twenty-four students, and expressed frustration about reading assessments taking five to ten minutes per student, which is a lot of time taken from instruction. On one day, she was able to finish only two reading assessments during the ninety-minute literacy block, and expressed frustration with being able to finish all reading assessments in one week. She forgot to grade writing samples one day and was upset about this. After school, Ms. Cook stayed until 6:15pm one day, and only finished six report cards during that time. She complained that she still has eight more left to complete. She also complained about assessing students three weeks before the end of the quarter, and commented that she was not looking forward to staying late nights at school. On one day, she was only able to complete one reading assessment because her students continuously interrupted her and needed her help. She expressed that she is starting to get anxious about when report cards will be finished.

Ms. Cook expressed positive comments in her journal entries in the area of academics, assessments, and report cards as well. She was thankful that her class has been

allotted help for some of the first grade fluency (literacy) assessments, as first grade has the most literacy assessments to complete. On one day, she reflected that assessments went surprisingly well; she did not have the students meet in literacy centers, but instead had them working independently at their seats on work they needed to complete. This lowered her stress level and kept the classroom quiet. She also felt less overwhelmed because her math grades and comments were finished and sent to their teachers. Ms. Cook expressed satisfaction that three of her report cards were finished and ready to be turned in to school administrators for editing/approval. She also expressed satisfaction that her students are receiving interventions from her grade level team, the fact that staying organized helps her, and she celebrated that she was able to complete five reading assessments in two hours. She also completed seven report cards on one day which made her feel satisfied.

Discipline. The next trend to surface in this study is discipline. In the first interview, Ms. Cook displayed overwhelmingly negative teacher efficacy in this area. She feels she has strong behaviors in her large class size and has written Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs – individual behavior plans that address specific positive and negative behavior and consequences) for students in her class. It is difficult for her to keep twenty-four students on-task and behaving, as she is unable to get around to all students to discuss academics and/or behavior during every lesson. She is frustrated because many of her students cannot keep their hands to themselves, and her class is very nosy as a whole. They are also needy, interrupting Ms. Cook when they need pencils, etc. She is frustrated with their interruptions. There is one major behavior challenge in Ms. Cook’s large class size, and she has several

students who visit the counselor to discuss their emotional issues. She finds it difficult to separate the students with so many bodies in the classroom, and her class has more boys than girls which is difficult as well. Ms. Cook is discouraged when she picks up her students from their special area classes (art, music, etc.), and commented, “It can make you really discouraged when you go to pick up your kids and they have a bad report. It can make you really hate the job.” She has days when she feels like she just does not know if she can do it anymore.

With this class, she worked on an activity centered around a one-roomed school house, and her students ruined it. They were painting when they were supposed to be adding feathers, up and out of their seats, feeding off each other, and were generally not following directions. She has tried this activity with smaller class sizes in the past and it has worked, but with this large class it was too much for them to handle. She feels badly for the students who are always doing the right thing and that the others ruin it for them. Ms. Cook finds it discouraging because she tries to do nice things for her class, but they abuse her activities and ruin it for themselves, which is aggravating, angering, and disappointing, not to mention costly for Ms. Cook. She explained that sometimes it is just too much effort to try and settle them down, so she just sits and waits for them to give her their attention. “Sometimes they just take it too far and then they feed off each other. And then we’re just done” (Ms. Cook). Ms. Cook explained that it is uncomfortable to discipline students while parents are in the classroom because it is awkward, but she does feel it is necessary and will speak to students about their behavior in front of their parents and in front of others’ parents. Ms. Cook

believes there is a fine line between students being loud and following directions, and students being out of control.

Ms. Cook experienced high levels of noise in her large class size of twenty-four students on a daily basis. According to the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), smaller classes have fewer students to distract each other, resulting in lower noise levels (2003). The AFT's report of noise in small class sizes directly relates to Ms. Cook's class, as she struggles with discipline and loud students, which affects her teacher efficacy level.

Ms. Cook explained that when her students transition from their math classes each day, it is frantic because there are so many students coming into the classroom at one time. She would like to have fewer students transitioning, as this is a chaotic part of her day.

Ms. Cook shared one positive comment in the first interview in the area of discipline. She discussed that she does try to do fun activities with her class, because she loves crafts, hands-on activities, and listening to music.

In the second interview, Ms. Cook displayed a balance of positive and negative teacher efficacy in the area of discipline. Regarding the positives, she shared that her class has learned to work well as a team this year for the most part. Regarding her difficult student, she has open communication with the parent and he is on a behavior chart and earns a trip to the prize box on Fridays if he earns a certain number of checks on his chart. If he sits on a special chair at his table, and has time to walk around the classroom to take breaks, he stays on-task more. She finds that giving him certain jobs and being a teacher's helper helps him with his behavior, which makes him (and Ms. Cook) feel successful. Ms. Cook discussed that this student is academically meeting benchmarks, which is helpful, and she tries to redirect

him in positive ways as much as possible. She builds up his self-esteem and has him visit with the guidance counselor with a friendship group to learn social skills. Ms. Cook commented, "I've definitely passed along information to next year's teachers, so that we already have something in place for him" when she discussed his placement next year.

Ms. Cook expressed negative comments regarding discipline in her second interview as well. She discussed that disciplining students can be exhausting, and that it's not always the student's fault that he/she is acting poorly, but may in fact be because the work is too difficult and their only outlet is to goof around. She has to pick and choose her battles with her large class size. Regarding her most challenging discipline student, she works on his BIP with him and is honing in on keeping his hands to himself and being too rough with others. Ms. Cook works with one student constantly on his behavior, and reported, "I correct and talk to him, probably forty-five minutes a day, just keeping him on-task or talking to him about making good decisions, not touching our friends."

In the first observation, Ms. Cook displayed overwhelmingly negative teacher efficacy in the area of discipline. Ms. Cook spoke severely to a student who was talking over his peers, and told two other students who were walking to their cubbies to "SHHHHH!" Ms. Cook made a comment with no true feeling but with a hint of sarcasm, "I love how [student's] group cleaned up and is coming to sit on the carpet." One student got up out of his seat while working in a small group and danced around on the tile floor, and one jumped around at his seat and fell on the floor. Students finishing an activity yelled out to Ms. Cook that they were done. Students continuously interrupted Ms. Cook as she was walking around and meeting with small groups about their projects, and some students ran around the

classroom and shouted about the progress of their projects. During the small group work, five students were off-task throughout the classroom. One student threw a marker at another student and hit her on the head; Ms. Cook had him apologize for his actions. One student made hooping noises throughout the classroom during the small group project work. At one point, Ms. Cook clapped her hands three times and the students did not hear her. She clapped again and some echo-clapped. Students continued to talk over Ms. Cook as she gave a reminder about receiving a special treat the next school day. At another point, Ms. Cook clapped her hands again and one student echo-clapped while the rest ignored her. She clapped again and students quieted. She gave them directions to go to the carpet with their poster projects to share. Ms. Cook asked the class which of them felt like they deserved a piece of candy for doing their work and being quiet; most students put their thumbs up. On the carpet, three students fought over their poster, and Ms. Cook told the class she was frustrated. She asked students to leave their posters and put their heads down at their seats. She told them they'd be working on their posters the next day instead of watching a fun movie. She allowed them to present their projects but sit at their seats (not on the carpet), and as one group was presenting, two students had scissors and twirled them around on their desks. Ms. Cook took the scissors away from them. Ten students were on-task listening to the two students presenting, and twelve students were not focused. During snack/read aloud, one student reader read a book aloud to the class as students ate their snacks and twenty students were not paying attention to the reader or the book. One student began clapping very loudly at an inappropriate time, one student at his seat tapped his pencil on his leg loudly, one tipped

his chair back with his cheek on the table. When students cleaned up their tables, two in the front made very inappropriate noises at their tablemates.

Ms. Cook displayed few positive interactions during the first observation in the area of discipline. She reminded students that when her voice goes on, theirs goes off and they responded with good manners. Ms. Cook asked her students, “Do you understand? (“Yes, ma’am”).” When one student was upset because another hurt her feelings, Ms. Cook took the time to help the student problem solve to make her feel better. After Ms. Cook had students return to their seats for being disrespectful during groups and presentations, she asked them to reflect on their behavior; some were honest and did not believe they did a good job listening. After one group presented their poster, Ms. Cook complimented them and asked the rest of the class to clap for the group to recognize their hard work.

In the second observation, Ms. Cook displayed negative teacher efficacy in the area of discipline. The whole group on the carpet was very talkative and loud. Four students in centers were off-task throughout the entire literacy block. Many students did not raise their hands, but instead just yelled out answers. Ms. Cook was visibly frustrated (sighing loudly, rolling eyes) when students did not walk to the carpet quietly. In writing, students did a mixture of calling out and raising their hands. As students finished their literacy center work, they walked around and looked for books to read at other tables, and were off-task. In one group, only some students followed the directions and answered the questions they were supposed to answer after reading their books. On the carpet, some students yelled out and some rolled around on the carpet.

Ms. Cook showed few positive interactions during the second observation in the area of discipline. Some students worked quietly in their centers and sat quietly on the carpet, and some followed directions the first time Ms. Cook gave them. Most of Ms. Cook's discipline redirections were appropriate and respectful, and she gave positive praise for students showing good behavior. Ms. Cook said nicely to a student, "Great job for making a good choice!" Some students raised their hands to answer questions.

In her journal entries, Ms. Cook displayed overwhelmingly negative teacher efficacy in the area of discipline. Ms. Cook remarked the following:

In social studies today, the students were off-task. I feel as though I am disciplining the whole time. I find that much of my time right now is used disciplining or giving reminders, and not being able to give true one-on-one attention.

When they do not receive the attention they need, they get off-task and impatient. She expressed that even though pull-out programs are beneficial, her classroom is always a little crazy with all of the students coming and going. She explained that she was frustrated when students were typing their writing, as they were getting out of hand and parents were in the classroom. She felt awkward disciplining the students with parents in the classroom, and feels that behaviors can escalate quickly if one or two in the class act up. She finds that much of her time this year is spent disciplining. One day, she felt her day had been crazy because of her large class size; the volume was so much greater with so many students in the room, and they were feeding off each other that day. They also were picking on each other, pushing each other's buttons (even though they are friends), and had a hard time settling down. Ms. Cook remarked that this group is much harder to manage than a smaller group.

Ms. Cook had one positive journal entry in the area of discipline. She expressed that she believes that this year, more than ever, she needs to start awarding the students who are always doing the right thing.

Parent involvement. The next trend in this study is parent involvement. In the first interview, Ms. Cook displayed negative teacher efficacy in this area. She discussed that many parents do not hold their children accountable for their actions and then complain about them when the students do not act responsibly. Ms. Cook discussed the following:

I also think that the parents need to instill for their child to be successful. It's getting harder and harder and, I know it's only first grade, but they've got to build in some responsibility for the child to be accountable for their own things.

She finds it hard to have all the different parent personalities in her classroom and noted that parents can be a little crazy. Ms. Cook discussed that this year she has had the least amount of parent support that she has had in the past years. She is lucky to have a parent volunteer each day. Parents come in to her class to help with reading and writing work with students. She added that, at times, it is easier for her to not have them in the classroom at times because the children of the volunteering parents are sometimes disruptive and need to be disciplined, which is difficult for her to do in front of the parents. Many times parents cause distractions in her classroom which she finds overwhelming. Ms. Cook believes that one reason why fewer parents are volunteering is because more parents are working these days.

Ms. Cook had few positive comments in her first interview regarding parent involvement. She discussed that she believes parents play a huge role in student academic

success, and that it is very obvious which parents work with their children at home. She occasionally has two to three parents in to help for about thirty minutes which is helpful to her class. Ms. Cook believes it is easier to have good parents who want to help and who are not nosy about what the other students are doing while they are volunteering. She has one father who volunteers and is helping Ms. Cook's lower-level student with his reading which is very helpful (one-on-one), as Ms. Cook can count that reading as an intervention. Ms. Cook loves when parents come in to help with learning experiences (parties) and loves all different kinds of parents.

In her second interview, Ms. Cook displayed positive teacher efficacy in the area of parent involvement. She discussed that some students have lack of support at home, and for those students she encourages them at school and gives them incentives to be successful (such as bringing homework in and receiving a reward). She believes it is very important for students to have positive work experiences at home with their parents, and she does her best in school to keep the students positive. Ms. Cook includes parents with work sent home, and stated the following:

I try to provide them with a lot of the same information that we have...tools that we use, so that they're using the same terminology because a lot of times they just might not understand when a kid comes home and says, "flip the sound," they don't know what that means.

She also sends home weekly newsletters home to parents so they know what the students are learning and doing in class each week, and includes small at-home activities parents can practice with their children to help them review the curriculum concepts mentioned in her

newsletters. Ms. Cook welcomes parent communication and emails parents on a regular basis as well. Ms. Cook enjoys having parents come into the classroom and present to the students (one year she had a parent who was a doctor come in and teach about bones). She feels that she teaches the parents and the parents teach her and the students in return, and everyone learns from each other.

Ms. Cook had few negative comments in the area of parent involvement in her second interview. She explained that she tries to keep open communication to encourage the parents in her classroom, but if they are not willing to come in and conference with her, she feels it is more important to put her energy into helping the student in the classroom. She does her best with parents but believes there is only so much she can do if parents are not willing to help. She also discussed that this year she has had the fewest parents volunteering which is hard, but she does understand that parents are back at work.

In her journal entries, Ms. Cook expressed a balance of positive and negative teacher efficacy in the area of parent involvement. Regarding the positives, she explained that, one day, "I had a parent volunteer in the morning and she was able to pull a few kids at a time to do an activity. Although it was only a few children, the classroom was quieter."

Regarding the negatives in her journal entries, Ms. Cook expressed that she was frustrated one day because, although she had a parent volunteer come in to help her class, she was still unable to reach all of her students during that period.

Self-reflection. The next trend in this study is self-reflection. In her first interview, Ms. Cook displayed negative teacher efficacy in this area. She self-reflects daily on her large

class size, and is often frustrated with the way her lessons go and she changes them as she teaches, or changes them the next day. Ms. Cook discussed that, in one lesson, she allowed the students to type their research papers but this backfired. The classroom only has three computers and all twenty-four students were ready to type at once. She was very frustrated during this lesson, as the students were needy, the parent volunteering was overwhelmed, and it was hard for her to find a balance during that lesson. The overwhelming morning set the precedent for the entire day which was frustrating when she self-reflects about this lesson. Ms. Cook discussed that when students work quietly in writing in the morning (and this usually happens mostly when there is *not* a parent volunteer helping), then the rest of Ms. Cook's day goes well. However, on Tuesdays, her large class has "Reading Buddies" with another class and that teacher drops her students off in Ms. Cook's classroom and leaves, leaving Ms. Cook alone with almost fifty children which she finds to be very stressful and overwhelming. In self-reflecting, she finds it difficult to control all of the bodies in her classroom.

Ms. Cook expressed positive comments regarding self-reflection during the first interview as well. She usually reflects while she is teaching, and often thinks about what went well with the lessons she teaches so she can teach it the same way the following year. Ms. Cook commented the following:

A lot of times I think about a lesson that went really well and I've got to remember to do it again next year. Or I think "this child needs help with handwriting, what things can I do to help him? I need to contact the OT." I try to make a list of things I need to do so that I can leave it here and not affect me at home.

She has to tell herself that it is important to be flexible, especially with the large number of students in her classroom. When she self-reflects, she usually thinks about what went well, what needs to be changed, or how she can help a student. She enjoys self-reflecting, as it helps her to release her emotions. She commutes to school and takes her morning and afternoon commuting time to think about things and to bring her mind back to the real world.

In her journal entries, Ms. Cook displayed only negative teacher efficacy in the area of self-reflection. Ms. Cook wrote the following:

Through this experience, it has really opened my mind to how large class size affects not only the students, but myself. Overall, students aren't able to have as much one-on-one instruction and intervention. It's often the middle students who get left out. Before reflecting in her journal, Ms. Cook did not truly think about how class size affects her mood. Her large class size causes more stress, more work, feelings of inadequacy, tiredness, and frustration. She explained that she loves her students and wouldn't want any to leave her class, but in the future it would be nicer to have smaller numbers in her classroom.

Student enjoyment. The next trend in this study is student enjoyment. In the first interview, Ms. Cook displayed only positive teacher efficacy in this area. She believes she is supportive of her students and encourages them to do their best. Her lowest-level student was excited when he made progress, and Ms. Cook commented the following:

I always reassure him and ask him why he can do it...and I told him it's because he's smart and handsome. But those are the moments that make your day doable when you have this many kids, seeing those small little perks.

She thinks that her class works hard together and helps each other.

In the second interview, Ms. Cook displayed only positive teacher efficacy in the area of student enjoyment. Regarding keeping students enjoying school, Ms. Cook remarked, “I think I find things they like to do, and allow them to have ownership. I found that with boys in writing, allowing them to choose what they get to write about is helpful.” Ms. Cook tries to make learning fun in her classroom with fewer worksheets, more hands-on activities, and using good computer programs to incorporate technology into lessons. Ms. Cook believes that it is important to keep the atmosphere of the classroom positive in order for her students to enjoy coming to school. Her students know she can be fun and loving, but is also the disciplinarian. She likes to sit down with them at least once per week and get to know about their families and personal experiences to foster relationships. She has to take the time to think about how the students are so young and they need to love school, and giving them positive reinforcement and hugs each day helps them to know school is a safe place. Ms. Cook finds that flexibility in her lessons and activities is crucial; sometimes she just talks with her class about issues that happen around the world and her planned lessons do not get completed, but this is fine because the students are interested and learning about life experiences. She loves to give the students real-life experiences and not just teaches to the test, which she believes helps them to like school more.

In her first observation, Ms. Cook displayed negative teacher efficacy in the area of student enjoyment. Her classroom was very loud and business-like, not warm and fuzzy or nurturing. Ms. Cook only smiled six times within the observation, and she praised one student by saying, “Johnny, good job” but without feeling. Ms. Cook explained harshly to the

students that she was disappointed with the way they handled their activity and that they would have to finish it the next day instead of having a fun reward. Students' faces fell.

Ms. Cook expressed some positive actions during the first observation in the area of student enjoyment as well. Her classroom was very clean and organized, and it was comfortable without clutter, making it easy for students to find materials.

In her second observation, Ms. Cook displayed positive teacher efficacy in the area of student enjoyment. Ms. Cook gave mostly specific positive reinforcement to students, and happily said to one, "Johnny, toot your horn! Toot-toot!" During one lesson, most students stayed on-task and knew her expectations. She smiled occasionally and seemed somewhat happy. She told the students that they would have to put up their work on the board because it was "Wow" work. Ms. Cook called on all different students to answer questions, giving them all an opportunity to participate.

Ms. Cook displayed few negative actions during her second observation in the area of student enjoyment as well. She interacted occasionally with the students, but they mostly worked on their own. Her interactions were quick and formal, and she talked to the students in a very fast pace, leaving some of them wondering and confused after she gave directions.

Teacher assistants. The next trend in this study is teacher assistants. In the journal entries, Ms. Cook displayed negative teacher efficacy in this area. She expressed frustration because her teacher assistant was out one day, and then expressed frustration again after her teacher assistant had been out all week. She found it hard to get everything finished without help, as she had to stuff folders, etc. by herself. She also expressed that having a large class

of first graders with a shared teacher assistant is difficult. Ms. Cook wrote, “Even trying to do fun crafts can be hard. Even with my assistant and I both working with students it took forty-five minutes with three [students] at a time.”

Ms. Cook expressed few positive comments about her teacher assistant. She explained that it does not hurt that she has a teacher assistant during small group math. She also expressed relief when her teacher assistant came back from being out for a week, and felt as though she was making progress, as she had time to work with all students one particular day.

Teacher retention. The next trend in this study is teacher retention. In the second interview, Ms. Cook displayed negative teacher efficacy in this area. Ms. Cook discussed her plans for staying in the classroom, and remarked, “I’ve thought about going into special education. Sadly school I feel has stopped becoming about the kids and started becoming more about politics and selling your school.” While she thinks it is important for teachers to be held accountable for their students’ work, she thinks some teachers are in education for the wrong reasons and should reevaluate their careers. She believes merit pay is coming down the pike and that many teachers will be turned off from the teaching profession due to the amount of work and lack of support. There is not enough necessary funding in education which frustrates Ms. Cook. Teachers in her county are expected to use technology on a daily basis to deliver instruction, yet adequate technology is not available (only three computers per classroom). Ms. Cook could see herself still in the classroom in twenty years only if things do not turn around in education. She will be in the classroom if education is centered

around children and if children need help, laws are not created to block them from receiving the help they need.

Ms. Cook expressed a positive comment regarding teacher retention in her second interview as well. She thinks she likes teaching now, and hopes that she continues to enjoy it and will always work in some fashion with children. She believes that they are pure of heart and innocent, and for the most part are nice to be around.

In her journal entries, Ms. Cook displayed negative teacher efficacy in the area of teacher retention. Ms. Cook wrote, “Getting a special education Master’s would put me in a smaller setting with more teacher assistants. We (as a team) have often talked about how we would have a hard time encouraging college students to become teachers.” She believes this may be due to large class sizes, lack of support (financial and personnel), and constant changes in procedures (PEPs, progress monitoring, etc.). These changes in procedures are magnified by the increasing classroom numbers, as the amount of time it takes to teach interventions in a large class size takes too much time out of the day, causes frustration, and makes it harder to plan a schedule that works best for the students.

Ms. Cook expressed one positive comment regarding teacher retention in a journal entry as well. She expressed excitement about possibly going back to school to receive a Master’s degree in special education.

Thoughts on control over academic success of students. The next trend in this study is thoughts on control over academic success of students. In the first interview, Ms. Cook displayed negative teacher efficacy in this area. She discussed that sometimes she feels

as if she needs to have too much control over her large class, and stated, “With the amount of kids you just kind of have to do the best you can and really try to meet with as many kids as you can, and just know that that’s just the hand that’s been dealt.” Other times, she feels that she does not have enough control and she worries about what other teachers think of her as a teacher. She is frustrated writing student PEPs, IEPs, and teaching her class, and thinks that she tries to have too much control over their successes.

Ms. Cook expressed one positive comment regarding her thoughts on control over academic success of her students in the first interview as well. She explained that she has to tell herself that she is doing the best she can and is trying to get her students what they need (extra resources, etc.) so they are successful.

In the second interview, Ms. Cook displayed overwhelmingly positive teacher efficacy in the area of thoughts of control over academic success of students. She feels that in her large class size, much student success is due to the atmosphere. She feels she a good relationship with her students and can talk about non-school related issues.

She feels she has control over teaching students at their appropriate levels and using interventions for lower-level students, and she also controls how far she pushes her higher-level students so they can excel. She feels she is able to give her students independence, important leveled questions, and ownership of their learning. She also has control over finding the appropriate materials for her students. Ms. Cook explained that keeping her first graders on a routine as much as possible helps with the number of students in her class, as transitions in a large class size naturally take longer. Ms. Cook believes that if she just stays organized and positive, then her students will have better experiences in learning, and she

also gives her students time to work in collaborative groups which she believes is beneficial to them. Ms. Cook remarked, “We try to do a lot of group things, or partnered things. We try to work as a team.” Giving her students tools they will need in life, such as working in learning groups, is an essential part of Ms. Cook’s teaching in order to help students become accountable and responsible citizens. Ms. Cook discussed that she has control over student homework, as she tries to differentiate it to their appropriate levels. She gives fun homework to the students, and gives them a monthly calendar to complete and turn in at the end of the month. She gives special homework to those who need special assistance in certain areas.

Thoughts/Feelings/Attitudes at the end of a day. The next trend in this study is the thoughts, feelings, and attitudes of the participants at the end of a school day. In the first interview, Ms. Cook displayed overwhelmingly negative teacher efficacy in this area. Sometimes she is kept up at night thinking of ways she can address each student’s needs, and Ms. Cook stated, “Sometimes it’s really overwhelming and stressful.” She is frustrated with the lack of resources at her school, and that she had to hunt down extra educators to help her with her lower-level students. She feels it is harder to get to know the students in her large class size, to get to know about their siblings and families, and even to just learn what they did over the weekends. Ms. Cook vents to her best friend who is a teacher, and in the evenings they discuss the stresses of report cards and assessments. Ms. Cook explained that she has more days where she is exhausted, physically worn down, stressed, and not sleeping at night, and is just looking forward to the quarter break. She explained that she tries hard and she is doing her best, but she is hard on herself because she needs to be the advocate for

her twenty-four students which takes away from her personal life. She takes papers home to grade, and explained that this is not a job she can just leave at school. She finds it very difficult to find a balance between school and personal life, and it is not working for her.

In her first interview, Ms. Cook expressed few positive comments about her thoughts, feelings, and attitudes at the end of a day. She feels that it is important to get to know her students, because building relationships helps with academics, and sometimes she does have good days. She does have some days where she loves teaching, and finds it rewarding.

In her second interview, Ms. Cook displayed negative teacher efficacy in the area of thoughts, feelings, and attitudes at the end of a day. She discussed that she is stressed over the changes that are happening in the curriculum, and that with her large class size she must do all of the class progress monitoring and interventions. She is frustrated with all of the paperwork that must be completed this year, as it is more than in years' past. At the end of a day, she feels stressed about all the things that need to happen the next day, and she makes lists to help her. She tries not to get too overwhelmed, because she knows she will get everything done, but she is tired at the end of a day. She tries not to put stress on the students, but again she is very tired (and sometimes happy) at the end of the day and just wants to go home.

Ms. Cook expressed few positive comments in her second interview in the area of thoughts, feelings, and attitudes at the end of a day as well. She commented that she thinks her year as a whole has gone pretty well. She commented, "I like having a little break in the day for the math class, just having new students and a smaller amount is fun."

In her journal entries, Ms. Cook displayed positive teacher efficacy in the area of thoughts, feelings, and attitudes at the end of a day. She expressed excitement when she reflected on her difficult day, and noted in a positive manner that tomorrow was another day. On one day Ms. Cook wrote, “Today was a pretty good day!” Another day, her morning went fine, and she had a good day with small victories which made her stress level decrease. Her ESL student was able to celebrate reading successes which made her excited. She noted that she had a pretty good day on several dates, and felt as though her class made good accomplishments. After her quarter break, Ms. Cook explained that she felt refreshed and her students seemed to have matured over their break, which made her hopeful for positive days to come. One day she felt as though she was making progress because she was able to receive extra help for her lower-level student. Getting this extra help made her feel less stressed and excited for the student. She also expressed contentment when she explained that her higher and lower-level students are being pulled out for small group reading support because she can rely on others for help. Her grade level pulled together, as the first grade as a whole is needy, and is considering the first graders as “all” of their students. Ms. Cook expressed excitement because the entire grade level pulled together to help each other’s students, and felt happy, less stressed, supported, respected, trusted, and part of a team. She also commented that she encourages her grade level, and the other teachers encourage her which helps her to relieve stress.

Trust of students/parents/administrators. The next trend to surface in this study is trust of students, parents, and school administrators. In the second interview, Ms. Cook

displayed positive teacher efficacy in this area. She discussed that she believes her students trust her, as she builds a relationship with them and they know she has their best interest at hand. She cares about what their home lives are like, which makes students trust her. She pays close attention to her students, hugs them often when they need hugs, and loves her students. Ms. Cook also believes that the more her students trust her, the more willing they are to listen her and learn from her. To build trust with parents, she keeps open lines of communication, and explains to parents that she will believe half of what their children tell her about what happens at home if they believe half of what their children tell parents about what happens at school. Ms. Cook stated, "This year, I've had great parents." Ms. Cook also believes that trust toward the parents in her classroom is fostered by being respectful to them, and allowing them to see that she has a backbone. Ms. Cook feels she has the respect of the administrators in her school, and respects them in return. Ms. Cook commented, "For the most part, I feel like I have the support of the administration."

Ms. Cook expressed a negative comment in the area of trust of students, parents, and school administrators in the second interview as well. She showed frustration when she discussed that if she has a discipline issue and needs to send a student to the office to speak to an administrator, the student often return to her classroom with candy. This is difficult for her.

Class size effect on personal teacher efficacy/attitudes. The next trend in this study is the class size effect on personal teacher efficacy, and attitudes of participants. In the first interview, Ms. Cook displayed overwhelmingly negative teacher efficacy in this area.

She discussed that if she had twenty-four well-behaved, hardworking students, having a large class size would not be so bad. However, she believes realistically this is never going to happen, as some require extra help academically and/or socially. She explained that she does not feel respected or appreciated at times by her students and their parents, as they think it is her job to do all the work. Ms. Cook explained that when she has bad days, they are very bad and she takes this home to her personal life, often creating a bad evening for her. Ms. Cook expressed frustration and discussed, “This year I’ve had more discouraging days. You feel guilty when you can’t get to the other kids, but then you feel guilty when you’re not helping these kids that are significantly below.” She does not know if this is because she is too hard on herself, as she feels guilty when she cannot reach all of her students. She also feels guilty when her lower-level students do not reach benchmarks, and feels as though she is harassing other teachers in her school to help her class. She has many days when she just needs a break because she is physically exhausted from talking to twenty-four students, because they ask her the same questions repeatedly and do not listen the first time she explains directions. Her students struggle with problem solving, and these life skills issues they have are sometimes more exhausting than academics.

Ms. Cook discussed few positive remarks in the area of class size effect on personal teacher efficacy and attitudes in her first interview as well. She discussed that when she has good teaching days, she enjoys her job and would encourage others to go into the teaching profession. She believes that celebrating the small successes and student successes is so rewarding. In addition, even though there are twenty-four students who are not cookie-cutter

children, she enjoys the different personalities of her class. She discussed that when she has good days, it makes up for the bad days and she still loves teaching.

In the second interview, Ms. Cook displayed only negative teacher efficacy in the area of class size effect on personal teacher efficacy and attitudes. When discussing having twenty-four students in her first grade class, Ms. Cook commented, “It makes me more tired, more stressed out knowing that the amount of the work is going to be greater.” The volume in the room is loud because of so many students, which makes it difficult for Ms. Cook to work in small groups. She finds herself taking more time for everything, including taking students to the restroom, etc. because of all of the bodies moving around and the amount of work that needs to be completed.

Leveled math groups. The next trend in this study is small leveled math groups. In first grade, the teachers give pre-tests in each math objective and group all first graders according to their performance on these pre-tests. After all first graders are placed into leveled groups, the students switch classes and learn their math objectives from the teacher teaching their particular leveled group. The lower-level and higher-level math groups are the smallest in number and have between fifteen to twenty students with a teacher and a teacher assistant in the classroom for the entire math hour. The middle-level math groups are the largest with between twenty-one to twenty-six students with a teacher and a teacher assistant in the classroom for the entire math hour. Five out of the six first grade teachers switch classes for math, and one of the school resource teachers takes the higher-level group of

students to lower the math class sizes. All of Ms. Cook's small group math comments were positive.

In the first interview, Ms. Cook discussed that she teaches the lower-level math class and at that current time there were only eighteen students in her math class. "It's really nice because we actually have an additional teacher, so the class sizes are smaller," Ms. Cook remarked. She feels it is nice to have the smaller class for an hour each day, and enjoys having a teacher assistant in the room during this small group instruction. She is excited that she is able to reach every student in math, and she can talk to each about their math skills and work they are completing as she helps them to master their objectives.

Ms. Cook has also taught math groups of twenty-two students, and she can see the difference even when teaching two fewer students than in her regular large class size of twenty-four, because the students are all on the same math level. She has also taught math groups of sixteen students, which she believes is even better because she can have the students sit on the carpet and spread their manipulatives out on the floor and she can visually assess their understanding of the concepts she is teaching.

Ms. Cook mentioned that in the small math groups, there are occasional behavior issues, but they are easy to deal with because there are fewer students. The small math groups are less overwhelming to Ms. Cook. She feels as though she does a good job teaching math because she can pinpoint exactly who needs more help with the objective she is teaching (whereas in her large class size, this is much more difficult for her). In addition, it does not take Ms. Cook as long to grade assessments and write report card comments for the students

in her small math groups. Ms. Cook feels more successful when teaching the small math groups.

In the second interview, Ms. Cook discussed more about small math groups. She stated that she has a new group of twenty students in her hour-long math class and she can even tell the difference between her last group with eighteen students and this group with twenty students. When she had eighteen students, the group was even more manageable and she could give more one-on-one help to the students. She enjoys the twenty students; since they are all on the same math level she does not have to differentiate her lessons. The interventions and pace of the class is right for the whole class, which helps her to stay less frustrated.

In her journal entries, Ms. Cook commented about teaching her small math groups. Ms. Cook felt that having the smaller number of students (eighteen to twenty) really seemed to be helpful, and wrote, “The smaller numbers (20) really seemed to work. It was nice to be able to get around to everyone.” One day, she commented that she had only sixteen students and a teacher assistant in her small math class. She expressed excitement about this, as she was able to meet with each student, even the neediest. She compared teaching small group math class to large group literacy class and remarked that teaching small math groups is a lot better. When she graded math tests one day, it still took her over an hour to grade them and put them into her grade book; however, she remarked that she cannot imagine how another teacher with a large group would be able to do this. She expressed excitement about teaching her small math groups, as they are manageable and the volume in the class is significantly lower than when her regular large class size is in her classroom. She finds it relaxing to be

able to sit with each student to monitor their progress, and it makes her feel as if she is doing a good job. On one day, Ms. Cook was happy because between herself and her teacher assistant, each student was able to receive one-on-one support during small math groups, as they were able to target specific problems and go over each student's work with them. She reflected that if only all classes were as small as her math groups, were leveled, and had a teacher assistant, it would be better for both students and teachers.

Small class size thoughts. The next trend that surfaced in this study was Ms. Cook's thoughts on small class sizes. She is teaching a large class size, however mentioned small class sizes that she has taught in the past and compared them to her large class size this year. The researcher did not rate this trend as positive or negative due to its neutrality. In the first interview, Ms. Cook discussed that she believes that if the students in her large class who are performing below grade level were in a small class size, they would receive more of the one-on-one attention that they need. They would be able to better receive the proper interventions necessary for their progress.

In the second interview, Ms. Cook discussed that the smallest class size she has taught in the past has been twenty students. She explained that after having so few students in her math groups, she knows having a small class size is more manageable, she feels she can really connect with the students, and has the time to reach each one each day. She enjoys having the diversity in her large class size, but believes that having a small class size would help with her stress levels.

Regarding her small class size thoughts in her journal entries, Ms. Cook expressed that if she had fewer students, she would be able to meet more of her students' needs. On one day, Ms. Cook had three students out which she was excited about because it helped with the volume in the classroom. She noted that she hoped more would leave early. Also on another day, she was excited because her day was calm due to having a few students out sick or on vacation. She noted that with fewer students that day, there were fewer behavior interruptions and her class was easier to discipline and manage. Ms. Cook wrote, "Much calmer today! Have a few out sick and on vacation. Actually made a difference!" Ms. Cook was very excited and happy when she had six students out and noted that it was a wonderful day. She was able to meet with each student for Word Study, and the classroom as a whole was much quieter and more manageable. She wishes her class were like this all the time. She believes that having fewer students would be amazing. She feels that if she has a smaller number of students, she can reach students on a more personal level as well as in academics, and she would be able to foster relationships more easily.

Staff development ideas. In the second interview, Ms. Cook suggested some staff development ideas that may be helpful to those teachers teaching large class sizes. When asked about staff development ideas, Ms. Cook remarked, "I would say to continue to learn more efficient ways to do the progress monitoring." She also thinks it would be helpful to learn the technological aspect of assessments, including how to insert data into the data collection programs used at her school, and how to manipulate the data (currently she relies on another teacher to do this for her). She would also like to see a change in keeping track of

profile cards and report cards, and would like to see these two data collection tools merge. She feels that there are little things the school district could do to minimize the amount of time it takes to collect data on each student, as data is collected on so many tools and this is very repetitive. Documents also need to be changed with terms that are appropriate for students and parents so they can be on board. If all of these things are put into place, Ms. Cook would like to see a workshop on how to use the data gathering tools that would be more helpful to teachers in the entire school.

Summary of Ms. Cook

Ms. Cook is a female kindergarten teacher of a large class size of twenty-four students in a suburban elementary school, and this is her fifth year in education. After analyzing her interviews, observations, and journal entries, the researcher concludes that Ms. Cook expressed overall negative teacher efficacy in the following trends that emerged in this study: ability to work with individual students/small groups, academics/assessments/report cards, discipline, self-reflection, teacher assistants, teacher retention, thoughts/feelings/attitudes at the end of a day, and class size effect on personal teacher efficacy/attitudes. Ms. Cook expressed positive teacher efficacy in the following trends: student enjoyment and trust of students/parents/school administrators. Ms. Cook expressed an overall balance of positive and negative teacher efficacy in the following trends: parent involvement and thoughts on control over academic success of students. This data shows that Ms. Cook's large class size contributes to her overall negative personal teacher efficacy.

Description of Ms. Decker

The fourth teacher participant, Ms. Samantha Decker, is a female teacher who is thirty-five years old. She teaches in a large class size of twenty-four students. She was raised in a small northern town and grew up with her mother and her sister. In high school she moved with her family to a larger town and was very social, playing sports and singing in the high school choir. While in high school, she began traveling and still continues to travel whenever possible. Ms. Decker has always known she would work with children; she would go to the grocery store and interact with the young children with whom she would come into contact. Her mother was in education until she became a single parent, and then changed fields to better support her family. In high school, Ms. Decker worked in a nursery school and decided to go into early childhood education at a small Christian, liberal arts college outside of a large city. She student taught in preschool, kindergarten, and first grade and loved teaching first grade the most due to the level of student independence.

Ms. Decker moved to the study site state in 2003 for a teaching job. Ms. Decker has solely been a first grade teacher since the start of her teaching career, and this is her ninth year in education. She is the teacher of a large class size (twenty-four students). Ms. Decker has a part-time teacher assistant who is in her classroom approximately two hours per day. She has twelve boys and twelve girls in her first grade class. She has taught both large and small classes during her nine year teaching career.

During the first and second researcher observations of Ms. Decker, her classroom was set up in a semi-organized, student-friendly fashion. In the front of this first grade classroom was a large white board, covered with a 1-10 number line, 1-120 numbers chart, Bloom's

Taxonomy poster, short vowels poster, date/specials schedule, money reminders (quarter, dime, penny pictures), American flag and state flag, and posters about revising writing. A bulletin board with information about comprehension, accuracy, fluency, and vocabulary (ideas/strategies for students to students to use while working in reading centers) were to the left of the white board. An open student-carpet area was located in the front of the classroom, along with a large wooden rocking chair.

On the side wall were twenty-four student cubbies filled with coats, back packs, and lunches. Above those cubbies were shelves filled with games, puzzles, craft bins and boxes, construction paper, extra student supplies, books, literacy and math resources, calculators, and thematic units. These shelves were covered with colorful blue/pink/yellow/purple flower curtains. To the left of the cubbies was a sink, paper towel dispenser, and drinking fountain. In front of the cubbies was tile flooring, which covered one-fourth of the classroom. Carpet covered the remaining three-fourths of the classroom floor.

Covering the opposite side wall was a word wall and comprehension bulletin board. Three student desk-top computers sat on a long table along the side wall (with science kits underneath them) with a printer, an overhead, and an LCD projector. A television hung from the corner of the classroom and a digital clock was showing the time on the television.

On the back wall was a wall of windows with an outside door leading to the school parking lot. A full-sized teacher desk and teacher assistant desk were near the back wall, and a student bathroom was in the back corner of the classroom. A kidney-shaped reading table was along the back wall of the classroom with a small white board on the top of it.

In the middle of the classroom were five rectangular student tables. Four of those rectangular tables had five student seats, and one rectangular table had four student seats. Under each student seat were bins for students' folders, books, journals, pencils, etc. so they did not need to move from their seats to retrieve items from their cubbies. Three bookshelves housed student literature with a world globe located on one of the shelves. Posters were placed around the classroom walls: character education, word families, months of the year, calendar, ABCs, 100 words, 200 numbers chart, writing hints, shapes, juicy words for fall, tricks for good readers, descriptive words, reading/writing strategies, colors, geometric shapes, and 21st Century learning. A tall filing cabinet housed word study word sets as well.

Ms. Decker: Trends from Interviews, Observations, and Journals

Ability to work with individual students/small groups. The first trend in this study is the ability to work with individual students and/or small groups. In the first interview, Ms. Decker displayed only positive teacher efficacy in this area. Ms. Decker discussed that she conferences with students, and commented, "While parents are helping in the classroom in writing, I'm conferencing, walking around and conferencing with individuals. One-on-one." This happens usually when parents are helping in the classroom, as she is able to reach more students on an individual basis.

In the second interview, Ms. Decker displayed negative teacher efficacy in the area of ability to work with individual students and/or small groups. Ms. Decker expressed frustration when she talked about her inability to meet with individual students on a daily basis, and explained, "We've been asked to do this, which I support, but we're not given the

support to do it.” She feels she needs to have a full-time teacher assistant in her classroom in order to be successful (but commented that her current part-time teacher assistant is ready to retire and is more work for Ms. Decker), and with so many students in the class she finds it difficult to meet each student’s needs. With so many students in her class, Ms. Decker finds it hard to differentiate her small groups and give students individualized attention, and she has a hard time balancing her class. She works hard to reach her higher-level students and has created a conferencing schedule to meet with students in reading and writing, and her goal is to meet with specific students on specific days. However, she expressed frustration with this because other issues arise during literacy, or Ms. Decker finds it more necessary to work with lower-level students more than her higher-level students.

In her second interview, Ms. Decker also discussed positive comments in the area of ability to work with individual students and/or small groups. She feels she has a supportive grade level that looks at all the first graders as all of the teachers’ students, which is helpful. During morning arrival time, Ms. Decker sends some of her students to other first grade classrooms to work on objectives in a small group, and she meets with first graders in her class as well as from other classes to review certain objectives. This way her targeted interventions are being met during this thirty-minute block in the mornings. Ms. Decker thinks that the idea of meeting with each student either individually or in small groups each day is fantastic in theory and she tries hard to make this happen.

In the first observation, Ms. Decker displayed a balance of positive and negative teacher efficacy in the area of ability to work with individual students and/or small groups. Regarding the positive, she had the chance to meet with two small groups and help the

students to understand the objectives they were learning in an intense, focused group. After meeting with her small groups, she called students individually to work with her on reading assessments. Regarding the negative, while she was working in her small groups, Ms. Decker had no emotion or expression when she was reading questions to students in her small group; she was reading mechanically and focusing on other things around the classroom (such as behavior, students off-task).

In the second observation, Ms. Decker displayed only positive teacher efficacy in the area of ability to work with individual students and/or small groups. During a science experiment, Ms. Decker was able to walk around to each table of students and visit with each group. She asked them questions to further their investigations, such as what they noticed happening in their experiment, why their rocks were behaving the way they did when interacting with water, and what they thought was causing bubbles. She was able to take the time during this lesson to ask these higher-level questions of her students in their small table groups.

In her journal entries, Ms. Decker displayed negative teacher efficacy in the area of ability to work with individual students and/or small groups. She wrote about how it is difficult with her large number of students to differentiate her groups for Word Study, and she noted that getting students together to meet in small groups while getting the rest of her students settled and ready to work called for time wasted. Ms. Decker wrote, "I do feel overwhelmed at times trying to make sure I meet or conference with all students, especially those high independent students." Regarding the conferencing schedule she created, she journaled that there are so many needs in her class that it is difficult for her to stick to her

schedule. Ms. Decker wrote, “I also feel torn that I cannot meet with the different levels of students enough to make a solid enough difference in the progress they make.” She expressed frustration at the number of students in her class and her inability to meet with each student again, stating that so many of her students are in pull-out programs for extra assistance (English as Second Language-ESL, literacy support, extension groups for higher-level learners). She finds it difficult to progress monitor all of the students who need extra data collection, and this takes time out of her conferencing schedule as well.

In her journal entries, Ms. Decker also expressed few positive comments in the area of ability to work with individual students and/or small groups. She reported that one day was a very smooth day for students doing their individual work, and she was able to work one-on-one and conference with students in writing and reading. She also stated that she finds that working in collaborative groups makes teaching and learning a bit easier, especially with the large number of students in her class. She finds that in collaborative groups, her students are more focused and learn important 21st Century skills. During this time Ms. Decker enjoys watching different student personalities interact and can note who the leaders, peacemakers, etc. are in the group. She finds it to be very interesting that, even at a young age, these personalities are developed.

Academics/Assessments/Report cards. The next trend in this study is academics, assessments, and report cards. In her first interview, Ms. Decker displayed positive teacher efficacy in this area. She explained that she feels her large class size of students is the most

successful class than past classes she has taught, due to the way her school has worked at addressing the different levels of students. Ms. Decker commented the following:

This is the first year where we've worked together as a grade level to really make sure that we're getting the needs of the children, not just in our class, but taking on that mindset of "it's not my students but everyone's students."

This is also the first year she has worked together with her grade level to work on meeting the needs of all students. She also likes the new literacy program her grade level has adopted, as it focuses on individual student ability and students work on their reading stamina, which allows Ms. Decker the time to conference with students independently. With the literacy program and conferencing, Ms. Decker is able to give more one-on-one instruction on certain objectives in the curriculum. At the time of this first interview, Ms. Decker had seventeen students who were above grade level in reading which she thought was fantastic. Ms. Decker discussed that she appreciates the reading assessments because they easily show fluency and comprehension understanding and she is better able to instruct her students when she knows exactly on what reading level the students are performing. Ms. Decker feels that students have more opportunities to continue and increase their reading abilities, which she thinks is great. She likes that her school has decided not to write reading levels on each report card, which is less time consuming at each quarter's end. At the time of this first interview, in math, about twelve students were above grade level, and the rest were at least on grade level. Her grade level has created quick common assessments for math objectives, which help her end of quarter math assessment to be not as long and difficult. Ms. Decker believes that these assessments are helpful and she understands the purpose of each.

In her first interview, Ms. Decker also expressed some negative comments about academics, assessments, and report cards. She explained that three students in her class were below grade level in literacy which was disappointing to her. She also discussed assessments and she feels that she is assessing a lot, and that assessments happen all too much in education in general. All of the assessments her students must take are a lot of time and work, and they are repeated at the end of each quarter. When she assesses, she puts her instruction on hold and puts aside blocks of time to just test the students to measure their progress. Her mini-lessons are shortened and are not as focused during assessment times, as she must get in all of the literacy assessments in a short amount of time. She expressed anxiousness when she thought about future assessments in the spring, as she will be held accountable for conducting all of the fluency assessments in her class (which another teacher is taking care of at this time for her). For every student who does not meet benchmarks, Ms. Decker must write a PEP for him/her with specific goals for students.

In her second interview, Ms. Decker displayed negative teacher efficacy in the area of academics, assessments, and report cards. She explained that she still has three students who are not meeting benchmarks in reading, and three who are not meeting benchmarks in writing (however, two of those three are ESL students). When asked if her students would make growth in reading and math this quarter, and she really did not know if they would. She feels that her middle-level group has grey areas in it and she couldn't predict their growth. She was not optimistic about her lower-level group making growth because some in that group have learning disabilities. She discussed that she will be disappointed if her students do not make growth, and will feel as if she should have worked harder with certain students. She

also believes that growth depends on maturity and some students are not developmentally ready to make the year's worth of growth target. She works hard and tries not to think of her students just as numbers, but stated again that she would be disappointed if her students do not make their projected growth.

Ms. Decker discussed report cards and commented that they are hard and that, at the time of the second interview, she still had at least twelve to complete. She finds it difficult to balance assessments and mini-lessons in the literacy block. Reading and writing assessments take a long time to correct, and then she does not have time to write report card comments because she is constantly correcting assessments. Ms. Decker commented the following:

Our report cards are very narrative based and narratives on twenty-four children take a lot of time. So I'm sure it will get busy and unfortunately with assessments, I do feel at least three weeks of vital instruction is going to be hindered.

In her second interview, Ms. Decker also discussed positives in the area of academics, assessments, and report cards. At the time of the interview, she was happy that all of her students were on grade level in math. She expressed happiness with the success of her students, and that her grade level and school have done so much with her class, helping with interventions and differentiation of groups. Ms. Decker felt positive that her higher-level students would make their growth targets at the end of the quarter, as an enrichment teacher has been pulling her higher-level students and working with them in small groups frequently. Another teacher pulls some of her students to progress monitor them (assess progress and collect more data) which is very helpful for Ms. Decker. Ms. Decker stated that she will feel

great if she can walk out of school at the end of the year and know that she's done everything possible for her students.

In the first observation, Ms. Decker displayed only positive teacher efficacy in the area of academics, assessments, and report cards. The researcher notes that there is only one observation action of Ms. Decker in this observation. Ms. Decker taught all throughout the observation, and she taught right until the dismissal bell rang in order for her students to learn as much as possible.

In her journal entries, Ms. Decker displayed a balance of positive and negative teacher efficacy in the area of academics, assessments, and report cards. Regarding the positives, Ms. Decker expressed her satisfaction with the amount of data that is collected on each student and wrote the following:

As our school continues to focus on data, and we are teaching individual progress for all students in different subgroups, I feel that this forces me to be aware of all students and how they progress, and keep data on each.

She likes that the data collection breaks down the areas of student need and targets interventions that need to be put into place. Ms. Decker tried a new way of teaching informational writing to her students when the third quarter began, which she hopes will allow her students a new way to change from their continual narrative writing to more non-fiction writing. She was optimistic about her writing conferencing schedule that she put into place, hoping that she would be able to meet each student's needs in writing. Ms. Decker positively commented about the enrichment teacher who pulls her high-level students daily in reading, which has taken a large burden from her, as she knows those students are being

extended in a focused way. Ms. Decker expressed happiness when she commented about her science experiment on one day, and noted that the students were very excited about volcanoes and were inquisitive, telling great stories.

Regarding the negatives in her journal entries in the area of academics, assessments, and report cards, Ms. Decker expressed that she never feels 100% confident that she is achieving her goal of ensuring all students make adequate progress because of so many individual needs in her large class size. Ms. Decker wrote, “Finishing report cards and assessments always makes me feel stressed.” One day, she realized that she had a few more students in reading that did not make benchmark, which she did not know about, and she reconsidered the new literacy program that her school adopted; she believes it may not be as beneficial for the lower-level readers. She wrote that she struggles with data collection, as it is just another plate she has to balance along with assessments, her large number of students who must receive interventions, struggling learners, and enrichment for higher-level learner, all while she still tries to maintain her on-level learners. She feels her on-level learners sometimes get missed. In her science lesson that the students were excited about one day, she struggled with having so many students in her class during the lesson. She had a difficult time getting to all of them to answer their questions, and her lesson was rushed. She felt badly about not getting to all of their questions, as they were excited about the lesson and she knew their questions would be forgotten.

Discipline. The next trend in this study is discipline. In the first interview, Ms. Decker displayed overwhelmingly negative teacher efficacy in this area. She explained that

she sees a lot of calling out in the classroom, short attention spans, not paying attention, not listening, and not following directions. Ms. Decker discussed, “I see a lot more hollering out, not paying attention, that kind of thing.” She expressed frustration because she has many responsibilities as a teacher, and teacher expectations are increasing but her students are not helping her and act inappropriately. Ms. Decker explained, “I feel with this particular group, listening and following directions is not really in their repertoire of things that they’re able to do. And that has played a part in how much gets done for sure.” Ms. Decker spends approximately fifteen minutes focusing on discipline during a forty-five minute lesson, which is frustrating to her. She explained that she goes into a lesson wanting to accomplish certain objectives and then has to stop and redirect a child so frequently that she cannot keep her mind on what she is teaching; this is frustrating to her and to the other students who are in her class.

Ms. Decker feels that teachers are asked to do so much that the importance of building relationships with her students has gone by the wayside. She feels she does not know her students this year as she has in years’ past, and getting to the root of their problems is not priority. Ms. Decker feels that student academics and her teaching is priority, but that if she were able to build relationships with her most difficultly-behaved students, they would not have as many behavior issues. Ms. Decker feels that parents shirk their responsibilities with behavior at home which means their negative behavior carries over into the classroom. She believes it is the parents’ job to instill proper behavior in their children (and not her job) which is very frustrating to Ms. Decker. It makes her frustrated when she sees solid family units with parents not doing their jobs, but instead are expecting her to raise their child. Ms.

Decker understands child impulsivity and the fact that her students are only six and seven years old; however, they are blatantly disrespectful to her which she cannot ignore. Ms. Decker remarked the following:

We had a situation today where I was trying to give directions and it took me three or four times to get everybody's attention and it was because people, standing right beside me, just continued to talk. I find myself saying, always saying, "when an adult is speaking, your eyes are on the person and you're listening."

She reiterated that this is very frustrating. When she is frustrated, she has to take deep breaths and try not to show her frustration, or else her students will elevate their excitement levels.

Ms. Decker has four behavior challenges in her large class size.

In her first interview, Ms. Decker discussed a positive comment about discipline. She believes that she does have a bit of control over how much she can affect student behaviors, and that the teacher is always in control.

In her second interview, Ms. Decker displayed overwhelmingly negative teacher efficacy in the area of discipline. She discussed that she has a new seating chart but it gets tricky for her because of the number of students in her class and the fact that she can only put certain combinations of students together at tables. She feels that her large class size makes it difficult to focus in on one problem, because as other problems arise, she has to focus on those problems. She believes her students are active but not out of control. She thinks if she had a smaller class size, it would be easier to separate students from each other.

Ms. Decker discussed her most behaviorally-challenged student. She explained that he comes from a home without much structure, and he struggled when he entered first grade

due to its structured nature. Ms. Decker had to teach him what he can do at home he cannot do at school. This student frustrates Ms. Decker, as he had a hard time in January after being home for five weeks, and he would confuse the two sets of rules and revert back to his home rules while at school. He would get upset and throw tantrums, and Ms. Decker had to teach him the tools he needed to interact and react appropriately. Both he and Ms. Decker still struggle with his behavior on a daily basis. Ms. Decker feels that she does not spend as much time with him as she would like, as she tries to quickly deal with his issues and move on for the betterment of her class. She does not have the luxury to build a relationship with this student, as she is too busy teaching the rest of her class. Ms. Decker is frustrated that she does not have the time to work with him to resolve his issues.

Ms. Decker had few positive comments in her second interview in the area of discipline as well. She believes that her class is not a bad class, but is just active. Regarding her most behaviorally-challenged student, she tries to set parameters and follow them, and she believes the school has an excellent guidance counselor that the student sees for a social group and on an individual basis. There interventions are working for him, and Ms. Decker has seen great improvement in his behavior. He is also maturing which is beneficial to both the student and to Ms. Decker.

In her first observation, Ms. Decker displayed overwhelmingly negative teacher efficacy in the area of discipline. Approximately eight students consistently did not follow the classroom rules, or listen to Ms. Decker's directions on the carpet area. She redirected several students by calling their names, which did not change their behavior. Ms. Decker said to one student, "[Student] I need you to STOP talking!" That student continued to talk,

although talked more quietly. During the course of the observation, the researcher took note that the noise level went up significantly, and six to eleven students were off-task at one time or another. When students were supposed to be reading with their leveled books on the front carpet, two played “rock, paper, scissors,” and six others were talking or playing instead. Students put away their work noisily. In a thirty-minute period, Ms. Decker redirected students on an average of every two minutes. Ms. Decker’s redirection comments to her students were sarcastic, negative, and inappropriate for first graders, and at one point commented, “[Student], I’m pretty sure you are NOT working!”. Her frustration with her class’ behavior showed in this first observation.

There were few positive actions of Ms. Decker in the first observation in the area of discipline. Students seemed to know their classroom rules, and most followed them. She praised one student for doing good work and another for working appropriately. Students did fidget on the carpet, but most listened to her directions. Sixteen out of her twenty-four students followed Ms. Decker’s directions, cleaned up appropriately, and were quiet.

In the second observation, Ms. Decker displayed overwhelmingly negative teacher efficacy in the area of discipline. Ms. Decker smiled only four times during this observation, and redirected student behavior more than twenty-nine times. Students did not pay attention on the carpet area and were off-task during the whole-group science mini-lesson. When at their tables, Ms. Decker told her class not to touch the science materials at their seats but seven picked up their materials anyway and toyed with them. Students talked loudly at their tables; Ms. Decker talked even louder over them. Ms. Decker clapped her hands three times to get her students’ attention, and only three students echo-clapped. She clapped five times,

and most students quieted. While she gave directions, two students talked. Students struggled to clean up after their science experiment, as there was so much loud talking going on, it was hard for them to focus and listen to Ms. Decker's directions. In this observation, Ms. Decker also redirected students in a negative, sarcastic, and inappropriate manner, showing her frustration regarding their behavior. At one time, Ms. Decker said to one student, "That's a comment, NOT a question." She said to another, "Geologist Johnny, if you were working in *my* lab, you'd probably lose your job because you're not listening and following directions. I really didn't think this would be a hard job, but apparently it is."

Ms. Decker's struggles with discipline issues in her large class size are linked to the results of the North Carolina class size studies reported by Finn in Chapter Two. Finn reported that students in small class sizes spent more time on task and less time on discipline or organizational matters as compared to teachers in larger classes (1998). Ms. Decker believes that her large class size is one reason her students exhibit unacceptable behavior, as they feed off each other, they are constantly noisy, and they often are off-task due to their inappropriate behavior.

In the second observation, Ms. Decker showed few positive actions in the area of discipline. When a student interrupted Ms. Decker, she quietly told him he needed to raise his hand. During the science lesson, most students followed her directions. It was evident that routines and procedures were in place, as some students followed them. At the end of the lesson, a few students cleaned the tables for the class.

In her journal entries, Ms. Decker displayed overwhelmingly negative teacher efficacy in the area of discipline. She wrote the following about her class' difficulty with discipline:

I have been thinking and noticing lately how this group of kids really seems to have a very difficult time listening and following directions. This becomes very frustrating when trying to teach a lesson because will often start their own conversations, will start playing with peers, etc., causing an interruption of the lesson. When disciplined, many kids seem unphased with no change in behavior.

She negatively remarked that her students were showing their true colors one day, and it didn't take them long to do so after their break. Ms. Decker expressed her frustration when dealing with her most behaviorally-challenged student, as he always tries to get others' attention by being funny, spends time with another child which is a bad mix of personalities, and Ms. Decker has to spend much extra time redirecting his behavior and giving consequences. She expressed frustration with the lack of parent support in discipline, and does not always contact parents when issues occur due to this lack of support. Ms. Decker commented that during one week, student interruptions were at their height, and she feels that part of the problem is the number of students in her class. Ms. Decker wrote the following:

This week interrupting has been a huge deal. As I sit and think about possible reasons for the increase, I can't help but feel that part of the problem is the number of students in class. With so many students I can't help but feel that this increases the amount of interruptions.

She went on to explain that the interruptions are constant; she only stops them when absolutely necessary because she needs to teach the important material she is expected to teach each day.

In her journal entries, Ms. Decker also expressed few positive comments in the area of discipline. She was excited to note that two of her difficult behavior students were absent one Friday and that her day was smooth and easy, which was a nice beginning to her weekend. She also noted that, after a break, her students made the overall transition back to school easily and were ready to learn.

Parent involvement. The next trend in this study is parent involvement. In her first interview, Ms. Decker displayed positive teacher efficacy in this area. She discussed that the parents she has volunteering in her classroom have been very helpful and offer students assistance by walking around and conferencing with them in writing. Ms. Decker discussed, “My group of parents has been very helpful, they come in and always ask exactly what they can be helping with.” Ms. Decker finds this to be very helpful because it allows more students to receive individual attention from an adult. She commented that her parent volunteers are supportive, responsible, and do whatever Ms. Decker would like for them to do while they are helping in the classroom.

Ms. Decker discussed one negative comment in the area of parent involvement in her first interview. She stated that she has created a schedule to conference with students in writing while parents are helping; however, other things get in the way during writing and she finds it difficult to stick to the schedule.

In her second interview, Ms. Decker displayed only positive teacher efficacy in the area of parent involvement. Ms. Decker commented, “When [education] is supported at home in the same way it’s supported at school, it’s successful.” When there is a lack of support at home, Ms. Decker does not think her hands are completely tied because she just works harder to reach her students in the classroom. She does as much as she can in the classroom to get her students on or above grade level if there is not as much support at home, and Ms. Decker believes that the more adults are around to help a child, the more the child will learn. She stated that she tries hard to find opportunities to praise her students for successes in the classroom so they feel successful.

To keep parents involved in her classroom, Ms. Decker sends home a newsletter with every science/social studies theme change (about every two to three weeks). The newsletter includes strategies Ms. Decker uses in class that can be reinforced at home (usually comprehension or fluency strategies). She also has a website that parents access on a regular basis, which includes educational resources (such as fun activities on educational websites), math activities or reading activities that parents could practice with their children at home.

Ms. Decker discussed that at the beginning of school, she asked for volunteers to sign up to help in the classroom, and to encourage them to come in on a regular basis, she feels she is warm and welcoming to them. She feels she communicates much with parents, tells them of her expectations, and guides them on how to assist the students in the classroom. Ms. Decker believes parents work hard in her classroom and she likes having an extra set of hands to help her in writing.

In her first observation, Ms. Decker displayed only positive teacher efficacy in the area of parent involvement. When her parent volunteer arrived, Ms. Decker went directly to her and gave her directions on exactly what to do in the classroom with students that day. The parent volunteer happily walked around the classroom and helped individual students, focusing on their writing and helped to keep students on-task and working.

In her journal entries, Ms. Decker displayed only negative teacher efficacy in the area of parent involvement. Ms. Decker wrote, “I often feel like the job that a parent should be doing falls into the hands of teachers. Overwhelming.” She also commented that with all of the meetings she attends, responsibilities, and the large number of students in her classroom, she feels she has not been very good at keeping parents aware of struggles and needs of students. Some of these struggling and needy students sneaked up on her and she expressed frustration, as she needs to contact and meet with their parents soon.

Self-reflection. The next trend in this study is self-reflection. In her first interview, Ms. Decker displayed positive teacher efficacy in this area. When asked about self-reflecting, Ms. Decker commented, “Honestly I would say I self reflect almost on a daily basis.” She noted that her husband is also in the field of education and they discuss and dissect their days daily together. If Ms. Decker sees a pattern with particular students or lessons while self-reflecting, she will try to switch the way she teaches or will try to dig deeper into finding out why they are struggling or why the lesson isn’t working. “I try to make changes as much as I can,” Ms. Decker remarked, and explained she makes changes whether it is changing student

activities or changing her presentation, and she tries to address the particular needs of each student after she self-reflects.

In her first interview, Ms. Decker also had few negative comments in the area of self-reflection. When she self-reflects, she stated she usually starts with a grumbling session which can last for a while. Only after the negativity of grumbling has passed can she realize that grumbling will not help and she needs to focus on how to make her classroom, discipline, academics, etc. better.

In her journal entries, Ms. Decker displayed negative teacher efficacy in the area of self-reflection. On one day Ms. Decker wrote, “As always, this week I felt torn in a million directions, and often feel that my planning and ability to plan after solid lessons is affected.” She also wondered if she is pushing her students too much, sometimes working on objectives that she feels are not developmentally appropriate for them. She knows her students will rise to her expectations, but wonders if the problems she encounters have to do with expectations that are developmentally out of their reach. Ms. Decker finds it difficult to find the balance between managing checklists she creates for herself and spending time with her students, and one day she was reminded of the balance of educating students academically and educating them socially. She teaches academics daily, but often thinks about how character education has been missed. She wonders how much of the character education piece should be her job, and how much of it is the job of the parents but is not being taught at home. Ms. Decker reflected on how she treats her first grade students, and realizes that the way she responds to them is because she feels so extended from all of her teacher responsibilities and she is

spread very thin. She believes that when she feels stressed, this has an effect on how she interacts with her students.

Ms. Decker had positive comments in her journals in the area of self-reflection as well. She reflected that one week was busy but productive. She reflected that she is thankful for her grade level teachers, as they are supportive and keep things light to help her with her stress level. She also mentioned that she enjoys that her school offers a staff yoga class, as this helps Ms. Decker with her stress level and helps her to put her days into perspective.

Student enjoyment. The next trend in this study is student enjoyment. In her first interview, Ms. Decker displayed overwhelmingly negative teacher efficacy in this area. She expressed frustration and disappointment when discussing that she is unable to do fun activities with her students as she was able to do when she first started teaching. This means working on few crafts during holidays, even though the students love to do crafts, but crafts just do not fit in with the state curriculum. Ms. Decker commented, “I feel torn because activities that we got to do when I first started teaching, you just can’t do. There’s no room for them anymore.” She does not believe that the push for rigor and relevance helps her students to enjoy school and the expectations that are placed upon them are unrealistic and not developmentally appropriate. Ms. Decker also expressed frustration when she discussed that she has some students who just believe school is a low priority, and commented, “You’re always going to have those that school is just not their thing.” Ms. Decker believes that students need to understand the importance of school and learn their responsibilities in the

classroom so they can be held accountable for their actions both in the classroom and at home.

In the first interview, Ms. Decker also expressed few positive comments in the area of student enjoyment. She believes the teacher is in control of student enjoyment, shown by the way her classroom is arranged, how she interacts with her students, and by the types of relationships she builds with her students. She also believes her class is a community but also is made up of individuals. She knows she has to make learning fun for her students, and she is happy that she has those students who just love school and love learning new knowledge.

In the second interview, Ms. Decker displayed positive teacher efficacy in the area of student enjoyment. She discussed that if students lack motivation in her classroom, she tries to find lessons that capture their interests. She uses rewards that students enjoy (such as lunch with a teacher) when they meet behavior goals, and she keeps them working in groups which they enjoy. Ms. Decker's students stay engaged when they work on group projects, and she believes they really like to work together towards a common goal. She uses technology to capture students' interests, and has a Smartboard in her classroom which the students love to use.

Ms. Decker also expressed few negative comments in the area of student enjoyment in her second interview. She discussed that she is at a loss sometimes when her students lack motivation, and she does not know what to do with them. When discussing what she does when students are not motivated, Ms. Decker said, "I honestly don't even know. Sometimes I don't think I even do. I don't know. I'm so busy." She often wonders if she can be doing

more for those who do not enjoy school and have low motivation for learning, and she feels at a loss because they are the ones who sometimes get missed.

In her first observation, Ms. Decker displayed negative teacher efficacy in the area of student enjoyment. The class was rushed and noisy during arrival time. Ms. Decker did not greet the students with “good morning” or acknowledge them as they came into her classroom. She smiled very little, and the students smiled very little. Her dialogue with her students was choppy, not warm or encouraging. Ms. Decker barked orders at the students and was very much to the point with her statements. When a student asked to go to the restroom, Ms. Decker agitatedly replied, “Go QUICKLY!” She displayed the actions of a very no-nonsense, task-oriented teacher.

Ms. Decker displayed one positive action in the area of student enjoyment during her first observation. Her class transition times were very quick which took less time away from her instruction and gave little time for students to misbehave and become off-task.

In her second observation, Ms. Decker displayed negative teacher efficacy in the area of student enjoyment. There was very little student work on the classroom walls to celebrate student success. The students were very serious and did not smile much, even though they were working on what Ms. Decker described as a fun science experiment. The volume in the classroom was loud and Ms. Decker had to talk loudly over the students, even when she visited their table groups to discuss their experiments. Ms. Decker was cold and her comments to her first grade students were sarcastic. When students were helping Ms. Decker to pass out folders with others’ names on them and were struggling with the names, Ms.

Decker said to them, “READ guys, you can read.” At times she used endearing terms with no feeling (she called one student “Lovebug” but in a harsh tone).

Ms. Decker displayed few positive actions in the area of student enjoyment during her second observation as well. She took the time to quietly review one student’s behavior chart with him, explaining to him that she expects a much better day from him the next day. She gave genuine positive feedback to three students during the observation.

In her journal entries, Ms. Decker displayed only positive teacher efficacy in the area of student enjoyment. She commented that she enjoys her students more at the end of the quarter when her report cards are finished and her stress level is at a manageable level. Ms. Decker wrote, “I did realize with the end of the quarter, with the stress of getting stuff done, once it was done, I found myself enjoying my kids a whole lot more.” She feels she is able to talk and laugh with her students, enjoying them more.

Teacher assistants. The next trend in this study is teacher assistants. In the second interview, Ms. Decker displayed only negative teacher efficacy in this area. She expressed frustration because she does not have a teacher assistant in her classroom full-time, especially with all of the expectations that are placed upon her. The teacher assistant she has been given is ready to retire and it is often more work for Ms. Decker to plan things for her to do. Ms. Decker discussed, “There are things that I just think my TA should know that she doesn’t, or has maybe lost touch in.” Ms. Decker thinks her teacher assistant needs training in different areas, such as expectations, curriculum, etc. and needs to be refreshed. Ms. Decker expressed that she would like to have both a smaller class size and a teacher assistant which would

enable her to better meet her students' individual needs. She is frustrated with education in general, as she is expected to do so many things, add new criteria to her job, and figure out how to make each student grow without a full-time teacher assistant.

In her first observation, Ms. Decker displayed a balance of positive and negative teacher efficacy in the area of teacher assistants. Regarding the positives, when her teacher assistant entered her classroom, she got right to work and walked around to the students, helping them with their work and getting them back on-task. Regarding the negatives, when a pull-out teacher interrupted Ms. Decker's class to talk to Ms. Decker about pulling a student, instead of stepping in for Ms. Decker, her teacher assistant leaned on the computer tables and watched the class as students got off-task.

In her journal entries, Ms. Decker displayed only negative teacher efficacy in the area of teacher assistants. She explained that she does not feel comfortable with her teacher assistant's abilities to help students appropriately. Ms. Decker wrote the following:

In regards to my TA, I do not feel confident in her abilities to help children appropriately. Sometimes I just feel it's easier to just do it myself. She is shared, so it's hard to fully rely on her being in the classroom.

Ms. Decker went on to explain that her teacher assistant often gets pulled to help in other classrooms as well.

Teacher retention. The next trend in this study is teacher retention. In her first interview, Ms. Decker displayed overwhelmingly negative teacher efficacy in this area. Ms. Decker discussed herself in education and commented, "I think if I were new now, I would

have gotten out a long time ago.” She expressed her frustration with the fact that she is unable to build personal relationships with her students as she used to be able to do when she first began teaching. This coupled with all of the teacher demands and expectations, it makes it very hard for her to want to stay in education. She explained that she does not see herself staying in education because she does not find joy in it anymore. Ms. Decker explained, “I don’t see myself staying in the education realm and I think that is partly because I don’t find the joy in it anymore. And the joy came from building those relationships.” Ms. Decker entered into education because she loves children and wanted to get to know them as people and she feels she does not have that opportunity anymore. Ms. Decker commented, “I just feel like I don’t know my kids the way I used to. Yes, I know them as students, absolutely. Do I know them as people? No.” Ms. Decker believes with the expectations and her large number of students, she is unable to build important relationships, which is where her joy came from but is now lost.

Ms. Decker expressed a positive comment in the area of teacher retention in the first interview as well. She discussed that she is grateful to have a job with this economy, and she tries to focus on the fact that she has a job with skills that are being used. However, she noted that her whole love of teaching began because she really enjoyed the relationships that she used to build with her students.

In her second interview, Ms. Decker displayed a balance of positive and negative teacher efficacy in the area of teacher retention. Regarding the positive, she explained that her heart is for her students. She discussed that she will stay in teaching until she figures out a different path. She noted that just because she will change careers, this does not mean she

will not do her job in the classroom. She believes she is too committed to her students to not do her job well. Regarding the negatives, Ms. Decker discussed the following:

I definitely don't think I want to be in the classroom until I'm fifty-five. Actually I know that I don't want to be in the classroom until I'm fifty-five. But what do I want to do? I don't know.

She does not know if she will be in the classroom in ten years, and will most likely go into another field having to do with children.

In her journal entries, Ms. Decker displayed only negative teacher efficacy in the area of teacher retention. She was frustrated in explaining that the outside forces that affect students' academic abilities with the responsibilities and expectations of the teacher increasing, her thoughts on staying in teaching have definitely changed. Regarding her thoughts on the teaching profession, Ms. Decker wrote the following:

I feel like our profession is now seen as a business, a commodity that can be bought versus a service that is done and given much respect and gratitude towards. It makes it feel like all the hard work and dedication is not appreciated like it used to be. It makes me often wonder, "why am I doing this again?"

She feels frustrated that her hard work and dedication is not appreciated the way it used to be appreciated, and she often wonders why she is even still teaching. She notes that it is not for the money. Ms. Decker explained that she believes there is a correlation between her stress level and how she feels about education, and her stress comes from her large number of students in her class, new curriculum, balancing interventions of students, and the disrespect she feels many people (parents, politicians, children) show towards teachers.

Thoughts on control over academic success of students. The next trend in this study is thoughts on control over academic success of students. Ms. Decker displayed a balance of positive and negative teacher efficacy in this area. Regarding the positives, Ms. Decker discussed that she has the control to enable her students to see that they are smart and can be successful. She also has the control to enable them to enjoy school. Regarding the negatives, Ms. Decker discussed that she is frustrated with the expectations that are placed upon her students, as her job is difficult.

In her second interview, Ms. Decker displayed overwhelmingly positive teacher efficacy in the area of thoughts on control over academic success of students. She discussed that the hard work she does is worth something and she feels good about it. Ms. Decker believes she is an important part of her students' lives and commented, "I'm the one looking at the data, figuring out what they need, and then going from there to help with providing lessons and opportunities if they're not getting something." She also believes her grade level is in control over her students' success in math because the grade level switches classes daily for math and breaks the students into leveled math groups. Her grade level teachers also work with all students at times in literacy which is helpful to Ms. Decker. She is the primary person from whom her students receive instruction, but she collaborates with her grade level teachers to decide on other appropriate strategies and lessons to teach her students.

Ms. Decker believes she has control over students learning in collaborative groups and working on projects. Regarding homework, she believes she has control over when they do their homework, as most parents of her students are involved in helping their children complete their homework on a daily basis and Ms. Decker reinforces this at school. She

assigns homework in first grade to encourage good study habits, which she feels she does have control over.

In her second interview, Ms. Decker had one negative comment in the area of thoughts on control over academic success of students as well. She discussed that, regarding homework, many of her higher-level students work independently on assignments without help from their parents, which is frustrating for Ms. Decker. She tries to encourage parents and students to work together on homework but this does not always happen; she believes a time for students to be independent with homework is in the older grades.

Thoughts/Feelings/Attitudes at the end of a day. The next trend in this study is the participants' thoughts, feelings, and attitudes at the end of a school day. In the first interview, Ms. Decker displayed overwhelmingly negative teacher efficacy in this area. At the end of a day, Ms. Decker commented the following:

I always leave like there's more that could have been done. I just feel like there is always something else that can be done, every day. Yes, I know I'm doing the best that I can, but I always wonder, "is there more that can be done?" There are a lot of days when I think, "what did I do today?"

She wonders if she is doing enough for her students to meet the expectations that are placed upon them in order for them to succeed. She tries her best each day, but always wonders if she could have met with her higher-level students in a different way, or she wonders how she can get her on-level learners to grow higher. It is frustrating to her that she always has to do more, to push her students to a higher level, and this makes her job more difficult.

Ms. Decker had a positive comment in the first interview in the area of thoughts, feelings, and attitudes at the end of a day. She stated that most of the time, she feels like she and her class have had a pretty good time in the classroom and a pretty good day overall.

In her second interview, Ms. Decker displayed overwhelmingly negative teacher efficacy in the area of thoughts, feelings, and attitudes at the end of a day. She discussed that she thinks she is so busy and has difficulty each day due to her large number of students and the amount of data she must collect on them in order to differentiate her instruction. Ms. Decker explained that she finds that much of the first grade curriculum is not developmentally appropriate for six and seven year old children, and this makes it difficult for her to feel good. She tries hard to determine where to fit working on fun activities into her lessons but she is frustrated because this is difficult to do, due to the demands she must face each day.

Ms. Decker discussed that it depends on the day or week if she finds enjoyment in school. She explained that she does not enjoy teaching the way she used to enjoy it. She does not hate school, but thinks teaching is a very difficult job. She disagrees in the direction education is going in and has a hard time with the fact that students are looked at as numbers and not as whole children. She believes there is a lack of respect for educators in society today. Ms. Decker finds it frustrating that schools are looked at as businesses and these thoughts affect her view on education at the end of a school day.

Ms. Decker discussed that sometimes she leaves school and wonders what she even did that day, because she didn't complete anything on her checklist. When this happens, she has to take her work home with her to complete it. At the end of a day, Ms. Decker is tired,

and does not want to do school work at home. She was frustrated when she discussed that school is a never-ending project and there is always something more that can be done, or something that can be taken home to complete.

In her second interview, Ms. Decker had few positive comments regarding her thoughts, feelings, and attitudes at the end of a day. She believes that overall, she has had a good year. Even though collecting data is time-consuming, she believes it is helpful to her because she can target struggling students and administer the proper interventions to them, which she finds to be positive. At the end of a day, Ms. Decker feels that strategies are being taught, she is teaching, and her students are learning.

In her journal entries, Ms. Decker displayed only negative teacher efficacy in the area of thoughts, feelings, and attitudes at the end of a day. She explained that she struggles trying to fit all of her activities into science lessons, and thinks this is due to her large class size, schedule, and timing. She feels that trying to get all students on task, finished, and ready to move on to the next activity is difficult. She expressed frustration with teaching science due to these factors. When her students came back from their quarter's end break, Ms. Decker wasn't sure about how her students would perform in class, both academically and discipline-wise. However, she explained that she had to really focus on not becoming overwhelmed by the needs of her students and what demands would be placed upon her in the future. At the end of a week, Ms. Decker wrote, "Just ready for the weekend. I guess the bright spot is there are kids making progress, but growth just feels that it's not enough sometimes." Ms. Decker has the attitude that she needs to come to terms with the fact that she just will not get as much done some days as she had planned.

Trust of students/parents/administrators. The next trend in this study is trust of students, parents, and school administrators. In the second interview, Ms. Decker displayed negative teacher efficacy in this area. She discussed not being able to build relationships with her students as intimately as she would like to, which hinders her students' trust of her. Regarding parents, Ms. Decker commented, "Would I say I trust all parents? Absolutely not." Regarding her school administrators, Ms. Decker expressed frustration when she described that her school principal has finally understood the importance of her grade level working together as a team. Ms. Decker struggles with her school administrators, and said, "I fell our administration in particular does not realize how they come off. I do think they have ruffled feathers in ways."

Ms. Decker also expressed few positive comments in her second interview in the area of trust of students, parents, and school administrators. She stated that she does trust her students. She also stated that she trusts most of her parents, as they support her and understand what she is trying to do in the classroom. Ms. Decker feels that she supports the school administrators in her school. She understands how hard her administrators work and they have difficult jobs. She believes her administrators are just doing what their superiors tell them to do, and they have many expectations placed upon them.

Class size effect on personal teacher efficacy/attitudes. The next trend in this study is the class size effect on personal teacher efficacy and attitudes. In her first interview, Ms. Decker displayed overwhelmingly negative teacher efficacy in this area. Ms. Decker expressed her frustration as she discussed that her small groups are actually larger than she

would like due to her large class size. These “large” groups of students may need extensions or remediation, which creates more work for her. Ms. Decker commented, “The larger number of kids that you have, the larger areas of need. The more kids you have to be concerned with.” The more students she has means she has more differing levels of students, which creates larger leveled groups of students; Ms. Decker expressed frustration about this.

Ms. Decker expressed that, while she does believe her large class size plays a part in her frustration with teaching, there are other factors that also play a part, such as the expectations that are placed on teachers and lack of parent teaching character traits (problem-solving, social skills) at home. When she thinks of her large class size, she is frustrated because the more students she has, the more she has to do in all areas of the classroom, which Ms. Decker finds to be difficult.

Ms. Decker expressed few positive comments in her first interview in the area of class size effect on personal teacher efficacy and attitudes. She believes she is a better teacher this year, as she is addressing the needs of her students more. She does not believe that has to do solely with her class size, but also has to do with the focus of her grade level team and the school in general.

In her second interview, Ms. Decker expressed only negative teacher efficacy in the area of class size effect on personal teacher efficacy and attitudes. She believes that her large class size absolutely plays a part in her frustration with report cards because she has more assessing and more report card comment writing to do with more students. Her large class size also has her struggling with grading writing papers, as they take about five to ten minutes each to grade which is frustrating to Ms. Decker. Ms. Decker explained that she has

difficult days due to her large class size, simply because there is so much more to do in all the areas in teaching. Ms. Decker explained, “There’s more stuff to do. There’s more lessons to plan, if I’m doing all the interventions. There’s more papers to correct, more assignments to correct.” She also has more time taken emailing parents, and more time taken differentiating lessons for each level of students.

Ms. Decker believes that she second guesses her effectiveness as a teacher because of the large number of students and the large number of needs in her class. She discussed that she is extremely stressed about this, but then decided that her large class size only plays a small part in her problem with education and remarked that sometimes she doesn’t even realize that her large class size is a problem. She explained that she does feel that she would have an easier job if she only had sixteen students, but that she would still feel frustrated about the data collection, differentiation, etc. She stated that class size plays a small part but is not a large part of her frustration.

In her first observation, Ms. Decker displayed only negative teacher efficacy in the area of class size effect on personal teacher efficacy and attitudes. During her observation, she lost track of one student and did not even know her female student was missing for about ten minutes. She realized the student was missing when she called her name to answer a question, and noticed the girl was not in the classroom and that she had been in the bathroom for an unusually long amount of time. “Martha? Oh is she in the bathroom? OH there she is!” With so many students, it was hard for Ms. Decker to keep track of them all.

In her journal entries, Ms. Decker displayed only negative teacher efficacy in the area of class size effect on personal teacher efficacy and attitudes. She noted that she believes

there are many outside forces that affect a child's social behavior and education abilities, such as media (TV, video games, computer games), family units, families that are busy and not parenting as they should, and noted that large class sizes also play a part. She explained that she struggles with keeping up with data and meeting the needs of all of her students. Ms. Decker wrote, "Obviously the number of students in my class greatly affects all of this from papers to correct, interventions to put in place, and conferences that need to be scheduled. It all seems like too much." She went on to explain that along with all of these stresses in her class, her large number of students is a big stressor for her because it means she has more of everything else to do, such as data collection, interventions, differentiating lessons, and administering assessments. She finds herself doing work at home which is frustrating for her, as she would like to be able to get it all completed at school so she can relax at home. She remarked that she often finishes the day wondering what she has completed that day.

Leveled math groups. The next trend in this study is small leveled math groups. In first grade, the teachers give pre-tests in each math objective and group all first graders according to their performance on these pre-tests. After all first graders are placed into leveled groups, the students switch classes and learn their math objectives from the teacher teaching their particular leveled group. The lower-level and higher-level math groups are the smallest in number and have between fifteen to twenty students with a teacher and a teacher assistant in the classroom for the entire math hour. The middle-level math groups are the largest with between twenty-one to twenty-six students with a teacher and a teacher assistant in the classroom for the entire math hour. Five out of the six first grade teachers switch

classes for math, and one of the school resource teachers takes the higher-level group of students to lower the math class sizes. At one time during this study, Ms. Decker was teaching a leveled math group with twenty-four students from all different first grade classes.

In her first interview, Ms. Decker discussed that she enjoys teaching the math groups, as they are leveled and she does not have to differentiate her lessons as much because the students are all on similar math levels. Ms. Decker feels the leveled math groups are successful and commented, “I attribute it to the fact that we are splitting our kids based upon objective.” She likes that the students she teaches are more independent and she only needs to sustain their math level, and her students are more mature than some who are in the lower-level groups. She believes that maturity plays a large part in the success of her students, whether it is in the regular classroom or in the math groups.

In her journal entries regarding math groups, Ms. Decker discussed that she has a much easier time teaching math because her students are grouped according to similar academic needs. She is optimistic about how much her students progress. She likes that her higher-level homeroom students are able to receive the proper extensions they need, and her lower-level homeroom students are able to be in a small math group that directly targets their deficits. Ms. Decker wrote the following:

I’m so glad that our grade level decided to do math groups, separated by ability. With such a large class size and large amounts of ability, this has been a huge relief to know that I am not being held responsible for the many levels, and knowing that the different levels are being met is a huge relief.

She believes that breaking students up into leveled math groups has been extremely beneficial to her students and to herself.

Regarding the negatives of these math groups, Ms. Decker explained that she struggles with providing enough help and feedback to the students in her math group, because she always feels as though some students are waiting while she is working with others. She feels that a lot of time is wasted trying to get her students back on track, as some lack the maturity of others.

Small class size thoughts. The next trend in this study is Ms. Decker's thoughts on small class sizes. She is teaching a large class size, however mentioned small class sizes that she has taught in the past and compared them to her large class size this year. The researcher did not rate this trend as positive or negative due to its neutrality. In the first interview, Ms. Decker discussed the atmosphere of small class sizes she has taught in the past. Ms. Decker remarked, "It's a lot more calm, just because you don't have the chance of having more disruptive kids." She attributes this to the fact that she had less of a chance to have more disruptive students. She also feels that it was calmer in her small class sizes because the students do not feed off each other and behavior is not as much of an issue. In large classes, when behavior escalates, students tend to band together to make discipline issues more prevalent.

Staff development ideas. The next trend in this study is staff development ideas. In her second interview, Ms. Decker discussed that she would like to see workshops offered on

ways to organize all of the aspects of her classroom. Regarding possible staff development workshops, Ms. Decker remarked, “Easy ways to organize it all, or organize your time or balance your time. That would be the biggest thing.” She feels she would benefit most in learning organizational strategies in teaching large class sizes.

Summary of Ms. Decker

Ms. Decker is a female kindergarten teacher of a large class size of twenty-four students in a suburban elementary school, and this is her ninth year in education. After analyzing her interviews, observations, and journal entries, the researcher concludes that Ms. Decker expressed overall negative teacher efficacy in the following trends that emerged in this study: discipline, student enjoyment, teacher assistants, teacher retention, thoughts/feelings/attitudes at the end of a day, trust of students/parents/school administrators, and class size effect on personal teacher efficacy/teacher attitudes. Ms. Decker expressed overall positive teacher efficacy in the following trends: parent involvement and thoughts on control over academic success of students. Ms. Decker expressed an overall balance of positive and negative teacher efficacy in the following trends: ability to work with individual students/small groups, academics/assessments/report cards, and self-reflection. This data shows that Ms. Decker’s large class size contributes to her overall negative personal teacher efficacy.

Description of Participant Comparison Table 4.1

The researcher created Table 4.1 to display and compare each participant and the twelve common trends that emerged in the data collected. The table shows that both Ms. Adams and Ms. Bender displayed positive teacher efficacy in every trend, creating an overall high, or positive, teacher efficacy rating for both Ms. Adams and Ms. Bender in their small class sizes.

This table shows that Ms. Cook displayed negative teacher efficacy in eight of the twelve trends (ability to work with individual students/small groups, academics/assessments/report cards, discipline, self-reflection, teacher assistants, teacher retention, thoughts/feelings/attitudes at the end of a day, and class size effect on personal teacher efficacy/attitudes). She showed positive teacher efficacy in two of the twelve trends (student enjoyment and trust of students/ parents/school administrators), and she showed a balance of positive and negative teacher efficacy in two of the twelve trends (parent involvement and thoughts on control over academic success of students). Ms. Cook showed overall low, or negative, teacher efficacy, as she displayed negative teacher efficacy in eight of the twelve trends in her large class size.

Table 4.1 shows that Ms. Decker displayed negative teacher efficacy in seven of the twelve trends (discipline, student enjoyment, teacher assistants, teacher retention, thoughts/feelings/attitudes at the end of a day, trust of students/parents/school administrators, and class size effect on personal teacher efficacy/attitudes). She showed positive teacher efficacy in two of the twelve trends (parent involvement and thoughts on control over academic success of students), and she showed a balance of positive and negative teacher

efficacy in three of the twelve trends (ability to work with individual students/small groups, academics/assessments/report cards, and self-reflection). Ms. Decker showed overall low, or negative, efficacy, as she displayed negative teacher efficacy in seven of the twelve trends in her large class size.

The researcher used the quantitative scales of Bandura (Hoy, 2000) and Tschannen-Moran (2001) and adapted these scales in this qualitative study, and these questions are reflected in Table 4.1. The following interview questions from the two scales were used in the interviews of each participant: What is your background? What events led you into education? How academically successful do you feel your students are and why? To what do you attribute this success or lack of success? How much control do *you* feel you have over your students' academic success? Considering the number of students in your class, explain why you feel you are able or unable to give each student individual attention. How much can you do to influence the class sizes in your school? How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students? How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules? How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom? How much can you do to get parents to become involved in school activities? How much can you do to make students enjoy coming to school?

The questions adapted from the scales of Bandura and Tschannen-Moran were chosen to extract feelings and attitudes about teaching from each participant, as both scales focus on teacher efficacy and were pertinent to this small case study. The participants' answers to these questions, along with the data from the observations and journal entries, were analyzed and coded according to positive and negative phrases and/or words, and then trends began to

emerge in the coded data. The researcher looked at these trends and created Table 4.1 to report the findings of this small case study.

Table 4.1 Comparative Table of Participants and Trends

<u>Trends</u>	<u>Ms. Adams</u>	<u>Ms. Bender</u>	<u>Ms. Cook</u>	<u>Ms. Decker</u>
1. Ability to Work with Individual Students/ Small Groups	Positive	Positive	Negative	Balanced Positive and Negative
2. Academics/ Assessments/Report Cards	Positive	Positive	Negative	Balanced Positive and Negative
3. Discipline	Positive	Positive	Negative	Negative
4. Parent Involvement	Positive	Positive	Balanced Positive and Negative	Positive
5. Self-Reflection	Positive	Positive	Negative	Balanced Positive and Negative
6. Student Enjoyment	Positive	Positive	Positive	Negative
7. Teacher Assistants	Positive	Positive	Negative	Negative
8. Teacher Retention	Positive	Positive	Negative	Negative
9. Thoughts on Control over Academic Success of Students	Positive	Positive	Balanced Positive and Negative	Positive
10. Thoughts/Feelings/ Attitudes at the End of a Day	Positive	Positive	Negative	Negative
11. Trust of Students/ Parents/School Administrators	Positive	Positive	Positive	Negative
12. Class Size Effect on Personal Teacher Efficacy/Attitudes	Positive	Positive	Negative	Negative
Overall Level of Teacher Efficacy	High (Positive)	High (Positive)	Low (Negative)	Low (Negative)

Summary of Chapter Four

This chapter described in detail each participant's analysis of the interviews, observations, and journal entries that were conducted by the researcher. It also explained the trends that emerged in each participant's data: ability to work with individual students and/or small groups, academics/assessments/report cards, discipline, parent involvement, self-reflection, student enjoyment, teacher assistants, teacher retention, thoughts on control over academic success of students, thoughts/feelings/attitudes at the end of a day, trust of students/parents/school administrators, class size effect on personal teacher efficacy/attitudes, leveled math groups, small/large class size thoughts, and staff development ideas. This chapter also explained a researcher-created table that shows comparisons of the participants and the trends that emerged in the data collected. Chapter Five will present a summary, conclusions, discussion of outside variables and relevant studies, implications for practice, and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

This small qualitative case study on the impact of class size on teacher efficacy points to a number of issues that affect teachers and administrators in elementary schools. This study was triangulated through the use of interviews, observations, and journal entries from each of four teacher participants. The researcher used triangulation of these interviews, observations, and journal entries to answer the research question: “Does class size impact a teacher’s sense of personal teacher efficacy, and, if so, what kind of impact does class size have on that teacher’s personal teacher efficacy?” The researcher categorized trends that emerged from the data collected and formed conclusions for each teacher participant.

This chapter is divided into eight sections. First is a discussion of conclusions of each participant, including answering this case study’s research question and drawing conclusions from each participant’s data analysis. Second is a comparison of participants, which reviews each trend and how each participant compares to the others in their study results. The third section is a discussion of outside variables that may affect this case study’s outcome. The fourth section is a discussion of the researcher’s insight, and takes into account the researcher’s experience and thoughts about this case study. The fifth section focuses on relevant studies cited in Chapter Two and relates them to the number of students in this small case study. The sixth section is also a discussion of relevant studies cited in Chapter Two, and connects the studies to the results in this small qualitative case study. The seventh section

suggests implications for practice, and the eighth and final section is the discussion of recommendations for further research regarding class size and teacher efficacy.

Participant Conclusions

Ms. Adams. Regarding this study's research question, "Does class size impact a teacher's sense of personal teacher efficacy, and, if so, what kind of impact does class size have on that teacher's personal teacher efficacy?" the researcher believes that in this small case study, the small class size of twenty students seemed to have an impact on Ms. Adams's sense of personal teacher efficacy. Ms. Adams seemed to display overall positive teacher efficacy after analyzing the triangulated data collected. She showed positive teacher efficacy in all of the trends that emerged in this study: ability to work with individual students/small groups, academics/assessments/report cards, discipline, parent involvement, self-reflection, student enjoyment, teacher assistants, teacher retention, thoughts on control over academic success of students, thoughts/feelings/attitudes at the end of a day, trust of students/parents/school administrators, and class size effect on personal teacher efficacy/attitudes.

The researcher found in all data sources that Ms. Adams had positive interactions with her small class size, smiled frequently, and seemed to truly love and enjoy teaching her kindergarten class. This was particularly prevalent during the teacher observations of Ms. Adams. In these observations, she was kind, patient, and understanding with her students, and also displayed an overall positive attitude while teaching lessons to her small class size. Ms. Adams showed much love for her students by speaking to them respectfully and by

hugging them, and they returned their love for her by following the class rules and by showing affection to her, using kind words and hugging her frequently. During one of her observations, Ms. Adams gave constant positive feedback to her students, and making them feel good about their work (“Great job! I’m so proud of you!”). After analyzing all of the data reported in Chapter Four, the researcher believes that Ms. Adams has a high level of teacher efficacy with her small class size of twenty kindergarten students.

In this study, the researcher believes that the small class size Ms. Adams’ small class size contributed to her high level of teacher efficacy. Due to fewer students in her classroom, Ms. Adams had more time to consult with individual students, therefore increasing their achievement levels and extending their curriculum on a more personal basis. She had more time to focus on building relationships with each of her individual students, therefore decreasing behavior issues within her class. For example, during an observation, a student was misbehaving and Ms. Adams handled it by saying, “Johnny, what is our class rule we’ve discussed about using appropriate language? And what do you need to do to make a good choice?” Ms. Adams also happily utilized her teacher assistant and invited parents in to the classroom to be a third set of hands, and allowed parents to help her extend the curriculum to students, which raised their achievement levels as well; when her achievement levels increased, Ms. Adams felt more successful about her teaching and her students’ learning. Ms. Adams shared in her second interview with the researcher that her students were very academically successful this year, and that they were all on grade level or above grade level in almost every area.

Ms. Adams loves classroom teaching and believes she will be staying in the education field because of her love for children and due to the relationships she has built with each child in her small class (towards the end of this case study, she had just begun working on a Master's degree in education). Ms. Adams's positive thoughts and feelings at the end of her school days contributed to her positive outlook on her students and their successes. Ms. Adams shared in her interviews that her students enjoyed learning in her small class of twenty and that she was a large part of their successes, which made her feel like a successful teacher. The researcher believed that Ms. Adams' kindergarten classroom was a safe, friendly, and comfortable place to work and learn, and she enjoyed observing Ms. Adams interact with her students. Therefore, the researcher believes that the small class size of Ms. Adams has an effect on her teacher efficacy, and her teacher efficacy level is high.

Ms. Bender. Regarding this study's research question, the researcher believes that in this small case study, the small class size of nineteen students does seem to have an impact on the personal teacher efficacy of Ms. Bender. Ms. Bender, kindergarten teacher, displayed overall positive teacher efficacy after analyzing the triangulated data collected. She seemed to show positive teacher efficacy in all of the trends that emerged in this study: ability to work with individual students/small groups, academics/assessments/report cards, discipline, parent involvement, self-reflection, student enjoyment, teacher assistants, teacher retention, thoughts/feelings/attitudes at the end of a day, and class size effect on personal teacher efficacy/attitudes.

The researcher found in all data sources that Ms. Bender had mostly positive interactions with her small class size, spoke respectfully to her students, smiled frequently, and seemed to truly enjoy the students in her small class. The researcher enjoyed observing Ms. Bender, and noted that in her observations Ms. Bender displayed respect, kindness, patience, empathy, and understanding through her word choices and actions with each of her students. She called the students “sweetheart” and touched their hands or arms when she was talking to them to let them know she cared. Ms. Bender displayed an overall positive attitude while teaching her small class size. The researcher believes that Ms. Bender seemed to have a high sense of teacher efficacy with her small class size of nineteen kindergarten students.

The researcher believes that the small class size of Ms. Bender contributes largely to her high level of teacher efficacy. Teaching only nineteen students on a daily basis enabled her to spend more time teaching academic content in small groups and conference with individuals on a daily basis in all subjects. Conducting these important tasks allowed Ms. Bender to be aware of the academic levels of each student so she could give extra help to those who struggled or who needed to be challenged. In her second interview, Ms. Bender discussed that she was able to make her groups of students small (no larger than three students per group) in order to best meet their needs. She believed she had the ability to do this due to her smaller class size.

In her first observation, the researcher noticed that Ms. Bender had an “active” student in her small class, with whom she had the time to establish a relationship, and she was able to discuss his behavior with the student and his parent (she called the parent from the class phone) to ensure he was supported both at school and at home. Ms. Bender utilized

her teacher assistant and invited parents and families into the classroom on a regular basis, accommodating their schedules because she knew how important it was to parents and their children to work together at school. In her first observation, Ms. Bender modeled correct behavior to her students, and gave them time to practice good behavior with each other, following her example. The researcher believes spending time to help students to make good choices and the modeling of good behavior are proactive strategies to manage student behavior which helped Ms. Bender's class to follow the class rules.

It was evident to the researcher that Ms. Bender loves teaching and believes she will be staying in the education field because she loves children and the relationships she has built with each child in her small class (towards the end of this study she had just begun working on a Master's degree in education). The researcher believes that Ms. Bender's positive thoughts and feelings at the end of her school days contributed to her positive outlook on her students and their successes. In her observations of Ms. Bender, it seemed to the researcher that Ms. Bender truly loved teaching, and that her students truly loved her. Ms. Bender's own students gave hugs to her, and previous students from her past classes stopped by the classroom to give hugs to Ms. Bender as well. Ms. Bender's positive demeanor was noticed by her students and parents, and the researcher feels that her positive attitude led to the academic and social success of her students. In her interviews and journal entries, Ms. Bender discussed that she felt her students enjoyed learning in her small class of nineteen students and that she was a large part of their successes, which made her feel like a successful kindergarten teacher. Therefore, the researcher believes that Ms. Bender's small class size has an effect on her teacher efficacy, and her teacher efficacy level is high.

Ms. Adams' and Ms. Bender's study results follow Bandura's thought that a strong sense of personal efficacy is related to more social integration, better health, and higher achievement (Schwarzer & Fuchs, 1995). In their interviews and journal entries, both Ms. Adams and Ms. Bender discussed their socially interactive students, their positive health habits (and belief of less sickness), and high student achievement in their small class sizes.

Ms. Cook. Regarding this study's research question, "Does class size impact a teacher's sense of personal teacher efficacy, and, if so, what kind of impact does class size have on that teacher's personal teacher efficacy?" the researcher believes that in this small case study, the large class size of twenty-four students seems to have an impact on Ms. Cook's sense of personal teacher efficacy. Ms. Cook, first grade teacher, seemed to show overall negative teacher efficacy after analyzing the triangulated data collected. The researcher believes she showed negative teacher efficacy in the following trends that emerged in this study: ability to work with individual students/small groups, academics/assessments/report cards, discipline, self-reflection, teacher assistants, teacher retention, thoughts/feelings/attitudes at the end of a school day, and class size effect on personal teacher efficacy/attitudes. She displayed positive teacher efficacy in the following trends that emerged in this study: student enjoyment and trust of students/parents/school administrators. She displayed a balance of positive and negative teacher efficacy in the following trends that emerged in this study: parent involvement and thoughts on control over academic success of students.

The researcher believes Ms. Cook had more instances of negative teacher efficacy in her data sources. Ms. Cook was mostly negative in her interviews, becoming frustrated while discussing many of the trends that emerged in the data. She also displayed mostly negative teacher efficacy in her journal entries when writing about many of these trends. For example, when discussing her good and bad days in her first interview, she stated that this year she has had more discouraging days than positive days, partly due to not being able to meet each of her student's individual needs. During her observations, Ms. Cook had mostly negative interactions with students in her large class size, smiled infrequently, became visibly frustrated easily, and did not seem to enjoy teaching her class. She displayed an overall negative attitude while teaching her large class size. From analyzing all of the data reported in Chapter Four, the researcher believes that Ms. Cook seems to have a low sense of teacher efficacy with her large class size of twenty-four first grade students.

The researcher believes that the large class size of Ms. Cook contributes largely to her low level of teacher efficacy. Teaching twenty-four students on a daily basis seemed to be difficult for her and took a toll on her personal attitudes about teaching. Ms. Cook was unable to spend individual time with each student on a daily basis in all subjects, or even in one or two subjects. In her first interview, Ms. Cook discussed that she was frustrated with the fact that she could not spend time with each of her students in reading and math, even after using available morning arrival time and time after school (while students waited for the school bus) to help them with their academics. The researcher noticed that she worked mostly with her below-level students delivering intervention activities, and often her on-level and above-level students were overlooked. Ms. Cook discussed in her interviews that this year she

constantly worried that her students would not make adequate growth by the end of the school year.

Ms. Cook has several challenging behavior students in her classroom, and she redirected them on an ongoing basis throughout the school day. With so many students, she did not have the time to establish relationships with each student, and in her observations found herself struggling to maintain control of her classroom during the day. In her first interview, she discussed how she was discouraged each time she picked her students up from their special area classes, as the special area teacher often gave her a negative report of their behavior. This disappointed Ms. Cook.

Ms. Cook utilized her teacher assistant occasionally and invited parents into the classroom to help students in writing each day, but could not rely on parents to be dependable in the classroom. During an observation, Ms. Cook's teacher assistant was out of the classroom making paper copies, grading papers, and checking her email while Ms. Cook taught the lesson and struggled with keeping her class on-task.

While Ms. Cook enjoyed her class, she was unsure if she would be teaching in the classroom until retirement because of the continued large class sizes which create other stressors for her associated with classroom teaching. Ms. Cook discussed with the researcher in her interviews that she does love her class and wants to do a great job teaching, but that she is just so frustrated with her students' actions and disrespectfulness that she is constantly frustrated. Ms. Cook had more negative thoughts and feelings at the end of her school days, and her attitude about her class and teaching was more negative than positive. She put her heart into teaching her class, but felt she was not as successful as she should have been with

each student. She was struggling in her attitudes and actions as a first grade teacher of a large class size of twenty-four students. Therefore, the researcher believes that Ms. Cook's large class size has an impact on her teacher efficacy, and her teacher efficacy level is low.

Ms. Decker. Regarding this study's research question, the researcher believes that in this small case study, the large class size of twenty-four students does have an impact the personal teacher efficacy of Ms. Decker. Ms. Decker, first grade teacher, displayed overall negative teacher efficacy after analyzing the triangulated data collected. She seemed to show negative teacher efficacy in the following trends that emerged in this study: discipline, student enjoyment, teacher assistants, teacher retention, thoughts/feelings/attitudes at the end of a day, trust of students/parents/school administrators, and class size effect on personal teacher efficacy/attitudes. She displayed positive teacher efficacy in the following trends: parent involvement, and thoughts on control over academic success of students. She displayed a balance of positive and negative teacher efficacy in the following trends: ability to work with individual students/small groups, academics/assessments/report cards, and self-reflection.

The researcher found more instances of negative teacher efficacy in the data sources of Ms. Decker. Ms. Decker was mostly negative in her interviews, becoming audibly and visibly frustrated while answering her interview questions. She also displayed mostly negative teacher efficacy in her journal entries when writing about her daily tasks in teaching and student behavior, often sharing that her students were disrespectful to her and to each other. It seemed to the researcher that Ms. Decker did not want to be in the classroom with

her students, and was just fulfilling job obligations rather than putting her heart and soul into the learning of her students. Ms. Decker seemed to show an overall negative attitude while teaching her large class size, and the researcher believes that Ms. Decker has a low level of teacher efficacy with her large class size of twenty-four first grade students.

The researcher also believes that the large class size of Ms. Decker contributes largely to her low level of teacher efficacy. It was time-consuming and difficult for her to teach twenty-four first graders on a daily basis. She did not spend individual time with students on concepts that she taught, nor was she able to adequately conference with students due to time constraints. During an observation, Ms. Decker pulled small groups to work with her below-level students to help them to meet benchmarks and her on-level and higher-level students were overlooked; they slipped through the cracks and she worried that they would not make the growth expected by the end of the school year. In one of her journal entries, Ms. Decker wrote about her difficulty meeting with each student on a daily basis, and that she felt badly for not meeting with all students because she knew they needed her guidance to be successful.

Ms. Decker had several challenging behavior students in her classroom, and she spent much time redirecting, punishing, and speaking sharply to them throughout the day, often interrupting her lessons to do so. She shared in her data that she did not have the time to build relationships with her students in order to get to the root of their behavior issues, and found herself spending much more time than appropriate trying to discipline her class. She seemed to be unhappy as she taught lessons, and spoke quickly and sarcastically to her students when she was frustrated with their progress and/or behavior. During her observations, Ms. Decker

had overwhelmingly negative interactions with students in her large class size, smiled infrequently, became visibly frustrated easily, used sarcasm and made inappropriate remarks with her first grade students, and did not seem to find enjoyment in the teaching and learning of her students. In her first observation, Ms. Decker quieted her students by yelling “SHHHH!!” to them until they became quieter, and when one student had a hand raised, she yelled at him, “Do you need help?” in a sarcastic tone. The student timidly asked his question when she spoke to him in such a manner. The researcher noticed in her observations that the students in the classroom were not affectionate towards their teacher and were apprehensive about interacting with her.

Ms. Decker did not utilize her teacher assistant to her fullest potential, but instead tried to take on all classroom students and responsibilities herself which contributed to her negativity. During an observation, the researcher noted that the teacher assistant was checking her email and sitting watching Ms. Decker teach instead of being actively involved in the lessons. Ms. Decker invited parents into the classroom to help in writing each day, but was not warm or friendly to them when giving them their instructions. The researcher did not believe that Ms. Decker enjoyed teaching and Ms. Decker had stated in her data that she could not see herself in the classroom until retirement. Ms. Decker shared in an interview that she knows she needs to leave teaching but has no idea what to do instead. She thought her large class size, which created for her many other classroom teaching stressors, was a cause of her negative daily thoughts and attitudes in teaching. The researcher believes that teachers should have the best interest of each child in mind, and Ms. Decker’s large class size of twenty-four students made it difficult in her actions and attitudes to provide the best

educational opportunity for her students; Ms. Decker did not feel like a successful teacher. Therefore, the researcher believes that Ms. Decker's large class size has an impact on her teacher efficacy, and her teacher efficacy level is low.

It is important to note that Ms. Decker had inconsistencies throughout her data. She frequently commented on the stressors her large class size brought to her on a daily basis, but when directly asked if her class size played a part in her stress level, she answered that it only played a small part and that other outside influences played larger parts. However, from her observations and interviews, this was not the case. In her observations, she overwhelmingly displayed negative teacher efficacy and consistently showed a negative attitude due to the number of students in her class, therefore the demands of her class increased.

Ms. Cook and Ms. Decker also follow Bandura's thoughts on personal efficacy. Both participants showed negative, or low, efficacy levels, which according to Bandura can result in low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, helplessness, and the feelings of pessimistic thoughts about accomplishments and personal development (Schwarzer & Fuchs, 1995). Both Ms. Cook and Ms. Decker displayed feelings of helplessness, anxiety, pessimistic thoughts about their accomplishments, and they doubted their teaching abilities in their interviews, observations, and/or journal entries.

Comparison of Participants

As shown in Table 4.1, Ms. Adams and Ms. Bender both displayed overall positive teacher efficacy in their small class sizes, and Ms. Cook and Ms. Decker both displayed overall negative teacher efficacy in their large class sizes. In the first trend, ability to work

with individual students/small groups, Ms. Adams and Ms. Bender showed positive teacher efficacy, as they shared in their data collected that they were able to meet with each of their students on an individual basis, each day in each subject. However, Ms. Cook and Ms. Decker were unable to do so due to their large class sizes, which caused them frustration and stress. The lack of time seemed to be a frustrating issue for Ms. Cook and Ms. Decker, as they could meet with some individual students during the school day, but could not reach every student on a daily basis.

In the second trend, academics/assessments/report cards, both Ms. Adams and Ms. Bender showed positive teacher efficacy and were happy with their small class' results on assessments and report cards. Both teachers felt that their students were achieving to their abilities (or higher) and were pleased with student progress. However, Ms. Cook and Ms. Decker felt their students were not all being challenged or that some students were not meeting their benchmarks. Time was also a factor with report cards, as with twenty-four students both Ms. Cook and Ms. Decker discussed in their journal entries that they were frustrated with the number of report cards they had to complete in a short amount of time.

In the third trend, discipline, both Ms. Adams and Ms. Bender showed positive teacher efficacy and built relationships with their small classes of students from the first day of school. They were proactive in their discipline of students, and gave frequent positive praise during observations. However, Ms. Cook and Ms. Decker did not have time to establish relationships with each student from the first day of school due to the number of students in their large classes. They were frustrated with the number of discipline issues in their large classes and were overwhelmed by their students' constant interruptions and

inappropriate student choices, and spent much time redirecting and giving consequences to challenging students.

In the fourth trend, parent involvement, Ms. Adams, Ms. Bender, Ms. Cook, and Ms. Decker enjoyed having parents help in their small and large classes. All four participants worked hard to include parents in their students' lives, and discussed in their journal entries that they communicated regularly, via email and telephone, with most parents. They also all believed that having parents come into their classes on a regular basis gave them more time to meet with students on an individual or small group basis.

In the fifth trend, self-reflection, Ms. Adams and Ms. Bender shared in their interviews that they reflected on their teaching during scheduled times of the day, and they thought positively about how their students performed in all subject areas (including socially). However, Ms. Cook and Ms. Decker treated their self-reflection times as more of gripe sessions and tended to negatively complain about their classes to others. Each participant believed it is important for them to have an outlet away from the classroom, and each shared in their journal entries that they participate in some type of extra-curricular activity to decompress after a school day (yoga, exercising, family/friend time).

In the sixth trend, student enjoyment, Ms. Adams, Ms. Bender, and Ms. Cook believed their students enjoyed learning in their small classes, and they constantly taught through fun activities that motivated their students to do their best. They believed they worked hard to create a positive classroom atmosphere in order to instill a love of learning in their students. Ms. Adams, Ms. Bender, and Ms. Cook had student work displayed in their classrooms to celebrate student successes. However, Ms. Decker discussed in her interviews

that she did not feel she was able to teach through fun activities in her large class size (due to rigorous curriculum expectations) and did not believe parents and students thought highly enough of education to make it a priority, which made her job as the teacher even more difficult. The researcher noticed in her observations that Ms. Decker had very little student work displayed in her classroom.

In the seventh trend, teacher assistants, Ms. Adams and Ms. Bender trusted their teacher assistants to be a second “teacher” within their small classes. They found that having a teacher assistant gave them extra time to work with students both individually and in small groups, and relied heavily on their teacher assistants each day. However, in their observations, Ms. Cook and Ms. Decker did not fully trust their teacher assistants, only relied on them occasionally, and did not fully utilize their abilities and experiences. They often just completed the extra work (that a teacher assistant would normally complete) themselves.

In the eighth trend, teacher retention, Ms. Adams and Ms. Bender felt they loved their jobs and planned to stay in the education field until retirement. They have both begun working on their Master’s degrees in education, and believe they have the time and energy to take classes toward their advanced degrees. However, Ms. Cook discussed in her interviews that she was looking into pursuing a Master’s degree in special education, as this would enable her to leave the regular classroom and work in small groups during the school day. Both Ms. Cook and Ms. Decker do not see themselves in the regular education classroom until retirement due to increasingly large class sizes, time constraints, and lack of resources. Ms. Decker also discussed in her interviews that she had lost her love of teaching and had a

negative attitude about education; she felt she would not be in education until retirement and would be looking for a new field sometime in the future.

In the ninth trend, thoughts on control over academic success of students, all four participants felt they had control over their students' academic success. Each participant felt they had confidence in themselves to ensure their students' success. They believed their relationships with their students had an impact on their successes, as their students worked hard because they knew their teachers had faith in them. Ms. Cook also felt that she often had too much control over her class' academics, and struggled with several of her students because of their many needs which caused her frustration.

In the tenth trend, thoughts/feelings/attitudes at the end of a day, Ms. Adams and Ms. Bender discussed in their first interviews that they loved their jobs at the end of a typical day. They felt they worked hard, their students learned, and they constantly looked forward to the next day. However, Ms. Cook and Ms. Decker shared in their journal entries that they did not always feel positive about their days, and often left work feeling frustrated, stressed, overworked, and overwhelmed.

In the eleventh trend, trust of students/parents/school administrators, Ms. Adams, Ms. Bender, and Ms. Cook shared in their interviews and journal entries that they trusted their students, parents, and school administrators and felt their students, parents, and school administrators trusted them in return. They attributed this to their positive relationships and respect of each. However, Ms. Decker felt she was unable to build relationships with her students as intimately as she would have liked, which hindered her students' trust of her. In her interviews, she admitted that she did trust most parents in her class, but was hesitant to

trust her school administrators due to what she felt was a strained relationship between the school administrators and the other teachers in her school.

In the twelfth trend, class size effect on personal teacher efficacy/attitudes, Ms. Adams and Ms. Bender felt that teaching small class sizes this year made their attitudes more positive, kept more money in their personal bank accounts, helped them to target students' specific academic issues, and helped to curb discipline issues before they began. They both discussed in their interviews that they believed their small class sizes contributed to their positive attitude in the classroom and personal feelings of success. However, Ms. Cook and Ms. Decker did not feel respected or appreciated by students (and parents), were physically exhausted, and did not feel as though they were helping their students to reach their fullest potential due to the number of students in their classes. The researcher noticed their frustration in her observations of both Ms. Cook and Ms. Decker. They both had negative attitudes in this area, because more students meant more time and energy to do all of their required tasks as teachers.

Regarding the research question in this study, "Does class size impact a teacher's sense of personal teacher efficacy, and, if so, what kind of impact does class size have on that teacher's personal teacher efficacy?" the researcher compared all four teacher participants' collected data in order to formulate a conclusion for this small case study. The researcher coded the statements, observations, and thoughts of each participant as negative or positive, and determined the overall personal teacher efficacy of each participant depending on whether they displayed more positive or negative statements, observations, thoughts, and actions in each trend. Ms. Cook and Ms. Decker had several trends that showed a balance of

positive and negative levels, as their data reported the same number of positive and negative statements, observations, thoughts, and actions.

Regarding the research question in this small qualitative case study, the researcher believes that yes, class size does seem to impact a teacher's sense of personal teacher efficacy for these four teacher participants. In addition, the impact a class size has on each teacher participant's personal teacher efficacy is high (positive) for small class size teachers Ms. Adams and Ms. Bender, and is low (negative) for large class size teachers Ms. Cook and Ms. Decker. This conclusion was determined by the researcher after conducting a detailed data analysis and comparison of all data sources.

From the results of this study, the researcher believes that teacher efficacy is an important part of a teacher's well-being in the classroom. In this study, when teachers are happy with and excited about their teaching, and have a positive attitude with their students regularly, they perform their educational duties well and are successful. In addition, when teachers are positive and proactive with discipline, the discipline challenges within the classroom seem to be decreased. With fewer behavior disruptions, more direct instruction can be conducted which leads to higher student achievement. Higher student achievement and the success of each and every student in the classroom are the teachers' goals, which may be achieved by having a high sense of teacher efficacy.

Outside Variables

This small case study found that four specific participants within a specific school setting have high or low senses of teacher efficacy, due to one (class size) variable. However,

even though class size is an important variable that greatly affects these participants, there are other variables that must be taken into consideration when reporting study results. Other variables that may have been a consideration to this small case study are students' family units, curriculum and grading demands, and extra teacher duties.

Students' family units (private lives) are an outside variable that the participants were unable to change, but that affected their classrooms daily. Some of the students did not have support at home with their homework, teacher/parent conferences, discipline, and in their general education. This put them at a disadvantage academically and behaviorally, and affected the efficacy of the teachers in this small case study.

Increasing curriculum and grading demands, especially report cards in kindergarten and first grade, were another outside variable that the participants were unable to change in their classrooms. County expectations of what to teach and which assessments to give during certain times in the quarter, in addition to preparing detailed report cards for each student, affected the participants' sense of teacher efficacy in this small case study.

The participants were each part of a Professional Learning Team (PLT) that met weekly during the school day, which took at least one planning period per week away from each participant's daily schedule. This meant that each participant was not able to plan for the day, review lesson plans, or gather materials during this PLT meeting day, and may have required the participants to come in to school early or stay later after school in order to fulfill their organizational obligations. Decreasing their amount of time to plan for their school days may have affected the participants' sense of teacher efficacy in this small case study.

Researcher Insight

In this small qualitative case study, the two kindergarten teacher participants teaching small class sizes exhibited a high (positive) sense of teacher efficacy, and the two first grade teacher participants teaching large class sizes exhibited a low (negative) sense of teacher efficacy. In the researcher's eleven years of experience as a classroom teacher and as an elementary school administrator, she has had several encounters of negative teacher efficacy with kindergarten and first grade teachers. She worked with one kindergarten teacher with a low sense of teacher efficacy, and this teacher was a veteran teacher of thirteen years who struggled with classroom management, organizational skills, parent communication, and with accurately following the county curriculum. The researcher also worked with two first grade teachers during different years with low senses of teacher efficacy. Both of these teachers were also veteran teachers, one of fifteen years and one of ten years. These first grade teachers struggled with classroom management, organization of curriculum themes and general organization of the classroom, parent communication and conferencing with parents, accurately following the county curriculum, pulling small groups on a regular basis, and interacting in a positive manner with their grade level colleagues.

Most of the researcher's classroom experience was in first grade, which is a very demanding grade to teach due to the heavy curriculum demands. Students enter first grade at a basic reading level, and are expected to read at an advanced level by then end of their first grade year. This is very taxing on first grade teachers, as they must teach all reading skills to all students, meet frequently in small groups, focus on those who need extra support so they are able to meet benchmarks each quarter, and teach lessons that enable students to make

adequate growth by the end of the school year. These demands place more stress on teachers who teach first grade, which may be a cause of low teacher efficacy levels.

Relevant Studies and Class Size Numbers

The three class size studies referenced in Chapter Two that reduced class sizes to seventeen students or fewer were the Burke County, Guilford County, and Tennessee Project STAR studies. Students in those particular studies were in decreased class sizes and showed significant higher academic achievement on reading and math standardized assessments than their peers in larger class sizes. Mathews (2009) reported a study that included nineteen class size studies which showed little effect from reducing class sizes unless the number of students was reduced to twenty or fewer students. This finding of decreasing class sizes to twenty or fewer students is aligned with this small case study. In this small case study, Ms. Adams' small class size included twenty students, and Ms. Bender's small class size included nineteen students.

The class size studies referenced in Chapter Two found that student achievement was impacted in positive ways when class sizes were reduced to between thirteen and seventeen students. After analyzing and reporting the results of this small case study, the researcher concludes that a small class size of nineteen or twenty students did in fact make a difference in the lives of the two small class size participants, Ms. Adams and Ms. Bender, in the area of teacher efficacy. Their overall attitudes were positive throughout the study. As compared to the participants of the larger class sizes in this study (those of Ms. Cook and Ms. Decker),

Ms. Adams' and Ms. Bender's classes of nineteen or twenty students were small enough to make a difference in their teacher efficacy levels.

Ms. Adams and Ms. Bender showed positive attitudes, smiled frequently, spoke respectfully and patiently to their students, enjoyed their jobs as classroom teachers, met with students on an individual basis, had all students on or above grade level benchmarks, planned to stay in education in the long-term future, and both had just begun work on their Master's degrees in education. Ms. Adams and Ms. Bender showed these positive attitudes and actions while they were teaching small class sizes of nineteen or twenty students. However, nineteen to twenty students is higher than the suggested thirteen to seventeen students in the studies reported in Chapter Two.

In comparison, Ms. Cook and Ms. Decker showed mostly negative attitudes, smiled infrequently, were not patient with their students and often spoke unkindly to them during classroom observations, discussed that they did not enjoy their teaching jobs and were frustrated often, did not have time to meet with individual students daily, and they each had several students who were below benchmarks and felt they were unable to meet all students' needs. Ms. Cook planned to move out of regular classroom teaching and considered a Master's in special education, and Ms. Decker planned on leaving education altogether due to her dissatisfaction. Ms. Cook and Ms. Decker showed these negative attitudes and actions while they were teaching large class sizes of twenty-four students, which is in the span of the larger class sizes reported in Chapter Two.

Based on the class size and teacher efficacy results of this small case study, the researcher believes there is a difference between classes of nineteen/twenty students and

twenty-four students. The four to five fewer students seemed to make a difference in the attitudes, actions, and statements of the four teacher participants in this small case study which enables the researcher to believe that class sizes of twenty or fewer students is small enough to make a difference in the teacher efficacy levels of the teachers in this study.

Discussion of Relevant Studies and Table

This small qualitative case study can be linked to class size studies and teacher efficacy studies referenced in the Chapter Two Literature Review of this dissertation. According to “Smaller Classes Benefit Burke County” in 2004, the Burke County North Carolina class size study in 1991 reduced class sizes in grades first, second, and third from approximately twenty-four to fifteen students. The tasks of this study were to examine the research on class size and student achievement, to evaluate classroom space, and to determine the needs of the faculty and staff. The student achievement scores increased in the county due to the smaller class sizes, the district made Adequate Yearly Progress, and the study showed that teachers with fewer students spent six percent more time on instruction in the classroom than teachers in larger class sizes. Administrators, teachers, students, and parents also supported these smaller classes, and parents found that they had more opportunity to be involved in the classrooms, and their parent-teacher conference attendance increased to ninety-nine percent. This study in Burke County was such an overall success that they are researching reducing class sizes in fourth and fifth grades as well, and will use Title I funds to do so. The study results showed that teachers were better able to get to know

their students, were better able to meet each individual student's needs, and had the time to individualize their lessons (2001).

The study conducted in Burke County is directly linked to this small case study, because the results of the small case study. While the Burke County study did not directly study teacher efficacy, some of the results of the study were similar. The researcher's small case study also found that in their small class sizes, Ms. Adams and Ms. Bender were able to meet the needs of each of their individual students and were better able to establish relationships with their students, resulting in fewer discipline issues. This small case study and the Burke County study had common results, however the small case study took the results a step further by focusing on teacher efficacy in those small and large class sizes.

According to Pritchard (1999), a second class size study that is directly linked to this small case study is the Tennessee Project STAR study. In this study in Tennessee, seventy-nine schools participated in a four-year study in kindergarten, first, second, and third grades. There were three hundred classrooms and seven thousand students included in this study, and students and teachers were randomly assigned to three different classroom types: classes of thirteen to seventeen students with one teacher, classes of twenty-two to twenty-five students with one teacher, and classes of twenty-two to twenty-five students with one teacher and one full-time instructional aide.

The results of the Tennessee study showed that the students in the small classes of thirteen to seventeen students significantly outperformed their peers in both large class size types on standardized reading and math tests (Agron, 1999). The Tennessee study also showed that the teachers in small classes had more time to spend on individual instruction

and less time on organizational tasks and classroom management. This study found that student behavior is directly affected by class size, and children in smaller classes are more likely to be engaged in work and less likely to be disruptive during lessons (Barnett, Schulman, and Shore, 2004).

The results of the Tennessee study relate to the results of the researcher's small case study because they both have similar results regarding increased time spent on individualized instruction and issues with student behavior. Kindergarten teachers Ms. Adams and Ms. Bender were able to meet with their students individually on a daily basis in each subject and their students were meeting kindergarten benchmarks. Both Ms. Adams and Ms. Bender also spent time at the beginning of the school year, and continued all throughout the school year, establishing positive relationships with students and parents which curbed their discipline issues in their classrooms. They were able to be proactive rather than reactive when dealing with challenging students, and had parental support when giving student consequences for inappropriate behavior. These two areas of spending time on individualized instruction and having fewer student discipline issues led Ms. Adams and Ms. Bender to a higher sense of teacher efficacy in this small case study.

According to "Changes in Teacher Efficacy During the Early Years of Teaching," the Rand Corporation conducted a teacher efficacy study between the years of 1972 and 1975 which identified teacher efficacy as one of the few teacher characteristics linked to student achievement (Hoy, 2000). The Rand Corporation study is linked to this small case study because Ms. Adams and Ms. Bender, kindergarten teachers of small class sizes, both reported having their students reach expected benchmarks at the end of a school quarter. They were

able to meet with individual students in each academic subject, which enabled them to learn each student's academic weaknesses, and then they could re-teach accordingly. Having time to re-teach in each subject afforded the students in Ms. Adams' and Ms. Bender's classes to reach their expected kindergarten benchmarks. However, Ms. Cook and Ms. Decker, first grade teachers of large class sizes, reported struggling to have their students reach expected benchmarks, and did not expect them all to meet benchmarks due to low performance towards the end of the school quarter. Due to their large class size factor, they were unable to meet with individual students in each academic subject on a daily basis, and were not always aware of which student weaknesses to focus on in their teaching. They did not have the time to re-teach students as they needed, and some of their first grade students did not meet benchmarks by the quarter's end. This frustrated Ms. Cook and Ms. Decker, and decreased their senses of teacher efficacy.

According to Huitt in 2000, the goal of reducing class sizes is to increase student achievement, and teacher efficacy plays a part in this goal because teachers teach students to become successful in their academics. The success of students may be related to the success of teachers, and Huitt's Dimensions of Teacher Efficacy (Table 2.2), demonstrates that teacher efficacy plays a part in student achievement. Huitt defines the Dimensions of Teacher Efficacy as: 1) A sense of personal accomplishment-The teacher must view the work as meaningful and important; 2) Positive expectations for student behavior and achievement-The teacher must expect students to progress; 3) Personal responsibility for student learning-Accepts accountability and shows a willingness to examine performance; 4) Strategies for achieving objectives-Must plan for student learning, set goals for themselves, and identify

strategies to achieve them; 5) Positive effect-Feels good about teaching, about self, and about students; 6) Sense of control-Believes s/he can influence student learning; 7) Sense of common teacher/student goals-Develops a joint venture with students to accomplish goals; and 8) Democratic decision making-Involves students in making decisions regarding goals and strategies (2000).

In this small qualitative case study with four teacher participants, class size and teacher efficacy are directly linked to Huit's dimensions. The researcher believes that Ms. Adams' and Ms. Bender's high teacher efficacy levels relate to Huit's dimensions. They both did view their work as meaningful and important and felt that they were doing a good job educating their kindergarten students. However, Ms. Decker believed that her students could learn, but she struggled with confidence in her own teaching skills.

All four teacher participants had positive expectations for student behavior and achievement, however Ms. Adams and Ms. Bender began creating positive relationships with their students from the beginning of the school year and were proactive in their discipline approaches. Ms. Bender and Ms. Decker had positive behavioral expectations for their first grade students as well, but their students did not strive to meet their expectations, which Ms. Cook and Ms. Decker believed was partly due to not having the time to establish those personal relationships.

Both Ms. Adams and Ms. Bender had a positive affect and felt good about their teaching, about themselves, and about their students. They had positive attitudes on a daily basis and seemed to truly enjoy teaching their small classes of kindergarten students. They both were very positive in their interactions with their students, teacher assistants, and

parents in the classroom, and self-reflected daily to brainstorm ways to constantly make their teaching more effective. They seemed to genuinely love their jobs and their students, and this love was relayed to their students which seemed to increase the students' drive to please their teachers and to perform well on assessments. Ms. Cook and Ms. Decker had a more negative affect in their teaching, and did not feel confident about their teaching abilities. Many of their students struggled both academically and socially, which the researcher believed decreased the teacher participants' efficacy levels. Ms. Decker did not feel good about teaching her students, and often engaged her first grade students in arguments and used sarcasm while disciplining students.

All of the teacher participants in this small case study believed they had a sense of control and that they could influence student learning. From the discussions in their interviews, they all worked hard to encourage their students to make progress (both academically and socially), and tried to create an environment rich for learning. Although each teacher participant worked hard to influence student learning, Ms. Adams and Ms. Bender did so with a positive attitude and student support. The researcher believes that with fewer students in their small classes, they were better able to maintain a positive attitude and their students were more inclined to be supportive and perform for their teachers. Ms. Cook and Ms. Decker did not always maintain positive attitudes and lost control of their students when they were observed by the researcher, and did not have the student support that may have been needed for reaching student goals. While Ms. Cook and Ms. Decker believed they had a sense of control over their students, they did not practice this in a positive manner during their observations and from their statements in their journal entries and interviews.

Implications for Practice

There are several implications for practice that the researcher suggests. Since this study found that the two participants teaching small class sizes have a high sense of teacher efficacy and the two participants teaching large class sizes have a low sense of teacher efficacy, it is suggested that school administrators offer teacher in-service workshops for teachers of large class sizes as well as for first-year teachers. According to Protheroe's article in the *National Association of Elementary School Principals* in 2008, school administrators can help remedy low senses of teacher efficacy if they "provide efficacy-building mastery experiences" through "thoughtfully designed staff development activities and action research projects." Workshops may include ways to organize a large class size, ways to efficiently collect and graph data, ways to manage the minimal amount of planning time during the school day, ways to complete report cards in a non-stressful manner, ways to use teacher assistants and parent volunteers to their fullest potential, ways to utilize fellow teachers as resources, self-reflection techniques, and ways to de-stress after a difficult day. First-year teachers may benefit from these workshops because Bandura's theory of self-efficacy states that efficacy must be influenced early in the learning stages (such as in the first years of teaching) and this may be significant in the long-term teacher efficacy development (Hoy, 2000).

Another reason the researcher suggests school administrators plan in-service workshops is because funding has been limited to schools and class sizes are increasing, not decreasing, due to state and federal funding. Due to decreased funding, class sizes may continue to rise and teachers may need to learn strategies regarding how to most effectively

teach their classes to continue to be retained in education. A fear is that more teachers may leave teaching because of increasing class sizes, which impacts teacher retention.

A second implication for practice is to hire more teacher assistants to help teachers who teach large class sizes. In this small case study, the participants who taught the large class sizes were unhappy with only having a part-time teacher assistant, and this negatively affected their teacher efficacy. If large class sizes are able to utilize full-time teacher assistants to help with all of the classroom tasks, instruction, etc., those teaching large class sizes may have increased teacher efficacy. Along this same vein, schools may find it beneficial to hire parent assistants for a few hours per day to assist the classroom teachers of large class sizes. A reliable parent helping would also be an extra set of hands to tutor, monitor, and assist the classroom teachers. The researcher believes having teacher in-service workshops on ways to best utilize teacher assistants and/or parent volunteers would be beneficial for maximum student achievement.

Recommendations for Further Research

This qualitative case study reached in-depth into the teacher efficacy of four public school teacher participants in a southeastern state. It can be concluded that teachers in a similar teaching situation as these participants would have similar teacher efficacy ratings. However, a study of a larger population sample of teachers using similar criteria as these four teachers may produce different results. The researcher recommends an additional study to be conducted with more teacher participants to determine if teachers in a different school (but with similar school criteria and conditions) would be similar to these study results.

The researcher recommends that a quantitative study using Bandura's teacher efficacy scale be conducted in order to encompass a larger sampling of participants, more specific to teacher efficacy questions (Appendix B). It would delve into efficacy with more specificity (because Bandura's scale is quantitatively specific). Bandura's likert rating scales are scored according to each individual quantitative question, and high or low self-efficacy is determined depending on the high or low numbers chosen for each question. Using Bandura's likert scales in a quantitative study would utilize teacher participants in small and large classes and a researcher would administer Bandura's rating scales to see if class size effects teacher efficacy on a larger scale. Additionally, the use of Tschannen-Moran's teacher self-efficacy likert scales could be used in conjunction with Bandura's scales in a future study, as Tschannen-Moran's scales are also quantitative (Appendix C). Tschannen-Moran's scales are scored by subgrouping quantitative questions, analyzing each subgroup of scores, and then high or low teacher self-efficacy is determined depending on the mean of each subgroup.

Another study that is recommended by the researcher is a qualitative study regarding the effect of class size on teacher efficacy in a class with a special education cluster ("cluster" refers to a group of special education students placed in a teacher's classroom to be included in daily activities). This study may look into whether a cluster of special needs students receive the attention they need in a small or large class size, and how the teacher(s) feel about their teaching (efficacy) with a cluster of special education students. This study is recommended by the researcher because both of the participants teaching the larger classes of students in the current study seemed to struggle with the size of their classes and the

inclusion of two to three students with special needs. A follow-up study would look at whether special education clusters have an effect on personal teacher efficacy in small and large classes, and could offer suggestions for teaching small or large classes with special education clusters in the future.

Summary of Chapter Five

In this small qualitative case study the researcher believes that the two kindergarten teacher participants of small class sizes of twenty or fewer students demonstrated a high (positive) sense of teacher efficacy, and the two first grade teacher participants of large class sizes of twenty-four students demonstrated a low (negative) sense of teacher efficacy. The participants of small class sizes, Ms. Adams and Ms. Bender, were generally positive in all of the data the researcher collected and analyzed, and the participants seemed to enjoy their jobs as teachers. Both Ms. Adams and Ms. Bender plan to stay in the education field, and both participants' students were academically successful and were making appropriate progress toward their quarterly benchmarks. Ms. Adams and Ms. Bender had academically successful students, which helped to promote their own excitement and high sense of teacher efficacy. According to Tschannen-Moran, teachers with a greater sense of teacher efficacy demonstrate a greater commitment to teaching and greater enthusiasm for teaching. They are more inclined to be retained as teachers (2001). The researcher believes this to be true in this small case study as well.

The participants of the large class sizes in this study, Ms. Cook and Ms. Decker, were overall negative in their collected data sources. Ms. Cook seemed to enjoy her teaching job

and loved her first grade students, but was frequently frustrated with discipline and her students' levels of achievement. She struggled with negativity both inside the classroom and out on a daily basis. Ms. Decker did not seem to enjoy her teaching job with her first graders, and was ready to leave the classroom due to dissatisfaction. She was frequently frustrated with behavior issues within her classroom, the family unit at home, and the curriculum demands of teachers in her school. The researcher believes that the frustration displayed from Ms. Cook and Ms. Decker, combined with their students not making expected academic gains, was a cause for them to have a low sense of teacher efficacy.

The teacher participants in this study may benefit from teacher in-service workshops focusing on behavior management, how to utilize teacher assistants within the classroom, strategies for implementing curriculum, and grading strategies. The teacher participants in this study may also benefit from the hiring of more teacher assistants, or parent volunteers, to support learning in their classrooms so that the needs of all students are met.

The researcher recommends further research to be conducted, as this study was a small qualitative case study that included only four teacher participants. An additional qualitative study (similar to this case study) including more teacher participants, may result in similar or different findings. A follow-up quantitative study using the teacher efficacy scales of Bandura and/or Tschannen-Moran may be useful in determining if class size impacts teacher efficacy with a larger population of teacher participants. A third recommended study is one that is similar to this case study, but with the inclusion of special education clusters of students to look into whether clusters of special education students

receive the attention they need in small or large class sizes, and to look into the effects of teacher efficacy in this area.

In this small case qualitative case study, it seems to the researcher that the teacher participants in small class sizes had a high sense of teacher efficacy and the teacher participants in large class sizes had a low sense of teacher efficacy. The area of class size on teacher efficacy continues to remain a viable area of qualitative and quantitative study, which requires further investigation.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A. Initial Guiding Interview Questions

Initial Guiding Interview Questions

1. What is your background?
2. What events led you into education? Explain.
3. How academically successful do you feel your students are and why?
4. To what do you attribute this success or lack of success?
5. How much control do *you* feel you have over your students' academic success?
6. Considering the number of students in your class, explain why you feel you are able or unable to give each student individual attention.
7. Why (or why do you not believe) you are a powerful influence on student achievement (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, p.39, 1998)?
8. How often do you self-reflect on your own after teaching?
9. How do you find your own self-reflecting to be helpful?

Appendix B. Bandura's Self-Efficacy Scale

**BANDURA'S INSTRUMENT
TEACHER SELF-EFFICACY SCALE**

This questionnaire is designed to help us gain a better understanding of the kinds of things that create difficulties for teachers in their school activities. Please indicate your opinions about each of the statements below by circling the appropriate number. Your answers will be kept strictly confidential and will not be identified by name.

Efficacy to Influence Decision making

How much can you influence the decisions that are made in the school?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Nothing		Very Little		Some Influence		Quite a Bit		A Great Deal

How much can you express your views freely on important school matters?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Nothing		Very Little		Some Influence		Quite a Bit		A Great Deal

Efficacy to Influence School Resources

How much can you do to get the instructional materials and equipment you need?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Nothing		Very Little		Some Influence		Quite a Bit		A Great Deal

Instructional Self-Efficacy

How much can you do to influence the class sizes in your school?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Nothing		Very Little		Some Influence		Quite a Bit		A Great Deal

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

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Nothing		Very Little		Some Influence		Quite a Bit		A Great Deal

How much can you do to promote learning when there is lack of support from the home?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Nothing		Very Little		Some Influence		Quite a Bit		A Great Deal

How much can you do to keep students on task on difficult assignments?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Nothing		Very Little		Some Influence		Quite a Bit		A Great Deal

How much can you do to increase students' memory of what they have been taught in previous lessons?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Nothing		Very Little		Some Influence		Quite a Bit		A Great Deal

How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in schoolwork?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Nothing		Very Little		Some Influence		Quite a Bit		A Great Deal

How much can you do to get students to work together?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Nothing		Very Little		Some Influence		Quite a Bit		A Great Deal

How much can you do to overcome the influence of adverse community conditions on students' learning?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Nothing		Very Little		Some Influence		Quite a Bit		A Great Deal

How much can you do to get children to do their homework?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Nothing		Very Little		Some Influence		Quite a Bit		A Great Deal

Disciplinary Self-Efficacy

How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Nothing		Very Little		Some Influence		Quite a Bit		A Great Deal

How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Nothing		Very Little		Some Influence		Quite a Bit		A Great Deal

How much can you do to prevent problem behavior on the school grounds?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Nothing		Very Little		Some Influence		Quite a Bit		A Great Deal

Efficacy to Enlist Parental Involvement

How much can you do to get parents to become involved in school activities?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Nothing		Very Little		Some Influence		Quite a Bit		A Great Deal

How much can you assist parents in helping their children do well in school?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Nothing		Very Little		Some Influence		Quite a Bit		A Great Deal

How much can you do to make parents feel comfortable coming to school?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Nothing		Very Little		Some Influence		Quite a Bit		A Great Deal

Efficacy to Enlist Community Involvement

How much can you do to get community groups involved in working with the schools?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Nothing		Very Little		Some Influence		Quite a Bit		A Great Deal

How much can you do to get churches involved in working with the school?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Nothing		Very Little		Some Influence		Quite a Bit		A Great Deal

How much can you do to get businesses involved in working with the school?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Nothing		Very Little		Some Influence		Quite a Bit		A Great Deal

How much can you do to get local colleges and universities involved in working with the school?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Nothing		Very Little		Some Influence		Quite a Bit		A Great Deal

Efficacy to Create a Positive School Climate

How much can you do to make the school a safe place?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Nothing		Very Little		Some Influence		Quite a Bit		A Great Deal

How much can you do to make students enjoy coming to school?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Nothing		Very Little		Some Influence		Quite a Bit		A Great Deal

How much can you do to get students to trust teachers?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Nothing		Very Little		Some Influence		Quite a Bit		A Great Deal

How much can you help other teachers with their teaching skills?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Nothing		Very Little		Some Influence		Quite a Bit		A Great Deal

How much can you do to enhance collaboration between teachers and the administration to make the school run effectively?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Nothing		Very Little		Some Influence		Quite a Bit		A Great Deal

How much can you do to reduce school dropout?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Nothing		Very Little		Some Influence		Quite a Bit		A Great Deal

How much can you do to reduce school absenteeism?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Nothing		Very Little		Some Influence		Quite a Bit		A Great Deal

How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in schoolwork?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Nothing		Very Little		Some Influence		Quite a Bit		A Great Deal

Appendix C. Tschannen-Moran's Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale

Tschannen-Moran's Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale

Teacher Beliefs - TSES		This questionnaire is designed to help us gain a better understanding of the kinds of things that create challenges for teachers. Your answers are confidential.								
<p>Directions: Please indicate your opinion about each of the questions below by marking any one of the nine responses in the columns on the right side, ranging from (1) "None at all" to (9) "A Great Deal" as each represents a degree on the continuum.</p> <p>Please respond to each of the questions by considering the combination of your current ability, resources, and opportunity to do each of the following in your present position.</p>		None at all	Very Little	Some Degree	Quite A Bit	A Great Deal				
1.	How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2.	How much can you do to help your students think critically?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
3.	How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
4.	How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
5.	To what extent can you make your expectations clear about student behavior?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
6.	How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
7.	How well can you respond to difficult questions from your students?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
8.	How well can you establish routines to keep activities running smoothly?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
9.	How much can you do to help your students value learning?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10.	How much can you gauge student comprehension of what you have taught?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
11.	To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
12.	How much can you do to foster student creativity?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
13.	How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
14.	How much can you do to improve the understanding of a student who is failing?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
15.	How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
16.	How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
17.	How much can you do to adjust your lessons to the proper level for individual students?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
18.	How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
19.	How well can you keep a few problem students from ruining an entire lesson?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
20.	To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
21.	How well can you respond to defiant students?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
22.	How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
23.	How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
24.	How well can you provide appropriate challenges for very capable students?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Directions for Scoring the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale¹

Developers: Megan Tschannen-Moran, College of William and Mary
Anita Woolfolk Hoy, the Ohio State University.

Construct Validity

For information the construct validity of the Teachers' Sense of Teacher efficacy Scale, see:

Tschannen-Moran, M., & Woolfolk Hoy, A. (2001). Teacher efficacy: Capturing an elusive construct. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 17*, 783-805.

Factor Analysis

As we have used factor analysis to test this instrument, we have consistently found three moderately correlated factors: *Efficacy in Student Engagement*, *Efficacy in Instructional Practices*, and *Efficacy in Classroom Management*. At times, however, the make up of the scales may vary slightly. With preservice teachers we recommend that the full scale (either 24-item or 12-item short form) be used, because the factor structure often is less distinct for these respondents.

Subscale Scores

To determine the *Efficacy in Student Engagement*, *Efficacy in Instructional Practices*, and *Efficacy in Classroom Management* subscale scores, we compute unweighted means of the items that load on each factor. Generally these groupings are:

Short Form

Efficacy in Student Engagement: Items 2, 4, 7, 11
Efficacy in Instructional Strategies: Items 5, 9, 10, 12
Efficacy in Classroom Management: Items 1, 3, 6, 8

Long Form

Efficacy in Student Engagement: Items 1, 2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 14, 22
Efficacy in Instructional Strategies: Items 7, 10, 11, 17, 18, 20, 23, 24
Efficacy in Classroom Management: Items 3, 5, 8, 13, 15, 16, 19, 21

Reliabilities

In the study reported in Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy (2001) above the following reliabilities were found:

	Long Form			Short Form		
	Mean	SD	alpha	Mean	SD	alpha
TSES	7.1	.94	.94	7.1	.98	.90
<i>Engagement</i>	7.3	1.1	.87	7.2	1.2	.81
<i>Instruction</i>	7.3	1.1	.91	7.3	1.2	.86
<i>Management</i>	6.7	1.1	.90	6.7	1.2	.86

¹ Because this instrument was developed at the Ohio State University, it is sometimes referred to as the *Ohio State Teacher Efficacy Scale*. We prefer the name, *Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale*.

Appendix D. Second and Third Interview Follow-up Questions

Second and Third Interview Follow-up Questions

(using the adapted instrument questions from Bandura and Tschannen-Moran)

1. How much can you do to influence the class sizes in your school? Explain.
2. How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students? Explain.
3. How much can you do to keep students on task on difficult assignments? Explain.
4. To what extent can you make your expectations clear about student behavior? Explain.
5. How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules? Explain.
6. How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom? Explain.
7. How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy? Explain.
8. How well can you keep a few problem students from ruining an entire lesson? Explain.
9. How well can you respond to defiant students? Explain.
10. How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom?
11. How much can you do to get parents to become involved in school activities? Explain.

12. How much can you do to make students enjoy coming to school? Explain.

13. How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school? Explain.

Appendix E. IRB Approval and Proposal

North Carolina State University is a land-grant
university and a constituent institution of the
University of North Carolina

Office of Research and Innovation
Division of Research Administration

NC STATE UNIVERSITY

Campus Box 7514
Raleigh, North Carolina 27695-7514

919.515.2444 (phone)
919.515.7721 (fax)

From: Carol Mickelson, IRB Coordinator
North Carolina State University
Institutional Review Board

Date: June 24, 2011

Title: The Impact of Class Size on Teacher Efficacy

IRB#: 1994

Dear Ms. Cara Sullivan,

The project listed above has been reviewed by the NC State Institutional Review Board for the Use of Human Subjects in Research, and is approved for one year. **This protocol will expire on May 16, 2012 and will need continuing review before that date.**

NOTE:

1. You must use the attached consent forms which have the approval and expiration dates of your study.
2. This board complies with requirements found in Title 45 part 46 of The Code of Federal Regulations. For NCSU the Assurance Number is: FWA00003429.
3. Any changes to the protocol and supporting documents must be submitted and approved by the IRB prior to implementation.
4. If any unanticipated problems occur, they must be reported to the IRB office within 5 business days by completing and submitting the unanticipated problem form on the IRB website.
5. Your approval for this study lasts for one year from the review date. If your study extends beyond that time, including data analysis, you must obtain continuing review from the IRB.

Sincerely,



Carol Mickelson
NC State IRB

**North Carolina State University
Institutional Review Board for the Use of Human Subjects in Research
GUIDELINES FOR A PROPOSAL NARRATIVE**

In your narrative, address each of the topics outlined below. Every application for IRB review must contain a proposal narrative, and failure to follow these directions will result in delays in reviewing/processing the protocol.

A. INTRODUCTION

1. Briefly describe in lay language the purpose of the proposed research and why it is important.

This study is being conducted to see if class size has any impact on the self efficacy of teachers.

This study is important in that it will examine if teachers in a small class size have positive or negative teacher efficacy levels, which may ultimately impact teacher retention in a school system. Also, school administrators could use this study to help determine whether their own teachers have positive or negative teacher efficacy levels and could create appropriate teacher in-services (workshops) to help raise the levels of teacher efficacy.

2. If student research, indicate whether for a course, thesis, dissertation, or independent research.

This study is a dissertation research project to satisfy the requirements for the Doctorate of Education degree in the Educational Administration and Supervision program.

B. SUBJECT POPULATION

1. How many subjects will be involved in the research?

Four public school teachers will be involved in this study.

2. Describe how subjects will be recruited. Please provide the IRB with any recruitment materials that will be used.

Subjects for this study are a purposeful sample chosen because of their class sizes in an elementary school. Two of the participants teach in small class sizes (20 or fewer students) and two participants teach in large class sizes (24 or more students).

3. List specific eligibility requirements for subjects (or describe screening procedures), including those criteria that would exclude otherwise acceptable subjects.

The subjects chosen for this study are all public school teachers with tenure. Two are chosen because they teach a small class size (20 or fewer students) and two are chosen because they teach a large class size (24 or more students). All four teachers teach in the same elementary school and have taught in North Carolina for at least five years.

4. Explain any sampling procedure that might exclude specific populations.

N/A

5. Disclose any relationship between researcher and subjects - such as, teacher/student; employer/employee.

There is no relationship between the researcher and subjects.

6. Check any vulnerable populations included in study:

minors (under age 18) - if so, have you included a line on the consent form for the parent/guardian signature

fetuses

pregnant women

persons with mental, psychiatric or emotional disabilities

persons with physical disabilities

economically or educationally disadvantaged

prisoners

elderly

students from a class taught by principal investigator

other vulnerable population.

If any of the above are used, state the necessity for doing so. Please indicate the approximate age range of the minors to be involved. **N/A**

C. PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED

1. In lay language, describe completely all procedures to be followed during the course of the experimentation. Provide sufficient detail so that the Committee is able to assess potential risks to human subjects.

All four teacher participants will be observed by the researcher for one hour each, two times. All four teacher participants will also be interviewed and audio-taped for one hour each, two times. All four teacher participants will be asked to keep a paper journal to write down their thoughts and feelings about their classes and class sizes at least two to three times per week.

2. How much time will be required of each subject?

Each teacher participant will be required to be observed for two hours, to interview with the researcher for two hours, and to write in a journal for an estimated time of twenty minutes per week for nine weeks. The total required time will be approximately seven hours.

D. POTENTIAL RISKS

1. State the potential risks (physical, psychological, financial, social, legal or other) connected with the proposed procedures and explain the steps taken to minimize these risks.

There are no known risks. However, a request will be proposed to the school principal with the intent of the researcher, with the study outlined. The teacher participants will not be used by name in this study, but will instead have pseudonyms. Any other people the teacher participants may name (administrators, students, or parents) in their notes or interviews will also be called by pseudonyms to protect themselves, the school, the administrators, and the school district. Each teacher participant will also sign an Informal Consent Form before participating in this study.

2. Will there be a request for information which subjects might consider to be personal or sensitive (e.g. private behavior, economic status, sexual issues, religious beliefs, or other matters that if

made public might impair their self-esteem or reputation or could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability)?

- a. If yes, please describe and explain the steps taken to minimize these risks.

No, there will not be a request for personally sensitive material in this study.

3. Could any of the study procedures produce stress or anxiety, or be considered offensive, threatening, or degrading? If yes, please describe why they are important and what arrangements have been made for handling an emotional reaction from the subject.

No, there will be no stress or anxiety to the teacher participants in this study.

4. How will data be recorded and stored?

Data will be stored by the researcher in a locked and secure location away from the school. Each time the researcher collects data from the teacher participants, the data will be removed directly after the data is collected.

- a. How will identifiers be used in study notes and other materials?

Pseudonyms will be used for each participant in this study.

- b. How will reports will be written, in aggregate terms, or will individual responses be described?

Individual responses will be described in this study. There will be no connection between the school site, administrators, or the school district in these responses.

5. If audio or videotaping is done how will the tapes be stored and how/when will the tapes be destroyed at the conclusion of the study.

Audio-tapes will be made during the interviews of each of the participants. The audio-tapes will be sent to a transcription service and will be destroyed at the completion of this dissertation project.

6. Is there any deception of the human subjects involved in this study? If yes, please describe why it is necessary and describe the debriefing procedures that have been arranged.

No, there is no deception of the human subjects involved in this study.

E. POTENTIAL BENEFITS

This does not include any form of compensation for participation.

1. What, if any, direct benefit is to be gained by the subject? If no direct benefit is expected, but indirect benefit may be expected (knowledge may be gained that could help others), please explain.

Teacher participants will benefit from personal reflection of how they feel about their own teaching. They will gain insight into their own thoughts and feelings and this may lead them to

thoughts of how to improve their teaching strategies, depending upon whether they have a small or large class size.

F. COMPENSATION

1. Explain compensation provisions if the subject withdraws prior to completion of the study.
N/A
2. If class credit will be given, list the amount and alternative ways to earn the same amount of credit.
N/A

G. COLLABORATORS

1. If you anticipate that additional investigators (other than those named on **Cover Page**) may be involved in this research, list them here indicating their institution, department and phone number.
N/A
2. Will anyone besides the PI or the research team have access to the data (including completed surveys) from the moment they are collected until they are destroyed
No, no one else will have access to the data in this study.

H. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1. If a questionnaire, survey or interview instrument is to be used, attach a copy to this proposal.
See attached.
2. Attach a copy of the informed consent form to this proposal.
See attached.
3. Please provide any additional materials that may aid the IRB in making its decision.
A copy of the Initial Guiding Interview Questions is attached. These guiding questions will frame the interview, and more questions will be developed later on which will be included in the interviews as the study evolves.

Appendix F. Informed Consent Form

Revised 01/2008

**North Carolina State University
Institutional Review Board For The Use of Human Subjects in Research**

GUIDELINES FOR PREPARATION OF INFORMED CONSENT FORM

An **Informed Consent Statement** has two purposes: (1) to provide adequate information to potential research subjects to make an informed choice as to their participation in a study, and (2) to document their decision to participate. In order to make an informed choice, potential subjects must understand the study, how they are involved in the study, what sort of risks it poses to them and who they can contact if a problem arises (see informed consent checklist for a full listing of required elements of consent). Please note that **the language used to describe these factors must be understandable to all potential subjects, which typically means an eighth grade reading level**. The informed consent form is to be read and signed by each subject who participates in the study **before** they begin participation in the study. A duplicate copy is to be provided to each subject.

If subjects are **minors (i.e. any subject under the age of 18)** use the following guidelines for obtaining consent:

- 0-5 years old** – requires signature of parent(s)/guardian/legal representative
- 6 – 10 years old** - requires signature of parent(s)/guardian/legal representative and verbal assent from the minor. In this case a minor assent script should be prepared and submitted along with a parental consent form.
- 11 - 17 years old** - requires signature of both minor and parent/guardian/legal representative

If the subject or legal representative is *unable to read and/or understand the written consent form*, it must be verbally presented in an understandable manner and witnessed (with signature of witness). If there is a good chance that your intended subjects will not be able to read and/or understand a written consent form, please contact the IRB office (919-515-4514) for further instructions.

*For your convenience, attached find a sample consent form template that contains necessary information. In generating a form for a specific project, the principal investigator should complete the underlined areas of the form and replicate all of the text that is not underlined, except for the compensation section where you should select the appropriate text to be used out of several different scenarios.

North Carolina State University
INFORMED CONSENT FORM for RESEARCH
This form is valid May 16, 2011 to May 16, 2012

Title of Study: **THE IMPACT OF CLASS SIZE ON TEACHER EFFICACY**

Principal Investigator: Cara Constantine Sullivan

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Kenneth H. Brinson, Jnr.

What are some general things you should know about research studies?

You are being asked to take part in a research study. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to be a part of this study, to choose not to participate or to stop participating at any time without penalty. The purpose of research studies is to gain a better understanding of a certain topic or issue. You are not guaranteed any personal benefits from being in a study. Research studies also may pose risks to those that participate. In this consent form you will find specific details about the research in which you are being asked to participate. If you do not understand something in this form it is your right to ask the researcher for clarification or more information. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you. If at any time you have questions about your participation, do not hesitate to contact the researcher(s) named above.

What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of this study is to determine if class size has an impact on teacher efficacy over a period of eight to nine weeks. Determining if there is a relationship between class size and how teachers feel they teach could help to increase teacher awareness of how their feelings of teaching are demonstrated to their students while the teachers instruct. You will be asked to write in a journal each week to help make you aware of your own attitudes and feelings, helping you to become more aware of how your own attitudes affect your students when learning. In this study, you may become more aware of your own attitudes and feelings through your introspection of writing in your journal.

On a broader scale, this study may show how class size affects personal teacher efficacies. As a result of this study, combined with the results of the many other main themes of studies documented in the literature review in the dissertation of the researcher, the researcher may find it possible to create potential staff development workshops for teachers of large or small class sizes to be utilized by the principal.

What will happen if you take part in the study?

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to be interviewed by the researcher two times for one hour each time, be observed in your classroom two times for one hour each, and keep a paper journal (provided by the researcher) in which to write down your thoughts and feelings about how you feel about your class size and daily activities that happen within your class (2-3 entries per week). Each interview and observation day and time will be decided by the participant at your convenience.

Interviews will take place at the school in the classroom of each teacher participant. However, due to confidentiality issues, you may choose to be interviewed at an outside location of your choice. Each interview will be audio-taped, will be sent to a confidential transcription service, and will be destroyed at the completion of this dissertation project.

Prior to the observations, you will be asked to tell your students that a visitor will be in the classroom observing. If students ask questions, you may explain that the researcher is doing a project and will be watching you teach, noting that the researcher will not be focused on the students but instead on the teacher.

Regarding journal entries, you will be asked to keep a paper journal (provided by the researcher) to write down your thoughts and feelings about your class and class size at least two to three times per week. Some examples of entry subjects would be: the overall feeling about your day at the end of the day; discipline issues; students grasping/not grasping concepts in small/large groups; feelings during "crunch times" (report card deadlines, administrative observations, etc.); whole group student behavior. You will be asked not to use the actual names of students in your journal entries in order to keep protect student confidentiality. You will be asked to create a key to keep track of those students mentioned in your journal entries (and only you will keep your key). The place of your journal entry writing will be at your discretion.

Risks

There are some perceived risks with your participation. You will be provided a pseudonym during this entire study (in the interviews, observations, and in the journal you use), to protect your anonymity as well as the anonymity of the administrators', the school, and the school district. Your principal has given the researcher permission to conduct this study; however, the principal does not know which teachers have decided to participate in this study. It is your choice to participate in this study; the principal will not know your choice. Your principal will not be informed of the results of this study. Although, the researcher will take precautions and the principal will not be given a list of participants, there still remains a chance that the principal will find out who is participating. In elementary schools, visitors are often asked to sign in and out of the building, declaring their location. The researcher will indicate that she will be visiting the grade level of each participant, and when asked, will legally provide information of her exact whereabouts.

This presents a confidentiality risk. Students, teachers, administrators, schools, and school districts will all have pseudonyms in this study.

No raw materials will be given to your principal before, during, or after the study is completed. The researcher will keep all raw data, and your principal will be notified of the final results in the researcher's completed dissertation. In these results, the researcher will only report to the principal major themes and trends that were found in the data. The researcher realizes the risk of secondary identification because of the small population. However, the researcher will be careful in her dissertation to mask any possible identifiers.

The researcher will meet with you individually and give you your journal. The principal will not be included in these meetings; they will be conducted solely by the researcher.

You may withdraw at any time during this study if you feel that your participation in this study could prove to be detrimental in any way to you or your position in the school.

Benefits

It is anticipated that you will benefit from the personal reflection of how you feel about your teaching and from the knowledge that you may gain into the insight of your own thoughts and feelings of your teaching. The insight you may gain may lead you to thoughts about how you could grow in your teaching strategies.

Confidentiality

The information in the study records will be kept strictly confidential. Data will be stored securely in a locked file box in the residence of the researcher. Each time the researcher collects data from the participants; the data will be removed from the school site and locked. All data will be kept within this locked file box until the study is complete, and then all data will be destroyed. No reference will be made in oral or written reports which could link you to the study.

Compensation

You will receive a \$25 gift card to Target for participating in this study. If at any time you withdraw from the study, you may keep the gift card.

What if you are a WCPSS employee?

Participation in this study is not a requirement of your employment at WCPSS, and your participation or lack thereof, will not affect your position at your school or in the county.

What if you have questions about this study?

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Cara Constantine Sullivan, at

What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Deb Paxton, Regulatory Compliance Administrator, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (919/515-4514).

Consent To Participate

"I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study with the understanding that I may choose not to participate or to stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled."

Subject's signature _____ Date _____

Investigator's signature _____ Date _____