Masters of Education in Teaching and Learning   Masters Theses and Projects

Spring 5-9-2020

Reader Self-Perceptions and MAP Reading Scores: Is There A Relationship?

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Abstract

Academic growth of all students should be the focus of education. The Measurement of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment measures academic growth and aligns to state standards. The purpose of this study was to understand students' perceptions of themselves as readers. Another purpose of this study was to determine if there was a relationship between reader self-perceptions and their MAP reading scores. Student data was collected through individual interviews, student surveys, and MAP reading assessment scores. The major themes developed from the data were reading preferences, perceptions of reading assessment, reading at school, reading at home, and reading progress perceptions. In addition, the quantitative data derived from Lexile reading levels and student surveys are visually represented by bar graphs and scatter plots. Specifically, the findings include a section focused primarily on the possible relationship between reader self-perceptions and their MAP reading scores.

Reading Perceptions and MAP Reading Scores: Is There A Relationship?

"It's okay. It's just they are not my favorite. They take a while, and I'm not used to reading that much." This was a student reply when she was asked about chapter books. As I heard this response, I realized how chapter books represented a challenging feat for several students, not just lower-level readers. "Good because I'm not behind." This was another student's emotional response about his reading level. When I first heard this, I was saddened because this student was already learning the competitive nature of comparison. In order to describe how he felt about his progress, he had to compare to others who were behind. "I feel really nervous!" This was a quote from a student moments before he took the Measurement of Academic Progress (MAP) reading assessment. As I heard this, I was slightly surprised because this student was identified as gifted and read well above his grade level. Each of these statements lead to my curiosity about students' self-perceptions of themselves as readers.

Purpose

The topic of my study is student perceptions of themselves as readers and its relationship to reading achievement. The school where I conducted my research is facing challenges regarding reading. The previous year students in this district received low reading scores on the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR). The district administration decided to shift reading assessment tools from the Accelerated Reader Star Reading test to the MAP reading assessment. Another change that recently occurred in the district is no longer using the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System. In addition, the administration chose to implement new Pearson language arts and reading curriculum.

Although researchers have found a correlation between student attitudes towards reading and reading achievement, there has yet to be a study conducted that analyzes the relationship

between student perceptions of themselves as readers and reading achievement as measured by the MAP reading assessment. My study will address this need by answering the following research questions:

Research Question: What are the students' perceptions of themselves as readers?

Sub Research Question: Is there a relationship between student self-perceptions as readers and their reading level?

As I conducted my action research, I was completing a year-long clinical teaching placement as a graduate student. My year-long clinical teaching placement was in a third-grade class at Jones Elementary in the Abner Independent School District (AISD). The names of the school, school district, and students have been kept confidential with pseudonyms. There are 15,882 students currently enrolled for the 2019-2020 school year. The Abner ISD student population is comprised of 44.3% Hispanic, 35.7% White, 13.3% Black, 4.4% Mixed, 1.8% Asian, and .3% Native American. Jones Elementary School is one of the 14 elementary schools within Abner ISD previously mentioned. From 2017-2018, the demographics of Jones Elementary School are as follows: 53.5% Hispanic, 29.9% White, 11.7% Black, and 4.5% Mixed. During the 2017-2018 school year, the campus had 86.1% of students who qualified as Economically Disadvantaged and a 17.5% mobility rate in 2016-2017.

Literature Review

Educational theorists have suggested that students' perception of themselves directly contributes to their academic achievement. According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy is defined as students' self-perceptions that influence their ability to take risk, their willingness to improve academically, and their perseverance through challenges. A student's level of self confidence in his or her own abilities has the potential to encourage the student to grow or regress. Skinner

(1948) suggested that students without high levels of self-confidence will underperform and fall into a cycle of learned helplessness.

Reading Self Perceptions and Achievement in African American Students

Studies have shown evidence of student self-perceptions or self-efficacy contributing to academic achievement. Pershey (2011) investigated the scores of 259 African American fourth and fifth-grade students on state standardized tests and the Perception of Abilities Scale in Students (PASS). Pershey (2011) found "self-perceptions of ability and confidence bore a consistent relation with capabilities that were assessed" (p. 59). This study demonstrated evidence of the relationship between student self-perceptions and standardized test scores.

Reader Self-Perception and Enjoyment

Adelson et al. (2019) gathered reading self-perception and reading enjoyment data from 777 students of different genders and races. They found that third-grade students experienced more enjoyment from reading than fourth grade students. However the reading self-perceptions scale showed that grade level did not significantly change the results. According to Adelson et al. (2019), reading self-perception measures were indicative of literacy achievement. The data demonstrated the correlation between students' self-perceptions from The Reading and Me Survey (R&MS) and their literacy skills from teacher ratings.

Smith, Smith, Gilmore, and Jameson (2012) examined the reading self-perceptions, enjoyment, and self-efficacy of eight-year old students enrolled in grade 4 in New Zealand. It is interesting to note that efficacy and enjoyment have a stronger relationship than the relationship between achievement and enjoyment. According to this study, the data exhibited that students who feel they are better readers tend to enjoy reading significantly more.

Research on MAP Assessment

MAP reading assessment research was limited to Cordray, Pion, Brandt, and Molefe (2012) because of recent implementation in schools. However, there are studies on Lexile reading levels which are a portion of the reading scores that the MAP assessment produces. Begeny and Greene (2014) scrutinized if the Lexile reading levels were accurately readable by the students in the correlating grade levels. According to the words per minute (WCPM) data, the Lexile readability scores were relatively accurate to the students' actual reading abilities with minimal exceptions. The data from this article supported the reliability of using the MAP Lexile scores as an accurate measure of student reading levels. The Northwest Evaluation Association (2016) displayed how a Rasch Unit (RIT) score produced by the MAP reading assessment can easily be converted into a Lexile score.

One study researched the impact of MAP assessments on elementary student reading achievement. Cordray, Pion, Brandt, and Molefe (2012) discovered the MAP assessment showed no statistically significant impact on the reading achievement of grade 5 students. However, another study investigated frequent MAP benchmark assessments and state assessments. VanDerHeyden, Burns, Bonifay, and Eckert (2018) found that the MAP benchmark scores were the best predictor of post-test reading scores on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA). Although both studies include research about the MAP assessment, there is no research evaluating the possible relationship with students' perceptions of themselves as readers. My study advanced the research regarding MAP assessment by also analyzing students' reading self-perceptions. The findings of my study revealed evidence of these two aspects which contributes to the educational research available for MAP assessment practices.

Methods

The following sections describe a mixed-methods action research study conducted in a third-grade classroom. The study was conducted during the second semester of my year-long master's program. My position in the classroom as teacher and researcher gave me a unique relationship with the students. During my study, I collected and analyzed different forms of data to find recurring themes that conveyed the reading self-perceptions of my students and the MAP reading assessment scores of my third-grade students.

Participant Selection

The participants consisted of 13 third-grade students selected from my clinical teaching classroom who provided a signed parent consent and student assent forms. Of the 13 students, five were male students and eight were female students. The student participants demonstrated racial diversity and were comprised of eight White students, three Hispanic students, and two Black students. The students were also academically diverse regarding reading achievement with four on-level students, two students identified as gifted, and one identified as special education (SPED). The gifted students read on reading levels higher than third grade, whereas the SPED student participated in Fountas and Pinnell Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI). Fountas and Pinnell (2019) explained how the leveled reading books guide students to developing better accuracy, fluency, and metacognition.

Data Collection

All student participants were administered a Reader Self Perception Scale (RSPS) survey. Henk and Melnick (1995) determined that the RSPS survey could be an accurate representation of students' perceptions of themselves as readers. Students responded to each statement using a Likert scale. This survey consisted of 33 statements regarding general perception, reading

progress, observational comparison, social feedback, and physiological states. An example of the

RSPS survey can be found in Appendix A.

In my research, data was collected over the span of four weeks and used the following

sources to gather data: class-wide Lexile level scores from the mid-year MAP assessment, class-

wide results from the RSPS survey, and nine 10-15 minute student interviews. The interviews

were conducted with students selected by reading levels based on the MAP reading assessment.

The selected students were three lower-level readers, three average readers, and three higher-

level readers. Interviews were conducted with semi-structured questions, and each interview was

audio-recorded and transcribed. (See these questions in Appendix B).

Data Analysis

The data retrieved from the nine individual interviews was analyzed using the constant

comparative method, with initial coding followed by creating hierarchies of categories and

supporting codes (Hubbard & Power, 2003). I analyzed 20% of the qualitative data collected

from the interviews by using Microsoft Word and created a list of 15 to 20 level 1codes (Tracy,

2013). Next, I used the level 1codes generated while analyzing the 20% of the data to code the

remaining 80% of the data. The level 1codes were topics or ideas that frequently occurred among

the data (Tracy, 2013). Then, I used the initial level 1codes and created level 2 codes that

conceptualized the major themes within the data. The level 2 codes were overarching themes

found within all the other codes. The codebook that gives a complete list of codes, definitions,

and an example from the data can be found in Appendix C. For level 2 codes, I also recorded

memos detailing reflections of their meanings. The RSPS survey was analyzed using the raw

scores and comparing them to the RSPS ranges. The quantitative data from the RSPS survey and

the Lexile reading scores from the MAP were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The RSPS

survey scores and Lexile reading scores from MAP were visually represented by bar graphs. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the students' self-perceptions and reading levels. In addition, a scatter plot was used to show the possibility of a relationship between RSPS survey scores and Lexile reading scores. These two variables served as the two axes for the scatter plot in order to investigate the possibility of a relationship. Descriptive statistics explained whether a relationship between the two variables existed.

Findings

Based upon my data collection and analysis, the following major themes emerged: reading preferences, reading at home, reading at school, reading progress perceptions and perceptions of reading assessments. The previous major themes were based on interview responses. In this section, the findings from specific quantitative data will be explained as well. The graphs in this section visually represent the data found from MAP reading assessment and the RSPS scores.

Reading Preferences

When administering the individual student interviews, the theme of students' reading preferences became apparent. Reading preferences are related to how the students perceive themselves as readers. In the individual interview, the students were asked about if they preferred reading alone or being read to. Of the nine students interviewed, four students preferred to read by themselves, one preferred to have someone read to them, and four enjoyed both. For example, Max said, "It's kind of hard for me to decide because I like it when Mrs. Rogers and you read to us. I also like reading by myself."

In third grade, one of the reading standards is understanding different purposes for reading. Three students were asked about their personal reasons for reading. Brinlee mentioned

that she reads for fun "because I get to learn interesting things." Max stated that he read for, "entertainment and information." Preston explained how his family plays board games where reading is necessary to understand the cards, characters, and powers. It was interesting how each student spoke about unique purposes for reading.

Also, I was curious about how the students felt about reading chapter books. One student, Brinlee said, "I feel pretty good because my mom bought me chapter books this weekend, and I've been reading a lot of them." Another student, Terri mentioned that she felt good, "but it takes me a while to read them and finish them." She understood that reading a chapter book was more time consuming than picture books. Paige expressed that chapter books are "okay" because they take more time, and she was not used to reading that much. Tyrone spoke about how chapter books bring up thoughts about his reading speed. He said, "I know in my mind that it might take a little bit longer than what I want it to. What I really want is to read one line that fast. (displayed quick reading with pointer finger) Really fast." Although, Ivy felt that chapter books were good for her and even discussed visualizing when she reads them, Max, one of the higher readers, said, "It feels like right on my level." Another higher-level reader, Preston found that chapter books are somewhat difficult because he "can't just walk away from the book for a long time and then come back." The difficulties that the students expressed were different from lower-level readers to higher-level readers. Lower-level readers described the length of chapter books to be difficult while higher-level readers explained that coming back to a chapter book is hard.

In addition to their reading preferences, the students were also asked how they felt when they read. These questions examined the students' comfortability when they read. Six of the nine students expressed that they feel calm when they read. However, the other three students described opposing emotions. Terri stated, "When I read by myself, I get nervous because most

of the words are easy for me. But there are big words in books, and I can't understand them."

Max, however, expressed, "I read so much that when I read, it feels like part of my routine."

Another student, Tyrone, said, "I feel calm when I'm reading." As I analyzed the interview

responses, I concluded that emotions related to reading are uniquely individual. Each of the nine

students indicated different levels of comfort when they read as well as separate reasons for their

level of comfort.

The RSPS survey posed statements about strategies for decoding unknown words. In the

interviews, I wanted to give the students an opportunity to share some strategies that they use.

Two lower-level readers, two average readers, and one higher-level reader said that they sound

out unknown words. The other two higher-level readers and one lower-level reader mentioned

using context clues to "find out the definition". One student, an average reader mentioned using

resources such as a dictionary or thesaurus to "find the definition". This student also described

how he used resources to define a new word the week before. It was interesting to realize that

only three students spoke about reading the sentences around the unknown word and only one

student found using resources to be helpful.

Reading at Home

Throughout the interviews, students expressed their emotions and the locations where

they read at home. Among the lower-level students, a majority of them expressed that reading at

home was a calm experience. Terri mentioned that she reads for "20 minutes every day" with her

brother and their dogs on the couch. Brinlee said that she reads on her bed with her stuffed

animals. Also, Brinlee said that she feels good when she reads at home. Another student, Ivy,

mainly reads in the car on the way to her gymnastics practice.

The average readers also expressed similar emotions. Both Paige and Carly mentioned reading by themselves at home. While Carly said she feels "safe", Paige described how her sibling can be distracting. She said, "My brother bugs me sometimes, and then I can't read books." Interestingly, the students mentioned how the environment in their homes were either helpful or distracting when they read. Whereas, Jordan admitted that he does not often read at home.

The higher-level readers revealed more struggles associated with reading at home. For instance, Max expressed that when he reads at home, it "seems like just an option." Likely, he is referring to the classroom expectations where students read once morning work is completed. Tyrone said, "It is a little bit more distracting at home." He mentioned the T.V. at his home being on and the volume being loud. Also, he said that he preferred reading at school because of the quiet environment. Preston said that he usually reads at home on the weekends, either in his bed or by the front door. Preston's answer was similar to Max's. Max mentioned that he does not see reading as a priority at home, and Preston mentioned several activities that prevent him from reading on weekdays.

Across the range of reading levels, students expressed that they read at home. Although their emotions towards reading at home varied, only two students expressed that they could read more frequently and two expressed distractions. Even between these students, they both expressed different thoughts. Jordan admitted that he does not often read at home, and Max expressed that reading at home seems optional. The majority of students expressed emotions of calm while they read at home.

Reading at School

In the individual interviews, the students answered questions about their emotions when reading at school. The lower reading level students expressed enjoyment when they read at school. Terri expressed, "I feel pretty good because like if I feel like there's a bubble around me... like in the morning when everyone is quiet and calm, it makes me feel good." Brinlee enjoyed reading at school because of the "quiet time in the classroom."

Some of the average readers expressed different emotions. Paige stated that she feels good reading at school because she likes to find a quiet place in the classroom. Jordan said that "I feel a little lonely, and I feel good because I can't get distracted easily." Even though he said that he feels lonely, he acknowledged that reading alone at school is necessary for his focused attention.

The description of the classroom's quiet environment was also found in the responses of the higher-level students. Tyrone feels good when he reads at his desk because "if it gets too loud you can tell everyone to be quiet." He also talked about how the teachers can maintain the tranquil environment which makes it easier for him to read. Max said that his reading at school feels routine because it is what the students are expected to do after they finish morning work. Preston said that he feels the same as when he reads at home, "calm and comfortable".

The students' responses about reading at school followed similar patterns. A majority of students mentioned that they appreciated reading alone when the classroom is quiet and calm. These emotions surrounding reading at school were true throughout the different reading levels among the students. In addition to the students' emotions being similar, several students mentioned similar locations when reading in the classroom. Three students mentioned sitting on a green stool in the corner to read, and two students mentioned that they enjoyed reading at their desks.

Reading Progress Perceptions

      In each interview, I asked the students about their perceptions of their reading levels. Out of the three lower-level readers interviewed, only one student spoke about growing in her reading abilities. However, Terri and Ivy expressed different emotions. Terri expressed some struggles on her reading level when she said, "Sometimes in my reading level right now, I don't get some words." Ivy expressed confidently that her reading level is a good fit. Paige was the average reader that answered this question, and she expressed that "it's just right for me." She also described how she perceived herself as a reader when she said, "I'm not that good of a reader, but I'm not bad at reading." Each of the higher-level readers expressed positive emotions towards their reading levels. Max and Preston expressed that their reading levels were just right. Whereas, Tyrone responded by referencing the Accelerated Reader (AR) website. He said that he was not behind because he "looked on the AR thing, and it said I'm on a third-grade level".

      As I interviewed each student, I asked about their perceptions about their reading speed in comparison with other students in the class. The three lower-level students perceived their reading at differing speeds. For instance, Brinlee responded by explaining that she reads fast so that she can play with her friends afterwards. Terri mentioned that she reads "slower" because she had seen Paige read "really fast." In contrast, Ivy expressed that she thought she reads neither faster nor slower than other students, but "in between." She explained that she thought this because "some kids read fast like Max and Preston, and some kids have trouble." Two average readers perceived themselves as reading faster than others, while Paige believed that she read slower because she had observed others finishing reading before her. Similarly, two higher-level readers believed they read faster while Tyrone believed that he read in the middle.

During each interview, I also asked about how the students felt about reading in third grade compared to second grade. Across all the reading levels, the students expressed that reading in third grade is more difficult. Brinlee, Max, Tyrone, Preston, and Paige all expressed that reading is more difficult because of the more complex words or because the books in third grade are longer. However, a few students found reading in third grade easier. Ivy said, "Now I know more words." Similarly, Terri mentioned that in third grade she has learned new words that help her read better this year.

Perceptions of Reading Assessments

The main research question that my study investigated is if reader self-perceptions relate to their reading level. As I interviewed students, I asked them about how they felt about the MAP reading assessments. During the interviews, I asked if the students felt nervous or calm about the MAP reading. One student, Brinlee, said that she did not feel quite ready for the MAP reading assessment. She said that her reason for not feeling ready is because "I make not so good grades, and I get nervous, and I click the one that isn't right." Terri said, "I feel really good because I can relax and lean back in my chair." However, when I asked her if she felt nervous or calm about the MAP reading assessment, she mentioned feeling nervous about the questions "because some of them are really, really hard or really, really big words."

Some average reading level students also mentioned feeling nervous. Paige said, "Sometimes, I am like scared about the story because it seems so big, but then I'm like I've read bigger stories." She described her initial fears of MAP reading assessments and then how she reminds herself that the stories are not longer than ones she has read in the past. Carly mentioned that she feels nervous because sometimes she reads the stories and skips a line. She stated that she feels nervous "before and after" taking the MAP reading assessment.

A gifted student, Max, mentioned that he enjoyed answering the questions and said, "At the beginning of the test I feel a little nervous but as I keep going it goes away." He described his ability to self-regulate his emotions during the MAP reading assessment in order to continue and complete it. Another higher-level reader, Tyrone, expressed that he felt bored during the MAP reading assessment because "you just have to sit and read and answer questions."

When asked about the difference between AR and MAP reading assessments, one student made it clear. Tyrone explained that the two assessments were not that different yet stated, "I like AR tests because of the points for parties, to do something fun. For MAP testing, all you get is a good grade." This student revealed that the extrinsic motivation connected to AR reading assessments created more motivation to do well. Another student, Carly, recognized that the MAP reading test is "different because it has more questions than the AR test."

Overall, students ranging all reading levels expressed either boredom or nervousness when taking the MAP reading assessment. Since students with lower, average, and high reading levels were interviewed, I expected the emotions towards MAP reading assessments to differ more. However, each student expressed a negative emotion, either nervousness or boredom.

Reader Self Perception Scores

Thirteen students completed the RSPS survey. This survey consisted of thirty Likert questions. The questions on the survey asked the students about their self-perceptions as readers and their emotions about reading. When analyzing the scores from the RSPS survey, the RSPS score sheet was used to identify the students' scores for general perceptions, progress, observational comparison, social feedback, and physiological states. According to Henk and Melnick (1995), each response has its own point value (Strongly Agree = 5, Agree = 4,

Undecided =3, Disagree = 2, and Strongly Disagree = 1). An example of the RSPS survey and

the RSPS survey score sheet can be found in Appendix A.

The RSPS survey asked students one direct statement about themselves as readers. This

stated, "I think I am a good reader." This was the first statement in the RSPS survey and was the

point value assigned to each students' general perception score. Brinlee, Carly, Ivy, Natalia,

Paige, Preston, and Tyrone scored a 4 in general perception. Whereas Isaiah, Jordan, Max,

Natasha, Terri, and Zaya scored a 5 for general perception. A graph showing the students'

general perceptions can be found in Figure 1.

Reader Self Perception Scale

General Perception
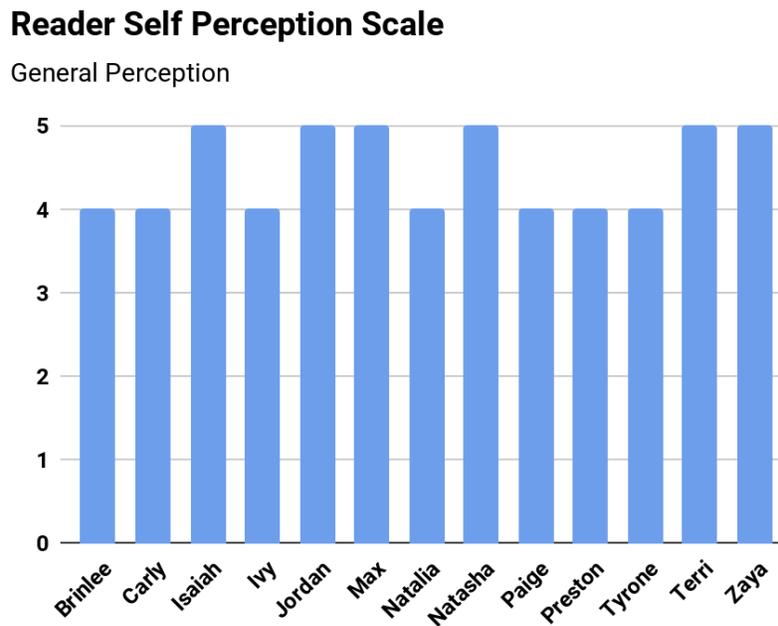
Figure 1. Students' general perceptions from the RSPS survey.

The RSPS survey also includes statements about how the students feel about their reading

progress. The students' progress scores were derived from statements about the students'

perception of reading speed, growth from last year, and the ease or difficulty of reading.

According to Figure 2, Brinlee scored the lowest perceived progress with 22, and Zaya scored

the highest perceived progress with 45. The remaining 11 students scored in between these

scores. The RSPS scoring sheet defined scores of 34 as low, scores of 39 as average, and scores of 44 or more as high. In the progress section, three students scored low: Brinlee with 22, Paige with 30, Natasha with 35. According to the data, six students scored average: Preston with 38, Carly with 39, Ivy and Natalia with 40, and Isaiah and Max with 41. Only the following three students scored high: Tyrone with 44, Terri with 44, and Zaya with 45.

In addition to progress, Figure 2 also represents the students' perceptions of observational comparison. The observational comparison score was calculated from statements regarding students' reading speed compared to other students, decoding skills compared to other students and their reading comprehension compared to other students. The graph in Figure 2 showed that Brinlee scored the lowest with 10, and Preston and Tyrone both scored the highest with 26. The RSPS scoring sheet defined observational comparison scores of 16 as low, 21 as average, and 26 or more as high. The data illustrated that five students scored lower in this section: Brinlee with 10, Natasha with 16, Ivy and Paige with 18, and Zaya with 20. The following six students scored average: Terri and Carly with 21, Natalia with 23, Isaiah, Jordan, and Max with 25. The two students who scored high are the following: Preston and Tyrone with 26.
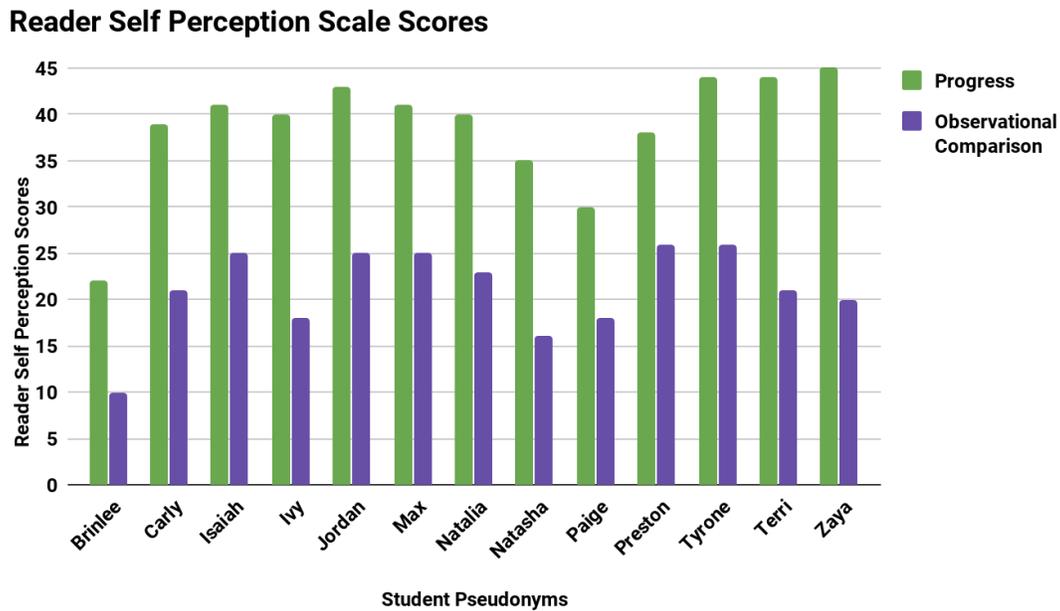
Reader Self Perception Scale Scores

Figure 2. Students' progress and observational comparison scores from the RSPS survey.

The RSPS survey also scored their social feedback when reading. The social feedback score was calculated from statements about students' perceptions of when teachers, classmates, and family members listen to them read. The RSPS scoring sheet defined social feedback scores of 27 as low, 33 as average, and 38 or more as high. According to the graph in Figure 3, Brinlee and Paige scored the lowest with 29 while Terri scored the highest with 41. The data showed that four students scored lower in this section: Brinlee and Paige with 29, Carly and Zaya with 31. The following five students scored average: Natasha with 35, Tyrone, Preston, Natalia, and Max with 36. The three students who scored high are the following: Jordan with 39, Isaiah with 40, and Terri with 41.

Additionally, Figure 3 demonstrated the students' physiological states when they read. The physiological state score was calculated from statements about students' emotions when they read. The RSPS scoring sheet defined physiological states scores of 25 as low, 31 as average, and 37 or more as high. The graph in Figure 3 showed that Paige scored the lowest with

18, and Brinlee and Terri both scored the highest with 37. The data demonstrated that two

students scored lower in this section: Paige with 18 and Zaya with 30. The following five

students scored average: Carly with 32, Isaiah and Jordan with 33, Preston and Natalia with 35.

The two students who scored high are the following: Terri and Brinlee with 37.

Reader Self Perception Scale Scores
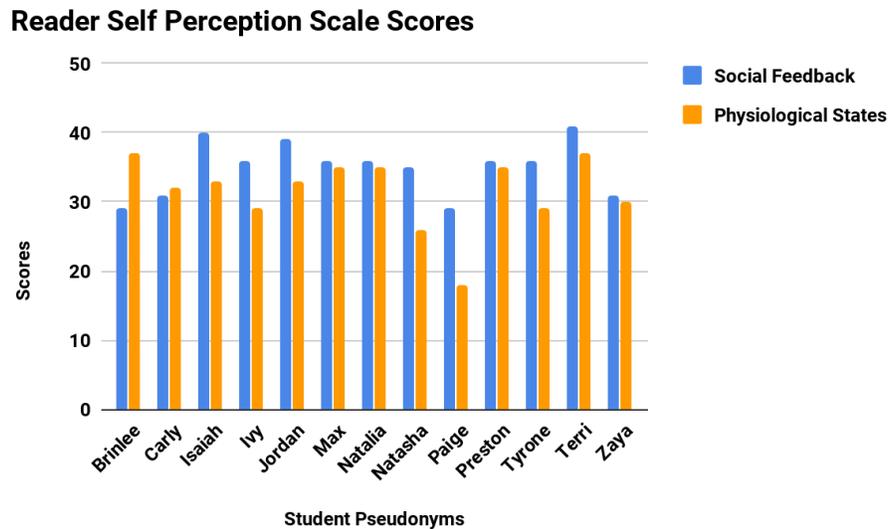
Figure 3. Students' social feedback and physiological states scores from RSPS survey.

MAP Reading Assessment Scores

      The 13 participating students were administered the MAP reading assessment in

accordance with state and school district standards. The MAP reading assessment was

administered in December 2019 within one school day. This reading assessment created Lexile

reading levels which give the students a reading range. The Lexile reading levels produced a

range of lower and higher reading levels that would best suit the students. The Lexile reading

levels created by the MAP reading assessment can be seen in Figure 4. According to the Lexile

reading levels produced from the MAP reading assessment, the students ranged from BR120 to

1160. I categorized Brinlee, Terri, Zaya, and Ivy as low-level readers because their ranges began

below 485. The following students were categorized as average readers: Paige, Carly, Jordan,

and Natasha. These students were identified as average readers because there Lexile ranges began below 700. The following students were categorized as higher readers because their Lexile ranges began above 700: Isaiah, Tyrone, Natalia, Preston, and Max. Among the 13 participating students, only two students received the same Lexile reading levels. Isaiah and Tyrone scored 705-855 Lexile reading level which is approximately fourth or fifth grade according to Northwest Evaluation Association (2016).

MAP Reading Lexile Scores
December 2019

Lexile Reading Levels	Number of Students
BR120 - 30 (Brinlee)	1
245-395 (Terri)	1
325-475 (Zaya)	1
445-595 (Ivy)	1
485-635 (Paige)	1
505 - 655 (Carly)	1
525-675 (Jordan)	1
605-755 (Natasha)	1
705 -855 (Isaiah & Tyrone)	2
750-900 (Natalia)	1
930-1080 (Preston)	1
1010-1160 (Max)	1
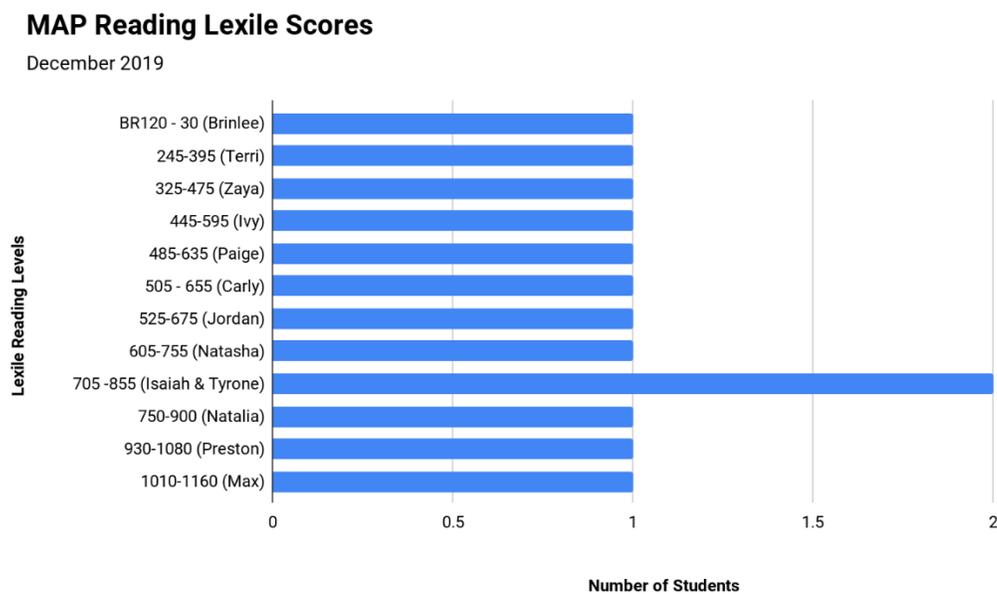
Figure 4. Lexile reading levels from MAP reading assessment.

Possible Relationship: Cumulative Reader Self Perception Scale and MAP Reading Levels

In order to investigate the potential relationship between students' Lexile reading levels and their RSPS survey scores, I created a cumulative RSPS score. In order to create these cumulative RSPS scores for each of the students, I combined the progress, observational comparison, social feedback, and physiological states scores. The graph in Figure 5 illustrates how these two factors interacted. The student with the lowest Lexile reading level, Brinlee, scored the lowest cumulative RSPS score. However, the student with the highest Lexile reading

level, Max, did not score the highest cumulative RSPS score. Instead, Terri scored the highest

cumulative RSPS score when she read at the second lowest Lexile reading level. As shown in

Figure 5, there is no apparent relationship between students' reading levels and their cumulative

RSPS scores.
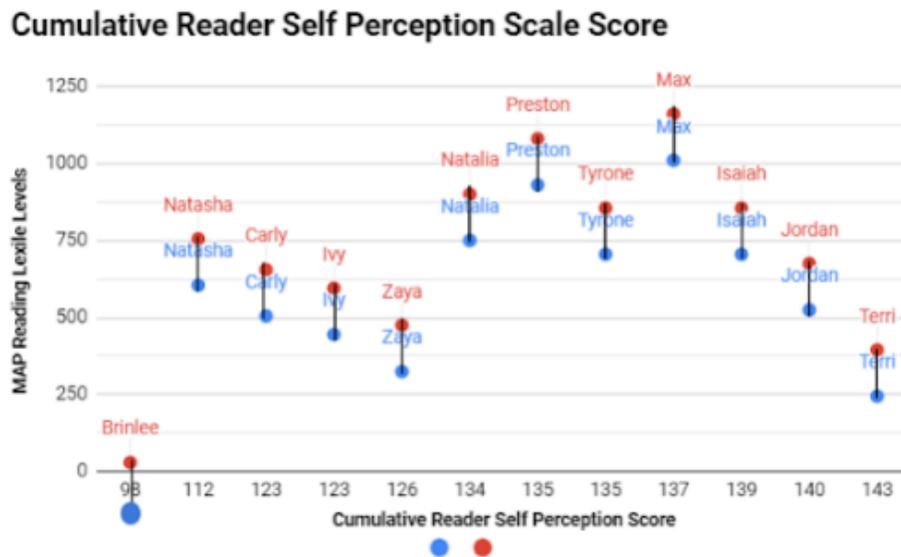
Figure 5. Student Cumulative RSPS scores and MAP reading levels.

Implications for Educators/ Practitioners

Standardized testing has become one of the most significant conversations between

educators and stakeholders since No Child Left Behind in 2002 (Ravitch, 2014). The MAP is one

of the newest online tests used to assess elementary student progress. As I researched the MAP

assessment, specifically for reading, I found that there was only one study that pertained to my

research. Cordray, Pion, Brandt, and Molefe (2012) found that the MAP reading assessment did

not exhibit a significant impact on the progress of grade 5 students. Although this study

investigated how using MAP assessments as an intervention would influence student

achievement, Cordray, Pion, Brandt, & Molefe (2012) used Illinois state standards as their

comparison. Clearly, there was a need for more evaluation and investigation into this new assessment tool.

Through analysis of interviews, RSPS surveys, and MAP Lexile data, I found students' perceptions significant. The individual interviews gave me the opportunity to delve into how the students felt about themselves as readers and inquire about why. Although most of the students expressed feeling enjoyment and calm while they read, some students expressed some challenges. The challenges the students mentioned revolved around the length and time required for reading chapter books. Even though, typically developing students should be able to read chapter books in third grade, all three levels of readers described struggling.

These individual interviews also gave me the opportunity to examine what emotions the students associated with the MAP reading assessment and why. According to my qualitative analysis, students across all reading levels indicated that they felt nervous either before, during, or after taking the MAP reading assessment. In addition, one higher-level reader expressed feeling bored while reading the stories in the assessment. The results from the RSPS surveys exhibited that the students scored relatively high on their cumulative scores. Despite the various Lexile reading levels represented, the students commonly perceived themselves as good readers.

The findings from my study showed that students' self-perceptions as readers does not relate to their Lexile reading levels from the MAP assessment. Students with higher Lexile reading levels did not have the highest cumulative RSPS survey scores. This outcome could have been affected by a few factors. One factor could have been my sample size was only 13 students. Instead of a larger sample size, I was restricted by parent consent. Another factor could have been the growth mindset techniques Mrs. Rogers and I used in our class. Although I expected to see a direct relationship, the growth mindset techniques could have inflated the students' self-

perception scores. Since Ms. Rogers and I encouraged each student to be confident in their

abilities, I wonder if the students answered in ways that they thought we wanted them.

As I reviewed the results of my study, I found myself asking more questions. One

question I wondered about was would the findings shift if the sample size were larger? In my

study, 13 students participated. My second question is would the interview responses be different

in a focus group setting? Only individual interviews were conducted in my study. I would be

interested to see how students would respond to similar questions in a group setting. My third

question is how would these students' self-perceptions shift over time? My data was based on

interviews and surveys conducted early in the spring. I would be curious to analyze how would

these same students respond at the end of the school year. Similarly, my fourth question is how

would the students' MAP reading scores change towards the end of the year? I would be

interested in gathering data from the students' Lexile reading levels at the end of year. This end

of the year data would potentially show if the MAP assessment truly produces growth.

Although my study did not reveal a relationship, I suggest teachers continue to be aware

of their students' self-perceptions as readers and their reading levels according to MAP reading

assessments. When teaching elementary students, teachers must be aware of their students'

emotions towards reading in order to encourage learning. Reading is a necessary in math, social

studies, and science. This means that students' perceptions of themselves as readers has the

potential to change how they perceive themselves as learners in general. By intentionally asking

students how they feel about themselves as readers, teachers will be able to guide their students

to personal emotional growth and academic progress.

Similarly, teachers will grow from understanding their students' emotions towards

standardized testing. I encourage teachers to ask about how their students feel and their

reasoning behind their emotions. The students' responses will guide teachers to help assure students of their abilities to reach success and to achieve growth. Understanding students' emotions towards standardized testing, could lead to lessening their fears or weaknesses and focusing on their strengths. Reader self-perceptions may not relate to Lexile reading levels, yet they do relate to student self-confidence and motivation. Through understanding student self-perceptions, teachers will have the tools needed to instill confidence and motivation in their students as they face standardized testing.

Personally, I will take these findings and use them to help me understand my future students. In my future classroom, I hope to have frequent conversations with my students about their reader self-perceptions. Also, I will build their reading self-confidence by giving each student the opportunity to track their progress and growth. I believe my findings will help transform how my future students perceive themselves as readers and how I approach MAP assessments in the future.

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Appendix A

APPENDIX A
The Reader Self-Perception Scale

Listed below are statements about reading. Please read each statement carefully. Then circle the letters that show how much you agree or disagree with the statement. Use the following:

SA = Strongly Agree
A = Agree
U = Undecided
D = Disagree
SD = Strongly Disagree

Example: **I think pizza with pepperoni is the best.**   SA   A   U   D   SD

If you are *really positive* that pepperoni pizza is best, circle SA (Strongly Agree).
If you *think* that is good but maybe not great, circle A (Agree).
If you *can't decide* whether or not it is best, circle U (undecided).
If you *think* that pepperoni pizza is not all that good, circle D (Disagree).
If you are *really positive* that pepperoni pizza is not very good, circle SD (Strongly Disagree).

	1. I think I am a good reader.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[SF]	2. I can tell that my teacher likes to listen to me read.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[SF]	3. My teacher thinks that my reading is fine.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[OC]	4. I read faster than other kids.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[PS]	5. I like to read aloud.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[OC]	6. When I read, I can figure out words better than other kids.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[SF]	7. My classmates like to listen to me read.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[PS]	8. I feel good inside when I read.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[SF]	9. My classmates think that I read pretty well.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[PR]	10. When I read, I don't have to try as hard as I used to.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[OC]	11. I seem to know more words than other kids when I read.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[SF]	12. People in my family think I am a good reader.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[PR]	13. I am getting better at reading.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[OC]	14. I understand what I read as well as other kids do.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[PR]	15. When I read, I need less help than I used to.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[PS]	16. Reading makes me feel happy inside.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[SF]	17. My teacher thinks I am a good reader.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[PR]	18. Reading is easier for me than it used to be.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[PR]	19. I read faster than I could before.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[OC]	20. I read better than other kids in my class.	SA	A	U	D	SD

(continued)

APPENDIX A (cont'd.)
The Reader Self-Perception Scale

[PS]	21. I feel calm when I read.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[OC]	22. I read more than other kids.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[PR]	23. I understand what I read better than I could before.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[PR]	24. I can figure out words better than I could before.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[PS]	25. I feel comfortable when I read.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[PS]	26. I think reading is relaxing.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[PR]	27. I read better now than I could before.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[PR]	28. When I read, I recognize more words than I used to.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[PS]	29. Reading makes me feel good.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[SF]	30. Other kids think I'm a good reader.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[SF]	31. People in my family think I read pretty well.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[PS]	32. I enjoy reading.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[SF]	33. People in my family like to listen to me read.	SA	A	U	D	SD

APPENDIX B
The Reader Self-Perception Scale
Directions for administration, scoring, and interpretation

The Reader Self-Perception Scale (RSPS) is intended to provide an assessment of how children feel about themselves as readers. The scale consists of 33 items that assess self-perceptions along four dimensions of self-efficacy (Progress, Observational Comparison, Social Feedback, and Physiological States). Children are asked to indicate how strongly they agree or disagree with each statement on a 5-point scale (5 = Strongly Agree, 1 = Strongly Disagree). The information gained from this scale can be used to devise ways to enhance children's self-esteem in reading and, ideally, to increase their motivation to read. The following directions explain specifically what you are to do.

Administration

For the results to be of any use, the children must: (a) understand exactly what they are to do, (b) have sufficient time to complete all items, and (c) respond honestly and thoughtfully. Briefly explain to the children that they are being asked to complete a questionnaire about reading. Emphasize that this is not a *test* and that there are no *right* answers. Tell them that they should be as honest as possible because their responses will be confidential. Ask the children to fill in their names, grade levels, and classrooms as appropriate. Read the directions aloud and work through the example with the students as a group. Discuss the response options and make sure that all children understand the rating scale before moving on. It is important that children know that they may raise their hands to ask questions about any words or ideas they do not understand.

The children should then read each item and circle their response for the item. They should work at their own pace. Remind the children that they should be sure to respond to all items. When all items are completed, the children should stop, put their pencils down, and wait for further instructions. Care should be taken that children who work more slowly are not disturbed by children who have already finished.

Scoring

To score the RSPS, enter the following point values for each response on the RSPS scoring sheet (Strongly Agree = 5, Agree = 4, Undecided = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly Disagree = 1) for each item number under the appropriate scale. Sum each column to obtain a raw score for each of the four specific scales.

Interpretation

Each scale is interpreted in relation to its total possible score. For example, because the RSPS uses a 5-point scale and the Progress scale consists of 9 items, the highest total score for Progress is 45 ($9 \times 5 = 45$). Therefore, a score that would fall approximately in the middle of the range (22–23) would indicate a child's somewhat indifferent perception of her or himself as a reader with respect to Progress. Note that each scale has a different possible total raw score (Progress = 45, Observational Comparison = 30, Social Feedback = 45, and Physiological States = 40) and should be interpreted accordingly.

As a further aid to interpretation, Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics by grade level for each scale. The raw score of a group or individual can be compared to that of the pilot study group at each grade level.

APPENDIX C
The Reader Self-Perception Scale scoring sheet

Student name _____

Teacher _____

Grade _____   Date _____

Scoring key: 5 = Strongly Agree (SA)
4 = Agree (A)
3 = Undecided (U)
2 = Disagree (D)
1 = Strongly Disagree (SD)

Scales

General Perception	Progress	Observational Comparison	Social Feedback	Physiological States
1. ____	10. ____	4. ____	2. ____	5. ____
	13. ____	6. ____	3. ____	8. ____
	15. ____	11. ____	7. ____	16. ____
	18. ____	14. ____	9. ____	21. ____
	19. ____	20. ____	12. ____	25. ____
	23. ____	22. ____	17. ____	26. ____
	24. ____		30. ____	29. ____
	27. ____		31. ____	32. ____
	28. ____		33. ____	

Raw score	____ of 45	____ of 30	____ of 45	____ of 40

Score interpretation

High	44+	26+	38+	37+
Average	39	21	33	31
Low	34	16	27	25

Appendix B

One-on-one Student Interview Protocol

1. Tell me what you know about your reading level.

2. How do you feel about your reading level? Why?

3. Tell me how you feel when you read picture books.

4. Tell me how you feel when you read chapter books.

5. If you see a word you don't know, what strategies do you use?

6. Do you like reading to yourself or having someone read to you? Why?

7. Do you feel nervous or calm when you read? Tell me more about that.

8. Do you think you read slower or faster than others in our class? How do you know?

9. When you read, does it feel easier than before? How? Tell me more.

10. When do you usually read? At home? At school? When you finish your work?

11. When you read at home, how do you feel? Why?

12. When you read at school how do you feel? Why?

13. Does your family read to you or help you read at home? Tell me about that.

Questions may vary and additional questions may be asked depending on the answers of the participants.

Appendix C

Codebook

Level 2 Codes:	Level 1Codes:	Definition of the code:	Example of the code:
Reading Preferences		Factors that affect the ways students read and the texts students read.	
	Reasons to Read	Students shared the reasons they read.	"I like to read for fun. I like to read for fun because I get to learn interesting things, I never knew."
	Chapter Books	Students' emotions about reading chapter books.	"I feel pretty good because my mom bought me chapter books this weekend, and I've been reading a lot of them."
	Unknown Word Strategies	Students shared the strategies they like to use to understand the	"I sound it out."

		meaning of an unknown word.	
	Comfort of Reading	Students' responses about whether they feel calm or nervous while they read.	"Calm because I am alone, and I don't have ... I don't have to get mad at anybody for doing something else."
	Reading Preferences	Students explain whether they like to read alone or have someone read to them.	"Sometimes I like to read by myself because I can read it through. I don't have to focus on it or feel like I have to listen. I can just go or if I need to stop I can stop."
	Favorite Books	Students share which books are their favorites and possibly reasons why.	"There is one called Narwhal Unicorn of the Sea."

Perceptions of Reading Assessments		Emotions that students communicated about either MAP or AR reading assessments.	
	Perceptions of MAP reading assessment	Students' emotions regarding the Measurement of Academic Progress (MAP) reading assessment.	"I feel a little bit good. It's just I'm not quite ready for it. Sometimes, I make not so good grades and I get nervous and I click the one that isn't right."
	Perceptions of AR	Students' emotions regarding the Accelerated Reader (AR) reading assessments.	"Good especially when I read to myself. When I take an AR test, I feel like I know the story better than if someone reads with me."
Reading at School		The locations, emotions, and	

		situations students associated with reading at school.	
	Reading at School	The locations associated with reading at school.	"Really good because I get quiet time in the classroom."
	Emotions -Reading at School	Emotions expressed when reading at school.	"Good because I try to be in a nice, quiet place."
Reading at Home		The locations, emotions, and situations students associated with reading at school.	
	Reading at Home	The locations associated with reading at home.	"On my bed and I cuddle with my little stuffies [stuffed animals]."
	Emotions- Reading at Home	Emotions expressed when reading at home.	"Most of the days I feel pretty good. My brother bugs me sometimes, and then I can't read books."

Reading Progress Perceptions		The emotions that affect how students perceive their reading progress.	
	Perceptions of Reading Level	Emotions that students associate with their reading level.	"Good because it's just right for me. I'm not that good of a reader, but I'm not bad at reading."
	Perceptions of Reading Speed	Students' responses about what they believe about their reading speed.	"A little bit slower. Sometimes when I'm reading a book, I'm still reading. They are done or on another page."
	Perceptions of reading in third grade compared to second grade	Students share their perspectives on how reading has changed from second grade to third grade.	"I read easy books in second grade instead of hard books because I was not ready to read hard books."