THE ENGLISH READING DEVELOPMENT OF KAREN CHILDREN USING THE
FLUENCY DEVELOPMENT LESSON IN AN INTENSIVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE
PROGRAM: THREE DESCRIPTIVE CASE STUDIES

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THE ENGLISH READING DEVELOPMENT OF KAREN CHILDREN USING THE FLUENCY DEVELOPMENT LESSON IN AN INTENSIVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROGRAM: THREE DESCRIPTIVE CASE STUDIES

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine, describe, and analyze the social interactions that occurred between three Karen ELLs and the researcher during a reading intervention program, as well as the impact that a modified FDL had on the English reading development of these ELLs.

The setting for the study was a multiage tutoring program for ELLs in an urban community in a Great Lakes state. The three ELLs attended this 9-week summer program for a total of 4½ hours a week, and they continued to participate in the after-school session from September through December for 1 hour a week. The conclusions of this study are based on the data regarding the two research questions that guided this descriptive study:

1. How do teacher-student interactions and student–to-student interactions, during the implementation of a modified FDL, impact the Karen children’s abilities to develop fluency and comprehension skills in English?

2. How does systematic language instruction using a modified FDL impact the fluency and comprehension development of these three ELLs?

The researcher collected data in two methods for analysis. First, the students completed pre- and posttests to measure fluency and comprehension scores, as well as to measure their attitudes towards recreational and academic reading. Data collection procedures for this study also included participant observations, interviews with ELLs
and their parents and teachers, and the collection and analysis of various material culture generated by the researcher and the ELLs.

Findings from this study suggest that the three ELLs appeared to benefit from a variety of instructional scenarios, that is, one-on-one instruction, large and small group instruction, and peer-assisted instruction, which provided the ELLs opportunities to experience literacy while engaged in numerous, authentic social interactions. Furthermore, the three ELLs demonstrated significant reading improvement based on the analyses of their pre and posttest fluency and comprehension scores.

In conclusion the social interactions during literacy events and the implementation of a modified FDL significantly impacted the literacy progress of three ELLs, and moreover, impacted their overall ability to function successfully in their regular classroom settings.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Nothing pleases me more than to watch a student learn to read, most especially a student with delayed literacy development. Each year as an elementary teacher I explained to my students that they are all caterpillars who grow and develop into butterflies. They work hard learning to read and write so that they can grow wings and fly on their own. One particular girl struggled with literacy skills, and I tossed and turned in bed worrying about her more than any other student that school year. Miraculously, she made significant progress. She presented me with a card on the last day of school, and it is one that I will always cherish. The card was beautifully decorated and inside she had written, “Mrs. Kulich, I got my wings.” I stood and cried and to this day tears still come to my eyes.

The above passage was taken from one of my papers written during a graduate course on research in reading instruction. Butterflies, like fluent readers, fly on their own. What triggers this cycle of metamorphosis and transforms students into proficient readers? The answer to this question became the heart of this research.

Fluency, no longer a “neglected goal” of reading instruction (Allington, 1983a), and its relationship with comprehension is the key to proficiency in reading; and elementary students who are struggling readers have difficulty applying fluency skills and comprehension strategies while attempting to decode a text (Allington, 1983b; Kuhn & Stahl, 2003; Rasinski, 2004b; Rasinski & Padak, 1998). Worthy and Broaddus (2001-2002) stated, “Fluency gives language its musical quality, its rhythm and flow, and makes reading sound effortless” (p. 334). Reading comprehension is the process through which
learners access a plethora of information, based on their specific purposes for reading and
the information provided by textual context clues (Pilgreen, 2006).

Recognizing that oral reading fluency is a vital component of reading instruction
and performance, Rasinski, Padak, Linek, and Sturtevant (1994) created The Fluency
Development Lesson (FDL) that incorporates poetry as a means of maximizing students’
fluency and comprehension development within a 10–15 minute lesson. The FDL
combines several aspects of effective fluency instruction: choral reading, paired reading,
and repeated readings, in order to focus on fluency and reading comprehension in a
relatively short period of time.

It has been my experience with the FDL that students not only improve their
fluency skills and comprehension strategies, but also their attitudes towards reading
(Kulich, 2008; Kulich & Evanchan, 2007, 2008). The FDL is researched-based, easily
implemented (Rasinski & Padak, 2001; Rasinski et al., 1994), and in my experience has
been enjoyed by most who participate (Kulich, 2008; Kulich & Evanchan, 2007, 2008).
Although various researchers recommend a wide variety of strategies to promote fluency
development, I am most interested in strategies that incorporate poetry on a daily basis.
Nursery rhymes and poems are great examples of authentic and predictable texts that
foster fluency development in emergent readers (Rasinski & Padak, 2001). Poetry
“speaks to the needs of our budding language learners, as well as to all students within
our reach” (Vardell, Hadaway, & Young, 2006, p. 739).

In particular, English Language Learners (ELLs), also known as English as a
Second Language (ESL), benefit greatly by engaging in the non-threatening fluency
activities and reading student-friendly poems. “For English learners, this is a connection
that can help them learn words and concepts, stay motivated and interested, and even participate more fully in class” (Vardell et al., 2006, p. 739). I am drawn to the FDL, in part because of the ease in which the activities are implemented and the scaffolding techniques that enable the students to read, confidently, poems at their appropriate grade level. According to Vardell et al.:

Poetry is an ideal entry into language learning for English learners because of its rhythm, repetition, and rhyme. Through listening to, reading, and rereading poetry, students can increase their exposure to language. The brevity of poetry appears manageable and not so intimidating to English learners. Poetry can be a powerful vehicle for developing students’ oral language capacity, which is so critical to functioning in the real world. (pp. 738-739)

Each year that I taught elementary students I worked closely with ELLs and their families. I enjoyed my experiences with ELLs, and it is no surprise that the focus of my research involves these diverse learners. My journey with ELLs began while teaching French in Atlanta, Georgia. The diversity of the students at my elementary building is best described by the 27 flying flags that wave from the roof of the building. These flags represent the 27 different countries from which the students and their families originate.

Daily, students arrived decorated in their traditional garb and speaking their native languages while making their way into their elementary classrooms. While learning English in their ESL resource room, they were also learning French with their monolingual classmates. The playing field was leveled during French instruction. For the first time ELLs were not academically challenged or linguistically disadvantaged in comparison to their monolingual peers. ELLs experience confusion, frustration, and disappointment on a daily basis while they attempt to communicate with native English speakers. These experiences provided some comprehensible input, which enabled the
ELLs to relax and feel more confident during the French lessons. The monolingual English students, who were learning French, experienced a vignette in a day in the life of an ELL. These similar literacy experiences helped to foster greater relationships among all the students, regardless of their native languages. It was here, teaching in Atlanta, that my interest in literacy and ELLs began to develop into what is now my passion and dissertation topic.

While teaching first, second, and third grade students in an elementary school in a Great Lakes state, I implemented the FDL with poetry on a daily basis in my classroom. Each year, my classroom culture was enriched by the diversity of my students. Not only were monolingual English learners developing fluency and comprehension skills with the incorporation of the FDL, but my ELLs were also demonstrating great reading progress. Perhaps the most compelling reason for implementing the FDL is the level of student engagement evident in the classroom. The sheer desire to read for both aesthetic and efferent purposes (Rosenblatt, 1978) began to escalate as the school year progressed. No other reading activity had such a powerful impact upon my diverse emergent readers.

As a constructivist, I believe that research questions are best answered by looking at multiple views, and the interaction between the researcher and the participants is a critical component to understanding the data collected (Creswell, 2003; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). This interaction that occurs is typically in the form of instructional scaffolding, which is “one of the most recommended, versatile, and powerful instructional techniques of constructivist teaching” (Clark & Graves, 2004, p. 570).

Piaget (Beilin, 1992) and Vygotsky (Van der Veer & Valsiner, 1991) were two psychologists who paved the way for the constructivist approach to teaching in the 20th
century. Both viewed reading and writing as social activities that reflect the culture and
community in which students live. Hammerberg (2004) stated that the act of reading is
“an interactive process involving the use of cultural tools, symbols, texts, and ways of
thinking” (p. 650). Vygotsky reasoned that language helps to organize thought and
students use language to learn as well as to communicate and share experiences with
others (Schultz, 1998).

Understanding that students use language for social purposes and “effective
learning takes place in social exchanges” (Onofrey & Theurer, 2007, p. 682) allows
teachers to plan instructional activities that incorporate a social component, such as
having students talk about books they are reading or share their writing with classmates.
Cazden (2005) suggested that children are eager to talk about their world rather than to
talk about the language. Ernst and Richard (1995) stated that “children learn their first
language by using language as a means to communicate with real people and in real
situations. The same applies for students who are learning a second language” (p. 326).

Given that students’ languages and concepts of literacy reflect their cultures and
home communities, teachers must respect students’ languages and appreciate the cultural
differences in their attitudes towards learning. Most notably is the constructivist belief
that students are at the focal point while the teacher is the facilitator in the learning
process. Vygotsky (1978) suggested that the zone of proximal development is the
difference between what students can accomplish alone versus what they can achieve
with guidance from a more proficient individual. This experienced individual is a teacher,
a parent, or a classmate. Effective learning takes place when students engage in authentic,
collaborative activities that support the multiple zones of proximal development existing in any particular learning environment (Wilkinson & Silliman, 2000).

Although Vygotsky did not specifically address the needs of ELLs, his theory of developmentally appropriate instruction is a critical component of the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Model of instruction for ELLs (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2004; Short & Echevarria, 1999). The SIOP Model is a teaching approach which aids in lesson preparation and delivery for teachers with ELLs. Teachers who follow the SIOP Model help to lower the cognitive and affective burdens of ELLs by integrating these students into the mainstream classroom, communicating effectively with the students, and teaching language and the subject matter in a manner conducive to acquisition.

One key component addressed in the SIOP model is the importance of comprehensible input. According to Freeman and Freeman (2003), “The key to acquisition is receiving messages we understand” (p. 36). If educators intend for ELLs to understand content-based knowledge presented in the classroom, then comprehensible input is a must (G. G. Garcia, 2003). Educators can alter their rate of delivery, repeat instructions and reiterate important information, and use a variety of visual and hands-on teaching strategies. Also, activities that engage ELLs in all language skills (i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing) help ELLs to apply content and language knowledge in meaningful contexts and these activities make the most use of instructional time.

The FDL is designed with comprehensible input in mind, and I demonstrate the contextual relationship between the FDL and the SIOP Model in my study. I intend to
add to the body of literature and positively impact the literacy education of elementary ELLs by describing to teachers and administrators the implications of this research.

Statement of the Research Problem

Fluency instruction in the elementary schools has received much attention in part because of the National Reading Panel Report (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [NICHD], 2000). This report suggests that there is a link between fluency and comprehension and fluency skills should be taught and assessed frequently in the elementary schools. Despite the available research on reading instruction, there is very little relevant research on ELLs (August & Hakuta, 1998; Chiappe, Siegel, & Wade-Wolley, 2002; Denton, Anthony, Parker, & Hasbrouck, 2004; Donovan & Cross, 2001; Geva & Yaghoub Zadeh, 2006). Fitzgerald (1985) stated, “The spectrum of research on ESL reading in the United States might best be characterized as having considerable breadth, but little depth” (p. 115). Unfortunately, very little research progress has been made on ELLs. In fact, “optimum levels of oral reading fluency for second-language students at different stages of English literacy acquisition are not known” (Denton et al., 2004, pp. 302-303). The knowledge that we do have regarding literacy acquisition is typically generalized from research conducted with native English speakers (Jimenez, 2003; Vaughn, Mathes, Linan-Thompson, & Francis, 2005). Clearly, we have sufficient knowledge about second language acquisition and reading development in emergent readers, yet we lack extensive research that links fluency instruction with those learners who need it the most.

So what about ELLs? These learners represent the fastest growing portion of our school-age population (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition,
In 1990, 1 out of 20 students were ELLs, and in 2005, 1 out of 9 students were ELLs. These statistics represent an increase in ELLs from 2 million to 5 million. In the 2004–2006 school year, 5 million school-age children were ELLs (NCELA, 2008). According to the U. S. Census Bureau (2005), more than 10.5 million students in our schools speak a language other than English in their homes. In fact, it is predicted that by 2025, one in four students in American classrooms will be ELLs, and ELLs will represent more than 40% of the school-age students by 2030 (Flynn & Hill, 2005).

These students arrive at school with varying degrees of literacy exposure and experiences. They speak a variety of languages and their reading levels vary greatly depending upon their native language skills and their experiences with the English language. Unlike monolingual English learners, these ELLs do not have the time to gradually develop literacy skills before they are required to meet the cognitive demands evident in the school curriculum (Mohr, 2004). Allington (1994) argued that schools should be the great equalizer, “I am quite certain that we must work to create schools where all children achieve, not just children with the ‘right’ parents” (p. 165). Children who lack literacy experiences are not necessarily lacking ability. Teachers who correlate instruction to student needs are in fact building the schools we need. Allington also stated:

There is little reason to doubt that we can have schools where children develop advanced literacy proficiencies regardless of the parents they have. But designing such schools requires that we discard many of the long traditions of American schooling and replace many widely held historical beliefs about human learning. (p. 176)
Teachers must not continue to confuse lack of experience and opportunity with lack of ability. Some children will always require closer, more personalized instruction in larger quantities than other children if educators are to help them achieve their full potential. Some children will need more and better models, explanations, and demonstrations than other children if they are to learn together with their peers. These are the children who need greater access to interesting books that they can comfortably read, as well as expanded opportunities to read those books in and out of school.

Students who arrive in classrooms with limited English experiences are clearly those students who need to be immersed in literature. They also need explicit, direct instruction and scaffolding of skills (Gutierrez, 2001; Manyak, 2008). Ironically, these students often find themselves completing worksheets and workbook pages while the more “capable” readers are engaged in authentic reading activities. Although this seems obvious, some teachers are reluctant to give struggling readers more time to read. Research has indicated that students who comprehend are students who spend time reading (Morrow, 1992; Wang & Guthrie, 2004). Cunningham (2005) stressed that “the amount of reading children do is important” (p. 88). “Simply put, books are virtually the only place where students get access to the low-frequency Greco-Latin lexicon of English” (Cummins, 2003, p. 3). Allington (1994) also stated the following:

The design of instructional interventions for limited-experience children has similarly failed to emphasize expanding substantially their opportunities to read, write, and listen to stories. Rather than creating interventions that immerse low-experience children in print and texts, remedial, compensatory, and special education interventions focus more often on providing participating children with more skills lessons. (p. 166)
Although reading instruction has gained much attention in recent years, the achievement gap is still gaping. ELLs have particular difficulties with English literacy skills, and they are among the percentage of students scoring below the “proficient” level (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008; Short & Echevarria, 2004/2005). Faced with the challenge of learning a new language, ELLs must also simultaneously apply English literacy skills in order to comprehend all content presented in the school curriculum (Carrier & Tatum, 2006; Short & Echevarria, 2004/2005). Consequently, compared with monolingual English learners, ELLs represent a larger percentage of the school dropout rates and demonstrate ponderous achievement gaps on state and national assessments (Gunderson, 2000; Snow & Biancarosa, 2003; White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans, 1999).

Slavin and Calderón (2001) suggested that pull-out programs for ELLs are not providing the necessary scaffolding to enable ELLs to develop oral language proficiencies in English as well as grade-appropriate reading and writing skills. Moreover, if ELLs are removed from their regular classrooms during language arts instruction, then they are most likely missing out on pertinent literacy activities, which cause them to fall even further behind their monolingual peers.

Inevitably, ELLs who struggle to read fluently and comprehend grade-level texts are most likely to develop poor attitudes towards reading. Reading intervention to support students who struggle as readers must focus simultaneously on both attitudes and achievement (Rasinski & Padak, 2000). It is not enough to teach students to read for the sake of learning, but teachers must help students learn to value reading so that it becomes a lifelong pursuit (Gambrell, 1996). Children who view themselves as poor readers are
less likely to engage in reading activities, and they do not develop the intrinsic desire to read.

The level of reading motivation significantly influences students’ interests, persistence with which they engage with texts, and rates of language acquisition (Pardo, 2004; Schallert & Martin, 2003). Students who want to make friends at school are more likely motivated to speak for social reasons. Some ELLs may have difficulty adjusting to their new environment, and therefore, their negative attitudes influence their motivation to learn to read in English. Educators also need to recognize that understanding spoken English is the key to second language acquisition. Therefore, ELLs often undergo a silent period during which they do not produce language, but are able to acquire language skills via listening strategies (Krashen, 1981; Peregoy & Boyle, 2008).

One of the biggest mistakes that educators tend to make with ELLs is to assume that their needs are identical to all other ELLs, and that an individual’s cognitive abilities define his literacy abilities. No two ELLs are alike, and different sociocultural contexts suggest different definitions of literacy. Each ELL arrives in a classroom with personal schema, native language abilities, and an educational background (Peregoy & Boyle, 2008). Some ELLs have family here who speak English, whereas others do not. Some may even have arrived from refugee camps with a history of abuse. Many ELLs come from middle-class families; others may live in poverty where they have a limited access to books. All of these factors affect the manner and ease in which ELLs acquire English. Therefore, teachers need to be aware that ELLs have differing levels of cognitive ability and various background experiences, which influence their ability to acquire English (Short & Echevarria, 2004/2005).
The Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) identified three proficiency levels to categorize ELLs at various stages of their English language development in its publication *ESL Standards for PreK-12 Students* (1997). Table 1 outlines each of the three levels. In March 2006 TESOL revised the *PreK-12 English Language Proficiency Standards* to include five levels of language proficiency. Table 2 includes a description of each of the five levels.

Table 1

**TESOL Proficiency Levels**

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<th>Beginning</th>
<th>Intermediate</th>
<th>Advanced</th>
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<td>Students rarely use English as a means to communicate, and they have minimal understanding of English. They typically respond non-verbally to other speakers of English. They rely heavily on illustrations, graphs, charts, etc., in order to draw meaning from a text. They construct simple texts that reflect their limited knowledge of English syntax.</td>
<td>Students are able to understand more complex language, but often require repetition. They have an assortment of vocabulary based on their daily experiences. Although they use English spontaneously, they may have difficulty expressing all of their thoughts due to a limited command of English syntax. Students have the most success comprehending texts that mirror any of their prior experiences. They are able to generate more coherent texts, with less syntactical errors than those made by beginners.</td>
<td>Students are able to communicate most of their needs even in new settings. They may experience difficulty with idioms, words with multiple meanings, and abstract concepts. They can read independently with a degree of fluency, and they are able to identify specific facts in a text. Comprehension problems may arise when attempting to read texts with abstract terms and concepts. Students can produce texts, which mirror those of native speakers of English, for personal and academic purposes with fewer errors than those made by intermediate level ELLs.</td>
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Table 2

TESOL Proficiency Levels Revised

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<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>At L1, students initially have limited or no understanding of English. They rarely use English for communication. They respond nonverbally to simple commands, statements, and questions. As their oral comprehension increases, they begin to imitate the verbalizations of others by using single words or simple phrases, and they begin to use English spontaneously. At the earliest stage, these learners construct meaning from text primarily through illustrations, graphs, maps, and tables.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>At L2, students can understand phrases and short sentences. They can communicate limited information in simple everyday and routine situations by using memorized phrases, groups of words, and formulae. They can use selected simple structures correctly but still systematically produce basic errors. Students begin to use general academic vocabulary and familiar everyday expressions. Errors in writing are present that often hinder communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>At L3, students understand more complex speech but still may require some repetition. They use English spontaneously but may have difficulty expressing all their thoughts due to a restricted vocabulary and a limited command of language structure. Students at this level speak in simple sentences, which are comprehensible and appropriate, but which are frequently marked by grammatical errors. Proficiency in reading may vary considerably. Students are most successful constructing meaning from texts for which they have background knowledge upon which to build.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4</td>
<td>At L4, students’ language skills are adequate for most day-to-day communication needs. They communicate in English in new or unfamiliar settings but have occasional difficulty with complex structures and abstract academic concepts. Students at this level may read with considerable fluency and are able to locate and identify specific facts within the text. However, they may not understand texts in which the concepts are presented in a decontextualized manner, the sentence structure is complex, or the vocabulary is abstract or has multiple meanings. They can read independently but may have occasional comprehension problems, especially when processing grade-level information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 5</td>
<td>At L5, students can express themselves fluently and spontaneously on a wide range of personal, general, academic, or social topics in a variety of contexts. They are poised to function in an environment with native speaking peers with minimal language support or guidance. Students have a good command of technical and academic vocabulary as well of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms. They can produce clear, smoothly flowing, well-structured texts of differing lengths and degrees of linguistic complexity. Errors are minimal, difficult to spot, and generally corrected when they occur.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to Collier and Thomas (1989), ELLs are able to attain conversational fluency in English within one to three years. Fluency skills develop via experiences in the classroom and experiences in the community among peers. However, Cummins (1981, 2000) suggested that the necessary academic language that leads to school success develops at a much slower rate. Within no time at all, ELLs lose their language focus during a content-based lecture in which the context is greatly reduced (Cummins, 1981; Zainuddin, Yahya, Morales-Jones, & Whelan Ariza, 2007). Likewise, ELLs may feel comfortable speaking on topics of personal interest among friends; yet feel intimidated participating in classroom conversations embedded in content language.

Evidence suggests intensive, supplemental instruction can alleviate the reading problems of ELLs (Quiroga, Lemos-Britton, Mostafapour, Abbott, & Berninger, 2002). However, the efficacy of these intervention programs for ELLs has not been thoroughly investigated (Denton et al., 2004). Therefore, researchers need to examine best practices for fluency and comprehension development of ELLs (Mohr, 2004). Calderón (2001) stated the following:

Researchers need to pull together effective practices to dispel old myths about the students and ineffective instructional practices through extensive teacher professional development, whole-school responsibility for ELL student learning, high expectations, and a comprehensive program that is linguistically and culturally relevant. (p. 257)

Despite the attention given to fluency instruction (Palumbo & Willcutt, 2006; Pikulski, 2006), the real task is to determine how to help ELLs improve their fluency and inevitably comprehend the texts that they are required to read in schools. It is no longer professionally acceptable to assume that “plain old good teaching,” meaning the techniques that master teachers employ on a daily basis, is good enough for ELLs.
“Working knowledge of differentiated instruction is essential for teachers working with ELL populations” (Flynn & Hill, 2005, p. 4).

Although there are instructional practices that are effective for all students, there are specific procedures that when implemented on a regular basis, render higher academic gains for ELLs (Echevarria, Short, & Powers, 2006). Unfortunately, regular classroom teachers receive very little, if any, training to teach ELLs (Lewis et al., 1999; National Center for Education Statistics, 2002). Echevarria et al. (2008) argued that every teacher that teaches ELLs must learn to teach content material and language methodically and accordantly. Research suggests that teachers’ content knowledge and instructional skills are instrumental in the success of their students (Darling-Hammond, 2000). The National Center for Education Evaluation (NCEE; 2007) recommended that schools provide their teachers with applicable professional development so they are prepared to teach academic English. Educators cannot attempt to eliminate the achievement gap unless our schools eliminate the knowledge gap that perpetuates the profession. Short and Echevarria (2004/2005) stated the following:

Clearly, teachers need specific preparation in working with English language learners. The need to know who the students are and what their prior education experiences were like. Moreover, teachers need to know how to deliver sheltered instruction—to teach content to English language learners in strategic ways that make the concepts comprehensible while promoting the students’ academic English language development. (p. 9)

In addition, Manyak (2007), Manyak and Bauer (2008), and Mohr (2004) suggested that ELLs do not need remedial instruction, but instruction at full throttle. They challenged teachers and administrators to focus on the strengths and weaknesses of ELLs,
and to proactively address their needs as they do the needs of monolingual English learners. Mohr argued the following:

Well-intentioned but poorly equipped teachers often excuse ELLs from classroom discussions, give less demanding work, and require them to do less. Unfortunately, the self-esteem of any student is unlikely to develop by passivity or marginality. Rather, students need challenge and engagement—the opportunity to participate and the support to make sense and meaning of their academic lives. (p. 19)

Furthermore, there is a great need for careful descriptions of the contexts in which instruction has been delivered and changes in student behaviors have occurred. In addition to other types of research methods, case studies can provide careful descriptions of the instructional contexts (International Reading Association and the NICHD, 2007).

Statement of the Research Purpose

In order to address the literacy needs of ELLs, educators need to understand how ELLs acquire a second language and which teaching strategies are most beneficial in the classroom. Hinkel (2005) stated that the greatest challenge facing teachers is to recognize, describe, and comprehend all factors that impact English-language acquisition and then to respond with effective teaching strategies that successfully promote reading proficiency for ELLs. Based on personal experiences, ELLs arrive in classrooms with native language acquisition skills already intact. Consequently, ELLs must continue to develop their native language skills in order to prevent any first-language loss (Cummins & Swain, 1986; Gunderson, 2000). Manyak (2007) argued that it is “critical that teachers committed to serving ELs [English Learners] consider alternative ways to support their students’ biliteracy development” (p. 199). In fact, Manyak advised that teachers might collaborate with parents and other community members to offer after-school programs
designed to teach native language literacy skills to young ELLs. These students rely on their native languages as a resource while learning English. Students whose native language is Latin-based are able to rely on cognates to help with comprehension (Anthony, 2008). Although some ELLs can adapt their native language strategies to assist with English acquisition, these students often require explicit, systematic instruction if this language transfer is to occur (Denton et al., 2004).

Fluency and comprehension in word recognition is one component of this explicit instruction. The greatest academic challenge for ELLs is not learning to decode in a second language, but learning to comprehend what they have decoded (Cummins, 2003). According to Palumbo and Willcutt (2006), students, who are literate in their first language, benefit when teachers keep the focus on meaning. This focus allows them to draw on their native language skills that they have already developed. Therefore, educators need to make smart choices when planning lessons in order to implement effective teaching strategies, which promote fluency and comprehension, and to incorporate culturally relevant texts for their ELLs.

The real challenge for educators is to effectively implement reading strategies that have research support for all students, to accelerate the literacy development of ELLs, and to promote positive attitudes about learning (Hinkel, 2005; Mohr, 2004).

The purpose of this study was to investigate and describe an early literacy intervention program that incorporated best practices previously confirmed for monolingual English students (Rasinski & Padak, 2001; Rasinski et al., 1994) with strategies that have research support for ELLs. The researcher examined and analyzed the interactions between the ELLs and the researcher during a modified FDL, as well as the
impact that a modified FDL had on the English reading development of three elementary ELLs.

The setting for the study was a multiage tutoring program for ELLs in an urban community in a Great Lakes state. A total of 25 ELLs attended this 9-week summer program for a total of 4½ hours a week, and they continued to participate in the after-school session from September through December for 1 hour a week.

After conducting fluency and comprehension pretests, the researcher purposively selected the three ELLs, based on the program director’s recommendations and the students’ pretest scores, with intermediate English proficiency levels. According to G. E. Garcia (2003), ELLs, as well as emergent readers, need a vocabulary foundation in order to build reading fluency skills. ELLs who have developed this foundation are typically those who have intermediate English proficiency skills. Moskal and Blachowicz (2006) stated:

Children learning how to read naturally sound choppy as they integrate decoding skills with growing sight word vocabulary. With reading instruction and practice, some beginning readers easily transition from choppy word-by-word reading to natural-sounding reading. Others need guidance and support to develop fluency as they move into upper elementary and even middle school. (p. 2)

Therefore, ELLs who demonstrate intermediate level language skills are more likely to benefit from fluency instruction than those ELLs who lack basic vocabulary knowledge.

The 3 ELLs completed the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERAS; McKenna & Kear, 1990), before the researcher implemented the FDL on a weekly basis. The researcher created lesson plans based on the students’ needs and made note of any necessary modifications to the FDL in order to meet the needs of the ELLs. At the
conclusion of this program, the researcher conducted fluency and comprehension posttests, and the ELLs completed a final ERAS.

The researcher conducted a focus group session and individual interviews with participating students, and their parents were interviewed in order to better understand any changes, which may have occurred, in the students’ attitudes towards reading and overall reading development. The students’ past and present classroom teachers were interviewed, as well as the students’ English as a Second Language (ESL) instructors.

Statement of the Research Questions

A qualitative paradigm guided the research questions. Descriptive data was collected in order to address and analyze the research questions. These questions are influenced by the research on second language acquisition and fluency and comprehension development. In order to describe the English reading development of these ELLs, two questions underlie this study:

1. How do teacher-student interactions and student-to-student interactions, during the implementation of a modified FDL, impact the Karen children’s abilities to develop fluency and comprehension skills in English?

2. How does systematic language instruction using a modified FDL impact the fluency and comprehension development of these three ELLs?

Operational Definitions

This section provides the definition of terms that underlie this study.

First, bilingual is defined as an individual who is capable of communicating in two languages with equal or approximately equal facility (LaCelle-Peterson & Rivera, 1994).
Change is defined as any difference in the results between the pretests and the posttests on the measurements of the 3 Minute Reading Assessments: Word Recognition, Fluency and Comprehension, Flynt–Cooter RIC, scores on the ERAS, and differences in reading development and reading attitudes observed and reported by the researcher, teachers, students, and parents.

Choral reading is one of the most widely used forms of assisted reading. It is defined as a reading activity in which less fluent readers read in unison with a teacher or with more fluent readers (Rasinski, 2004b; Rasinski & Padak, 1998, 2000).

Comprehension is defined as the purpose of reading (Allington, 1983a). Reading is a meaning-making activity in which the reader connects to and understands the text by reading, interpreting, and reacting to the author’s message.

Culturally relevant, in reference to pedagogy, is defined as instruction that draws upon knowledge of concepts, procedures, and strategies that students know well in order to create for themselves a mental representation of the new concept, procedure or strategy (Moll & Greenberg, 1990).

Cueing systems, in reference to reading, are commonly referred to as graphophonics (sound/symbol correspondences), syntax (word order), and semantics (meaning). During the reading process, readers use their background knowledge about the letters and their sounds, the structure of the language and how words go together, and knowledge about the text’s topic. Efficient readers rely on multiple strategies to decode words (Clay, 1985).

Emergent readers are defined as readers who are immersed in a literate home environment and are engaged in literacy activities from birth (Teale, 1978).
English Language Learners (ELLs) are defined as students for whom English is an alternative language (LaCelle-Peterson & Rivera, 1994). Au (1998) also offered that an ELL is an American Indian or an Alaskan native whose language other than English affects his English proficiency level. The term ELL is interchangeable with the terms English as a Second Language (ESL) and Limited English Proficiency (LEP).

Ex post facto research is a term from Latin used to describe an investigation in which the causes are studied and reported after they “presumably have exerted their effect on the variable of interest” (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007, p. 639).

For the purpose of this study, fluency is defined as oral reading that is characterized as quick, accurate, expressive, and well understood by the reader (Hudson, Lane, & Pullen, 2005; National Reading Panel [NRP], 2001; Rasinski & Padak, 2000). Fluency is measured by the number of words read correctly in a passage, and a rating on the ability to decode words automatically (Flynt-Cooter, 1998) while reading with appropriate prosody (Rasinski & Padak, 2005).

The Fluency Development Lesson (FDL) is a 15-minute lesson that incorporates effective fluency and comprehension activities. This lesson is in addition to the regular reading curriculum (Rasinski et al., 1994).

Intermediate language proficiency is a level of language ability demonstrated by ELLs as defined by Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. (1997). See Table 1 TESOL Proficiency Levels for a detailed explanation of the intermediate language abilities.

Metacognition refers to the knowledge and control that students have over their own thinking and learning activities (A. L. Brown, 1980).
Metalinguistic awareness is a term first used by Cazden (1974) to describe and explain the transfer of linguistic knowledge and skills from one language to a different language. Bialystok (2007) defined metalinguistic awareness, specifically in bilingual learners’ literacy development, as a theory or model to explain the interaction occurring between language and the written text.

Motivation, with respect to education, has been defined as the desire, need, or willingness to participate and be successful in the learning process (Winograd & Paris, 1989).

Paired reading is a strategy that enables a disfluent reader to read alongside a more fluent reader (Koskinen & Blum, 1984). This activity is best suited for struggling readers who need assistance with decoding and fluency.

Poetry for children is defined as language that comes to life with its own natural rhythm, imagery, and sound that catapults children into a new consciousness and causes them to reflect with emotional intensity (Temple, Martinez, Yokota, & Naylor, 2002). Poetry is written language that “includes songs and raps, word pictures, memories, riddles, observations, questions, odes, and rhymes” (Tompkins, Bright, Pollard, & Winsor, 1998, p. 414).

Prosody is defined as the components of spoken language: volume, pitch, tempo, and rhythm (Harris & Hodges, 1995). Dowhower (1991) defined prosody as the reader’s ability to connect words into appropriate and expressive rhythmic patterns.

Reading attitude is divided into two constructs: recreational reading and academic reading (McKenna & Kear, 1990); this was measured by the ERAS and interviews conducted with the students. Recreational reading implies that students choose to engage
in the reading activity or choose the reading material. Academic reading, on the contrary, implies that students are required to engage in the reading activity or the teacher chooses the specific reading material for the students.

*Refugee* is defined by the United Nations 1951 *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* as an individual who “owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality . . . [and] is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it” (Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, 1951, Article I, section 2).

*Refugee camp* is defined as a place constructed by governments or non-governmental organizations for the purpose of receiving and caring for refugees. Refugees may remain in camps until it is safe to return to their native lands or until they are resettled in countries away from the borders they have crossed (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 2006).

Next, *repeated readings* are defined as the numerous readings of the same text that provide practice for students in reading fluency (Kuhn & Stahl, 2003; LaBerge & Samuels, 1974; Samuels, 1979).

*Retelling* is defined as the reader’s oral reconstruction of the text, which is used to verify the reader’s ability to make sense of the content of the text (Flynt-Cooter, 1998).

*Scaffolding* is defined as a “process that enables a child or novice to solve a problem, carry out a task or achieve a goal which would be beyond his unassisted efforts” (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976, p. 90).
Last, *vocabulary* is defined as those words that students both recognize and comprehend. Recognition and meaning vocabularies evolve concurrently, and vocabulary development is a critical factor in reading comprehension (Cunningham, 2006; Palumbo & Willcutt, 2006).

**Assumptions**

The three ELLs in this study were identified as having intermediate English language proficiency levels, which are described in Table 1 *TESOL Proficiency Levels*, through the recommendation of an administrator, initial informal observations by the researcher, initial scores on the 3 Minute Reading Assessments: Word Recognition, Fluency and Comprehension and the Flynt–Cooter RIC, and by confirmation from the ESL instructors with whom the ELLs worked.

The researcher modified the FDL as it is prescribed by the authors of the protocol. The researcher also correctly followed the assessment protocols for the 3 Minute Reading Assessments: Word Recognition, Fluency and Comprehension, the Flynt-Cooter RIC, and the ERAS.

The three ELLs were able to articulate their feelings, beliefs, and opinions about the intervention program during the focus group session and during individual interviews conducted by the researcher.

The translator/interpreter was able to correctly articulate the researcher’s interview protocol and provide an accurate account of the parents’ answers and comments to the researcher’s interview protocol.

The three classroom teachers and two ESL instructors were able to share their personal feelings and opinions about the English reading behaviors of these three ELLs.
Delimitations

This study was conducted in an urban community in a Great Lakes state. The participants in this study were chosen based on purposive sampling and share identical native languages. “Purposive sampling is based on the assumption that one wants to discover, understand, gain insight; therefore one needs to select a sample from which one can learn the most” (Merriam, 1988, p. 48).

Limitations

The following limitations may have hindered the research study.

Maturation: The students were likely to show some degree of progress throughout the course of the intervention program regardless of the intervention.

Researcher subjectivity: During the focus group session and individual interviews the researcher’s bias towards the FDL may have influenced the participants to respond with positive comments in response to their experiences with the FDL.

Methodology: The use of case study methodology and a small sampling size limits the generalizability of this study.

Summary

In this chapter, the nature of the study has been presented, and an explanation of the research problem and purpose has been provided. The purpose of this study was to describe and interpret the various student-teacher interactions and student-to-student interactions, to discover how the ELLs reacted to the components of the FDL, to determine how best to modify the FDL to meet the ELLs’ literacy needs, and to analyze the impact that the FDL had on the fluency and comprehension development of the ELLs. The research questions were stated, as well as assumptions, delimitations, and limitations.
Operational terms were also defined. The following chapter presents a review of the literature that provides a theoretical framework for the topic of this study.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction and Overview

This chapter provides an overview of the literature significant to this study of the FDL as a strategy to enhance fluency and comprehension development in ELLs. The best practices in reading instruction for monolingual English students provide a foundation from which to build reading instruction for ELLs. Four major areas of research were reviewed: (a) the relationship between fluency and comprehension and best practices to foster fluency and comprehension in emergent readers; (b) fluency and comprehension assessments; (c) student attitudes and motivation towards reading; (d) theory and research conducted in the fields of second language acquisition and reading development of ELLs, which include the challenges that ELLs face while learning English, background information about the Karen people, and best practices for teaching fluency and comprehension skills to ELLs.

Understanding Fluency and Comprehension

Learning to read is a complicated and intricate process involving various metacognitive skills. Proficient readers apply syntactic, graphophonic, and semantic skills as they encounter and decode texts (Clay, 1985). Merely learning about these skills is not enough. Children need to learn how to use the skills that will enhance their ability to read (NICHD, 2000). Readers who apply these skills with ease are able to focus their attention
on comprehending the texts. According to Rasinski and Padak (2001), “Fluency is that bridge between word recognition and comprehension. It is marked by quick, accurate, and expressive oral reading that is well understood by the reader” (p. 28). Consequently, a fluent reader is one who not only reads automatically but one who can simultaneously comprehend the text (Rasinski, 2006; Samuels, 2006).

Samuels (1979) suggested that there are three different levels that correspond to oral fluency. The first level is the non-accurate stage in which a reader demonstrates difficulty recognizing words. Next, in the accurate stage, readers are decoding slowly and cautiously, without much attention to prosody, and usually with a lack of comprehension. Finally, in the automatic stage, readers read with expression, automaticity, and accuracy, and comprehension is attainable. Readers progress from one stage to the next as they are able to perform tasks automatically. Consequently, an ELL whose attention is not only focused on reading automatically, accurately, and with adequate comprehension, but on deciphering a non-native language, is significantly challenged.

The National Reading Panel (NICHD, 2001) reported that a reader is truly fluent when he can understand and interpret text. A reader may accurately decode the words, yet read word-by-word and with little intonation that the meaning of the text gets lost in the act of decoding. Comprehension or the construction of meaning is the ultimate goal of reading and when any one component of fluency is jeopardized, the reader is less likely to derive meaning from the text (Rasinski, 2006). Duke, Pressley, and Hilden (2004) echoed the concern that readers with less than adequate decoding and fluency skills are more likely to struggle with reading comprehension and inevitably fall short of reading achievement. Readers who connect with the author’s message are proficient readers, and
Opitz (2007) suggested that teachers want “proficient readers who are fluent rather than fluent readers who are not proficient” (p. 63).

Being able to decode a text and read fluently is important, yet what really matters is whether or not a student can rise above word-level processing in order to glean the big idea from the text. According to Pardo (2004), “comprehension occurs in the transaction between a reader and a text within a sociocultural context. That makes the transaction crucial to comprehension and the teacher’s role within this transaction very important” (p. 277). Vaughn et al. (2006) suggested that ELLs, like emergent, monolingual English readers, often demonstrate automatic word-level decoding skills regardless of whether or not they are able to comprehend the text.

The RAND Reading Study Group (RRSG; 2002) defined comprehension as the process in which a reader both extracts and constructs meaning while interacting with a text. The process of reading comprehension is multidimensional and it involves the reader, the text, and the activity (RRSG, 2002). Duke (2003) added the important role that schema theory plays during this reading transaction. “Schema theory involves the storage of various kinds of information in long-term memory” (Pardo, 2004, p. 273). Narvaez (2002) posited that this stored information is specific to a reader’s skills, knowledge, experiences, culture, and motivational purpose. “The most important single factor influencing learning is what the learner already knows” (Ausubel, 1968, p. iv), and that the meaning of any given text will vary somewhat depending on the connections that different readers make while interpreting the text (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2000).
Rosenblatt, as cited in Holley (2005), offered that readers construct meaning by making connections to what they are reading with what they already know about the topic. As they construct meaning, readers use their knowledge about the structure of the text that they are reading. For instance, students learn to recognize a folk tale from a biography. The more background knowledge a reader can access during the reading transaction, the less likely the reader will struggle to make sense of the text (Neuman, 2001; Strickland, 2005). Readers also use problem-solving strategies to monitor their understanding of the text as well as to redirect when comprehension breaks down.

Furthermore, a reader who decodes rapidly may not necessarily derive meaning from the text. In fact, Pressley and Hilden (2005) stated that assessments that measure students’ oral reading rates do not measure comprehension.

Fluency does not always guarantee comprehension (Applegate, Applegate, & Modla, 2009; Schatschneider et al., 2004). Applegate et al. cautioned that many reading teachers may actually judge the reading proficiency level of their students according to charts denoting rate, accuracy, and prosody without any consideration given to comprehension. In a study, conducted by Applegate et al., to investigate the relationship between fluency and comprehension, the authors assessed students in grades 2 through 10 who had been labeled as fluent, proficient readers by their current teachers. The purpose of this study was to determine if these fluent readers, who were deemed capable of reading above grade level, were in fact simultaneously constructing sufficient meaning from the texts.

The results of their study suggested that a third of the students who read accurately, with a good pace and with appropriate intonation, did not necessarily obtain
the expected comprehension scores. The authors noted that these particular students were able to answer text-based questions, but demonstrated a lack of higher order comprehension skills. If it is standard practice to assess a student’s ability to answer factual questions after having fluently read a text, then this sample of students represents proficient readers. “And if the assessment of reading comprehension remained largely literal, it may be years before their struggles with comprehension are discovered” (Applegate et al., 2009, p. 518).

Certainly, fluent readers identify words automatically without paying much attention to decoding. Automaticity, a component of fluency, is one characteristic of good readers because they are in control of their reading, and they are able to focus on making meaning. However, round robin reading (RRR) is one instructional style in which fluent readers may in fact misinterpret the meaning of a text. Readers are often so preoccupied rehearsing their part or agonizing over their turn that they cannot comprehend what has been read or even what they have just read aloud. S. Stahl (2004) posited that RRR does not provide all students with sufficient quality practice time because the students spend the majority of their time waiting to read rather than engaging in the act of reading. Ash, Kuhn, and Walpole (2003) argued that RRR does not foster oral reading development. Consequently, RRR does not have a valid purpose in the whole language classroom (Opitz & Rasinski, 2008).

Opitz (2007) argued that comprehension does in fact occur and can be measured without the presence of fluency. Based on his research as a literacy coach, he has witnessed students who are able to apply semantic cues in order to articulate high levels of comprehension even when fluency skills are weak. Therefore, Opitz is not a proponent
of assessing students’ oral fluency skills with an unfamiliar text. He, as well as Cunningham and Allington (1994), and Flynt and Cooter (1998), proposed that students have the opportunity to silently read the text, all the while connecting to the message, before reading aloud for fluency assessment purposes.

A reader’s ability to fluently read a text depends, in part, on the actual text. Fluency rates fluctuate based on the length and difficulty of the text. The reading environment and the ease with which the reader can activate background knowledge also influence the level of fluency. Consequently, fluency cannot be defined in a vacuum (Opitz, 2007; Samuels & Farstrup, 2006).

Walczyk and Griffith-Ross (2007) conducted a landmark study, which supports this notion that a reader’s fluency and comprehension abilities often depend on the text with which the reader interacts. The researchers noted that readers who struggle while attempting to read a text typically demonstrate comprehension after engaging in numerous compensation techniques (Walczyk, 2000; Walczyk & Griffith-Ross, 2007). When the flow of comprehension is interrupted readers opt for the compensation technique that is least disruptive before resorting to other techniques that require more of the reader’s effort. The following is a list of compensations, in order of least disruptiveness, which readers employ while reading challenging texts.

1. Slowing reading rate.
2. Pause.
3. Look back.
4. Read aloud.
5. Sounding out, analogizing to known sight words, or contextual guessing.
7. Reread text.
A summary of this study (Walczyk & Griffith-Ross, 2007) suggested that reader compensations, time restrictions, and motivation all influence a reader’s ability to read a text fluently and with comprehension. The sample included 71 third-graders, 68 fifth graders, and 72 seventh-graders who attended either a rural school in northern Louisiana or a suburban school in Ruston, Louisiana. According to standardized test score results, the students in the rural school performed below the state average in English language arts, in contrast to the students at the suburban school who performed well above the state average. Despite the degree of difference between the participants’ skill levels, none of the participants had a declared reading disability.

After conducting experimental assessments, the researchers (Walczyk & Griffith-Ross, 2007) analyzed and reported the findings. First, both fluent and disfluent readers demonstrated comprehension. Those students who read fluently compensated less frequently, whereas, students who were disfluent and motivated to read the text compensated more frequently. Likewise, less skilled readers lacking motivation, or self-esteem, will likely choose to compensate infrequently and comprehend defectively.

Second, readers who engaged in time-pressured readings demonstrated less comprehension in comparison to those readers who were non-time-pressured. The time-pressured students who were fluent comprehended better. However, disfluent students who were not timed demonstrated considerable comprehension, which suggests that they may have been motivated to compensate for their weak fluency skills. Consequently, motivated, fluent readers comprehend better than unmotivated, disfluent readers. Likewise, motivated, disfluent readers are able to comprehend in less restrictive environments, without time restrictions, which encourage compensation. In conclusion,
teachers need to teach metacognitive skills so that struggling readers are equipped with compensation techniques. “Fluent word reading, then, may not be sufficient, or even necessary, to comprehend well” (Walczyk & Griffith-Ross, 2007, p. 566).

The Significance of Fluency and Comprehension Instruction

Regardless of the subject, reading is at the heart of all instruction. Therefore, developing and maintaining reading proficiency is the key to academic fruition. Why all the fuss with fluency? “Fluency gives language its musical quality, its rhythm and flow, and makes reading sound effortless” (Worthy & Broaddus, 2001-2002, p. 334). Well-constructed studies have suggested that quick, automatic decoding skills, coupled with appropriate expression and phrasing, can determine comprehension skills (NICHD, 2000). However, research has also suggested that students who decode may not actually read fluently or comprehend the message (Morrow, Kuhn, & Schwanenflugel, 2006). Consequently, students need explicit training in fluency strategies (Allington, 1983b; Morrow et al., 2006; Reutzel, 1996). The RRSG (2002) stated the following:

First, we know some of the prerequisites to successful reading comprehension. We know, for example, that reading comprehension capacity builds on successful initial reading instruction and that children who can read words accurately and rapidly have a good foundation for progressing well in comprehension. (p. 21)

According to Stecker, Roser, and Martinez (1998), “Fluency has been shown to have a ‘reciprocal relationship’ with comprehension, with each fostering the other” (p. 306). Allington (1983a) once referred to fluency as the neglected goal of reading instruction. However, fluency is no longer overlooked and this resurgence of interest in fostering fluency has led to an investigation into the relationship between fluency and comprehension. Hudson et al. (2005) stated, “Each aspect of fluency has a clear
connection to text comprehension“ (p. 703). Students who decode inaccurately will have minimal understanding of the author’s intent, which inevitably leads to misinterpretations. Students who read word-by-word and thus lack automaticity are less likely to comprehend the meaning of a whole text. Finally, students with poor prosody are likely to group words into inappropriate phrases or apply expression without fully understanding the contextual meaning of the words. “Conversely, the correct use of prosody serves as an indicator of a reader’s understanding of the material because without such an understanding it would be impossible to apply these elements appropriately” (Kuhn, 2004). In each of these incidences, the students must go to great pains to comprehend what they are reading (Chard, Vaughn, & Tyler, 2002; Kuhn, 2004; Reutzel, 1996; Stanovich, 1986).

Understanding the relationship between fluency and comprehension is actually more complicated than one may anticipate. Walczyk and Griffith-Ross (2007) argued that a child’s level of interest in a particular text inevitably influences her ability to read fluently and to comprehend the content. Other researchers have cautioned that struggling readers are more likely to respond, reflectively, to texts when fluency instruction is multidimensional in nature (Pikulski & Chard, 2005; Pressley, Gaskins, & Fingeret, 2006). Furthermore, Schwanenflugel et al. (2006) discussed the importance of simultaneously developing fluency and comprehension in order for readers to consciously link these skills and to transfer them into their metacognition, which refers to their ability to think about their own thinking processes (Yopp & Yopp, 2000).

According to Nathan and Stanovich (1991) and Richards (2000) fluent oral reading is a necessary component of reading performance and several studies have shown
(e.g., Bell & Perfetti, 1994; Fuchs, Fuchs, Hosp, & Jenkins, 2001) that fluent oral reading fosters comprehension, especially in the primary grades. Taylor and Connor, as cited in Richards (2000), offered three reasons that suggest the importance of oral reading. First, emergent readers not only enjoy hearing themselves read, but they need to hear themselves engaged in the reading process. Second, readers need to read orally to glean feedback from more proficient readers and this feedback enables readers to make necessary modifications while reading. Last, oral reading allows students the opportunity to showcase their skills and perform for authentic purposes. However, Yuill and Oakhill (1991) suggested that approximately 10% to 15% of students struggle with text comprehension even though they demonstrate oral fluency. Poor comprehenders often hide behind accurate, automatic, and expressive oral reading, and choose not to engage in reading-related activities for pleasure (Nathan & Stanovich, 1991; Richards, 2000).

The phenomenon of fluency has gained much ground recently as researchers examine the impact that fluency has on a reader’s ability to read silently as opposed to orally. Pikulski and Chard (2005) submitted that “the importance of oral reading pales dramatically in comparison to that of silent reading comprehension. Most readers spend a minuscule amount of time doing oral reading as compared to silent reading” (p. 510).

Silent reading was often a neglected component of an elementary reading program. Teachers did not value silent reading because they were not “instructing” during this block of time, and many students were off-task, especially if they were unable to independently read the books they had chosen. Allington (1994) observed that “teachers seem to feel uncomfortable when children just read. Sustained silent reading seems more like a leisure activity than educational work to adults” (p. 171).
However, Taberski (2000) and Vacca et al. (2009) suggested that teachers can no longer send students off to read on their own unless the students understand that there is actually a purpose for the activity. This silent reading time is the opportunity that students need to practice all of the skills and strategies that good readers use while reading independently. Taberski (2000) explained that “it’s every reader’s responsibility to make sense of what the author has written. Over the course of the year, when children in my class read ‘silently’ each day for extended periods of time, they’re consolidating their strategies and skills” (p. 7). Gambrell (1996) suggested that teachers who model reading during silent reading have good intentions. However, this is a passive activity and a more admirable approach is to explicitly share their personal reading experiences with their students. Teachers who converse about what they are reading for pleasure enable students to quickly recognize that reading occurs beyond the four walls of the classroom. Researchers also suggested that teachers should conduct individual reading conferences and assess reading skills during silent reading sessions (G. Manning & Manning, 1984; NRP, 2000).

Readers who find the act of reading rather difficult and laborious are least likely to choose to read silently for pleasure. Stanovich (1986) pointed out that these students who are unengaged in reading continue to fall further behind their fluent classmates who find reading less challenging and much more enjoyable. Motivating disfluent readers is a battle that many teachers face daily in their elementary classrooms. However, Worthy and Broaddus (2001-2002) stated, “When teachers make fluency a major classroom focus and when instruction and materials are engaging, students can accomplish the major goal of reading instruction – reading independently for learning and enjoyment” (p. 342).
Fostering Fluency and Comprehension Development in Emergent Readers

Worthy and Broaddus (2001-2002) offered a description of a classroom that recognizes and promotes the acquisition of literacy skills:

A classroom that fosters fluent reading development is full of interesting, well-written materials on every topic imaginable, in a variety of formats, and with a wide range of difficulty levels. Instructional activities and texts are purposeful and interesting, the atmosphere is positive and engaging, and there are many opportunities to read individually and with others. (p. 335)

Numerous researchers have suggested fluency and comprehension activities that lead to the greatest gains in proficient reading. Topping, as cited in Samuels and Farstrup (2006), commented that many of these activities “usually involve some combination of modeling, practice, prompting, scaffolding, and feedback” (p. 116). Given that fluency is comprised of three components: accuracy, automaticity and prosody, Rasinski (2006) advised against teaching each component as a separate entity. Instructional time is paramount in the elementary classroom. Although comprehension is the ultimate goal of fluency instruction, many teachers focus on developing automaticity through repeated reading activities and likewise increase their students’ reading rates. Students who are able to master the code and recognize patterns in written words move toward becoming automatic readers. However, students who read rapidly may not have a clue about that which they have decoded and consequently, comprehension has been jeopardized. This is the case in many elementary classrooms (Rasinski, 2006).

First and foremost, teachers must assist students so that the reading transaction occurs. Opitz and Eldridge (2004) cautioned that “comprehension skills are frequently left untaught. How important it is to remember that comprehension is the essence of reading and that it has to be taught and cannot be left to chance” (p. 772). Pressley,
Wharton-McDonald, Mistretta-Hampston, and Echevarria (1998) claimed that despite the numerous comprehension assessments used in elementary classrooms, there is very little evidence of explicit comprehension instruction. The RAND Reading Study Group (2002) reported that comprehension instruction continues to be lacking in schools, and not much has changed as Onofrey and Theurer (2007) suggested that many teachers are still unsure exactly how to address comprehension instruction in their classrooms. Merely asking students questions at the end of a text is not sufficient instruction and will not transform students into proficient readers who learn to individually and automatically implement skills and strategies.

Even when students are immersed in a language-rich environment and exposed to a variety of experiences, many students are not able to develop fluency and comprehension skills on their own (Pinnell et al., 1995). Teachers must scaffold instruction by teaching decoding skills, the components of fluency, vocabulary, how to activate personal schema before, during, and after reading (Gordon & Pearson, 1983), and how to respond to texts (Clark & Graves, 2004; Duke & Pearson, 2002). If students receive effective instruction, then they are able to self-monitor and repair while reading and when comprehension breaks down. S. Stahl (2004) suggested that teachers who discuss and teach comprehension strategies enable students to understand a text even when students are unable to relate it to background experiences. Students may refer to pictures, subvocalize, skip and read to the end of the sentence, reread and use context clues. Students learn to employ these strategies simultaneously and continuously if given the opportunities to practice for authentic purposes. The strategies that teachers use for teaching and improving fluency and comprehension must not limit students’ abilities to
comprehend texts outside of the classroom, but serve to enable students to comprehend a variety of texts in diverse contexts (Perez, 1998).

Various instructional activities promote the development of reading skills in diverse learners. First, teachers can teach phonemic awareness and phonics to promote students’ automatic decoding skills. “If students put too much mental energy into sounding out the words, they will have less mental energy left to think about the meaning” (Pardo, 2004, p. 273). Students who are phonemically aware automatically recognize that speech consists of a sequence of sounds or phonemes. They can identify the individual sounds in a spoken word, blend sounds to make words, and manipulate these “chunks” of speech to create new words (Yopp & Yopp, 2000). For instance, a proficient reader can identify the three specific sounds in the spoken word *clap* (/cl/-/a/-/p/), blend phonemes together to make words (/f/-/o/-/g/), and change *clap* to *trap*. This awareness that spoken language is comprised of small units of sound and the ability to reorganize these units or phonemes appears to be necessary for readers of English, which is an alphabetic orthography (NICHD, 2001). Activities such as songs, chants, and word-sound games provide students with phoneme instruction and authentic opportunities to recognize and create language (Vacca et al., 2009; Yopp & Yopp, 2000).

Phonics, like phonemic awareness, has been recognized as a critical component of effective reading instruction (NICHD, 2001). Phonics instruction teaches students the corresponding relationship between the letters of written English and the sounds of spoken English (Vacca et al., 2009). Systematic and explicit phonics instruction focuses on the teaching of consonant and vowel letter-sound relationships in a prescribed sequence that leads to improved spelling, word recognition, and reading comprehension.
Effective reading teachers balance direct instruction of skills with authentic reading experiences. Thus, phonics instruction is essential and must definitely be a component of reading instruction. However, phonics lessons, which are isolated and unrelated to an authentic text, can be meaningless for students. Flood and Lapp (1994) recommended implementing a whole-to-part-to-whole organization for teaching phonics skills.

Emergent readers can read and respond to literature—this is the whole; then teachers focus on a specific reading skill while engaged in a minilesson using examples from the literature—this is the part. Finally, the students revisit the literature to apply that which they have learned by rereading or participating in corresponding writing activities—this is the whole again (Wiggins, 1994).

S. Stahl (2004) argued that instruction in phonemic awareness and decoding skills without any reference to comprehension strategies will not enable readers to make any connections to the text. A multiple-strategy approach to fluency and comprehension instruction is recommended, which “will help children learn to use prior knowledge effectively to make specific connections to text, and teaching strategies that will help them navigate multiple genres of text about which they may have limited background knowledge” (p. 602).

The ability to decode is an essential reading skill; however, when decoding is overemphasized and students are given easy, decodable texts to read, then the purpose of reading as a meaning making activity is jeopardized (Cunningham & Allington, 1994). Students quickly learn that correct pronunciation is the goal, and they have difficulty focusing on the meaning of the text because they are concentrating on word-by-word decoding. This overemphasis on word-by-word decoding is not only unnecessary, but
actually physiologically unrealistic. Cunningham and Allington revealed that the human eye scans about 12 letters at a time. In fact, we read ahead of our voice, and this is how we are able to read expressively because we render appropriate emphasis to words after first seeing what follows and how the words are “expressed” in context.

Next, teachers need to model fluent reading on a daily basis in their classrooms (Pardo, 2004; Richards, 2000). According to the landmark study *Becoming a Nation of Readers* (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985), “The single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children” (p. 23). Reading aloud not only serves as a model for disfluent readers, but assists students with effective decoding skills to read with more prosody (NICHD, 2000; Worthy & Broaddus, 2001-2002). Trelease (1989, 2006), author of *The Read-Aloud Handbook*, argued that reading aloud is fun, simple, and inexpensive, and he advocated reading aloud to students in the classroom and at home. Gambrell (1996), who has researched the effect of motivation on emergent readers, claimed that, “If we serve as explicit reading models for our students and specifically associate reading with enjoyment, pleasure, and learning, our students will be encouraged to become voluntary lifelong readers” (p. 440). Fisher, Flood, Lapp, and Frey (2004), Morrow (2003), and Van Kleeck, Bauer, and Stahl (2003) also echoed the belief that teachers who read to and with their students help to develop an intrinsic desire to read while building their vocabularies, background knowledge, and concepts of print and story. Furthermore, read-alouds help ELLs to recognize the patterns and structures commonly associated with the English language (Fisher et al., 2004; Lapp & Flood, 2003). Pinnell and Jaggar (2003) also
confirmed that read-alouds foster language development throughout all content areas of
the curriculum.

Reading aloud is a springboard for numerous activities. It allows teachers to set
the scene for a new theme of study and it also helps to put students in the right frame of
mind before reading a text independently. Most importantly, Trelease (1989) argued that
reading aloud to students “is the most effective advertisement for the pleasures of
reading” (p. 235). Teachers, who read aloud from a text above the independent level of
their students, encourage and entice even the most struggling readers. The students
witness the joy and pleasures of reading while teachers model the components of fluency
(Rasinski & Padak, 2000).

Although read-alouds are an important instructional tool, various researchers have
suggested that teachers can maximize the benefits of a read aloud session by using
interactive strategies (Fisher et al., 2004; Houk, 2005; Hoyt, 2007). While reading from a
text, the teacher may stop at a preplanned point in order to invite the students to make
predictions or analyze that which has occurred. In this way, students are actively rather
than passively participating in the read aloud session. Again, teachers should choose to
read aloud books that are slightly above the reading level of the students. In this way,
emergent readers are introduced to more complex language structures, a broader range of
vocabulary, and more sophisticated ideas. Also and equally important is the concept of
fluency. Students need to hear what a fluent reader sounds like in order to internalize
correct pronunciation, syllabication, tone, and rhythm. Schrieber (1980) concluded that
the written English language does not always offer sufficient clues about the prosody of
language. Consequently, emergent readers rely on hearing a fluent reader breathe life into
the text by appropriately modeling the pitch, intonation, and expression, while reading a variety of different genre (Nichols, Rupley, & Rasinski, 2009; Richards, 2000).

Read-alouds have shown to motivate elementary students to read particular texts (Palmer, Coding, & Gambrell, 1994). However, Cunningham (2005) argued that teachers who only read-aloud fiction may unintentionally ignore students in their classrooms who find non-fiction more intriguing, and who are much more inclined to read about spiders than about a fictional spider that spins a web to save a pig in *Charlotte’s Web* (White, 1952/1974). In order for read-alouds to effectively engage, motivate, and inspire reluctant readers, teachers must choose texts that these students would actually want to read themselves. “Reading aloud matters to motivation, and what we read aloud might really matter to struggling readers” (Cunningham, 2005, p. 89).

Silverman (2007) posited that read-aloud programs, which focus instruction on building vocabulary through contextual elements, have been successful instructional techniques with ELLs. In particular, ELLs benefit from read-aloud sessions that engage diverse learners in active dialogue with the target vocabulary (August, Carlo, Dressler, & Snow, 2005). Teachers, who expose ELLs to a language-rich classroom environment that supports social interactions, are expediting ELLs’ academic vocabulary development (Bauer & Manyak, 2008; Mohr, 2004)).

Independent reading, which fosters fluency and comprehension development, is the time that students spend reading texts that are at their independent reading levels. Students who spend time reading texts at their frustration reading levels do not improve oral reading fluency and risk developing negative feelings towards reading (Worthy & Broaddus, 2001-2002; Zutell & Rasinski, 1991). Samuels and Farstrup (2006) also
recommended that a student’s reading ability level should match the text’s reading level, especially during independent reading activities, in order to enhance fluency and comprehension skills. This is the time when the students apply all of their reading skills (i.e., ease, speed, and understanding) gained during oral fluency instruction and enjoy reading for authentic purposes (Pilgreen 2000). “When students recognize the relationship between instructional activities, they are more likely to apply the knowledge and skills they learned in one context to the other” (C. Williams & Lundstrom, 2007, p. 210).

Students should have access to a wide range of reading materials. This is the time for students to explore authentic texts and various genres of literature that they are able to read fluently. This reading time needs to be silent and sustained, and it is the cornerstone of a solid literacy program (Vacca et al., 2009). Kuhn (2004) also stated that although read-alouds are important instructional activities, students need sufficient time to independently read connected texts in order to develop into skillful readers. If students are to reap the benefits of independent reading, then teachers must provide sufficient time for students to read independently each day in the classroom (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006; Pardo, 2004).

Reading is a sociopsycholinguistic process in which literacy skills immerge in part through social interaction (Freeman & Freeman, 2003; Vacca et al., 2009). Gambrell (1996) believed that students need the opportunity to choose what they read from a wide variety of books, interact socially with others, and share classroom books with family members. Students need to discover what they enjoy reading, and that it is appropriate and common to share their likes and interests with others.
Parental engagement in literacy programs is paramount (Rasinski, 1989). Morrow et al. (2006) implemented a five-year fluency program and study, *The Family Fluency Program*, incorporating the participation of the students and their families. A total of 115 students participated in either the control group or the experimental group, and more than 30 native languages were represented in the sample. However, the researchers decided not to include ELLs in the assessment portion of the study because the assessments were only available in English.

In order to implement *The Family Fluency Program*, the researchers offered three evening training sessions for the parents. The purpose of these sessions was to explain the importance of fluency instruction, to model the fluency strategies the students experienced at school, and to discuss activities that the parents could do at home with their children.

The treatment group participated in various literacy activities such as morning message lessons, read-alouds, independent silent reading, and guided reading groups. The manipulation of the basal reader was the major difference between the control and the treatment groups. Those students in the treatment group received scaffolded support before, during, and after they read the basal readings, and they participated in various formats of repeated readings with the basal. Twice a week, the students took their basal readers home to read for or with their parents. On the contrary, the students in the control group received minimal guidance during the reading activities, and they engaged in round robin reading as opposed to choral reading or repeated reading sessions. The parents did not participate in fluency training seminars, nor did the students read their basal readers at home.
To examine the impact of *The Family Fluency Program*, the researchers assessed the students, with the exception of ELLs, in both groups using the Gray Oral Reading Test, Fourth Edition (GORT-4; Wiederholt & Bryant, 2001). The data analyzed suggested a greater improvement in reading fluency among the students in *The Family Fluency Program* than students in the control group. The researchers cautioned that “home-school programs need to be easy to use. Materials sent home should be introduced to children in school first. The content should be non-threatening and the activities need to be enjoyable” (Morrow et al., 2006, p. 322).

Readers need time to read in risk-free environments. Opitz (2007) stressed that “independent silent reading is a time for students to practice without penalty” (p. 76). He reassured that the students’ reading growth can be measured and ascertained later via assessments. Many teachers avoid independent silent reading because they are unable to assess the students and/or teachers cannot be certain that students are reading appropriate leveled texts. Opitz cautioned that teachers must invest in the time to teach students how to select appropriate texts at their independent reading levels. He also advised that students have the opportunity to communicate with others in class about that which they have read. In this way, the students are able to reflect on the text and express their views. Students can also record the books they have read, along with their comments, on a reading log sheet.

A study by Taylor, Frye, and Maruyama (1990) suggested that in-school independent reading had a dramatic impact on the reading development of fifth and sixth grade students. These students spent, on average, 16 minutes a day engaging in independent reading in their classrooms. In order for students to benefit from independent
reading activities schools and classrooms must be equipped with a sufficient supply of books at all reading levels that entice even the most reluctant readers (Neuman & Celano, 2001).

Paired reading or shared reading is another powerful reading technique for emergent readers. During this reading event, developed by Koskinen and Blum (1984), students silently read a text, meet with their partners to take turns orally reading the text while the other partner listens attentively and provides constructive feedback. Richards (2000) suggested that shared reading creates an atmosphere for explicit instruction in oral reading fluency. “Daily shared reading of poems, songs, and chants provides students with enjoyable successful reading experiences, and it can be the basis of skills lessons in the context of real reading” (Gill, 2006, p. 191). Roskos, Tabors, and Lenhart (2009) stated, “Shared reading mimics the time-honored bedtime story routine in which adult and child share the warm intimacy of reading together” (p. 56). In fact, shared reading was designed by Holdaway (1979) as a way to bring this parent-child reading experience into the school classroom. This shared reading experience allows learners the opportunity to participate actively in the reading of the story.

During shared reading students are able to see an enlarged version of a text or they have their own copy of the text that is being read aloud. The text may be a Big Book, a poem, or even a chant. The text is usually read aloud several times before the students are asked to join in and read. Shared reading teaches students many reading skills such as: fluency, one-to-one correspondence, directionality, concept of rhyme, and grammatical language structures. The weaker reader reads along with the stronger reader, gaining confidence all the while. This emphasis on continuity and fluency gives students
the opportunity to read for pleasure and to gain confidence through praise (Topping, 1987a, 1987b, 1995).

Topping (1987a) stated that although paired reading

... was originally designed on behaviorist principles, it has since become clear that many psycholinguistic factors are at work in its success. The reading together aspect, coupled with the availability of virtually immediate support, frees many children from word by word decoding and enables them to read much more fluently with much greater consciousness of contextual cues. Word attack strategies may still be deployed by the child, but if they cannot be deployed rapidly and fluently within 5 seconds, support is immediately available. (p. 611)

The most effective paired reading sessions occur after teachers invest the time in explaining and modeling the purpose and components of paired reading. For example, Friedland and Truesdell (2004), as well as Topping (1987a, 1989) recommended that teachers stress the importance of book selection, fluency, and appropriate follow-up questions and discussions. It is also critical that teachers observe during paired reading in order to provide constructive feedback at the conclusion of the sessions. This feedback helps to keep the stronger reader engaged and focused while working with the weaker reader. Paired reading not only fosters reading development, but also confidence and motivation to read (Friedland & Truesdell, 2004; Topping, 1987a, 1989).

According to Routman (2000), the main purpose of shared reading is to entice and intrigue the readers. In particular, Routman recommended shared reading of poetry because it “is one of the best ways I know for promoting confidence and competency in developing readers of any age” (p. 36). Kuhn and Stahl, as cited in Opitz (2007), claimed that “assisted activities are more effective at advancing reading fluency than unassisted activities. Given this finding, emphasizing assisted fluency activities makes good sense” (p. 37).
J. Smith and Elley (1997) conducted a two-year study comparing shared reading and traditional reading instruction. The results of the study indicated that the shared reading students improved at twice the normal reading rate in reading and that they out-performed the control group on measures of reading, writing, grammar, and vocabulary. Paired reading by parents has been demonstrated to be an effective reading practice with ethnic minorities who are speakers of English living in the United Kingdom (Topping, 1987a). Moreover, children of disadvantaged or of ethnic minority areas who attend American schools have demonstrated growth in reading after their parents, with low literacy skills, participated in paired reading workshops (Topping, 1987a).

Although parents and teachers are more likely to engage in paired reading activities with emergent readers, Topping, as cited in Samuels and Farstrup (2006), advocated that readers continue to engage in paired reading activities as they read more challenging books. Consequently, the readers can continue to benefit from this supportive system regardless of their ages.

Choral reading is also a shared reading technique in which small groups of students read together. Richards (2000) recommended including poetry in choral reading and colorfully displaying the poetry on a large chart for all to view. The teacher may assign parts of a text or a stanza of a poem for each group to read for an audience. Again, the less fluent readers rely on those who are more fluent to help lead the way through the passage. The less fluent reader, feeling more confident with a particular passage, should signal the more fluent reader who then stops reading aloud in order to let the emergent reader take over the reins. If the partner begins to experience difficulty, then the fluent reader takes back the leadership role. Kuhn and Stahl (2000) stated that assisted reading
activities as opposed to unassisted activities are more likely to render greater progress in fluency development.

Stoltz (2006) implemented a study with 47 parent-child pairs who engaged in a six-week reading intervention program that incorporated choral reading. The results of this study suggested that the children participating in the intervention condition dramatically improved their reading rate, accuracy, and fluency in comparison to the children in the control group.

An alternative to paired reading is tape-recorded readings (Rasinski, 2003). Students can listen along to a story on a cassette tape as they turn the passages of the book. This activity allows a student to listen to the story numerous times and to read along with the cassette tape once they feel more confident (Barr & Johnson, 1991). Teachers are wise to place these cassette tapes and books in a listening center that is accessible to students throughout the day. Tape-recorded books are also wonderful tools for ELLs who can listen to the tapes at home.

Pluck (1995) implemented a tape-assisted reading program in New Zealand for struggling readers whose chronological ages were not at all matching their independent reading level ages. This program, known as the Rainbow Reading Program, was offered in addition to the regular classroom reading instruction. After the administration and scoring of various tests, 43 students qualified for this program one hour, five times per week. These students practiced reading a book at their instructional levels while listening to it on tape until they could read it successfully without the tape. The results of this program were very favorable. The 43 students spent between 9 and 32 weeks on the
Rainbow Reading Program. These students made an average gain of 2.2 years and up to 4 years in their reading level.

J. Smith and Elley (1997) engaged in a 27-week study with students who listened to tape-recorded books at their specific instructional reading levels for approximately 20 minutes per school day. Based on an administered reading assessment, these students gained, on average, 2.2 years in reading achievement.

Chunking words together in phrases is another important component of fluency and proficient readers make a gradual transition from word-by-word reading to reading in meaningful phrases (Bear, 1991). The meaning of a sentence is carried by the phrases rather than by individual words (Rasinski & Padak, 2001). Consequently, those students who tend to read word-by-word are less likely to derive meaning from the text, regardless of proficient decoding skills (Therrien, 2004). These readers benefit greatly from reading texts that have highlighted phrase boundaries marked with a vertical line or slash mark so that they can adjust their reading in order to improve fluency and comprehension by reducing word-by-word reading (DeFord, 1991; Dowhower, 1991; Nichols et al., 2009).

Many schools offer lists of sight words that each student should be able to read fluently throughout each grade level. A list of phrases in lieu of isolated words is most beneficial for fluency development (Kuhn, 2004). Students need multiple opportunities throughout the school day to read sight words in connected text, rather than in isolation.

On the contrary, Opitz (2007) and A. Young and Grieg (1995) disagreed with phrase boundaries. They feared that emergent readers are more likely to become confused trying to decipher a parsed text, and that these readers are not necessarily leaning how to apply appropriate phrasing in their own reading.
Guided reading is yet another powerful reading experience, based on the use of leveled texts, which enhances fluency and comprehension development (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001; Routman, 2000). Teachers meet independently with each of their students to conduct running records and ask comprehension questions in order to determine the exact instructional reading level of each student. The instructional reading level is the level of difficulty of a text that a student is able to read with minimal support. Once the reading levels have been established, then the teacher forms guided reading groups that are comprised of students who share the same instructional reading level. These flexible groups are constantly changing in order to accommodate the students’ reading interests or instructional needs (Kuhn, 2004; Reutzel, 2003).

At the beginning of each guided reading session the teacher presents the objectives of the group. The students and teacher preview a new text. At this time, the teacher provides the necessary scaffolding so that each student can make a connection to the text. Scaffolding is the gradual increase and decrease of the level of support that teachers provide so that students can comprehend a text (Pardo, 2004). The level of support varies according to the demands of the text and the skillfulness of the reader (S. Stahl, 2004). New vocabulary is introduced via various prereading activities. The students read independently and out loud so that the teacher can “tune in” to any particular student and listen to how well she uses decoding and fluency strategies.

Once the students are finished reading, then the teacher may conduct one of many postreading activities. The students talk about the text and ask questions. They may respond in their journals to a particular question or they may even write and illustrate a new ending to the story. The teacher may also focus in on a specific language skill. For
example, the author may have used contractions quite frequently throughout the text. Thus, the teacher can conduct a minilesson on the correct use of contractions. The teacher also takes the opportunity to share the specific reading strategies that she noticed certain students using in order to decode challenging words.

Guided reading groups are also useful for grouping students who share a common literary interest or even for students who need to review a particular reading skill. The key components to successful guided reading groups are cognizant teachers who combine purposeful observations of student reading behaviors with background knowledge of emergent literacy development (Houk, 2005).

During guided reading groups teachers can reinforce particular reading strategies that proficient readers use while reading. Pardo (2004) explained that teachers can help students learn to use their metacognition while reading in order to use the most effective reading strategies when comprehension breaks down. Poor readers tend to mismonitor their reading and inevitably miscomprehend the text (Pardo). Within a guided reading group, teachers are able to help foster the transaction that needs to occur between the text and the reader so that comprehension is attainable.

One such strategy that promotes this transaction between the reader and the text is the Question-Answer Relationships (QAR) strategy created by Raphael (1984). This strategy supports students in thinking about questions generated by teachers or students in a whole-class setting or even during guided reading groups. Students learn to interpret and categorize questions into four main constructs, so that students can draw on information from the text and their personal schemata when responding to questions.
related to a text they have read. The four question constructs are listed and described below (K.A.D. Stahl, 2004).

- Right There answers are found in a single sentence in the text.
- Putting It Together or Think and Search answers must be found across sections of text.
- Author and You answers require the reader to infer the meaning from the text because the answer to the question is not stated explicitly.
- On My Own answers rely on the reader’s experience and knowledge. (p. 600)

Interested in the relationship between guided reading and comprehension, Dowdell (2008) conducted a study with first through fifth-grade students who participated in before, during, and after reading activities in guided reading groups. The researcher analyzed three sources of comprehension scores, two standardized evaluations and one informal assessment that specifically measured fluency. The participating students’ scores increased by 48 points from their scores obtained 2 years prior.

Readers Theatre is another strategy that provides numerous opportunities for oral language development. According to Millin and Rinehart (1999), Readers Theatre is an instructional strategy that incorporates fluency skills with creative performance skills. Tyler and Chard, as cited in Peebles (2007), suggested that Readers Theatre is the key to motivating even the most reluctant readers because students have the opportunity to reread the same text while preparing to perform for an authentic purpose. The Readers Theatre Institute (2004) recognized that because students do not have to create scenery, design costumes, or memorize lines they are able to focus on simply reading the lines and using their voices to bring the script to life. Worthy and Prater, as cited in Rees (2005) found that students can concentrate on reading fluently because they are not pressured to memorize the text. They can sit or stand in a semi-circle and make eye contact with the
audience. The fact that students can rehearse their presentations lowers the affective filter, and English language learners are also much more willing to take the risk and participate.

Rees (2005) conducted a 12-week study in which low achieving high ability middle school students engaged in Readers Theatre. The data from this study indicated that the students made significant improvement in reading rate and fluency. Also, their positive attitudes towards reading increased.

Martinez, Roser, and Stecker (1999) incorporated 30 minutes of Readers Theatre instruction into their daily literacy lesson. After 10 weeks, they conducted informal reading assessments and reported gains in reading comprehension and reading fluency.

A radio reading (Greene, 1979; Opitz & Rasinski, 2008; Rasinski, 2006) is yet another oral performance opportunity which enhances fluency and comprehension development. Informational texts are best suited for radio reading performances. Students each take a specific section of the text and read their parts as if they are engaging in a radio broadcast (Nichols et al., 2009). The audience should be able to picture the events as if the performers are broadcasting live on the radio.

Radio reading was developed and is practiced in lieu of round robin reading (RRR), which does not promote comprehension or student engagement (Worthy & Broaddus, 2001-2002). Unlike RRR, students who participate in radio reading have the opportunity to rehearse their portions of the text and to perform for the enjoyment of others. The purpose of radio reading, besides entertaining an audience, is to enable students to practice the components of fluency, that is, prosody, accuracy, and pace (Rasinski, 2006).
Hoffman and Isaacs (1991) conducted a study in which they observed oral reading sessions in elementary classrooms. Approximately two-thirds of the amount of oral reading time was devoted to RRR, especially within the low groups of readers participating in this study. The authors of this study concluded that this strategy is ineffective because the students were not able to demonstrate comprehension of the texts they read. The students were too preoccupied with reading their passages perfectly that they were unable to comprehend. RRR did not foster reading comprehension. Tompkins and Hoskisson (1995) also reiterated that RRR does not have a valid purpose in the classroom because it focuses on accurate word identification rather than constructing meaning; leaving readers so preoccupied rehearsing their parts or agonizing over their turns that they cannot comprehend what has been read or even what they have just read aloud.

Research has suggested that students who engage in repeated readings of familiar texts improve their fluency and comprehension skills. Samuels (1979) has been recognized as the creator of the repeated reading strategy that aids in fluency and comprehension development. He explained that a reader can reread a text to improve reading ability just as an athlete can rehearse basketball drills. Chafouleas, Martens, Dobson, Weinstein, and Gardner (2004); Kuhn and Stahl (2002); Rasinski and Padak (2001); and Samuels (1979) defined repeated reading as a strategy in which a reader rereads a passage multiple times with varying degrees of support. Repeated reading has been accepted as an effective strategy for promoting fluency and comprehension in students, especially in those diverse learners (Chard et al., 2002; NICHD, 2000; Therrien, 2004).
Repeated readings can be effective if implemented correctly (Richards, 2000). According to Dowhower (1989), texts for repeated readings should be no longer than 300 words in length, students should have an 85% accuracy rate on their initial reading of the texts, and students should reread the text at least three times before moving on to additional texts. Therrien (2004) conducted a meta-analysis of fluency and comprehension scores that were obtained after a series of repeated reading events. The data from this study suggested that both repeated readings that involved corrective feedback from an adult and debriefing of the text to foster comprehension had a positive impact on the fluency of the participating students.

Routman (2000) expressed that students who reread familiar books are taking advantage of one of the most useful strategies to improve fluency and comprehension. “Within the comfortable territory of a well-known text, developing readers can practice multiple strategies and experience the success of reading with growing fluency and comprehension” (p. 130).

Recent brain research has suggested a connection between repeated reading activities and fluency development in struggling readers (Peebles, 2007). Shaywitz and Shaywitz (2004) reported that repeated reading demonstrated “significant and durable changes in brain organization so the struggling reader’s brain activation patterns come to resemble those of typical readers” (p. 9).

Stayter and Allington (1991) conducted a study with middle school students who were engaged in repeated reading activities as a means to develop higher-order comprehension. The students experimented with different voices and emotions as they reread texts with accuracy and prosody. The students reported that they began to fully
understand the characters in the texts as they reread and familiarized themselves with the authors’ intentions.

Students who read texts at their instructional levels maintain a degree of motivation without becoming overly frustrated (Kuhn & Stahl, 2000; Moskal & Blachowicz, 2006). The key to avoiding frustration is the amount and level of scaffolding provided by an adult. Kuhn and Stahl (2000) noted that even students who are attempting to read texts at their frustration levels are more likely to do so with a degree of success if they have appropriate support. Nichols et al. (2009) cautioned that, “Continued reliance on repeated readings without appropriate guidance and support can lead to diminished student engagement and may not help students recognize that increased fluency provides for more focus on meaning” (p. 5). Meaningful repeated readings can occur when students read with a partner, to a younger student, for their family at home, and to perform a poem or Readers Theatre play. Teachers wishing to maximize the effect of repeated readings with partners provide a special, quiet space in the classroom for students to read. Richards (2000) offered that students may also read along with a cassette tape, mimicking the accurate, prosodic recording. This cassette tape, along with a mini tape recorder, can accompany a child home where he can continue to listen and engage in repeated readings.

Recognizing that poetry was a meaningful modem through which students could participate in repeated readings, Faver (2008) implemented a daily repeated reading session with her second-grade students. Faver (2008) began the school week by introducing a poem, and the students actively participated in echo reading, choral reading, and partner reading throughout the week. The students learned to self-assess
their reading performances based on the fluency skills that Faver had introduced and modeled. Each evening the students took their poem home to continue to read for different, authentic audiences. The students also performed the poems in other classrooms; building and sustaining the enthusiasm for reading. At the conclusion of the school year Faver noticed a boost in self-esteem and an increased desire to read for pleasure, especially in those students who were disfluent readers in August.

In an attempt to clearly understand the effectiveness of repeated readings, Kuhn (2004) conducted a study with 24 second graders who were monolingual English speakers reading at or below the first grade reading level based on school-wide assessments. The students were separated into three different groups and participated in one of the three different reading intervention programs: a fluency-oriented oral reading group (FOOR), a wide-reading group, and a listening-only group. The students met for a total of 18 sessions throughout a six-week treatment period. Each session lasted for 15 to 20 minutes, three times per week.

The students who participated in the FOOR group reread a total of six books after having heard each book read out loud. Kuhn (2004) modeled the components of fluency, and the students had the opportunity to echo read, choral read, and partner read. On the contrary, those students in the wide-reading group read a total of 18 books while they also engaged in echo and choral reading. The third group of students merely listened to an expressive version of the 18 stories.

Fluency and comprehension pretests and posttests results suggested that those students who participated in the FOOR and the wide-reading groups demonstrated the
most improvement in terms of word accuracy and prosody. However, only the students in the wide-reading group showed the greatest gains in comprehension development.

Kuhn (2004) concluded that readers who engage in repeated readings, with a focus on accuracy and prosody, may not automatically make the connection between fluency and comprehension. “Therefore, if seems a reasonable possibility that learners may look toward whatever cues exist, whether implicit or explicit, to decide where to focus their attention during reading” (p. 343). Keeping this in mind, teachers need to make clear that reading is a meaning-making activity and good readers not only read with accuracy, automaticity, and prosody, but with comprehension. Furthermore, the NICHD (2000) recommended teaching numerous reading strategies in tandem, rather than in isolation.

Recognizing the benefits of repeated readings, Peebles (2007) advocated incorporating “Rhythm Walks” (p. 579) as a multidimensional approach to impact the reading development of elementary struggling readers. “Incorporating movement into fluency instruction enhances the brain’s capacity to learn and also holds the motivational appeal to endure intensive and extensive repeated reading methods” (p. 581). Students engaging in “Rhythm Walks” learn through modeling to “listen” to and “feel” the natural rhythm inherent in each phrase, of each line, in a text. Motivated and collaborating with partners, the students enthusiastically stomp to emphasize an exclamatory phrase and tiptoe to mimic a whisper while chorally reading the text (Peebles).

Nursery rhymes and poems are great examples of authentic and predictable texts that also foster fluency and comprehension development in emergent readers. Poetry, no longer considered merely a collection of “classics” to be memorized, can be used in
classrooms as a genre to demonstrate feelings, thoughts, and experiences (Gill, 2007).

Harrison and Holderith (2003) stated the following:

In our fast-paced, ‘instant everything world,’ we need poetry. It helps children and adults to ponder, to observe, to ask questions, to discover sights, sounds, and feelings that otherwise might remain untapped. It brings balance and beauty to our increasingly complex world. Poetry can awaken our senses or bring the element of surprise into our lives. It makes us laugh, teaches us powerful lessons, and renews our souls. (p. 6)

Perfect (1999) claimed that poetry, with its natural rhythm, rhyme, and repetition, is an excellent choice for struggling readers. Proficient readers, who demonstrate phonemic awareness and a keen sense of the natural rhyme and rhythm embedded in oral and written language, are distinguished from those readers who are “at risk.” Although “poetry is the first genre that most children hear” (J. S. Jacobs & Tunnell, 2003; M. Manning, 2003, p. 86), many children arrive at school with limited literacy experiences making the case much stronger that teachers provide daily opportunities to engage learners in rich language lessons (Parr & Campbell, 2006).

Opitz (2007) reiterated the important role that poetry plays in fluency instruction. He stated, “I can think of few ways that are better for teaching students about all three aspects of fluency than poetry. It is a natural fit” (p. 45). Effective fluency instruction depends ultimately on the methods and materials used to model the defining components. According to Perfect (2005), “Poetry’s spare, uncluttered format (e.g., short lines, arranged in stanzas, surrounded by plenty of white space) is especially suited to struggling or reluctant readers, and enhances reading motivation” (p. 17). Stanley (2004) summed up the impact that poetry has on reading development and stated, “Reading and performing poetry provides numerous opportunities for children to practice—with
pleasure—the essential skills of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension” (p. 56).

Recognizing the benefits of poetry, Rasinski and Padak (2001) and Perfect (1999) believed that poetry instruction should be included as part of a teacher’s daily instructional routine. Cunningham and Allington (1994) reiterated that poetry is a crucial component of literacy instruction. “Much of it is funny, and the language, rhyme, and rhythm are delightful” (p. 11). Given the brevity of most poems, students are more likely to engage in multiple readings, and to practice the components of fluency with multiple reading partners (Hadaway, Vardell, & Young, 2001; Vardell et al., 2006).

After having practiced reading short poems, students are more at ease tackling lengthy texts with similar content. Thus, poetry provides necessary scaffolding for all students, especially for ELLs. Parr and Campbell (2006) suggested that the key to introducing poetry activities is found in the scaffolding techniques that enable students to experience all that poetry has to offer, above and beyond the rhyme and rhythm. “Poetry isn’t just whimsical but contributes to increasing reading abilities” (M. Manning, 2003, p. 86). Perfect, as cited in Linaberger (2004), claimed that poetry fosters higher-order thinking skills while developing personal and social communication skills.

Readers who have a purpose and a listening audience are more likely to be enthusiastic and motivated to read (Rasinski, Rupley, & Nichols, 2008). “Poetry is almost perfect for performance” (Rasinski & Padak, 2000, p. 109). Students may perform rather informally for other classmates or perform for invited guests at a “poetry coffeehouse” (Rasinski, 2003). Students select and practice their poems throughout the week in their classrooms and at home. They rehearse the poems while focusing on prosody, accuracy,
and pace. The invited guests arrive on Friday, and the students read, individually and chorally, their poetry selections, and everyone enjoys refreshments.

Poetry is an excellent modem through which the diversity of the English language can be presented to ELLs. Rather than focusing on standard examples of English, the students quickly recognize that language is a reflection of the genre, the historical time period, the social setting, and the audience for which it was created (Hadaway et al., 2001). Likewise, poetry is an obvious choice for introducing concepts and content that students will experience across the curriculum. While reading poetry, ELLs not only participate in an energizing language activity, but they acquire new concepts and content.

Wilfong (2006) conducted a study with students in four third grade classrooms in a program called the Poetry Academy. The program was implemented for 11 weeks, and 6 adult volunteers worked with 36 students who were purposively sampled from a population of 86 third graders. The 36 students were chosen based on a curriculum-based assessment measuring words correct per minute, word recognition, and a score on a retelling. The volunteers read poetry with the sampled students in a weekly cycle. The volunteers spent 10 minutes with each of their students and engaged in repeated reading, listening-while-reading, assisted reading, and modeling activities. The 36 disfluent students kept their poems in a poetry folder that they took home on a weekly basis. The researcher asked the students to read their weekly poems to as many people as possible and to retrieve signatures for all those who listened to the students read. Scores on the post-test reveal a significant gain in the treatment population when compared to the control group in the areas of words correct per minute, word recognition, and attitude towards reading. A marginally significant gain was made in the area of comprehension.
The Fluency Development Lesson (FDL), created by Rasinski et al. (1994) incorporates effective scaffolding strategies that have shown to foster fluency and comprehension development. Given poetry’s natural rhythm, short text, and lively nature, Rasinski et al. suggested using it to implement the FDL. Rasinski and Padak (2001) found the following:

Our experience with the FDL indicates that, when employed three to four times a week over several months, it is easily implemented by teachers and parents, enjoyed by students, and leads to significant improvements in students’ fluency and overall reading, considerably beyond their previous progress. (p. 172)

Literacy skills need to be fostered in ways that are not only pedagogically effective, but in ways that engage learners in meaningful and authentic activities. The FDL combines several aspects of effective fluency and comprehension instruction in order to maximize students’ reading in a relatively short period of time. The FDL, designed to supplement the regular reading curriculum, encourages students to think out loud and share why and how they constructed their beliefs.

Rasinski and Padak (2001) suggested the following:

Our goal in describing the FDL to you is not to suggest that you use it as described here in your own classroom. Rather, we hope you will see what can happen when a lesson format is created using informed practices as building blocks. Thus, we challenge you to adapt the FDL for use in your own classroom, with whatever modifications fit your own particular needs or the needs of your students. We think that the FDL would also work well, with modifications, in certain middle school classrooms. (p. 172)

First, the teacher makes copies of brief passages, usually poems of 50–150 words for each child. The teacher also makes a transparency or poster of the text. The first day the teacher introduces the text and reads it several times as the students follow along on the poster or by using their own personal copies. A discussion ensues about the meaning
of the passage and the author’s purpose and style. “Students need opportunities to practice the use of cognitive strategies in order to internalize them and strengthen their comprehension. Students who engage in conversation in the classroom become reflective thinkers” (Ketch, 2005, p. 12).

Next, the students locate any rhyming words, onomatopoeias, or use of alliteration. Both the teacher and the students may identify unfamiliar words for further discussion. Direct vocabulary instruction allows the students to experience new words within a meaningful context and it is “more productive than simply relying on extensive reading” (Bernhardt, 2000, p. 799). Reading is a social act and the whole experience is much more meaningful when students unite as a community to reflect on and to connect to the text (Rosenblatt, 1978). It is within these text connections that readers relate to the characters, experience the plot, and recall personal experiences.

Next, the students read the text chorally several times. The teacher creates variety by having students read different verses or portions of the text in groups. While the students are reading aloud the poem, the teacher has the opportunity to listen and analyze their misreadings. Cunningham and Allington (1994) stated, “It is these misreadings that allow teachers a ‘window into the mind’ of the reader. It is in responding to these misreadings that teachers have a chance to coach children into strategic reading” (p. 47). Proficient readers know how to apply metacognitive strategies in order to monitor and repair when their reading ceases to make sense. These reading strategies must be taught so struggling readers can fluently read and comprehend (Pressley & Hilden, 2002).

The following day the students may listen to the teacher read the poem again before they divide into pairs, find a quiet spot, and practice reading the poem with their
partners. The partner’s job is to follow along in the text, provide help if necessary, and give positive feedback to the reader. The authentic reflection and conversation that occur within the realm of this social activity promotes critical thinking skills. Then the students regroup and the teacher asks for volunteers to perform the poem. Individuals, pairs, and groups perform the poem for the audience.

After having read the poem for several days, the students take it home to read for their parents or other family members. The parents are asked to listen to their child read as many times as they would like and to praise their child’s efforts. Casanova (1987) and Chavkin and Gonzalez (1995) agreed that schools and parents need to engage in dialogue and activities with one another in order to enhance children’s literacy development. This engagement is critical for schools with diverse populations. Roskos et al. (2009) discussed the important role that parents and caregivers have in their children’s literacy development. For many children, literacy is fostered within the home and as a result of the interaction that occurs among family members. Parents or caregivers, who actively assist children with literacy assignments, help to foster language development and a genuine interest in books (Primavera, 2000). Teachers of diverse learners must recognize the importance of family narratives and make connections between classroom instruction and home experiences. These connections lend critical support in the literacy development of ELLs.

One adaptation to the FDL is the addition of a writing component. The students may complete a writing/illustrating activity on the back of the poem. Corson and Wells, as cited in Wilkinson and Silliman (2000), highlighted the importance of the integration of oral and written language because these literacy experiences foster literate cognition.
Taberski (2000) recognized the importance of reading reflection and encourages teachers to incorporate opportunities for their students to respond, in writing, to poetry. This opportunity allows students to “highlight favorite parts, relating what they’ve learned to their lives, summarizing the central theme, and comparing the book (or poem) to others they’ve read” (p. 171). Zainuddin et al. (2007) argued that ELLs who are given the opportunity to write about that which they have read are more likely to activate their schemata about language and content than those students who lack the writing component. Fitzgerald and Graves (2004) reiterated that writing activities are so valuable for ELLs that teachers should allow beginning language learners the opportunity to respond in their native languages. Although this may not be the most optimal situation, writing in the native language is preferred than not writing at all. In fact, Rubin and Carlan (2005) recommended that ELLs have the opportunity to write in both languages because teachers can glean a clearer picture of the learners’ literacy skills.

Finally, teachers are advised to include enrichment activities to continue to motivate students to read the poem. The students can become actors as they read the poem using different voices and specific emotions. After having practiced reading the poem for several days, the teacher selects “mystery readers” who secretly make an audio recording of the poem. The teacher plays the recording for the other eager students who try to guess the “mystery readers.”

As a culminating activity the students celebrate their literacy accomplishments with a poetry party at the end of the school year. Worthy and Broaddus (2001-2002) stated that students become fluent readers over time and that reading performance is the most effective way to model and practice reading fluency. Each student chooses a
particular poem to read for an audience of students, parents, and administrators. “Successful programs include parents and the entire staff in an effort to connect home and school” (Strickland, 2004, p. 88). The student creates a costume and/or props that coincide with the poem and rehearses in front of the teacher and her peers. “Effective performances are built upon positive social interactions focused on reading. Teacher instruction and feedback are natural components of rehearsing” (Worthy & Broaddus, 2001-2002). Effective rehearsals provide struggling readers with the opportunity to practice and to perform with confidence. Each successful rehearsal leads to increased self-confidence and to motivation to return to the literacy event. With poem in hand, each proud student stands by the microphone and delivers the poem with accuracy, automaticity, and prosody for a supportive audience. Cunningham and Allington (1994) stated, “Children who are successful at becoming literate view reading and writing as authentic activities from which they get information and pleasure, and by which they communicate with others” (p. 2).

Hoagland (1995) hosted a *Poetry Spectacular* in one sixth grade classroom. After having immersed themselves into a variety of different types of poetry, the students chose their favorites to read at a school assembly. They gathered appropriate props and costumes to coincide with their poetry, and they performed in a decorated auditorium for the student body, faculty, and parents. This poetry performance allowed the students the opportunity to collaborate and cooperate with other classmates and to integrate skills such as writing, reading, listening, and speaking.

In summation, the FDL allows the students to develop fluency and comprehension skills via a variety of scaffolding activities in a non-threatening learning environment.
Understanding that reading and writing are synergistic, the students practice various writing skills as they read and study poetry on a daily basis. The incorporation of word studies, cloze activities, writing response sheets, dramatic interpretations, choral and paired readings, and tape recordings all promote fluency and comprehension development in emergent readers. Also, the repetitive nature of the FDL provides the students with multiple opportunities to listen to the poems and to practice reading them for authentic purposes. The poems can be organized in a notebook for easy access during paired reading sessions or even independent reading time (Richards, 2000). Allington (2001), Cunningham (2000), and Rasinski and Padak (2001) suggested that readers are more likely to transition from decoding a text accurately and cautiously to decoding automatically with ease when they practice reading the same text.

Rasinski et al. (1994) implemented the FDL from May to October in second-grade classrooms in an urban school district. Based on an informal reading survey, the students made substantial gains in reading fluency and comprehension. Both the teachers and the students enjoyed engaging in the lessons and continued to practice the FDL after the completion of the study. The results of this study also suggested that the students demonstrated ease at reading unfamiliar texts.

Although the FDL and the SIOP Model were designed for two different, distinct purposes, the content and implications for instruction manifested in both are strikingly similar. In Table 3 the researcher provides a visual that demonstrates the salient connection between the components of the FDL and the SIOP Model.
Table 3

Relationship Between the FDL and the SIOP Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FDL</th>
<th>SIOP Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Large, visual text</td>
<td>#4 Supplementary materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual student text</td>
<td>#20 Provides hands-on materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher reads and rereads the text</td>
<td>#26 Pacing of the lesson appropriate to the students’ ability levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher models fluent reading and discusses the components of fluency</td>
<td>#14 Consistent use of scaffolding techniques throughout the lesson, assisting and supporting student understanding, such as think alouds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher and students chorally read the text</td>
<td>#25 Students engaged approximately 90 – 100% of the period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher creates variety by creating alternative reading activities</td>
<td>#12 Use a variety of techniques to make content concepts clear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paired reading activities</td>
<td>#16 Frequent opportunities for interactions and discussion between teacher/student and among students, which encourage elaborated responses about lesson concepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students read/perform text for authentic audiences</td>
<td>#13 Provides ample opportunities for students to use strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher listens to students read and conducts informal/formal fluency assessments</td>
<td>#30 Conducts assessment of student comprehension and learning of all lesson objectives throughout the lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher and students discuss vocabulary</td>
<td>#9 Key vocabulary emphasized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students add content words to word banks</td>
<td>#27 Comprehensive review of key vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students engage in word sorts</td>
<td>#28 Comprehensive review of key content concepts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fluency and Comprehension Assessments

Assessment is a critical part of what occurs in the classroom. Teachers who apply best practice techniques understand that although assessment should drive instruction, it is not a substitution for instruction. Students learn through instruction, not through assessment. Kuhn and Stahl (2003) stressed the importance of fluency assessment both before and after any intervention occurs. Initial assessments will determine those students who are the most disfluent and in need of intervention assistance. Sylvia Ashton-Warner (1963) stated, “I reach a hand into the mind of a child, bring out a handful of the stuff I find there, and use that as our first working material” (p. 34).

Blachowicz, Sullivan, and Cieply (2001) created the Classroom Fluency Snapshots (CFS) to assess students’ reading rates in terms of words correct per minute. Even though this assessment provides useful information about individual students’ reading rates compared to other students of similar age, the CFS, alone, does not provide information about fluency scale scores or comprehension ability.

Recognizing the need for a multidimensional assessment, Rasinski and Padak (2005) developed the 3 Minute Reading Assessments: Word Recognition, Fluency, & Comprehension. This instrument is a combination of several assessment techniques, and was designed to be administered to individual students. The teacher selects a text provided, depending on the grade level and month of year, for the student to read aloud. The student is given one minute to read aloud the text. While the student reads, the teacher follows along with his personal copy, and the teacher completes a running record and miscue analysis of the student’s errors and self-corrections.
The authors also provide a Reading Fluency-Automaticity table that indicates the number of words that a student should be able to read correctly depending upon the grade level and time of the year. Any words that a student self-corrects are counted as words read correctly.

After the student reads aloud, then the teacher uses the Multidimensional Fluency Scale (Zutell & Rasinski, 1991) in order to rate each participant reader based on the four criteria found in the scale. The Multidimensional Fluency Scale contains the following four dimensions: Expression & Volume, Phrasing & Intonation, Smoothness, and Pace. Finally, the teacher proceeds to assess comprehension by asking the student to retell, from memory, the events that occurred in the short story. A complete description of this instrument is found in Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

Unlike the 3 Minute Reading Assessments, the Flynt-Cooter RIC (Flynt & Cooter, 2001) assesses a student’s oral reading behaviors and fluency only after the student has had the opportunity to silently read the leveled passage. The two instruments also differ in the method of text selection. Teachers using the Flynt-Cooter RIC may choose any grade level passage for a student to read, regardless of the student’s current grade level. If a third grade student is unable to successfully read the third grade sentences for initial passage selection, then the teacher can assess this student with second grade sentences and passages. Finally, the Flynt-Cooter RIC is not a timed assessment. A thorough description of this information is provided in Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

Paige (2006) conducted a study using the Flynt-Cooter RIC with 11 disabled middle school readers. Paige examined the effects of repeated reading strategies on the
reading rate and reading miscues of the participating students. A pretest-posttest design was used to measure the impact of the repeated reading intervention. After determining each participant’s reading level, Paige collected oral reading measures using the appropriate level of Form A of the Flynt-Cooter RIC. At the completion of the six-week repeated reading intervention Paige conducted posttests using the same level of Form A in order to analyze any impact that the repeated reading had on the participants’ scores for accuracy and reading rate.

The large effect size of the reading intervention on the pretest-posttest scores from the Flynt-Cooter RIC suggested that repeated readings may improve the reading rate and accuracy of disfluent readers. Furthermore, repeated readings may also lead to increased levels of confidence and motivation in disabled middle school readers.

Very little research has been conducted for the purpose of assessing the reading development of elementary ELLs. However, Denton et al. (2004) were approached by the director of bilingual education in a Texas school district to evaluate the effectiveness of two approaches for assisting bilingual students with the transition to English reading. The researchers chose Read Well (Sprick, Howard, & Fidanque, 1998), and Read Naturally (Ihnot, 1992). They focused on these approaches because classroom teachers or tutors could learn to implement them without extensive training. The tutors consisted of twenty-three undergraduate university students who enrolled in a course about teaching students who struggle with reading. Most of the tutors were enrolled in the field of special education, and this research project was the first field experience for the majority of these undergraduate students. They all received instruction and training in both reading
programs, and the tutors were supervised by graduate students with experience in education.

ELLs in grades second through fifth were tutored three times a week for 10 weeks. The tutoring session lasted 40 minutes and took place from February through April. The majority of the ELLs were Spanish bilingual students. The Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests–Revised (Woodcock, 1987) was used to evaluate and compare the 51 tutored students to the 42 nontutored classmates. The Read Naturally program focuses on repeated reading with vocabulary and comprehension instruction. The researchers concluded that this program was most appropriate for ELLs who had already reached a first grade decoding level in English. The Read Well approach incorporates systematic phonics with decodable texts. Inevitably, the purpose of this research was to determine if those students who participated in one of the two reading programs demonstrated greater levels of growth in English decoding and comprehension skills than those nontutored students in the comparison groups.

In Read Naturally, students practice reading an expository text until they can meet a specified reading fluency goal, read the text with no more than three errors, and demonstrate acceptable phrasing and expression. The students had to monitor their own progress by graphing their repeated reading practice scores. The students who participated in the Read Well program had decodable books to read that focused on specific phonics lessons. The tutors also had books to read that were related to the students’ books, yet the tutors’ books were more challenging to read because of the richer vocabulary. The students completed unit pretests and posttests that were included in this program. Both reading programs were modified to meet the ELLs’ needs. For example, in
the Read Naturally program, the tutors increased the amount of time spent on vocabulary, decoding, and comprehension activities. Likewise, the Read Well tutors decided to focus instruction on their students’ background knowledge, and therefore they skipped lessons that dealt with sounds that students already knew and were the same in English and Spanish.

The results of this study indicate that those students who participated in the Read Well program made progress with word identification skills. However, there was no other significant progress for either group of tutored students in the areas of decoding and comprehension. The researchers suggested that additional research is needed that examines the impact of a fluency intervention program.

Reading Attitudes and Motivation

ELLs, who are immersed into a new setting defined by its language and culture, may have negative attitudes towards reading in English, and they are less motivated to learn. Mizokawa and Hansen-Krening (2000) stated, “If the act of reading is an act of drudgery—no matter how facile the reader might be—then reading is not fulfilling in the way we educators hope it is” (p. 73). Motivation is a critical factor in the reading development of diverse learners because they typically require repeated readings of the same text with instruction tailored to their needs before they can read with fluency and comprehension (Therrien, 2004). Consequently, research is needed to better understand the reading attitudes of ELLs in order to help foster English literacy skills and promote positive attitudes towards reading.

Mohr (2004) cautioned that teachers must avoid the notion that ELLs need to be pampered or granted leniency so as not to deflate their self-esteem. Inevitably, ELLs
receive limited instruction and are not held accountable for making any effort towards academic progress merely because their English language skills are limited. This “hands off” approach only promotes passivity and will not enable these ELLs to successfully achieve state standards or pass state-mandated assessments.

In order to move forward and foster positive attitudes and influence motivation the RRSG (2002) recognized the following:

We know that social interaction in homes and classrooms as well as in communities and in the larger sociocultural context influence motivation and participation in literate communities and help construct students’ identities as readers, thus influencing their access to text. We know that children who have had rich exposure to literacy experiences are more likely to succeed. (p. 22)

Bomia et al. (1997) defined motivation as the “magnitude and direction of behavior” (p. 3) with respect to the decisions students make regarding the experiences they wish to pursue or avoid and the degree of effort they will exert. Motivation, alone, can often predict a student’s reading habits (Holloway, 2007), and a student’s attitude towards reading. According to K. D. Moore (2005) and Sweet and Guthrie (1996), students’ attitudes about reading are influenced by both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

K. D. Moore (2005) defined intrinsic motivation in terms of the learners themselves and that which they bring into the learning environment. These learners’ attitudes towards reading are often molded by their families’ values placed on education. Guthrie (2000) claimed that comprehension is a vital component of intrinsic motivation. If students understand that which they are reading, then they are intrinsically motivated to engage in acts of reading in the classroom and at home.

Extrinsic motivation originates in the learning environment (K. D. Moore, 2005). Teachers who model good reading strategies and positive attitudes towards reading often
influence and motivate students to want to learn to read. The classroom atmosphere also contributes to reading motivation. Classrooms filled with a variety of reading materials and cozy spots for reading increase students’ desires to read. Pardo (2004) suggested that teachers can motivate reluctant readers by “providing them with interesting texts, allowing them choices in reading and writing, and helping students set authentic purposes for reading” (p. 274). Furthermore, teachers, who seek out their students’ interests, when selecting materials for instructional units, are likely to engage and motivate their students (Shearer, Ruddell, & Vogt, 2001; Walczyk & Griffith-Ross, 2007). Rasinski (1988) argued that real learning takes place when teachers provide opportunities for students to choose to read about and connect to their own world.

Proficient readers recognize their purpose for reading a text. According to Rosenblatt (1978), readers engage with a text both efferently and aesthetically, and teachers help promote motivation and comprehension when they encourage students to read widely and for different purposes. Students who read efferently are searching for specific information; whereas, those who read aesthetically are reading for pleasure (Rosenblatt). When students recognize that reading is not just about all work and no play, then they are more likely motivated to read for the sake of reading.

Wang and Guthrie (2004) examined the effect of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on the reading comprehension of 384 fourth grade students in the United States and China. The results suggested that intrinsic motivation was a significant predictor of students’ comprehension levels in both countries. On the contrary, extrinsic motivation was found to positively predict comprehension only when it was associated with intrinsic motivation.
Researchers have advised against using rewards and gifts to motivate readers (Cunningham, 2005; Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006; Fawson & Moore, 1999; Gambrell, 1996; Kohn, 1993; Patel & David, 1996). This type of extrinsic motivation is short-lived and does not promote reading habits in reluctant readers. The reward, either verbal or tangible, controls students engaged in reading and the students are motivated to win the prize. Somehow, the reward of becoming proficient readers gets lost in the bag of tricks. However, rewards are more likely to have a positive impact on intrinsic motivation if the students receive them unexpectedly after completing a reading task (Patel & David).

Teachers continue to identify developing a positive attitude towards reading and searching for motivational tools that may foster lifelong reading habits as their most urgent priority (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006; Gambrell, 1996). Palardy (1999) suggested the following strategies for teachers wishing to motivate their students:

- Involve students in setting individual objectives.
- Set priorities for content.
- Show students the relevance of what they are learning.
- Help students understand the learning process.
- Make sure students’ first experiences are positive.
- Use familiar things to teach the new and unfamiliar.
- Relate learning to a child’s natural interests and curiosity.
- Show students they are successful.
- Reward students for the efforts they put forth.
- Reward students for success.
- Show students that learning is interesting and fun.
- Use a variety of teaching strategies.
- Care, and be a friend. (pp. 116-121)

Interested in studying the reading motivation of elementary students, Edmunds and Bauserman (2006) decided to speak directly to the children and interviewed 91 fourth-grade students using the Conversational Interview portion of the Motivation to Read Profile (Gambrell, Palmer, Coding, & Mazzoni, 1996). The researchers used the
constant comparative method to analyze all of the data retrieved from the interviews, which they then organized into six categories. They recommended the following five approaches to promote reading motivation in elementary students: “self-selection, attention to characteristics of books, personal interests, access to books, and active involvement of others” (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006, p. 420). In conclusion, the researchers also suggested that students have flexible access to the school library so as to borrow books on a needs basis, and that teachers invest time introducing new books, sharing books, reading books, and giving students books.

Motivation may also be related to metacognition. According to McMillan and Hearn (2008), metacognition is “the capacity to monitor, evaluate, and know what to do to improve performance. This includes conscious control of specific cognitive skills such as checking understanding, predicting outcomes, planning activities, managing time, and switching to different learning activities” (p. 43). Students who self-reflect and self-assess while engaging with a text are using their metacognition to monitor and repair their reading. This continuous process of reflection and assessment may inevitably lead to increased levels of motivation and success in reluctant readers (McMillan & Hearn). Students who have clear learning targets and evaluation criteria are likely more motivated to connect with a text on a more personal level, and they are able to self-assess, as well as assess others using specific guidelines.

In search of a tool for measuring students’ reading attitudes, McKenna and Kear (1990) devised an instrument for teachers to measure the reading attitudes of their students. More specifically, this instrument, the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERAS), measures reading attitudes by examining two different constructs. The survey
items measure attitudes towards academic reading and recreational reading. McKenna and Kear suggested that this instrument, unlike any other, attempts to address “the important role played by children’s attitudes in the process of becoming literate” (p. 626). A more detailed description of this instrument is provided in Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

Kush and Watkins (1996) used the ERAS to measure the stability of reading attitudes of students from grades one through four. The findings suggested that the students’ attitudes towards reading remained relatively stable until grade four. Both academic and recreational reading attitudes dropped in grade four.

Lazarus and Callahan (2000) administered the ERAS in a study comparing the reading attitudes of learning disabled students and their non-disabled peers. The results of the study suggested that the reading attitudes of disabled students receiving best practices and research-based instruction in a special education resource classroom were equivalent or exceeded the attitudes expressed by their non-disabled peers.

However, many struggling readers are often pulled out of their regular classrooms to receive remedial reading instruction. Much of this instruction involves paper-pencil activities rather than reading enrichment activities (Sanacore, 2002). Research conducted with the ERAS by McKenna and Kear (1990) and Lazarus and Callahan (2000) prompted Sanacore (2002) to call for authentic uses of literature and engagement with texts for all students, including struggling readers. The RAND Reading Study Group (2002) also suggested that effective teachers not only invest time implementing authentic activities, but allow struggling readers to practice these activities in relation to real texts.
Students who struggle with reading tend to associate reading with failure, which perpetuates negative attitudes about reading. According to Rasinski and Padak (2000), “Attitudes affect motivation, and motivation affects our thinking about why we succeed or fail. Moreover, those who repeatedly fail may begin to believe that they are incapable of success” (p. 38).

On the contrary, Rasinski et al. (2000) cautioned that surveys may render distorted data because students have a tendency to choose the perceived “correct” response as opposed to the response that accurately reflects their feelings about reading. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to observe their students’ reading habits and engage in conversation with their students about reading attitudes (Flynt & Cooter, 1998; Rasinski & Padak, 2000).

English Language Learners and Second Language Acquisition

Educators and administrators can no longer ignore the needs of English Language Learners (ELLs), in part, because of the mandates established with the implementation of No Child Left Behind (NCLB; 2001). Under title three of NCLB (2001), school systems have the freedom to choose the instructional methods that they implement with ELLs (Colorín Colorado, 2007). Recent statistics demonstrate the need for research, education, and funding in order to provide instruction for ELLs. T. A. Young and Hadaway (2006) argued that “the gap between students’ needs and teachers’ preparation” (p. 1) can no longer be avoided.

We know that 43% of teachers in American public schools are teaching ELLs. A significant number of these children are poor and often enrolled in schools that lack funding and resources to help meet these students’ needs (G. E. Garcia, 2000; NICHD,
Johnson and Graden, as cited in Bernhardt (2000), argued that teachers often are unequipped with research-based information about ELLs and the process of second-language acquisition. Echevarria et al. (2008) reported that only 4% of eighth grade ELLs scored at the proficient or advanced levels on the reading portion of the 2005 National Assessment for Educational Progress. It comes as no surprise that ELLs are most likely to drop out of school and never receive a diploma (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004). In 1990, 1 out of 20 students were ELLs, and in 2005, 1 out of 9 students were ELLs. These statistics represent an increase in ELLs from 2 million to 5 million, and ELLs are the fastest growing portion of the student population (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, [NCELA], 2002). In fact, it is predicted that by 2025, one in four students in American classrooms will be ELLs, and ELLs will represent more than 40% of the school-age students by 2030 (NCES, 2006).

Second language acquisition theories attempt to explain how students acquire alternative languages. Skinner’s (1957) behaviorism theory is based on the belief that children acquire language through imitation and stimulus inspired responses. He contended that children are born as blank slates and are a direct product of their social environment. Consequently, language is constructed outside of the individual, and behaviorists believed that anyone could learn anything—given the right external stimuli and reinforcement. Parents and teachers provide the language models by which children imitate and practice. Children play a secondary role in language acquisition as they are trained to develop appropriate language habits in response to reinforcement. Teachers who aspire to this theory of language learning focus their instruction on drills, patterns, rules, and accuracy rather than on communication and affective approaches. However,
this theory breaks down when a student responds with, “I not sick.” Clearly, the child has not yet internalized all the correct grammatical structures of the language.

Chomsky’s (1959) innatist theory of language acquisition provided valuable information about second language acquisition. His theory is based on the belief that at least some components of language are innate. Disagreeing with the behaviorists, Chomsky claimed that children are not born as a blank slate but rather are preprogrammed to acquire language. He proposed that our brains contain complex structures that begin to function through an interactive process, and these complex structures are located in a special “organ” in the brain. Chomsky referred to this “organ” as the Language Acquisition Device (LAD). According to Chomsky, this LAD is universal in nature to all humans. He compared it to a computer with preprogrammed menus from which the learner makes choices that are culturally and linguistically chosen as the learner experiences his environment.

In short, the child takes an active role in the acquisition process. For example, an English native speaker automatically “sets” his device to the subject-verb-object word order after first experiencing it in his environment. Therefore, the idea that “children acquire language through imitation” is somewhat disputed by those who adhere to Chomsky’s (1959) theory since language is an innate process. However, through imitation or exposure children seem to automatically adjust their LAD to match the language produced in their environment. Some innatists believe that second language learners are able to reprogram their LAD when they are exposed to a language that does not match their native language.
Comprehensible input is all about making the language understandable for the learner. Chastain (1988) proposed that ELLs require an abundance of comprehensible input prior to speaking. The learner is most likely to succeed if the content of the lesson is within the learner’s range of instruction. This idea of “comprehensible input” is the basis for Krashen’s Input Hypothesis of second language acquisition. Krashen (1982) posited that in order for ELLs to transition to the next level of language competence (i and i+1), they must “understand language that contains structure a bit beyond [their] level of competence” (p. 21). Without comprehensible input, the learner quickly finds himself in a high anxiety situation and consequently unlikely to understand the content of the lesson. The learner who lacks comprehension is also unlikely to willingly participate in any classroom activities.

McCann, Hecht, and Ribeau (1986) argued that comprehensible input is different from language exposure. Exposure, alone, to a second language will not lead to language competency. On the contrary, comprehensible input “is a message in the second language containing some elements that are familiar and some elements that are slightly beyond the learner’s current level of competence” (McCann et al., p. 34). ELLs begin to acquire a second language through comprehensible input that provides pertinent linguistic cues and contextual cues.

G. E. Garcia (2003) argued that the single most essential component of instruction for ELLs should be to make the language comprehensible. Teachers who generally provide comprehensible input to their students may not be consciously providing comprehensible input to their second language learners. Not all students are programmed with the same background experiences and personal schemata. Therefore, teachers can
not assume that second language learners are able to decode the same content, in the same manner as native speakers do in a classroom setting. Krashen (1981) argued that comprehensible input must be a constant and conscious effort on the part of the instructor in order for these second language learners to successfully perform in the classroom. If comprehensible input is present, then second language learners truly have an opportunity to learn.

Krashen (1982) also suggested that ELLs often experience a “silent period” while acquiring a second language. During this period, ELLs are “building up competence in the second language via listening, by understanding the language around [them] . . . speaking emerges on its own after enough competence has been developed by listening and understanding” (p. 27).

The interactionist perspective provides another theory of second language acquisition. Interactionists see the importance of cultural activity, which is defined by the give-and-take between individuals in a social situation. Environmental and social factors play a pertinent role in how learners interpret and react to language. Vygotsky laid the foundation for the interactionist view of language acquisition. According to Vygotsky (1978), learners are able to construct knowledge and new language through the zone of proximal development. This “zone” is defined by socially mediated interaction, especially the interaction and dialogue that occurs between a teacher and a student.

Wells (1999) extended this “zone” to include the dynamics occurring not only between teacher and student, but within a group of students in the same social setting. Zainuddin et al. (2007) expounded that ELLs learn to read by direct participation in the act of reading, and by “the quantity and quality of interactions in which adults discuss
matters that are of interest to them. In short, children learn language and progress from one stage to another by interacting with others” (p. 190). Perez (1996) as well as Bauer and Manyak (2008) posited that classrooms that foster students’ interaction with peers and the instructor significantly lower the affective filter, and allow for a student-focused agenda that acknowledges new ideas that surface during the ELLs’ interactions.

Although interactionists recognized the importance of comprehensible input, they suggested that the actual dynamics that occur during conversations between native and non-native speakers is what drives the language acquisition process (Peregoy & Boyle, 2008). The focus of language acquisition is on the modification process, which occurs as ELLs attempt to use their acquired, limited knowledge to project their message and sustain levels of communication. This act of communication, in which language volleys back and forth between the speakers as they adjust their language output to achieve comprehension, is known as the negotiation of meaning (Peregoy & Boyle, 2008). Krashen (1981) emphasized the significance of interaction for ELLs and acknowledged that “acquisition requires meaningful interaction in the target language—natural communication—in which speakers are concerned not with the form of their utterances but with the messages they are conveying and understanding” (p. 1).

Freeman and Freeman (2000) commented that Krashen’s theory of second language acquisition (1982) focuses on literacy instruction. “In the case of reading, the input comes from written language. Teachers make the input comprehensible when they read to students from big books or song or poetry charts” (p. 22). The students listen, rely on background knowledge, experiences, values and cultures, and interact and communicate with others in order to develop reading proficiency. This process, which
includes social, psychological, and linguistic factors is referred to as the sociopsycholinguistic theory of reading (Freeman & Freeman, 2000; Vacca et al., 2009).

During the act of communication the language facilitator is able to employ various tactics to enhance comprehension and promote language development in ELLs. Peregoy and Boyle (2008) stated, “Paraphrasing, repetition of key points, reference to concrete materials, and acting out meanings are some of the ways speakers can help convey meaning and thus make language more understandable” (p. 65). The amount of comprehensible input significantly increases when those who are communicating take advantage of both verbal and nonverbal cueing systems. Facial expressions, hand gestures, and body language all add to the richness of the lesson and lower the affective filter that can hinder comprehension. Teachers who focus intently on their instructional delivery in order to purposefully incorporate additional cues are providing that necessary comprehensible input that makes language decipherable for ELLs (Peregoy & Boyle).

Cummins (2003) cited research that suggests Canadian students enrolled in French immersion programs, in which authentic reading activities were stressed over phonics lessons, were able to transfer their native literacy skills into French literacy skills. This concept of language transfer is also evident in a study conducted by Reyes (2000). In a longitudinal case study of four low-income working class Mexicano/Latino children in a bilingual program, two children were taught to read initially in English and the other two only in Spanish. All four students received structured phonics instruction in the target language in Kindergarten, and only minimal phonics in first grade and second grade. These four students were able to spontaneously transfer their literacy skills from their first language into their second language despite the lack of formal instruction.
Reyes (2000) also concluded that Latina/o children are more apt to become literate in English when they are immersed in authentic reading experiences in which they can rely on their native language skills and experiences. These students who are read to by their parents in their native language are also less likely to become frustrated while acquiring English (Colorín Colorado, 2007). Parents who mentor their children help to provide a home-school connection for ELLs. Even if the parents lack English skills, they can still help motivate their children by taking interest and supporting and encouraging their efforts.

A learner’s dominant, and often native language, influences the strategies that he will use when working with English orthography. Children whose native language is Chinese are often able to match speech to print earlier than children whose native language is English. This difference is due in part because each symbol in Chinese represents a syllable, and children are easily able to track these symbols. Each symbol contains an initial sound, a final sound, and usually a tone. However, Spanish-speaking students may have difficulty pronouncing certain consonants such as /d/ and /j/, as well as diagraphs such as /sh/ and /th/. Certain vowel sounds are also not part of spoken Spanish and are therefore difficult for these students to correctly discriminate. Karen students tend to forget to pronounce any final consonants present in English words because these students are not accustomed to final consonants in their native language.

The Challenges of Reading in a Second Language

First, the limited or even lack of high quality instruction in second language acquisition adds to the academic challenges that ELLs face. Second, the ELLs’ native
languages, lack of background experiences, and limited educational opportunities can also hinder second language acquisition.

Educators often lack the necessary training to meet the needs of ELLs (Carrier, 2005; Denton et al., 2004). NCLB (2001) called for highly qualified teachers in every core academic classroom. However, very few states require that regular classroom teachers have training in second-language acquisition methods. Although half of all teachers are likely to work with ELLs at some point in their teaching careers, only 25% of teachers who work with ELLs have a degree or are licensed to teach ELLs. Therefore, 75% of teachers lack the appropriate training (Carrier, 2005; Clair, 2000; T. A. Young & Hadaway, 2006). Some teachers recognize the needs of their ELLs, and these teachers make a conscious effort to provide differentiated instruction. However, teachers often provide these ELLs with worksheets to keep them occupied, and these students have very little understanding of the purpose of the task or the content of the material presented in the worksheets.

Educators who lack knowledge, training, and experience working with ELLs are often guided by inaccurate assumptions about ELLs. For example, Asian American English learners often fall victims to misjudgments about their academic abilities. Too often educators assume that these Asian and Asian American students perform well in school, and consequently, their needs are overlooked and these students are not receiving effective interventions. Chang (2003) suggested that multilevel collaborations among the home, school, and community are critical to effectively meet the needs of these specific ELLs. Chang’s suggestion is rooted in Vygotsky’s (1978) sociocultural theory of education. Students benefit from engaging in meaningful contexts with other capable
individuals. In this theory, the learner is an active participant in the teaching and learning environment.

Another misconception exists between conversational and academic English. Teachers are likely to assume that ELLs who are able to communicate with peers at recess should also be able to understand and articulate the content of any classroom lesson. An acceptable level of conversational ability does not guarantee language proficiency (Cummins & Swain, 1986; Lenters, 2004). Conversational English is easier to learn than academic English. Collier (1987) suggested that it takes ELLs six to eight years to develop the oral-skill level of their English-speaking peers. Social language emerges within two years; however, cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP), a level at which ELLs can use higher-order thinking skills, takes five to seven years for children arriving in the United States between ages 8-11, and even longer for children ages 4-7 (Collier, 1987; Cummins, 2001).

Proficiency in academic language includes knowledge about less-frequent vocabulary in English. As students progress through the elementary grades they encounter fewer high-frequency words and much more subject-specific language. ELLs who are able to develop phonological awareness and decoding skills in English during the early elementary grades are not necessarily able to transfer these skills into grade-level academic skills. This is particularly evident when the academic focus shifts from learning to read to reading to learn (Cummins, 2003). Acquiring decoding skills is not the same as acquiring comprehension skills (Freeman & Freeman, 2004). Consequently, these ELLs who lack comprehension fall drastically behind their monolingual peers.
Also, ELLs typically face an adjustment period, and teachers need to recognize this and assist them through this process (Fillmore & Snow, 2000). These students all have academic strengths and weaknesses that are often buried under fear and intimidation. Their fears affect the manner and ease in which they acquire English.

Buttarro and King (2001) recognized that the “degree of literacy in the first language can greatly influence the speed and depth of literacy development in the second language [consequently], the relationship between the two language systems must be taken into consideration” (p. 40). ELLs who have limited academic or educational experiences are at a disadvantage and consequently have the most difficulty learning English often because they are unable to rely on their native language as a resource. Consequently, ELLs do not just acquire English by immersion, but direct, explicit instruction is critical (Denton et al., 2004).

Despite the academic and educational experiences of some ELLs, the differences between their native languages and English are also likely to hinder second language acquisition. The greater the differences are in directionality, syntax, and phonology, the greater the challenges of second language acquisition. ELLs may have native language scripts that differ from English (Gibbons, 1993). For example, Chinese and Arabic languages do not share our English alphabet. Quotation marks are not used in Spanish, rather speech dashes. Turkish has different sound-symbol relationships and Vietnamese uses diacritics. Some ELLs may even have a lack of concept of print. For instance the Hmong language was just recently transcribed into print. Arabic and Hebrew are languages which are read right to left, and therefore, ELLs need to learn basic
navigational skills in order to read English. Yetta Goodman (1985) advised that “kidwatching” is critical for understanding how ELLs approach a text.

Orthographic knowledge is developmental and greatly influences reading fluency (Torgesen & Hudson, 2006). Orthographic development involves the use of spelling to assess language development. Spelling assessments reveal students’ orthographic knowledge, which is an important factor in fostering reading development (Henderson, 1992; Perfetti, 1985). Without English orthographic knowledge, ELLs are likely to read slowly and without appropriate phrasing and expression (Palumbo & Willcutt, 2006).

An orthography that has a strong link between the sounds and symbols of the language is referred to as translucent orthography. Spanish and Italian are two such examples (Bear, Templeton, Helman, & Baren, 2003). However, the relationship between letters and sounds in French and English is much less salient, and consequently, these languages are examples of deep or opaque orthographies. Chinese is also a deep orthography due to the characters that represent morphemes. These characters contain sound, pattern, and meaning levels of information. German is an example of a semitranslucent orthography because it is neither shallow nor deep, but located in the middle of this continuum. The deeper the orthography, the more challenging it is for students learning to read words.

Students who have limited oral English speaking skills often try to match their native spoken language to written English. Although the Spanish language has a significant overlap with English syntax, morphology, and orthography, this is not the case for other languages. For instance, Vietnamese letters do not overlap with English letters, and the English /r/ and /l/ sounds do not exist in Japanese.
Next, English vocabulary is yet another factor that presents a primary barrier for ELLs. Nation and Coady, as cited in G. E. Garcia (2003), pointed out that the degree of difficulty of the vocabulary in a text is the most salient factor determining the readability level of a text. Therefore, teachers need to focus on continually developing the vocabulary of ELLs and to be cognizant of challenging words found within any text that students are required to read (Lenters, 2004). As learners read more in their second language, they have more opportunities to infer vocabulary from a variety of texts. “Students who develop an extensive bank of words that they can retrieve effortlessly by sight will find reading new texts easier and more meaningful and are in a position to learn many more new words from grade-level texts” (Helman & Burns, 2008).

Many English words are polysemous and because of their multiple meanings ELLs need to read these words in appropriate contexts rather than in isolation. Spanish speakers are able to rely on cognates that exist between English and Spanish in order to make the connection between the first-language and the second-language (Cummins, 2003). Even so, teachers need to explicitly demonstrate the role that cognates play in language acquisition. Bauer and Manyak (2008) suggested that teachers incorporate cognates into word walls so that ELLs are able to rely on these words while constructing meaning, especially during content-based lessons.

Carrier and Tatum (2006) suggested that teachers can build on the notion of word walls by creating sentence walls “for ELLs to become familiar with vocabulary and sentence structures in their content reading” (p. 285). Sentence walls can be initiated by teachers and sustained by the growing and changing linguistic needs of the students. ELLs are better equipped to actively participate in classroom activities, talking and
writing about the topic of discussion. Teachers need to consider which questions and statements would be most beneficial for ELLs to see displayed on the sentence wall, and invest the time to teach ELLs how to benefit from this tool.

Cultural differences often create limitations for ELLs. There is often a mismatch between the culture of the home and the culture in the school. Pardo (2004) stated, “Comprehension is affected by a reader’s culture, based on the degree to which it matches with the writer’s culture or the culture espoused in the text” (p. 273). Idiomatic expressions and social uses of language can hinder language acquisition; therefore, ELLs need plenty of opportunities to actively participate in social activities. Even when ELLs learn the meaning of a word, they must be able to link it to personal schemata. Vietnamese who read and write about rice fields have the personal schemata to do so with a degree of success unlike other ELLs who lack the background knowledge.

Grabe, as cited in Zainuddin et al. (2007), explained that reinterpreting or challenging a text is unacceptable in certain cultures. In some cultures, students are taught to accept the text as it is written and as the accurate and genuine account of the truth. Therefore, cultural differences in expectations about reading often impact the ease in which students acquire English literacy skills.

English Language Learners and Reading Development

According to Peregoy and Boyle (2008), every ELL “contributes to the rich tapestry of languages and cultures that form the basic fabric of the United States” (p. 3). Teachers must familiarize themselves with this “tapestry” in order to clearly understand the contribution that each ELL has to offer.
Ovando, Collier, and Combs, as cited in T. A. Young and Hadaway (2006, pp. 9-10), offered eight cultural and language background elements that significantly impact the ease in which ELLs acquire English literacy skills. These factors are provided in the following list:

- Country of origin
- Length of residence in U.S.
- Extent of ties to country of origin
- Political and economic situation in the region from which they immigrated
- Reasons for immigration
- Other countries lived in prior to U.S.
- Amount and quality of schooling in native language
- Languages other than English and their native language to which students have been exposed.

Harper and de Jong (2004) stressed that ELLs do not all fit the same mold. The languages, cultures, and educational backgrounds of ELLs either hinder or enhance second language learning. Socioeconomic levels also play a part (T. A. Young & Hadaway, 2006). Students who have been exposed to print and texts in their homes have less difficulty acquiring a second language in comparison to those ELLs who were born in refugee camps where books are critically limited (Cummins, 1981; Hadaway et al., 2001).

McBrien (2003) addressed the difference between immigrants and refugees, and how each group of English Language Learners’ needs require various levels of support. Many teachers are often unaware of the hardships that their new students have endured. Immigrants, unlike refugees, have in most cases chosen to move to the United States of America. They may have visited before, are financially stable, or they have family who are able and willing to help them settle into their new lives. Refugees, on the other hand, have often escaped dangerous situations, and they are dealing with emotional and
physical scars. Refugees seek temporary shelter in refugee camps that are usually lacking sufficient food and medical care.

In 1999 the majority of refugees included Muslims from Bosnia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Burundi, Somalia, and the Sudan (Mason, 1999). Black Africans represented the majority of these refugees, and they are faced with discrimination and racism. Even African Americans are guilty of shunning these Africans. Over half of the 22.3 million refugees are children. The children are faced with overwhelming responsibilities as they act as translators for their parents because they often learn English before their adult parents. As of December 31, 2005, the largest source countries of refugees are the Palestinian Territories, Afghanistan, Iraq, Myanmar, and Sudan (UNHCR, 2006).

Refugee children, especially those who have lived in camps, look for stability, love, and acceptance in their classrooms. Therefore, teachers need to create a welcoming environment by preparing their students for the arrival of the refugees. Students who understand what others have endured are more likely to be empathetic. Teachers need to research the refugees’ cultures so as to be prepared for any differences and to avoid any misunderstandings that could ensue. Making assumptions is the greatest mistake that teachers make with regard to cultural expectations. For instance, a refugee student may not look at the teacher when being spoken to because his culture deems it impolite to do so.

Finally, McBrien (2003) offered various strategies that help teachers meet the refugees’ needs. First, teachers should attempt to learn some words in the refugees’ languages. Calderón et al. (2005) noted that ELLs often arrive with limited English
vocabulary, syntax, and phonology. Consequently, ELLs are trying to learn, simultaneously, the oral and written version of English words. The task of learning to read is seemingly more challenging because these ELLs are not able to rely on their oral vocabulary skills. However, teachers must not assume that the refugees are academically challenged just because they have limited English proficiencies. Refugees who are literate in their native languages are less challenged when learning English compared to those who are illiterate. Provide a support group of students who are kind, capable, and willing to aid these learners. Helman and Burns (2008) suggested that ELLs focus on the most salient and useful terms that can be immediately reinforced in a variety of settings. Next, engage all students by incorporating relevant literature from the refugees’ countries of origin. Recognize that these refugees may be the target of discrimination. Therefore, educate the students about refugees and the situations that they often endure before arriving in a new country. Finally, teachers may need to contact local nonprofit organizations that are willing to tutor or offer life-skills courses for older refugee students. Refugees are survivors, and McBrien (2003) suggested that refugees will continue to do so in this country with the help of classroom teachers.

ELLs who are literate in their first language have an advantage over illiterate ELLs when attempting to learn English (Denton et al., 2004; Drucker, 2003). Students who are fluent in their first language are able to rely on their native language skills while learning English. In fact, ELLs who know how to use reading cueing systems in their native language do not need to relearn these skills in order to learn English (Avalos, Plasencia, Chavez, & Rascon, 2007; Jimenez, Garcia, & Pearson, 1996; Krashen, 1985). Educators must acknowledge and respect the skills that ELLs bring to the classroom and
encourage ELLs to continue to develop their primary language (International Reading Association, 2001; Flynn & Hill, 2005). Manyak (2007) reiterated Verhoeven’s (1994) findings that bilingual children who develop literacy skills in either English or in their native language, simultaneously develop these skills in their other language. In fact, G. E. Garcia (1991) and Moll and Diaz (1987) stated that ELLs may comprehend a text they have read even though they are unable to articulate their ideas, and therefore, it is often beneficial for ELLs to use their native language as a medium for text discussion.

One mistake that educators tend to make is to assume that reading techniques for emergent readers are the same for ELLs with native language skills. Reading concepts are not stored by language, but they are part of students’ academic proficiencies, consequently, these concepts do not need to be relearned, but rather reinforced.

The Karen

The Karen, or Pwa Ka Nyaw Po, are an ethnic minority population from Burma who constitute about 1 in 7 of the total Burmese population of 47 million people. The name Karen has been self-proclaimed as a badge of courage; however, the term was originally used pejoratively by their enemies. The Karen have been seeking independence from a harsh militant dictatorship in Burma since January 31, 1949. In fact, the Karen recognize this date as Revolutionary Day. Kawthoolei is the Karen name for the state that the Karen have been working to establish since 1949. The exact meaning of this name has been disputed amongst the Karen; possible interpretations include Flowerland, Land Without Evil, and the Land Burnt Black (Green, 2005; Taw Sein Ko, 1924).

The on-going conflict between the Burmese government and the Karen shows no signs of resolution. Karen villages are burned down, crops and livestock are destroyed,
and the Karen who do not escape are forced into labor, or used as human mine detectors by the Burmese troops. The U.S. State Department has accused the Burmese government of ethnic cleansing and suppression of religious freedom. Although some Karen are Buddhist, most follow the Christian religion which further divides them from the Burmese majority (Ba Saw Khin, 2005; Saw Kapi, 2006).

Due to the continuous persecution because of their desire for independence from the military rule of Burma, nearly 120,000 Karen fled to Thailand where they have resided in refugee camps for the past 15 years. Families continue to face hardships in the Thai refugee camps as food is scarce and the Thai government refuses to offer additional assistance or permanent placement. Consequently, the United States government has accepted the Karen as a group for resettlement. Given the Karen’s rural background, they face many challenges adjusting to life in urban communities such as learning to use modern utilities, the transportation system, and adjusting to childcare and schools. This adjustment is compounded by the language barrier that they are attempting to overcome (D. Reed, personal communication, July 12, 2008).

The Karen languages belong to the Tibeto-Burman group of the Sino-Tibetan language family and are spoken by approximately 4 million people in Burma and Thailand. The three main branches are Sgaw, Pwo, and Pa’o, and they feature a subject-verb-object word order and adjectives may precede or proceed a noun. With the exception of words related to technology, measurements, and modern institutions, there are few English cognates in the Karen vocabulary. Unlike nouns in English, nouns in Karen are not pluralized by the addition of a final consonant. Therefore, the Karen do not readily recognize and pronounce the plural forms of English nouns any differently from
their singular forms (Green, 2005; Taw Sein Ko, 1924). Unlike other refugees, the Karen are a literate people. Their children were born in the refugee camps where they learned to speak, read, and write in their native Karen language (D. Reed, personal communication, July 12, 2008).

Anxious to prosper here in the United States, the Karen are very willing to work, save for the future, and help to support other Karen in their communities. They are constantly reminded of the few rights granted to them by the Burmese government, and the Karen are fearful of arriving in the United States only to become lower-class servants. They desire to learn English and support themselves in their new country (D. Reed, personal communication, July 12, 2008).

Best Practices for Teaching Fluency and Comprehension in a Second Language

The best practices in reading instruction for monolingual English students certainly guide reading instruction for ELLs. However, if teachers intend for ELLs to achieve reading proficiencies like that of monolinguals, then best practices may not be sufficient. ELLs deserve “not only effective instruction in basic reading elements but also language-rich, socioculturally informed, and additive literacy instruction as well” (Manyak & Bauer, 2008). Hammerberg (2004) suggested that teachers closely examine reading instruction, and stated:

Today, the students in U. S. classrooms are culturally, linguistically, ethnically, and socioeconomically diverse from one another as well as from the teaching force (National Center for Education Statistics, 1997). Given this situation, it is important that we understand what messages our current methods of comprehension instruction send to students from diverse backgrounds and how these methods function in classrooms to support literacy learning among all children. (p. 648)
Ladson-Billings (2000) and Slavin and Cheung (2005) argued that reading teachers must recognize and support ELLs’ social and cultural needs as a means to encourage the students’ participation in literacy events, and several researchers conducted studies (e.g., Miller, 2000; Norton, 2000; Pappamihiel, 2002; Yoon, 2004) that supported this argument. Culturally relevant instruction does not focus on what is taught but on how teachers perceive the curriculum through the eyes and ears of the learners. ELLs are more likely to participate and respond to instruction that is personally meaningful (Au, 1998; Mays, 2008).

This idea of culturally relevant pedagogy was the basis for research conducted by Moll and Greenberg (1990), Moll, Amanti, Neff, and Gonzalez (1992), and Gonzalez, Moll, and Amanti (2005). These researchers acknowledged that everyone has “funds of knowledge” (Gonzalez et al., 2005, p. ix). This knowledge, built upon a foundation of life experiences, is worthy, has merit, and is an asset rather than a deficit. Gonzalez et al. stated that the purpose of their research was “to alter perceptions of working-class or poor communities and to view these households primarily in terms of their strengths and resources (or funds of knowledge) as their defining pedagogical characteristic” (p. x). Therefore, these researchers collaborated with teachers and acted as participant observers engaging in ethnographic research. They visited their students’ homes in order “to create the bridge between [their] students’ knowledge, background experiences, and ways of viewing the world and the academic domain” (Gonzalez et al., p. 8). Teachers who wish to provide all of their students with culturally relevant pedagogy need to look outside the four walls of the classroom and into the households from which their students reside (Gonzalez et al., 2005; Moll, 1990, 1992, 1998, 2002). Meeting parents at Open House,
engaging in phone conferences, and sending home surveys about family members’ hobbies are all worthwhile activities; yet, none of these experiences allow teachers to truly design lessons that connect the household to the classroom (Moll et al., 1992).

Recognizing the significant impact that parents make on students’ cultural experiences and academic successes, Gonzalez et al. (2005) not only invested time getting to know the students, but these researchers tapped into the parents’ own “funds of knowledge” (Gonzalez et al.) in order to provide participatory pedagogy that expanded the walls of the classrooms. In short, the researchers and classroom teachers examined culture through a magnifying glass and discovered that they could create instruction that directly corresponded to a family’s specific knowledge and routine household activities all the while validating the lives of minority students.

According to the International Reading Association Position Statement on Second Language Literacy Instruction, proficiency in English or the dominant language should be the goal of instruction in language and literacy (International Reading Association, 2001). “In meeting current educational goals, the teacher is the key component” (Reed & Railsback, 2003). Yoon (2007) also suggested that teachers, not strategies or methods, make the greatest difference in the lives of ELLs. First and foremost, teachers must conduct assessments to determine each student’s level of English language acquisition in order to provide appropriate scaffolding (Flynn & Hill, 2005; Helman & Bear, 2007). Students cannot attempt to read with comprehension a language that they do not speak or comprehend. Carrell and Grabe (2002) suggested that readers must be familiar with at least 95% of the words in a text if they are to understand what they have decoded.
Educators must provide quality, effective instruction and use methods and materials based on the individual needs of their ELLs (C. Newman & Smolen, 2006). Bear et al. (2003) argued that teachers must plan for specific lessons by focusing on the learners’ native languages, comparing and contrasting syntax and orthographic systems. Opitz and Harding-DeKam (2007) posited that “processing multiple languages makes students different, not deficient” (p. 592). Tomlinson (2005) proposed that differentiated instruction looks at the pace, level, and types of instruction that teachers provide to their ELLs.

English-language instruction is most beneficial for ELLs who are just beginning school (K-3) because this is when reading skills are taught. Manyak (2007) and Manyak and Bauer (2008) stated that phonemic awareness and phonics instruction are critical for diverse learners, in particular ELLs. In fact, studies (e.g., Lesaux & Siegel, 2003; Vaughn et al., 2005) have indicated that ELLs have demonstrated reading progress after participating in instructional literacy programs that included systematic instruction in both phonemic awareness and phonics.

Recent research suggested that ELLs learning to read in English benefit from explicit instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics. Two studies are worthy of mention. Lesaux and Siegel (2003) conducted a study comparing the reading progress of 978 monolingual English students with 188 ELLs in a Canadian school district. All participants received a well-balanced approach to literacy instruction that included explicit instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics from kindergarten to the end of the second grade school year. At the completion of second grade, the researchers noted
that the ELLs performed as well as or better than the monolingual students on various reading assessments, which included a comprehension component.

The second study examined the English reading progress of first grade Spanish-speaking ELLs in Texas who had been identified as struggling readers. Vaughn et al. (2005) analyzed the effects of a code-based early reading intervention program that included explicit instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, decodable text reading, vocabulary recognition, and comprehension development. The ELLs made significant progress in decoding skills and comprehension, and their scores on reading assessments were similar to their monolingual peers.

Despite the value of explicit code-based instruction, ELLs generally demonstrate more difficulty in reading comprehension than their monolingual peers (Lesaux, Koda, Siegel, & Shanahan, 2006). One explanation for this discrepancy lies in the fact that ELLs are less familiar with English content and vocabulary than their monolingual peers, and ELLs are challenged to activate personal schemata that makes comprehension attainable. Therefore, teachers are challenged to provide appropriate, high-quality reading instruction that focuses on building strategic comprehension skills for ELLs.

A balanced-literacy approach to reading instruction is paramount for ELLs. The focus of reading instruction should not be only on decoding skills, but it must emphasize both building students’ vocabulary knowledge and independent reading. Students who read texts at their instructional levels are more likely to build background knowledge, which aids in comprehension. Despite the lack of experimental research (NICHD, 2000), independent reading allows ELLs to read for pleasure and to practice reading strategies. ELLs should engage in recreational reading in which they can decode 90% of the words
they encounter. They become much more able to recognize the same words as holistic units (Samuels, Bremer, & LaBerge, 1978). The challenge is to find books that are both at the students’ recreational levels, as well as at the students’ interest levels. Also, teachers who articulate high student expectations help to promote reading skills.

Cappellini (2005) and Zainuddin et al. (2007) argued that teachers of ELLs must plan thematic lessons. Thematic planning allows ELLs to revisit critical vocabulary and likewise, comprehensible input increases (Cappellini, 2005; Freeman & Freeman, 2000; Mohr, 2002). ELLs who engage in thematic lessons are able to read topics in depth rather than just sampling ideas here and there. They continue to add to their knowledge base and simultaneously learn new phrases (Cappellini, 2005; Krashen, 2004).

Read-alouds, guided reading, literature circles, and shared reading all foster fluency and comprehension development. One of the most enjoyable and worthwhile practices to employ with ELLs is reading aloud. Cappellini (2005) stated the following about read-alouds:

In Becoming a Nation of Readers (1985), the Commission on Reading stated that the single most important factor in children’s reading success is having people read aloud to them. Unfortunately many English language learners come from homes where no one reads to them in any language. That means our role as teachers in reading aloud to children is even more important. (p. 98)

When teachers read aloud they allow the students to engage themselves with the text on a personal level. Students are encouraged to relax and become “caught up” in the text. Without realizing it, students are learning about story structure, character development, comprehension strategies, and narrative discourse. Read-alouds expose ELLs to rich language that is embedded within a particular context. Alliteration, rhymes, metaphors, and onomatopoeias are best understood when presented contextually.
Cappellini (2005); Fitzgerald and Graves (2004); Freeman and Freeman (2000); G. G. Garcia (2003); Perego and Boyle (2008); Pinnell and Jaggar (2003); T. A. Young and Hadaway (2006); and Zainuddin et al. (2007) argued the importance of read-alouds in the development of oral language for ELLs. Furthermore, Barnes (1992) suggested that effective read-alouds enabled students to improve their level of language expression in all areas of the curriculum.

Hoyt (2007) and Cappellini (2005) advocated interactive read-alouds that enable the teacher and the learners to focus their attention on specific, pertinent aspects of a text in order to facilitate comprehension. Making meaning is paramount. Interactive read-alouds encourage ELLs to actively engage in the reading event by asking clarification questions, sharing text-to-self connections, and developing higher order thinking skills in English.

Houk (2005) and Hoyt (2007) offered specific interactive strategies that can maximize the benefits of a read aloud session. While reading from a text, the teacher may stop at a preplanned point in order to invite the ELLs to make predictions or analyze what has occurred. In this way, students are actively rather than passively participating in the read aloud session. Again, teachers should choose to read aloud books that are slightly above the reading level of the students. In this way, the English language learners are introduced to more complex language structures, a broader range of vocabulary, and more sophisticated ideas. Teachers need to explicitly teach the language of the standards that are the focus of the read-aloud session. Consequently, ELLs are simultaneously exposed to the language and content material. For example, students should be able to
recognize, comprehend, and articulate the setting and problem, as well as other structural elements of a story.

Researchers have recognized that popular media can serve to promote literacy skills in schools (Marsh & Millard, 2000; Morrison, Bryan, & Chilcoat, 2002). Ranker (2007/2008) conducted a study using comic books as read-alouds in an ESL classroom. “Because of their capacity to increase interest and motivation, comic books are also an effective way of increasing reading comprehension and teaching strategies” (Ranker, 2007/2008, p. 296). The ELLs engaged in this study demonstrated an increased understanding of critical literacy skills as they participated orally in conversations about stereotypical versions of gender identities. The visual support inherent in comic books provided comprehensible input for the ELLs and continued to sustain their interest in the read-alouds (Ranker). Comic books provide multiple and flexible opportunities for ELLs to participate in literacy events (New London Group, 2000).

G. E. Garcia (2003) and Bauer and Manyak (2008) advocated that teachers should compliment read-alouds with visuals, realia, graphic organizers, gestures, and dramatization in order to emphasize pertinent terms or concepts. Darling (2005) suggested that both graphic and semantic organizers support comprehension by enabling students to make appropriate text connections. Graphic organizers also help students see how new concepts relate to previously known concepts (Pardo, 2004). Unlike worksheets, graphic organizers assist students in “guided dialogue” (Merkley & Jefferies, 2001, p. 356), and these visual aids provide the necessary scaffolding so students can make text connections. Chun and Plass, in Bernhardt (2000), echoed that graphic organizers and direct vocabulary instruction lead to text comprehension. Anthony (2008)
stated that vocabulary must be explicitly taught because it is the foundation of all communication. When preteaching vocabulary, teachers should consider the students’ backgrounds, cultures, and native languages so as to select only the vocabulary that is necessary for students to understand the text (Blachowicz & Fisher, 2000; Pardo, 2004). Also and equally important is the concept of fluency. Students need to hear what a fluent English reader sounds like in order to internalize correct pronunciation, syllabication, tone, and rhythm.

Teachers can assist ELLs with their English reading skills in the context of guided reading lessons. ELLs receive scaffolded support while tracking print, using picture clues and background knowledge to predict, recognizing high-frequency words, and decoding unfamiliar words. During this supportive setting, teachers can encourage ELLs to cross-check all three cuing systems to facilitate comprehension (Cappellini, 2005; Routman, 2000; T. A. Young & Hadaway, 2006). Young and Hadaway suggested the following format for guided reading sessions:

- Introduction: Teacher solicits language
- Orientation: Teacher guides students through first viewing of the text
- First reading: Students read the text by themselves
- Discussion: Students respond to the text
- Students reread the text (on their own or in buddy reading)
- Students respond to the text on their own. (p. 117)

Although each component of the guided reading lesson is critical to the reading successfulness of the participating ELLs, it is during the first reading of the text that the teacher is able to gain the most insight on the students’ reading strengths and weaknesses. The teacher may choose to sit closer to a particular student who individually reads aloud the text at his own rate, and visibly demonstrates cueing strategies. Based on the reader’s
skills, the teacher can immediately scaffold appropriate instruction in order to help the reader make sense of the text without becoming overly frustrated (T. A. Young & Hadaway, 2006). This “coaching scenario” allows the teacher ample time to address some of the specific vocabulary needs of the individual ELL.

Literature circles provide students with opportunities to read texts of interest with others, to react and respond to the author’s message, and to discuss how they use strategies to decode and comprehend the texts (Freeman & Freeman, 2000). Students should have access to various genres of literature that they are able to read fluently. ELLs who are exposed to a variety of genres are more likely to develop a deep understanding of vocabulary as they employ their semantic cueing systems (Droop & Verhoeven, 2003). During literature circles students apply all of their reading skills and enjoy reading for authentic purposes (Pilgreen, 2000). Cooperative learning, which is often a component of literature circles, is more effective than working alone because it addresses cross-cultural comprehension (Snowman & Biehl, 2003). Calderón (2001) suggested that cooperative learning is a scaffolding technique that is effective if the learners have a specific task that is centered on literature.

Assisted readings such as choral readings, echo readings, and shared readings place ELLs in nonthreatening situations and promote fluency development. Bradly and Thalgott, as cited in Zainuddin et al. (2007), claimed that choral reading helps ELLs develop appropriate intonation, diction, and fluency. According to Peregoy and Boyle (2008), echo reading is a process that allows students to demonstrate their level of syntax. It is particularly useful with ELLs who are shy and reluctant to attempt to read a text independently.
Zainuddin et al. (2007) stated that shared reading is a process that often allows students to read a Big Book along with the teacher. This Big Book, with its colorful illustrations and predictable story and language patterns, enables ELLs to follow along easily (Drucker, 2003; Peregoy & Boyle, 2008). ELLs find themselves engaged with a text in a non-threatening atmosphere and are willing to read along with the more proficient adult or peer. Teachers are wise to assign two ELLs to read together or pair an ELL with a proficient English speaker (T. A. Young & Hadaway, 2006). It is paramount to find ELLs who can amicably work together in order to make the most of the shared reading experience.

Many teachers worry that ELLs may become bored after listening to and reading the same text. On the contrary, G. G. Garcia (2003) pointed out that repetition of familiar stories allows students to develop prediction skills by gradually relying on higher order thinking skills and language cueing systems. Lenters (2004) also suggested that repeated readings help foster vocabulary development, which is crucial for ELLs if they are to comprehend texts.

Moss, as cited in T. A. Young and Hadaway (2006), commented that shared reading of a Big Book provides ELLs with a visual model of the author’s text features. Discussion that ensues about the table of contents and photo captions allow ELLs to further develop content language. Expository texts are well suited for ELLs with intermediate English language proficiencies. Readers may use decoding skills and background knowledge as they read, and these literacy skills are enhanced when coupled with conversations about the text and interactions with teachers and peers during shared reading sessions (Au, 1990).
Elley and Mangubhai (1983) demonstrated that fourth and fifth grade students in Fifi who were immersed in literature that they either read independently or with a teacher during a daily, 30-minute English class out-performed students who received more traditional language instruction in areas of English language development. Cummins (2003) stated, “What determines reading achievement in the long term is how effectively we develop students’ reading comprehension—and reading comprehension is overwhelmingly related to the extent to which students engage in extensive reading” (p. 3). Cummins also advocated engaging children in texts rather than worksheets and drills in order to promote comprehension and academic language. The single most valuable activity for developing comprehension in ELLs is reading—not worksheets or flashcards. ELLs need reading experiences and exposure to print.

Choosing appropriate texts and identifying which skills to teach during shared reading are vital components in the lesson planning process. According to Cappellini (2005), poetry is one of the best genres for shared reading activities, and it offers endless benefits for ELLs (Hadaway, Vardell, & Young, 2001, 2006). In fact, Vardell et al. (2006) posited that, “Poetry is an ideal entry into language learning for English learners because of its rhythm, repetition, and rhyme” (p. 738). Poetry often models natural language patterns, which serve to reinforce English language syntax, and to foster fluency and comprehension for ELLs (Richards, 2000).

Poems can be written on large chart paper or displayed on a transparency for students to reread and enjoy. Content language is naturally embedded in poetry, and teachers are able to introduce this language in a context that is often appealing to ELLs. Sound-symbol relationships, punctuation, and syntactical elements are just three
components of the English language that may need addressed depending on the native languages of the ELLs. Hiebert, Brown, Taitague, Fisher, and Adler (2004) stated that instructors must choose texts that contain high-frequency words, words of interest to ELLs’ personal lives, words representing familiar concepts, significantly high word repetition rates, and relatively few unfamiliar terms. Poetry naturally lends itself to a particular style, and it contains textual features to scaffold ELLs’ literacy success. Poetry is an example of an authentic text, and Bernhardt (2000) espoused that the reading of authentic texts that are grammatically unaltered foster more comprehension development in ELLs than texts that are fabricated for instructional purposes.

Poetry reading is a scaffolding technique that encourages oral language development (Peregoy & Boyle, 2008). Poetry, with its natural rhythm, repetition, and rhyme, provides ELLs with ample opportunities to build fluency and comprehension skills (Zainuddin et al., 2007). Poetry that is recited in unison helps to lower the affective filter, and ELLs are more inclined to participate, as equals, in the reading of the text (Vardell, Hadaway, & Young, 2002). ELLs gain confidence in reading while listening to the teacher read and then echoing the lines with appropriate pace, intonation, and expression.

Poetry lends itself to numerous instructional strategies that allow teachers to continue to engage learners and avoid any boredom that may arise from repeated readings (Vardell et al., 2002; T. A. Young & Hadaway, 2006). For example, students may read alternating lines or stanzas, use dramatic voices, act out the poem for an audience, and sing the lines in unison. All of these strategies make for meaningful and memorable learning activities.
Repeated readings of poems that rhyme allow teachers to involve students in the study of rimes. Rimes are spelling patterns in English words that represent specific sounds (Gill, 2006; Vacca et al., 2009). As opposed to teaching inconsistent, individual letter sounds, rimes are more beneficial because children learn to identify new words by applying their knowledge of spelling patterns (Moustafa, 1997). Gill (2006) suggested that teachers use highlighter tape over the rime in each word in order to emphasize spelling patterns, teach word chunking strategies, and identify the numerous ways to spell a particular sound in English.

Vardell et al. (2002) and T. A. Young and Hadaway (2006) proposed that poetry’s short length is not only less intimidating for ELLs, but it serves as a powerful anticipatory tool for the introduction of a thematic lesson. Teachers who search will certainly find an appropriate poem to address any content area lesson. “Poetry brings the names and faces of geography, and the faces and figures of social studies vividly and memorably to life” (Vardell et al., 2002).

According to Zipke (2008), “Riddles are the perfect medium for learning how to manipulate language” (p. 130). Students who are able to manipulate and dissect language so as to understand the multiple meanings of individual words and words within a context are said to demonstrate metalinguistic awareness (NICHD, 2000; Yopp & Yopp, 2000). According to Cairns, as cited in Zipke (2008), a significant percentage of the 1,000 most common English words in our culture are multiply ambiguous. Readers who understand that words, as well as sentences, may have multiple meanings are developing their comprehension strategies as they consider the underlying meaning or message exemplified in the text. In order for ELLs to successfully interpret the intended meaning
of words, then teachers must provide comprehensible input, helping ELLs to activate their background knowledge.

Although background knowledge can enhance a reader’s ability to connect with a text, Dewitz and Dewitz (2003) and Lipson (1983) cautioned that background knowledge can also distort comprehension when a reader’s schema countermands the information in the text. This distortion is likely to occur when ELLs elaborate on their personal knowledge in order to read and interpret riddles. Learners bring experiences with their world to any text that they encounter, and they construct meaning based on their experiences and reading skills. Because a text is bound by its context and content, it is socially and culturally situated and the student may or may not be literate in a particular sociocultural context. Therefore, “sociocultural theories acknowledge that a good comprehender of one text might struggle with a different text” (Hammerberg, 2004, p. 650). Any reader, at any given time, may or may not be literate, depending upon the text and how well the reader can adjust her own schema, and this notion of literacy is critical when working with ELLs.

Teachers of ELLs must explicitly explain that riddles are written in question form and the answers turn into jokes. Given that humor is culturally sensitive (Vardell et al., 2006), it is unlikely that all ELLs will find the same riddles humorous. Furthermore, if ELLs are to comprehend any ambiguity that exists within the language used in riddles, then teachers are wise to provide comprehensible input by conducting think-alouds and by incorporating visual aids.

Riddles and jokes help promote ELLs’ oral language development in a non-threatening, fun atmosphere (Zainuddin et al., 2007). Peregoy and Boyle (2008)
recommended incorporating riddles and jokes as part of a teacher’s daily classroom routine. Riddles are particularly useful as culminating activities that assess students’ understanding of the content addressed in the lesson. ELLs can collaborate in small groups, using their English language skills, as they attempt to decipher the riddles. As with all material, teachers need to make wise choices when incorporating culturally embedded riddles and jokes in order to avoid any uncomfortable, discriminatory situations.

Hypothesizing that metalinguistic awareness fosters reading comprehension; Zipke (2007) conducted two studies to determine the correlation between these two constructs. First, one hundred sixth and seventh graders completed a series of reading assessments, and the results indicated a significant correlation between those students who were able to recognize and manipulate sentences and riddles with multiple meanings and the students’ reading comprehension and vocabulary development.

In order to determine definitive causal conclusions about the relationship between metalinguistic awareness and reading comprehension, Zipke, Ehri, and Cairns (2008) implemented an experimental intervention program. The purpose of this program was to promote metalinguistic awareness by engaging young, multicultural children from low socioeconomic backgrounds in word play and riddles. Forty-six third grade students were randomly divided and assigned to the control group and the experimental group. All students completed the Passage Comprehension subtest from the Woodcock Reading Mastery-Tests—Revised (Woodcock, 1987, 1998).

Twenty-three students participated in four individually administered intervention sessions for 30 minutes each that emphasized words and sentences with multiple
meanings. The lessons focused on homonyms, ambiguous sentences, reading and writing riddles, and reading and writing stories that mirror the Amelia Bedelia series by Peggy Parish. Both the control group and the experimental group completed posttests, and those students in the experimental group showed the greatest gain in scores from the pretest to the posttest. Zipke et al. (2008) concluded that students who engage in ambiguity training, with an emphasis on riddles, improve their reading comprehension abilities. Furthermore, riddles “create an invaluable enthusiasm for literacy learning that is all too often missing from the elementary curriculum” (Zipke, 2008, p. 136).

ELLs, similar to struggling readers, must develop sight-word vocabularies through reading practice every day. Average-level readers are also developing, concurrently, their sight-word vocabularies. Consequently, it is difficult for struggling readers, who are unlikely to read age-appropriate texts, to become “fluent readers” when they are required to accurately decode all of the words in a text that is age-appropriate. These students are hard pressed to make up lost time and catch up with their average-level reading peers (Torgesen & Hudson, 2006). Au (2000) suggested that ELLs need meaningful opportunities to merely converse in the classroom, and that these opportunities, rather than flashcards and word drills, will promote vocabulary and comprehension development.

Cunningham (2006) recognized the importance that vocabulary development has on the fluency and comprehension development of ELLs. A lack of vocabulary, alone, is a major deterrent in second language acquisition. Those ELLs who are at the beginning level of English language learning may need to learn to manipulate word families in order to make vocabulary acquisition manageable (Peregoy & Boyle, 2008; Zainuddin et al.,
ELLs need to develop basic vocabulary as well as academic vocabulary. Focused read-alouds, in which teachers spend time introducing and reviewing pertinent vocabulary, allow ELLs to hone in on specific words that will aid their comprehension of the text (Cunningham, 2006). Elley (1998) conducted studies suggesting that ELLs who were read to on a regular basis were more likely to have greater gains in vocabulary than those ELLs who were pretaught specific vocabulary.

Besides focused read-alouds, the Total Physical Response (TPR; Asher, 1969) method is an effective communicative approach to teaching vocabulary, especially to ELLs at a beginning level stage of English language learning because the level of language production is limited and thus, language participation is less intimidating (G. G. Garcia, 2003).

Asher’s (1969) TPR Method of language learning came about in the 1960s as a substitute for the popular audiolingual method. In short, the teacher begins by commanding and modeling a task in the target language. The learners observe and eventually respond to the commands. This method provides comprehensible input and it lowers the affective filter. The number of new concepts and commands taught coincide with the level of the language learners. Listening, an active activity rather than a passive activity is a critical component to English language acquisition (G. Brown, 1986; Zainuddin et al., 2007). TPR is effective because it pairs words with appropriate gestures and actions and allows teachers to implement verbal commands in order to determine which students comprehend the new term. As students’ language levels increase, teachers can modify this approach by engaging the students in more elaborate commands (Peregoy & Boyle, 2008).
However, critics of this method argue that it is not suited for teaching higher level abstract concepts or even past and future tenses. They also argue that it lacks a verbal performance component. The students are not usually required to speak but rather to point to something or to perform an action. A typical TPR lesson is best used for a warm-up activity rather than for an entire class period. Finally, TPR lacks natural, inherent sequencing. No matter how much fun the learners have turning around and jumping up and down there is no context for doing so. Consequently, the learners perform the commands without a meaningful context.

Echevarria, Vogt, and Short (2000) provided a list of techniques that promote effective vocabulary development in ELLs. These techniques are most effective when the teachers introduce the vocabulary in context, rather than in isolation. The following is a list of the recommended instructional techniques:

- Contextualizing Vocabulary: Choose vocabulary words that are critical to understanding the concepts in the text. Teach these words in context.
- Vocabulary Self-Selection: Encourage students to choose which words are important and make an individual list and a class list.
- Personal Dictionaries: Allow students to create their own spelling and vocabulary resource.
- Word Walls: Display content words that students are likely to use in the classroom. Limit the number of words to avoid overwhelming the students.
- Concept Definition Maps: These graphic organizers enable students to see the relationship among multiple words.
- Word Sorts: Choose words and allow students to organize them into meaningful categories related to a concept.
- Word Generation: Provide students with word parts and allow the students to use analogies to list words that include the given word parts.
- Word Study Books: Choose words or allow students to generate a list of frequently used words that they can include in a personal word book. The more students read, the more they develop their vocabulary and comprehension skills and become fluent readers (Colorín Colorado, 2007). However, ELLs need appropriate and consistent scaffolding to help them read and relate the
vocabulary to the context of the passage. Scaffolding is necessary along with comprehensible input. There is a misconception that exposure alone will foster second language acquisition (Gibbons, 2002). “Many students read texts passively, waiting for information to present and organize itself for them” (Peregoy & Boyle, 2008). If ELLs are to comprehend that which they read, then teachers must help ELLs to use metacognitive processes as they feel their way through texts.

Fitzgerald and Graves (2004) suggested that three closely related features contribute to effective scaffolding. First, the actual scaffold structure must be appropriate for the learners. Second, the learner must be in his zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). Finally, the instructor must gradually remove the scaffold and hand over the responsibilities to the student. Scaffolded reading experiences include prereading, during reading, and postreading activities (Fitzgerald & Graves, 2004).

Prereading activities include: motivating, introducing vocabulary, building background knowledge and suggesting strategies. During reading activities include: supported reading, reading to students, and silent, independent reading. Picture dictionaries and word sorts are both effective tools to use for prereading and during reading activities that help ELLs to make connections with words and concepts. Graphic organizers are also helpful for presenting new vocabulary, and personal word banks allow students to keep new vocabulary as a reference aid. Depending on the context, the students can sort these words in multiple ways. Word sorts and word charts with equivalent translations are also valuable tools for ELLs.

Individual picture dictionaries, comprised of sight words, help to support vocabulary development (Helman & Burns, 2008). Small index cards are best suited for
recording pertinent vocabulary that students can keep as a reference tool for writing and speaking. The students can also engage in a variety of word sorts with these cards in order to demonstrate spelling patterns or to analyze the usage of terms in specific contexts.

Helman and Burns (2008) elaborated on the importance of developing sight words for ELLs to use and practice in meaningful contexts. First, ELLs benefit from Personal Readers that contain collections of short texts that ELLs can reread (Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton, & Johnston, 2008). Second, ELLs need significant time built into their school day for reading texts at their instructional and independent levels. Reading texts at their instructional levels permits them to glean support from teachers, and reading at independent levels allows them to reap the true rewards of reading for pleasure. Third, in order to scaffold the cognitive challenge of learning to speak and read simultaneously in English, teachers must make careful text selections. Choosing texts, embedded within familiar contexts that contain high-frequency words permit ELLs to practice reading with a degree of success (Hiebert et al., 2004). Finally, research supports repeated readings of various familiar texts to improve automaticity and accuracy in reading (NICHD, 2000).

Postreading activities that include discussion, drama, artistic activity, reteaching, and writing response enable ELLs to contextualize the language (Fitzgerald & Graves, 2004).

Reading and writing are synergistic and likewise, foster literacy development. Teachers who connect reading with writing activities are making the most use of instructional time, and they demonstrate that the more students read, the better they write (Kucer, 2001). Fitzgerald and Graves (2004) stated, “For English-language learners,
writing has the added advantage of forcing attention to the relationships between sounds in a language and letters and spelling rules as well as to syntactical structures” (p. 95). Calderón et al. (2005) recommended that ELLs simultaneously learn the written and oral version of words in English. In this way, ELLs are able to rely on multiple modalities in order to acquire English.

The SIOP Model (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2004; Short & Echevarria, 1999) provides a list of scaffolding techniques for teachers of ELLs. The SIOP Model is part of a seven-year study grounded in 20 years of classroom-based research. It is comprised of 30 instructional strategies and it attempts to address the cognitive demands of content and language teaching. ELLs can not successfully complete written activities independently, read texts without prior knowledge of pertinent vocabulary, or listen to and comprehend a lecture without any visual aids (Short & Echevarria, 2004/2005). However, Gersten and Baker (2000) argued that if the content demands are too high, then the language skills are jeopardized. The SIOP Model was designed to address content demands and to include effective teaching methods, which have shown to foster academic success for ELLs. The following strategies, as cited in Hernandez (2003), are outlined in the SIOP Model.

- Identify the language demands of the content course.
- Plan language objectives for all lessons and make them explicit to students.
- Emphasize academic vocabulary development.
- Activate and strengthen background knowledge.
- Promote oral interaction and extended academic talk.
- Review vocabulary and content concepts.
- Give students feedback on language use in class. (pp. 125-149)

The following summary, as cited in Peregoy and Boyle (2008), outlines the major components of the SIOP Model for instruction.
Preparation

1. Clearly defined content objectives for students
2. Clearly defined language objectives for students
3. Content concepts appropriate for age and educational background level of students
4. Supplementary materials used to a high degree, making the lesson clear and meaningful
5. Adaptation of content to all levels of student proficiency
6. Meaningful activities that integrate lesson concepts with language practice opportunities for reading, writing, listening, and/or speaking

Building Background

7. Concepts explicitly linked to students’ background experiences
8. Links explicitly made between past learning and new concepts
9. Key vocabulary emphasized and repeated

Comprehensible Input

10. Speech appropriate for students’ proficiency level
11. Explanations of academic tasks clear
12. Use a variety of techniques to make content concepts clear

Strategies

13. Provides ample opportunities for students to use strategies
14. Consistent use of scaffolding techniques throughout lesson, assisting and supporting student understanding, such as think alouds
15. Teacher uses a variety of question types including those that promote higher-order thinking skills throughout the lesson

Interaction

16. Frequent opportunities for interactions and discussions between teacher/student and among students, which encourage elaborated responses about lesson concepts
17. Grouping configurations support language and content objectives of the lesson
18. Consistently provides sufficient wait time for student responses
19. Ample opportunities for students to clarify key concepts in L1 as needed with aide, peer, or L1 text
Practice/Application

20. Provides hands-on materials and/or manipulatives for students to practice using new content knowledge
21. Provides activities for students to apply content and language knowledge in the classroom
22. Uses activities that integrate reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills

Lesson Delivery

23. Content objectives clearly supported by lesson delivery
24. Language objectives clearly supported by lesson delivery
25. Students engaged approximately 90 – 100% of the period
26. Pacing of the lesson appropriate to the students’ ability level

Review/Assessment

27. Comprehensive review of key vocabulary
28. Comprehensive review of key content concepts
29. Regularly provides feedback to students on their output
30. Conducts assessment of student comprehension and learning of all lesson objectives throughout the lesson. (p. 11)

Echevarria, Short, and Powers (2003) conducted a study of the SIOP Model sponsored by the Center on Education, Diversity & Excellence (CREDE). The results of the data suggested that ELLs whose teachers followed the SIOP Model performed significantly better on a writing assignment in comparison to a group of ELLs whose teachers did not implement the SIOP Model.

There are numerous ways that a teacher can provide comprehensible input (Colorin Colorado, 2007). First, in order to bring life to language, the teacher should focus on expression and body language. Facial expressions, gestures, and body language can contextualize the message of a lesson. One should note; however, that gestures are not all universal, and some may in fact be offensive to certain ELLs. Gambrell and Bales (1986), and Ketch (2005) also advocated using visual imagery to help learners connect
their senses and emotions with the text. K. A. D. Stahl (2004) suggested that teachers can use realia to initiate visual imagery or use think-alouds to model how to create mental pictures that help students make text connections.

Second, an instructor can monitor his speech patterns to address the needs of all learners. ELLs benefit greatly when the teacher speaks slowly and clearly. Also, the teacher who pauses between phrases allows those learners time to process the information. Shorter sentences with less complicated syntax are also helpful. The teacher should be prepared to repeat and review pertinent vocabulary. Keep the vocabulary consistent as much as possible. Check for comprehension and prepare to restate or clarify meaning often throughout a lesson. Teachers should also keep in mind that ELLs do not necessarily have difficulty hearing. Therefore, teachers do not need to increase their volume just their wait time after posing a question to the students.

Third, maintain a warm and friendly atmosphere in the classroom. The teacher who is friendly and energetic will most likely lower the affective barrier for the learner. The student who feels at ease is more likely to volunteer to participate.

Fourth, the teacher needs to modify the instructional strategies. The use of visual aids is highly important. A concept that seems clear to most students may not be comprehensible to ELLs without a visual. Teachers who communicate about a subject in a variety of formats that is, oral, written, physical, and pictorial, are likely to reach diverse language learners.

Finally, the incorporation of cooperative learning activities provides that comprehensible input. Cooperative learning groups and peer tutoring allow ELLs to work collaboratively with others who are both above and below their levels of performance.
The negotiation of meaning that takes place between the learners provides the scaffolding that helps ELLs acquire the language.

Besides providing comprehensible input, there are many strategies that teachers can use to foster active listening and speaking skills. For example, Diaz-Rico and Weed (1995) and Cappellini (2005) suggested that teachers begin by teaching group conversation and interpersonal skills prior to introducing collaborative tasks. They also suggested that teachers consciously build in numerous opportunities for student interaction. Finally, embedding listening and speaking experiences within reading and writing activities is another successful strategy. Audio publishing, panel discussions, and Readers Theatre are three such activities that promote literacy development. Repeated readings, especially with computer-based instructional programs, are also very effective. ELLs can listen to their recorded readings and use self-monitoring skills.

Teachers must focus instruction on comprehension skills even before ELLs read fluently (Freeman & Freeman, 2004; Pressley et al., 2006). In order to promote fluency, teachers of ELLs need to focus on basic reading skills for word recognition accuracy, provide sufficient opportunities to engage in authentic reading activities, and maintain motivation. Reading rate may not have as great a correlation with reading comprehension for ELLs because of vocabulary and differences in grammatical structures of ELLs’ native language. To be considered a measure of fluency; more than reading rate must be measured. Fluency involves both word recognition and comprehension and recall of a text needs to include key ideas from the story (Calderón, 2008).

Based on the multidimensional definition of fluency (Opitz, 2007; Rasinski, 2003; & Rasinski and Padak, 2001), fluency instruction is most beneficial when each
component of fluency is targeted, simultaneously, within a lesson. The same argument applies with fluency instruction for ELLs. “For ELLs, try not to provide instruction in fluency that focuses primarily on developing students’ reading rates at the expense of reading with expression, meaning, and comprehension” (Colorín Colorado, 2007, p. 1). Teachers who separate the components of fluency instruction, and for instance, only focus on accuracy or reading rate without any regard for prosody, are inevitably interrupting the constant flow of comprehensible input for ELLs. The Report of the National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth (August & Shanahan, 2006) recognized two studies that suggested that fluency instruction is advantageous for ELLs.

Summary

Chapter 2 presented a review of literature and research relating to reading fluency and comprehension, second language acquisition and reading development of ELLs, assessments, and attitudes and motivation towards reading. Together, they build a strong case in support of the implementation of the FDL as a means to develop and improve the reading skills of ELLs. Elements of research-based best practices for fluency and comprehension instruction are found in the FDL.

The following chapter outlines the methods employed as a means to address the research problem, purpose, and questions that drive this study.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Rationale of Research Design

This study examined the English reading development of three ELLs who attended a 9-week reading intervention program during the summer for 4½ hours a week. The students continued to participate in the after-school program from September through December for 1 hour a week. The study also described the impact that the students’ social interactions had on their reading development. Finally, the components and adaptations of the FDL were described and interpreted in order to better understand any impact that it may have had on the English reading development of the three ELLs.

In this qualitative study, the researcher implemented a modified FDL with a group of three, multiage ELLs, participating in the community summer and after-school intervention program. These participants were purposively selected from a sample population of 25 multiage ELLs who participated in a modified FDL.

Given that the researcher was approached and presented with the opportunity to work with the Karen ELLs, this study represented ex post facto research, in which the causes of the study are analyzed and reported after they “presumably have exerted their effect on the variable of interest” (Gall et al., 2007).
Design of the Study

A qualitative or constructivist research approach addressed the problem, purpose, and questions of this study. The goal of qualitative research is to discover and interpret a particular social reality by analyzing cases in their natural settings and implementing analytic induction as a means of data analysis (Gall et al., 2007). “Case study has proved particularly useful for studying educational innovations, for evaluating programs, and for informing policy” (Merriam, 1988, pp. 32-33). According to Merriam (1998), the driving force behind qualitative research is the whole process rather than the product of the study in a specific context. Discovery, rather than confirmation, is the purpose of the research.

A multiple-case study design, in which the researcher moves towards better understanding the general phenomenon (Schram, 2006), best suits the purpose of this study. Merriam (1998) posited that a multiple case design adds to the external validity and generalizability of the study. Gall et al. (2007) stated the following:

In a multiple-case study design, the unit of analysis needs to be at least two or more individuals or two or more instances of a phenomenon, selected either to be similar to each other or different from each other in some way that is of interest to the researchers. (p. 178)

In this strategy, the researcher gathers and analyzes “open-ended, emerging data with the primary intent of developing themes from the data” (Creswell, 2003, p. 18). The researcher often focuses on the various interpretations of individual experiences constructed in a social setting. According to Stake (1995) and Schram (2006), case study research is delimited by a particular activity that takes place over a sustained period of time. Data collection procedures involve interview data, observation data, material culture data, and audiovisual data (Creswell, 2003).
The researcher collected data in two methods for analysis. First, the students completed pretests to measure fluency and comprehension scores, as well as pretests to measure their attitudes towards recreational and academic reading. At the completion of the summer reading intervention program, the students completed posttests in order to compare and contrast their scores on all the administered instruments. Finally, the students completed posttests at the conclusion of the after-school session in December.

Second, in order to provide an understanding of the research problem, the researcher collected multiple sources of data and used a variety of methods to access this data. Data collection procedures for this study included participant observations, interviews with ELLs and their parents and teachers, and the collection and analysis of various material culture generated by the researcher and the ELLs. All field notes and interviews were transcribed and the data were coded for emerging themes. Peer review established inter-rater reliability.

The descriptive approach to research is based on methods of data collection involving observations, interviews, and analyses (Creswell, 2003). The data described is dependent upon the researcher’s interaction with the participants and the description of the events and data. Descriptive case studies provide detailed accounts of the phenomenon under study rather than predicting any future behavior (Merriam, 1998). Merriam (1988) argued that “rigor in a qualitative case study derives from the researcher’s presence, the nature of the interaction between researcher and participants, the triangulation of data, the interpretation of perceptions, and rich, thick descriptions” (p. 120). Qualitative researchers spend a great amount of time in the natural setting, engaged
with the participants in the study with the intention of creating images that allow the readers to view the study as if they had been present (Merriam, 1998).

In order to describe the events of this intervention project, the researcher participated and observed throughout the summer intervention program and again during the after-school program. Thorough field notes addressed the context of this research study. All field notes were transcribed and coded for emerging themes. Analytic and personal notes correspond with the descriptive notes. All material culture was dated and analyzed.

The weakness of this descriptive approach rests in its subjectivity and integrity of the researcher (Merriam, 1988, 1998; Worthen, Sanders, & Fitzpatrick, 1997). As a participant-observer the researcher’s subjectivity was inevitable. However, this subjectivity and any bias that may have manifested itself in this study was balanced by the validated instruments used to measure any student progress in fluency and comprehension, as well as any changes in attitudes towards reading.

Research Questions

The research questions, along with the problem and the purpose, informed this study. I. Newman, Ridenour, Newman, and DeMarco (2003) identified nine purposes for conducting research. This particular qualitative study was implemented for the following purposes: to generate new ideas, add to the existing knowledge base, inform constituencies, and measure change. According to Merriam (1988),

The case study results in a rich and holistic account of a phenomenon. It offers insights and illuminates meanings that expand its readers’ experiences. These insights can be construed as tentative hypotheses that help structure future research: hence, case study plays an important role in advancing a field’s knowledge base. (p. 32)
The following questions guided this study:

1. How do teacher-student interactions and student-to-student interactions, during the implementation of a modified FDL, impact the Karen children’s abilities to develop fluency and comprehension skills in English?

2. How does systematic language instruction using a modified FDL impact the fluency and comprehension development of these three ELLs?

Participant Selection Criteria

The participant selection process began on the first day of the English reading summer intervention program. The researcher used the following criteria in order to select the case study participants from the 25 ELLs participating in the program.

Initially, the director of the community organization sponsoring the intervention program recommended five ELLs, based on his personal experience, who would most likely demonstrate intermediate English language proficiencies. These 5 ELLs spent a significant amount of time at this organization. The director assisted these students, after school during the week, with their homework. Consequently, he was a reliable source in the selection process.

The five ELLs whom he recommended met with the researcher, as a small group, to converse and read the poem, *Crayons* by Helen H. Moore (1997). After conducting informal observations, the researcher administered the 3 Minute Reading Assessments: Word Recognition, Fluency and Comprehension and the Flynt-Cooter RIC to all five students. The purpose of the assessments was to determine which ELLs could
demonstrate intermediate English language proficiencies, which are described in Level 3 of the TESOL’s new PreK-12 English Language Proficiency Standards (2006).

Based on the scores from the 3 Minute Reading Assessments: Word Recognition, Fluency and Comprehension and the Flynt-Cooter RIC, 3 out of the 5 ELLs demonstrated the ability to read a leveled passage and retell the events that occurred. On the contrary, 2 out of the 5 ELLs were unable to read any of the passages out loud, and consequently, the researcher concluded the assessment session.

Participants

The participants in this case study were three ELLs who demonstrated intermediate English language proficiencies, as identified by their scores on the 3 Minute Reading Assessments: Word Recognition, Fluency and Comprehension and the Flynt-Cooter RIC and later by the two ESL instructors who worked with these ELLs in the school setting. These three students were also recommended by the director of this community organization who was very familiar with the students’ English language skills. Merriam (1988) referred to this purposive or criterion-based sampling strategy as “reputational-case selection” (p. 50). In this strategy, experts in the field or individuals who have an established relationship with the subjects recommend those subjects who would best qualify for the sample. The three students were alike in gender and nationality; however, they differed in ages. Two of the participants were siblings, and none of the participants had any English language experiences prior to arriving in the United States.

Naw Bee Ko was 12 years old and would be entering into the seventh grade in the fall of 2008. She was rather tall for her age, and had beautiful, long black hair. She had 2
brothers and 5 sisters, and Naw Bee Ko was born in a refugee camp in Thailand. While in the camp, she attended school. She learned to read and write in her native language and she liked to do math. The researcher learned that books in the camps were very scarce. At the time of this intervention program, she stated that she had been living in the United States for 1 year. Her adult older brother and two adult older sisters did not transfer to the United States, but remained in Thailand. Naw Bee Ko was very shy and afraid to make oral reading mistakes in front of her peers. She was always willing to participate; yet, she was cautious. Mannerly and polite, she appeared grateful to receive reading instruction. She always greeted the researcher with a huge smile on her face. Like most ELLs, she did not have brand new clothes. She wore second-hand clothes given to her by Urban Vision and the Goodwill. In order to attend a summer retreat she needed a pair of tennis shoes, which she did not own. I considered donating a gently used pair belonging to my daughter; however, my daughter wore a different size shoe than Naw Bee Ko wore. Consequently, I bought a new pair of shoes for Naw Bee Ko and realized that this pair may have been Naw Bee Ko’s first brand new pair. Naw Bee Ko thanked me, and she often wore the shoes throughout the remainder of the reading intervention program.

Mi Mi was 10 years old and would be entering into the fourth grade in the fall of 2008. She appeared rather tiny for her age; however, her self-confidence led me to believe that Mi Mi was actually older than her chronological age. Like Naw Bee Ko, Mi Mi had shiny, long black hair that she often wore in a braid. Mi Mi had 1 brother and 3 sisters. She was born in a refugee camp in Thailand and has been in the United States for 1½ years. Mi Mi loved to read and sing. Although she received some educational instruction in the refugee camp, she said that her mother helped her learn to read and
write in their language. She also stated that she and her mother liked to sing songs together. Mi Mi’s English reading skills progressed at such a rapid rate that she assisted others at Urban Vision with various language tasks. Mi Mi was also extremely energetic, extraverted, and polite. She loved to comment on my shoes and wardrobe. Mi Mi often admired a particular necklace that I wore, so I bought her a similar necklace for a gift.

Naw Eh Ywa Paw was 8 years old and just completed first grade. She would enter into second grade in the fall of 2008. Naw Eh Ywa Paw, like her sister, Mi Mi, was born in the same refugee camp in Thailand. She arrived in the United States 1½ years ago with her family. She learned to read and write in the refugee camp, and her mother told her stories to help her sleep. She, too, was tiny with long black hair. Her short stature was no match for her dynamic personality. Determined to prove that she, too, was smart and capable like her sister, Naw Eh Ywa Paw was always competing against Mi Mi. Naw Eh Ywa Paw often ignored her sister’s attempts to correct or instruct her because she did not want to appear inferior. Naw Eh Ywa Paw loved to read and draw pictures, and she often liked to read aloud, from books of her choice, to me. Mi Mi had a charm bracelet that Naw Eh Ywa Paw admired, and Mi Mi often shared the bracelet with her sister. I bought Naw Eh Ywa Paw her own bracelet as a farewell gift.

Implementation of the FDL

The researcher implemented a modified FDL with the ELLs from June through December. The summer session consisted of 3 sessions per week for a total of 9 weeks. Each session lasted for 90 minutes. However, in September, after the students completed their normal school-day routine, the after-school sessions were limited to one per week for 60 minutes each. The researcher modified the FDL by incorporating written activities,
vocabulary boxes, and various games to continue to reinforce and enhance the repeated reading activities and comprehension strategies embedded in the FDL. Furthermore, the researcher extended the FDL from 15 minutes up to 90 minutes by transitioning the students and alternating between activities in large groups and small groups.

Prior to the start of the summer session, the researcher conducted two training sessions for the adult volunteers. The purpose of the sessions was to present and model the modified components of the FDL in order to enable the 8 volunteers to comfortably implement appropriate fluency and comprehension scaffolding activities with the ELLs.

Each lesson was divided into three components. During the summer session the researcher spent approximately 20 minutes conducting a large group activity. Next, the 25 ELLs were divided up into small groups for 50 minutes of instruction with volunteers, and finally, the ELLs and volunteers reconvened as a large group for 20 minutes of review and extension activities. The after-school session in the fall consisted of approximately 20 minutes of large group instruction, followed by 30 minutes of small-group activities, and 10 minutes of large group review. Perez, as cited in Bauer and Manyak (2008), stated:

> Classrooms that support students’ interaction with peers and the teacher do make use of the collective knowledge of the class, which enhances students’ language skills. These classrooms are inherently low-risk, build on what students bring to the classroom, and create the space for the emergence of new ideas based on students’ interactions with one another. (p. 177)

The poetry was purposely selected for both summer and after-school sessions. Careful to select poetry appropriate for the students, the researcher considered length, vocabulary, and content of each poem. During the summer months, the researcher chose poetry that either incorporated summertime themes or those that were filled with a hint of
humor appropriate for young children. Hadaway et al. (2001) recommended that teachers select poems that they personally enjoy so that they are able to read it effectively and are able to pass on their enthusiasm to their students. The researcher favored the poems by Shel Silverstein, and quickly recognized that the ELLs were equally delighted to read his work, and therefore, the researcher continued to choose his poetry. The poetry selected in September reflected typical school themes, seasons, and holidays. In this way, the students were often able to relate the poems to many of the curriculum-based activities that occurred in their classrooms at school. Vardell et al. (2006) commented that teachers should choose poems that allow their ELLs to make meaningful connections.

At the start of each large group lesson, the researcher introduced the topic of the poem, careful to provide comprehensible input by incorporating props, drama, TPR, and appropriate literature that enhanced vocabulary acquisition. The researcher pretaught the vocabulary pertinent for text comprehension. Fitzgerald and Graves (2004) suggested that the words that ELLs encounter “fall on a continuum from those they can read and understand easily to those they can’t even pronounce much less associate with a meaning” (p. 127). Each poem was colorfully displayed on a large hanging chart for all ELLs to see. “Seeing the words while hearing them is additional reinforcement for children learning to read” (Hadaway et al., 2001).

During this large group lesson, the researcher and ELLs engaged in conversations about the poet’s message and the use and purpose of the language chosen to bring the poem to life. “Discussing poems allows students to use the language—both basic communicative and academic—that they are learning to move to higher levels of proficiency” (Hadaway et al., 2001). The purpose of this discussion is to promote native-
like use of English, as opposed to contrived, fixed statements. After I read the poem and modeled the components of fluency, the ELLs engaged in echo reading and choral reading activities before moving into small group settings. Together, the ELLs and I focused on the verbal and nonverbal markers for expression and appropriate emphasis, and engaged in think-alouds to review the cueing systems that facilitated comprehension.

While in small groups, the volunteers reread the poem and continued to engage the ELLs in echo reading and choral reading activities as deemed necessary. Worthy and Broaddus (2001-2002) posited that some students may need more, individualized instruction and modeling of fluency just as some students need more metacognitive strategy instruction. “Hearing poetry helps language learners acquire correct word pronunciations and incorporates listening vocabulary to aid their overall comprehension” (Hadaway et al., 2001). The researcher worked consistently with the three ELLs who are described in this study. With their personal copy of the poem in hand, the ELLs had multiple opportunities to partner read and coach each other on the components of fluency. The researcher spent a significant amount of time modeling effective peer reading activities before the ELLs began assisting each other. The ELLs played “teacher” while offering up constructive criticism in their native language. Ketch (2005) stated, “Students actively engaged in the conversation process can, over time, become reflective, critical thinkers” (p. 8). Furthermore, Moskal and Blachowicz (2006) stated:

Children are better able to improve their fluency when they understand the goals of fluency instruction. They should be able to explain why the rereading of a passage is important to improve fluency, and after listening to a read-aloud, children should be able to discuss why a reading was fluent and how fluency was achieved. Teaching the characteristics of fluency—appropriate rate, accuracy, and prosody—is therefore the first step in fluency instruction and development. (p. 45)
Next, the ELLs engaged in the interactive writing phase of this session. McClure (1999) noted, “Passive listening isn’t enough . . . show them how to uncover the subtle nuances of meaning and what poets do to forge an emotional connection with the reader” (p. 68). ELLs need the time and resources to reflect and respond in writing about their own ideas and feelings (Rubin & Carlan, 2005). During this activity the students and the researcher discussed the comprehension questions that corresponded with the poem. The purpose of the interactive writing activity was to provide the necessary scaffolding that enabled the ELLs to answer the comprehension questions that accompanied each poem.

Taberski (2000) referred to this type of writing as shared writing that allows the teacher and students to work through the conventions of print, grammar, and spelling. “The teacher scaffolds the children’s participation in the writing event, helping students to use the conventions of print—space, direction, capitalization, punctuation—to make the text readable” (C. Williams & Lundstrom, 2007, p. 205). The focus is on composing the text. With dry erase marker in hand, I modified and transcribed their comments into appropriate complete sentences, emphasizing correct syntax. The ELLs copied their sentences into their poetry folders. Within this meaningful, collaborative context, opportunities arose to demonstrate English language print conventions and to provide practice in strategic word solving behaviors. Furthermore, the ELLs developed English phonemic awareness skills as they located rhyming words in the poem and worked collaboratively to list other words with the same rhyming pattern. Smith, Walker, and Yellin (2004) suggested that students with phonological awareness are able to engage in more fluent reading.
After completing the interactive writing activity, I refocused their attention on the pertinent vocabulary that was explicitly introduced in the large group session. Each student had her own personal vocabulary box in which to store these new words introduced throughout the session. The students chose at least three vocabulary terms from the poem to write on separate index cards. They drew a picture, wrote a simple definition for the term, in either English or in their native language, and used the term in a complete sentence. These cards were stored in their vocabulary boxes, which they took home to use as a reference tool, at the completion of the summer session.

Occasionally, the students and I collaborated to discuss and complete a corresponding graphic organizer that promoted higher-order thinking skills. Bauer and Manyak (2008) and Fitzgerald and Graves (2004) commented that graphic organizers are scaffolding tools that allow ELLs to activate and construct their background knowledge; in turn, fostering comprehension.

Finally, all of the ELLs and volunteers met as a large group to perform the poem and discuss their different writing responses. Reading instruction is most beneficial when students participate in whole-to-part-to-whole group activities (Mazzoni & Gambrell, 2003; M. Smith et al., 2004). Next, I also reviewed the pertinent vocabulary by asking the students to explain each term in their own words. The students had plenty of opportunities to read for authentic purposes without becoming bored. For instance, “mystery readers” read the poem while others listened with blind-folds over their eyes and tried to guess the readers. I also tape recorded readers so they could listen to their progress. Hadaway et al. (2001) suggested that students who have become comfortable reading the poem may wish to tape record themselves reading the poem aloud. Poetry
naturally lends itself to performance (Hadaway, Vardell, & Young, 2001; Vardell, Hadaway, & Young, 2006) and consequently, many ELLs asked to perform the poem, either individually or with a partner, for the entire group.

As researcher, I adapted the FDL in preparation for each successive session with the ELLs. First, in preparation for the next session, I reflected on the field notes and journal entries before choosing the next poem to read with the ELLs. Not only did I consider length, vocabulary, and content, but consideration was also given to the grammatical language structures that were evident within the text. Occasionally, some of the ELLs expressed interest in reading a particular poet or in reading more riddles and knock-knock jokes, and therefore, I obliged.

Before introducing a new text, the ELLs engaged in warm-up activities by reading texts, which had previously been read. In this way, the ELLs had the opportunity to reread familiar texts with a degree of success. Careful to allow the ELLs to choose the texts to reread, I quickly discovered the most preferred texts as well as the diverse interests of the participants. As a large group, I also reviewed vocabulary gleaned from previous texts. While participating in this review, the ELLs were encouraged to rely upon their vocabulary cards that were stored in their vocabulary boxes. In hopes of triggering the students’ memories, I recited random lines from different poems. The students responded enthusiastically by shouting out the titles and chorally reciting the poems with me.

As previously stated, the FDL was designed as a rather quick lesson to support the fluency and comprehension development of learners. I recognized the need to further explain and/or develop the themes embedded within the poetry, and therefore, decided to
link these themes with age-appropriate books. These books served to introduce the poems and to create an authentic context from which the ELLs could comprehend the themes and vocabulary in the poems.

While reading the books, I invested in before, during, and after comprehension activities. This scaffolding not only enabled the ELLs to understand the books, but to make appropriate and vital text connections with the themes in the poems. The conversations that ensued led me to believe that the ELLs were often able to use culturally relevant schemata to reinforce their comprehension, and in certain instances, the book provided sufficient background information when the ELLs did not have previous, familiar experiences. Yoon (2007) argued that teachers must be keenly aware of the cultural and social needs of ELLs, and that their needs are not just rooted in the language. Eager to have another look at the books, several of the ELLs asked to view them before leaving the session, and some students asked permission to take the books home.

At the conclusion of the summer session, I decided to celebrate with a poetry party. Initially, I envisioned asking the ELLs to choose their favorite poem, create a costume or locate a prop, and to perform the poem for the entire group of ELLs and volunteers. After careful consideration, I concluded that most of the ELLs would not have the means to create costumes or props, and I did not want to impose any unnecessary stress on the ELLs and their parents. Therefore, I approached the volunteers and asked them to select their favorite poems to perform for the ELLs. The volunteers, disguised in elaborate costumes and accompanied with props, performed their favorite
poems to a cheering crowd of ELLs. Unable to resist the temptation, the ELLs quickly chimed in with the performing volunteers and recited the poetry together.

Data Collection

Merriam (1988) suggested that there are no limitations to the methods of data collection for a case study. In fact, both quantitative and qualitative techniques may be employed in combination to thoroughly address the questions in a case study. “Any and all methods of gathering data from testing to interviewing can be used in a case study, although certain techniques are used more than others” (p. 10).

According to Merriam (1988, 1998) and Gall et al. (2007), the researcher, taking on the participant/observer role, observes and interacts with the individuals in the study so as to establish a significant coalescence with the group. Jansen and Peshkin, as quoted in Schram (2006), explained that, “The inescapable fact of our presence in research means that we are present to make choices. Choices equal subjectivity at work” (p. 135).

The ELLs participated in the FDL for 41 sessions for a total of 3,170 minutes. I implemented a modified FDL and conducted observations for 38 sessions for a total of 2,900 minutes. Merriam (1988, 1998) stated that researchers who conduct observations over a long period of time add to the validity of the study. According to Merriam (1988), “rigor in a qualitative case study derives from the researcher’s presence, the nature of the interaction between researcher and participants, the triangulation of data, the interpretation of perceptions, and rich, thick description” (p. 120).

The focus of the observations and coinciding field notes transformed over time as the study became more defined. Gall et al. (2007) defined three stages that identify each stage of transformation. In the descriptive stage, the researcher’s observations are less
focused and primarily provide a base from which the researcher begins to organize data. Next in the focused stage, the observations become tailored to the components of the study that have been identified and that are of interest to the researcher. In the selective stage, the researcher focuses on cultivating and clarifying specific factors that arise in order to reach the point of replication. This point is theoretical saturation.

In this study I used multiple methods to gather data. I engaged in qualitative measures such as observations, a focus group, interviews, and material culture. In addition, I, as researcher, administered three quantitative measures to each of the three participants. Gall et al. (2007) stated that, “Case study researchers need to understand and consider using mixed methods in their research studies” (p. 461).

Research Agenda

The research questions and purposes, as well as the corresponding assumptions and procedures are specified in Table 4. The timeline for data collection is provided in Table 5.

Table 6 outlines the dates and times of the English reading intervention program, as well as the poems chosen for each session. Table 7 includes the dates in which the researcher was absent. A program volunteer introduced each of the poems in my absence.

Table 8 outlines the dates and times of the English reading intervention after-school program, as well as the poems chosen for each session.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Procedure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How do teacher-student interactions and student–to-student interactions, during a modified FDL, impact the Karen children’s abilities to develop fluency and comprehension skills in English?</td>
<td>To discover any relationships between social interactions and English reading development of the ELLs.</td>
<td>Data from the analysis of:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Field notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Journal entries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Lesson plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Poetry folders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Student focus group and interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Parent interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Teacher interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does systematic language instruction using a modified FDL impact the reading development of these three ELLs?</td>
<td>To discover any impact that the FDL had on the fluency and comprehension development of ELLs.</td>
<td>Data from the analysis of:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Field notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Journal entries</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Lesson plans</td>
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<td>• Poetry folders</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Student focus group and interviews</td>
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<td>• Parent interviews</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Teacher interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• 3 Minute Reading Assessments: Word Recognition, Fluency and Comprehension pretests and posttests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Flynt-Cooter RIC pretests and posttests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Elementary Reading Attitude Survey pretests and posttests</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5

Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 7, 2008</td>
<td>3 Minute Reading Assessments Pretest &amp; Flynt-Cooter RIC Pretest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 9, 2008</td>
<td>ERAS Pretest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 7, 2008 – December 18, 2008 (45 sessions)</td>
<td>Implementation of the FDL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 7, 2008 – December 18, 2008 (42 observations)</td>
<td>Participant Observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 18, 2008</td>
<td>3 Minute Reading Assessments Posttest &amp; Flynt- Cooter RIC Posttest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 4, 2009</td>
<td>Student Focus Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 15, 2009</td>
<td>3 Minute Reading Assessments Posttest, Flynt-Cooter RIC Posttest, &amp; ERAS Posttest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 22, 2009</td>
<td>Student Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June – August 2009</td>
<td>Parent &amp; Teacher Interviews</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6

English Reading Intervention Summer Sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATES</th>
<th>TIMES</th>
<th>POEM(S)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 7, 2008</td>
<td>11:00 – 12:30</td>
<td>Crayons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 9, 2008</td>
<td>2:00 – 3:30</td>
<td>Apples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 12, 2008</td>
<td>2:00 - 3:30</td>
<td>Humpty Dumpty / Twinkle Twinkle Little Star</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 14, 2008</td>
<td>11:00 – 12:30</td>
<td>Rainy Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 16, 2008</td>
<td>2:00 – 3:30</td>
<td>June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 19, 2008</td>
<td>2:00 – 3:30</td>
<td>I Like To...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 21, 2008</td>
<td>11:00 – 12:30</td>
<td>Something Missing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 26, 2008</td>
<td>2:00 – 3:30</td>
<td>Magic Carpet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 28, 2008</td>
<td>11:00 – 12:30</td>
<td>Sorry I Spilled It</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 30, 2008</td>
<td>2:00 – 3:30</td>
<td>Carrots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 3, 2008</td>
<td>2:00 - 3:30</td>
<td>The Mummy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 10, 2008</td>
<td>2:00 – 3:30</td>
<td>Sharing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 14, 2008</td>
<td>2:00 – 3:30</td>
<td>Recess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 17, 2008</td>
<td>2:00 – 3:30</td>
<td>Why My Homework Is Missing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 19, 2008</td>
<td>11:00 – 12:30</td>
<td>Show Fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 21, 2008</td>
<td>2:00 – 3:30</td>
<td>K-K Jokes Dozen/Sloan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 24, 2008</td>
<td>2:00 – 3:30</td>
<td>K-K Jokes Aaron/Abe/Alistir/Alma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 28, 2008</td>
<td>2:00 – 3:30</td>
<td>Pancake?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 31, 2008</td>
<td>2:00 – 3:30</td>
<td>The Planet of Mars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2, 2008</td>
<td>11:00 – 12:30</td>
<td>Warning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 11, 2008</td>
<td>2:00 – 3:30</td>
<td>Crowded Tub</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 14, 2008</td>
<td>2:00 – 3:30</td>
<td>Band – Aids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 16, 2008</td>
<td>11:00 – 12:30</td>
<td>Keep a Poem in Your Pocket</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7

English Reading Intervention Summer Session (Without Researcher)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATES</th>
<th>TIMES</th>
<th>POEMS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 23, 2008</td>
<td>2:00 – 3:30</td>
<td><em>Jack &amp; Jill / Row, Row, Row Your Boat</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 5, 2008</td>
<td>11:00 – 12:30</td>
<td><em>Lost</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 7, 2008</td>
<td>2:00 – 3:30</td>
<td><em>Snowball</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8

English Reading Intervention After-School Session

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATES</th>
<th>TIMES</th>
<th>POEMS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 4, 2008</td>
<td>3:00 – 4:00</td>
<td><em>School Bus</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 11, 2008</td>
<td>3:00 – 4:00</td>
<td><em>The Whirl and Twirl &amp; Storm</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 18, 2008</td>
<td>3:00 – 4:00</td>
<td><em>Gray Squirrel</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 25, 2008</td>
<td>3:00 – 4:00</td>
<td><em>The Little Fire Fighter</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2, 2008</td>
<td>3:00 – 4:00</td>
<td><em>On Christopher Columbus’ Ship</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 9, 2008</td>
<td>3:00 – 4:00</td>
<td><em>Autumn Leaves</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 16, 2008</td>
<td>3:00 – 4:00</td>
<td><em>Pumpkins</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 23, 2008</td>
<td>3:00 – 4:00</td>
<td><em>The Pumpkin That Grew</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 30, 2008</td>
<td>3:00 – 4:00</td>
<td><em>Little Jack Pumpkin Face</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 6, 2008</td>
<td>3:00 – 4:00</td>
<td><em>The Pilgrims Came</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 13, 2008</td>
<td>3:00 – 4:00</td>
<td><em>Thanksgiving</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 20, 2008</td>
<td>3:00 – 4:00</td>
<td><em>Give Thanks</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 4, 2008</td>
<td>3:00 – 4:00</td>
<td><em>A Secret</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 11, 2008</td>
<td>3:00 – 4:00</td>
<td><em>Snowflakes, Snowflakes &amp; White Snow</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 18, 2008</td>
<td>3:00 – 4:00</td>
<td><em>The Twenty-Fourth of December</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Instrumentation

Three formal instruments were implemented during this study. I analyzed the pre- and post-test scores from each instrument to discover any impact that the FDL had on the fluency and comprehension development of the ELLS.

_The 3 Minute Reading Assessments: Word Recognition, Fluency and Comprehension_

Rasinski and Padak (2005) developed the 3 Minute Reading Assessments: Word Recognition, Fluency and Comprehension to assess all of the components of fluency and comprehension addressed in the FDL. The purpose of this instrument is to measure the fluency and comprehension development of students in elementary and middle school grades. The assessment results enable researchers or classroom teachers to determine how well each student is able to read grade-level texts. The authors of this instrument recommended that teachers assess individual students at least three times per year, at regular intervals. Ideally, one would assess students in the fall, once or twice during the winter, and once again in the spring. The instrument includes four different passages, labeled A, B, C, & D, for the students to read. The passages range in difficulty, with the fourth passage being the most challenging. Therefore, this particular passage is appropriate for assessments in the spring.

This instrument is intended to help classroom teachers or researchers determine those students who are not reading at grade-level, and who are most likely candidates for reading intervention. Rasinski and Padak (2005) offered instructional suggestions for developing word recognition, fluency, and comprehension skills. The authors did not suggest that the results from this instrument, alone, determine a reading letter grade or the promotion or retention of a student.
The authors (Rasinski & Padak, 2005) designed the instrument to be administered to individual students. The teacher chooses a text provided, depending on the grade level and month of year, for the student to read aloud. The student is given one minute to read aloud the text. While the student reads, the teacher follows along with his personal copy, and the teacher completes a running record of the student’s errors and self-corrections. If the student pauses for more than three seconds when attempting to decode a word, then the teacher is instructed to provide the word for the student and indicate this on the running record sheet.

Immediately after the student reads aloud the text, then the teacher completes the assessment rubrics provided by the authors of this instrument. First, the teacher records the number of words that the student read correctly, including any words that the student may have self-corrected. This number is divided by the total number of words that the student was able to read in 1 minute. This answer is the percentage of words read accurately. A student whose score ranges from 99% to 100% is reading at an independent level. If the student’s score falls between 92% and 98%, then he is reading at an instructional level. A score below 92% indicates that the student is at a frustration level, and the text is too challenging for the student (Rasinski & Padak, 2005).

The authors (Rasinski & Padak, 2005) also provided a Reading Fluency-Automaticity table that indicates the number of words that a student should be able to read correctly depending upon the grade level and time of the year. Any words that a student self-corrects are counted as words read correctly.

After the student reads aloud, then the teacher uses the Multidimensional Fluency Scale, provided, in order to rate each participant reader based on the four criteria found in
the scale. The criteria include: Expression & Volume, Phrasing & Intonation, Smoothness, and Pace. Each student may earn a score of 1 through 4 based on the rubric provided, with a score of 4 as the optimum score in each category. Therefore, a student could earn a total score as low as 4 or as high as 16. The authors (Rasinski & Padak, 2005) proposed that a student earning a score less than 3 on any dimension or a total score less than 9 may require reading intervention.

Next, the teacher begins rereading the passage aloud, from the beginning, while the student follows along silently. However, if the student has made very few errors while reading aloud, but did not finish reading the entire text, then the teacher may allow the student to silently read the remainder of the text. The teacher sits quietly while the student completes the reading task. Then, the teacher removes the text from the student’s view and instructs the student to retell the events from the story. The teacher rates the recall on the Comprehension rubric provided in the instrument. The teacher is permitted to probe the student for information if the student is reluctant to retell the events as they occurred in the story. After the student recalls as much information that she can remember, then the teacher rates the retelling on a scale of 1 to 6, with a score of 6 being the optimum score (Rasinski & Padak, 2005).

The teacher records each student’s scores on an Individual Record Sheet. This recording sheet is used throughout the school year for each of the four forms of the assessment. A Class Record Sheet, which enables a teacher to record all of the scores for all of the students assessed, is also provided for the entire school year (Rasinski & Padak, 2005).
According to T. V. Rasinski (personal communication, March 5, 2008), this instrument is a combination of several assessment techniques. The four fluency measures, which make up the Multidimensional Fluency Scale, are derived from the work of Stan Deno (1986) on Curriculum Based Assessment. The comprehension and fluency rubrics come from the report published in 1995 by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) on elementary students’ oral reading. The Word Recognition Accuracy scale is from the work of Marie Clay (1993) and Informal Reading Inventories (Fuchs, Fuchs, & Deno, 1982).

Rasinski and Padak (2005) stated that the four test passages for each grade level were checked for readability using all or several formulas: the Flesch Reading Ease Formula (1948); the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Formula (Kincaid, 1975); the Fry Readability Graph (1968); the Spache Readability Formula (1953); and the Dale-Chall Readability Formula (1948). The passages were also checked for equivalent levels of difficulty within each grade level.

N. D. Padak (personal communication, February, 12, 2008) explained that the procedures, not the passages, in this assessment were field tested in the Canton City Schools in Ohio and at Parkview Elementary School in Wooster, Ohio. She stated that they were pleased with the field tests, and the teachers at Parkview Elementary School found the assessments to be useful. Consequently, modifications to the instrument were unnecessary.

The authors (Rasinski & Padak, 2005) of this instrument provided rubrics, scales, and scoring tables as well as a narrative description that details how teachers should interpret the results of the instrument. The Word Recognition Accuracy score is obtained
by dividing the number of words that a student read correctly by the number of total
words that a student read in 1 minute. This percentage of words read correctly is used to
determine whether that particular text is at the student’s instructional level or independent
reading level. The authors assumed that a student who is developing at a typical rate will
read a grade-level text at an instructional level at the beginning of the school year and at
an independent level at the end of the school year. However, the authors advised that this
assumption does not apply to first grade students. These students are just beginning to
learn to decode, and consequently, teachers should not expect them to read grade-level
texts, at the beginning of the school year, at an instructional or independent level. First
grade students are expected to read grade-level texts, at the end of first grade, with 99%-100% accuracy. The authors included a table, which lists the target reading rates of
students in grades one through eight. Three different rates for each grade level are
provided for fall, winter, and spring. Students who are reading below the instructional
level in spring may benefit from further instruction in fluency development. If a student
reads quickly, but does not adhere to punctuation or appropriate expression, then she may
also require additional fluency instruction.

The Multidimensional Fluency Scale contains the following four dimensions:
Expression & Volume, Phrasing & Intonation, Smoothness, and Pace. Each dimension is
based on a scale of 1 through 4, and a score of 4 is the optimum score for each
dimension. Therefore, a student could earn a total score as low as 4 or as high as 16. The
authors proposed that a student earning a score less than 3 on any dimension or a total
score less than 9 may require reading intervention (Rasinski & Padak, 2005).
The Comprehension Rubric is based on a scale of 1 through 6, with 6 indicating that a student is able to make appropriate connections beyond the text. Although a score of 3 or below indicates inadequate comprehension of the text, this score is not unusual for students at the beginning of the school year. By spring, those students who are still scoring at the inadequate level may require further assessments and interventions (Rasinski & Padak, 2005).

Before the student is instructed to retell the events in the story, the teacher rereads the story aloud to the student. However, if the student has made very few errors while reading aloud, but did not finish reading the entire text, then the researcher may allow the student to silently read the remainder of the text. The researcher sits quietly while the student completes the reading task. After the student finishes reading the passage, he recalls the events.

According to T. V. Rasinski (personal communication, March 5, 2008), the 3 Minute Reading Assessments are based on Jerry Johns Basic Reading Inventories (2005), which are normative tests used to assess students’ reading behaviors. Classroom teachers have been using reading inventories to determine the instructional reading levels of their students. The instructional reading levels of students are in contrast to the frustration levels and independent levels, and are used to determine which texts are most likely to maximize student learning. A criterion of 95% accuracy for word identification has been widely used to establish the instructional reading level (Fuchs et al., 1982).

Finally, the information on fluency assessment, which is published in the Pacific Regional Educational Lab (PREL; Rasinski, 2004a), lends support to the components of the 3 Minute Reading Assessments. In this document, Rasinski explained that reading
fluency is a multidimensional construct comprised of components necessary for comprehension, and each component must be taught and assessed often in the elementary classroom. Rasinski cautioned that fluency assessments should reflect the nature of fluency instruction in order for the assessments to render valid and reliable data. Due to the correlation between fluency and reading proficiency, the fluency assessments should also relate to other reading proficiency assessments.

Assessment is a critical part of what occurs in the classroom. However, assessment is not a substitution for instruction. Ironically, the time spent administering assessment inevitably chips away at the time allocated for instruction. Rasinski (2004a) argued that assessments should be easily administered, scored, and interpreted, otherwise; teachers are less likely to use them or more likely to modify them beyond the intended use. The 3 Minute Reading Assessments were developed to reflect the components of a well-balanced fluency program. Furthermore, the amount of data collected, within a short period of time, is priceless for elementary teachers with 25 or more students in a classroom.

*Flynt-Cooter Informal Reading Inventory for the Classroom*

Flynt and Cooter (1998) created the Flynt-Cooter RIC for use with individual students, multiple times throughout the school year. The purpose of this instrument is to measure the fluency and comprehension development of students with reading levels from preprimer through grade 12. The assessment results enable researchers or classroom teachers to determine which reading materials are appropriate for their students. The authors of this instrument recommended that teachers assess students at least three times per year, at regular intervals. Ideally, one would assess students in the fall, once or twice
during the winter, and once again in the spring. The instrument includes four different passages, labeled A, B, C, & D, for the students to read. The passages in each level range in difficulty, with the fourth passage being the most challenging. Therefore, this particular passage is appropriate for assessments in the spring.

This instrument is also intended to help classroom teachers, intervention specialists, or researchers determine the successfulness of reading instruction. Flynt and Cooter created a table that lists Flynt-Cooter RIC reading levels with their corresponding Guided Reading (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996) levels. Also, the authors included corresponding Reading Recovery (Clay, 1985) levels for intervention specialists. Consequently, teachers and specialists are able to easily identify appropriate reading materials for their students.

The authors (Flynt & Cooter, 1998) designed the instrument to be administered to individual students. The teacher chooses a leveled passage provided, depending on the grade level, for the student to read aloud. Level PP is designed for a beginning first grade difficulty level, and Level 12 corresponds to twelfth-grade difficulty. Forms A and B are narrative passages, and Forms C and D are expository passages. The reading passages, adopted by the authors of the instrument, were created after numerous interviews with students with whom the authors have worked for numerous years. The teacher begins by selecting a level and form for the student to read. The authors recommended beginning with a level that is two years below the student’s current grade placement. First, the student begins by reading the sentences for initial passage selection. The student continues reading placement sentences until he has missed two or more words. At this
point, the highest level of placement sentences without any errors is the student’s beginning level of assessment.

Next, the student is asked to silently read the passage one time. The student understands that after the initial reading he will be asked to retell the story in his own words. The teacher removes the passage and allows the student to retell the story. The teacher follows along with the provided comprehension guide and indicates how well the student retells the passage by marking “ua” in the blank before each question that the student answers without assistance during the retelling. The teacher will ask the student any questions that are left unaddressed during the retelling. If the student answers these questions with assistance than the teacher indicates this by marking “a” in the appropriate blank to clarify that the student was aided (Flynt & Cooter, 1998).

After the retelling, the student is asked to reread the passage aloud up to the oral reading stop marker. The student is not timed while reading the passage. While the student reads, the teacher follows along with his personal copy, and the teacher completes a running record of the student’s errors and self-corrections. If the student asks for assistance when attempting to decode a word, then the teacher is instructed to provide the word for the student and indicate this on the running record sheet (Flynt & Cooter, 1998).

Immediately after the student reads aloud the text, the teacher analyzes the student’s fluency skills. If the student reads without automatic decoding and in a word-by-word fashion, then the student is not exhibiting fluent reading.

Finally, the teacher determines, based on the previous analyses, whether to ask the student to continue to read a more difficult form or level. If the passage that the student read is too hard, then the student’s placement in reading material should be one level
lower than the level that the student just read. However, the teacher may wish to
determine the student’s listening comprehension level by reading the next level out loud
to the student. After reading, the teacher asks the student to retell the passage. The
teacher continues to read passages until the student is able to respond to only 75% of the
questions. This final passage marks the student’s listening comprehension level.

The authors provided all of the leveled passages as well as the student assessment
protocols and recording sheets. Flynt and Cooter (1998) stipulated that this assessment
offers insight into a student’s reading skills, and teachers are wise to continue to observe
and assess each student over a two-week period in order to have a clear understanding
about each student’s reading strengths and weaknesses. Included with this instrument is a
narrative description that details how teachers should interpret the results of the
instrument.

In the Introduction of the RIC handbook the authors stated that their theory of
learning is derived from Rosenblatt’s (1978) transactional theory. This theory is
summarized by Reutzel and Cooter (2000) as a transaction that occurs when a reader
interacts with a text in a particular social situation. The reader, the text, and the social
context are transformed during the reading process. Consequently, this instrument was
designed to reflect this balanced theory of reading. Instead of focusing on the
measurement of discrete reading skills, this instrument attends to the social-situational
context of reading. The RIC offers teachers an insight into the student’s literacy
development, experiences, and the types of texts that the student may find difficult to
read. In summation, the RIC addresses the following domains:
• prereading capabilities
• phonemic awareness
• alphabetic principle
• phonics knowledge
• decoding strategies
• word structural analysis
• onset and rime
• fluency.

The authors of RIC chose to use leveled sentences rather than word lists commonly used in informal reading inventories to determine the appropriate passage to use for assessment. Flynt and Cooter (1998) espoused that reading words in sentences imitates normal reading more than reading words in isolation. The words used in each assessment sentence are those words typically found in the corresponding form. For instance, the words in Form B sentences are derived in part from the words found in Form B passages of that particular level.

All of the leveled passages correspond to typical texts in each corresponding grade level. The level of difficulty was determined by using the Fry Readability Graph (1968) and the Harris-Jacobson Readability Formula (1975). Forms A and B represent narrative passages, and the comprehension questions are literal, inferential, and evaluative in nature. The expository passages, Forms C and D, are followed by questions that address the expository grammar components established by Meyer and Freedle (1984).

In Part I the Silent Reading Comprehension protocol includes a statement that the teacher reads out loud to the student after he silently reads the passage. The authors (Flynt & Cooter, 1998) provided a chronological list of events for each passage, and the teacher may refer to this list in order to ask the student questions about the retelling. The
teacher must indicate, on the protocol sheet, if the student’s statements were either aided or unaided. The teacher is encouraged to record, in writing, the student’s comments.

In Parts II and III the student reads the passage out loud, and the teacher is able to follow along with a copy of the text. If the teacher so chooses, he has ample space to complete a running record of the student’s miscues. The teacher can later analyze the error types and total the number of error types and error analyses. These sections allow the teacher to focus on the student’s specific reading behaviors. The teacher also indicates, based on the quality of the retelling and the number of errors made during the oral reading, if the passage is easy, adequate, or too hard (Flynt & Cooter, 1998).

In Part IV the teacher assesses the student’s listening comprehension in the event that the teacher decides not to have the student continue to read another passage. The authors provided space for the teacher to write notes based on the student’s retelling. Finally, a Student Summary form allows the teacher to record a summative report about the passages used and the student’s overall performance. This sheet is also a summation of the student’s miscues. The authors (Flynt & Cooter, 1998) included a sample student scoring sheet to assistance teachers with the interpretation of the miscue grid and miscue analysis.

As previously mentioned, the instrument is divided into four forms: A, B, C, and D. The passages range from levels 1 through 9. However, a teacher may use form E for students who are reading at an upper high school level. Form E does not contain any sentences for initial passage selection.

In order to determine the viability of this instrument, it is necessary to look at the purpose of the research study. First, the lack of research on fluency development and
ELLS warrants this study. Second, an instrument that assesses fluency development in elementary ELLs does not currently exist. Consequently, the Flynt-Cooter RIC, which was developed to assess all of the components of fluency and comprehension addressed in the Fluency Development Lesson for elementary students, is a viable instrument to use with elementary ELLs.

This instrument is designed with a degree of flexibility that allows the researcher to choose the leveled passage and form that best suits the student’s reading abilities regardless of the student’s chronological age or current grade level. Given that ELLs’ chronological ages do not usually correspond with their grade level English reading abilities, this instrument is especially suitable for ELLs.

The Flynt-Cooter RIC has been widely implemented among educational professionals. The authors of this instrument have since then developed a sequel, the Comprehensive Reading Inventory (CRI; Cooter, Flynt, & Cooter, 2007), with identical testing levels and passages. The assessment forms are also identical with the exception of one additional component. In the CRI edition the researcher times the student for one minute and then calculates a reading rate. Oral reading fluency norms (Hasbrouck & Tindal, 2006) are included in order to determine whether students are reading at their appropriate rates according to their grade levels.

The Center for Research in Educational Policy (CREP; 2005) conducted psychometric research to determine the validity, reliability, and grade-level norms for the Flynt-Cooter RIC and CRI. The research sample consisted of 714 students in kindergarten through fifth-grade from Memphis City Schools. A total of 130 teachers
were trained to assess the sample population. Forms A and B of this instrument were used to assess the students.

First, test-retest reliability was calculated using Pearson product-moment correlations between students’ scores on the first administration with their scores on the second administration. A reliability estimate was provided for each grade level and for each subgroup with sufficient sample size. The use of ANOVA procedures established no evidence of any differences between the subgroups. The test-retest reliability coefficients were high for the fourth and fifth grade students; however, the coefficients were lower for kindergarten through third grade participants. CREP recommended reexamination of the instruments and the teacher training protocol.

Next, in order to establish alternate forms reliability, Pearson product-moment correlations were computed for forms A and B for every grade with sufficient sample size. The results from grades first through third suggest that the reliability coefficients for Form B were lower than for Form A and consequently, these forms may not be equivalent.

Norms were also established and provided evidence of natural progression for each grade level. Each grade level of students scored higher than the previous grade level of students scored, with one exception. The fifth grade students scored lower than the mean for the fourth grade students. CREP recommended analysis of the difficulty level of the fifth grade test.

In short, CREP concluded that the Flynt-Cooter RIC and CRI are reliable and valid reading tests, and these instruments compare auspiciously to other available instruments measuring the same constructs.
As researcher, I administered the ERAS to the three ELLs in the treatment group. The instrument was administered on the first day of the intervention reading program in June of 2008. A posttest was given in January of 2009 at the conclusion of the after-school program in December of 2008. The purpose of the intervention was to see if a modified FDL had a positive impact on the reading attitudes of these ELLs.

The purpose of this survey is to provide quantitative estimates of two important components of elementary students’ attitudes toward reading in English. The questions in this survey address recreational reading and academic reading. This instrument does not identify the causes of reading attitudes nor does it suggest instructional techniques that would likely alter reading attitudes. However, this instrument can be used to (a) gather information about specific students and their reading attitudes, (b) provide general information about the reading attitudes of a particular class of students, or (c) monitor the attitudinal impact of a particular instructional program or strategy.

Teachers may choose to administer this survey during the first month of the new school year. The data yielded from the survey can be used to create a snapshot of a particular classroom of students or to identify specific students with whom the teachers may wish to conduct interviews in order to further understand the origins of the students’ reading attitudes. The results of this survey will guide teachers in determining what sorts of additional information are necessary to further understand the student’s reading attitudes.

Additionally, teachers may conduct this survey before and after the implementation of a particular instructional program or strategy. Again, the results of this
survey may enable teachers to gain insight on the effectiveness or impact that instruction has on reading attitudes.

The focus of the questionnaire is divided into 2 constructs. The 20 items in this instrument are a reflection of typical reading activities in which students engage both in and out of school. The items listed under recreational reading imply that students are choosing to engage in the reading activity or choosing the reading material. On the contrary, the items listed under academic reading imply that students are required to engage in the reading activity or the teacher has chosen the specific reading material.

The first 10 items are geared toward recreational reading activities at school or at home and the last 10 items address academic reading activities at school or at home. The survey can be administered to an entire class of students or to individual students. The teacher or survey administrator presents each student with his own copy of the survey, reads the first item and waits for the student to respond before proceeding with the next item. Each question is followed by 4 pictures of Garfield, a fictional cat in the Jim Davis comic strip, Garfield (Karonen, 1999). Each picture represents a different emotional state, which ranges from very positive to very negative. After each question is read, the student circles the picture that best depicts his emotional state.

Each survey item is worth a total of 4 points. The excited Garfield response is worth 4 points, the grinning Garfield is worth 3 points, the frowning Garfield is worth 2 points, and the angry Garfield is worth 1 point. Each student receives 3 separate scores: a total for the first 10 items, a total for the second 10 items, and a full scale score. Again, the first 10 items address recreational reading activities and the second 10 items address academic reading activities. A full scale score of 80 is the highest possible score and 20 is
the lowest possible score. The authors of the survey provided a norm referencing table for the interpretation of the students’ survey scores.

The validity and reliability of the ERAS has been established by numerous researchers (Kazelskis et al., 2004; Lazarus & Callahan, 2000; McKenna & Kear, 1990; McKenna, Kear, & Ellsworth, 1995). In order to demonstrate reliability, McKenna and Kear (1990) calculated the Cronbach’s alpha, which was used to measure the internal consistency of attitude scales on each grade level, first through sixth, for the recreational and academic subscales and for the composite score.

McKenna and Kear (1990) also demonstrated construct validity for the recreational and academic reading subscales. For the recreational subscale, the 18,138 students representing the normal sample were grouped according to availability of a public library and then further grouped based on whether the students owned a current library card. The researchers also grouped those students who had books checked out from their school libraries and compared them to those students who did not have school library books. Last, the students were divided into groups based on the amount of time spent watching television per night.

In order to assess the validity of the academic subscale, the researchers examined the students’ scores on a reading ability test and compared these scores to the academic subscale scores. Finally, the researchers examined the relationship between the subscales and conducted factor analyses.

Lesson Plans and Poetry Folders

The researcher created 23 lesson plans, which were aligned to the state’s English Language Proficiency Standards for Limited English Proficient Students and the state’s
Content Standards for Language Arts. Furthermore, the researcher linked the components of the SIOP Model (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2004) to the numerous activities described in the lesson plans. Each lesson plan was designed after the previous lesson was implemented to allow the researcher to reflect upon the ELLs’ strengths, weaknesses, background knowledge, and overall reaction to the poem presented in the context of a modified FDL.

Each ELL who participated in this summer reading intervention program received a poetry folder in which they kept each poem, their corresponding written responses, and any graphic organizers. These folders remained on site during the duration of the summer program. After the completion of the final session on August 16, 2008, the students received their poems and work in their folders to take home to read with their parents. Morrow et al. (2006) stressed the urgent need for teachers and other school personnel to engage in relationships with parents that foster fluency development in children. The poetry folder provided an opportunity for the parents to observe their children in authentic reading situations.

Observations and Artifacts

In order to document the events that occurred during each of the reading intervention sessions, I, the researcher acting as a participant observer, collected field notes based on each observation with the three ELLs. I recorded all of the ELLs’ pertinent comments, responses, reactions, and behaviors that helped to provide answers to the two research questions that undergird this study. The field notes from each of the observations were transcribed and coded for emerging themes. As the sessions
progressed, I purposefully narrowed the scope of observations in an effort to address each research question with detailed field notes.

Collection and analysis of the students’ artifacts allowed me to view, firsthand, the students’ written activities in response to each of the poems presented during each of the sessions. I examined and analyzed any self-initiated notes that the ELLs chose to write in the margins beside each of their personal poetry handouts. I also collected and analyzed the corresponding written activities and illustrations, which the ELLs completed in response to each of the poems presented during the sessions. These written artifacts allowed me to glean data in order to answer the two research questions.

Focus Group and Interviews

A focus group is an analysis tool aimed at identifying trends in a particular culture. Focus groups provide a sense of security and often stimulate the participants to express their feelings more freely than they would normally express if interviewed individually (Gall et al., 2007). There are three phases involved in conducting a focus group. The first phase is conceptualization. The researcher identifies the purpose of the focus group and the questions, primary and secondary, which will elicit pertinent data necessary for answering the research question(s) (Stewart, Shamdasani, & Rook, 2007).

The second phase is the interview. The order of the questions and the arrangement of the room are pertinent factors to consider when preparing for the interview process. The questions should be purposely arranged. Synthesizing information is a more thought-provoking activity than an activity involving the basic recall of information. Consequently, the researcher should begin with easier questions and proceed with those that appear to be more challenging.
Stewart et al. (2007) discussed the nature of two interviewing styles, and they recommend a researcher who exhibits characteristics of both. Although the directive approach to interviewing tends to elicit greater coverage of topics or more specific dialogue about a particular question, the interaction among the group participants is limited. Nondirective approaches allow for the participants to express themselves more explicitly and to build momentum from the dialogue exchanged among the participants. A skilled researcher successfully allows the participants to engage in purposeful conversation that addresses the research questions (Stewart et al.).

The third phase of focus group research is the analysis and reporting of the data. Audio taping is necessary for gathering all verbal communication. The researcher should globally interpret the data from the focus group session. The purpose of this research tool is to identify trends, themes, and multiple points of view that emerge from the data. Consequently, the data is very group specific and not generalizable to other populations or even to individual participants. The data retrieved from focus groups are best used to create an interview protocol or an observation protocol (Stewart et al., 2007).

A focus group session was conducted with the three ELLs at the site of the community organization. Although Stewart et al. (2007) suggested a circular arrangement for focus groups, the researcher preferred a U-shaped arrangement with the three ELLs seated facing the researcher. The purpose of the focus group was to address, in part, the following research questions: How do teacher-student interactions and student-to-student interactions, during a modified FDL, impact the Karen children’s abilities to develop fluency and comprehension skills in English? How does systematic language instruction using a modified FDL impact the fluency and comprehension development of these three
ELLs? The focus group questions were semi-structured to allow the researcher freedom to redirect comments or questions as deemed necessary. The duration of the focus group was approximately 30 minutes and did not include the 5-minute intermission deemed necessary by me, as researcher.

The focus group was audio-taped, transcribed, and coded for themes. All data were recoded by a second coder to establish inter-rater reliability. The field notes from this focus group were also coded, and emergent themes were checked through inter-rater reliability. The purpose of the field notes was to record pertinent, nonverbal behaviors of the participants, which would add to the content analysis of the data.

I conducted interviews, individually, with all three students at the community site. A set protocol was followed to help maintain stability during the interviews. Again, I used a set of questions that guided the semi-structured interview process to allow for any necessary redirection. According to Gall et al. (2007), “The semistructured interview involves asking a series of questions and then probing more deeply with open-form questions to obtain additional information” (p. 246). The interviews were audio-taped, transcribed, and coded for themes. The purpose of the student interviews was to address, in part, the following research questions: How do teacher-student interactions and student-to-student interactions, during the implementation of a modified FDL, impact the Karen children’s abilities to develop fluency and comprehension skills in English? How does systematic language instruction using a modified FDL impact the fluency and comprehension development of these three ELLs? Each interview session lasted approximately 30 minutes.
I also met with two parents whose students participated in a modified FDL intervention. Two of the three participating students are siblings. I visited the homes and conducted the interviews with the assistance of a translator. Individual interviews were audio-taped, transcribed, and coded for themes. Again, a set interview protocol was designed and followed and the questions were semi-structured. Merriam (1998) noted that interviewing in qualitative studies is typically open-ended, which allows for the interviewee to describe or define circumstances in a unique manner. The purpose of the interviews was to address, in part, the following research question: How does systematic language instruction using a modified FDL impact the fluency and comprehension development of these three ELLs? Each of the two interviews was conducted for approximately 60 minutes.

Finally, I visited the schools attended by the three ELLs in order to conduct interviews with a total of three present classroom teachers. Also, the two ESL instructors, one from the elementary school and one from the middle school, participated in interviews for the purpose of better understanding the English reading development, both before and after the reading intervention program, of these three ELLs. The purpose of the interviews was to address, in part, the following research questions: How do teacher-student interactions and student-to-student interactions, during the implementation of the FDL, impact the Karen children’s abilities to develop fluency and comprehension skills in English? How does systematic language instruction using a modified FDL impact the fluency and comprehension development of these three ELLs? The questions were semi-structured, which allowed for flexibility during the interviews. A specific interview protocol was created and followed, and each of the five individual interviews was audio-
taped, transcribed, and coded for emerging themes. The data generated from the interviews were reanalyzed by a second coder.

Data Analysis

Tesch, as cited in Gall et al. (2007), organized qualitative approaches to data analysis into three categories: interpretational analysis, structural analysis, and reflective analysis. The researcher in this study used the interpretational analysis approach, which is defined by Gall et al. (2007) as, “the process of examining case study data closely in order to find constructs, themes, and patterns that can be used to describe and explain the phenomenon being studied” (p. 466). Gall et al. (2007) stated that, “A case study is done to shed light on a phenomenon, which is a process, event, person, or other item of interest to the researcher” (p. 447). Merriam (1988) suggested that the purpose of a case study is to understand the nature and meaning of an experience in context. Multiple realities exist within the phenomenon, and these realities are uncovered through personal interactions and individual perceptions.

In qualitative research, Merriam (1988) stated that the researcher “is the primary instrument for gathering and analyzing data” (p. 36). The researcher relies on inductive reasoning to make sense of the emerging data (Merriam, 1988, 1998). I transcribed all interviews and compiled field notes into a computer database. After reviewing the data, I made a list of emerging themes and used a color-coding system to identify and group common themes into categories. A category is defined by Gall et al. (2007) as a concept that alludes to a type of phenomenon that surfaces in the data collected. Rather than implementing a predefined set of categories, I derived these categories from the data collected in this study.
The categories in this data became redefined as codes and were color-coded accordingly. This process of color-coding was employed throughout the entire analysis process. I coded these categories within each of the three cases and then conducted analysis across the cases. This constant comparison approach to data analysis originated with Glaser and Strauss (1967) and has been explained by Gall et al. (2007) as the “continual process of comparing segments within and across categories” (p. 469). Schram (2006) stated that this constant comparison method adds to the thoroughness of the analysis process. The researcher closely examines all data for similarities and differences, which help to address the research questions and explain the phenomenon being studied.

Trustworthiness and Credibility

Gall et al. (2007) and Merriam (1988, 1998) defined triangulation of data as the process by which multiple methods of data collection are employed in order to provide validity of the case study findings. Focus groups, interviews, observations, and the collection and analysis of material culture are all methods of data collection that ensure triangulation (Merriam, 1988, 1998). In this study, I administered three quantitative assessments and collected field notes, interview transcripts, and material culture in order to add to the credibility of this study.

As a former elementary teacher who implemented a modified FDL on a regular basis, I controlled for researcher bias by maintaining a journal to record participant/observer comments and personal feelings. The journal entries were integrated into the analysis of this study. Gall et al. (2007) suggested that researchers undergo a subjectivity audit, which involves taking notes about incidences that evoke personal positive and negative emotions.
The number of sessions and total hours of observation add to the credibility of this study. Creswell (2003) and Merriam (1988, 1998) stated that researchers who spend a prolonged time in the field are often more cognizant of the phenomenon and consequently, are able to articulate details that add to the study’s credibility.

During the final stages of data analysis credibility was established with the aid of an inter-rater. I provided the inter-rater with 19 out of the 38 sessions of field notes and all 10 interview transcriptions. I supplied the inter-rater with five premeditated categories, that is, self-confidence, metacognition, leadership, fluency, and comprehension, to guide the review of the field notes and interview transcriptions. Finally, I audio taped each of the ELLs while they completed all of the pre- and posttest measurements. I supplied the inter-rater with all of the recordings. The inter-rater’s analysis corroborated my findings and conclusions.

Pseudonyms were used throughout all field notes, as well as throughout the narrative of this study, to protect the anonymity of the participants, parents, and teachers.

Delimitations

This qualitative study was conducted in an urban community in a Great Lakes state. The three participants in this study were selected based on purposive sampling and share identical native languages. At the start of the intervention program two of the three students had been living in this Great Lakes state for the equivalent of 1½ years, and one of the three students had been residing here for 1 year.

Limitations

Limitations exist within this study. A true experimental design is necessary in order to generalize this study to other populations. However, the participants in the case
study were not randomly chosen. The students in this case study were purposively selected based on their fluency and comprehension pretest scores and their parental permission to participate in the reading intervention program. The 3 students with intermediate English proficiency levels and parental permission became the sample.

Maturation and statistical regression may have also hindered this study. The students in the case study were likely to show some degree of progress throughout the course of the program regardless of the intervention. Also, statistical regression may have occurred because students who scored at either extreme on the pretests are more likely to have regressed towards the mean on the posttests.

Finally, my subjectivity may have contributed to the limitations of this study. During the interviews, my bias for the modified FDL may have influenced the responses of the participants. In order to control for this, interview protocols were created, and a translator assisted with the parent interviews.

Summary

This chapter provided evidence of the relevancy of multi-case studies as a viable research methodology for this study. This chapter described the program being evaluated, the methods of data collection, and the techniques and instruments used in the evaluations. Methods for ensuring the accuracy and credibility of this study were provided. The impact of a modified FDL on the three ELLs, implications for teachers, and suggestions for further research are discussed in the following chapters.
CHAPTER IV
ANALYSIS OF DATA: OVERVIEW AND CASE STUDIES

Introduction

This chapter presents results of an analysis of the data collected in this study, which sought to investigate the English reading development of three ELLs who attended a 9-week reading intervention program during the summer for 4½ hours a week. The ELLs continued to participate in the after-school program from September through December for 1 hour a week for a total of 25 weeks. The researcher continuously adapted a modified FDL in preparation for each successive session with the ELLs. Also, this chapter describes the impact that the students’ various social interactions, during the intervention program, had on their reading development. Five major areas of data analysis are reviewed: (a) the various social interactions that occurred during the reading intervention program; (b) the results of the three administered instruments, that is, the 3 Minute Reading Assessments: Word Recognition, Fluency and Comprehension, the Flynt-Cooter RIC, and the ERAS; (c) the researcher’s perceptions; (d) the perceptions of the ELLs, the parents, and the teachers; (e) the multiple case studies, which address the two research questions in this study.
Two research questions guided this study:

1. How do teacher-student interactions and student-to-student interactions, during the implementation of a modified FDL, impact the Karen children’s abilities to develop fluency and comprehension skills in English?

2. How does systematic language instruction using a modified FDL impact the fluency and comprehension development of these three ELLs?

Data were analyzed qualitatively, looking for patterns from which to generate themes and develop categories. Qualitative data collection methods included a focus group with the three ELLs, interviews with the ELLs, parents, and teachers, various material culture generated by the ELLs, and researcher field notes, journal entries, and lesson plans. All qualitative data collection methods were analyzed to provide answers to both research questions. The researcher also analyzed data through quantitative data collection methods, including pretests and posttests of the 3 Minute Reading Assessments: Word Recognition, Fluency and Comprehension, and the Flynt-Cooter RIC. The data gleaned from words correct per minute, word accuracy, fluency and comprehension via a retelling were examined. Furthermore, I administered the ERAS, which quantitatively measured the ELLs’ attitudes towards both academic and recreational reading. The scores from the pretests and posttests were compared to determine achievement patterns. All quantitative data collection methods were analyzed to address the second research question.

The analysis of the first research question, “how do teacher-student interactions and student-to-student interactions, during the implementation of a modified FDL, impact the Karen children’s abilities to develop fluency and comprehension skills in English?”
suggested that the various social interactions, observed and documented, improved fluency and comprehension development. Specifically, analysis of the qualitative data revealed three broad categories of instructional scenarios in which social interactions impacted the students: (a) One-on-One Instruction, (b) Large and Small Group Instruction, and (c) Peer-Assisted Instruction. Further analysis revealed distinct subcategories or themes within each of the three broad categories. These subcategories revealed a variety of outcomes based on the various social interactions occurring within the three social settings. These outcomes are positive indicators that the ELLs’ fluency and comprehension skills improved. First, the One-on-One Instruction category generated two themes: (a) positive self-image and (b) metacognitive awareness. Second, the Large and Small Group Instruction category generated three themes: (a) cooperation, (b) increased levels of oral participation, and (c) text connections. Finally, the Peer-Assisted Instruction category generated two themes: (a) positive constructive criticism, and (b) leadership skills.

Data analysis of the second research question, “How does systematic language instruction using a modified FDL impact the fluency and comprehension development of these three ELLs?” suggested that the three ELLs significantly improved their fluency and comprehension reading skills and consequently benefited from this reading intervention program. Pre and post data analyses from the 3 Minute Reading Assessments: Word Recognition, Fluency and Comprehension, the Flynt-Cooter RIC, and the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey were analyzed for the purpose of comparing and contrasting the scores. The data revealed that the three ELLs’ scores significantly improved, from the pretests to the posttests, in all three of the measurements: the 3
Minute Reading Assessments: Word Recognition, Fluency and Comprehension, the Flynt-Cooter RIC, and the ERAS.

Finally, this chapter includes analyses of my field notes, journal entries, and lesson plans, analyses of the transcriptions of the interviews, and in-depth case analyses of each of the three ELLs’ participation in the study. I conducted analysis across the three cases in order to add to the thoroughness of the research process.

Research Question 1

How do teacher-student interactions and student-to-student interactions, during the implementation of the FDL, impact the Karen children’s abilities to develop fluency and comprehension skills in English?

Social Interactions During One-on-One Instruction

During One-on-One Instruction, two categories emerged that best indicate that fluency and comprehension skills improved for each of the three ELLs.

Positive Self-Image

Data analysis showed that the three ELLs demonstrated positive self-images and even personally expressed their high self-esteem during one-on-one instruction with the researcher. During small group instruction with the three ELLs, the researcher often worked solely with one ELL while the other two ELLs engaged in peer-assisted activities. The interactions that occurred were not all a direct result of a specific instructional scenario, but rather a result of the mere fact that the researcher spent a few minutes meeting independently with the ELLs in order to get to know each one as a person and as a reader. On occasion, the researcher and the ELL would have a little chat about any particular topic of interest (6-14-08, 9-18-08). Mi Mi commented to the
researcher about a poem, “Miss Lynne, I love to practice *Apples* at home, and my mom likes to hear me read it.” During another session, Mi Mi shared with me, “I like when you say ‘I got it goin’ on!’ I tell my teacher that you say you gonna see me on TV. She think you are right. I want to be on TV.”

The ELLs engaged in lively conversations while moving from the large group session into their small groups (6-21-08, 8-02-08, 8-11-08). Naw Eh Ywa Paw approached me with a book in hand and asked, “Miss Lynne, can I read this book to you? I can read it really good!” During one-on-one instruction, Naw Eh Ywa Paw proceeded to read the book, *Never Wake a Sleeping Snake* (Nims, 1996), with accuracy, automaticity, and prosody (7-31-08). When she finished reading she looked at me with a smile on her face and replied, “I’m good reader.” I hugged Naw Eh Ywa Paw, and stated, “I’m so proud of you.” “Thank you Miss Lynne,” Naw Eh Ywa Paw replied. “Tell me what happened in the story,” I commented. Naw Eh Ywa Paw asked, “The whole story or just the end?”

During another one-on-one session, I learned that Mi Mi and Naw Eh Ywa Paw were taking their poems to school to share with their ESL instructor (9-11-08). This instructor made additional copies of the poem to share with the other ELLs at the school. Naw Eh Ywa Paw remarked, “My ESL teacher let me read my poems to her and she says I’m sooooo good! She let me read to the class.”

Naw Bee Ko also demonstrated a positive self-image. The following interview, which took place at Urban Vision in January 2009 between Naw Bee Ko and the researcher, is a transcription of an audiotape:
Researcher: Are you a good reader?
Naw Bee Ko: Yes, I think so.
Researcher: Why are you a good reader?
Naw Bee Ko: I don’t know.
Researcher: What does a good reader sound like?
Naw Bee Ko: Like fluent.
Researcher: What does a fluent reader do?
Naw Bee Ko: They say the right words and the exclamation point.
Researcher: Yes, you’re right! Tell me more. What else does a fluent reader do?
Naw Bee Ko: Uhm . . .
Researcher: How fast does a fluent reader read?
Naw Bee Ko: Not fast, but like when we talk.
Researcher: Good, not too fast and not too slow. What does a good reader do while she is reading?
Naw Bee Ko: They think about the book.
Researcher: Why is it a good idea to think about the book?
Naw Bee Ko: They can know what’s going on.
Researcher: Right! They need to understand what they are reading. What happens if they don’t understand?
Naw Bee Ko: They can’t answer questions. If the teacher asks them question and they say they don’t know that’s ’cause they didn’t know the book.
Researcher: Okay. So if a good reader reads with fluency and can answer questions about a story, then are you a good reader?
Naw Bee Ko: Sometimes I think I’m good reader. I love to read books to my brother, and I love to read my social studies book. I know a lot now. It’s easy—sometimes.
Researcher: When is it hard to read?
Naw Bee Ko: I don’t know . . . if the book is too hard and I can’t read all the words. It’s not fun.
Researcher: Should reading be fun to do?
Naw Bee Ko: Yes, when it’s fun I like to read and I’m good reader.
Researcher: I’m glad you think you’re a good reader. I think you are a good reader, too.
Naw Bee Ko: That’s what my ESL teacher say!

At the conclusion of the study my field notes suggested that Naw Bee Ko’s self-image improved significantly from June of 2008 to January of 2009.
**Metacognitive and Metalinguistic Awareness**

Metacognitive awareness or metacognition is the process of recognizing, monitoring, and evaluating our own thought processes (Peregoy & Boyle, 2008). Students who are able to manipulate and dissect language so as to understand the multiple meanings of individual words and words within a context are said to demonstrate metalinguistic awareness (NICHD, 2000; Yopp & Yopp, 2000). Code-switching and translation are examples of metalinguistic awareness (Bialystok, 2007). As Peregoy and Boyle (2008) and Pressley and Hilden (2002) suggested, metacognitive and metalinguistic strategies are not to be taken for granted, and teachers must model these reading tools so ELLs can fluently read and comprehend.

Data analysis suggested that the three ELLs demonstrated metacognition and metalinguistic awareness as the reading intervention program progressed. While meeting individually with Mi Mi, I reviewed the poem, *Crayons* by Helen H. Moore (1997). I asked if she understood the contextual meaning of the phrase, “I don’t care.” Mi Mi enthusiastically waved her hand across her body and blurted out, “It’s no big deal. Don’t worry. If I come to your house and it’s—you know—messy I say, ‘It’s no big deal!’” (6-9-08).

During one-on-one instruction Naw Eh Ywa Paw and I were creating a list of words that rhyme with the word sight from the poem, *Carrots* by Shel Silverstein (1996). After they recorded the rhyming words, Naw Eh Ywa Paw remarked, “Do all poems have words that sound the same way? I like poems like that ’cause I like to hear the words in my head.” Naw Eh Ywa Paw suddenly grabbed the dry erase marker and wrote hight on the mini dry erase board. “This word sounds like sight!” I showed Naw Eh Ywa Paw how
to spell the word correctly, and explained that words that sound alike in English are sometimes spelled differently (6-30-08).

Naw Bee Ko frequently made notations on her poetry papers, which suggested that she was not only focused but that she was applying her metalinguistic abilities (6-12-08, 6-14-08, 6-16-08). While chorally reading with Naw Bee Ko, I asked her to locate the rhyming words in the nursery rhyme, *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star* (6-12-08). Carefully following along with her copy, she whispered the nursery rhyme song and drew brackets on her paper to connect the words high and sky. In the margin, next to the words, she wrote rhyme.

While working individually with Naw Bee Ko, Mi Mi and Naw Eh Ywa Paw were engaged in peer-assisted activities. Naw Eh Ywa Paw approached me and asked, “Miss Lynne, we’re done making words with those letters. What do we do now?” I suggested that the two girls spend time rereading the poem or any other poems in their folders. Naw Eh Ywa Paw said, “Okay, I like to read them again ’cause it gets easier if you read it again and again.”

Analysis of field notes suggested that Mi Mi often made discoveries while comparing poetry to prose (6-28-08, 7-19-08, 8-14-08). One such incident occurred while Mi Mi and I chorally read *Sorry I Spilled It* by Shel Silverstein (1996). Mi Mi sat across from me at the table and appeared to be in deep thought while skimming over the lines of poetry on the paper. She finally asked, “Why are letters capital here each time there’s new line? There’s only one period down at the bottom.” Grabbing a book from my bag, I pointed out that prose and poetry are often written differently. Then I commented, “I think it’s fun to write poetry because you don’t always have to follow so many rules!”
In order to address proper prosody, I spent time emphasizing punctuation marks found in the poems (6-21-08, 6-28-08, 7-10-08). Naw Bee Ko had an epiphany while working with me (7-28-08). We were echo reading the poem, *Pancake*? by Shel Silverstein (1974), and Naw Bee Ko made an interesting comment about the title of the poem. “I know that this is a question mark, but I don’t know what I’m asking?” Naw Bee Ko realized that she knew what she didn’t know. She vocalized the appropriate voice inflection; however, she did not make the connection that the poet is asking if the reader wants a pancake.

I listened to Naw Eh Ywa Paw read the poem, *The Pilgrims Came* by Wynne, cited in Moore (1997). A conversation ensued about some of the Thanksgiving books that Naw Eh Ywa Paw’s classroom teacher had on display for the students to read (11-6-08). Given that Thanksgiving is a culturally specific holiday, the Karen are learning about the reasons for this American holiday and the various festivities that accompany it. Naw EhYwa Paw proceeded to explain that she tried to read a book in her classroom about Thanksgiving, but she had some difficulty. “If I can read this book, but I don’t remember what happened, do you think it’s too hard? Should I read a different book?” I praised Naw Eh Ywa Paw for doing what good readers do, and explained how to decide if a book is too challenging to read.

One final incident, above and beyond the others, demonstrated that the ELLs became reflective, cognizant readers (1-15-09). They grew to understand that reading is much more than decoding the words and entertaining an audience with an expressive voice. Reading is enjoyable for the reader when the text makes sense. In January of 2009 I individually conducted final fluency and comprehension assessments. Mi Mi sat down
in a small room with me and silently read a text, selected by me, from the Flynt-Cooter RIC assessment booklet. Mi Mi understood that after she finished reading she would be prompted to complete a retelling of the events of the story. Mi Mi finished reading the text, looked at me and immediately commented, “Miss Lynne, I could read all the words, but sometimes I couldn’t understand what I read.” I reassured Mi Mi that good readers recognize their reading strengths and weaknesses and that their ability to read fluently and comprehend often depends on the text.

Social Interactions During Large and Small Group Instruction

During Large and Small Group Instruction, three categories emerged that best indicate that fluency and comprehension skills improved for each of the three ELLS.

Cooperation

Analysis of field notes suggested that each of the three ELLs gradually and willingly collaborated with each other, as well as with other ELLs who participated in the intervention program at Urban Vision (6-21-0, 7-17-08, 9-18-08). The ELLs discovered that language learning is enjoyable when everyone is participating. Mi Mi responded that reading the poems “was more fun when we got to say them all together. We sounded good all together.” Naw Bee Ko commented, “I liked reading poems with everyone. If I didn’t know the word I just listened to someone. That helped me.” Naw Eh Ywa Paw recognized that she was able to help others read during large group instruction. “I’m you know little, but I could read the words and I think Blut La Neh was listening to me read Something Missing so she could read, too.” The two sisters, Mi Mi and Naw Eh Ywa Paw, admitted that they liked to practice reciting the poems together at home. Naw Eh Ywa Paw stated, “I like to say the poems with Mi Mi when we go to sleep.”
I also observed that the ELLs were likely to show a greater interest in cooperating with each other in the small group if the researcher provided an overview, of the various group tasks, at the beginning of the small group session. The ELLs knew exactly what activities would take place and what role they played in the small group setting. Naw Eh Ywa Paw commented, “Miss Lynne, I know you are going to ask us to read our favorite poem, but I’ll wait for Mi Mi to go because I go first last time.”

When the three ELLs discovered that they were able to read a particular poem with fluency, then they took the initiative to assist other ELLs who were experiencing difficulty. For example, as our small group disbanded and all the ELLs reunited in large group, Mi Mi walked with Pa Lah and offered some coaching tips. Mi Mi stated, “Pa Lah, Miss Lynne say to us to say s at the end of pants.” Pa Lah replied, “Why? He no have two on just one. We go ask her.”

My field notes indicated, on several occasions, that the three ELLs, willingly and without hesitation, assisted one another during the written response activities that took place in the small group setting (7-3-08, 8-2-08, 10-30-08). Although Naw Bee Ko was the oldest of the three, Mi Mi was more adept at writing in English. Consequently, Mi Mi often worked side-by-side to model English sentences for Naw Bee Ko (7-17-08, 8-2-08, 9-25-08, 10-23-08). After having read the poem, Warning by Shel Silverstein (1974), the students completed a writing activity to reinforce comprehension skills. The students had to read and answer the following question: What should you do if you see someone with his finger in his nose? Naw Bee Ko laughed and buried her head in her hands. She replied, “I would give him napkin.” Mi Mi laughed and suggested that we write tissue. Next, while I transcribed the word tissue on the mini dry erase board, Mi Mi blurted out,
“Go wash you hands!” The three ELLs and I burst out laughing and agreed that they would record that sentence on their papers. Mi Mi proceeded to help Naw Bee Ko write the command and also add the appropriate quotation marks (see Appendix E). All three of the ELLs read their written response and pointed their fingers while appropriately shouting, “Go wash you hands!”

*Increased Levels of Oral Participation*

Vardell et al. (2002) commented that students often enjoy creating their own versions of songs or poems. This was the case with the three ELLs participating in this reading program. During large group instruction, while setting the stage for the poem, *Mummy* by Shel Silverstein (1996), I broke into a song, “Head, shoulders, knees, and toes…,” which is specific to the American culture. Although the ELLs did not recognize the song, Naw Bee Ko, Mi Mi, and Naw Eh Ywa Paw immediately stood imitating me and collaborating to sing the lyrics in their native language. Within seconds, the other participating ELLs joined in and attempted to translate the song (7-3-08).

I recognized that ELLs may have difficulty comprehending riddles due to the lack of or distortion of background knowledge (Dewitz & Dewitz, 2003; Lipson, 1983). However, I was careful to use multiple visual aids and drama to provide the necessary scaffolding that enabled the ELLs to relate to the context of the riddles (7-21-08, 7-24-08). One particular knock-knock joke (Cole, 2002) referenced Abe Lincoln. Consequently, I displayed a small American flag, and a large poster of the former President while reading a short picture book about the life of Abe Lincoln. In order to address the reference to the blinking yellow light in the knock-knock joke, I displayed a picture of a traffic light and engaged the ELLs in a physical game that reinforced the
color codes. After several rounds of oral repetition the ELLs were capable of carrying out the knock-knock joke without my assistance. Naw Eh Ywa Paw begged, “Please Miss Lynne, one more time! Can I be the knock-knock?” When I arrived at Urban Vision for the next reading intervention session, Mi Mi rushed to greet me and immediately engaged in reciting the knock-knock joke from the previous session. Eager to join in and show off their literacy skills, other ELLs ran towards Mi Mi and me and chimed in with the joke. Naw Eh Ywa Paw and Mi Mi then proceeded to ask me to allow them to lead the knock-knock joke during the large group session (7-24-08).

This pattern of oral participation continued as the ELLs often recited, in unison, previous learned poems at the beginning of each large group session. Crayons by Helen H. Moore (1997) was the first poem introduced to the ELLs. In December of 2008, my field notes indicated that Mi Mi and Naw Bee Ko were still freely reciting the poem during large and small group sessions.

In preparation for the Thanksgiving holiday, I selected the poem, Give Thanks by Signes, cited in Scholastic Instructor Books (1983). At the end of the final large group session, Mi Mi and Naw Eh Ywa Paw enthusiastically approached me to ask permission to read the poem to Mr. Tim, one of the Urban Vision employees with whom they spent a great deal of time learning biblical stories and verses. Mi Mi commented, “Miss Lynne, can we read Give Thanks to Mr. Tim ’cause he tells us to thank God for all the good things we have?” I obliged and escorted Mr. Tim to the girls who read the poem with accuracy, automaticity, and prosody. Mr. Tim applauded and cheered them on as they read. Consequently, the two ELLs insisted on rereading it to Mr. Tim (11-20-08).
Data analysis of the earliest field notes indicated that Naw Bee Ko was rather reluctant to enthusiastically participate in the concluding large group session (6-7-08, 6-9-08, 6-12-08). Despite the multiple opportunities to reread the poem during the small group session, Naw Bee Ko preferred to “mouth” the words while her friends vocalized. I recognized this behavior and chose to provide multiple opportunities through a variety of different activities to encourage Naw Bee Ko to orally participate in the large group session. One of the volunteers at Urban Vision informed me that the Karen love to sing songs; therefore, I chose to teach the ELLs to read and sing songs. The first song introduced was a nursery rhyme, *Row Row Row Your Boat*. After having repeatedly read the lyrics, I introduced a microphone and encouraged the ELLs to sing in unison. In an attempt to engage Naw Bee Ko, I purposefully chose her, along with other ELLs, to hold the microphone and lead the group in song (6-26-08). Naw Bee Ko responded positively; likewise, I continued to allow the ELLs to volunteer to read and/or sing the poems during the large group sessions.

Cognizant that students have limited attention spans and are likely to become disinterested in completing the same mundane tasks or activities, I chose to boost oral participation by incorporating drama, props, and games. At the beginning of each reading intervention session the ELLs and I reread poems that had been previously introduced. In lieu of asking volunteers to merely read for the group, I asked for “mystery readers.” These students read the poem while others listened with blind-folds over their eyes and tried to guess the readers. I also tape recorded readers so they could listen to their progress. During one particular session, Mi Mi commented, “Miss Lynne, we need to do that again. I didn’t hear exclamation point.” After having heard the recording of her solo
attempt to read the poem, *Sorry I Spilled It* by Shel Silverstein (1996), Naw Bee Ko smiled and commented, “Was that me? Can I try again?” (7-17-08).

Although the students appeared to enjoy reading each new poem and learning the new vocabulary words, data analysis indicates that a few poems quickly became favorites. The poems became favorites because the students were able to read with recognizable fluency. One such poem, *Apples* by Helen H. Moore (1997), was Mi Mi’s favorite poem to recite. In order to encourage her, as well as others, to continue to read it, I asked the ELLs to become actors on stage and *perform* the poems. Using a variety of voices and props, the students practiced reading some of their favorites. As the sessions progressed, the ELLs begged to engage in this dramatic activity. Naw Eh Ywa Paw asked permission to read the poem, *Something Missing* (Silverstein, 1981), in an angry voice. Mi Mi followed by offering to read it with a sleepy voice (6-26-08).

Worthy and Broaddus (2001-2002) suggested that the goal of reading instruction is to enable students to read independently for the sake of learning and enjoyment. I recognized that the ELLs were more likely to improve their reading skills and look forward to the reading intervention program if they were enjoying themselves. Thus, the ELLs and I often played games during the small and large group sessions (7-19-08, 8-11-08, 8-16-08). One game in particular, which the students played in large group, not only increased oral participation, but encouraged the ELLs to use their poetry folders as a reading resource. I would randomly recite a line of poetry from a poem previously introduced and ask the ELLs to name that poem. After a student correctly named the poem, then I flipped to that poem on the display chart, handed the microphone over to the student and allowed that student to lead everyone in the reading of the poem. This
activity quickly became competitive as the students raced to flip through their poetry folders to locate the correct poem (7-21-08, 8-14-08, 10-2-08, 10-9-08). In an attempt to keep them engaged, I modified the activity by asking the ELLs to finish the line of poetry that I began. Therefore, they had to recognize the poem, skim through the lines to locate the correct response, and accurately read the line. Those ELLs who answered correctly were allowed to “play teacher” by selecting the poem, choosing a line to read, and calling on volunteers. During one particular round Mi Mi was the “teacher,” and she chose to read a line from the poem *On Christopher Columbus’ Ship* (Liatos, 1999). She surprised everyone by using a dramatic voice while she recited the line. The other ELLs laughed and followed her lead by reading the remainder of the poem with sad voices (10-16-08).

Each ELL had a personal vocabulary box in which to store index cards filled with pertinent words from each of the poems. The ELLs recorded a definition for each word and collaborated to write a sentence using the word in an appropriate context. Occasionally, if relevant, the ELLs included a picture for the word. With the purpose of review, I created a game that provided additional opportunities for the ELLs to orally participate in the small group session. Each ELL took a turn randomly drawing a card from her vocabulary box and reading the definition of the word written on the card. The other ELLs attempted to respond with the correct vocabulary word and then use that word in a complete sentence. Naw Eh Ywa Paw drew a card and read, “A necklace or bracelet.” Mi Mi immediately shouted out the correct word and used the word in a sentence. She smiled, pointed to her sister’s wrist and said, “I like the charm Miss Lynne gave to Naw Eh Ywa Paw” (8-11-08).
Text Connections

The data analysis suggested that I used text connections purposefully to provide an appropriate context from which the ELLs could relate to each of the poems. I often selected poetry that corresponded to a particular season, holiday, or school theme. By late fall of 2008 I learned that Mi Mi and Naw Eh Ywa Paw took their poetry folders to school and shared the poems with their elementary ESL instructor. This instructor made additional copies for the other ELLs, and she built time into her curriculum to provide repeated reading opportunities. Also, as the intervention program progressed, I chose poetry that was pertinent to the lives of the ELLs. Based on various conversations documented in the field notes (7-19-08, 7-28-08, 8-2-08, 8-11-08, 9-4-08), the more the ELLs and I socially interacted, the more adept I became at using text connections to provide scaffolding for the ELLs.

I assisted the ELLs in making a text-to-world connection when introducing the poem, Rainy Day by Gina Bell-Zano, cited in Moore (1997). The ELLs were unable to play outside due to the constant rain and thunderstorms in early June of 2008. Therefore, I opened a large umbrella in front of the ELLs who were seated on the floor in large group session waiting to hear the new poem of the day. Twirling the umbrella, I continued chanting, as the ELLs chimed in, “Rain, rain, go away! Come again another day.” Without further introduction, I opened up the flip chart to display the poem (6-14-08).

Many of the poetry themes focused on food because I discovered via numerous conversations with the students that the Karen children love to eat fruits and vegetables, and their families enjoy growing their own gardens. Therefore, the ELLs were able to
make text-to-self connections. In July of 2008, I chose the poem, *Pancake?* by Shel Silverstein (1974), and quickly discovered that the ELLs were not accustomed to eating pancakes with butter and syrup. As a culminating activity in large group, I, with the help of Urban Vision volunteers, made pancakes for each of the ELLs to eat. This activity enabled the ELLs to make a text-to-self connection that they were previously unable to make. However, Naw Boo Ke, Mi Mi, and Naw Eh Ywa Paw were not terribly fond of the sweet, syrupy pancakes. After some thought, I realized that perhaps I should have offered blueberry pancakes instead, given the ELLs’ preference towards fruit (6-9-08, 6-30-08, 7-10-08).

When I arrived at Urban Vision on July 17, 2008, I discovered that most of the boys were absent because they had planned a fishing trip with the director of Urban Vision. Naw Eh Ywa Paw commented, “Miss Lynne, do you have fishing poem we can read when the boys come back?” Ironically, Shel Silverstein (1996) had written *Show Fish*, which I presented to all of the ELLs on July 19, 2009. The boys were eager to share their fishing stories, and their conversations at the beginning of the large group session provided a valid text-to-self connection to the new poem (7-19-08).

Urban Vision not only acted as a safe haven for the Karen residing in the community, but it also provided the ELLs with multiple opportunities to engage in life experiences outside of the community that they were unlikely to experience by themselves. Many of the Karen ELLs, like Naw Bee Ko, Mi Mi, and Naw Eh Ywa Paw, left the refugee camp in Thailand and landed in the southern United States before being transplanted to this urban community in a Great Lake state. Aside from this trip, the ELLs were not accustomed to traveling. Consequently, I chose poems that helped the
ELLs to think more globally. For example, based on field notes, two specific poems, *Magic Carpet* and *The Planet of Mars*, both by Shel Silverstein (1981, 1974), appeared to have a significant impact on the ELLs (6-26-08, 7-31-08). I introduced *Magic Carpet* in the large group session by displaying a large world map. Mi Mi volunteered to locate Burma and Thailand while Naw Bee Ko pointed to the United States. Next, I asked the ELLs to brainstorm places that they would like to visit such as a beach or even Disney World. With arms spread wide, I encouraged the ELLs to pretend to fly to that particular destination that they were dreaming of in their minds. “Now imagine,” I stated, “that I gave you a magic carpet and it would fly you anywhere you wished to go. Would you want to take a ride? Where would you want to go?” Mi Mi raised her hand, “I want to go to Thailand.” I asked, “What would you like to do there?” Without hesitation, Mi Mi replied, “I want to help Karen get away from Burma.” This conversation suggests that Mi Mi made a text-to-self connection, as well as a text-to-world connection.

The three ELLs were discussing the poem, *The Planet of Mars* (Silverstein, 1974), in the small group setting (7-31-08). Shel Silverstein compared people on Mars to people on Earth. I asked the ELLs to make a text-to-self and text-to-world connection by comparing the Karen to Americans. Naw Bee Ko was the first to respond. “The color of skin—it’s not same white. Some friends have skin it’s more brown than me. I don’t know . . . I think we don’t talk the same at home. I talk like them at school—sometimes.” Mi Mi offered that she likes to watch *Hannah Montana* like her friends at school, and Naw Eh Ywa Paw smiled and admitted, “I like to sing like *American Idol* people.” I concluded the discussion by asking if the Karen are more alike Americans or more different than
Americans. The three ELLs unanimously agreed that the two were more alike than more different.

I encouraged the ELLs to make text-to-text connections by introducing books that corresponded to the themes, topics, or messages embedded in the poems. In order to provide comprehensible input for a knock-knock joke (see Appendix F), I read one of Aesop’s fables, *The Tortoise and the Hare* (Handford, 1954), which addressed the theme of patience and perseverance. Naw Eh Ywa Paw immediately recognized the fable because her classroom teacher read the story to her class. I asked if Mi Mi understood the message, and she replied, “If you keep going you can get there.” I asked, “Where are you going?” Mi Mi thought for a moment before responding, “It don’t matter—no place —I think if you keep trying you will get it.”

In mid-August of 2008, my youngest son fell from a tree and broke his arm. I shared the news with the ELLs and provided comprehensible input for the poem, *Band – Aids* by Shel Silverstein (1974). Covered in band-aids, I reminded the students, “Do you remember what happened to Johnathan?” Naw Bee Ko replied, “He broke his arm.” Using drama to mimic a fall, I proceeded to ask, “Have you ever fallen, scraped your knee or elbow? Good thing we have band-aids!” The ELLs laughed, raised their hands to share personal stories, and they made text-to-self connections to the poem (8-14-08).

Keenly aware that the ELLs did not have proper personal hygiene in the refugee camps, I selected poems that led to personal hygiene discussions. For example, the poem, *Crowded Tub* (Silverstein, 1981) enabled the students to make text-to-self and text-to-world connections. While Naw Kee Bo, Mi Mi, and Naw Eh Ywe Paw met with me in the small group setting to continue working with the components of the FDL, I
discovered that the three ELLs had never taken a bubble bath (8-11-08). In fact, they saw a tub for the first time after they arrived in the United States. I brought scented bubble bath for the each of the three ELLs to take home to their families. To my surprise, the three ELLs did not like the bubble bath nor did their family members. “We don’t like the smell,” admitted Naw Bee Ko while holding her nose and making a funny face.

One particular Saturday morning during the summer session, I chose to introduce the poem, The Mummy by Shel Silverstein (1996). I assumed that the ELLs were familiar with ghosts, but even though the word mummy is synonymous, I was not certain that the ELLs would recognize the word. Armed with pictures and a roll of toilet paper, I prepared to act ghost-like in order to introduce the word. I asked for a volunteer to wrap me up in toilet paper, and Eh Cho, Naw Bee Ko’s brother, eagerly volunteered. Wrapped from head-to-toe in toilet paper, I proceeded to howl like a ghost and meander around the room with arms straight out. While the ELLs in the large group setting started to laugh Mi Mi jumped up out of her seat and shouted, “Scooby Doo!” She made a text-to-world connection that I had not even considered (7-3-08). That following Tuesday afternoon I brought a Scooby Doo book from home to share with the ELLs. A mummy was featured on the cover of this book.

Social Interactions During Peer-Assisted Activities

During Peer-Assisted Activities, two categories emerged that best indicate that fluency and comprehension skills improved for each of the three ELLS.

Positive Constructive Criticism

Analysis of data showed that all three of the ELLs demonstrated, during peer-assisted activities, the awareness of the three components of fluency: automaticity,
accuracy, and prosody. Analysis also revealed that the ELLs were able to provide appropriate constructive criticism to one another during numerous peer-assisted activities.

In October of 2008 Naw Bee Ko offered constructive criticism, during a peer-assisted activity, which demonstrated her awareness of prosody (10-30-08). I presented the new poem, *Little Jack Pumpkin Face* (anonymous), cited by Moore (1997), first in the large group setting. The poem was not particularly difficult, due in part to the short length and rhyming pattern. The ELLs appeared to like the poem and demonstrated, in large group, the ability to read with accuracy. At the conclusion of the small group instruction, I asked Naw Bee Ko to buddy read with Naw Eh Ywa Paw, while I read with Mi Mi. I overheard Naw Bee Ko instruct Naw Eh Ywa Paw, “That’s good. You know the words. Now be happy when you read it so it sound better—you know like when Miss Lynne read it.”

Careful to select poems to which the ELLs could relate, I presented the final poem, *The Twenty-Fourth of December* (anonymous), cited by Moore (1997), on December 18, 2008. This particular poem required the ELLs to pay close attention to their pace, especially while they read the final line. I documented excerpts from the conversation between Mi Mi and Naw Eh Ywa Paw, which took place during a peer-assisted reading activity (12-18-08). Naw Eh Ywa Paw wanted to be the “coach” so she asked Mi Mi to read the poem first. Apparently dissatisfied with Mi Mi’s initial attempt, Naw Eh Ywa Paw gently suggested to Mi Mi that she should really “stretch” the word *slowly*, and Naw Eh Ywa Paw demonstrated by pretending to stretch out a rubber band. Together the girls laughed and both repeated the word *slowly* as they stretched out the imaginary rubber band.
Review and analysis of my lesson plans and field notes suggested that I explicitly discussed the importance of reading comprehension. Furthermore, the ELLs discussed comprehension with one another while buddy reading. The following interview between Mi Mi and me is a transcription of an audiotape:

Researcher: How did you feel when I asked you to sit on the floor and practice reading the poems with your sister, Naw Eh Ywa Paw?
Mi Mi: I like it, but sometimes it was hard.
Researcher: Why was it hard?
Mi Mi: Well, you know sometimes she doesn’t want to listen to me and I get mad.
Researcher: I understand. My two boys, Ethan and Johnathan, don’t always get along. Johnathan is younger than Ethan, and Johnathan likes to bug Ethan. Ethan gets mad when Johnathan doesn’t listen to him.
Mi Mi: My mom tell her to listen to me, but she doesn’t like to.
Researcher: So, what did you do when you were reading with her on the floor so that she would listen to you?
Mi Mi: I tried not to yell and I told her that she was doing good, but she should read it again ’cause you know, sometimes she will skip a word. If she skip words it will be hard to understand what she reads. I don’t think she can remember what she reads when she skip words.
Researcher: Good job, Mi Mi. That’s good thinking.

Leadership Skills

The data analysis revealed that the three ELLs developed and strengthened their leadership skills through the experiences with peer-assisted activities. The purpose of peer-assisted activities was to provide the ELLs an opportunity to practice their fluency skills and grow increasingly comfortable speaking, reading, and performing in front of peers and adults.

One particular afternoon in November of 2008, at the conclusion of the reading intervention session, the coordinator of Urban Vision entered the room to address the group of ELLs. He intended to inform them about an upcoming event in which the ELLs
needed parental permission to participate. However, he quickly became frustrated because he sensed from the ELLs’ blank stares that he was not clearly communicating his message. He quickly turned to Mi Mi and said, “Mi Mi, help me out. Translate for me.” Without any hesitation Mi Mi proceeded to translate his message, and the director asked Mi Mi to make certain that everyone understood. Judging from the looks of the ELLs’ faces and the affirmative nods, Mi Mi was successful (11-6-08).

Periodically, new Karen ELLs arrived to participate in after-school activities at Urban Vision. Unable to comprehend and communicate successfully in English, the Urban Vision employees often relied on Naw Bee Ko, Mi Mi, and Naw Eh Ywa Paw to assist with these new ELLs. In December of 2008, the ELLs arrived at Urban Vision after school to participate in the reading intervention program, complete their homework, and have dinner. The ELLs finished their reading session and moved into the next room to receive help completing their homework. I packed up my materials and walked out of the room to leave for the day. Instead of leaving immediately, I decided to stop by the other room and observe the ELLs while they completed their homework. Upon entering, I overheard a conversation between an ELL and an adult volunteer. The volunteer was attempting to explain the reading homework directions so that the ELL could complete the activity sheet. Suddenly, the ELL broke into tears and put her head down on the table. Naw Eh Ywa Paw was seated across the table from the tearful ELL. Eager to help, Naw Eh Ywa Paw put her arm around the student and appeared to console her in their native language. Naw Eh Ywa Paw quickly looked at the homework sheet, read the directions out loud in English, and then translated them for the ELL. Naw Eh Ywa Paw watched
over the dry-eyed ELL while she completed the activity. The adult volunteer patted Naw Eh Ywa Paw on the back and thanked her for assisting (12-4-08).

The field notes suggested that in June of 2008, Naw Bee Ko doubted her English speaking and reading abilities (6-9-08). However, by December of 2008, I observed that Naw Bee Ko was much more confident and willing to show off her English skills (12-11-08). Due to unforeseen, hazardous weather, I arrived a few minutes late to Urban Vision one December afternoon. The ELLs, accompanied by another Urban Vision volunteer, were already in the room waiting for me to arrive. Upon my arrival, I witnessed Naw Bee Ko, with pointer stick in hand, standing in front of the hanging chart and leading the other ELLs in a choral reading of the poem, White Snow (Moore, 1997) that they learned the previous week. Delightfully surprised, I took a seat and encouraged Naw Bee Ko to continue leading the group. After instructing the ELLs to read the poem without her help, Naw Bee Ko responded, “Good, but you have to get loud here, ‘Until it turns to SLUSH!’ Try one more time.”

Interview data indicated that Naw Eh Ywa Paw viewed herself as a leader in multiple settings. The following conversation, which took place at Urban Vision between Naw Eh Ywa Paw and me, is a transcription of an audiotape:

Researcher: What did you like about the reading intervention program?
Naw Eh Ywa Paw: I like reading the poems.
Researcher: Did you like to read the poems by yourself or with Mi Mi and Naw Bee Ko?
Naw Eh Ywa Paw: Oh, I liked when I read with them. You know when we got to sit on the floor and uhm . . . play teacher.
Researcher: Why did you like that?
Naw Eh Ywa Paw: I got to help them read better and I got to show them that I was good.
Researcher: Do you like to help other students read?
Naw Eh Ywa Paw: Yes. My teacher lets me help Eh Ta Moo when we buddy read. She says that I can help her if she gets stuck on the words.

Researcher: What do you tell her to do when she gets stuck?
Naw Eh Ywa Paw: Sometimes I say to skip the word and say ‘Blank.’ And sometimes I say to look at the letters and make a guess.

Researcher: How does she know if her guess is correct?
Naw Eh Ywa Paw: I say to read the rest of the sentence to see—you know if it is right.

Summary

Data analysis for the research question, “How do teacher-student interactions and student-to-student interactions, during the implementation of a modified FDL, impact the Karen children’s abilities to develop fluency and comprehension skills in English?” suggested that the numerous social interactions that occurred during one-on-one instruction, large and small group instruction, and peer-assisted instruction helped facilitate the fluency and comprehension development of the three Karen ELLs who participated in the reading intervention program at Urban Vision.

The social interactions, which occurred during one-on-one instruction with me, revealed that the ELLs maintained positive self-images, and the ELLs viewed themselves as capable readers equipped with metacognitive and metalinguistic awareness about their reading and language skills. Further evidence suggested that social interactions that occurred during large and small group sessions fostered cooperation, increased levels of oral participation, and text connections. The ELLs experienced reading as a sociopsycholinguistic process as they socially interacted during the intervention program. The ELLs and the instructor discussed the meanings of the poems, wrote about the poets’ messages, performed the poems for authentic purposes, and they shared and connected the poems they read to other texts, as well as to personal and global experiences.
Finally, data analysis indicated that the social interactions that occurred during peer-assisted reading activities enabled the students to internalize the components of fluency in order to provide positive constructive criticism when working with other students. They also learned to develop their leadership skills in order to assist other ELLs, as well as the Urban Vision director and employees. All of these observed and documented observations suggested that the three ELLs significantly benefited from the various social scenarios that occurred during the implementation of a modified FDL.

Research Question 2

How does systematic language instruction using a modified FDL impact the fluency and comprehension development of these three ELLs?

The Assessments

Data from the 3 Minute Reading Assessments: Word Recognition, Fluency and Comprehension, the Flynt-Cooter RIC, and the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey were collected from the three ELLs in June of 2008, August of 2008, and January of 2009. I administered both the 3 Minute Reading Assessments: Word Recognition, Fluency and Comprehension and the Flynt-Cooter RIC for different purposes.

The short texts that are included in the 3 Minute Reading Assessments allowed me to quickly glean information about the ELLs as readers. The authors (Rasinski & Padak, 2005) of the instrument suggested that teachers or researchers use the grade level texts that correspond to the students’ current grade levels. However, for the purposes of this study, I selected the texts that were appropriate for the ELLs to read, regardless of their current grades in school. Furthermore, I chose the 3 Minute Assessments because of the valuable information generated about the readers’ abilities to read fluently. The
Multidimensional Fluency Scale addressed four components of fluency, that is, Expression & Volume, Phrasing & Intonation, Smoothness, and Pace. In contrast, the Flynt-Cooter RIC did not provide as much detailed information about the readers’ fluency abilities. The 3 Minute Assessments are timed-reads, which allowed for the analysis of students’ pace. In contrast, the Flynt-Cooter RIC is not timed and it allows the readers to completely read the entire text. The researcher chose to administer the Flynt-Cooter RIC because the readers silently read the text before reading it out loud for the assessor. In this way, the readers have an opportunity to “practice” before “performing.” Additionally, the assessor is permitted to prompt the readers during the retelling, providing the readers with ample opportunities to demonstrate all that they can recall from the text. The Flynt-Cooter RIC, unlike the 3 Minute Assessments, provided additional information about the readers’ listening comprehension levels. Together, both instruments afforded thorough descriptions of the ELLs’ reading abilities. Descriptions of the data analyzed for each assessment are included in the case studies.

*The Researcher*

An investigation of the researcher’s field notes, journal entries, and lesson plans suggested four broad themes that characterized me, as researcher, and my practices while working with the ELLs: (a) Incorporated Best Practices, (b) Attended to Different Learning Modalities, (c) Guided by Reflection, and (d) Invested in the “Whole” Student. This data addressed both research questions.

*Incorporated Best Practices*

The expression, “Time is of the essence,” could not have been more appropriate for the ELLs. I recognized that in order to address the urgent literacy needs of these ELLs
at Urban Vision, I needed to make a little magic. Banking on my knowledge that the FDL was effective, fun, and research-based, I carefully examined the lesson components and compared them to the instructional recommendations identified in the SIOP Model for ELLs. With a wave of my wand, I juxtaposed the two models of instruction so that I could offer the ELLs the best possible literacy activities. I created lesson plans for each reading intervention session, and carefully included the components of the SIOP Model, as they related to the specific activities in my lesson plans. Furthermore, I included the English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards, that is, listening, speaking, reading, and writing, that I would address with the students during each lesson (see Appendix G).

**Attended to Different Learning Modalities**

All learners, regardless of their native languages, learn differently. I attended to these different learning modalities by incorporating visual aids, auditory aids, and TPR (Asher, 1969) into each reading session. In this way, I provided that comprehensible input that each ELL needed in order to comprehend the poems.

Based on careful reflections, I concluded that Mi Mi and Naw Eh Ywa Paw appeared to be visual and/or kinesthetic learners. I chose to introduce the poem, *Sharing* by Shel Silverstein (1996), because I could easily use visual aids and TPR to model the poet’s message. The ELLs had expressed on multiple occasions that they loved to eat fruit. Therefore, I purchased clementines to share with them on July 10, 2008. After modeling the concept of sharing with various props mentioned in the poem, that is, *toys*, *money*, *toast*, *honey*, and *milk and cookies*, the students discussed the challenges of sharing. I displayed the clementines and announced, “I’ll share mine with you!”
Students who are auditory learners often benefit from using PCV pipes while they read. The pipes help to mute out other sounds and to magnify the reader’s voice, which allows the reader to hear herself while she reads. Naw Bee Ko appeared to be an auditory learner so I encouraged Naw Bee Ko to use the PCV pipes when working in the small group setting. On June 28, 2008, I introduced a humorous poem, *Sorry I Spilled It* by Shel Silverstein (1996). Although I assumed that the ELLs would enjoy this particular poem, I was also aware that the poem’s rhythm was tricky due to the number of contractions in the verses. I was not too surprised to hear Naw Bee Ko stumble over two particular verses. Consequently, I demonstrated how to use the PCV pipe to assist with fluency, and Naw Bee Ko demonstrated significant progress (6-28-08).

Furthermore, on July 14, 2008, the students were working with me in the small group setting when I noticed that Naw Bee Ko had difficulty accurately reading the words, that is, *Suzy, Samantha, skinned, sweatshirt*, and *Inez*, in the poem, *Recess* by Timothy Tocher, cited in Silverstein (1996). Although Naw Bee Ko practiced echo reading and choral reading with the instructor, Naw Bee Ko still had difficulty with her fluency skills. To my surprise, Naw Bee Ko asked if she could read the poem with the PCV pipe. Naw Bee Ko sat with her poem in hand and the pipe to her ear and mouth, and she practiced reading over and over again. After multiple attempts and a great deal of patience, Naw Bee Ko proudly read the poem fluently for me (7-14-08).

When the ELLs left school and arrived at Urban Vision in the afternoon they were typically full of energy and somewhat rambunctious. Therefore, I often incorporated TPR into the lessons, which allowed the ELLs to move about and release some energy. TPR was a perfect instructional strategy for the poem, *Snowflakes* by Jean Warren (n.d.).
students danced, touched the ground, waved their hands in the air, and swirled themselves around in circles while fluently reciting the verses. Mi Mi and Naw Eh Ywa Paw enjoyed reciting the poem, and they often encouraged other ELLs to stand up and join in with them as they practiced it (12-11-08).

Guided by Reflection

Reflective about the interactions that took place, I planned consecutive lessons according to the learners’ needs. I spent a significant amount of time selecting the appropriate poems to use with the ELLs. I considered the poem’s length, grammatical and syntactical structures, themes, and humor. Recognizing that the ELLs were “doing school” during their summer vacation and also after their regular school day ended, I felt it was important to include humorous poetry because the ELLs were more likely to be engaged and willing to participate if the reading intervention sessions were fun.

Although I selected poems to coincide with seasons, holidays, and so forth, I also took into consideration a variety of grammatical language structures that would be of benefit to the learners. Analysis of lesson plans indicated that a significant amount of time was spent working with contractions (6-7-08, 6-12-08, 6-14-08, 6-19-08, 6-26-08, 6-28-08, 6-30-08, 7-3-08).

Due to the informal nature of Shel Silverstein’s poetry (1974, 1981, 1996), I was able to choose many of his poems that emphasized the use of contractions. In June of 2008, the students read the humorous poem, Carrots (Silverstein, 1996), and they learned that apostrophes are used to indicate a contraction, as well as to mark the spot of a missing letter in slang speech. The last line of the poem was a bit challenging for the ELLs to read accurately and with appropriate prosodic rhythm. Therefore, the ELLs
engaged in phrase reading activities to practice reading the line correctly. Finally, I had the ELLs stand and tap their laps in unison, while repeatedly chanting the phrase, *ain’t usin’ ‘em right?* (6-30-08).

Given that jokes and riddles are often challenging for ELLs to comprehend, I chose to introduce knock-knock jokes embedded with contractions. Two such jokes, by Ronny Cole (2002), provided the ELLs with the opportunities to decode and practice reciting the contractions *I’ll* and *aren’t*. In keeping with the decoding spirit, the ELLs and I comprised a list of contractions on the large flipchart and attempted to create funny words that resembled the sounds of the contractions, for example, *can’t* (*Kent*), *we’re* (*weary*), *I’ll be* (*L.B.*), *let’s* (*lettuce*), and *I’ve been* (*Ivan*), which could inevitably be used to tell knock-knock jokes.

I purposefully chose the poem, *Keep a Poem in Your Pocket* by Beatrice Schenk de Regniers (n. d.) for the final summer session. I made pocket-sized photocopies of the three ELLs’ favorite poems and matted them on soft, decorative fabric so that the ELLs could fold the poems to fit inside their pockets and carry with them. During an interview with one of the ESL instructors, I learned that Mi Mi brought her poem, in her pocket, to school and shared it with her peers during her instructional session in the ESL classroom. According to the ESL instructor, Mi Mi read the poem and explained to her peers, “This poem helps me to remember the things I learned with Miss Lynne during English class.”

*Invested in the “Whole” Student*

The student who sits in the classroom represents one dimension of the whole, complicated, and uniquely designed individual. Realizing that I needed to plan lessons, using the FDL, which would be most beneficial for the ELLs, I took numerous
opportunities to build positive relationships with the three girls. Before each reading session commenced, I made an effort to arrive a few minutes early in order to sit with the girls and chat. Their conversations were never preplanned, but spontaneous and lively in nature. On occasion, the girls talked about their weekend or the daily drama that occurred in school (9-4-08, 9-11-08, 9-18-08). I noticed that the girls began to develop their conversation skills as they learned how to take turns, acknowledge other’s comments, and encourage everyone to participate.

During the initial large group session, I usually took the opportunity to engage the ELLs in light-hearted conversation about school, their family, and their friends. This opportunity enabled me to learn about their likes and dislikes, and to plan lessons that would accentuate their reading strengths and ameliorate their reading weaknesses. Although I was unable to accompany the ELLs on field trips sponsored by Urban Vision, I did make a conscious effort to inquire about their experiences. In fact, while creating lesson plans, I often prepared to elaborate on some of their field trip experiences in order to create a context from which the students could relate to the poems.

Perhaps one of the best ways to learn about students and to understand them as “whole” persons is to visit their neighborhoods. Urban Vision is located in very close proximity to the students’ elementary school and middle school. Likewise, the students live near Urban Vision. During the summer months, many of the ELLs walked to and from Urban Vision for English class. However, the director did have permission to retrieve and return the students at designated stops within the neighborhood. On multiple occasions, I rode in the donated van with the Urban Vision director, and enjoyed the opportunity to see, first-hand, the urban neighborhood that housed a large majority of the
Karen refugees. The director commented that the Karen appeared to live here fearlessly because even though the urban neighborhood was tainted by poverty and crime, it was a significant upgrade from the refugee camp in Thailand. Life was good, and for many it would only get better as their English literacy skills improved.

Finally, interviews with the three ELLs, two parents, and five teachers provided insight about the effects of the various social interactions, as well as the impact of the reading intervention program using a modified FDL. I used semi-structured protocols to guide each of the interviews.

ELLs

The three ELLs who participated in this research study participated in a focus group interview with me on August 18, 2008 (see Appendix H). Although Denzin and Lincoln (2000) suggested that group interviews with children often compromise the integrity of the data because children are likely to imitate each other’s responses, I chose to implement the focus group, in part, to help prepare the ELLs for individual interviews that would follow in January. I introduced the ELLs to the audio recording device, and the ELLs had the opportunity to hear their recorded voices. To analyze the data from this focus group, all answers were compiled by question. I also recorded field notes that detailed the participants’ nonverbal behaviors, which would add to the content analysis of the data.

In keeping with the relaxed atmosphere, I only asked primary questions. Each question yielded several answers from which I developed the student interview protocol. Table 9 details the students’ responses to each question addressed during the focus group.
interview. I analyzed this data to answer both research questions. The numbers in parentheses indicate the number of times a particular response was given.

Table 9

Student Answers to Focus Group Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Student Comments</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What did you like about the English reading program at Urban Vision?</td>
<td>“The poems.” (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I liked you.” (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I liked reading in groups.” (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I liked watching you make pancakes.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I liked the clementines.” (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I like the pictures on the chart.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I like the microphone.” (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I like the folder.” (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I liked mystery reader.” (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I liked to color.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I liked that white pipe.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I liked the books.” (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What didn’t you like about the English reading program at Urban Vision?</td>
<td>“I don’t know.” (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The boys.” (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“When I had trouble reading Sorry I Spilled It.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What changes would you make to the English reading program to make it better?</td>
<td>“I don’t know.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“More poems.” (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Longer.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>What books do you like to read at school?</td>
<td>“Shel Silverstein.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Girl books.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Social studies.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What books do you like to read at home?</td>
<td>“My library books.” (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“My reading book.” (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What makes you a good reader?</td>
<td>“When I sound good.” (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“When my teacher says, ‘Good job.’”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“When I get good grade.” (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“If I understand.” (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“When I know the word.” (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“When I can read and not get stuck.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary of Results Related to Student Focus Group

The answers generated by the three ELLs, Naw Bee Ko, Mi Mi, and Naw Eh Ywa Paw, suggested that the ELLs enjoyed the reading intervention program, and two of the ELLs hinted that they wanted an opportunity to read more poems and to continue the reading intervention program. The final question, “What makes you a good reader?” yielded interesting answers that suggested the ELLs understood the concept of proficient reading, and they were also familiar with the positive self-esteem that results from proficient reading.

According to the field notes, the three ELLs were cooperative and willing to answer my questions (9-4-08). They sat in the chairs situated near me at the very table where they conducted their small group sessions. Before the tape recording began, I explained to the girls that I would ask them a series of questions about the activities in which they had participated with me during the reading intervention program. I also encouraged the girls to answer honestly, and that there were no correct or incorrect responses. Finally, I advised them that they did not have to answer any questions if they were unsure of an appropriate answer.

I proceeded to ask each question in the protocol, and waited for each of the three girls to have an opportunity to answer. I purposefully did not direct any one question to any specific ELL. The ELLs were encouraged to answer spontaneously as their thoughts materialized. Consequently, the girls did not practice turn-taking, but excitedly blurted out responses and often interrupted each other. I permitted this rather unstructured atmosphere because the girls appeared happy, relaxed, engaged in the activity, and eager to share important insight about their experiences with the poetry and a modified FDL.
Based on the ELLs’ responses to the focus group questions, I devised an interview protocol to use, individually, with each of the three ELLs (see Appendix I). To analyze results from student interviews, I used open coding, described by Gall et al. (2007). Given that I conducted the interviews and transcribed the data from the interviews, I established *a priori* themes from which to initiate open coding procedures. I assigned names to each of the themes gathered and color coded each theme. This color code system enabled me to see and compare each of the themes. Three themes emerged from the interviews, that is, self-confidence, metacognition, and leadership skills. Table 10 illustrates specific, selected comments from the interview transcripts that demonstrated the themes that emerged from the interviews. I chose to use the letters A, B, and C to identify each ELL and her responses. The letter A denotes responses generated by Naw Bee Ko, the letter B specifies responses by Mi Mi, and the letter C designates responses by Naw Eh Ywa Paw.

**Summary of Results Related to Student Interviews**

I asked the first question in the interview protocol, “Think about all of the poems you learned with me. Which ones did you like the best? Why? Which ones didn’t you like? Why?” in part to provide a context for the questions that followed. Also, I assumed that the ELLs would have no difficulty answering the first question, and consequently, the ELLs would be relaxed during the interview session.
## Table 10

### Student Interview Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Student Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Self-confidence | “Yes I can do it more fast” (A).  
                 | “Yes I don’t need so much help” (C).  
                 | “I’m not afraid to do it” (A).  
                 | “She likes when I read them [the poems]” (B). |
| Metacognition | “Yes I know what to do. I understand” (B).  
                 | “Read out loud because I like to hear myself read” (A).  
                 | “I would sing and dance because it’s fun” (C).  
                 | “I would buddy read because I like to read with friends” (B).  
                 | “I would write with the markers on the little board” (B).  
                 | “Mystery reader is fun because you can trick the person” (C).  
                 | “Everybody should get a microphone!” (A).  
                 | “I would make lots of food” (B).  
                 | “Bring in a toast thing and eat toast” (C). |
| Leadership   | “My mom asks me to read them [the poems]” (B).  
                 | “I teach them to my brother” (A).  
                 | “Read with them” (C).  
                 | “Listen to them read” (A).  
                 | “Give them my poetry folder” (B).  
                 | “Play teacher” (B).  
                 | “Read for them and tell them to repeat” (A).  
                 | “Explain it in my language” (B).  
                 | “Show them my lips when I read” (C). |

Of the five questions asked during the individual interviews, the ELLs appeared to enjoy responding to the second question, “If you were the new English reading teacher at Urban Vision, then tell me what activities you would do with the students. Why would you want to do these activities?” Each student enthusiastically responded with multiple activities that they recalled from their experiences in this reading program. I noted, after analyzing field notes, that the ELLs typically responded with activities that they themselves enjoyed and deemed helpful in the reading process (6-9-08, 6-21-08, 6-28-08, 7-4-08, 7-11-08, 7-18-08).
Mi Mi, who appeared to be a visual learner, commented during her interview, “I would bring things in for everyone to see, like the toaster because it helps you see the words in the poem.” In response to the same question, Naw Bee Ko replied, “I would use the microphone because I like to hear it—it’s loud.” Analysis of data indicated that Naw Bee Ko was an auditory learner. Naw Eh Ywa Paw loved to perform and sing, so I was not surprised with Naw Eh Ywa Paw’s response to the same question. She replied, “I would read funny poems and ones that we could sing and dance to.” The information gleaned from the three ELLs suggested that they not only applied metacognition while reading, but they were also keenly aware of their own personal learning modalities. The data gleaned from the student interviews addressed both research questions.

Parents

Each of the mothers whose children participated in the FDL at Urban Vision was interviewed regarding their perceptions of the reading intervention program. Mi Mi and Naw Eh Ywa Paw were sisters; therefore, I conducted one interview with their mother and asked her to consider each daughter individually when responding to the questions. I created a semi-structured interview protocol and tape recorded the interviews, which took place in the homes (see Appendix J). Given that the women did not speak English, I relied upon a translator. I asked the questions in English and the translator relayed the questions to the women in their native language. The women responded and the translator provided the English translation, which I transcribed for data analysis. Again, I color coded emerging themes, and the letters A, B, and C denote comments made in reference to Naw Bee Ko, Mi Mi, and Naw Eh Ywa Paw. The five themes, self-confidence,
motivation, leadership, fluency, and comprehension, along with selected corresponding
comments, are displayed in Table 11.

Table 11
Selected Parent Comments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Parent Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Self-confidence | “Oh yes, she was so proud of how well she could read. She would come home and say these poems” (B).  
              | “She doesn’t get angry anymore” (A).  
              | “When I need to go to the store I take her with me because she always says, ‘Mom, I can read the labels for you’” (B).  
              | “I love when she comes home from Urban Vision with a smile because her English teacher said she did well” (C).  
              | “Her English teacher always told her she was a good reader” (A).  |
| Motivation   | “She works hard and wants to do well” (C).  
              | “She always liked to read, but now she doesn’t complain about doing her homework. She gets it done right away” (C).  
              | “I never have to tell her to go read” (B).  
              | “She likes to read books from the library” (A).  
              | “If she isn’t watching television, then she goes in her room and reads” (B).  
              | “I never had to make her go to English class. She always wanted to go” (A).  |
| Leadership   | “I think that she likes to help others, maybe because she likes to show off and let others know she can read good” (B).  
              | “She helps me to read and tells me to skip words that I can’t read” (C).  
              | “She will read it for me and tell me to say it after her” (B).  
              | “She reads books to her brother” (A).  |
| Fluency      | “She sounded so good” (B).  
              | “She laughs when I read something and I don’t sound right” (A).  
              | “I notice that she claps her hands when she reads those poems” (C).  
              | “Last year she read slowly and the teacher gave her extra time to read. This year she reads faster” (B).  |
| Comprehension | “I can’t believe that she understands so much” (B).  
               | “I know that she’ll do well in school because she knows what she is reading. She loves school” (C).  
               | “I think she understands her homework, and she helps her brother with his because I don’t understand the directions” (A).  
               | “The teacher says she’s a wonderful reader” (B).  
               | “She gets good grades in reading” (C).  
               | “The teacher gave her a friend to read with and that helped her understand” (A).  
               | “The teacher read things over again for her so she could understand” (C).  |
Summary of Results Related to Parent Interviews

In summary, data collected from parent interviews suggested that the parents were overwhelmingly pleased with the reading intervention program and thrilled with their daughters’ reading progress at home and at school. During the open coding process, five themes, that is, self-confidence, motivation, leadership, fluency, and comprehension, emerged from the data that supported the finding that a modified FDL positively impacted the reading development of the three ELLs.

I attempted to gain insight about the extent to which the ELLs applied their reading skills. Therefore, I asked, “What does your child do, if anything, when she comes to a word in a text that she can’t read?” Although the two mothers appeared a little unsure about specific strategies that their daughters personally used while reading, they were very clear about the strategies that the girls encouraged their mothers to try when reading challenges ensued. For example, Naw Bee Ko’s mother remarked, “She laughs when I read something and I don’t sound right. She tells me how to say it. It’s hard for me.” Mi Mi and Naw Eh Ywa Paw’s mother mentioned that her daughters were very helpful and she relied on their assistance with different routine activities. For instance, their mother commented, “I don’t like to go to the grocery store here unless the girls come with me. They help me with the shopping, you know, reading labels that sort of thing. Mi Mi reads mail for me and even tells me to repeat after her. Naw Eh Ywa Paw tells me not to get upset, but she says to skip words I don’t know and she’ll help me with them later. I am lucky to have such good girls.” The data analyzed from the parent interviews addressed both research questions.
Teachers

I followed a semi-structured interview protocol and interviewed a total of five teachers, each of whom worked with the ELLs on a daily or weekly basis (see Appendix K). In order to conduct the semi-structured interviews, I met with two elementary classroom teachers and the elementary ESL instructor, after school hours, at their designated elementary school building. Likewise, the middle school language arts teacher and middle school ESL instructor agreed to meet me during their common planning period at the middle school. As compared to data analyses used during the student interviews and the parent interviews, data analysis of the teacher interviews also included the establishment of *a priori* themes from which I began the coding process. The interviews were tape recorded, transcribed, and color coded for common emerging themes. Among the themes were: self-confidence, positive attitude towards reading, increased level of participation, fluency, and comprehension. I chose and included specific teacher comments that helped to generate each of the themes (see Table 12). The letters A, B, and C denote comments made by the teachers in reference to Naw Bee Ko, Mi Mi, and Naw Eh Ywa Paw.
### Table 12

**Selected Teacher Comments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Teacher Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Self-confidence             | “She has lots of confidence in her ability to read in English. I don’t think she’s apprehensive at all” (B).  
“*I think she likes to prove that she can read in English just like her peers*” (A).  
“She walks in my classroom with a smile on her face—every day” (C).  
“I think she feels good about herself—she also has made a lot of friends” (A).  
“If I make a mistake, she’s right there to point it out to me!” (B).                                                                                           |
| Positive attitude towards reading | “She loves to do the listening center” (C).  
“She enjoys buddy reading” (C).  
“I notice that a lot of students want to be her reading partner” (B).  
“She always gets excited to read poetry” (B).  
“The students completed a reading interest inventory, and she wrote that her favorite subjects were reading and social studies” (A).  
“She once told me that she wished we could go to our school library more than just once a week” (A).                                             |
| Increased level of participation | “She seems to really love to write in her journal and share her responses with the class” (B).  
“Sometimes we create a whole-class story about a field trip or an assembly and she loves to offer up suggestions about what we should write” (C).  
“Definitely a hard worker. I can always count on her to participate in class” (A).  
“She’s not nearly as shy and she volunteers to read, answer questions, etc.” (A).  
“She always completes her reading homework log on time” (B).  
“During silent reading time she always has her own book from home to read. She usually brings her public library book, and sometimes I ask her about what she’s reading” (C).  
“She likes to volunteer to read or share her answers” (B).                                                                                           |
| Fluency                     | “She reads with great expression” (B).  
“Her pace is good—I don’t have to constantly wait for her to finish a silent reading activity before moving on” (C).  
“Her pronunciation is so much better. It’s hard to believe that it’s only her second year here in school” (A).  
“She had a decent part in our classroom play, and she was wonderful—very dramatic and loud” (B).                                                                 |
Table 12

Selected Teacher Comments (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Teacher Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td>“Her comprehension skills are amazing” (B).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“She’s a good little reader” (C).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I notice that she often relies on context clues when she reads” (A).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“She is constantly making text connections when she reads and she loves to share her “Aha” moments with me” (C).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I don’t need to repeat instructions, etc. several times for her. Once, twice, and she’s got it!” (B).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“She’s reading in my intermediate level reading group” (A).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I just graded her vocabulary cloze test and she didn’t miss any” (A).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“She almost never says, ‘I don’t know.’ Other students used to tell her what to do, but now she tells them because they don’t pay attention!” (C).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary of Results Related to Teacher Interviews

Information gleaned about the ELLs from their teachers indicated that all three of the ELLs were performing successfully in the classroom and applying their reading skills in all areas of the school curriculum. I analyzed this data in order to answer the two research questions. During the open coding process, five themes, that is, self-confidence, positive attitude towards reading, increased level of participation, fluency, and comprehension, emerged from the data that supported the finding that a modified FDL positively impacted the reading development of the three ELLs.

All five teachers shared their appreciation for the reading assistance provided by Urban Vision, and the teachers admitted that the three ELLs had made such strides in reading, in part, due to the collaborative efforts between the school and the community. Naw Eh Ywa Paw’s elementary teacher stated, “I appreciate that you [the researcher] reinforced so many reading skills through your poetry program. It was like we were team
teaching, just in different classrooms!” The elementary ESL instructor commented that she loved the poems that I chose to use for the reading intervention program, and that she encouraged Mi Mi and Naw Eh Ywa Paw to bring them to school to read and share with the other ELLs. In fact, she made additional copies of the poems to use with all of her students for fluency practice. Although I worked intensively with the three ELLs in this study, many other Karen ELLs attended Urban Vision and participated in the FDL. Both ESL instructors mentioned that all of their Karen ELLs were making significant reading progress, and many of them spoke about the poems and/or reading activities in which they participated at Urban Vision.

When asked to speak about Naw Bee Ko’s ability to comprehend grade level texts, the middle school ESL instructor replied, “

It’s been a pleasure to watch her [Naw Bee Ko] develop her reading skills and positive attitudes about reading in English. When she started school here she didn’t have any English skills; however, she relied on her native language skills to help her learn to read in English. It’s tough to be in middle school and only able to decode texts at a 3rd grade level. I think that your reading activities at Urban Vision probably helped her with her reading and her self-confidence.

In response to the question, “What does your student like to read?” Mi Mi’s classroom teacher replied, “Just about anything we read in class she seems to enjoy. She has a very positive attitude about reading and doing school work, in general.” In response to the same question, Naw Eh Ywa Paw’s classroom teacher admitted, “I don’t think there’s anything that she doesn’t like to read. She’s one of my most enthusiastic students.” I asked Naw Bee Ko’s language arts teacher to speak about Naw Bee Ko’s attitudes towards reading and school in general. The teacher replied,

Her [Naw Bee Ko] attitude is wonderful. She accepts my constructive criticism, and she works very hard at comprehending our stories. I notice that she often
relies on context clues when she reads. She makes a lot of text connections and that seems to help. I’m so pleased that she’s doing well, and that she’s adjusted socially and emotionally here at school.

In summation, analyses of the interview transcriptions and the field notes, journal entries, and lesson plans indicated that my thoughtful planning and actions helped facilitate learning for the ELLs. Also evident was my ability to choose poetry that would impact the ELLs, either by reinforcing their knowledge and skills or by relating to their life experiences. Furthermore, my sensitivity and acceptance of student perspectives provided for a comfortable, stress-free learning environment that enabled the ELLs to transfer the skills that they learned with me into their learning environments at home and at school.

Case Studies

Each of the three ELLs demonstrated significant progress in reading fluency and comprehension skills, as measured by the 3 Minute Reading Assessments: Word Recognition, Fluency and Comprehension and the Flynt-Cooter RIC. Likewise, the three ELLs’ attitudes towards recreational and academic reading improved according to the analysis of the results of the pre- and posttests on the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey. The various social interactions, which occurred during the reading intervention program, suggested that the ELLs benefited from one-on-one instruction, large and small group instruction, and peer-assisted reading activities. The following case study narratives contextualize the broader findings of the three participants in the study.

Case Study #1: Naw Bee Ko

Naw Bee Ko was 12 years old and had just completed the sixth grade. Given her chronological age, she should have just completed the fifth grade. However, I learned,
during an interview with the ESL instructor, that Naw Bee Ko was likely placed in the sixth grade, by the school secretary, because of her tall stature. Naw Bee Ko lived at home with her two parents and four siblings. Her parents were born in Burma, and Naw Bee Ko was born in a refugee camp in Thailand. Three of her older siblings live in Thailand.

Although Naw Bee Ko was a capable reader, she was quite reluctant to do so. Her reading pace was slow and her volume level was weak. She appeared to rely very little on any metacognition while attempting to read the text. She lacked self-confidence and was not comfortable initiating any conversation. Naw Bee Ko was able to read at a beginning first-grade level according to her pretest scores on the 3 Minute Reading Assessments: Word Recognition, Fluency and Comprehension (see Table 13; the tables for each of these case studies are found at the end of each section). She could recall the main idea of the text and provide minimal details. Her Multidimensional Fluency Scale score was a score of 6 out of a possible 16. Her weakest areas of fluency were noted in the categories of Expression & Volume and Pace. Naw Bee Ko correctly decoded 28 words that she read in 1 minute, and her Word Recognition Accuracy rate was 76%. Her initial Flynt-Cooter RIC scores also suggested that she was reading at a beginning first-grade level and her listening comprehension skills also reflected a beginning first-grade level (see Table 14). The results of the pretest scores on the ERAS suggested that Naw Bee Ko’s recreational and academic reading attitudes were almost identical with a slight preference for recreational reading (see Table 15).

Throughout the summer session, she gained considerable confidence at reading the poetry, and she was even willing to read independently out loud in our small group
sessions. She appeared to be an auditory language learner. Naw Bee Ko began to rely on her native language while attempting to comprehend pertinent vocabulary. She frequently transcribed English terms into her native language, and she began to participate orally in the interactive writing activities.

In August of 2008, after Naw Bee Ko had attended 25 of the 26 reading intervention sessions, I administered the 3 Minute Reading Assessments: Word Recognition, Fluency and Comprehension, as well as the Flynt-Cooter RIC to determine any reading progress, based on the analyses of her test scores in June of 2008 and in August of 2008. The posttest scores generated from the 3 Minute Reading Assessments: Word Recognition, Fluency and Comprehension (see Table 13) suggested that Naw Bee Ko was making considerable progress in all areas of her reading development. She read at a beginning second-grade level, and she recalled the main idea of the passage, along with multiple supporting details. Her Multidimensional Fluency Scale score was a score of 8 out of a possible 16. She demonstrated progress in the areas of Expression & Volume and Pace. Naw Bee Ko correctly decoded 35 words that she read in 1 minute, and her Word Recognition Accuracy Rate had improved to 88%. The posttest RIC scores suggested that she was reading at the beginning of second grade, and her listening comprehension level was at the beginning of third grade (see Table 14). According to the field notes, Naw Bee Ko was clearly vocalizing, using appropriate prosody, and even self-correcting while reading.

The reading intervention program with the three ELLs concluded in December of 2008, and I conducted three posttest assessments in January of 2009. The scores generated on the 3 Minute Reading Assessments: Word Recognition, Fluency and
Comprehension (see Table 13) suggested that Naw Bee Ko had demonstrated continued progress in fluency and comprehension skills. According to her final posttest scores on the 3 Minute Reading Assessments: Word Recognition, Fluency and Comprehension, Naw Bee Ko was able to read at a middle third-grade level. She could recall the main idea of the text and provide a sufficient set of details in sequential order. Her Multidimensional Fluency Scale score was a score of 12 out of a possible 16. Again, she demonstrated continued progress in the areas of Expression & Volume and Pace. Naw Bee Ko correctly read 80 words in 1 minute, with an improved Word Recognition Accuracy rate of 95%. According to the posttest results on the Flynt-Cooter RIC, she was reading at the end of third grade, and her listening comprehension level was at the beginning of fourth grade (see Table 15). The results of the pretest scores on the ERAS suggested that Naw Bee Ko’s recreational and academic reading attitudes significantly improved from June of 2008 to January of 2009. Her greatest preference was towards recreational reading (see Table 15).

The analysis of material culture, which included Naw Bee Ko’s poetry folder, showed that Naw Bee Ko chose to take notes during the small group sessions with me, and these notes indicated that Naw Bee Ko applied metalinguistic abilities while reading. Further analysis of her notes revealed that she often underlined pertinent words from the poems that I made mention of or she underlined the rhyming words in the poems (see Appendix L). Naw Bee Ko also periodically translated the English words into her native Karen language. On one occasion Naw Bee Ko used her pencil to shade over a silent letter e at the beginning of a contraction in the poem, *Carrots* by Shel Silverstein (1996).
The last line of the poem read, “You think maybe I ain’t usin’ ‘em right.” Naw Bee Ko commented that we just say the letter m for the contraction ‘em.

Further data analysis revealed that Naw Bee Ko understood that reading was a sociopsycholinguistic activity. She, as well as the other ELLs, was accustomed to waiting for me to count to the number three so they could begin choral reading. On June 30, 2008, Naw Bee Ko interrupted as I began counting. Naw Bee Ko proceeded to translate, out loud, the numbers into her native language. I asked her to repeat the numbers again, and Naw Bee Ko obliged while she transcribed the words above the corresponding numbers on her poetry paper (see Appendix L). From that moment forward, I always counted to three in the ELLs’ native language.

While working one-on-one with Naw Bee Ko, I was pleasantly surprised by a response that suggested Naw Bee Ko understood the nursery rhyme, Jack and Jill. Naw Bee Ko and I had chorally read the poem, and Naw Bee Ko read it several times independently. Acting on impulse, I asked Mi Mi and Naw Eh Ywa Paw to play the roles of Jack and Jill while Naw Bee Ko read. Mi Mi and Naw Eh Ywa Paw held hands and pretended to climb up a hill. When “Jack” fell down and “Jill” rolled down, Naw Bee Ko commented, “Who will call 911?” The three ELLs and I laughed out loud (6-26-08).

Another incident suggested that Naw Bee Ko used metacognition while reading in order to self-correct her mistake. Just as I had modeled appropriate actions, Naw Bee Ko used motions to coincide with many of the words in the poem. While she was independently reading the poem, Recess by Timothy Tocher, cited in Prelutsky (2003), she realized that she had incorrectly decoded tore for the word took. When she read,
“Jamie took her sweatshirt,” and mimicked tearing with her hands, she instantly paused, shook her head, and reread correctly, “Jamie tore her sweatshirt” (7-14-08).

In the fall, Urban Vision planned a field trip to a local pumpkin patch. The ELLs were excited about going on the hay ride and picking out their own pumpkin. In keeping with this theme, I selected the poem, *The Pumpkin That Grew* by M. Lucille Ford, cited in *Scholastic Instructor Books* (1983). I introduced the poem to the ELLs prior to their field trip. The ELLs enjoyed the rhythmical pattern of this poem, and Naw Bee Ko, in particular, chose to read it during one-on-one instruction with me. After the ELLs returned from the field trip, I learned from one of the adult chaperones that Naw Bee Ko led other ELLs in her wagon as they all repeatedly chanted the first stanza of the poem (10-30-08). This type of leadership behavior was uncharacteristic of Naw Bee Ko in June of 2008. Clearly, she felt confident not only vocalizing in a large group setting, but leading her peers in a literacy event.

Naw Bee Ko grew to recognize that in order to read with prosody she needed to sound like me when I modeled the poem for the students. Naw Bee Ko also demonstrated that she was aware of the activities that would foster her fluency skills. On December 4, 2008, Naw Bee Ko was reading the poem, *A Secret* by Laura Alice Boyd, cited in *Scholastic Instructor Books* (1983), with me when Naw Bee Ko stopped in mid-sentence and groaned, “I don’t read it like you.” I replied, “Do you want to start over at the beginning?” Taking a moment to reflect, Naw Bee Ko responded, “No, can you say it? Then I’ll say it?” I smiled and initiated an echo reading exercise with Naw Be Ko.
Table 13
Naw Bee Ko: 3 Minute Reading Assessments: Word Recognition, Fluency and Comprehension

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pretest Grade Level 1 Form A June of 2008</th>
<th>Posttest Grade Level 2 Form A August of 2008</th>
<th>Final Posttest Grade Level 3 Form B January of 2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Word Recognition Accuracy</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluency-Automaticity (wcp)</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multidimensional Fluency Scale</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expression &amp; Volume</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phrasing &amp; Intonation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoothness</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pace</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14
Naw Bee Ko: Flynt-Cooter RIC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pretest Grade Level &amp; Form June of 2008</th>
<th>Posttest Grade Level &amp; Form August of 2008</th>
<th>Final Posttest Grade Level &amp; Form January of 2009</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading Comprehension</td>
<td>Level 1 Form A</td>
<td>Level 2 Form A</td>
<td>Level 3 Form C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening Comprehension</td>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>Level 4</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Table 15

Naw Bee Ko: Elementary Reading Attitude Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pretest Score</th>
<th>Posttest Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>June of 2008</td>
<td>January of 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational Reading Percentile</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic Reading Percentile</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Scale Percentile</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Case Study #2: Mi Mi

Mi Mi was 10 years old and was entering into the fourth grade in the fall of 2008. She lived at home with her two parents and four siblings. Mi Mi appeared to be a visual and kinesthetic learner. She was very extraverted, confident, and self-motivated. She was very eager to learn and willing to assist others during the language acquisition process. Mi Mi was able to read at a beginning third grade level according to her pretest scores on the 3 Minute Reading Assessments: Word Recognition, Fluency and Comprehension (see Table 16). She demonstrated the ability to recall the main idea of the text and provide several details. Her Multidimensional Fluency Scale score was a score of 7 out of a possible 16. Her weakest area of performance was noted in Expression & Volume. Mi Mi correctly decoded 70 words that she read in 1 minute, and her Word Recognition Accuracy rate was 86%. Her initial Flynt-Cooter RIC pretest scores suggested that her reading and listening comprehension skills were like that of students at the beginning of third grade (see Table 17). She, unlike most ELLs, appeared to be reading on level. The results of the pretest scores on the ERAS suggested that Mi Mi’s attitudes towards
recreational and academic reading were very similar, with a slight preference for recreational reading (see Table 18).

Although she appeared to employ metacognition while reading, she did not consistently demonstrate the use of syntactic cues at the beginning of this study. Nor did she read with a great deal of prosody. Throughout the summer session, she became my student teacher. She proceeded to model fluent reading, make text-to-text connections as well as text-to-self connections. She began to use her background knowledge about English idiomatic expressions in order to make sense of a text. She not only read independently in our small group session, but she willingly and confidently read out loud during the final large group session; all the while modeling the components of fluency.

In August of 2008, after Mi Mi attended 25 of the 26 reading intervention sessions, her posttest scores generated from the 3 Minute Reading Assessments: Word Recognition, Fluency and Comprehension (see Table 16) suggested that Mi Mi was able to read at a middle third grade level. She demonstrated the ability to recall the main idea of the text and provide several details in chronological order. Her Multidimensional Fluency Scale score was 12 out of a possible 16. She progressed in all performance areas included in the scale. Mi Mi correctly decoded 83 words that she read in 1 minute, and her improved Word Recognition Accuracy rate was 94%. Her post-test RIC scores suggested that she was reading at the middle of third grade and her listening comprehension level was at the beginning of fourth grade (see Table 17). Data analysis from field notes indicated that Mi Mi was applying syntactic, as well as semantic cues to assist with decoding. She required minimal prompting during text retelling, and she demonstrated the ability to make text-to-world connections.
Finally, in January of 2009, after the completion of the intervention reading program, Mi Mi’s scores generated on the 3 Minute Reading Assessments: Word Recognition, Fluency and Comprehension (see Table 16) suggested that she progressed in all areas of reading fluency and comprehension. Mi Mi was able to read at a beginning fifth-grade level. She recalled the main idea of the text, remembered an abundance of details in sequential order, and made text-to-world connections. Her Multidimensional Fluency Scale score was a score of 14 out of a possible 16. Mi Mi correctly decoded 92 words that she read in 1 minute, and her Word Recognition Accuracy rate had improved to 97%. According to the posttest results on the Flynt-Cooter RIC, Mi Mi was reading at the beginning of fifth grade and her listening comprehension skills also reflected those of other students reading at the beginning of fifth grade (see Table 17). Mi Mi’s posttest scores on the ERAS suggested that her attitudes towards recreational reading and academic reading improved, and she continued to show a preference towards recreational reading (see Table 18).

I introduced the first Shel Silverstein poem to the ELLs on June 21, 2008. Although I assumed that the ELLs would enjoy the funny illustrations that accompany many of Shel Silverstein’s poems, I did not anticipate the overwhelmingly positive response that I received from the ELLs each time I read his work.

After presenting Shel Silverstein’s (1981) poem, *Something Missing*, Mi Mi excitedly shared with me in the small group session that she loved to read Shel Silverstein poems, and her classroom teacher had given her a copy of *Where the Sidewalk Ends* (1974) as a gift at the end of the school year. Mi Mi arrived at Urban Vision the following session with the book in her hand (6-28-08). I asked Mi Mi to display the book
for the other ELLs to see during the large group session. I assured the ELLs that they would have the opportunity to read many of Shel Silverstein’s poems when they come to the reading intervention program. When the students moved into the small group session, Mi Mi immediately placed the book on the table in front of me, who realized that this was a perfect opportunity to discuss the pleasure of reading. According to my journal entry (6-28-08), Mi Mi was thrilled to sit at the table in the small group session and flip through the pages of the book. I spent time pointing out some of my favorite poems that I remembered from childhood, as well as some of the poems that I introduced to my own elementary students. I commented,

> When you learn to read, then you can read all the things that you love to read. You don’t have to just read your science book or your social studies book; you can choose books from the library that you really want to read. Mi Mi, you can go to the library and look for other poetry books by Shel Silverstein. I have two others at home that I can let you borrow. (6/28/08)

Analysis of my field notes indicated that Mi Mi demonstrated metalinguistic awareness, and she shared her knowledge with peers (9-11-08, 10-23-08, 11-13-08). Naw Bee Ko was rereading the poem, *Storm* by Helen H. Moore (1997), to Mi Mi who was coaching her on the correct pronunciation of the words *crashes, flashes*, and *lashes*. Mi Mi advised, “Try to open your mouth and say ‘ez’ like it’s a z not s. I’ll read it again with you, okay.” Mi Mi chorally read with Naw Bee Ko, and Mi Mi modeled the appropriate pronunciation by pointing to her mouth as she opened it wide.

In the fall of 2008, the students had practiced reading the poem, *The Whirl and Twirl* (anonymous), cited in Scholastic Professional Books (1999), and I decided to engage the ELLs in a science experiment that coincided with the poem. In order to provide a context for the terms *sink* and *float*, I displayed numerous objects, placed them
in opaque containers filled with water, and encouraged the ELLs to guess whether the dispersed objects would sink or float in the water. I also decided to record the outcomes on a flipchart for all the ELLs to view. Typically, I transcribed the ELL’s comments; however, I decided to ask for a volunteer to transcribe, and Mi Mi enthusiastically offered. After I drew a two-column chart with the labels *Sink* and *Float*, I passed the marker to Mi Mi who recorded the objects under the appropriate headings, based on the results of each experiment. I noticed that Mi Mi spelled most of the words correctly without having asked for assistance. As Mi Mi began to record *seashell* on the chart paper, she paused, looked at me and asked, “Miss Lynne, is it . . . you know, a compound word?” Again, Mi Mi applied her understanding of the English language during a literacy event (9-11-08).

Mi Mi often made text connections by relating the poems to other books and experiences at school. I introduced the poem, *Squirrel* by Joan Horton, cited in Scholastic Professional Books (1999), to the ELLs in the large group setting. While moving into the small group setting, Mi Mi shared her knowledge about squirrels with me (9-18-08). Mi Mi boasted, “Miss Lynne, I know why squirrels bury acorns—they eat them in winter. We learned about it at school. My teacher has books about animals in the winter.” I replied, “Great! I have a book about fish and where they go in the winter. I’ll bring it for you to read when I come next week.”

The leaves on the trees displayed their seasonal colors, so I chose the poem, *Autumn Leaves* by Leland B. Jacobs (1993). With a bag full of colorful leaves, I read the poem while tossing the leaves in the air and letting them fall and cover the floor. The musical quality of the poem was very evident, and Mi Mi quickly recognized the natural
beat. While the ELLs and I chorally read the poem in the large group setting, Mi Mi suddenly began tapping her hands on her lap to mimic the poem’s rhythm. Eager to join in, the other ELLs followed Mi Mi and together they performed the poem (10-9-08).

Finally, Mi Mi demonstrated her ability to comprehend new words by connecting them to words she had previously learned in other poems (7-31-08, 9-2-08, 11-13-08). During the summer reading intervention session, Mi Mi learned the meaning of the word *charms* in the poem, *The Planet of Mars* (Silverstein, 1974). On November 13, 2008, the students read a new poem, *Thanksgiving* (anonymous), cited in Scholastic Instructor Books (1983), in preparation for the upcoming holiday. The ELLs discussed the terms *harvest* and *orchards* with me in the large group setting. In order to explain the word *treasures*, I displayed a small “treasure” box that contained beads and coins. Almost immediately, Mi Mi raised her hand and replied, “Miss Lynne, remember the poem, *Planet of Mars*? She paused and then recited, “Same charms and same graces. Same heads and same faces. Charms are treasures!” I replied, “Yes, good thinking! So what kinds of charms do orchards have?” “I know . . . fruit!” she shouted.
Table 16

Mi Mi: 3 Minute Reading Assessments: Word Recognition, Fluency and Comprehension

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pretest Grade Level 3 Form A June of 2008</th>
<th>Posttest Grade Level 3 Form B August of 2008</th>
<th>Final Posttest Grade Level 5 Form A January of 2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Word Recognition Accuracy</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluency-Automaticity (wcp)</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multidimensional Fluency Scale</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expression &amp; Volume</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phrasing &amp; Intonation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoothness</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pace</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 17

Mi Mi: Flynt-Cooter RIC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pretest Grade Level &amp; Form June of 2008</th>
<th>Posttest Grade Level &amp; Form August of 2008</th>
<th>Final Posttest Grade Level &amp; Form January of 2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading Comprehension</td>
<td>Level 3 Form A</td>
<td>Level 3 Form B</td>
<td>Level 5 Form A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening Comprehension</td>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>Level 4</td>
<td>Level 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 18

Mi Mi: Elementary Reading Attitude Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pretest Score</th>
<th>Posttest Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>June of 2008</td>
<td>January of 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational Reading Percentile</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Reading Percentile</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Scale Percentile</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Case Study #3: Naw Eh Ywa Paw

Naw Eh Ywa Paw was 8 years old and just completed first grade. She entered into second grade in the fall of 2008. Naw Eh Ywa Paw lived with her two parents, her sister Mi Mi, and her other three siblings. I concluded that Naw Eh Ywa Paw preferred to learn through visual and kinesthetic modalities. The youngest of the three ELLs, Naw Eh Ywa Paw was quiet and often in her sister’s shadow. However, she grew confident and eager to prove herself as a reader. Naw Eh Ywa Paw was able to read at a beginning first-grade level according to her pretest scores on the 3 Minute Reading Assessments: Word Recognition, Fluency and Comprehension (see Table 19). She demonstrated the ability to recall the main idea of the text and provide several details, but not in chronological order. Her Multidimensional Fluency Scale score was a score of 7 out of a possible 16. Her weakest area of performance was noted in Expression & Volume. Naw Eh Ywa Paw read 29 words correctly in one minute, with a Word Recognition Accuracy rate of 73%. Her initial Flynt-Cooter RIC pretest scores indicated that her reading and listening comprehension were at a beginning first grade level (see Table 20). She appeared to use
some graphophonemic cues; however, she did not self-correct or read with much expression. The results of the prettest scores on the ERAS suggested that Naw Eh Ywa Paw’s recreational and academic attitudes towards reading were almost identical, with a slight preference for academic reading (see Table 21).

As the summer session progressed, she began to demonstrate leadership skills even while partner reading with Naw Bee Ko who was 12 years old. Naw Eh Ywa Paw and her sister, Mi Mi, often engaged in arguments about text accuracy and word pronunciation while partner reading. Naw Eh Ywa Paw quickly developed into a reading leader. She demonstrated an incredible ability to make text-to-self connections and text-to-world connections.

In August of 2008, after participating in all 26 summer reading intervention sessions, her scores generated on the 3 Minute Reading Assessments: Word Recognition, Fluency and Comprehension (see Table 19) suggested that Naw Eh Ywa Paw had demonstrated progress in all areas of the reading assessment. She was able to read a passage at a middle second-grade level. She demonstrated the ability to recall the main idea of the text and provide several details, which were in chronological order. Her Multidimensional Fluency Scale score was a score of 10 out of a possible 16. Despite the progress from the pretest, her weakest areas of performance were noted in Expression & Volume and Phrasing & Intonation. Naw Eh Ywa Paw read 40 words correctly in one minute, with a Word Recognition Accuracy rate of 87%. Her posttest RIC scores suggested that she was able to read at the end of second grade with a listening comprehension level at the beginning of third grade (see Table 20). She demonstrated the use of all three cueing systems, read with appropriate expression and pace.
In January of 2009, Naw Eh Ywa Paw completed the posttest, which indicated further reading progress. The scores accumulated on the 3 Minute Reading Assessments: Word Recognition, Fluency and Comprehension (see Table 19) suggested that Naw Eh Ywa Paw had demonstrated progress in all areas of her reading development. She was able to read a passage at a middle third-grade level. She demonstrated the ability to recall the main idea of the text, remember several sequential details, and make text-to-self connections. Her Multidimensional Fluency Scale score was a score of 13 out of a possible 16. Her strongest area of performance was noted in Expression & Volume, which was her weakest area noted from the pretest in June of 2008. Naw Eh Ywa Paw read 84 words correctly in one minute, with a Word Recognition Accuracy rate of 94%. According to the posttest results on the Flynt-Cooter RIC, she demonstrated the ability to read at the middle of third grade. Her listening comprehension ability reflected those of other students reading at the beginning of fourth grade (see Table 20). Her posttest scores on the ERAS suggested that her attitudes in reading, in both categories, greatly improved (see Table 21). Naw Eh Ywa Paw’s scores on this posttest survey were the highest scores out of all three of the ELLs to whom the survey was administered.

During the summer of 2008, I created a writing activity to correspond with the poem, *Show Fish* by Shel Silverstein (1996), in which I asked the ELLs to write about something they would want to take to school for show and tell. Data analysis of field notes and poetry folders suggested that Naw Eh Ywa Paw had some difficulty relating to this prompt (7-19-08). She wrote the following sentence on her paper “I would take calendar.” As I engaged in further conversation with her, I realized that Naw Eh Ywa Paw did not have any material objects at home that she valued enough to share with her
classmates. After further prompting, Naw Eh Ywa Paw decided that she could share her coloring book. I gave her a graphic organizer activity to help Naw Eh Ywa Paw plan out her show and share event. Without hesitation, she filled out the sorting circles, on the activity sheet, with examples of pictures she could share (see Appendix M).

Analysis of field notes revealed that Naw Eh Ywa Pah often mimicked me leading or coaching other ELLs. One such example occurred on September 25, 2008. During the final 15 minutes of the session, all of the ELLs reunited in large group to review the new poem, *The Little Fire Fighter* by Debbie Berthold, cited in *Scholastic Professional Books* (1999). I typically began the review session by rereading the poem, modeling the components of fluency, for the ELLs. However, Naw Eh Ywa Paw approached me and asked if she could lead the rereading for the ELLs. Feeling confident, she proceeded to read the poem and then to read it chorally with the group. Naw Eh Ywa Paw reminded everyone to shout when they read *shout*. Naw Eh Ywa Paw quickly summed up the performance and commented, “Good job. Just boys read this time” (9-25-08).

Naw Eh Ywa Paw often demonstrated phonemic awareness while engaging with the poetry. I had introduced the poem, *Storm* by Helen H. Moore (1997), and asked the students in the large group setting to help identify any rhyming words. Immediately, the ELLs recognized the obvious rhymes in the words *crashes, flashes, and lashes*. Naw Eh Ywa Paw raised her hand and remarked, “Miss Lynne, I see two words that rhyme—*warm* and *storm*—but they have different letters.” “How do you know that they rhyme?” I asked. Naw Eh Ywa Paw responded with a smile, “They sound the same!” (9-11-08).
While working in the small group setting, I often transcribed the ELLs’ comments on the mini dry erase board. I encouraged the ELLs to rely on their knowledge of the English language in order to modify their statements. The ELLs were completing the written activity for the poem, *June* by Aileen Fisher, cited in Scholastic Professional Books (1999), when Naw Eh Ywa Paw demonstrated her ability to self-correct her written work (6-16-08). I asked the ELLs to write about what they like to do outside when the sun is shining. After a few minutes passed, the ELLs shared some of their responses, and I transcribed theses responses, verbatim, on the mini dry erase board. Naw Eh Ywa Paw volunteered to share, “I like to play swimming.” After transcribing her sentence, I remarked, “My children like to swim in the lake, too! I love how you spelled *swimming*, you’re so smart. Now is there anything we can change in your sentence?” With pencil in hand, she proceeded to cross out *play*, as well as the suffix on *swimming*. She paused, read her new sentence, and then decided to insert the words *in* and *a* before the word *lake*. I mimicked her corrections on the dry erase board while Naw Eh Ywa Paw read her new sentence, “I like to swim in a lake” (see Appendix N).

On July 10, I returned from a brief absence and began by reviewing the poem, *Lost* by Bruce Lansky, cited in Shel Silverstein (1996). After reading the poem to the ELLs, I chose to review some of the pertinent vocabulary words. Naw Eh Ywa Paw demonstrated her ability to use the word *rotten* in an appropriate context. She confidently shared, “Miss Lynne, don’t eat apple, it’s rotten.” I retorted, “How do you know it’s rotten?” Naw Eh Ywa Paw replied, “It has brown spots, and I can put my finger in it.”

Finally, Naw Eh Ywa Paw demonstrated her ability to comprehend the poet’s message. The ELLs read the poem, *Band-Aids* by Shel Silverstein (1974), and while in
the large group setting, I asked the ELLs to count the number of band-aids listed in the poem. This was not necessarily a simple task because the ELLs had to read through the poem and apply context clues to answer the question. Several ELLs responded, rather haphazardly, with different numbers; however, Naw Eh Ywa Paw decided to make tally marks on paper while she read through the poem. She calculated the tally marks and responded, “33!” I responded, “Are you sure? What about the 35 band-aids in the box?” After referring back to the poem, she pointed with her finger and quoted from the poem, “No, he don’t have them on. See it say, ‘in case I might need ‘em’ right here” (8-14-08).

Table 19

Naw Eh Ywa Paw: 3 Minute Reading Assessments: Word Recognition, Fluency and Comprehension

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pretest Grade Level 1</th>
<th>Posttest Grade Level 2</th>
<th>Final Posttest Grade Level 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Form A</td>
<td>Form C</td>
<td>Form B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>June of 2008</td>
<td>August of 2008</td>
<td>January of 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word Recognition Accuracy</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluency-Automaticity (wcp)</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multidimensional Fluency Scale</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expression &amp; Volume</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phrasing &amp; Intonation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoothness</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pace</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 20

Naw Eh Ywa Paw: Flynt-Cooter RIC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pretest Grade Level &amp; Form June of 2008</th>
<th>Posttest Grade Level &amp; Form August of 2008</th>
<th>Final Posttest Grade Level &amp; Form January of 2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading Comprehension</td>
<td>Level 1 Form A</td>
<td>Level 2 Form C</td>
<td>Level 3 Form B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening Comprehension</td>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>Level 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 21

Naw Eh Ywa Paw: Elementary Reading Attitude Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pretest Score June of 2008</th>
<th>Posttest Score January of 2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recreational Reading Percentile</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Reading Percentile</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Scale Percentile</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Multi-Case Analysis

All three of the ELLs were literate in their native language, and they did not speak English while living in the refugee camp in Thailand. It is also important to note that these three individuals were not receiving any other form of English language instruction during the summer months, while they participated in a modified FDL at Urban Vision.

According to data analysis of the individual cases, all three students demonstrated strides in automaticity, accuracy, prosody, and comprehension. Based on the analysis of the scores on the Flynt-Cooter RIC, all three ELLs progressed by two grade levels by
January of 2009. Despite their age differences, Naw Bee Ko and Naw Eh Ywa Paw appeared to mirror each other’s scores. At the conclusion of the reading intervention program, both girls demonstrated the abilities to read at a third grade level. At that present time, Naw Bee Ko was in the seventh grade, and Naw Eh Ywa Paw was in the second grade. In January of 2009, Mi Mi was in fourth grade; yet, she performed at a fifth grade level according to the Flynt Cooter RIC.

Each of the ELLs improved their attitudes in reference to recreational reading and academic reading. During our small group sessions, the students would often beg to engage in repeated readings of some of their favorite poetry. Outside of the Urban Vision setting, the three ELLs enjoyed reading and even reciting from memory some of their favorites to family members and school teachers. Each of the ELLs, on numerous occasions, described herself as a good reader and one who likes to read and willingly chooses to read. Clearly, the ELLs embraced the poetry, grew as confident, fluent readers, and eagerly shared their reading achievements with others who were willing to celebrate with them.

Due to prior commitments, I was unavailable to attend the reading intervention sessions on three different occasions. In my absence, a program volunteer led a modified FDL. This particular volunteer, like all the volunteers at Urban Vision, was not a certified teacher. She was a retired administrative assistant who learned about this volunteer opportunity through communications at her church. Prior to her absence, I created lesson plans, wrote the poems on the flipchart, and prepared corresponding written activities for the ELLs. I also left instructions to guide the volunteer.
Each time I returned from the scheduled absence, the volunteer shared similar stories about the occurring events. “Thank goodness I had your students to help because they knew what to do. Actually, they pretty much ran the entire session.” The volunteer was referring to the three ELLs, Naw Bee Ko, Mi Mi, and Naw Eh Ywa Paw, with whom I worked. When I returned to Urban Vision after my July 7, 2008, absence, the volunteer approached me and commented, “I can’t believe how good those girls can read now. Such sweet girls. You can tell, too, how proud they are of their progress. They sure are smart.”

The reading intervention program at Urban Vision was offered as a service for the ELLs living in that community. The program was free of charge and the ELLs were not in any way obligated to attend. However, they did receive “Urban Vision Dollars” for participating in any activity sponsored by Urban Vision (see Appendix O). The reading intervention program was one such activity. The ELLs were encouraged to attend and participate in order to earn “dollars” to use to “purchase” items from the Urban Vision Store. Items usually consisted of school supplies, clothing, toys, and games. In December, the ELLs used their pretend dollars to buy their family and friends holiday gifts.

The three ELLs’ attendance records were impeccable. During the summer reading intervention session the overall attendance rate of all the 25 ELLs ranged from consistent to sporadic. Analysis of field notes and journal entries suggested that all three of the ELLs in this study attended each of the summer and fall sessions, with only two exceptions. In August of 2008, Mi Mi missed one session due to an opportunity to attend a dance program with her mother. Also that August, Naw Bee Ko missed one session in
order to attend a summer retreat sponsored by Urban Vision. Each of the three ELLs appeared happy to attend, eager to listen and follow directions, and always willing to actively participate.

In conclusion, the portraits of Naw Bee Ko, Mi Mi, and Naw Eh Ywa Paw clearly suggest that they benefited from their participation in the reading intervention program, which incorporated a modified FDL. Furthermore, reading progress was evident, based on the analysis of the pre- and post-reading assessments and the analysis of field notes, journal entries, lesson plans, poetry folders, and interview transcriptions.

Summary

The two research questions for this study sought to describe how a reading intervention program might impact the fluency and comprehension development of three Karen ELLs. Data analysis suggested that the ELLs’ fluency and comprehension development significantly improved throughout the course of the reading intervention program. The three case study narratives were presented as a means to contextualize the results via detailed portraits of the participants in this study.

Naw Bee Ko, Mi Mi, and Naw Eh Ywa Paw all experienced reading progress as a result of participating in the reading intervention program. They learned to identify the components of fluency and recognize the important role that the components play in reading development. The ELLs also learned that they could actively monitor their own thought processes in order to assist with reading comprehension. Results of data analyses indicated that the ELLs improved their positive attitudes towards recreational and academic reading throughout the entire duration of the reading intervention program.
In conclusion, the portraits of Naw Bee Ko, Mi Mi, and Naw Eh Ywa Paw revealed that systematic language instruction using a modified FDL positively impacted the fluency and comprehension development of these three ELLs. Furthermore, analyses of the cases revealed that social interactions during one-on-one instruction, large and small group instruction, and peer-assisted reading instruction helped to foster fluency and comprehension development for the three ELLs.

In the following chapter, the results of this study are presented in order to answer the research questions. A summary of the research is discussed, including implications for future implementations of this reading intervention program. Last, recommendations are suggested for further research involving the reading development of ELLs.
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate and describe an early literacy intervention program that incorporated best practices previously confirmed for monolingual English students (Rasinski et al., 1994; Rasinski & Padak, 2001) with strategies that have research support for ELLs. As the researcher, I examined, described, and analyzed the interactions between the ELLs and myself during a modified FDL, as well as the impact that a modified FDL had on the English reading development of three elementary ELLs.

The setting for the study was a multiage tutoring program for ELLs in an urban community in a Great Lakes state. A total of 25 ELLs attended this 9-week summer program for a total of 4½ hours a week, and they continued to participate in the after-school session from September through December for 1 hour a week.

After conducting fluency and comprehension pretests, the researcher purposively selected the three ELLs, based on the program director’s recommendations and the students’ pretest scores, with intermediate English proficiency levels. The following questions guided this study:
1. How do teacher-student interactions and student-to-student interactions, during the implementation of a modified FDL, impact the Karen children’s abilities to develop fluency and comprehension skills in English?

2. How does systematic language instruction using a modified FDL impact the fluency and comprehension development of these three ELLs?

As researcher I collected multiple sources of data and used a variety of methods to access this data. First, the students completed pretests using the 3 Minute Reading Assessments: Word Recognition, Fluency and Comprehension, the Flynt-Cooter RIC, and the ERAS, to measure fluency and comprehension scores, as well as to measure their attitudes towards recreational and academic reading. At the completion of the summer reading intervention program, the students completed posttests in order to compare and contrast their scores on the 3 Minute Reading Assessments, and the Flynt-Cooter RIC. Finally, at the conclusion of the after-school session in December of 2008, the students completed posttests on all three instruments in January of 2009.

Second, in order to answer the two research questions, data collection procedures for this study included participant observations, interviews with ELLs, their parents, and teachers, and the collection and analysis of various material culture generated by the ELLs and myself. All field notes and interviews were transcribed and the data were coded for emerging themes. Peer review established inter-rater reliability. Student poetry folders, written artifacts, interview transcriptions, and field notes and lesson plans were continually analyzed following the constant comparative method of data analysis (Merriam, 1988, 1998).
During the data analysis phase, specific themes and categories emerged in reference to the ELLs’ participation in the reading intervention program. The results of the analysis were compared to findings of current research, in the applicable fields, in order to support theories relevant to the research questions.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the results of data analysis. First, I discuss conclusions in terms of the questions that guided this study. Last, I offer educational implications of the conclusions for various stakeholders.

Conclusions

I addressed both research questions by analyzing all of the data collected throughout the study. The findings from the data analyses support the following conclusions for the two questions that guided this study.

The three ELLs who participated in the reading intervention program appeared to benefit from a variety of instructional scenarios that provided them opportunities to experience literacy while engaged in numerous, authentic social interactions. Social interactions that occur between the teacher and the students are critical to whether or not the students realize their full academic potential (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Sanders, Wright, & Horn, 1997).

Researchers in the field of literacy reported that reading is a multidimensional skill that includes the incorporation of listening, speaking, writing, and performing (Freeman & Freeman, 2000; Vacca et al., 2009). Analysis of the data in this study appeared to support a sociopsycholinguistic theory of reading development. Given that I viewed the act of reading in a multidimensional sense, I chose to implement the research-based components of a modified FDL in order to engage the ELLs in a variety of
activities, for example, listening, speaking, reading, writing, and performing to enhance their fluency and comprehension skills. Furthermore, I chose to implement a modified FDL using a variety of poems that reinforced themes, language patterns, and grammatical sentence structures. The different instructional scenarios, that is, one-on-one instruction, large and small group instruction, and peer-assisted instruction, allowed the ELLs to socially interact with each other and with me, all the while improving their reading skills and attitudes about reading. Numerous researchers suggested that the goal of reading intervention programs should focus simultaneously on skills, as well as on reading attitudes (Burns, Senesac, & Symington, 2004; McDaniel, 2002; Neuman, 1995).

In the following statement, Zainuddin et al. (2007) addressed the vital role that social interactions play in the reading process:

Children learn to read not only by actively engaging in the act of reading itself, but also often facilitated by the quantity and quality of interactions in which adults discuss matters that are of interest to them. In short, children learn language and progress from one stage to another by interacting with others. (p. 190)

Specifically, the social interactions, which occurred during one-on-one instruction with me, reveal that the ELLs maintained positive self-images, and the ELLs viewed themselves as capable readers equipped with metacognitive and metalinguistic awareness about their reading and language skills. Findings of this study therefore extend the breadth of earlier research on metacognitive and metalinguistic skills in reading (Clay, 1985; Jacobs & Paris, 1987; NICHD, 2000; Peregoy & Boyle, 2008; Pressley, 2002; Worthy & Broaddus, 2001-2002; Yopp & Yopp, 2000; Zainuddin et al., 2007). The three ELLs began to recognize the components of fluency, and how accuracy, automaticity, and prosody all work together to make reading comprehensible. Furthermore, they
discovered that fluent reading was much more enjoyable for both the reader and the audience. The development of metacognitive and metalinguistic skills not only allowed the three ELLs to self-monitor while reading, but to constructively evaluate the reading performances of their peers.

Further evidence suggests that social interactions that occurred during large and small group sessions fostered cooperation, increased levels of oral participation, and text connections. The cooperation between the ELLs allowed them to communicate, for authentic purposes, what they had learned, and Moje, Young, Readance, and Moore (2000) suggested that these social interactions are significant ways to help students actively engage with print. The findings of this study corroborate Rosenblatt’s (1978) reader response theory, which stressed the importance of fostering readers’ personal transactions with texts to allow for unparalleled interpretations of the author’s or poet’s message. The three ELLs constructed meaning from the poems by matching their personal experiences to the words on the pages.

The social interactions that occurred between the ELLs, during peer-assisted reading activities, fostered leadership skills as the ELLs modeled the components of fluency and provided positive constructive criticism. Various researchers suggest that readers who understand the purpose of reading, that is, fluency and comprehension, are confident and inclined to lead others in literacy activities (Friedland & Truesdell, 2004; Ketch, 2005; Kuhn & Stahl, 2000; Routman, 2000). Naw Bee Ko was reluctant to orally participate in large group at the beginning of this intervention program. However, during peer-assisted settings, she developed the necessary leadership skills, as well as reading
skills that enabled her to feel comfortable and capable participating in all three social settings by the end of the study. Zainuddin et al. (2007) reiterated the following:

In a peer tutoring setup, students receive individual attention. They also receive undivided attention as they read, spell, ask questions, and provide answers. Students are given sustained time to read and share their viewpoints. English language learners can practice conversational English while discussing academic English. They may find the buddy system structure less inhibiting and, thus, become more comfortable speaking up as compared to speaking up in front of the whole class. (p. 148)

The three ELLs, who participated in the summer and after-school reading intervention program that focused on developing reading skills with a modified FDL, demonstrated significant reading improvement based on the analyses of their pretest scores on the 3 Minute Reading Assessments: Word Recognition, Fluency and Comprehension, and the pretest scores on the Flynt-Cooter RIC.

Although this study was qualitative in nature, the results related to reading fluency and comprehension are similar to other research findings (Homan, Klesius, & Hite, 1993; Rasinski, 1990; Rasinski et al., 1994; Reutzel & Hollingsworth, 1993). Moreover, a meta-analysis conducted by Therrien (2004) suggested that students who engaged in repeated reading activities with an adult tutor, who offered constructive criticism, made considerable progress in reading comprehension. Given that repeated reading activities with an adult are embedded in the FDL, the results of this present study appear to relate to the results of the meta-analysis.

The Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERAS) consists of two components: academic and recreational reading. Based on the analysis of the pre- and post-surveys, the three ELLs’ attitudes towards recreational and academic reading improved from June of 2008 to January of 2009.
Various researchers have examined the differences in reading attitudes over time using either the ERAS or other calibrated instruments (Alexander & Engin, 1986; Kush & Watkins, 1996; Lazarus & Callahan, 2000; McKenna & Kear, 1990; Roettger, Szymczuk, & Millard, 1979; Wilfong, 2006). Lazarus and Callahan (2000) and Wilfong (2006) used the ERAS to determine group differences in attitudes, whereas the other researchers measured changes in students’ attitudes in reading over a period of time. This present study adds to the literature by using the ERAS to note any changes in students’ reading attitudes over a specified time period.

Positive changes in attitudes towards academic reading is desired given that struggling readers often feel negatively about reading in the classroom (McKenna & Kear, 1990). Students who feel comfortable and confident engaging in a task are more likely to choose to continue the engagement. Although other extraneous factors may have influenced the ELLs’ positive attitudes towards academic reading, the research data collected during this present study suggest that the ELLs’ fluency and comprehension progress, documented during the reading intervention program, positively influenced their attitudes towards reading in school. Likewise, it is also possible that their positive attitudes about reading affected their motivation to continue to participate in a modified FDL. Even though I cannot establish a direct link between the ELLs’ improved attitudes towards academic reading and fluency and comprehension performances, the conclusions of this study corroborate with a study in which struggling second grade readers also demonstrated progress in fluency and improved attitudes towards reading activities (Rinehart, 1999).
In summation, reading progress in the ELLs was also noted through observations made by the ELLs, their parents, their teachers, and myself, as the researcher. Interviews with the ELLs, their parents, and their teachers offered further insight into the affect of social interactions during the intervention program and the impact of a modified FDL. Oral guided repeated reading was a common theme that emerged during the analysis of the interviews. All interviewees mentioned the beneficial relationship between repeated readings and fluency development. A recent study by Griffith and Rasinski (2004) suggested that oral repeated reading activities led to fluency improvement. Likewise, this research is consistent with the National Reading Panel (2001), which recommended that teachers engage their students in oral guided repeated reading activities in order to develop and improve reading fluency.

Implications

Based on the conclusions from the data, numerous implications for classroom teachers, ESL instructors, administrators, teacher educators, and future research are provided.

Introduction

Prior to initiating this study, I was an elementary classroom teacher with diverse teaching experiences in multiple states. Each year while teaching first grade in a Great Lake state, I found an increased number of ELLs in my classroom. Albeit the limited instruction that they received in the school district from the ESL instructor, I recognized that their literacy success depended greatly upon the instruction they received on a daily basis in my classroom. I wanted to discover a way to simultaneously address the literacy needs of these ELLs, as well as my monolingual students. I discovered that the FDL was
research-based, easily implemented within a short period of time, and stimulating enough to engage even the most reluctant learners (Kulich, 2008). Moreover, my struggling readers transitioned into second grade without the need for any additional, remedial reading assistance. Likewise, my ELLs required less assistance from the ESL instructor (Kulich & Evanchan, 2007, 2008). Curious as to the impact that a modified, intensive FDL would have on ELLs, I chose to implement a modified FDL during an English reading intervention program offered to ELLs who attended Urban Vision. Therefore, the results of this study have significant implications for teachers, administrators, teacher educators, and researchers.

**Implications for Classroom Teachers and ESL Instructors**

Manyak (2008) stated that English-speaking students learning to read in their native language often require similar instructional practices that ELLs require while learning to read in their additional language. Explicit instruction in phonemic awareness and word recognition strategies are two such necessary instructional practices. However, Manyak also commented that teachers must provide “rich instruction that fosters ELLs’ oral language development, acknowledges their unique linguistic and cultural resources, and provides them with opportunities to interact with print in meaningful ways (Fitzgerald, 1993; Gutierrez, 2001; Lenters, 2004; Lesaux & Siegel, 2003; Moll & Gonzalez, 1994)” (p. 451).

Whether or not teachers are working with struggling monolingual readers or with ELLs, early and applicable intervention makes all the difference in the lives of these learners (Carnine, Silbert, Kame’enui, Tarver, & Jungjohann, 2006). In order to facilitate any viable intervention, collaboration among colleagues is paramount. ESL instructors,
who are often only able to work with the students on a limited basis, cannot meet all of the ELLs’ literacy needs. Similarly, an elementary classroom teacher with at least 20 to 30 students cannot be expected to accomplish the same task. In order to align strategic teaching and research-based literacy practices with instruction in the regular classroom, as well as in the ESL classroom, continuous professional development for all teachers is critical. ESL instructors need to explicitly and consistently communicate and demonstrate the components of the SIOP Model for the classroom teachers. Likewise, the classroom teachers should practice the FDL on a regular basis and share the components with the ESL instructor. Fitzharris, Blake Jones, and Crawford (2008) stated, “changes in teacher knowledge and procedures are tied to student outcomes and achievement (Guskey, 2000) [and] knowing the developmental nature as well as the depth and breadth of those changes becomes important” (p. 385).

J. A. Williams (2001) proposed that teachers view their ELLs’ native language as an asset rather than as a deficit. Most ELLs and their families generally speak their native language at home. Educators should continue to encourage their ELLs to speak, read, and write at home in their native language. Buttaro and King (2001) suggested that ELLs who are able to rely on their literacy skills in their first language are more adept at developing literacy skills in a second language than are ELLs who attempt to learn English at the expense of their native language. When ELLs maintain their native language they are able to retain their personal identity and preserve their ties with their family and international community (National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education, 2000).

Even though many ELLs’ parents do not demonstrate proficient literacy skills in English, these parents still desire to help their children succeed in school. These parents
often look to teachers for guidance, and Topping (1987a) commented that teachers should guide the parents in the techniques of paired reading. Although Topping did not purposefully address parents of ELLs, he did reference a study, conducted by Hewison and Tizard (1980) in the United Kingdom, which indicated that parents who listen to their children read, regardless of whether or not the parents reciprocate, is a major component in the children’s reading development. The results of this study suggested that even though parents are unable to read in English, they can still facilitate their child’s literacy development by lending a listening ear.

Finally, classroom teachers and ESL instructors are encouraged to incorporate the FDL with poetry into their curricula. The FDL incorporated numerous researched methods of developing and improving fluency and comprehension such as choral reading, echo reading, repeated reading, and peer-assisted reading (Chard et al., 2002; Kuhn & Stahl, 2003; Rasinski, 2006; Therrien, 2004). The combination of these activities in multiple social settings positively impacted the fluency and comprehension skills of the three ELLs. Poetry was the genre of choice due to its relatively short text, humorous nature, musical quality, and relatable themes. Gill (2007) cautioned that teachers need to make an effort to search out poetry that relates to their students and to add this poetry to their classroom libraries. Gill (2007) suggested, “Teachers, more than anyone else, can make sure that children’s poetry does not become a forgotten genre” (p. 625).

**Implications for Administrators**

J. A. Williams (2001) suggested, “The educational decisions we make about ESL students have a tremendous impact on their future” (p. 750). Administrators are wise to reconsider and to reexamine the practices and programs in place for ELLs in order to
verify that instructional time and funds are well spent. The goal of such practices and programs should be to support ELLs in the mainstream classroom so that ELLs may find themselves successfully engaged in literacy activities.

Rasinski and Nathenson-Mejia (1987) suggested that stakeholders reexamine the purpose of teaching students to read. Although the researchers recognized that a practical goal of schools is to teach students to use literacy skills to become productive citizens in a global economy, they also suggested the following:

While productivity is certainly not inappropriate, we would argue that an equally important mandate for schooling exists: Schools need to help children learn to become responsible and caring citizens, and to live peacefully and amicably with one another. Schools must help children see that they live in a world of others and bear a responsibility to others. Selflessness, not selfishness, is as important a determinant of the viability of a society as are the academic levels its citizens achieve. (p. 260)

Many school districts employ literacy coaches to provide ongoing literacy training to teachers in early primary grades. Given the number of ELLs in the elementary public school attended by the ELLs in this research study, the school district decided to hire, in August of 2009, a certified ESL instructor to act as a liaison for all persons with vested interests such as the classroom teacher, the ESL teacher, and the ELLs and their families. This particular school, with its ESL liaison, may become a model for future schools in this country.

Furthermore, professional development for teachers must not be limited to language arts teachers, but expanded to include all teachers regardless of their content area specialization. In this way, all teachers could positively impact the lives of their ELLs all throughout the school day, regardless of the subject material. Literacy skills provide the necessary foundation for all learning that takes place. Therefore, professional
development for content area teachers should demonstrate how to maximize student achievement by collaborating with colleagues, albeit the subject material, in order to incorporate research-based literacy activities into their classrooms.

Finally, the results of this study suggest that the two youngest ELLs who began learning English while attending elementary school had an advantage over the older ELL who was attending middle school. The ELLs attending elementary school were learning to read side-by-side their monolingual peers. A large portion of their school day was spent engaged in literacy activities that promoted the development of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and comprehension. In essence, they were learning to read. However, the older ELL spent the majority of her school day engaged in activities with monolingual peers who had already developed the necessary skills so that they could learn from what they read. The literacy instruction that the older ELL received was strikingly different from what the younger ELLs received, regardless of the fact that the older ELL’s English literacy abilities were not superior to the younger ELLs’ abilities. Therefore, it may be advantageous to examine the benefits and shortcomings of a newcomer’s building to determine if such a building is cost effective for school districts that receive and educate large numbers of ELLs on a consistent basis. This particular building would provide the appropriate instruction to support all ELLs in their development and application of English literacy skills throughout all content areas of the curriculum.

*Implications for Teacher Educators*

Given current predictions on the number of ELLs who will enter into American classrooms within the next 20 years (Flynn & Hill, 2005), it is advisable to reexamine
teacher-education curricula and course requirements offered and mandated at institutions of higher education. Teacher educators need to learn from this and other studies that present the positive benefits of using the FDL with ELLs. Although the data in this study cannot be generalized to other populations of ELLs, the ELLs in this case study are representative of other ELLs who need authentic, research-based literacy activities in order to be successful students and capable citizens in this country. Consequently, this study adds to the body of literacy and second language research, which should be of major interest to teacher educators and to their teacher candidates.

Findings from this study suggest that social interactions during literacy events and the implementation of a modified FDL significantly impacted the literacy progress of three ELLs, and moreover, impacted their overall ability to function successfully in their regular classroom settings. As researcher, I also demonstrated the uncanny relationship between two effective, research-based models of instruction: the FDL and the SIOP Model. Teacher candidates should not only be introduced to these two models, but they should have ample opportunities to implement the models’ components with students, to receive supportive feedback, and to continue to practice the components in appropriate settings throughout their teacher-education courses.

Implications for Research

The implementation of a true-experimental design would provide extensive research in the fields of English language acquisition and fluency and comprehension development. Given this design, the researcher could randomly sample for an experimental group and a control group and justifiably generalize the results to a broader population.
The three ELLs who participated in this study shared the same native language and nationality. In the future, it would be beneficial to implement a modified FDL with ELLs who have dissimilar backgrounds and cultural experiences in order to compare and contrast reading progress within a heterogeneous group of ELLs.

The ELLs participated in this study for a total of 25 weeks. Despite the significant gains during that time, a longitudinal study that tracked the students through high school would provide further insight into the long-term effects of such a reading intervention program. Also, future studies might investigate ELLs with different levels of attitudes towards academic and recreational reading. Analysis of pre- and posttests using the ERAS suggest that the three Karen ELLs in this study shared common, positive attitudes overall towards various different reading scenarios. Obviously, this will not always be the case with different populations of ELLs.

Future studies may employ other instruments to measure the dynamics of social interactions, fluency, comprehension, and reading attitudes. These studies would afford additional evidence about the FDL as a literacy strategy that engages ELLs to become proficient, motivated readers. The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) is one such instrument developed to measure the quality of preschool through third-grade classrooms based on teacher-student interactions in the classroom rather than evaluation of a particular curriculum (Pianta, La Paro, & Hamre, 2008). The CLASS covers three specific domains of exemplary teacher-student interaction, that is, emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support. The quality of the first domain, emotional support, is measured by the teacher’s sensitivity and acceptance of student perspectives and opinions. Next, the CLASS evaluates how well the organization of the
classroom impacts student behavior, productivity, and instructional learning scenarios. Last, the CLASS assesses how adept the teacher is at supporting cognitive and language development. Administrator, program directors, and researchers administer this assessment in 30-minute cycles of observation and scoring, which can be repeated up to 6 times over a 3-hour period. The results of the CLASS provide feedback, pinpointing specific teacher behaviors that need to be altered, in order for teachers to improve their classroom interactions and positively affect the social and academic development of their students. Numerous studies (e.g., NICHD, 2002, 2003, 2005) have validated the CLASS as a viable instrument to measure the social interactions between the teacher and the students in elementary classrooms.

Finally, although I, as researcher in this current study, collected and examined the three ELLs’ written work that they completed in their poetry folders, I did not specifically analyze their writing processes and the relationship between their first and second languages. Rubin and Carlan (2005) commented that very few published studies (e.g., Escamilla, 2000; Freeman & Freeman, 1997; Moll, Saez, & Dworin, 2001) explored the writing development of ELLs. Therefore, further research is needed in order to corroborate previous findings.

Summary

This chapter has presented the analysis of the data collected to answer the two research questions chosen to shed light on the impact of the students’ social interactions during the intervention program, and to describe how systematic language instruction using a modified FDL impacted the students’ fluency and comprehension progress.
Findings from the data suggest that when three ELLs were actively engaged in authentic, research-based literacy activities such as the FDL, they improved their fluency and comprehension skills, and maintained their high levels of interest in academic and recreational reading. This particular reading intervention program enhanced their metacognitive and metalinguistic awareness, which are indicative of good readers.

It is no surprise that educators are constantly attempting to find ways to continue to motivate students and equip them with the necessary skills to achieve proficiency in reading. The FDL is a conduit through which students become empowered and develop positive self-images as readers. All educational stakeholders are wise to take into account the implications of this study and any future studies that demonstrate the positive benefits of using a modified FDL with ELLs.

In conclusion, the following excerpt was the last entry from my journal that demonstrates the overall impact that this reading intervention program had not only on the ELLs, but also on me as the researcher.

While packing up my materials, all except for the books that I donated for the children who attend Urban Vision, I suddenly, yet not surprisingly, became emotional. It was in that small room where I had worked tirelessly with children who were so different from any other children with whom I had worked, that I had an epiphany. Many children are passionate about the materialistic things that they want because they don’t already have them. These three ELLs were passionate about books. They wanted, almost more than anything else, to learn to listen, speak, read, write, and perform in English. Moreover, they wanted to be smart, capable, and proud of themselves. As much as these ELLs were different from my former students, they clearly dreamed the same dreams. My role as an educator, no matter the subject or the students that I taught, has always been to help students realize their potentials, work towards achieving them, and celebrating their successes. As I write this entry, I know that Naw Bee Ko, Mi Mi, and Naw Eh Ywa Paw are proudly listening, speaking, reading, writing, and performing in English, and they are serving as positive, powerful role models for other ELLs who share the same dreams. (1-22-09)


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Cunningham, P. M. (2005). If they don’t read much, how they ever gonna get good? The *Reading Teacher, 59*(1), 88-90.

Cunningham, P. M. (2006). *What if they can say the words but don’t know what they mean?* (pp. 708-711). The International Reading Association, Inc.

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APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW LETTER

NOTICE OF APPROVAL

Date: August 25, 2008
To: Lynne S. Kulich
3651 Deer Trace Avenue, N.W.
Canton, Ohio 44708

From: Sharon McWhorter, IRB Administrator
Re: IRB Number 20080713
"The Fluency Development Lesson and English Language Learners"

Thank you for submitting an IRB Application for Review of Research Involving Human Subjects for the referenced project. Your protocol represents minimal risk to subjects and has been approved under Expedited Category A7.

Approval Date: August 25, 2008
Expiration Date: August 25, 2009
Continuation Application Due: August 11, 2009

In addition, the following are approved:
[ ] Waiver of documentation of consent
[ ] Waiver or alteration of consent
[ ] Research involving children
[ ] Research involving prisoners

Please adhere to the following IRB policies:

- IRB approval is given for not more than 12 months. If your project will be active for longer than one year, it is your responsibility to submit a continuation application prior to the expiration date. We request submission two weeks prior to expiration to ensure sufficient time for review.
- A copy of the approved consent form must be submitted with any continuation application.
- If you plan to make any changes to the approved protocol you must submit a continuation application for change and it must be approved by the IRB before being implemented.
- Any adverse reactions/incidents must be reported immediately to the IRB.
- If this research is being conducted for a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation, you must file a copy of this letter with the thesis or dissertation.
- When your project terminates you must submit a Final Report Form in order to close your IRB file.

Additional information and all IRB forms can be accessed on the IRB web site at: https://www.ualakron.edu/research/irb/irb/home.php

Approved consent form/s enclosed

Cc: Lynn Spoden, Advisor
Cc: Rosalee Hall, IRB Chair

Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs
Akron, OH 44325-2102
330-972-7666 • 330-972-4281 Fax
The University of Akron is an Equal Education and Employment Institution
APPENDIX B

PARENTAL CONSENT FORM FOR CHILDREN UNDER 18

Parental Consent Form for Children Under 18

September 15, 2008

Dear Parent or Guardian:

I am a doctoral student at the University of Akron and a former elementary classroom teacher. I have worked with numerous English Language Learners and their families while I taught in Georgia and in Ohio. Teaching is my passion, and I have always enjoyed working with English Language Learners.

Currently, I am interested in the impact, if any, that the Fluency Development Lesson has on the reading attitudes and overall reading development of English Language Learners. Your child has completed a reading attitude questionnaire and a fluency/comprehension assessment before participating in the Urban Vision English classes. The questionnaire and reading assessment were administered so that I could design the most effective reading intervention program for your child. I am asking permission to reassess your child to determine the effectiveness of the reading intervention program. I am also asking permission to interview your child in order to understand the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of this program. This study has been approved by the University of Akron’s Institutional Review Board for Protection of Human Subjects. However, in order to proceed with this study, I need your written permission before your child is permitted to participate in this study.

There are no anticipated benefits or risks to your child, aside from helping me gain a better understanding of the reading attitudes and abilities of English Language Learners. The data gathered from this research will help teachers determine if in fact the Fluency Development Lesson has a positive impact on the reading attitudes and reading development of their students. The results of these assessments will be shared with Dr. Lynne Smolik, my research advisor. I will not publicly present any data that is identifiable by your child’s name. I will keep the data in a secure location.

If you have any questions about this study, you may contact me at (330) 832-7568, my faculty advisor, Dr. Smolik, at (330) 972-6666, or the directors of Urban Vision, Mr. and Mrs. Matheus, at (330) 762-1163. You may also contact the IRB at (330) 972-6666 if you have any questions about the rights of research participants.

I hope that you will allow your child to participate in this study so that I can better understand how instructional programs may impact your child’s reading progress. If you grant permission, then please sign and return this form to Urban Vision. I certainly appreciate your consideration.

Thank you,

Lynne Kulich, Doctoral Candidate
College of Education
The University of Akron

I have read the information provided above and all of my questions have been answered. I voluntarily agree to the participation of my child in this study. I will receive a copy of this consent form for my information.

Parent / Legal Guardian Signature __________________________________________ Name of Child __________________________________________
APPENDIX C

ASSENT FORM FOR CHILDREN UNDER 18

Asent Form for Children Under 18

The Fluency Development Lesson
and English Language Learners

1. My name is Lynne Kalich and I am a student in the Department of Curricular & Instructional Studies, at The University of Akron.

2. I am asking you to take part in a research study because I am trying to learn more about how to help students learn to read in English.

3. If you agree to be in this study [describe what will take place from the child’s point of view in language that is both appropriate to the child’s maturity and age].

4. There are no risks to you by participating in this study.

5. There are no benefits to you by participating in this study.

6. Please talk this over with your parents before you decide whether or not to participate. I will also ask your parents to give their permission for you to take part in this study. But even if your parents say “yes” you can still decide not to do this.

7. If you don’t want to be in this study, you don’t have to participate. Remember, being in this study is up to you and no one will be upset if you don’t want to participate or even if you change your mind later and want to stop.

8. To show my appreciation for your participation you will receive a book of poems.

9. You can ask any questions that you have about the study. If you have a question later that you didn’t think of now, you can call me at home at (330) 832-7568.

10. Signing your name at the bottom means that you agree to be in this study. You will be given a copy of this form to keep.

Name of Subject

Age

Signature

Date
APPENDIX D

CONSENT STATEMENT PARENT INTERVIEWS

CONSENT STATEMENT
PARENT INTERVIEWS

September 15, 2008

Dear Parent or Guardian:

I have had the pleasure helping your child with English this summer at Urban Vision. I am conducting a study to determine the effectiveness of the Fluency Development Lesson, which I used with your child this summer.

I would like to meet with you for one hour to conduct an interview based on an interview protocol that I have created. This protocol consists of a set of questions about your child's English reading experiences. Your allowing me to do this would help me gain a better understanding of how your child has developed his/her English reading skills, and I would be grateful for your help.

Your participation in this interview is voluntary. If during the interview you feel uncomfortable for any reason, I will, of course, conclude the interview and leave immediately. You may withdraw from participation at any time without penalty. There are no anticipated benefits or risks to you.

I will tape record the interview so that I may transcribe the questions and responses. Your confidentiality will be protected throughout this study. Any data obtained from you through this interview will be kept confidential and will not be viewed by anyone but myself and my research advisor. All identifying information will be retained in a locked cabinet or other locked storage area. The data will be kept for twelve months and will be destroyed upon completion of the study.

This study has been approved by the University of Akron's Institutional Review Board for Protection of Human Subjects. If this plan meets your approval, please check the box below.

If you have any questions or concerns, you may reach me at (330) 832-7568 or my advisor, Dr. Lynn Smolen at (330) 972-6961. Thank you for your consideration.

I agree to participate in this interview. ☐

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CONSENT STATEMENT
TEACHER INTERVIEWS

April, 2009

Dear Teacher:

I have had the pleasure helping your student with English reading skills at Urban Vision. I am conducting a study to determine the effectiveness of the Fluency Development Lesson, which I used with your student during the English reading intervention program at Urban Vision.

I would like to meet with you for one hour to conduct an interview based on an interview protocol that I have created. This protocol consists of a set of questions about your student's English reading experiences. Your allowing me to do this would help me gain a better understanding of how your student has developed her English reading skills, and I would be grateful for your help.

Your participation in this interview is voluntary. If during the interview you feel uncomfortable for any reason, I will, of course, conclude the interview and leave immediately. You may withdraw from participation at any time without penalty. There are no anticipated benefits or risks to you.

I will tape record the interview so that I may transcribe the questions and responses. Your confidentiality will be protected throughout this study. Any data obtained from you through this interview will be kept confidential and will not be viewed by anyone but myself and my research advisor. All identifying information will be retained in a locked cabinet or other locked storage area. The data will be kept for twelve months and will be destroyed upon completion of the study.

This study has been approved by the University of Akron's Institutional Review Board for Protection of Human Subjects. If this plan meets your approval, please check the box below.

If you have any questions or concerns, you may reach me at (330) 832-7568 or my research advisor, Dr. Lynn Smolen at (330) 972-6961. Thank you for your consideration.

I have read the information provided above and all of my questions have been answered. I voluntarily agree to participate in this interview. I will receive a copy of this consent form for my information.

__________________________________________  ______________________________________
Participant signature                          Date

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APPENDIX F

WRITING ACTIVITY SAMPLE

WARNING - NAW BEE KO

Why should you keep your finger out of your nose?

Sticking my finger inside my nose

is dirty.

What should you do if you see someone with his finger in his nose?

I would give him a tissue.

You're a

Make a list of words that rhyme with snail. Use one word in a sentence.

mail  fall

palm  stale

mail  whole

Today I got a card in the mail.
APPENDIX G

KNOCK KNOCK JOKES

Knock Knock Jokes

Knock – knock.
Who’s there?
Aaron.
Aaron who?
Why Aaron you opening the door?

Knock – knock.
Who’s there?
Abe Lincoln.
Abe Lincoln who?
Abe Lincoln yellow
Light means slow down!

Ronny M. Cole
APPENDIX H

SAMPLE LESSON PLAN

Lesson Plan # 18
Monday, July 28, 2008
2:00 – 3:30
Urban Vision

Features of the Model

Background: This is the twenty-first day of our English session. The students are not accustomed to eating pancakes for breakfast so I’ll make pancakes with butter and syrup for them to enjoy.

English Proficiency Level: Intermediate Level
Grade: Elementary

Day & Time: July 28, 2008, 2:00 – 3:30

Poem: Pancake?

ELP Standards

ELP Standards: Listening:
Standard 1.1 Comprehend spoken instructions (Intermediate Level)
- Follow simple and routine oral directions with limited support
- Follow multi-step directions with repetition or rephrasing within a familiar context, or with visual support

Standard 1.2 Identify main ideas and supporting details of spoken English (Intermediate Level)
- Identify main idea of longer, routine messages in familiar context, which may be supported by visuals
- Identify main idea and details of fiction read aloud, with support

Standard 1.3 Determine speaker attitude and point of view (Intermediate Level)
- Identify and/or describe range of speaker’s attitudes, moods or emotions in extended oral messages by reading body language, and/or tone and
voice quality, with limited support

**Standard 1.4 Comprehend meaning of academic/specialized vocabulary used by speakers (Intermediate Level)**

- Recognize and comprehend high-frequency grade -level academic spoken vocabulary when presented with contextual support

**Speaking:**

**Standard 2.1 Speak fluently using clear pronunciation with appropriate intonation and stress (Intermediate Level)**

- Produce a wide-range of words, phrases and sentences that can be understood
- Produce most phrases and sentences with appropriate intonation and stress

**Standard 2.2 Speak using appropriate grammar and vocabulary (Intermediate Level)**

- Use a range of familiar and newly-introduced vocabulary when speaking

**Standard 2.3 Speak for varied purposes, both informal and formal, with focus, relevance and cohesion (Intermediate Level)**

- Request clarification and/or information in a variety of settings
- Seek and/or give support to others
- Identify and use appropriate language styles, gestures, and topics for different kinds of interactions, with limited support

**Reading:**

**Standard 3.1 Demonstrate reading strategies (Intermediate Level)**

- Develop and use background knowledge to gain meaning from texts, with support
- Use pictures and other graphics to help identify purpose and meaning of texts, with limited support

**Standard 3.2 Identify meaning of written vocabulary (Intermediate Level)**

- Use context clues to determine meaning of new vocabulary, with support

**Standard 3.3 Read with comprehension (Intermediate Level)**

- Follow simple written directions, with support
-Recall, retell and sequence information from fictional and non-fictional texts, with support

**Writing:**

**Standard 4.1 Write using appropriate conventions and grammar (Intermediate Level)**

-Write simple sentences independently with correct capitalization, punctuation, spelling and moderate control of grammar

**Standard 4.2 Write for varied purposes and audiences, with appropriate tone and voice, using various media (Intermediate Level)**

-Write as a learning strategy, with support
-Write to demonstrate learning, share ideas and present new information, with support
-Write to demonstrate learning, with support

**Language Objectives:**

1. The students will review vocabulary and practice reading the previous poems.
2. The students will listen to the new poem and follow along with the text.
3. The students will listen to and repeat pertinent vocabulary as it is presented, in relation to the meaning of the poem.
4. The students will repeat each line of the poem.
5. The students will chorally read the poem with the instructor.
6. The students will chorally read the poem without the instructor.
7. The students will discuss and explain how the poem relates to them on a personal level.

**Vocabulary:** pancakes, sweet, piping hot, fresh, griddle, syrup, butter, spread, cut, stack, top, middle, bottom, & terrible

**Materials:** Pancakes by Shel Silverstein, poetry chart, poetry folders with poem and activity sheet, school boxes with pencils and crayons, index cards with storage box, mini dry erase board and marker, stack of books, pancake mix, measuring cups, spoons, pancake flipper, water, griddles, butter, syrup, plates, forks, knives, & napkins,
Motivation

SIOP Model

Begin the lesson by reviewing the knock-knock Jokes that we have studied. The students will take turns playing the alternating roles. Next, I'll ask the students to talk about what they like to eat for breakfast. I'll explain that the poem we're going to read is called Pancakes, and after we practice reading it we'll make pancakes to eat.

Content/Presentation

The students and volunteers will join me, seated on the carpet and at the tables. I will display a stack of books and ask the students to predict what would happen if I pulled a book from the middle of the stack. What would happen if I pulled the book from the bottom? I'll have volunteers attempt to pull a book. What would happen if we pull the book on the top? Next, I'll read the poem twice before asking them to repeat each line after me. I'll discuss the pertinent vocabulary words. Finally, the students will chorally read the poem with me.

Practice/Review with Small Group Instruction

Each student will work in small groups with his/her volunteer. First, the volunteer will begin by reading the poem. The student will follow along with her personal copy. Next, the student will repeat each line after the volunteer. Together, the student and volunteer will chorally read the poem several times. The student and volunteer may practice reading alternating lines of the poem. Then, the volunteer, in collaboration with the student, will suggest vocabulary from the poem to write onto individual index cards. The student will include a definition and use the word in a complete sentence. The student may also wish to draw a corresponding illustration. The volunteer will assist the student with the written completion of the activity sheet. The students will answer both knowledge level and higher order questions related to the poem. The volunteer may wish to use sponge letters to help students make connections between words in the poem and other words that may rhyme or share similar spelling patterns. At the completion of this session, the student and volunteer will reread the poem several times; careful to attend to accuracy, pace, and intonation.

Assessment

Finally, with about fifteen minutes remaining in our session, we will transition back to a whole-class setting. I will reread the poem with accuracy, correct pace, and intonation. Then, the students will chorally read with me before reading the poem on their own. I will monitor correct
pronunciation and intonation. I will use the visual aids to review and assess
comprehension of vocabulary and pertinent phrases. We will end the
session with small groups of students who wish to read the poem for the
class. I'll also ask for mystery readers.
APPENDIX I

FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL FOR STUDENTS

Focus Group Protocol for Students

I. What did you like about the English reading program at Urban Vision?

II. What didn’t you like about the English reading program at Urban Vision?

III. What changes would you make to the English reading program to make it better?

IV. What books do you like to read at school?

V. What books do you like to read at home?

VI. What makes you a good reader?
APPENDIX J

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR STUDENTS

Interview Protocol for Students

I. Think about all of the poems you learned with me. Which ones did you like the best? Why? Which ones didn’t you like? Why?

II. If you were the new English reading teacher at Urban Vision, then tell me what activities you would do with the students. Why would you want to do these activities?

III. Do you think that English reading class has helped you with your school work? Why?

IV. What will you do with your poetry folder?

V. How could you help other Karen students with their reading?
APPENDIX K

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR PARENTS

Interview Protocol for Parents

I. How do you think your child feels about reading in English at home?
   A. What does your child like to read? Why?
   B. What doesn’t your child like to read? Why?
   C. Describe, if any, the reading activities that you engage in with your child at home.

II. How do you think your child feels about reading in English at school?
    A. What does your child like to read? Why?
    B. What doesn’t your child like to read? Why?
    C. Describe, if any, the reading activities at school that have been a positive experience for your child.

III. How do you think your child felt about attending English classes at Urban Vision?
    A. What did your child like best about the English classes?
    B. What did your child like least about the English classes?
    C. Did you notice any English reading progress with your child?
    D. Did you notice any changes in your child’s attitude towards reading in English after attending the English classes?

IV. How would you describe your child’s reading abilities in English?
    A. What does your child do, if anything, when she comes to a word in a text that she can’t read?
    B. What would you like your child’s future teacher to know about your child’s reading interests or abilities?
APPENDIX L

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR SCHOOL TEACHERS

Interview Protocol for School Teachers

I. How do you think your student feels about reading in English at school?
   A. What does your student like to read? Why?
   B. What doesn’t your student like to read? Why?
   C. Describe, if any, the reading activities at school that your student appears to enjoy.
   D. Describe, if any, the reading activities at school that appear to be more challenging for your student.
   E. Does your student volunteer to read in class? (Leader or Follower)
   F. Does your student have a support system in class – perhaps other students who assist her if needed?

II. How do you think your student feels about reading in English at home?
   A. What does your student like to read? Why?
   B. What doesn’t your student like to read? Why?
   C. Describe, if any, the reading activities that you encourage or require your student to engage in at home.

III. How would you describe your student’s reading strengths and weaknesses in English?
   A. Discuss your student’s fluency skills and ability to comprehend grade level texts.
   B. What changes, if any, in social interactions did you observe with your student throughout this intervention program?
   C. What changes, if any, in fluency and comprehension did you observe with your student throughout this intervention program?
   D. What changes, if any, did you observe in your student’s attitudes about reading?
   E. What would you like your student’s future teachers to know about your student’s reading interests and abilities?
APPENDIX M

WRITING ACTIVITY SAMPLE

CARROTS - NAW BEE KO

Carrots

They say that carrots are good for your eyes,
They swear that they improve your sight,
But I'm seein' worse than I did last night—
You think maybe I ain't usin' 'em right?

Sh尔 Silverstein
APPENDIX N

WRITING ACTIVITY SAMPLE

SHARING – NAW EH YWA

PAW

Sorting Circles

I have a Picture of Girl.

and I have a Picture of Boy.

and I have a Picture of Girl.

and I have Picture of banana.

Color Book

Title/Topic: Show and talk

Name:

11-19-08
APPENDIX O

WRITING ACTIVITY SAMPLE

I LIKE TO... – NAW EH YWA PAW

What do you like to do outside when the sun is shining?

I like to play ball.
I like to play swimming in a lake.
I like to play volley ball.
I like to read outside.
I like to play outside.
I like to play soccer.
I like to play with my friend.
I like to read outside.

Compound Words:

- Butter + fly = butterfly
- Cup + cake = cupcake
- Up + stairs = upstairs
- Mail + box = mailbox
- Mush + room = mushroom
- School + yard = schoolyard

Use three of the above words in sentences.

The butterfly fly.
I make cupcakes.
I go upstairs.
APPENDIX P

URBAN VISION DOLLAR