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THE EFFECT THAT AN INTENSIVE LITERACY PROGRAM,  
COMPREHENSION EARLY LITERACY LEARNING (CELL), HAS ON  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS' READING PROFICIENCY

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A Thesis  
Presented to the  
Faculty of  
California State University,  
San Bernardino

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts  
in  
Education:  
Special Education

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by  
Susana Puerta Ramos  
September 2004

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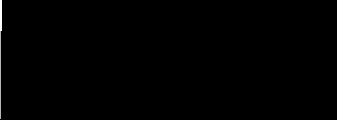
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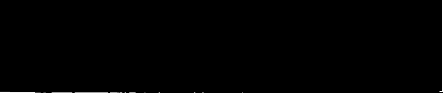
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by  
Susana Puerta Ramos  
September 2004

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## ABSTRACT

This research paper investigates the effectiveness of an intensive literacy program, Comprehensive Early Literacy Learning (CELL), to teach Second Language Learners to read and write in English. Since this program provides numerous opportunities to practice the English language through literacy activities, the researcher believes it is a good method to teach English in its oral and written forms.

Although previous research demonstrated that CELL has had good outcomes for literacy acquisition and enhancing reading comprehension, there is not much research that tests its effectiveness with English language learners, a group that is at risk in our public schools. The intention of the researcher is to determine whether English language learners enrolled in this Program actually improve their literacy skills faster and more solidly than other English language learners that are not involved in any literacy programs.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my parents, whose effort in life has allowed me to achieve my educational and professional goals. Without their love, support and encouragement I would not have done it. To them I dedicate this research project. I love you.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### General Statement of the Problem

This is a descriptive study that is investigating the improvements that English language learners make in the areas of reading and writing, as a result of their inclusion in the literacy program, Comprehensive Early Literacy Learning (CELL). The assessment instrument utilized to determine the progress that the participant students made is the *Dominie Reading and Writing Assessment Portfolio* (DeFord, 2001).

The current study also analyzes the basic components of the CELL program and its theoretical base in the theories of language and learning proposed by Chomsky, Clay and Vygotsky among others. This will be explained in the Literature Review.

#### Significance of the Thesis

It has been proven that students who are good readers in the early grades tend also to be good readers in the higher grades. Reading efficiency is the best indicator for academic success: students who learn to read early tend to get good grades throughout their entire education

(Loban, 1976; Buckley, 1992; Gentile, 2003). Since the acquisition of reading skills during the early grades appears to be such a decisive factor in academic success, it seems reasonable that teachers need to be trained to promote literacy in their classrooms. In addition, researchers need to investigate new and effective instructional strategies to enhance literacy instruction. This is what CELL intends to do: to provide teachers with the professional skills to promote literacy in their classrooms.

The present study is also relevant for the educational community because it addresses issues of literacy acquisition for Hispanic students, a population that currently experiences one of the largest high school dropout rates in the United States (National Center of Education Statistics, 2000).

In 2000, 44.2 percent of Hispanic young adults born outside the United States were high school dropouts. Hispanic young adults born within the United States were much less likely to be dropouts. However, when looking at just those young adults born in the United States, Hispanic youths were still the more likely to be dropouts than other young adults. (p.v)

Because these students are placed in settings where instruction is provided in a language they do not speak

well, they experience difficulties with learning to read and write. This difficulty is also reflected in special education classrooms, where we find an over-identification of the Hispanic population. The researcher believes it is important to investigate new and different ways of teaching English language learners to read and write in English in order to help them succeed academically.

CELL has shown to be an effective literacy promoter. However, the question of whether Spanish-speaking students in this Program learn to read and write more easily than Hispanics not in the Program has not been deeply explored. It is important to look for the best ways to make it easier for these students to learn to read and write in English, a task that is not easy for them, considering language differences.

#### Research Questions

The study was guided by an intention to find answers for the following questions:

1. Will students in the CELL group read significantly higher level books? Will their reading level be significantly higher than the non-CELL students

when measured by the *Dominie Reading and Writing Assessment Portfolio* (DeFord, 2001)?

2. Will CELL students significantly improve their writing? Will they write significantly better than the non-CELL students when measured by the *Dominie Reading and Writing Assessment Portfolio* (DeFord, 2001)?

#### Limitations

The researcher is aware that when working with a group of students of a considerable size for such a long time (a school year) there is the probability that some students will move to a different school district or even to a different state. This mobility might alter the progress of the study, especially if the transient students are from the experimental group. In fact, three of the students that participated in the research (two from the treatment group and one from the control group) moved to different schools while the research was being implemented. This is a factor that is out of the researcher's control.

Another limitation for the study is the generalization of its results. With the intention of making the study as accurate and reliable as possible, the study began with a

total of 24 participant students. The researcher is aware that even though the sample utilized for the research is significant, it might not be very large. This might affect the generalization of this study's results to the larger population.

Finally, the researcher is aware that any instrument utilized that might be used to evaluate students' reading and writing proficiency has its own limitations; no assessment tool has a 100% validity and/or reliability. Besides, there are students' internal factors that might be affecting their scores and that are out of the researcher's control, such as emotional state, etc. Therefore the possibility that the assessment tool utilized in this research might not be reflecting the students' actual reading/writing level must be considered.

#### Delimitations

In the earliest stages of the current study the researcher intended to design a project that would evaluate not only literacy acquisition (both reading and writing) but also language proficiency of the English language learners in the study. This initial consideration was based on the fact that English proficiency is developed in

the CELL Program through literacy activities. Oral language is enhanced in every single element of the CELL framework, therefore it would be necessary to evaluate the impact that this Program has on its development. However, once the research project was initiated, the researcher realized how different these two topics are and how difficult it would be to evaluate them both in the same study. Therefore it was decided to narrow the research focus just to literacy acquisition, considering that a complete and independent research in language should be implemented to evaluate how students in the CELL program improve their proficiency in English.

#### Assumptions

The following assumptions apply to this thesis:

1. CELL is an early literacy program that is able to enhance students' literacy skills (both, reading proficiency and writing quality).
2. The CELL program provides teachers with good instructional skills to teach students to read and write in English.
3. Reading proficiency is a predictor of academic achievement.

4. The effect of social and economic differences can be controlled with an appropriate early literacy program.

#### Definition of Terms

1. Active discovery is a process where students get engaged in their own learning rather than passively listening to a lecture. The teacher's task is to guide students in the process, more than providing them with knowledge.
2. According to the California Reading Task Force (1995) a Balanced literacy framework must include 1) an organized, explicit skills program that includes phonics, phonemic awareness, and decoding skills instruction to address the needs of the emergent reader; 2) a strong literature, language and comprehension program that balances between oral and written language; 3) ongoing diagnosis and assessment; and 4) an early intervention program that provides individual support for at-risk students.
3. The Dominie Reading and Writing Assessment Portfolio is an evaluation instrument developed by



Diane DeFord in 2001 to evaluate the growth that students from Kindergarten through Fifth grade demonstrate in reading and writing. The different areas that are evaluated are oral reading comprehension, oral reading fluency, knowledge about words and letters, phonemic and phonetic awareness, sentence writing and spelling.

4. "Fluency is the ability to read a text accurately and quickly. Fluent readers decode automatically and therefore are able to concentrate their attention on the meaning of the text. Fluent readers recognize and comprehend words at the same time" (Swartz, Shook, Klein, Moon, Bunnell, Belt, & Huntley, 2003, p. 6).
5. A text is at a frustration level when "the student is able to read at less than 90% word-identification accuracy and less than 75% comprehension" (Swartz, Shook, Klein, Moon, Bunnell, Belt, & Huntley, 2003, p. 6).
6. Guided reading is an activity in which the teacher works with small, homogeneous groups of students (from one to five students) based upon their abilities and needs. The purpose of guided reading

is to improve the reading skills the students in the group already have, and to help them develop new ones to increase independency.

7. Independent reading is when students read books of their own choosing at a level of difficulty that challenges them but which is not so difficult that it discourages independence. During this time the teacher observes students' reading behavior, taking anecdotal records to identify strengths and to determine their needs.
8. A text is at an independent level when "the student is able to read with above 95% word-identification and better than 90% comprehension" (Swartz, Shook, Klein, Moon, Bunnell, Belt, & Huntley, 2003, p. 6).
9. Independent writing is when students write their own stories making use of their own abilities, without the support of others. During this time the teacher observes students' writing behaviors, taking anecdotal records to identify strengths and to determine individual needs.
10. A text is at an instructional level when "the student is able to read with 90-95% word-identification accuracy and 75% comprehension"

(Swartz, Shook, Klein, Moon, Bunnell, Belt, & Huntley, 2003, p. 6).

11. An interactive read aloud is a reading activity during which teachers read aloud to students from a book to introduce them to the pleasures of reading and books (Barrentine, 1996). At the same time that they might be teaching a content area (such as Math, Social Sciences...) they are also modeling the reading process. It is called interactive because students participate in the reading by making predictions about the story, making connections to their own experiences (text-to-self), to the world (text-to-world) and to other texts they have read (text-to-text) that help them better comprehend the meaning of the story. (Keene & Zimmermann, 1997).
12. Interactive writing is a group activity in which all the students along with their teacher share the pen to collaboratively write a text or message. Every student collaborates at their own level of proficiency (Swartz, Klein & Shook, 2001).
13. Oral language is a specific type of communication using oral signs. It is a faculty that only humans have. We are born with a natural predisposition to

language acquisition as a way to communicate, however it must be stimulated in order for it to be developed.

14. Phonemic awareness is the ability to understand that speech can be broken down into sentences; sentences into words; words into syllables; and syllables into phonemes (sounds). It is the capacity to notice, think about, and work with sounds in oral language.
15. Phonics is the existing relationship between spoken and written language. In order to be able to decode a text, readers need to be aware of the phoneme-grapheme correspondence, that is, the established relationship between sounds of spoken language and the letters of the alphabet.
16. Reading comprehension is to understand the meaning of a text, that is, to make sense of a text. "It involves the ability to construct meaning from and to respond to a text, using background knowledge as well as printed information" (Robinson, et. al., 2000, p.36). Reading comprehension also includes the idea that the reader will receive or infer some meaning from the message that the author intended.

17. Reading strategies are those that allow the reader to read effectively, that is to reach comprehension.
18. Remedial teaching is a specialized instruction provided to students whose performance is below average.
19. Scaffolding is a teaching technique in which the teacher gradually reduces the amount of support given to the student until complete independence is achieved.
20. Shared reading is defined as a reading activity where teacher and students read aloud a text at the same time. Once the text is familiar to students, the teacher uses it as a teaching tool to help the students learn about a specific content area (Swartz, Shook & Klein, 2002).
21. Vocabulary is the words that we use in our speech (oral vocabulary) and the ones we can read in print (reading vocabulary). In order to comprehend a text, a reader needs to know most of the words in it, or at least be able to infer them from the context.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### Comprehensive Early Literacy Learning's Foundations

Comprehensive Early Literacy Learning is a professional development program that provides teachers with the instructional skills they need in order to enhance their students' literacy skills. Its aim is to transform classrooms into literacy-rich and risk-free environments, where students have the opportunity to try new learning and to practice new strategies throughout the day.

Being aware that reading and writing is the foundation for academic success (Loban, 1976; Buckley, 2000; Gentile, 2003), CELL promotes literacy skills in students from the earliest grades (PreK-3). It also stresses the importance of intervening on reading difficulties before they can affect students' motivation and their academic success: "It is hoped that powerful instruction and access to good first teaching for all children will impact the need for remedial reading and special education instruction" (Swartz, Shook, & Klein, 2002, p.18).

## Oral Language Development

Given the importance of oral language development within the classroom (Chomsky, 1972; Loban, 1976; Green & Harker, 1982; Buckley, 1992; Clay, 1998), CELL tries to ensure that oral language is part of the every day instruction in the program's classrooms. This is done by emphasizing it in every element of its framework: "Oral language is the foundation for all of the elements of early literacy learning. The dialogue, discussion, verbal interaction, and active oral engagement of each student is stressed as each of the framework elements is used" (Swartz, Shook & Klein, 2003, p. 6).

Traditional teaching approaches assume that students will improve their oral language skills by promoting the much more abstract processes such as reading and writing. However, this rarely occurs. On the contrary, students whose oral language is not well-developed continue to have this need until it is specifically addressed. This affects their reading and writing achievement, and hence, their academic success. As Buckley stated on a review of Walter Loban's work, "...whenever students are denied the persuasiveness of oral language to ease and simplify the abstractions of reading and writing, many students fail.

Unfortunately, Loban warned, such students continue to fail as long as their language instruction remains restricted" (Buckley, 1992, p.623).

In agreement with Loban, who encouraged teachers to promote oral language instruction within the classroom, CELL urges teachers to maintain a balanced and integrated language approach, in which reading and writing is in equilibrium with listening and speaking within the curriculum. This is especially important for students whose oral language is not well-developed, as is the case with English language learners, the population on which we in this study is focused.

Clay also supported the idea of providing students in classrooms with many opportunities to practice and improve their language skills:

We could schedule time to when children with poor language skills would be encourage to initiate learning opportunities for themselves and then be encouraged to talk, to question, to explain to other children and to the teacher as she moves among them extending their expressions of ideas into an oral statement. (Clay, 1985)

#### Literacy Promotion throughout the Day

Loban encouraged teachers to "listen to the equivalent of a book a day; talk the equivalent of a book a week; read the equivalent of a book a month; and write the equivalent



of a book a year" (Buckley, 1992, p. 623). Concurring with his statement, CELL-trained teachers provide students many opportunities to practice their reading and writing all through the day. Their lesson plans are based on literacy activities, which are used to teach other curricular areas: "The frameworks have been designed to structure classrooms that use literacy activities throughout the day of every school day. Other curricular areas are delivered using literacy activities as the method of instruction" (Swartz, Shook & Klein, 2003, p. 1). Their classrooms are to be converted into literacy-rich environments. In order to do so, they are to provide students, not only with a great variety of books, but also with many writing samples displayed over the walls as a resource.

#### Active Discovery

CELL also agrees with the necessity for incorporating active discovery into classrooms. It encourages teachers to provide students with the most productive learning experience, and to help them solve the difficulties they may encounter themselves, instead of solving the difficulties for them. Students learn through experience, by making mistakes and finding solutions. Teachers are responsible for creating environments where students do not

feel intimidated about making mistakes when investigating new ways of solving problems. This idea is consistent with the theory of another relevant psychologist, Jean Piaget, who was the first one that incorporated active discovery into classrooms. "To understand is to discover, or reconstruct by rediscovery, and such conditions must be complied with if in the future individuals are to be formed who are capable of production and creativity and not simply repetition" (Piaget, 1973, p. 20).

CELL, concurring with Piaget, is against traditional instructional methods where students play a passive role and teachers are merely information deliverers. In the CELL model, students are in charge of learning and it is teachers' responsibility to guide and stimulate them through the process: "The model (CELL) stresses and encourages active participation from each student regardless of his or her current level of literacy acquisition." (Swartz, Shook & Klein, 2003, p. 1). "The active engagement of each student is stressed throughout the ... framework, with verbal interaction and reading and writing activities taught across the content fields." (Swartz, Shook & Klein, 2003, p. 8)

## Student's Independence: Ongoing Observation and Anecdotal Notes

CELL intends that all students participate in the learning process according to their individual current level of knowledge. It is its final goal that all students become independent learners. In order to succeed, teachers need to know what strategies and skills their students are able to use independently to problem-solve successfully; what strategies/skills they are able to use with support; and what strategies/skills they still need to learn. Teachers are urged to consider students' level of development as a basis to build new knowledge. They need to know their students' strengths and needs. This is consistent with the work of another important psychologist, Vygotsky, and his concept of "Zone of Proximal Development" (ZPD). The ZPD defines the distance between the actual developmental level -determined by independent problem solving, and the level of potential -determined through problem solving under the guidance/help of a more capable other. A child's actual developmental level indicates a child's level of mental development at a particular time. It indicates the functions that have already matured in the child. A child's ZPD defines those functions that have not

matured yet, but that are in the process of maturing and developing (Vygotsky, 1978).

CELL urges its teachers to use ongoing and thorough observation of students' independent performance to identify their strengths and needs. Teachers are trained to observe students as they are reading and writing independently and to take notes about the strategies they seem to have mastered and those they are having difficulty with. The more they know about their students, the more appropriate their instruction will be. Based on their observations, they design instructional plans to build up on each student's individual strengths to scaffold their new learning. According to their current abilities and learning styles, students will learn their own ways and at their individual pace:

Teachers are trained to use a gradual decline of teacher support and a gradual increase in student independence based on demonstrated student capability. This reduction of teacher support is based on observations of individual student growth and understanding the process of literacy (Swartz, Shook & Klein, 2003).

As mentioned above, students' independent learning is CELL's final goal. This program believes that, in order for students to become independent learners, teachers need to provide them with skills and strategies in addition to

content. This means their learning should not be related to one specific context/situation. On the contrary, students would have acquired the ability to solve many different problem-solving situations. This is called learning generalization, which is consistent with Clay's philosophy.

### The Reading Process

For CELL, the reading process is a matter of comprehending the author's intended message (Chomsky, 1972, 1976; Clay, 1985, 1991, 1993, 1998; DeFord, 2001; Fountas and Pinnell, 2001; Gentile, 2003; Swartz, Shook & Klein, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003). Therefore, instruction and modeling of reading comprehension strategies is considered essential in the program. However, these are not the only strategies students need to master in order to become effective readers. The CELL program is aware of this. For this reason, instruction of phonemic awareness, phonics, reading fluency and vocabulary is an essential part of the program as well. All these areas of instruction will enable students to attain a good reading comprehension level. The reciprocity that exists between reading and writing is also reinforced. Students need to understand that what they say can be written down and then read again.

## Instructional Framework

The CELL program provides teachers with an instructional framework composed of research-based teaching methodologies that were proven to be effective literacy promoters (Report of the National Reading Panel, 2001). Six instructional methods are integrated into a balanced literacy program which intends to reinforce not only reading achievement but also other curricular areas. These six basic components of the CELL program are: Read aloud, shared reading, guided reading, independent reading, interactive writing, and independent writing.

Read aloud. CELL initiators incorporate read aloud into its framework because research demonstrated it is a valuable teaching method for literacy instruction (Chomsky, 1972; Green & Harker, 1982). Reading aloud has multiple functions:

1. It promotes language development (Chomsky, 1972).  
Given the complex nature of written language, read alouds give children the opportunity to get in contact with more elaborated language structures and with broader vocabulary, which may consequently improve their language skills: "The child who reads (or listens to) a variety of rich and complex

materials benefits from a range of linguistic inputs that is unavailable to the non-literary child" (Chomsky, 1972, p. 23). Moreover, the dialogues that accompany the text presentation provide students with the opportunity to practice rich-language conversations. This is essential for language and literacy development because, as Gentile says, "language development is inseparable from becoming literate. Talk is in the cornerstone of language and literacy development, and it must be practiced." (2003, p. vii).

2. It enables teachers to model reading comprehension strategies for their students. Read aloud is a great activity for teachers to show students the reading process and the strategies good readers use when seeking comprehension (Keene & Zimmerman, 1997).
3. It allows students to have access to a variety of literature forms and styles. Students have the opportunity to interact with texts they would not yet be able to read on their own.
4. It promotes the joy of reading. It encourages students to attain the necessary skills to be able

to emulate the reader, who is obviously enjoying the process of reading.

Research has verified that, when used as a "communicative process," read aloud is an activity that enhances reading comprehension (Green & Harker, 1982). However, in order to do this it should be structured so both teacher and students will be active participants in the process. This is called interactive read alouds: "The teacher and student...are interactors and active part in what happens in a lesson" (Green & Harker, 1982, p. 199).

The process of reading aloud does not only involve reading. "Reading to children, when used to develop and extend listening comprehension skills, requires more of the adult reader than simply reading the story and asking questions" (Green & Harker, 1982, p. 197). It also includes a discussion between the teacher and the students. There has been a controversy regarding whether the discussion should be held exclusively after the reading, or whether it should also be held before and during the reading. Based on previous research, CELL teachers believe that discussion should be held before, during and after the reading of the story to promote comprehension and to enhance oral language (Green & Harker, 1982).



Shared Reading. Shared reading, a teaching procedure where teacher and students read along, is an effective method for literacy instruction and for teaching other curricular areas. It is also a valuable teaching procedure for oral language development, since it encourages dialogue between the teacher and the students.

The basic steps for shared reading are as follows (Swartz, Shook, & Klein, 2002):

1. Text selection. Teachers should choose a text that is within the students' current level of achievement and that fits their instructional purpose. Language complexity is another variable that needs to be considered when selecting a text for a shared reading. Its vocabulary and language structure should be within the students' language ability, so that comprehension is achievable. The last variable that needs to be considered is the text size. Since all students are supposed to read along, they should be able to see the text from their seats.
2. Text introduction. During text introduction, teachers give students the information that they consider necessary for the students to better

comprehend the text. Introductions will be more or less supportive, that is, give more or less information about the text, based on the students' needs. Focused dialogue is promoted; students are encouraged to share their experiences and knowledge, making contributions related to the text. Through dialogue, oral language is supported.

3. Text reading and rereading. The teacher reads the text along with students, who will make contributions based on their individual abilities. The teacher shows the students how good readers behave, modeling fluent reading and the use of reading and comprehension strategies. Again, conversation is encouraged. The text is read several times so students become familiar with its vocabulary, language structure and meaning.
4. Text revisit. Through every repeated reading, new teaching points are addressed.
5. Connection to other elements of the framework.  
"The power of shared reading is enhanced by opportunities to connect it to other elements in a

balanced literacy framework" (Swartz, Shook, & Klein, 2002, p. 6).

Many literacy teaching points can be taught through shared reading (Swartz, Shook, & Klein, 2002, pp. 13-14):

1. Alphabetic principle: letter recognition, letter formation, letter-name correspondence, alphabetic order, and letter-sound correspondence.
2. Concepts about print: directionality, one-to-one matching, return sweep, spacing, and punctuation.
3. Phonemic awareness and phonics: hearing sounds in words, inflectional endings, rhyming, syllabication, compound words, onset and rime, segmentation, chunking and blending, root words, sounds in sequence, analogies, high frequency words, spelling patterns, consonants, blends, short and long vowels, diagraphs, diphthongs, alliteration, suffixes, prefixes, and root words.
4. Written language conventions: punctuation and capitalization, spelling and word analysis, sentence structure, grammar, parts of speech, words usage, irregular words, onomatopoeia, contractions, metaphors, similes, and idioms.

5. Advanced reading skills: fluency, text structure, word study, and comprehension.
6. Content for all the curricular areas. Students can learn to become good readers at the same time that they learn content from another curricular area.

Guided Reading. Students in a class are usually a heterogeneous group, since they all have their individual learning style and learn at their own pace. They all come from different backgrounds and have different levels of development. This will eventually have an impact on the learning outcome and will make it difficult for teachers to achieve their instructional goals. Students' previous knowledge about literacy along with their oral language development will affect the way they will learn to read and write:

Readers at all levels bring their own knowledge and experience to the task of reading and comprehending what is read. Oral language and background knowledge are important resources that readers use to decode print and make sense of the message (Swartz, Shook, Klein, Moon, Bunnell, Belt & Huntley, 2003, p. 5).

How do teachers approach this disparity of learning levels? Traditional instruction methodologies are not sensitive to students' individualities. Teachers who follow traditional instructional approaches would have a

single way for instructing the whole group of students and they would not consider their individual characteristics. The CELL program however has developed a framework that includes instructional methodologies that take into consideration students' individual needs. Guided reading is a good example. It is a teaching method that can provide different levels of support, based on each student's reading level and oral language development. By distributing students into small groups of homogeneous reading levels, this instructional methodology makes teaching more efficient--it provides students with individualized attention and an instruction based on their current needs.

After the teacher has introduced a new text that is at the students' instructional level, students begin to read aloud at their own pace. The teacher meanwhile observes each student's reading behavior and, by noticing their mistakes, tries to infer the reading strategy that they are using--or not using, while problem-solving. This gives the teacher the opportunity to provide students with specific contextual feedback about the reading strategy they might use in order to problem-solve effectively.

Guided reading is an instructional activity that provides students with partial support. As they observe and listen to the students reading, teachers give them the minimum support they need to read at a slightly higher level than they can perform on their own. This procedure is based on Vygotsky's theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD): teachers help students to go beyond what they can do independently by offering appropriate assistance.

Guided reading is an especially powerful strategy to use with struggling readers. It provides them with the extra support they need without pulling them out from the regular classroom. This has positive effects over students' motivation and self-esteem, since other students are not able to identify them as needing extra help.

Independent Reading. Students need the opportunity to practice the reading strategies they have learned. During independent reading time students are responsible for their own reading. Meanwhile, teachers take this time to observe their performance and take notes on the reading strategies they have already mastered and those they have not yet acquired. This helps teachers in designing an appropriate lesson plan.

During independent reading time students have access to a variety of familiar books. They use these as they practice the reading strategies they have learned throughout the day. They have the opportunity to read familiar texts, which helps them improve their fluency. They also read texts that will not be so familiar, in which they use the skills they have acquired for problem-solving.

Interactive Writing. Interactive writing is a teaching method in which teacher and students share the pen to jointly write a piece of text. It can be broken down into the following steps (Swartz, Klein, & Shook, 2002):

1. Negotiation of the text between the teacher and the students. This involves the discussion of the topic and genre, the ideas that are going to be reflected in the text and words that are going to be used, and the structure of the text.

Once the portion of text has been agreed on, students and teachers are to repeat it a couple of times. This procedure not only facilitates that students will remember the text they are going to write, it is also a means to reinforce correct English language usage.

2. Composition of the text. The teacher selects a scribe, a student who will be able to write the portion of the text that s/he has been selected to write. This enables the teacher to focus on the rest of the class to make appropriate teaching points and present mini lessons.
3. Reading and rereading of the text. Every time a new portion of the text is added, teacher and students should read the text as a group. This helps to maintain continuity. It also reinforces fluency, reading expression and comprehension.

During an interactive writing session teachers have the opportunity to model successful reading and writing strategies for students. It also provides a great opportunity to show students the reciprocal relationship that exists between reading and writing. Its main goal is that students use literacy skills that have been learned through their independent writing and reading.

Teachers can use interactive writing as an instrument to make many teaching points (Swartz, Klein, & Shook, 2002, pp.14-15):



1. Alphabetic principle: letter recognition, letter formation, letter-name correspondence, alphabetic order, and letter-sound correspondence.
2. Concepts about print: directionality, one-to-one matching, return sweep, spacing, and punctuation).
3. Phonemic awareness and phonics: hearing sounds in words, inflectional endings, rhyming, syllabication, compound words, onset and rime, segmentation, chunking and blending, root words, sounds in sequence, analogies, high frequency words, spelling patterns, consonants, blends, short and long vowels, diagraphs and diphthongs, alliterations, suffixes, prefixes, and root words.

As mentioned above, every element of the CELL framework is used to teach, not only literacy strategies, but also other curricular areas. Through interactive writing, this might be done by writing about a science or a math topic, depending on the focus of the lesson. This way, students might be writing about the months of the year (a topic that has been addressed through a read aloud earlier in the day) as they see--and practice, how words work in writing. This teaching procedure is more efficient

and motivating than lecturing, since it gets students more involved.

Teaching that carries content and helps children become more proficient readers at the same time is an efficient use of teaching time. It helps students understand reading for different purposes and the use of comprehension strategies in the content areas (Swartz, Shook, & Klein, 2002, p. 16).

Depending on the students and on the purpose of the lesson, teachers can choose from three different types of interactive writings:

1. Transcription is when the text being written already exists. Teacher and students are just reconstructing a text that they know well.
2. Innovation is when teacher and students modify a text that already exists.
3. Negotiation is when teacher and students jointly create an original piece of text based on a shared experience. This type of interactive writing promotes oral language development the most, since it is the one that requires an agreement on the text, which would translate into more student talk.

Interactive writing pieces are important resources for students. They are an essential part of a classroom in

order to turn it into a literacy rich environment. They can be used in many ways:

1. They can be a great source for students to write unfamiliar irregular words during independent writing time. Students need to have access to texts in which they can locate words that cannot be stretched out. Hanging interactive writing pieces on the walls, fosters students' independence since they do not require the teacher to spell out words for them.
2. They are valuable pieces to use for shared reading. Since it is a familiar piece for students--they helped to create it, teachers can focus on the teaching points.
3. They can be turned into big books so that students can read them during independent reading.
4. And finally, they can be reduced to individual books so students can have them on their desks to read during independent reading time.

Independent Writing. Students need time to practice the writing strategies they learned during the other writing instructional activities. Teachers also need time to observe their students' independent performance so they

can find out what students learned. Both of these are completed during independent writing time. This is an opportunity to find out what students can do on their own and to give them feedback during individual conferences.

Besides its value as a practice and an observation activity, independent writing is a means to encourage writing for different purposes and different audiences (Swartz, Shook & Klein, 2003). It can also be a great source for creativity and the ability to compose.

## CHAPTER THREE

### DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

#### Subjects

The population from which the sample has been selected, is English language learner (ELL) students with a Hispanic background. At the time students attended second grade (seven years old) in a general education setting where instruction was provided in English. A total of 24 students (six from each of the participating classrooms) were selected by their classroom teacher according to their reading and writing level (two low-readers, two middle-readers and two high-readers). They all attended public schools in the various districts in California. The schools that participated in the study were Riverview Elementary and P. J. Shields Elementary (Folsom-Cordova Unified School District), Jefferson Elementary (Corona-Norco Unified School District) and Cesar Chavez Elementary (Montebello Unified School District). All the schools are located in similar economic and social areas, with the intent to control undesirable effects on the dependent variable.

## Data Collection

The current study is a descriptive research thesis, since no distribution of subjects was done. The students who were chosen for the study were already distributed into CELL or non-CELL schools. The study only describes the effects that the different instructional methods were observed to have on reading and writing proficiency.

The independent variable in this study is the type of reading program that students in the sample attended: 1) CELL and 2) some other program. The dependent variable for this research study is the progress that students at any of the reading programs made by the end of the academic year.

The assessment instrument that was used is the *Dominie Reading and Writing Assessment Portfolio* (DeFord, 2001). This assessment tool provided information about the reading and writing level that the participant students had achieved at the beginning of the school year, before any instruction had been initiated (pre-test), and the end of the school year, after instruction in either program (post-test). Both an intra-group and an inter-group scores comparison was implemented.

The following sections from the *Dominie Reading and Writing Assessment Portfolio* were utilized:

## Reading Assessment

The reading assessment has includes the following subtests:

Oral Reading. A running record is taken on the student while reading a book/passage from a book. A book will not be considered to be at an instructional level unless the student being evaluated reads it with a 90% accuracy rate.

Reading Comprehension. Students are asked questions to confirm that they actually comprehended the text they read. A book will not be considered to be at an instructional level unless the student being evaluated responds correctly to at least 75% of the questions.

Reading Fluency. A fluency rubric is provided in the assessment tool for the evaluator to estimate the student's reading fluency.

In order for the evaluator to consider a reading level to be achieved, students, with the exception of the early readers (students reading at a kindergarten level), will have to get a passing score in all three variables. This means that a discrepancy between the treatment and the control group is only expected to be found in the reading

level. Therefore, this is the only subtest that is going to be considered in this study for analysis.

### Writing Assessment

In the writing rubric students are asked to make up an ending for a story that was dictated to them. This subtest assesses knowledge about writing conventions, clarity and expression.

### Data Treatment Procedures

Results from the different subtests implemented to evaluate reading and writing proficiency will be analyzed to verify whether the difference in the progress made by the experimental and the control group is significant. A comparison between the pre and the post-test scores for each of the two groups will also be implemented, evaluating intra-groups progress. A t-test comparing means will be applied to analyze the data.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Presentation of the Findings

The study was initiated in the beginning of the school year 2002-2003 with 24 students available for the pre-testing. However, by the time that the post-test was administered three students had moved to different school districts (two from the treatment group and one from the control group). Since they were unavailable for re-testing, the data from these students when eliminated from the study. The scores of 21 students were finally available for analysis.

Table 1 and figures 1 and 2 show the scores obtained by students in the CELL program in the beginning and at the end of the school year. Figure 1 illustrates the growth that these students demonstrated in the area of reading. Figure 2 reflects their growth regarding the quality of their writing. As it was expected, most of the students in the CELL group improved their reading and writing achievement as a result of their inclusion in a CELL classroom.

Table 1. Pre and Post Test Scores for the CELL Group

Student	Reading Level		Writing Rubric	
	Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test
1	7	9	2	2
2	6	9	2	2
3	6	8	1	2
4	7	9	2	2
5	7	9	3	4
6	7	10	3	4
7	6	7	2	4
8	7	9	2	2
9	3	5	1	1
10	8	11	3	4

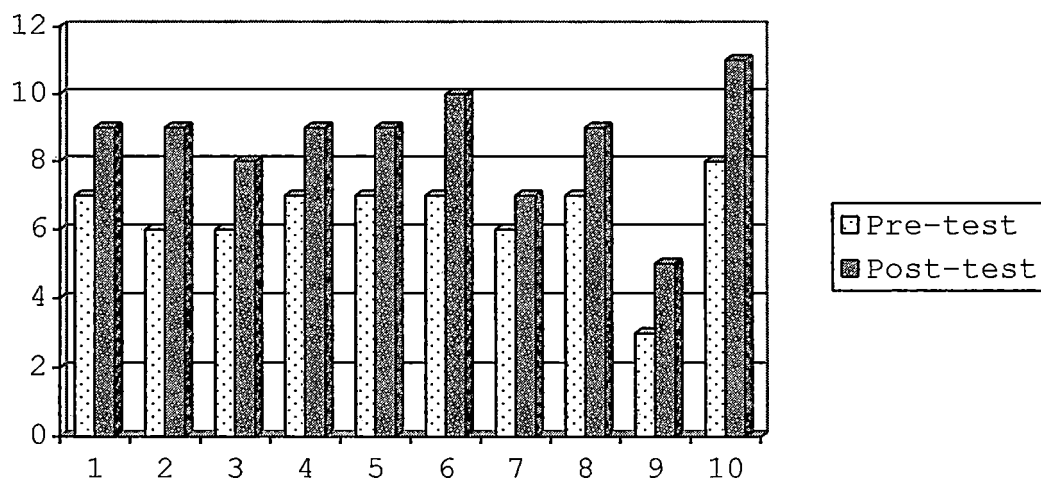


Figure 1. CELL Students' Reading Level Scores

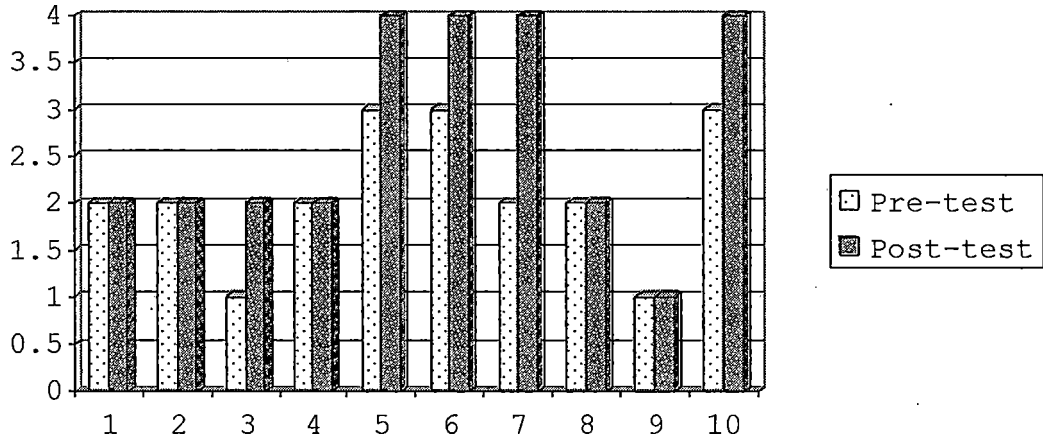


Figure 2. CELL Students' Writing Quality Scores

Table 2 and figures 3 and 4 display the scores for the non-CELL students. Where table 2 represents the students' raw scores for reading level and writing quality, figures 3 and 4 graphically illustrate their achievement in each of these areas individually. Although the non-CELL students showed growth over the school year in the area of reading, this improvement is not shown in the area of writing.

Table 2. Pre and Post Test Scores for the Non-CELL Group

Student	Reading Level		Story Writing	
	Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test
1	3	5	2	2
2	8	9	1	2
3	7	9	2	3
4	8	10	2	2
5	5	7	1	2
6	7	7	3	1
7	6	8	3	2
8	5	6	3	1
9	6	6	2	0
10	2	3	2	1
11	3	4	3	1

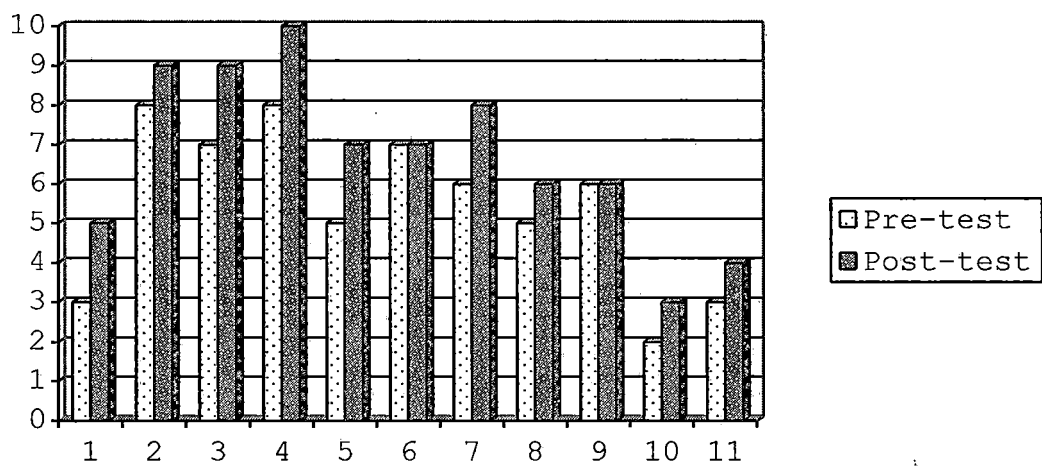


Figure 3. Non-CELL Student's Reading Level Scores

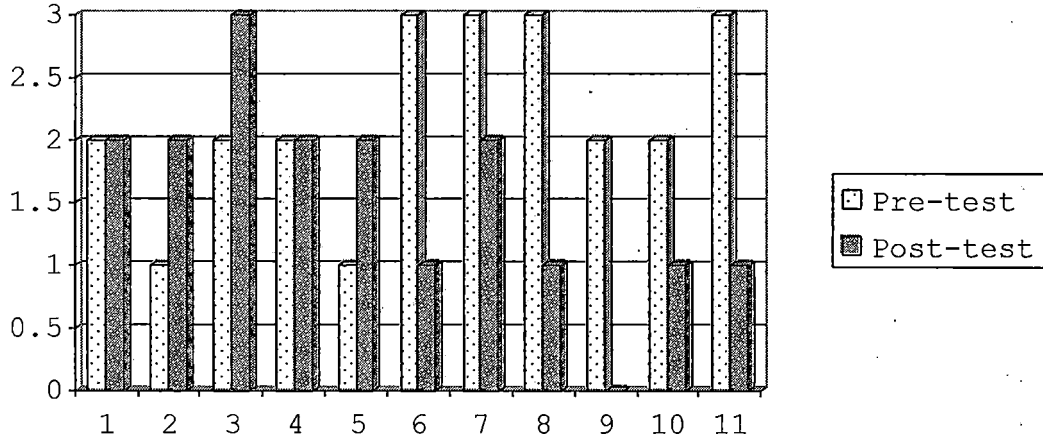


Figure 4. Non-CELL Students' Writing Quality Scores

Table 3 makes a comparison of means for the treatment and the control groups in the areas of reading and writing. It analyses the growth that students in both CELL and non-CELL classrooms demonstrated throughout the school year. The table shows a significant discrepancy between the mean scores in both, reading level and writing rubric for the treatment and the control groups. The reading level and writing quality scores for the CELL group were significantly higher than those for the non-CELL group.

Table 3. Mean Growth Experimented by Students in the CELL and the Non-CELL Groups

	CELL classroom		Non-CELL classroom	
	Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test
Reading Level*	6.10	8.60	5.45	6.72
Writing Rubric**	2.10	2.70	2.18	1.55

N=21

\*t=-2.571, p<.05      \*\*t=-2.695, p<.05

The assessment instrument that was utilized was the *Dominie Reading and Writing Assessment Portfolio*.

#### Answers to the Research Questions

Will students in the CELL group read significantly higher level books? Will their reading level be significantly higher than the non-CELL students when measured by the *Dominie Reading and Writing Assessment Portfolio* (DeFord, 2001)?

Although CELL and non-CELL groups both achieved a higher reading level scores from the beginning till the end of the school year, the mean reading level score for students in the CELL classrooms was significantly higher than the one for the non-CELL classrooms. This corroborates the researcher's expectations, since the CELL program was believed to be an effective instructional program to teach English language learners to read in English.

Will CELL students significantly improve their writing? Will they write significantly better than the non-CELL students when measured by the *Dominie Reading and Writing Assessment Portfolio* (DeFord, 2001)?

Students in the CELL groups showed a significant improvement when their scores from the pre-test were compared to the scores from the post-test (see Tables 1 and 3). Students in the non-CELL group, however, did not show such improvement (see Tables 4 and 6). When these two groups' writing scores were compared, it was found that the CELL students mean scores were significantly higher than the non-CELL ones. This also verifies the researcher's assumption that CELL is a good instructional program to teach English language learners to write in English.

#### Discussion of the Findings

Results from the study confirm the hypothesis of this research. CELL has been an effective literacy instructional program to teach English language learners to read and write in English. When comparing the improvement that students in the CELL Program made over a school year with the one made by students in other instructional

programs, it is observed that students in the CELL Program made greater progress in both areas, reading and writing.

CELL is a strategy-based program. Teachers receive a thorough professional training in research-based instructional strategies which have been demonstrated to be effective literacy teaching methodologies (the elements of the framework). They are also trained to use observation as a tool to learn about their students' current level of performance. This assures that instruction will match students' particular needs.

Moreover, teachers provide students with literacy learning strategies, instead of just content. This will enable students to become independent readers and writers.

These elements make CELL an effective literacy instructional program. Those, together with the fact that language is promoted in every single element of the framework, explains the study's results: students in schools where the CELL program was implemented showed significantly higher improvement in the areas of reading and writing over the school year.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

The study presented in this research paper investigated the effectiveness of CELL as a program that teaches Second language learners to read and write in English. Being an intensive literacy program that provides students with many opportunities to practice the English language, CELL is believed to be a good alternative for schools to teach this language in its oral and written forms.

In Chapter 2 an overview of CELL's basic elements and its theoretical foundations was done. An analysis of several professionals in the area of language, education and literacy instruction, and the way they stimulated the development of the CELL program was also made in this section.

Chapter 3 reviews the way the study was designed and the methodologies used to test the research questions. A descriptive study was implemented, with a total of 24 second graders with a Hispanic background. Data was recorded before and after instruction was initiated (pre-

post test) and a comparison of achievements was done for students in the CELL and the non-CELL classrooms.

Finally, Chapter 4 presents the data obtained through a school year of literacy instruction, where the CELL classrooms showed a significantly better performance than the non-CELL classrooms. Chapter 5 analyses and discusses these data and makes recommendations for future research done in the area of literacy instruction for English language learners.

#### Conclusions

The current study has proven to be relevant for the educational community because it reveals new effective ways (such as the CELL framework) to teach English language learner to read and write in English. This is significant, since this group of students is at risk in our public schools (National Center of Education Statistics, 2000). Although previous research demonstrated that CELL has had good outcomes for literacy acquisition and enhancing reading comprehension, its effectiveness has not been examined deeply enough with English language learners.

## Recommendations

It is recommended that future research implement a longitudinal study in which the growth that English language learners in the CELL program make over the years (from kindergarten to third grade) is tested. A comparison with the growth over the years of students in other literacy programs should also be done, as it was done for this study.

The current study demonstrated that students in the CELL program made greater progress at the end of the school year than students in other literacy programs. However a follow-up on the sustainability of the results was not done. Future research should verify whether the advantage that the CELL students showed is sustained over the years. A longitudinal study would verify that.

APPENDIX A

ORAL READING ASSESSMENT FORM

# Oral Reading Assessment Form

**BENCHMARK** *Can You Play?*

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher / Tester \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Pg #	Can You Play?	Student Reading	Errors	Corrections
2 (T):	Pat wants to play. She is looking for someone to play with her.			
4 (T):	"Mommy, can you play with me?"			
5 (T):	No!			
6 (T):	"Daddy, can you play with me?"			
7 (S):	No!			
8 (T):	"Dan, can you play with me?"			
9 (S):	No! No!			
10 (T):	"Who will play with me?" Pat went outside. "Bird, can you play with me?"			
11 (S):	No!			
12 (T):	"Butterfly, can you play with me?"			
13 (S):	No! No! No!			
14 (T):	Then Pat saw her friend Tom. "Tom, can you play with me?"			
14 (S):	Yes! Yes!  Yes!			
		<b>Totals</b>		

From Dominic Reading and Writing Portfolio  
 © 2000 Diane DeFord Published by Dominic Press, Inc.

BENCHMARK 1 Can You Play?

**Oral Reading Assessment Scoring**

Criterion: 90% ♦ No more than 1 error

Totals: Errors = \_\_\_\_\_ Corrections = \_\_\_\_\_

Correction Ratio 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Fluency: \_\_\_\_\_ /4 (See Fluency Rubric, Page 22.)

Accuracy =  $100 - (\text{Errors} / \text{Words Read} \times 100) = \text{_____} / 10 \times 100 = \text{_____}$

Correction Ratio =  $\text{Errors} + \text{Corrections} / \text{Corrections}$

**Story Retelling: Can You Play? (Benchmark 1)**

Record the gist of the student's retelling after each question. Score one point for appropriate responses from the retelling that answer the following questions. Criterion: The student must receive at least 75% (three out of four excluding the first, second, and last question) to meet the criterion.

1. Did you like that story?
2. Tell (a toy bear, or a doll, or a stuffed animal) about what happened in the story. I think he or she would like to hear about this story. If necessary, pretend the toy is asking questions like those below to probe understanding of the story. Responses to these questions receive points.
3. Who was in the story? (Circle those that are mentioned.)  
Characters: Mom Dad Dan Pat Tom Bird Butterfly
4. What did Pat want to do?
5. Why did everyone say "No" to Pat?
6. Who was Tom? What do you think Tom and Pat will play?
7. What was the best part of the story? (Share what you liked.)

**BENCHMARK 2 Sally's Tricks**

Student	Teacher/Tester	Grade	School	Date
Pg #	Sally's Tricks	Student Reading	Errors	Corrections
2 (T)	Sally likes to play tricks.			
4 (T)	Sally put a phone in the closet.			
6 (S)	Sally put a bug in a box.			
8 (S)	Sally put a hat in a chair.			
10 (S)	Sally put a book in the car.			
12 (S)	Sally put a plant in the refrigerator.			
13 (T)	No more tricks, Sally!			
14 (S)	Sally put the plant in the window.			
		<b>Totals</b>		

## Oral Reading Assessment Scoring

Criterion: 90% ♦ No more than 3 errors

Totals: Errors = \_\_\_\_\_ Corrections = \_\_\_\_\_

Correction Ratio 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Fluency: \_\_\_\_\_ / 4 (See Fluency Rubric, Page 22.)

Accuracy =  $100 - ( \text{Errors} / \text{Words Read} \times 100 = \text{_____} / 35 \times 100 ) = \text{_____}$

Correction Ratio =  $\text{Errors} + \text{Corrections} / \text{Corrections}$

## Story Retelling: *Sally's Tricks* (Benchmark 2)

Record the gist of the student's retelling after each question. Score one point for appropriate responses from the retelling that answer the following questions. Criterion: The student must receive at least 75% (three out of four excluding the first, second, and last question) to meet the criterion.

1. Did you like that story?
2. Tell (a toy bear, or a doll, or a stuffed animal) about what happened in the story. I think he or she would like to hear about the story. If necessary, pretend the toy is asking questions like those listed below to probe understanding of the story. Responses to these questions receive points.
3. Who was in the story? (Circle those that are mentioned.)  
Characters: Sally, Mom
4. What did Sally do?
5. What did Mom do that made Sally put the plant back in the window?
6. What do you think Sally's mom made her do with all of her tricks?
7. What was the best part of the story? (Share what you liked.)



# Oral Reading Assessment Form

**BENCHMARK**  **Don't jump!**

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher/Tester \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Pg #	Don't Jump!	Student Reading:	Errors	Corrections
2:	Jumper is my pet frog. He sits and looks at me.			
3:	No, Jumper, don't jump!			
4:	Jumper went under the chair.			
5:	No, Jumper, don't jump!			
6:	He went on the piano.			
7:	No, Jumper, don't jump!			
8:	Jumper went over the baby.			
9:	No, Jumper, don't jump!			
10:	He went under the bed.			
11:	No, Jumper, don't jump!			
12:	Jumper went into the kitchen.			
13:	No, Jumper, don't jump!			
14:	I got you, Jumper!			
15:	Now, you sit and look at me!			
		<b>Totals</b>		

## Oral Reading Assessment Scoring

Criterion: 90% ♦ No more than 7 errors

Totals: Errors = \_\_\_\_\_ Corrections = \_\_\_\_\_

Correction Ratio 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Fluency: \_\_\_\_\_/4 (See Fluency Rubric, Page 22.)

Accuracy =  $100 - (\text{Errors} / \text{Words Read} \times 100 = \text{_____} / 71 \times 100) = \text{_____}$

Correction Ratio =  $\text{Errors} + \text{Corrections} / \text{Corrections}$

## Story Retelling: *Don't Jump!* (Benchmark 3)

Record the gist of the student's retelling after each question. Score one point for appropriate responses from the retelling that answer the following questions. Criterion: The student must receive at least 75% (three out of four excluding the first, second, and last question) to meet the criterion.

1. Did you like that story?
2. Tell (a toy bear, or a doll, or a stuffed animal) about what happened in the story. I think he or she would like to hear about the story. (If necessary, pretend the toy is asking questions like those below to probe understanding of the story.) Responses to these questions receive points.
3. Who was in the story? (Circle those that are mentioned.)  
Characters: Bob Jumper the baby Sunny
4. What did Jumper do that made trouble?
5. What did Bob do that made Jumper stop jumping?
6. What do you think Bob will do to keep Jumper in his tank?
7. What was the best part of the story? (Share what you liked.)

# Oral Reading Assessment Form

BENCHMARK  *The Magic Show*

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher/Tester \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Pg # <i>The Magic Show</i>	Student Reading	Errors	Corrections
<p>2 Sally wanted to do magic tricks.</p> <p>She read a book about them.</p>			
<p>3 Sally tried to make a rabbit disappear.</p> <p>It ran into the kitchen. Mom yelled.</p>			
<p>4 Sally tried to trick Tom.</p> <p>She asked, "Where is the nut?"</p> <p>"Here," he said.</p>			
<p>5 The nut was there.</p> <p>She asked, "How did you know?"</p> <p>Tom smiled.</p>			
<p>6 Sally tried to trick her dad.</p> <p>"You have a card behind your ear,"</p> <p>she said.</p>			
<p>7 Dad said, "No, I don't!"</p> <p>Sally looked behind his ear.</p> <p>She cried, "No card!"</p>			

# Oral Reading Assessment Form

BENCHMARK  The Magic Show

Student	Teacher/Tester	Grade	School	Date	
Pg #	The Magic Show		Student Reading	Errors	Corrections
8.	Sally ran to her mom.				
9.	"Mom, I can't do any magic tricks," she cried.				
10.	Mom got the book. "Try this one," she said.				
11.	Sally tried her trick again and again.				
12.	Sally shouted, "I can do tricks!" Mom, Dad, and Tom sat down to see Sally's magic show.				
13.	Sally asked Tom to take a card. Tom did.				
14.	Sally asked, "Is it a five?" Tom said, "Yes, it is!" How did you know?"				
15.	Sally just smiled!				
			Totals		

**BENCHMARK 4 The Magic Show**

**Oral Reading Assessment Scoring**

**Criterion: 90% ♦ No more than 15 errors**

**Totals: Errors = \_\_\_\_\_ Corrections = \_\_\_\_\_**

**Correction Ratio 1: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Fluency: \_\_\_\_\_/4 (See Fluency Rubric, Page 22.)**

**Accuracy =  $100 - (\text{Errors} / \text{Words Read} \times 100 = \text{_____} / 155 \times 100) = \text{_____}$**

**Correction Ratio =  $\text{Errors} + \text{Corrections} / \text{Corrections}$**

**Story Retelling: The Magic Show (Benchmark 4)**

Record the gist of the student's retelling after each question. Score one point for appropriate responses from the retelling that answer the following questions. Criterion: The student must receive at least 75% (three out of four excluding the first, second, and last question) to meet the criterion.

1. **Did you like that story?**
  
2. **Tell (a toy bear, or a doll, or a stuffed animal) about what happened in the story. I think he or she would like to hear about the story.** If necessary, pretend the toy is asking questions like those below to probe understanding of the story. Responses to these questions receive points.
  
3. **Who was in the story?** (Circle those that are mentioned.)  
Characters: Sally Tom Mom Dad a rabbit
  
4. **What kind of magic tricks did Sally do?**
  
5. **What were some of the things that happened when Sally tried to do tricks?**
  
6. **How did Tom know which shell hid the nut?**
  
7. **How did Sally know that the card was a five?**
  
8. **Why did Tom and Sally smile?**
  
9. **What was the best part of the story?** (Share what you liked.)

# Oral Reading Assessment Form

BENCHMARK  The Field Trip

Student	Teacher/Tester	Grade	School	Date
Pg #:	The Field Trip			
		Student Reading	Errors	Corrections
2	Today was our field trip to the zoo.			
3	Miss Brook gave each of us a Zoo Book. She said, "Write in this book about what you see."			
4	Sandy ran to see the lions. They were asleep.			
5	Sandy wrote, "Lions are cute when they sleep."			
6	Tom looked at the monkeys. They ran around the cage.			
7	Tom wrote, "Monkeys like to run and play."			
8	Jenny liked the elephants. They sprayed water in the air.			
9	Jenny wrote, "Elephants love to take baths."			
10	Tom, Jenny, and Sandy went to see the gorillas. The gorillas played on a swing and then played a game of hide-and-seek.			

# Oral Reading Assessment Form

BENCHMARK  *The Field Trip*

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher/Tester \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Pg #	The Field Trip	Student Reading	Errors	Corrections
11	Tom wrote, "Gorillas like to have fun."  Jenny wrote, "Gorillas like to swing."  Sandy wrote, "Gorillas like to play games."			
12	At lunch, they watched the giraffes.  The giraffes ate lunch, too.			
13	Tom wrote, "Giraffes eat a lot of food."  Jenny wrote, "Giraffes chew their food a long time."  Sandy wrote, "Giraffes have long noses and big ears."			
14	Miss Brook said it was time  to go back to school.  On the bus, Sandy took a nap.  Jenny ate an apple.  Tom played a game with Jenny.			
15	Tom told Miss Brook, "Animals are just like people."			
		<b>Totals</b>		

### Oral Reading Assessment Scoring

Criterion: 90% ♦ No more than 19 errors

Totals: Errors = \_\_\_\_\_ Corrections = \_\_\_\_\_

Correction Ratio: 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Fluency: \_\_\_\_\_/4 (See Fluency Rubric, Page 22.)

Accuracy =  $100 - (\text{Errors} / \text{Words Read} \times 100 = \text{_____} / 195 \times 100) = \text{_____}$

Correction Ratio =  $\text{Errors} + \text{Corrections} / \text{Corrections}$

### Story Retelling: *The Field Trip* (Benchmark 5)

Record the gist of the student's retelling after each question. Score one point for appropriate responses from the retelling that answer the following questions. Criterion: The student must receive at least 80% (four out of five excluding the first, second, and last question) to meet the criterion.

1. Did you like that story?
2. Retell this story in your own words.
3. Who was in the story? (Circle those that are mentioned.)  
Characters: Miss Brook Sandy Tom Jenny other children
4. What did the children see on the field trip?
5. What kinds of things were the animals doing?
6. What were the children writing about in their Zoo Books?
7. Why did Tom think animals and people are alike?
8. What was the best part of the story? (Share what you liked.)



# Oral Reading Assessment Form

BENCHMARK  *The Smallest Mouse*

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher/Tester \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Pg #	The Smallest Mouse	Student Reading	Errors	Corrections
2	There once was a very little mouse. His sister was big. His brother was a lot bigger.			
3	The farmer didn't want mice in his barn. So he set traps. He put yellow cheese in the traps. Big Brother, Big Sister, and Little Mouse liked cheese.			
4	Little Mouse said, "I'll help you get the cheese."			
5	Big Sister stood up tall. "No, you won't, Little Mouse," she said. Big Brother stood up taller. "No, you won't, Little Mouse," he said. "We're the biggest. We'll get the cheese."			
6	So Big Brother and Big Sister waited until dark. They smelled the yellow cheese. It smelled so good.			
7	Big Brother hid behind a shovel. Big Sister hid behind a plow. Then they saw the cheese. There were two traps.			
8	Big Brother went to the first trap. He smelled the cheese and then took a little bite. Snap! "Ouch!" he cried. The tip of his tail was caught in the trap.			

# Oral Reading Assessment Form

BENCHMARK 6 The Smallest Mouse

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher/Tester \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Pg #	The Smallest Mouse	Student Reading	Errors	Corrections
9	Big Sister went to the second trap. She smelled the cheese and then took a little bite. Snap! "Ouch!" she cried. The tip of her tail was caught in the trap.			
10	Little Mouse ran up to Big Brother and Big Sister. "Are you all right?" he cried.			
11	Big Brother tugged on his tail. Big Sister tugged on her tail. Out came their tails. But each tail was a little shorter.			
12	Big Brother took the cheese from his trap and ate it all up. Big Sister took the cheese from her trap and ate it all up.			
13	Little Mouse found a trap. In the trap was a very big piece of cheese. He looked for a stick. "There's one!" he said.			
14	Little Mouse put the stick in the trap. Snap!			
15	Then he took a very big bite. "I may be little, but my tail is longer!" he shouted.			
		Totals		

### Oral Reading Assessment Scoring

Criterion: 90% ♦ No more than 30 errors

Totals: Errors = \_\_\_\_\_ Corrections = \_\_\_\_\_

Correction Ratio 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Fluency: \_\_\_\_\_/4 (See Fluency Rubric, Page 22.)

Accuracy =  $100 - (\text{Errors} / \text{Words Read} \times 100) = \text{_____} / 302 \times 100 = \text{_____}$

Correction Ratio =  $\text{Errors} + \text{Corrections} / \text{Corrections}$

### Story Retelling: *The Smallest Mouse* (Benchmark 6)

Record the gist of the student's retelling after each question. Score one point for appropriate responses from the retelling that answer the following questions. Criterion: The student must receive at least 75% (six out of eight excluding the first, second, and last question) to meet the criterion.

1. Did you like that story?
2. Retell this story in your own words.
3. Who was in the story? (Circle those that are mentioned.)  
Characters: Little Mouse Big Sister Big Brother The farmer
4. Why did the farmer set traps in the barn?
5. What were Big Sister and Big Brother going to do?
6. How did they treat Little Mouse?
7. What happened to Big Sister and Big Brother?
8. Why were their tails shorter?
9. How did Little Mouse get the cheese?
10. What lesson do you think Big Sister and Big Brother might learn from Little Mouse?
11. What was the best part of the story? (Share what you liked.)

# Oral Reading Assessment Form

BENCHMARK  Tom's New Pet

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher/Tester \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Pg #	Tom's New Pet	Student Reading	Errors	Corrections
2	Tom ran ahead of his sister, Sally, and his dad. He was too excited to wait any longer. He ran into the pet shop to find a new pet.			
3	First, Tom went to look at the turtles. He held one in his hand. He stroked its hard shell. The turtle just looked at him. "Don't you want a turtle for a pet?" asked Sally. "No," said Tom. "Not a turtle."			
4	Tom watched the fish swimming in the fish tank. He put his hand on the glass. It was cold. His dad said, "Fish are easy to take care of. Don't you want some fish?" "No," said Tom. "No fish."			
5	Then Tom saw a big snake. He ran over to look. It was coiled at the bottom of a tank. Sally said, "You don't want a snake for a pet." "Why not?" asked Tom. "Mom is scared of snakes," she said. "No, then I don't want a snake," said Tom.			
6	Tom touched the lizards. They felt smooth but very cold. His dad shook his head. Sally stood on the other side of the room, shaking her head from side to side.			
7	Tom looked at the kittens. But his friend Andy had a cat, and Tom wanted something very different. So Tom looked at the puppies. But his friend Pat had a dog.			

# Oral Reading Assessment Form

**BENCHMARK** **Tom's New Pet**

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher/Tester \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Pg. # <i>Tom's New Pet</i>	Student Reading	Errors	Corrections
<p>So Tom looked at the frogs. But Sally made a face when he looked at the frogs.</p> <p>"No, no frogs," Tom thought.</p> <p>8: Tom looked at the birds in their cages, but when he put his finger between the bars, the parrot bit him.</p> <p>9: When Tom ran over to the mice, Sally pulled him away. "No mice," she said.</p> <p>10: Just for fun, Tom picked up a cricket. "No crickets," said his dad.</p> <p>11: Sally found a chair she could sit on. She pulled out some cards from her pocket to practice a magic trick.</p> <p>12: Tom's dad sighed. "You've seen EVERYTHING this store has in the way of pets," he said. "Now what?"</p> <p>13: Tom looked all around the room again. Turtles, snakes, frogs, fish, and lizards were too cold.</p> <p>14: Birds, crickets, mice, kittens, and dogs were just okay, but not quite right.</p> <p>15: Then Tom ran over to the store window. Hopping around inside a fence were some baby rabbits. "This is it!" he said. "I want a rabbit!" Sally and his dad shrugged. "Why a rabbit?" Sally asked. Tom laughed. "It's not too big, and not too small. It's just right!" he said.</p>			
	<b>Totals</b>		

### Oral Reading Assessment Scoring

Criterion: 90% ♦ No more than 41 errors

Totals: Errors = \_\_\_\_\_ Corrections = \_\_\_\_\_

Correction Ratio 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Fluency: \_\_\_\_\_/4 (See Fluency Rubric, Page 22.)

Accuracy =  $100 - (\text{Errors} / \text{Words Read} \times 100 = \text{_____} / 414 \times 100) = \text{_____}$

Correction Ratio =  $\text{Errors} + \text{Corrections} / \text{Corrections}$

### Story Retelling: *Tom's New Pet* (Benchmark 7)

Record the gist of the student's retelling after each question. Score one point for appropriate responses from the retelling that answer the following questions. Criterion: The student must receive at least 75% (six out of eight excluding the first, second, and last question) to meet the criterion.

1. Did you like that story?
2. Retell this story in your own words.
3. Who was in the story? (Circle those that are mentioned.)  
Characters: Tom Dad Sally animals
4. What kind of pet did Tom want?
5. What was wrong with the snakes, frogs, turtles, fish, and lizards?
6. Why didn't Tom like the parrots?
7. What was wrong with kittens, dogs, birds, and crickets?
8. Why do you think Sally didn't want mice?
9. Did Sally like lizards and frogs?
10. What does "Tom wanted something very different" mean in this story?
11. What was the best part of the story? (Share what you liked.)

# Oral Reading Assessment Form

BENCHMARK  Running Wolf

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher/Tester \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Pg # <i>Running Wolf</i>	Student Reading	Errors	Corrections
<p>3. In the land between two rivers, Morning Sun</p> <p>looked lovingly at her baby son. Today was his First</p> <p>Name day. She waited by the edge of the Big Snake</p> <p>River for One-So-Wise. He stood on the hill above and</p> <p>listened to the wind. In this way he would know her</p> <p>son's heart and his name.</p> <p>The trees whispered as One-So-Wise walked down</p> <p>the hill. He took her son in his strong arms and raised</p> <p>him high in the sky. "You are a child of the wolves,"</p> <p>he said. "Learn well from them. Their eyes see far, and</p> <p>they listen to the wind."</p>			

# Oral Reading Assessment Form

BENCHMARK  Running Wolf

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher/Tester \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Pg #: <i>Running Wolf</i>	Student Reading	Errors	Corrections
<p>One-So-Wise turned to Morning Sun. "Your son, Running Wolf," he said.</p> <p>She smiled. "One who runs with the wind," she said. "Grow strong, my son."</p> <p>5: Running Wolf did grow strong. He ran like the wind.</p> <p>He listened to the messages sent to him on the wind.</p> <p>When Running Wolf was ten, One-So-Wise sent him into the forest.</p> <p>"Go to the forest to learn the way of the wolf," said One-So-Wise. "Take your bow and arrows with you. Return in three days."</p> <p>With that, Running Wolf ran swiftly into the forest.</p> <p><i>Note to the teacher/tester: The rest of the story is to be read silently, before the student answers the questions in Story Retelling.</i></p>			
	<b>Totals:</b>		



BENCHMARK  Running Wolf

**Oral Reading Assessment Scoring**

Criterion: 92% ♦ No more than 15 errors

Totals: Errors = \_\_\_\_\_ Corrections = \_\_\_\_\_

Correction Ratio 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Fluency: \_\_\_\_\_ / 4 (See Fluency Rubric, Page 22.)

Accuracy =  $100 - (\text{Errors} / \text{Words Read} \times 100) = \text{_____} / 193 \times 100) = \text{_____}$

Correction Ratio =  $\text{Errors} \div \text{Corrections} / \text{Corrections}$

**Story Retelling: Running Wolf (Benchmark 8)**

Record the gist of the student's retelling after each question. Score one point for appropriate responses from the retelling that answer the following questions. Criterion: The student must receive at least 75% (seven out of nine excluding the first, second, and last question) to meet the criterion.

1. Did you like that story?
2. Retell the story in your own words.
3. Who was in the story? (Circle those that are mentioned.)  
Characters: Morning Sun One-So-Wise Running Wolf or Wolf-Who-Leads  
hunters: villagers
4. How did Running Wolf get his First Name?
5. Why did One-So-Wise change Running Wolf's name to Wolf-Who-Leads?
6. How did Wolf-Who-Leads earn his name?
7. How was Running Wolf like the wolves in the forest?
8. What did Running Wolf learn about the wolves in the forest?
9. What does the word *loyal* mean in this story?
10. What does the word *leader* mean in this story?
11. What did the Native Americans do to hunt buffalo?
12. What was the best part of the story? (Share what you liked.)

# Oral Reading Assessment Form

**BENCHMARK** *Ten New Friends*

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher/Tester \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Pg # <i>Ten New Friends</i>	Student Reading	Errors	Corrections
<p>2 Tina walked slowly down the snowy road. The words her mom spoke when she left home made her cry all over again.</p> <p>"It will be all right," she'd said. "By the end of the first day, you'll have ten new friends."</p> <p>Tina's cheeks stung with cold, wet tears.</p> <p>"New friends, true friends, maybe more like blue friends," she said.</p> <p>Tina's feet stomped to the beat of her simple ditty. That's what her dad called them, anyway, just simple ditties.</p> <p>By the time she got to the school, her ditty was, "Mad friends, sad friends, I don't need those bad friends."</p>			
<p>3 Day five, and no friends yet to count. And she really missed her mom and dad. She loved Grandma and Grandpa, too, but it wasn't the same as home.</p> <p>Tina opened the door and went inside.</p>			
<p>4 The school's one room was still cold. Miss Frank was using a poker to stir up the fire. She turned when the door slammed.</p> <p>"That a girl!" she said. "I hoped someone would come in early. I need some more wood." Miss Frank pushed her hair back. "Be a dear, won't</p>			

# Oral Reading Assessment Form

**BENCHMARK** **Ten New Friends**

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher/Tester \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Pg # <i>Ten New Friends</i>	Student Reading	Errors	Corrections
<p>you? The wood pile is behind the school.</p> <p>"Yes, ma'am," Tina said.</p> <p>Tina went back out into the cold for the wood.</p> <p>It was hard to hold. One log dropped. As she picked it up, she heard a sound. She listened again—just the wind whistling in the tree branches.</p> <p>5. There it was again! It sounded like a puppy or a kitten!</p> <p>16. Tina dropped the wood and ran into the woods. She ran for a little while, then stopped and listened.</p> <p>"Come on! Where are you?" she asked.</p> <p>Again, she heard a whimper, like a baby or an animal crying. She ran toward a big rock.</p> <p>In a deep hole at the bottom of the rock, Tina saw a dog lying in the snow. Three puppies were curled up against the dog's fur, shivering. So was the dog. At first its eyes were shut, and it didn't move when Tina touched its head. There was a gash in its brown fur and blood on the ground.</p> <p>But then the dog opened its eyes and closed them again.</p> <p>"It's alive," Tina whispered. Then she ran.</p> <p><i>*Note to the teacher/tester: The rest of the story is to be read silently, before the student answers the questions in Story Retelling.*</i></p>			
	<b>Totals</b>		

**BENCHMARK**  **Ten New Friends**

**Oral Reading Assessment Scoring**

Criterion: 92% ♦ No more than 29 errors

Totals: Errors = \_\_\_\_\_ Corrections = \_\_\_\_\_

Correction Ratio 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Fluency: \_\_\_\_\_ / 4 (See Fluency Rubric, Page 22.)

Accuracy =  $100 - ( \text{Errors} / \text{Words Read} \times 100 = \text{_____} / 371 \times 100 ) = \text{_____}$


Correction Ratio =  $\text{Errors} + \text{Corrections} / \text{Corrections}$

**Story Retelling: Ten New Friends (Benchmark 9)**

Record the gist of the student's retelling after each question. Score one point for appropriate responses from the retelling that answer the following questions. Criterion: The student must receive at least 75% (six out of eight excluding the first, second, and last question) to meet the criterion.

1. Did you like that story?
2. Retell the story in your own words.
3. Who was in the story? (Circle those that are mentioned.)  
Characters: Tina Miss Frank James other children Grandma Grandpa Mom Dad
4. Why was Tina sad at the beginning of the story?
5. Why didn't she have friends?
6. How did Tina find the dog and her puppies?
7. Describe the information that tells you when the story occurred.
8. What did James think had happened to the mother dog?
9. What does the word *whimper* mean in the story?
10. What do you think Tina learned about making friends?
11. What was the best part of the story? (Share what you liked.)

# Oral Reading Assessment Form

**BENCHMARK**  *Legends: Water Monsters and Unicorns*

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher/Tester \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Pg #: <i>Legends: Water Monsters and Unicorns</i>	Student Reading	Errors	Corrections
<p>2. In the land of the mist in Scotland there is a quiet, deep lake. At least, Loch Ness is usually quiet. But early one morning, Mr. and Mrs. Spicer were driving on the new road next to the lake.</p> <p>The year was 1933. They saw an unusual animal crossing the road. First its long neck appeared in the lights of the car. Then the Spicers saw its huge, ponderous body. It was thirty to forty feet tall. In seconds, the beast crossed the road. It lurched toward the Loch and disappeared into its depths.</p>			
<p>3. This was not the first sighting of the mysterious creature in Loch Ness. But it was the first sighting of it on land.</p> <p>In January of the next year, a motorcyclist named Mr. Grant almost collided with the monster. He was going home at about one o'clock in the morning. He jumped off his motorcycle to follow the creature. It headed toward the lake. The moon was bright, so Mr. Grant could see the small head on the monster's very large body. By the time he reached the lake, he saw only the ripples on the water.</p>			

# Oral Reading Assessment Form

BENCHMARK  *Legends: Water Monsters and Unicorns*

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher/Tester \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Pg # <i>Legends: Water Monsters and Unicorns</i>	Student Reading	Errors	Corrections
<p>5 There have been sightings of Nessie, the Loch Ness monster, since the 6th century. But the reports from the past 100 years have created the most interest. The people who live near Loch Ness are the best sources of information. A young girl working as a maid in a home near the lake described the animal. It had a neck like a giraffe, skin like an elephant, and short flippers for front legs. She said it was one of the biggest animals she had ever seen!</p>			
<p>7 In recent years, film crews and photographers have tried to capture images of Nessie. Most of the pictures show a large creature in the water, but no one can be sure of what it is. There have even been people using sonar equipment to try to take underwater pictures of the creature. But to date, no one has been able to verify that the Loch Ness monster exists. However, each day another name is added to the long list of people who say they have seen this amazing creature.*</p> <p><i>*Note to the teacher/tester: The rest of the book is to be read silently, before the student answers the questions in Story Retelling.</i></p>			
	<b>Totals</b>		

**BENCHMARK**  **Legends: Water Monsters and Unicorns**

**Oral Reading Assessment Scoring**

**Criterion:** 92% ♦ No more than 29 errors

**Totals:** Errors = \_\_\_\_\_ Corrections = \_\_\_\_\_

**Correction Ratio 1:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Fluency:** \_\_\_\_\_ /4 (See Fluency Rubric, Page 22.)

**Accuracy** =  $100 - (\text{Errors} / \text{Words Read} \times 100 = \text{_____} / 366 \times 100) = \text{_____}$

**Correction Ratio** =  $\text{Errors} + \text{Corrections} / \text{Corrections}$

**Story Retelling: Legends: Water Monsters and Unicorns  
(Benchmark 10)**

Record the gist of the student's retelling after each question. Score one point for appropriate responses from the retelling that answer the following questions. Criterion: The student must receive at least 75% (six out of eight excluding the first, second, and last question) to meet the criterion.

1. Did you like those stories?
2. Retell the stories in your own words. (Read the questions out loud before asking the student to write.)
3. How are the stories of the Loch Ness monster and the unicorns the same?
4. How are the stories of the Loch Ness monster and the unicorns different?
5. What evidence does this book provide for the existence of the Loch Ness monster?
6. What evidence does this book provide for the existence of unicorns?
7. What does the word *verify* mean in these stories?
8. Why do some people use sonar equipment at Loch Ness?
9. What would you want to know to learn whether or not unicorns or water monsters are real?
10. What was the purpose of the body oil used by Mr. Vavra?
11. What was the best part of each story? (Share what you liked.)

APENDIX B  
STORY WRITING



## Story Writing

The following are the sentences that were read and dictated to students when their writing quality was being tested (Story Writing). Students were supposed to write and ending for the stories.

### Sentence A

Once my pet snake followed a baby skunk under the garage. Slinky tried to catch the skunk, but he was very smelly.

### Sentence B

David pulled on gray slacks and a shirt. He picked up a package. He carried it over to Brent's house and yelled "Surprise!"

### Sentence C

Three kids tried to walk across a shallow stream. The water was chilly and their feet grew numb and dripping wet.

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APENDIX C  
WRITING RUBRIC

# Writing Rubric **K123**

## Language Conventions

- 1** The child attempts to write (may or may not relate to assigned task) but is generally unsuccessful in responding to the task.
- 2** The child writes purposefully to accomplish a task, and writing takes on more conventional print qualities with many invented spellings.
- 3** The child produces expanded text in response to assignments, and writing takes on more conventional print qualities with some invented spellings.
- 4** The child produces expanded text in response to assignment and shows more consistent use of the range of print conventions.
- 5** Reader/writer links expand. The child develops written composition with emerging voice or personality, along with close adherence to print conventions.
- 6** The writing process is a creative venture, utilizing rich language and exceptionally strong attention to printed conventions.

## Message Quality

- 1** The child does not attempt to convey a thought or a message relating to the purpose of an assigned task.
- 2** The child conveys a simple message that may include more than one, possibly unrelated, thought.
- 3** The message may include more than one thought. The writer begins to develop topics, and different functions may appear.
- 4** The child produces a text with two or more thematically related ideas that are logically organized and somewhat developed.
- 5** The child composes interesting text with several thematically related ideas that are logically organized and developed.
- 6** The child composes creative and thoughtful text that clearly addresses a specific topic and is well-elaborated.

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