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# An Effective Instructional Model for Teaching English Language Learners within the Mainstream Classroom

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AN EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTIONAL MODEL  
FOR TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS  
WITHIN THE MAINSTREAM CLASSROOM

by

Sofia V. Vladimirova

A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of  
Arts in Teaching.

Hamline University  
Saint Paul, Minnesota

July 2016

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Thesis Rationale

“Sofia, go put your stuff in your locker!” The teacher’s loud voice hurt my ears but none of the words registered. “Sofia, how come you are not putting your stuff in your locker?” All I could think about was the sounds that I was hearing: l-o-k-e-r, h-o-u-c-o-m, s-t-u-f. What did they mean? The only word I understood was Sofia.

I was aware that my teacher was speaking to me and wanted me to follow her directions, yet I did not know what she was saying or what she wanted me to do. I froze. I looked around, and all I saw were unfamiliar faces, with lips moving and pronouncing words I had never heard before. One of them pointed to a locker. “Finally, someone is using sign language,” I thought to myself.

This moment marks my experience as a newcomer to the United States and as an English language learner. In September of 2001, I entered eighth grade without speaking or understanding a single word of English. The atmosphere was unfamiliar, the faces were strange, the voices sounded muffled, and the words were simply meaningless speech.

It took me nearly eight years to become fluent in English. I devoted long hours to studying English after I returned home from school each day, and I spent numerous sleepless nights studying vocabulary. In the beginning of this journey the language sounded like babble to me: the words always blending, the sounds never ending. I felt lost, isolated, and, worst of all, I felt I had lost my voice. As a fluent speaker of Bulgarian and French, I was

always extremely verbal and never held back my words. The moment I stepped off the plane onto U.S. territory, my voice fell silent. Little did I know that, in this country of opportunities, I would become voiceless for many years.

When I first started middle school in Rochester, Minnesota, I was placed in an English as a Second Language, or ESL, self-contained classroom. As I entered the room on the first day of school, I noticed faces that represented different races and cultures. I sat behind a boy from the Philippines who was also unable to converse in English. Every time he wanted to get my attention he would pull my hair. On the right and left of me sat two Somali girls. The majority of the class was Somali, Hmong, or Filipino. A boy from Serbia and I were the only ones from Eastern Europe.

I was lucky that I had been exposed to the Latin alphabet while learning French. Bulgarian uses the Cyrillic alphabet, which has nothing in common with the Latin one. Being in a classroom with only ESL students, I felt excluded from the rest of the school, not to mention extremely alienated.

I began to despise school – until one day I decided that it was my job to catch up and become “equal” to my English speaking peers. I would go to school, come home, and begin studying on my own until late into the night. After three months, my ESL teacher decided it was time to exit me from the program and place me in a mainstream classroom.

I felt damaged.

It was too late.

The strong sense of being different had taken over, and I never felt equal to my English-speaking peers again. My confidence was demolished, yet I had to continue to persevere in this new world. I was put in a mainstream language arts class that was working

on reading Shakespeare. “Another language,” I thought to myself. “Bring it on!” I excelled and was soon placed in honors classes, yet my comprehension level was still minimal.

As an English Language Learner born and raised in Bulgaria, it is no surprise that I have chosen the profession of teaching language to those who are in similar positions as I was fourteen years ago. Acquiring a second language is not simply the process of learning a new language. Rather, it is much more complex: learning a new language not only includes some degree of cultural alienation, but it also means experiencing feelings of constant anxiety due to the inability to function as well as native English speakers. The idea of creating classrooms that consist solely of English Language Learners frustrates me, and I find this particular model completely flawed.

I realize that I began to truly learn the language once I entered college because at that point I was surrounded by native speakers. I acquired knowledge of the English language in a more authentic, natural way, and my peer interactions were not limited to individuals who were also struggling to learn the language.

As a result of my more positive language learning experiences in college, I have often asked myself how the K-12 educational system could be so flawed in regard to educating English Language Learners. How is it possible for educators to believe that individuals are capable of learning English while exclusively exposed to other English Language Learners for the entirety of their school day?

As I teach in my own elementary classroom, I am always grateful that my English Language Learners do not have to experience the self-contained model that I did in my first few months as a student in the United States. I believe that my students will not be as

damaged; they will not feel that they are completely different from their peers, and they will learn the language much quicker than I did.

It should come as no surprise that methods of effective language teaching for English Language Learners has become a main focus of the educational system. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) calls for quality education and accountability for all children in U.S. schools, including English Language Learners (No Child Left Behind Act [NCLB Act], n.d.). According to the World-class Instructional Design and Assessment, WIDA, these children are classified as entering, emerging, developing, expanding, bridging, and reaching the English Language proficiency standards (WIDA, n.d.).

In order for the rhetoric of NCLB to become reality, instructional staff must bridge the gap between the entering phase to the reaching phase (No Child Left Behind Act [NCLB Act], n.d.). Moreover, schools are presented with the gift and power to help English Language Learners overcome language barriers. This is not an easy task, and there is an urgent need to improve the quantity and quality for English Language Learners, both in special programs and in mainstream classrooms (Mamantov, 2013). The methods and strategies an instructor chooses to teach the English language can be detrimental to a child's language acquisition, and great care must be taken in selecting appropriate instructional methods (Bahamonde, 1999). My research topic is about an effective instructional practice in teaching the English language to students who have been identified as English Language Learners. I chose this topic due to the fact that it is an area in education that I am passionate about, have personal experience in, and am presented with on a daily basis at the school where I currently teach. My interest in this topic sparked during middle school because I was identified as an English Language Learner. Given the above information, English language



acquisition has played a large role in my life and has been a tremendous struggle that I had to overcome. The idea of creating a classroom of English Language Learners is parallel to segregation in my eyes. Sometimes I wonder how this could be possible after all the years the United States has fought for equality and equity. I always think that, while there is equality given the fact that I was blessed with the opportunity to attend a U.S. school, equity was never achieved because the ways in which I learned English were completely flawed.

In addition, I teach at a school that serves a large Latino, Somali, and Indian population. My school uses a co-teaching model that provides intervention services to English Language Learners on a daily basis. The instructional model is referred to as the Integrated Services Approach by my school district. My hopes are that this research will conclude that placing English Language Learners in a mainstream classroom – rather than a self-contained classroom consisting solely of English Language Learners – is an effective instructional model for language acquisition and academic success. Moreover, there are specific instructional practices that should be used within a mainstream classroom in order to teach language to non-native English speakers that yield the highest academic and language gains.

The goal of this research is to find effective practices in teaching English to students that have been identified as English Language Learners by a school district, and to find ways to actively involve English Language Learners in learning about themselves, their classmates, and the world around them.

## **Effective Classroom Instruction and Instructional Models for English Language**

### **Learners**

The research conducted is done in a first-grade, mainstream classroom. The class is composed of native English speakers and non-native English speakers, some of whom are identified as English Language Learners. The study focuses on sheltered instruction, which is a thematic curriculum (Rodriguez Moux, 2010), and an effective instructional model known to this particular school district as the Integrated Services Approach.

More specifically, the Integrated Services Approach allows for the mainstream classroom to include English Language Learners and support them with appropriate teaching methods that will increase language acquisition as well as yield success in academic learning. Hyll and Flynn (2006) argue that cooperative learning enhances academic learning and language acquisition. The Integrated Services Approach is an instructional model in which specialists provide push in support. Such a model allows for students identified as English Language Learners to remain in the mainstream classroom and learn with their native English-speaking peers (Miner, 2006). Moreover, students are able to interact with each other in groups in ways that benefit their academic learning and language acquisition. This holds true for the Integrated Services Approach. This specific approach uses cooperative learning strategies in maximizing language acquisition. Furthermore, Hyll and Flynn (2006) suggest that there are nine categories of instructional strategies that have been proven as exceptionally effective in improving English Language Learners' academic and linguistic performance. These nine strategies will be reviewed in detail in Chapter Two.

### **Personal and Professional Significance of the Research Topic**

As stated earlier, my interest in identifying the most effective practices and methods of teaching English to English Language Learners (ELL) is extremely personal because I was once identified as an English Language Learner (ELL). The struggles and barriers I had to overcome were enormous and I wish to better facilitate the language acquisition process for the students in my current and future classrooms. Too often, students who are learning English as an additional language fall into the “tracking trap” within the K-12 educational system and are either instructed at a level below their academic abilities or become identified as students with special needs (Gui, 2007). In the instances in which these students are referred to special education, they become labeled for the rest of their K-12 experience – which can become detrimental to a child’s self-concept (Gui, 2007). By finding the best practices and methods to teach English to the ELL population, educators will have the tools to successfully avoid this trap and can instead provide English Language Learners with an appropriate education (Miner, 2006).

### **Conclusion**

In the chapters to follow, there will be a detailed discussion of effective methods for teaching English to English Language Learners. These methods will pertain to the assessment, instruction, and evaluation of English Language Learners. In addition, the ELL population will be studied in categories of beginner to intermediate, which are defined as limited English proficient (LEP), and advanced English Language Learners, by the federal government (LEP Partnership, n.d.). According to the U.S. Department of Education, a student who is identified as LEP is not fully proficient in English; speaks a language other than English at home; and does not demonstrate the English language skills of

comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing at a level equivalent to a native English speaker (LEP Partnership, n.d.). Ultimately, LEP is a term to describe anyone who has tested into an ESL or ELL program. The standard procedure for testing into the program begins with parents or legal guardians filling out a Home Language Survey (LEP Partnership, n.d.). If the parent indicates that a language other than English is spoken at home, then the student is given a language assessment screener to determine the exact level of proficiency (LEP Partnership, n.d.); in Minnesota and other WIDA Consortium states, this screener is the W-APT. If the assessment shows that the child is considered LEP, then the child qualifies for ESL or ELL services or support – provided that the parent or guardian does not waive the right to these additional services (Clegg, 1996).

Furthermore, Chapter Two will provide a review of the literature describing why an Integrated Services Approach is an effective educational model for teaching language to English Language Learners. The chapter will also discuss nine teaching practices and strategies. According to Hyll and Flynn (2006), these strategies and practices facilitate and accelerate the process of language acquisition and academic success. In addition, the chapter will explain three leading language acquisition theories and how they relate to instruction for English Language Learners (Conteh-Morgan, 2002). Finally, the chapter will provide insight into six aspects of literacy instruction and the appropriate teaching an educator must utilize during the different stages of language acquisition (Weber, 2001). In an effort to assist readers with relevant vocabulary in the field, Chapter Two also includes a section on terminology used to describe English Language Learners.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **Literature Review**

#### **Terminology Relevant to English Language Learners**

The complexity and heterogeneity of the English language learner population in the United States has increased dramatically in recent years. According to Sarah Bardack at the English Language Learner Center and American Institutes for Research, English Language Learners have different levels of language proficiency and different socioeconomic status, academic experiences, and immigration history (Common ELL Terms and Definitions, 2010). Therefore, ELLs do not fit a single profile (Common ELL Terms and Definitions, 2010).

Due to the variety of the proficiency of English Language Learners, the terminology used to define English Language Learners is complex and different educational entities, such as schools and the U.S. government, use different terms in describing this population (Bardack, 2010). The most common term that is used in the U.S. is “English Language Learner,” or “ELL.” According to the U.S. Department of Education, both of the terms “English Language Learner” and “limited English proficient” are widely used (LEP Partnership, n.d.). However, the term “ELL” is more commonly used within school districts. Both terms are used to describe an individual who is in the process of actively acquiring English, and whose primary language is one other than English.

Other terms that are commonly used to refer to ELLs are “language minority students,” “English as Second Language” (ESL) students, and “culturally and linguistically diverse” (CLD) students (Common ELL Terms and Definitions, 2010). Recently learners of English have been referred to as students who learn “English as an additional language.” This definition may be more accurate due to the fact that many students speak more than one language prior to learning English. For the purposes of this research, the term English Language Learners will be used while the researcher will be conscious of the fact that English may not be learned as a second language but rather as an additional language. The first language of the individual is known as the L1. The target language, which in this case is English, is known as the L2 (LEP Partnership, n.d.). An ELL benefits from language support programs to improve academic performance in English due to challenges with reading, comprehension, speaking, and writing skills in English (Cooter, R., Reutzler, 2004).

### **Instruction for English Language Learners as Determined by Various School Districts**

The nature of the instruction of English Language Learners is determined by the districts, school administration, specialists, and classroom teachers (Williams, 2011). There are numerous factors that determine how a child will be taught English. This chapter explores effective teaching strategies for English Language Learners in the elementary setting, the types of settings and programs of learning that exist, as well as the process of second language acquisition. It presents research about the teaching methods that accelerate the language development of English Language Learners. This exploration leads to what experts have found to be most successful and challenging in implementing the various teaching strategies. The chapter also provides information on teaching models of English Language

Learners. Finally, it compares the models and summarizes which ones have been found most effective in language development.

### **Second Language Acquisition**

Second language acquisition is the process of learning a new language which is second to the native one (Williams, 2011). There are three phases of acquiring a second language and these phases may occur at a different rate depending on the student's abilities in the first language (Conteh-Morgan, 2002). There are numerous language acquisition theories with the main ones being behaviorist theory, innatist theory, and interactionist theory (Peregoy & Boyle, 2005). All three theories focus on the following acquisition aspects: linguistic focus, process of acquisition, role of the child, and role of the social environment.

The behaviorist theory believes that the primary medium of language is oral and language production is rewarded by human role models. It suggests that language is primarily what is spoken and secondarily what is written. The theory suggests that a language learner should be mostly exposed to spoken language (Peregoy & Boyle, 2005). Teachers should focus on teaching oral language and provide rewards for language usage. Moreover, the theory suggests that infants learn oral language from other human role models through a process involving imitation, rewards, and practice. Human role models in an infant's environment provide the stimuli and rewards (Cooter & Reutzel, 2004). Imitating the sounds produced by role models or attempting language use should be praised. This theory is criticized because of the vital role that rewards play in language acquisition. Given that praise and rewards are such vital components in language development, it is possible that language use attempts would discontinue if there were a lack of rewards (Cooter & Reutzel, 2004).

The behaviorist theory is logical given the fact that the basis for children's personalities and abilities are shaped throughout their early years. It only makes sense that ELLs learn the language from human role models. In addition, speaking is more natural than writing.

While the behaviorist theory has many strong points, it does not explain the creativity of children in generating language. ELL children have an ability to overcome grammatical errors without native speakers' corrections. Therefore, ELL children do not always need to mimic role models to acquire a language. They are able to imagine and create different ways of correcting language throughout the process of additional language acquisition.

The innatist theory suggests that language development is influenced by responses to environmental stimuli (Peregoy & Boyle, 2005). According to this theory, all humans are born with a language acquisition device that provides them with the innate ability to process linguistic rules. Children do not simply mimic the sounds they hear when learning a language (Jackson, 2008). Instead, they piece together the grammar of the language as they go through the natural developmental process. Once the critical period for language learning is over, the device is turned off. This is the reason why it is more difficult to learn a language at a later age in life.

Moreover, the innatist theory suggests that there are processes of acquisition and learning necessary for internalizing a new language. Acquiring a language is a subconscious process by which learners pick up a language. Once the knowledge is acquired, it is possible for the learner to produce language. Learning is the more conscious attempt to know about the structure and workings of a language. Most likely, the learning takes place in formal teaching settings (Conteh-Morgan, 2002).



This theory is sound because it suggests that children construct grammar through a process of hypothesis test. This would suggest that ELLs would learn a grammar rule and apply it to future language production. For example, if an ELL knows that the addition of –ed to a verb makes it in the past tense, the child would continue applying the –ed to other verbs. This may produce a word such as “goed” but eventually children revise their hypothesis to accommodate exception of the past tense of irregular verbs. In addition, the theory is credible because it suggests that children create sentences by using rules rather than by simple repetition. This means that children do not repeat what they have heard but rather test their own rules and apply them until the language makes sense. Innatist theory believes that children naturally acquire the L1 from the world around them. This means that in order for students to acquire L2, teachers must focus on communication rather on the memorization of language rules.

In contrast, the innatist theory seems flawed because it suggests that the ability to learn language is inborn. It proposes that nature is more important than nurture and that experience is only necessary to initiate the language acquisition process. This belief is flawed because children could be taught discipline in learning despite the lack of natural learning drive and abilities. Although language acquisition would come easier to someone who is studious and inherently intelligent, a child with strong learning discipline could acquire a second language just as well. In the case that children are merely biologically programmed for language learning, children would also be biologically predisposed to any educational success. As an educator, I have witnessed equivalent progress between children with a significantly low IQ and children with a much higher IQ. The level of a child’s IQ is biologically predisposed and children are born with certain abilities. However, the

willingness to study and succeed in school could be a determining factor in language acquisition and good school performance.

Differently, the interactionist theory focuses more on the use of language in communicative acts, on the functions of language, and its use in various contexts (Peregoy & Boyle, 2005). Unlike the innatist theory, this theory suggests that as native speakers communicate with language learners, they modify their language to accommodate the learners' communicative proficiency and level of understanding. At the same time, language learners use their language skills as they communicate back. During the communication, both native and non-native speakers negotiate meaning in case of misunderstanding. In the case of any errors, the learner can self-correct during the verbal exchange. Overall, theory suggests that, through the acts of interacting and communicating, learners gain language proficiency. This theory provides a logical explanation and supports the Integrated Services Approach. It seems that this teaching model most closely follows the interactionist theory because the model is based on communication during guided reading groups. While the teachers and specialists are modifying the material taught to accommodate the level of the ELLs level of understanding, the ELL is responding. This exchange facilitates the language acquisition process and allows for repetitive practice of communication (Cooter, R., Reutzel, 2004). The theory suggests that interaction with adults plays an integral part in children's language acquisition and is of the utmost importance in becoming proficient in an additional language (Peregoy & Boyle, 2005).

Differently, the interactionist theory may have some shortcomings given the fact that it merely focuses on the adult-child relationship. The theory seems to be over-representative of middle class educated American and European families that have strong parent-child

interactions. There are children that are exposed to less language and come from low-educated families that nevertheless grow up to become fluent in the additional language. The behaviorist theory, innatist theory, and interactionist theory all provide some useful insight on how English Language Learners acquire language and become proficient in a language.

### **Aspects of Literacy**

ELLs must develop a total of six aspects of literacy in order to become proficient in English. According to Weber, there are six aspects of literacy that must be developed in order for one to become proficient in a language (2010).

In order for an English Language Learner to become proficient in English, he or she must develop all of the six aspects of literacy. According to Weber, the aspects of literacy include the following (2010):

- Reading comprehension
- The writing process
- Language and vocabulary knowledge
- Word reading
- Spelling strategies (commonly called “word study”)
- Voluntary (or independent) reading

These six areas include the affective and cognitive domains of learning. The affective and cognitive domains of learning are all imperative in becoming proficient in a language (Facella, 2005). Some of the domains require lower level thinking skills, while others require higher level thinking skills. For example, word reading, knowledge of vocabulary, and spelling require lower level thinking skills (Harr, 2008). In order for a student to become

proficient, he or she must develop these prior to tackling reading comprehension, the writing process, and independent reading (Cooter, R., Reutzel, 2004). Overall, the affective and cognitive domains of learning are interdependent and one must acquire the lower level thinking skills first in order to support higher level thinking skills for literacy success (Weber, 2010).

### **Stages of Second Language Acquisition and Appropriate Strategies in Questioning and Commands**

The stages of second language acquisition are critical to determining what strategy to use in instructing English Language Learners, the levels of text they should be presented with, and the work load that should be given. Being aware of the stage and understanding its characteristics are key in effectively differentiating instruction within the classroom. Stephen Krashen and Tracy Terrell have identified five stages of Second Language Acquisition in their book, *The Natural Approach*. Instructional staff must be aware of these stages in order to deliver quality instruction to English Language Learners.

The first stage is the preproduction stage. This stage may be referred as the “newcomer” stage in some districts. At this point of the language development process, the student has minimal comprehension and understands a significantly small amount of words (Krashen, Terrell, 1983). The student is not able to verbalize or carry on a conversation. He or she may nod “yes” or “no” as well as draw pictures or point to pictures. The time frame of the preproduction stage is about six months. It is important that teachers use specific prompts during this language acquisition stage. During instruction, a teacher should give commands by asking to circle the correct answer or picture. When asking questions, the teacher should begin with where someone or something is and who has something. These are lower order

questions that do not require inferring. They are simpler and would help the student be successful in answering them correctly. In addition, the teacher should have visuals that accompany these questions.

The second stage of second language acquisition is known as the early production stage (Krashen, 1988). The name of it reveals that at this point the student begins to produce language but it is limited to one or two word responses. The student still has limited comprehension and is unable to understand most of the language around him or her. However, she or he may begin to participate in conversations by using some key words or phrases she or he has been exposed to numerous times (Krashen, 1988). At this point, the student may use some present tense verbs. This occurs from six months up to a full year of instruction. It is critical that teachers use yes or no and either and or questions. This way, the student is able to process all the information and answer the questions successfully. Moreover, it is crucial to provide one or two word answers when answering the student as opposed to giving a complicated sentence as an answer (Krashen, 1988). This would only confuse the student and make them feel frustrated. Using lists and labels is also beneficial to students in the early production stage because they are able to match the verbal statement with the written words.

The third stage is the speech emergence stage (Krashen, 1988). At this time the student has good comprehension, can produce simple sentences, and may understand the words in a joke but misinterpret the meaning of the actual joke. The student also makes frequent grammar and pronunciation errors which should not be immediately corrected by the teacher. The reason behind not correcting immediately is that the student's confidence may decrease and they may shut down. This may result in reverting back to the early

production phase. Teachers and instructional staff would be using effective prompts if they use the questions why and how (Krashen, 1988). Also, they should give the directive of explain. More specifically, after the teacher has asked a question of why and how, the student should always be asked to explain his thinking. In this way, the student is both processing information and practicing his or her language skills verbally. In the cases the teacher responds to the student, he or she must do so using phrase or short sentence answers. These type of responses will not confuse the student and will assure the success and confidence of the language learner (Krashen, 1988).

The fourth stage is the intermediate fluency stage and is expected after three to five years of English Language instruction (Krashen, 1988). The amount of time is directly correlated to the first language abilities of the child. During this stage, an English Language Learner will have excellent comprehension and communication with peers and elders. While speaking and writing, the student would make a minimal amount of grammatical mistakes. While instructing children in this stage, the teacher should use questions that are higher order thinking questions. Asking students what would happen if a different event occurred in a story, would accelerate the language development of that student. Also, it is important to ask students of the reasoning behind their thinking. It forces them to use the language and improves their reading comprehension (Krashen, 1988).

The final stage of the second language acquisition is called the advanced fluency stage (Krashen, Terrell, 1983). This stage is reached after at least five years of language exposure. At this point, the student would be considered proficient in the second language. The student has a near native level of speech with r without an accent. There is a general consensus that students that enter the United States educational system prior to the age of

twelve will lose the accent. Ones that arrive after the age of twelve may retain an accent to some extent. The appropriate and effective teacher prompts at this stage are asking students to decide whether something in a story is true or false, and retell the story. This forces the student to synthesize and evaluate the text. It also teaches students to differentiate between important and unimportant information in the story (Catina, 2010).

### **Components of Literacy Acquisition**

The New Standards Primary Literacy Committee has developed standards that are assessed at the primary level (1999). There are three reading standards and three writing standards that are assessed for first grade. The New Standards Organization and Garin Baker lay out the primary literacy standards in the book, *Reading and writing grade by grade: primary literacy standards for kindergarten through third grade* (The New Standards Primary Literacy Committee, 1999). These serve as standards of literacy acquisition for all first graders including those who are considered English Language Learners. There are three main standards that are assessed (The New Standards Primary Literacy Committee, 1999).

Reading Standard 1 includes phonemic awareness, in which the student has the ability to segment and blend each of the sounds in words (The New Standards Primary Literacy Committee, 1999). Every student should be able to separate the sounds by saying each sound aloud and blend separately spoken phonemes to make an actual word (Cooter, Reutzel, 2004). The students should know regular letter-sound correspondences, rather than simply identifying the name of the letter. They should be able to use onsets and rimes to create new words. This means that students can divide one-syllable words into two parts, onset and rime (The New Standards Primary Literacy Committee, 1999). The onset is the initial consonant or consonant cluster of the word, and the rime is the vowel and consonants that follow it.

Also, they should recognize about 150 high- frequency words. Fry's list of words is a widely used sight word list (Cooter & Reutzel, 2004).

Reading Standard 2 includes accuracy, fluency, self-monitoring, self- correcting strategies, and comprehension (The New Standards Primary Literacy Committee, 1999). The student should be able to read unfamiliar Level I books with a 90% or better accuracy as well as read aloud with intonation, pauses, and emphases. This would indicate that the students understand the text (Cooter & Reutzel, 2004). Self- monitoring and self-correcting strategies contain the expectations that students will notice whether or not words sound right given their spelling. It also means that students would go back and reread, notice whether words do or do not make sense in context, solve reading problems through syntax and word-meaning clues, compare pronounced sounds and printed letters, use context clues, use analogy, and check their solution against what they already know (Weber, 2004). Comprehension includes the students' ability to retell a story, summarize a book, describe new information gained from a text, and answer simple comprehension questions (Cooter & Reutzel, 2004). When a text is read aloud, students are expected to be able to extend the story, make predictions about what might happen next, talk about motives and characters, and describe causes and effects of specific events (The New Standards Primary Literacy Committee, 1999).

Reading Standard 3 includes reading habits in independent and assisted reading, being read to and discussing books (The New Standards Primary Literacy Committee, 1999). First-graders are expected to read four or more books daily with or without assistance, discuss at least one of these books with another student or in a group, read some favorite books many times gaining deeper comprehension, read their own writing and sometimes the writing of their classmates, and read functional messages they encounter in the classroom.



When being read to, students are expected to hear two to four books or other texts read aloud daily and listen to and discuss at least one text that is more difficult than their independent reading level (Cooter, Reutzel, 2004). In discussing books students are expected to comprehend the meaning of the text, be able to compare two books by the same author, discuss several books on the same theme, refer to parts of the text when presenting or defending a claim, politely disagree, ask questions that seek elaboration and justification, and attempt to explain the validity of their interpretation of the text (The New Standards Primary Literacy Committee, 1999).

Vocabulary development includes the expectations that first-grade students will make sense of new words from the context of the text, notice and show interest in understanding unfamiliar words, talk about the meaning of new words encountered, know how to talk about what words mean in terms of functions, and learn new words every day from classroom experiences (The New Standards Primary Literacy Committee, 1999).

Writing Standards include habits and processes, writing purposes and resulting genres, and language use and conventions (Harr, 2008). Students are expected to take responsibility for choosing a topic and develop the text around it. There are three writing standards assessed for first grade.

Writing Standard 1 includes the expectations that students will write daily, generate topics and content, reread their work with the expectation that others will be able to read it, solicit and provide responses to writing, revise, edit and proofread appropriately, apply some commonly agreed-upon criteria to their own work, and polish at least 10 pieces throughout the year (The New Standards Primary Literacy Committee, 1999).

Writing Standard 2 includes narrative, informative, and functional writing; and producing and responding to literature. Students are expected to evidence a plan for writing, develop a narrative containing two or more sequenced events, incorporate drawings, diagrams, and other suitable graphics, demonstrate an awareness of author's craft, imitate narrative elements, and begin to recount reactions as well as events (The New Standards Primary Literacy Committee, 1999).

Writing Standard 3 includes style and syntax, vocabulary and word choice, spelling, and punctuation, capitalization and other conventions (The New Standards Primary Literacy Committee, 1999). Students are expected to vary sentence openers, use a wide range of syntactic patterns, embed literary language appropriately, reflect sentence structures from various genres, and produce writing that employs their speaking vocabulary. They are also expected to select a more precise word when prompted and use new vocabulary gained from their classroom experiences. Spelling should contain a large proportion of correctly spelled high-frequency words (Harr, 2008). The student should use recognizable phonetic representation, reflect a range of resources in spelling unfamiliar words, and be able to automatically use some familiar words and word endings. First grade demonstration of awareness of punctuation and other conventions should approximate the use of some punctuation, borrow some conventions from favorite and familiar authors, and show some control over the use of capital letters for names and sentence beginnings (The New Standards Primary Literacy Committee, 1999).

### **Classroom Instruction and Best Practices**

Review of the literature shows that it was found that most of the research based best literacy practices recommended for English Language Learners (ELLs) are those used to

instruct native English speakers, but with greater application for ELLs. Best practices in teaching English Language Learners will result in higher motivation, involvement, and understanding of the grade level content areas. According to Goldberg, research shows that there are nine practices to best support the English language learner within the classroom. In his book, *Teaching English Language Learners: What the research does-and does not-say*, Golberg presents the following practices:

- Display and visuals of concepts
- Explanation of language objectives
- Activation of background knowledge
- Language practice and clear sentence frames
- First language use
- Multimodal manner of instruction using visuals, oral language, written language and acting out
- Awareness of the language function students will use
- Multiple opportunities in using new vocabulary
- Ongoing assessment of student understanding (Golberg, 2008)

The Integrated Services Approach uses all of the above strategies that have proven effective in language acquisition. Furthermore, this particular instructional model is effective because it includes all of the components of a balanced literacy model. According to Weber, balanced literacy best supports the second language learner because it provides clear and explicit language. In addition, balanced literacy provides the opportunity for guided reading and writing practice of a strategy. It is crucial that English Language Learners are given the time and opportunity to receive guided reading and writing practices that meets their needs

(Cooter, R., Reutzel, 2004). Also, the balanced literacy model is beneficial because it fosters intrinsic motivation, self-reward, student accountability, and student ownership of literacy in a community of learners. Moreover, this model allows for oral language use that surrounds, supports, and extends all activities. Some other benefits of the balanced literacy model are a well-managed classroom, purposeful reading and writing activities, attention to the thinking process, co-construction of meaning between student-and-student and student-and- teacher, ongoing assessments, documentation, and teaching to the child at his or her level of reading and writing (Weber, 2004).

### **Sheltered Instruction for English Language Learners**

Sheltered instruction provides access to core curriculum, English language development, and opportunities for social integration into a classroom (Catina, 2010). This model of instruction is used in a heterogeneous, mainstream classroom that includes English Language Learners are higher stages of English Language acquisition. The Sheltered Instruction model has been found to be effective and beneficial to English Language Learners because it allows for the instructional talk to become more understandable for English Language Learners (Peregoy & Boyle, 2005). Teachers would speak more clearly, use high repetition of key words and commands, define and preteach essential vocabulary in context before exposing children to new text, and pair talk with nonverbal communication cues such as objects, pictures, and gestures (Hardwick-Smith, 2002). This will reach kinesthetic, visual, and auditory learning, which in turn facilitates and accelerates the English language acquisition process (Peregoy & Boyle, 2005).

The Sheltered Instruction method of teaching English to English Language Learners is successful because it provides multiple opportunities for English Language Learners to

understand and process new material (Miner, 2007). More specifically, it provides content learning and language development through repetition (Catina, 2010). The class is divided in flexible groupings, which are cooperative and collaborative as well as heterogeneous and homogeneous based on reading levels. The instructional features of this model are theme studies, scaffolding during whole and small group lessons, and language sensitive modifications. Theme studies are studies that focus on one theme and involve different types of assignments and activities that only focus on a certain theme (Hardwick-Smith, 2002). This helps in learning new vocabulary because students are exposed to the same words numerous times. Scaffolding during whole and small group lessons ensures that the English language learner will understand the new material (Hardwick-Smith, 2002). This means that the child is pre-taught new vocabulary words before being exposed to new text and information. Background knowledge is accessed in order for the English language learner to make a connection to previous texts (Facella, Rampino, & Shea, 2005). The material is taught in small segments. Questions of low to high levels of difficulty are asked and sentence frames in answering them are offered. Language sensitive modifications are ways that the teacher can change the instruction, materials, and assessment to meet the specific needs of the English language learner (Facella, Rampino, & Shea, 2005). For example, the teacher could decrease the amount of work presented, use supplementary materials such as videos, illustrations, and drawings, and use non-verbal cues in supporting verbal explanations (Clegg, 1996). The assessment within this method of instruction is both formal and informal (Miner, 2007).

An important element of sheltered instruction is group work within the classroom. This method of teaching English to English Language Learners is effective because receptive

and productive language learning opportunities arise (Jackson, 2008). During the instructional day English Language Learners interact with native English speaking peers, and are exposed to listening to language as well as producing language. Having writing response groups is also beneficial because students share their writings with one another and improve their writing abilities. Some other strategies are literature response groups and cooperative groups where students have different responsibilities and all become accountable in the learning process (Catina, 2010).

Literature response groups are small groups of readers who meet together to discuss what they have read (Facella, Rampino, & Shea, 2005). In some cases, participants can discuss a text they have only listened to. The students usually respond in a journal or literature log to what has been read or listened to. The journals form the basis for the small group discussion. Students discuss what they have written and find differences and similarities between their writings and their own lives (Anzul, 1993). Similarly, cooperative groups are small groups of readers who meet together to work on a project together or work on an assignment. A cooperative group requires students with diverse ability and characteristics to work together and learn from one another to accomplish assigned learning goals (Anzul, 1993).

Peregoy and Boyle argue that the most beneficial instructional model for English Language Learners is balanced literacy approach and sheltered instruction because it always provides academic learning as well as language and literacy learning opportunities (2005). In their book, *Reading, Writing, and Learning in ESL: A Resource Book for K-12 Teachers*, Peregoy and Boyle have shown that using cooperative learning and literature response groups in the classroom has positive effects on academic achievement, interethnic relationships, the

development of English proficiency, acceptance of mainstreamed students with IEP's, self-esteem, liking of self and others, and attitudes toward school and teachers.

### **Immersion Settings**

There are two models of bilingual education that prevail in the educational setting: one way language immersion and two-way instruction (Jackson, 2008). However, research shows that each of these models has serious shortcomings and may have elements that are not best practices in teaching English Language Learners (Cervantes-Soon, 2014).

One way language immersion programs are programs that use only the target language and exclude the native language of the children. The students become fully immersed in the target language (Cervantes-Soon, 2014).

Two-way instruction programs are academic programs that use the native language of students and well as English as the second language (Jackson, 2008). According to Cervantes-Soon, two-way programs “aim to support the English development and native-language maintenance of language-minority students while simultaneously offering English-speaking children the opportunity to acquire a foreign language in the same classroom” (p.64). As such, this type of program has been rendered a better alternative than the typical ESL programs offered to most language-minority students and as superior to more traditional bilingual program models.

In addition, bilingual programs are a successful method but whether full immersion or two way instruction is more beneficial has not been determined (Jackson, 2008).

Implementing a model of co-teaching based on collaboration within either of these programs is an alternative many schools have chosen.

Language immersion can be full or one way, or dual, meaning two-way (Cervantes-Soon, 2014). In either setting educators are to be aware that teaching children to read in their primary language promotes reading achievement in English. Educators should also remember that in many important respects, what works for learners in general also works for ELLs. Finally, in both of these types of immersion teachers must make instructional modifications when ELLs are taught in English.

### **Conclusion**

Chapter Two discussed theories of second language acquisition, the stages of language acquisition, assessments for determining language proficiency levels, and the components of literacy acquisition at the lower elementary level. Moreover, the chapter discussed effective instructional models for English Language Learners.

In Chapter Three, there will be a detailed discussion of an effective method for teaching English to English Language Learners. This will include all three components of assessment, instruction, and evaluation. The chapter will explain the educational context of the study, the setting and participants, and a detailed explanation of the Integrated Services Approach. The chapter will also provide a discussion of the methodology that will be used in answering the posed research question: What is an effective strategy in educating English Language Learners?



## CHAPTER THREE

### Methodology

#### Introduction

Educating the English language learner population is a challenging task, yet one of the most rewarding aspects of teaching. Overcoming a language barrier is a determinant of academic success for all English Language Learners (Facella, Rampino, & Shea, 2005). As educators, we must be able to teach English Language Learners (ELLs) at a high level, both in academic content and English language acquisition. The previous chapter discussed effective approaches to meeting this task, as well as several teaching models that are most effective in language acquisition and academic success. The approaches and methods presented in this capstone are believed to be effective in teaching English to non-native speakers.

In Chapter Two, the methods of assessment of English Language Learners were described, as well as the different language acquisition stages child could be in. In addition, I discussed strategies in teaching English Language Learners based on the stage they were in. I also discussed instructional models that are used in predominantly English language learner classrooms and classrooms that have some percent of English Language Learners.

The following chapter includes a discussion of the methodology that was used in answering the posed research question: What is an effective strategy in educating English Language Learners and what are the best instructional models for language acquisition and

academic success? In addition, the following chapter discusses the setting of the classroom that was used in finding effective strategies, as well as the participants. A description of the research methods, the assessments used to determine what stage of language acquisition each child was in, and the definition of each one is provided. Finally, Chapter Three discusses the design of each instructional model.

### **Research Methods**

Established research methods were used to find insight into the questions “What are effective strategies in educating English Language Learners and what instructional models yield language acquisition and academic success?” Qualitative and quantitative methods were used in conducting the research. The qualitative methods included in-depth interviews from English Language Specialists. The response options were unstructured or semi-structured in order to gather the most authentic information. In addition, classroom observations were being conducted to find an effective instructional model in teaching English to English Language Learners within a mainstream classroom. The research was conducted during a school year in an elementary setting. More specifically, the classroom observed was a 1<sup>st</sup> grade classroom composed of six and seven year old students.

The quantitative methods include reviews of student records for information such as WIDA assessments, level of language acquisition, cultural and linguistic background, as well as Teacher College reading levels of the English Language Learners. These tests were used for analysis and to determine if the Integrated Services Approach is effective in teaching English Language Learners.

The hope was to gain insight into what aspects of the Integrated Services Approach are effective in teaching English Language Learners, and whether this instructional model is

beneficial in both academic success and language acquisition. In addition, the research aimed to find the best strategies in teaching English Language Learners.

### **Research Paradigm: Mixed Methods Approach**

The mixed methods approach was the research design chosen for this study because it allowed for analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data. “The purpose of mixed-methods research is to build on the synergy and strength that exist between quantitative and qualitative research methods to understand a phenomenon more fully than is possible using either quantitative or qualitative methods alone” (Mills, 2014).

In order to determine the effectiveness of the Integrated Services Approach, the WIDA assessment was used in order to see whether the English Language Proficiency levels are improving, Teacher College Reading Levels, as well as interviews from the English Language specialist.

### **Educational Context**

The elementary school that was under observation for the purpose of this research is a culturally, linguistically, and socioeconomically diverse school. The area in which the school is located is populated by a high percentage of first and second generation Mexican families, first and second generation families from India, as well as first and second generation families from Somalia. Within this population, students in the elementary school were at different stages of the language acquisition process. There were students that were in the entering, beginning, developing, expanding, bridging, and reaching phases based on the World Class Instructional Design and Assessment, WIDA, assessment. In addition, these families were from various socioeconomic statuses, with a majority that qualified for Free and Reduced Lunch. The school population was also composed of a high percentage of

African American students and Caucasian students that are native English speakers. With that said, the instruction that was delivered was always differentiated and the instructional model was the Integrated Services approach.

### **English Language Learners in the Public School District**

The public school district used in this study was a metropolitan school district. The district serves thousands of students including the English Language Learners. Of those students, a high percentage qualifies for English as a Second Language services. There are numerous languages spoken by the students and their families, of which the majority are Spanish, Somali and a South or North Indian language. In order to qualify for the English language learner services, the families must provide information to the district based on the guidelines presented from the Minnesota Department of Education. The process is lengthy and includes a home language questionnaire, a parent notification of English Language services, and an assessment, World Class Instructional Design and Assessment, also known as WIDA, provided by a certified district English as a Second Language teacher (WIDA, n.d). The vision of the English as a Second Language Department of the Public School District used in this study is that the ELL Department inspires all English learners to develop confidence and competence in their native language development and in their English language development so that they may succeed socially, academically and vocationally. According to the school district used for this research, the mission of the department is the following:

- Co-plan, co-teach, and co-assess in English language arts, science and social studies during first time instruction
- Play an integral role in curriculum development through the backward design process

- Ensure teaching addresses content, literacy and ELD standards
- Ensure assessments and activities are:
  - Derived from the standards' benchmarks
  - Differentiated and scaffolded by proficiency level
- Ensure the domains of reading, writing, speaking and listening are represented in all stages of planning, teaching and assessment

The Integrated Services Approach is an effective instructional model because it requires much collaboration between reading specialists, classroom teachers, special education teachers, and English as Second Language specialists. According to Bahamonde and Friend, “co-teaching is effective for language acquisition because there are at least two professionals who contribute complementary perspectives to the education process” (p. 12). First, this arrangement creates the opportunity for educators to collaborate and share ideas and increase each other's expertise. Second, the professionals involved collaboratively plan and deliver instruction. Because educators share the responsibility for instruction, monitoring, and performance evaluation, all teachers have a personal stake, and the instruction reflects the strengths of each professional (Bahamonde & Friend 1999).

The classroom that was observed was a mainstream classroom. In this classroom, the English language learner students were mainstreamed because it was found to be most beneficial for language acquisition. In her study, Gui supports this belief and states that placing ELLs in classes with native English speakers encourages mutual learning and decreases the possibility that the language minority students will remain isolated both socially and academically. In addition, Gui adds that the ELLs' self-concept improves

significantly as a result of increased contact with native English speakers in a mainstream classroom (Gui, 2007).

### **Types of Schools within the District**

The district is made up of three elementary schools that provide an all English education and one that provides a dual language bilingual education. The classroom that was being observed was in a school that provided instruction in English across all content areas without any support in the native language of the English Language Learners. This could have been classified as a one-way full immersion program for English Language Learners because they were fully immersed in the English Language (Cervantes- Soon, 2014). In addition, the school used the Integrated Services Approach as an instructional model to support English Language Learners within the mainstream classroom.

In contrast, the dual language bilingual school in the district was an elementary school that used two-way immersion programs. According to the National Dual Language Consortium, dual language bilingual schools use two languages in the classroom to stimulate students' cognitive and academic growth, oral language development, reading and writing, and content areas in both languages (Morales, 2012). More specifically, the district in consideration used Spanish and English. Moreover, both groups had active use of instructional strategies to promote cross-cultural cooperation and learning.

While both instructional models had benefits and disadvantages for English Language Learners, this research aimed to suggest that the full immersion model, or Integrated Services Approach, is an effective for English Language acquisition and academic success.

## **Components of Culturally Responsive Instruction for English Language Learners**

The major components of culturally responsive instruction to English Language Learners are assessment, instruction, and evaluation. Finding the best practices within these three realms was the focus of this research.

In addition, best practices in teaching English Language Learners include using the language acquisition theory, classroom organization of materials, visuals, furniture, teaching strategies, and assessment procedures and tools.

Choice is another important component of the culturally responsive instruction for English Language Learners. Providing a choice to English Language Learners is essential because not only does it allow for student investment, but it also provides comfort when the English language may intimidate and drive the English language learner to a frustration level of reading comprehension, writing, and speaking. Students pursue topics of their own choosing, using oral and written English to discuss and confer with their classmates. Also, reading, writing, reporting, and sharing is part of this ongoing process of language acquisition.

Ideally, the culturally responsive instruction would allow for academic, linguistic, and sociocultural competence to create better worlds for the English Language Learners.

### **Integrated Services Approach**

The delivery model for student instruction in this particular school was an Integrated Services approach. While the classroom being observed was composed of students that had been identified as English Language Learners as well as native speakers, students were never pulled out of the classroom by English Language specialists to receive language instruction. Instead, the English Language specialist collaborated in lesson planning and delivery with

the mainstream classroom teacher and delivered instruction in the mainstream classroom. The integrated services time happened once per instructional day for thirty minutes. The time was separated into two segments. Students were separated in reading groups based on their WIDA language proficiency assessment as well as their Teacher's College, or Developmental Reading Assessment or DRA, scores. Teacher's College is an assessment used in this particular district that determines the guided reading level. It consists of oral reading and a comprehension questions. This assessment was given three times per year, and was used as a benchmark assessment to determine the guided reading level of each student. In addition, the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) is an individually administered assessment of a child's reading capabilities. According to Pearson Learning Services, it is a tool to be used by instructors to identify a student's reading level, accuracy, fluency, and comprehension (2016). Once levels are identified, an instructor can use this information for instructional planning purposes (Pearson Learning Services, 2016). The literacy instruction was not only differentiated but was also delivered by teachers that are certified in different areas. There were a total of four teachers that deliver instruction to a small group of students. The teachers were the mainstream classroom teacher, the English Language specialist, a Reading Interventionist, and a Special Education teacher. In the beginning of the year, the students that were speakers of a different language than English at home were given the WIDA assessment. This assessment determined what language acquisition phase they were in and whether or not they should English language services. Once identified as English Language Learners, these students were closely progress monitored using the WIDA assessment, running records, Teacher's College reading levels, as well as AIMs web. The instruction that students within the classroom received was fully in English, which would



classify it as full immersion instruction given that the native language is not used in teaching academics (Cervantes- Soon, 2014). While the classroom teacher, reading specialist, and special education teacher focused on content learning, the English Language specialist focused on language acquisition.

### **Assessment of English Language Learners**

The school district used in this study adapted the World Class Instructional Design and Assessment, WIDA, in order to qualify students for English as a Second Language services. According to the WIDA Consortium, the assessment given determines the level of language proficiency a student has. Once the assessment is given, the district divided the English Language Learners into one the following categories:

- Newcomer
- Beginner
- Intermediate
- Advanced
- Transitioning

This assessment was given to students until they were determined proficient by the WIDA standards. In addition, the students that were determined proficient in the English Language would also be considered at the Advanced Fluency Stage based on the stages of second language acquisition. The English Language teachers, also known as specialists within this particular Public School District, used the WIDA English Language Development Standards (Appendix A), which provided teachers with valuable information on both the language acquisition level of the child and the instruction that is necessary at that level (WIDA, 2012).

Moreover, Goldberg suggests that there are three phases in language acquisition. These are the beginner to early intermediate period, preproduction, which is sometimes called the “silent period”, early production where students can say one- or two-word utterances, and the speech emergence. In the last phase students can say longer phrases and sentences (Goldberg, 2008).

### **Setting, Classrooms, and Participants**

There were twenty-six students in the classroom. There were eight students that were identified as English Language Learners. In addition, there were two students that were classified as bilingual due to the fact that they had both verbal and written abilities in both Spanish and English. The eight students that were identified as English Language Learners represented three or four different first languages. One student was a Hmong speaker and writer, another was a Somali speaker and Arabic writer, and another one was a south Indian language speaker. The other five were speakers and writers of Spanish. Two of the students that were identified as English Language Learners were also identified as Students with Special Needs, and had IEP's. One of the eight students had repeated first grade once due to insufficient academic gains and minimal language acquisition progress.

Moreover, the eight students that were receiving English Language services and had been identified as English Language Learners were all in different stages on language acquisition. The stage of language acquisition each student was at was determined at this particular district's Welcome Center. The Welcome Center used a computerized assessment to determine the language level of each child enrolling into the Public School District. The assessment given is known as the Measure of Developing English Language. It is designed by the WIDA consortium. The assessment determines the level of English language

proficiency and provides an overall composite proficiency level. Each student in the district was assessed on four skills: listening, speaking, writing, and reading. The listening part was made up of 30 questions. The speaking one was made up of 10 responses. The writing portion was a writing sample that is out of 17 points. Finally, the reading part had a total of 30 points. Using a conversion table, the English Language specialist that tests each student converts the points into a Proficiency Level, PL, which determines their overall composite proficiency level. There are six levels that a child can fall under in order to qualify for English Language services and be identified as an English language learner. The following are the six English language proficiency levels:

- Entering
- Beginning
- Developing
- Expanding
- Bridging
- Reaching

Once the students were assessed and received a proficiency level, a WIDA score sheet was placed in their student file. Students were then placed into a mainstream classroom with push in support from an English Language specialist and a reading interventionist. Based on IEPs, English Language Learners could receive special education services within the classroom as well.

The eight students that were identified as English Language Learners within the first grade mainstream classroom were at the entering, beginning, and expanding level of English language proficiency.

## **Conclusion**

In Chapter Three research design and methodology were presented as well as the setting and participants used in the study. Additionally, the chapter included a discussion of the assessment and method of determining the English language proficiency levels of students. Chapter Four will discuss both the qualitative and quantitative data that has been collected and provide an analysis of what has been gathered. This will allow determining of the most effective strategies in educating English Language Learners and the instructional model that yields the most language acquisition and academic success.

Moreover, Chapter Four will provide an overview of the findings in this research. It will show the growth or lack thereof in student academics and language acquisition. It will review the different strategies, methods, and classroom structures.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **Findings**

#### **Introduction**

Throughout the research, qualitative and quantitative data has been collected. This data consists of student assessments, WIDA data, teacher questionnaires, and classroom teacher findings and observations. More specifically, the student assessments consist of ORF assessments, PSF assessments, sight word assessment, WIDA ACCESS testing, writing records, and Teacher College reading records. The teacher questionnaire was directed towards the English Language specialist. The specialist was interviewed on a one on one basis and responses were written down by the researcher as the specialist answered.

In reviewing the above mentioned qualitative and quantitative data, it is evident that the Integrated Services Approach is an effective approach for teaching language to ELLs. It was determined that one of the most effective strategies in educating English Language Learners is the Integrated Services Approach. This instructional model resulted in student academic and linguistic growth in all ten ELL students within the mainstream classrooms.

Moreover, Chapter Four will provide an overview of the findings in this research. It will show the growth in student academics and language acquisition. It will review the different strategies, methods, and classroom structures put in place throughout the research.

## **Demographics**

The research consisted of data collection from ten ELL students within an elementary classroom. The students made up 40% of the class populations. Their academic levels, first languages, culture, race, and socioeconomic status all defers. It is important to note that all ten ELL students showed some growth in the target language acquisition and academics. Their reading comprehension, fluency, accuracy, expression, writing abilities, as well as speaking and listening skills were closely monitored throughout the research with the use of the above mentioned variety of assessments. It is important to note that some of the ELL participants had perfect attendance, some were consistently absent, and some missed only a few days of school. The amount of days in school may directly correlate to their academic and language acquisition progress.

## **Data from WIDA ACCESS Testing Data**

The ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 Interpretive Guide for Score Reports Kindergarten–Grade 12 Spring 2016 tests ELL students and places them on one of the six different levels of language acquisition (WIDA, n.d.). The WIDA Consortium states that there are six levels of language proficiency:

For the purpose of this research, only the proficiency level scores have been used. These are scores on a scale from 1 to 6. After each whole number, there is a decimal to signify the exact level of the ELL language proficiency. The English Language Proficiency (ELP) level interpretation is as follows:

- ELP Level 1 - Entering
- ELP Level 2 - Emerging
- ELP Level 3 - Developing

- ELP Level 4 - Expanding
- ELP Level 5 - Bridging ELP
- ELP Level 6 - Reaching

As stated by the WIDA Consortium, the proficiency level scores provide a score in terms of the six WIDA language proficiency levels shown above.

In addition, the scores provide individual domain scores which can be used with the WIDA Can Do Descriptors to get a profile of the student's English language performance. The Descriptors are an explanation of what an ELL should be able to do at each grade level. For the purposes of this paper, only the first grade WIDA Can Do Descriptors were used. The test also informs targeted language instruction using the WIDA ELD Standards.

The WIDA Can Do Descriptors (Appendix B) can be used to gauge the growth and level of each ELL student within the mainstream elementary classroom (Kahoks, 2016). For the purposes of this research, these descriptors were used in determining the growth of all ten ELL students in the Integrated Services Approach classroom.

## Findings from WIDA ACCESS Testing

Name	Fall Overall	Spring Overall	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
Student A	1.7	1.8	1.9	1.4	1.9	1.9
Student B	1.3	3.3	2.9	6	3.9	2.3
Student C	1.8	2.4	2.1	2	3.7	2
Student D	2.3	2.9	2.6	6	2.1	2.4
Student E	1.6	2.2	1.9	2.6	2.8	1.9
Student F	1.5	2.6	3.3	2.6	2.4	2.4
Student G	2.1	3.6	5.8	4.2	4	2.8
Student H	No data available	4.5	3.9	6	5.8	3.5
Student I	1.9	2.6	4.2	3.2	2.8	1.8
Student J	3.2	3.4	4.1	2.6	5.1	2.9

Table 1: WIDA Access Testing Results

The findings from the WIDA ACCESS testing were crucial in informing classroom decisions, differentiating curriculum, instruction, and assessments. The instruction of the Integrated Services Approach was based on language learners' levels of English language proficiency. The classroom teacher, English Language specialist, Reading Interventionist, and the Special Education teacher were able to collaborate and engage in instructional conversations about the academic success of language learners in English environments. This allowed for equitable access to content for language learners based on their level of language proficiency and resulted in academic and language growth in all ten ELL students.

Students B, F, and G made the largest progress in language growth. Student B grew by 2 points, student F grew by 1.1, and student G grew by 1.5 points. The least progress was made by Student A, who grew only by 0.1 points. In addition, Student J only grew by 0.2 points. It must be noted that student A had severe behavioral issues and was not able to



receive instruction at some times. As a result, his instructional time was decreased and his emotional needs were met instead.

It is interesting that three students were able to meet the level of reaching in the speaking domain. This means that these students are no longer in need of English language support services in the area of speaking.

### **Data from Teacher College Reading Assessments**

The academic and language progress of the ten ELL student participants was closely monitored. There were three benchmarks throughout the year that reflect the reading level of each student. The students were given a one-on-one reading assessment, Teacher College, which is widely used in the school district. The assessment tests the reading comprehension, fluency, vocabulary level, and expression of a student. It is in the form of a reading passage or a book. The student is presented with a text and is asked to read aloud. After the reading, the student is asked to answer several comprehension questions. If the student scores between 94%-100% accuracy, the student is moved onto the next reading level. If the student is below 93%, the student is provided with a less rigorous reading passage and moved down to a letter below.

<b>Student</b>	<b>Fall 2015</b>	<b>Winter 2015</b>	<b>Spring 2016</b>
Student A	B	C	F
Student B	A	B	D
Student C	B	D	E
Student D	B	E	H
Student E	A	C	E
Student F	C	F	K
Student G	C	C	D
Student H	E	H	H
Student I	C	F	M
Student J	D	H	N

Table 2: Teacher College Levels

### **Findings from Teacher College Reading Assessments**

All ten of the ELL students grew within their reading comprehension, fluency, and accuracy level. A diagnostic assessment and a benchmark was given to all ten students in August. Students were retested in January, and again in May. The smallest progress was made by Student G who grew only one level. The highest progress a student made was ten reading levels.

Student A went from reading level B to reading level F. The student grew four reading levels during the research. The student had reading exposure during whole group, independent reading, and during four different guided reading groups at his particular level. The student worked with the classroom teacher, the Special Education teacher, the English Language specialist, and the Reading interventionist.

Initially, the student was only able to understand how print works and the idea that one reads from left to right. Student A was beginning to understand the relationship between letters and sounds but made numerous mistakes when sounding out letters even in isolation. He was beginning to learn how to use 1-1 matching. 1-1 matching is the ability to match the written letter with the spoken sound (Cooter & Reutzel, 2004). In addition, he was able to understand the distinct print of each letter and knew that letters sound differently. However, the student had to point to each word in isolation in order to make out the words. During guided reading, the student was able to differentiate between print and pictures and explain what he saw in the pictures.

At the end of the study, and after exposure to the Integrated Research Approach, student A began to recognize a large number of high frequency words at the first grade level. These words were based on Fry's list of words. Also, the student began to use letter-sound

information to take apart simple words as well as some multisyllable words although he needed teacher redirection at times. He was able to see a difference between different genres of text, and when the student was asked he could explain the difference between genres. Moreover, the student was beginning to read fiction with more well-developed characters and explain character traits and answer comprehension questions with or without sentence stems. Overall, the student read without pointing and with an appropriate rate, phrasing, and intonation.

Student B went from reading level A to reading level D. The student grew three reading levels. The student had reading exposure during whole group, independent reading, and during four different guided reading groups at his particular level. The student worked with the classroom teacher, the Special Education teacher, the English Language specialist, and the Reading interventionist. It is important to note that Student B did not make as big of a progress as Student A due to limited exposure to guided reading with the Special Education teacher as he was not yet identified as a student in need of an IEP. However, the student had missed half the academic year in his previous school year and had emotional and social challenges. The student had a shy demeanor and an underachieving attitude.

In the beginning of the research, Student B was unsure of how to follow print. He understood the relationship between letters and sounds but only in isolation. Moreover, the student was provided with an alphabet with pictures that made the letter sound next to each. This was practiced in a song format and was the only way the student could say the sounds. The student did not follow text from left to right, and easily lost his place in simple readings. However, the student was beginning to notice each letter's distinct features and learning some easy, high-frequency words made of 1-3 letters.

At the end of the research, the student was able to track print over two to six lines per page with pointing. While he struggles, he was able to process texts with fewer repeating language patterns. His finger pointing was rarely needed, and he became more confident in his reading. He was also able to solve many regular two-syllable words, usually with inflectional endings (-ing). Finally, the student consistently monitored his reading and self-corrected when reading. He was able to monitor himself when something did not make sense and reread the words.

Student C went from reading level B to reading level E. The student grew three reading levels. The student had reading exposure during whole group, independent reading, and during four different guided reading groups at his particular level. The student worked with the classroom teacher, the English Language specialist, and the Reading interventionist. Initially, the student was only able to understand how print works and the idea that one reads from left to right. Student C was not able to track words and letters and always looked at the teacher while reading as opposed to looking at the text. She was beginning to understand the relationship between letters and sounds but made many mistakes when sounding out letters even. The student was given transparent neon tape to track each letter. However, the student had to point to each word in isolation in order to make out the words. This method was used for about a month until the student finally began to point to the words.

At the end, the student was reading at a level E. She was able to track words on her own and self-correct when needed. She repeated a lot of words even when read correctly.

The student was able to read more complex stories with fluency and recognition of a large number of sight words. In addition, the student stopped relying on pictures to figure out the words and was no longer pointing to each word while reading.

Student D went from reading level B to reading level H. The student grew six reading levels. This particular student repeated the first grade and did not make any reading progress in his first year of first grade. In the beginning of the research, the student was just beginning to learn how print works and the concept that letters make sounds. Initially, the student strictly relied on pictures in decoding text. HE also confused letters such as “d” and “b” and would pronounce the letter “j” as “y”.

At the end of the research, the student was able to read much more complex texts without much teacher support. When encountering more difficult vocabulary, the student was able to use context clues and background knowledge in understanding the meaning of the new words. He was able to process a great deal of dialogue and understood how it added to the story. In addition, Student D was able to solve a large number of multisyllable words, plurals, contractions, and possessives. At this point, he was able to fluently read almost all first grade sight words.

Student E went from reading level A to reading level E. The student grew four reading levels. This student received a large amount of Special Education support as outlined in his IEP. He met with four different teachers per day during the Integrated Services Approach as well as received reading support at home from a social worker. In the beginning, he was just beginning to learn how print works and how to use 1-1 matching. He relied on pointing to letters and sounding letters out in isolation. He knew a minimal amount of high frequency words and needed much teacher support.

At the end of the school year, the student was able to track words on his own without pointing to each letter. He was able to self-correct when needed and read most words without any mistakes. He was able to engage in more complex stories with fluency and recognition of

a large number of sight words. In addition, the student stopped relying on pictures to figure out the words and used his background knowledge.

Student F went from reading level C to reading level K. The student grew eight reading levels. This student in particular was in a dual language school in Kindergarten. The student also spoke Somali at home and was exposed to both Spanish and English at school. In the beginning of the research, the student was beginning to move smoothly across the printed page when reading and even began to use some expression when reading. She was beginning to remove finger tracking and quickly read high-frequency words. While her accuracy and fluency was at a good beginning level, the student's comprehension was minimal.

The student was given support by the English Language specialist, the reading interventionist, and the classroom teacher. At the end of the research, she was able to accommodate the higher-level processing of fiction texts and read about and understand characters that are increasingly more complex. Her vocabulary bank increased and her comprehension developed. Moreover, teachers were able to challenge her to read stories based on concepts that are distant in time and space and reflect diverse cultures

Student F was able to quickly apply word-solving strategies for complex spelling patterns, multisyllable words, and words with inflectional endings, plurals, contractions, and possessives. During independent reading, the student was fully engaged and could read for prolonged periods of time without redirection.

Student G went from reading level C to reading level D. The student grew one reading level. This student was not literate in her first language. The family of the student did not speak any English and was not literate in their first language of Spanish. The student did

not have a strong work ethic and educational investment. Initially, she began to move smoothly across the printed page when reading and used minimal expression when reading. While she was noticing dialogue and punctuation, she did not understand what it meant for the story.

The student did not make much progress in reading comprehension, fluency, or accuracy during the research. The biggest progress she made was that at the end she was able to track print over two to six lines per page. She also began self-correcting and noticing that she is mispronouncing words.

Student H went from reading level E to reading level H. The student grew three reading levels. The student spoke an Indian language at home and was only exposed to that out of school. Initially, the student was able to read and understand more subtle ideas and complex stories. The student could read sentences that carry over 2-3 lines or over two pages. While the student did not rely on pictures at all times, they were referenced when a word was difficult to decode.

At the end of the research, Student H was able to read informational texts, simple animal fantasy, realistic fiction, and traditional literature. She was able to read longer stories and process a great deal of dialogue. She could read almost all high-frequency words without teacher support. However, while the student's accuracy and fluency was equivalent or higher to that of a native speaker, she was not able to comprehend what she was reading even with the help of pictures and teacher support. This is the reason the student was put at a reading level H at the end of the research.

Student I went from reading level C to reading level M. The student grew ten reading levels. He spoke Lao at home and was not literate in his first language. The case of this

student is interesting because the student was extremely shy initially and refused to be verbal. The student would only answer “yes” or “no” questions. In the beginning of the research, the student was exiting special education for a speech impediment. Both his accent and speech impediment may have negatively affected his reading and speaking confidence. Initially, he began to move smoothly across pages when reading and would use some expression. He read very softly and all teachers were barely able to hear. The student always self-corrected but would sometimes produce words incorrectly and move on.

At the end of the research, student I made amazing progress. Not only did he become verbal and spoke more clearly, but his confidence had increased dramatically. He was able to read mysteries and biographies with complex language. In addition, he was able to understand and process narratives with more elaborate plots and multiple characters. His reading strategies and skills improved and he could describe what he read, compare and contrast, provide a problem and solution, and give the cause and effect when asked.

Student J went from reading level D to reading level N. The student grew ten reading levels. This student seemed extremely detached from both whole group and small group instruction. While reading, she could track print over two to six lines per page and could solve many regular two-syllable words. She consistently monitored her reading and self-corrected. Her reading expression was great and she used intonation at all times.

At the end of the research, Student J was reading at a higher level than her native speaking peers. She was placed in the highest level guided reading group and was able to handle the material. She was able to process the full range of genres and could understand narratives with more elaborate plots and multiple characters that develop and change over time. Her word solving became smooth and automatic with both oral and silent reading. It



was interesting to see how she began to slow down to problem solve, then resume normal reading pace.

### **Data from Sight Words**

<b>Student</b>	<b>Fall 2015</b>	<b>Winter 2015</b>	<b>Spring 2016</b>
Student A	6	55	74
Student B	0	10	39
Student C	9	35	61
Student D	48	85	97
Student E	27	67	94
Student F	33	97	100*
Student G	16	41	54
Student H	94	100	100*
Student I	68	100	100*
Student J	66	98	100*

Table 3: Data from Sight Words; \*Student is able to read most or all of the

second and/or third grade sight words

### **Findings from Sight Words**

Students F, H, I, and J were able to exceed above the goal. They exceeded the sight word knowledge of their native speaking peers and were able to read words from the second and third grade sight words. Student D and E were three and six words away from their 100 word goal respectively. Student A, C, and G were able to read more than half of the sight word list. However, these students did not learn all one hundred sight words by the end of first grade. Student B made minimal progress despite one on one support and intensive specialist and classroom teacher support.

### **Data from Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF) Assessments**

The PSF assessments are used to test a student's phonological awareness. In other words, the assessment measures the ability to hear and manipulate the sounds in spoken words and the understanding that spoken words and syllables are made up of sequences of speech sounds. It measures a student's ability to segment three- and four-phoneme words into

their individual phonemes fluently. It has been found to be a good indicator of later reading achievement (Kaminski and Good, 1996).

For the winter benchmarks, the class mean was 25 and the grade mean was 27. For the end of the year, the class mean was 48 and the grade mean was 47. This includes all ELL and native English speaking students.

<b>Student</b>	<b>Winter 2015</b>	<b>End Of Year 2016</b>
Student A	22	40
Student B	17	45
Student C	3	36
Student D	33	53
Student E	3	6
Student F	10	53
Student G	22	43
Student H	41	45
Student I	50	56
Student J	6	51

Table 4: PSF Scores

### **Findings from PSF Assessments**

The chart above displays the PSF scores for all ten ELL students in this study. All ten students showed growth in their phonological awareness. Five of them doubled their scores or higher. One made a 45 point increase, which is a true accomplishment. One student only grew 3 points. Seven students were at or above grade level at the end of the year. Only three were below the grade level average, which includes their native speaking peers. This is different from the beginning of the research when only three students were at or around grade level.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter presented and analyzed the qualitative and quantitative data that has been collected throughout the course of this research. The data was collected and analyzed to show whether the Integrated Services Approach has yielded high achievement results in

ELLs in the mainstream classroom. It is important to note that this data consists of student assessments, WIDA data, and classroom teacher findings and observations. There are factors such as student disruptive and negative behaviors at the time of assessment. This may have skewed the result and minimized the accuracy of the test scores.

Chapter Five will provide an overview of my insights from the qualitative and quantitative data gathered throughout the research. Also, it will explain how I can implement the research findings in my future teaching of English Language Learners.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Conclusion

#### Introduction

The Capstone topic and research question stemmed from my experiences as an English language learner. I moved to the United States at the age of fourteen without the ability to speak, write, or understand the English language. I was placed in a self-contained English language learner classroom composed of newcomers. The students within the classroom were never exposed to native English speakers, hence the difficulty and slowed down process of language acquisition.

After I joined Teach for America in 2010, I was solely exposed to teaching English Learners in a variety of settings and circumstances. My passion for the topic of English learning comes from my personal life and my professional life. It is imperative that in the position of an English Language teacher one remains flexible and creative with teaching methods, reaching with students from a variety of socioeconomic statuses, first languages, cultures, and race.

Throughout the course of my professional life, I often questioned whether the effectiveness of different teaching strategies and techniques as well as approaches. Throughout the course of this research, I taught in a school with roughly two-thirds of the students who were English Language Learners. I questioned the effectiveness of the teaching

methods and approaches used and constantly altered my language instruction based on students' academic results. I have determined that a homogeneous classroom made up solely of language learners is not effective, and that the integrated services approach is an effective instructional setting. The class I taught was composed of both native language speakers as well as English Language Learners. The students were supported by a classroom teacher, an English language specialist, a reading interventionist, and a Special Education teacher.

By collecting and analyzing qualitative and quantitative data in regards to literacy scores, I have begun to close the achievement gap between language learners and native speakers of English and have helped to answer the question: what are effective instructional practices and instructional approaches in teaching the English language to students who have been identified as English Language Learners? More specifically, the study aimed to find if the use of the Integrated Services Approach is an effective approach in helping English Language Learners excel in language acquisition. In addition, the research aimed to find effective instructional strategies for English Language Learners.

This chapter will explain my insights from the qualitative and quantitative data gathered and how I can implement these findings in my future teaching of English Language Learners.

### **Overview of the Findings**

The data was collected and analyzed to show whether the Integrated Services Approach has yielded high achievement results in ELLs in the mainstream classroom. It was also collected to show whether the instructional strategies used in teaching ELL's within the mainstream classroom were effective. To review, the data consists of student assessments, WIDA scores, and classroom teacher findings and observations.

All data collected shows that the ten ELL students have made an enormous amount of progress in language acquisition. Based on the Teachers College reading assessment, all ten students made progress with two of them moving ten reading levels. Moreover, sight word data shows that all ELL students improved their sight word knowledge with four of them moving beyond the targeted goal of 100 sight words. It is amazing that these four students were able to read the second and third grade sight words as well.

Overall, the qualitative and quantitative data collected shows that the Integrated Services Approach is an effective approach for teaching language to ELLs. It was determined that the Integrated Services Approach was an effective strategy in educating English Language Learners. This instructional model resulted in student academic and linguistic growth in all ten ELL students within the mainstream classrooms.

### **Revisiting the Literature Review**

Throughout the literature review of my research, I found that there was more literature in support of moving away from mainstreaming English Learners in classes, and instead shifting to providing them with push-in support in a heterogeneous classroom (Mamantov, 2013). This shift is happening in many schools. My current district has just finished its first year implementing the Integrated Services Approach. It is expected that specialists and classroom teachers will collaborate in teaching English Language Learners within the mainstream classroom (Mamantov, 2013).

Before I began this research, it was my personal belief based on my own educational experience as a newcomer and English language learner, that teaching language to a class composed exclusively of language learners is not an effective approach in language acquisition. The reasoning behind my belief is that my personal language acquisition process

was slowed down and my confidence level in learning the language was diminished in a self-contained classroom. Once I exited the English as a Second Language program, my language learning accelerated and I regained my self-esteem.

The qualitative and quantitative data I collected throughout my research supports my personal belief that a self-contained classroom is not an effective instructional model for language acquisition. It was definitely insightful and rewarding to see how the majority of English Language Learners in my classroom showed growth in language acquisition through the use of the Integrated Services Approach. More specifically, the ELL's in my classroom showed a lot of growth on the ACCESS test and some were able to move up to two overall ACCESS levels.

In addition, the reading data collected showed that the Integrated Services Approach helped students move over ten reading levels based on Teachers' College assessments. It was surprising to me that ELL students made more progress in reading compared to their native language speaking peers. My data shows that there is not one native language speaker who made more progress than Student D, Student F, Student I, and Student J, with student I and J making ten levels of reading progress in one instructional year. This growth was inspirational to me and showed me the power of the Integrated Services Approach in language acquisition.

### **Insights and Future Implementations**

Moving forward from the insight gained in this research, I will continue to use the instructional practices used. I will also continue to advocate for approaches similar to or identical to the Integrated Service Approach. The teaching methods and academic approach have shown to be effective in teaching language to English Language Learners.

One limitation that I found was scheduling and the overlap of language instruction. Scheduling guided reading groups lead by the classroom teacher, the English language specialist, the reading interventionist, and the Special Education teacher at the same time was challenging. The noise level increased while the student focus level decreased. In the future, I would advocate that services are provided at different times during the instructional day as opposed to simultaneous teachings. More specifically, I would suggest that each specialist comes in at a different time and that the classroom teacher provides guided reading instruction to ELLs at a time when specialists are not in the classroom. It is my belief that this will further increase the level of language acquisition for ELL's.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, the following topics were discussed: an introduction, an overview of the findings, revisiting the literature review, insights, and future implementations. A strong positive correlation was found between the findings of the literature review and the strategies used in the classroom used for this study. The literature review supported the idea that it is best to move away from self-contained classrooms that are solely composed of English Language Learners, and to move to a heterogeneous student body with specialist and classroom teacher language push-in support (Harr, 2008). The Integrated Services Approach provided for possibilities that could benefit English Learners in reading instruction and extending into other content areas as well.

The Integrated Services Approach has not only helped students in the language acquisition field, but has also improved their self-esteem and confidence. Instead of alienating and excluding ELL students, this approach allows for integrating them in a setting with their native English speaking peers. This way, students did not perceive themselves as



less able due to the fact that their English language level is not equivalent to their native speaking peers. ELL students felt they were part of a group of children and did not identify differences in each other.

### **Final Conclusion**

This research has been a positive experience that helped me realize how far I have come in the process of language acquisition as an English language learner. The study has also made me feel privileged to be in the teaching profession because I am able to contribute to the lives of language learners. I feel a strong connection to my ELL students and understand the daily struggle that they have to go through as a newcomer. It is difficult to explain the feeling of alienation and uniqueness one feels as an English language learner. This feeling could either make an individual stronger or break them to the extent of impeding on the development on their professional and personal life.

Conducting this research and teaching English Language Learners is close to my heart and has provided me with new insights in helping individuals that are similar to me. Helping students of lower socioeconomic status and diverse backgrounds is my driving force in this profession. It is important that I remain true to myself in the future and continue to search for answers to the struggles and challenges that face our schools and English Language Learners. At the beginning of this Capstone journey, my goal was to find answers to the research question: What is an effective instructional approach and language strategies for English Language Learners within the mainstream classroom? I was certain that as a classroom teacher, we needed to pay more attention to instructional settings that we teach our English Language Learners and analyze what was most beneficial for our children to be successful readers. Researching instructional strategies was insightful and helped me gain

knowledge and perspectives into the needs of my English Language Learners. Analyzing data such as reading scores to learning about the experiences of my ELL students helped me remain grounded in my Capstone writing. It helped me gain valuable knowledge of my profession and strengthened my passion for helping English Language Learners.

Through analyzing the academic growth and success of my ELL students, I now have a renewed energy in my work and additional motivation to be a strong advocate for my English Learners. I know that the road to implementing the most successful instructional approach and methods for English Language Learners is long; however, I truly believe that the sight at the end of this road is attainable with motivation, self-discipline, knowledge, understanding, and compassion for those less privileged than ourselves.

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**APPENDIX A**

WIDA English Language Development Standards

<b>WIDA Stage</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>
Entering	<p>The student uses pictorial or graphic representation of the language of the content areas</p> <p>The student uses words, phrases, or chunks of language when given one step directions, choice, or yes or no questions with the support of sensory, graphic, or interactive tools</p> <p>The student produces language with errors that impede meaning when presented with basic oral commands, direct questions, or simple statements with support</p>
Beginning	<p>The student uses general language that is relevant to the content areas but the phrases are short</p> <p>There are errors in both oral and written language that are phonological, syntactic, or semantic</p> <p>The above impede on the meaning of the communication</p>
Developing	<p>The student has general and some specific language skills as well as expanded sentences in oral interaction or writings</p> <p>The errors made in written and oral language may impede on the communication, but retain much of</p>



	the meaning
Expanding	<p>The student has specific and some technical language of the content areas as well as uses a variety of sentence structures and lengths of varying complexity in both oral and written language</p> <p>There are errors made in oral and written language that do not impede on the overall meaning of the communication when presented with sensory, graphic, or interactive support</p>
Bridging	<p>The language use is comparable to that of a native English speakers or English-proficient peers when given grade level material</p> <p>The student uses a variety of sentence length and complexity and uses specialized or technical language of the content areas</p>
Reaching	<p>The student uses specialized or technical language that is at grade level</p> <p>The student uses a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic structures and complexity</p> <p>The oral and written language and communication is now fully comparable to English proficient peers</p>

**APPENDIX B**

WIDA Can Do Descriptors

	<b>Level 1: Entering</b>	<b>Level 2: Emerging</b>	<b>Level 3: Developing</b>	<b>Level 4: Expanding</b>	<b>Level 5: Bridging</b>
<b>Listening</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow one-step directions</li> <li>• Find pictures of things the teacher tells me</li> <li>• Point to things that my teacher says</li> <li>• Listen and do what the teacher doe</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Match pictures to a story I hear</li> <li>• Follow two and three step directions</li> <li>• Listen and put things in the order</li> <li>• Listen and find things</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow directions with more than one step</li> <li>• Put pictures in order to retell a story</li> <li>• Match people and jobs</li> <li>• Listen and sort thing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen and tell how things are alike and different</li> <li>• Find details in stories that are read aloud</li> <li>• Find the picture that I am told about</li> <li>• Find things that are described to me</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Figure out what words don't know mean from listening to a story</li> <li>• Use ideas from discussions</li> <li>• Tell the meaning of what the teacher reads</li> <li>• Match an explanation to a picture or a term</li> </ul>
<b>Speaking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repeat words and phrases</li> <li>• Answer questions about things I see</li> <li>• Tell the names of things that I see a lot</li> <li>• Sing and chant with the class</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use my home language to help me speak English</li> <li>• Repeat facts or statements</li> <li>• Tell what jobs people do from pictures</li> <li>• Compare things</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask questions about people</li> <li>• Tell how I feel</li> <li>• Retell stories with pictures</li> <li>• Sort things and tell how I sorted them</li> <li>• Tell what I think will happen</li> <li>• Tell about parts (levels, order) of things</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask questions to find about people and school</li> <li>• Talk in whole class discussions •</li> <li>• Retell stories with details</li> <li>• Put stories in order using order words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use academic vocabulary in class discussions</li> <li>• Tell and support ideas with examples</li> <li>• Give oral reports</li> <li>• Start conversation with children and teachers</li> </ul>
<b>Reading</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show the sign that goes with something</li> <li>• Match words and pictures</li> <li>• Match real things to words</li> <li>• Follow directions using pictures</li> <li>• Find pictures to match patterns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find and explain pictures I've seen before</li> <li>• Match what the teacher says to pictures and letters</li> <li>• Sort words into word families</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make text-to-self connections</li> <li>• Choose a title to match pictures</li> <li>• Sorts labeled pictures</li> <li>• Match sentences to pictures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put words in order to make sentences</li> <li>• Tell about setting and characters in a story</li> <li>• Follow whole sentence directions</li> <li>• Tell the difference between general and specific things</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read nonfiction texts and use text features to help me understand</li> <li>• Use reading strategies</li> <li>• Tell main idea</li> <li>• Match figurative language to pictures</li> </ul>
<b>Writing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy written words</li> <li>• Listen to the teacher explain how to write a</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use graphic organizers</li> <li>• Make lists from word wall</li> <li>• Finish sentences that the teacher starts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do prewriting</li> <li>• Make sentences using the word bank</li> <li>• Write in journal</li> <li>• Tell about something using</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making sentences by myself</li> <li>• Write cards or letters</li> <li>• Write in my journal about my life</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write several sentences about a prompt</li> <li>• Write content related sentences</li> <li>• Write stories</li> <li>• Explain how to</li> </ul>

	word and write it • Write things with pictures • Label things and pictures	• Write about people, places, and things from pictures	pictures	• Use dictionaries and word walls to write sentences	do something
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**APPENDIX C**

## Characteristics of Leveled Text

<b>Characteristics of Texts at Level A</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simple factual texts, animal fantasy and realistic fiction</li> <li>• Picture books</li> <li>• Text and concepts highly supported by pictures</li> <li>• One line of text on each page</li> <li>• Familiar, easy content</li> <li>• Repeating language patterns (3-6 words per page)</li> <li>• Short, predictable sentences</li> <li>• Almost all vocabulary familiar to children</li> </ul>
<b>Characteristics of Early Emergent Readers (Reading at Level A)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Just beginning to learn how print works</li> <li>• Just beginning to learn the alphabetic principle – the relationship between letters and sounds</li> <li>• Learning to use 1-1 matching</li> <li>• Learning to follow text from left to right</li> <li>• Differentiating between print and pictures</li> <li>• Beginning to notice each letter's distinct features</li> <li>• Learning some easy, high-frequency words</li> </ul>
<b>Characteristics of Texts at Level B</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simple factual texts, animal fantasy and realistic fiction</li> <li>• Simple, one-dimensional characters</li> <li>• Picture books</li> <li>• Text and concepts highly supported by pictures</li> <li>• Two or more lines of text on each page</li> <li>• Repeating language patterns (3-7 words per page)</li> <li>• Very familiar themes and ideas</li> <li>• Short, predictable sentences</li> <li>• Almost all vocabulary familiar to children – strongly sight-word based</li> </ul>
<b>Characteristics of Early Emergent Readers (Reading at Level B)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognize and apply repeating language patterns</li> <li>• Stronger awareness of left-to-right directionality</li> <li>• Stronger awareness of 1-1 matching</li> <li>• Learning concept of return sweep (moving from one line of text to the next)</li> <li>• Able to distinguish and identify more letters according to their distinct features</li> <li>• Developing stronger understanding of the connection between sounds and letters</li> <li>• Expanding their core of easy, high-frequency words F &amp; P Text</li> </ul>
<b>Characteristics of Texts at Level C</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simple factual texts, animal fantasy and realistic fiction</li> </ul>

- Picture books
- Amusing one-dimensional characters
- Familiar, easy content
- Introduction of dialogue (assigned by said in most cases)
- Many sentences with prepositional phrases and adjectives
- Almost all vocabulary familiar to children – greater range of high-frequency words
- Some simple contractions and possessives (words with apostrophes)
- Two to five lines of text on each page
- Some bolded words and some ellipses, commas, quotation marks, question marks, and exclamation points

#### **Characteristics of Early Emergent Readers (Reading at Level C)**

- Begin to move smoothly across the printed page when reading
- Begin to use some expression when reading
- Eyes are taking over the process of matching the spoken word to the printed word (removal of finger tracking)
- Developing phrased reading
- Noticing dialogue and punctuation and reflecting this with the voice
- Developing a larger core of high-frequency words
- Consistently monitoring reading and cross-checking one source of information against another; self-correcting

#### **Characteristics of Texts at Level D**

- Simple factual texts, animal fantasy and realistic fiction
- Picture books
- Amusing one-dimensional characters
  - Familiar, easy content, themes, and ideas
- Simple dialogue (some split dialogue)
- Many sentences with prepositional phrases and adjectives
- Some longer sentences (some with more than six words)
- Some simple contractions and possessives (words with apostrophes)
- Two to six lines of text on each page
- Some sentences turn over to the next line
- Some words with –s and –ing endings
- Fewer repetitive language patterns

#### **Characteristics of Early Emergent Readers (Reading at Level D)**

- Eyes can track print over two to six lines per page
- Can process texts with fewer repeating language patterns
- Voice-print match is smooth and automatic; finger pointing is rarely needed, if ever
- Notices and uses a range of punctuation and read dialogue, reflecting the meaning through phrasing
- Can solve many regular two-syllable words, usually with inflectional endings (-ing).
- Consistently monitors reading and cross-checks one source of

information against another; self- corrects
<b>Characteristics of Texts at Level E</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simple informational texts, simple animal fantasy, realistic fiction, very simple retellings of traditional tales, simple plays</li> <li>• Some texts with sequential information</li> <li>• Familiar content that expands beyond home, neighborhood, and school</li> <li>• Most concepts supported by pictures</li> <li>• More literary stories and language</li> <li>• Concrete, easy-to-understand ideas</li> <li>• Some longer sentences – more than ten words</li> <li>• Some three-syllable words</li> <li>• Some sentences with verb preceding subject</li> <li>• Variation of words to assign dialogue in some texts (said, cried, shouted)</li> <li>• Easy contractions</li> <li>• Mostly words with easy, predictable spelling patterns</li> <li>• Two to eight lines of print per page</li> </ul>
<b>Characteristics of Emergent Readers (Reading at Level E)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible enough to process texts with varied placement of print and a full range of punctuation</li> <li>• Attend to more subtle ideas and complex stories</li> <li>• Solve longer words with inflectional endings</li> <li>• Read sentences that carry over 2-3 lines or over two pages</li> <li>• Rely much more on the print; pictures are becoming less supportive</li> <li>• Left-to-right directionality and voice-print match are automatic</li> <li>• Oral reading demonstrates fluency and phrasing with appropriate stress on words</li> <li>• Read without finger pointing, bringing in finger only at point of difficulty</li> <li>• Recognize a large number of high-frequency words</li> <li>• Easily solve words with regular letter-sound relationships, as well as a few irregular words</li> </ul>
<b>Characteristics of Texts at Level F</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simple informational texts, simple animal fantasy, realistic fiction, very simple retellings of traditional tales, simple plays</li> <li>• Some texts with sequential information</li> <li>• Familiar content that expands beyond home, neighborhood, and school</li> <li>• Both simple and split dialogue, speaker usually assigned</li> <li>• Some longer stretches of dialogue</li> <li>• Some longer sentences – more than ten words – with prepositional phrases, adjectives, and dialogue</li> <li>• Variation in placement of subject, verb, adjectives, and adverbs</li> <li>• Some compound sentences conjoined by and</li> <li>• Many words with inflectional endings</li> </ul>



- More details in the illustrations
- Most texts three to eight lines of text per page
- Periods, commas, quotation marks, exclamation points, question marks, and ellipses

#### **Characteristics of Emergent Readers (Reading at Level F)**

- Beginning to build knowledge of the characteristics of different genres of texts
- Read stretches of both simple and split dialogue
- Recognize a large number of high-frequency words quickly and automatically
- Use letter-sound information to take apart simple, regular words as well as some multisyllable words
- Process and understand text patterns that are particular to written language
- Beginning to read fiction with more well-developed characters
- Left-to-right directionality and voice-print match are completely automatic
- Read without pointing and with appropriate rate, phrasing, intonation, and stress

#### **Characteristics of Texts at Level G**

- Informational texts, simple animal fantasy, realistic fiction, traditional literature (folktales)
- Some longer texts with repeating longer and more complex patterns
- Some unusual formats, such as questions followed by answers or letters
- Some texts with sequential information
- Familiar content that expands beyond home, neighborhood, and school
- Some texts with settings that are not typical of many children's experience
- Some sentences that are questions in simple sentences and in dialogue
- Sentences with clauses and embedded phrases
- Some complex letter-sound relationships in words
- Some content-specific words introduced, explained and illustrated in the text
- Complex illustrations depicting multiple ideas
- Most texts three to eight lines of print per page
- Slightly smaller print

<p><b>Characteristics of Developing Readers (Reading at Level G)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to internalize more and deeper knowledge of different genres</li> <li>• Early reading behaviors now completely automatic</li> <li>• Recognize a large number of high-frequency words</li> <li>• Able to attend to more complex story lines and ideas</li> <li>• Use a range of word-solving strategies (letter-sound information, making connections between words, using word parts) to read unknown words</li> <li>• Read texts with some content-specific words</li> <li>• Demonstrate appropriate rate, phrasing, intonation, and word stress</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Characteristics of Texts at Level H</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informational texts, simple animal fantasy, realistic fiction, traditional literature (folktales)</li> <li>• Narratives with more episodes and less repetition</li> <li>• Accessible content that expands beyond home, school and neighborhood</li> <li>• Multiple episodes taking place across time</li> <li>• Some stretches of descriptive language</li> <li>• Wide variety in words used to assign dialogue to speaker</li> <li>• Some complex letter-sound relationships in words</li> <li>• Some complex spelling patterns</li> <li>• Some easy compound words</li> <li>• Most texts with no or only minimal illustrations</li> <li>• Italics indicating unspoken thought</li> <li>• Most texts three to eight lines of print per page</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Characteristics of Developing Readers (Reading at Level H)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encounter more complex language and vocabulary</li> <li>• Read longer, more literary stories</li> <li>• Able to process a great deal of dialogue and reflect it through appropriate word stress and phrasing</li> <li>• Solve a large number of multisyllable words, plurals, contractions, and possessives</li> <li>• Able to read a larger and larger number of high-frequency words</li> <li>• Able to think at increasingly deeper levels</li> <li>• Solve words with complex spelling patterns</li> <li>• Begin to read more new texts silently, in order to achieve efficient and smooth processing</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Characteristics of Texts at Level I</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informational texts, simple animal fantasy, realistic fiction, traditional literature (folktales)</li> <li>• Some informational texts with a table of contents and/or a glossary</li> <li>• Narratives with multiple episodes and little repetition of similar episodes; more elaborated episodes</li> <li>• Underlying organizational structures used and presented clearly</li> </ul>
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- (description, compare and contrast, problem and solution)
- Some unusual formats, such as letters or questions followed by answers
  - Both familiar content and some new content children may not know
  - Contain a few abstract concepts that are highly supported by text and illustrations
  - Longer sentences that can carry over to two or three lines, and some over two pages
  - Many two-to-three-syllable words from all parts of speech
  - Some complex spelling patterns
  - Some complex letter-sound relationships in words
  - Eight to sixteen pages of print (some easy chapter books of fifty to sixty pages)
  - Three to eight lines of text per page

#### **Characteristics of Developing Readers (Reading at Level I)**

- Able to process mostly short texts (eight to sixteen pages); some easy illustrated chapter books
- Able to sustain attention and memory over longer periods of time
- Can process longer (ten words or more) and more complex sentences
  - Have a large sight-word vocabulary
- Able to use word-solving strategies for complex spelling patterns, multisyllable words, and words with inflectional endings, plurals, contractions, and possessives
- Read many texts silently, following text with their eyes and without pointing
- Oral reading reflects appropriate rate, stress, intonation, phrasing, and pausing

#### **Characteristics of Texts at Level J**

- Informational texts, simple animal fantasy, realistic fiction, traditional literature (folktales), some simple biographies on familiar subjects
- Beginning chapter books with illustrations (forty to seventy-five pages)
- Underlying organizational structures used and presented clearly (description, compare and contrast, problem and solution)
- Some unusual formats, such as letters or questions followed by answers
- Some ideas new to most children
- Some texts with settings that are not familiar to most children
- Varied placement of subject, verb, adjectives and adverbs in sentences
- Contain some abstract concepts that are highly supported by text and illustrations
- Some complex spelling patterns and letter-sound relationships in

words

- Many lines of print on a page

#### **Characteristics of Developing Readers (Reading at Level J)**

- Able to process a variety of texts (short fiction texts, short informational texts, and longer narrative texts that have illustrations and short chapters)
- Adjust reading strategies as needed to process different genres
- Process increasingly more complex sentences
- Have a large, expanding sight-word vocabulary
- Able to quickly apply word-solving strategies for complex spelling patterns, multisyllable words, and words with inflectional endings, plurals, contractions, and possessives
- Read silently during independent reading
- Oral reading reflects appropriate rate, stress, intonation, phrasing, and pausing

#### **Characteristics of Texts at Level K**

- Informational texts, simple animal fantasy, realistic fiction, traditional literature (folktales), some simple biographies on familiar subjects
- Beginning chapter books (sixty to one hundred pages of print)
- Varied organization in nonfiction text formats (question/answer, boxes, legends, etc.)
- Some texts with plots, situations, and settings outside what a child would typically find familiar
- Longer (more than fifteen words), more complex sentences
- Variety of words used to assign dialogue, with verbs and adverbs essential to meaning
- Multisyllable words that are challenging to take apart or decode
- Longer stretches of print without the support of pictures

#### **Characteristics of Developing Readers (Reading at Level K)**

- Able to accommodate the higher-level processing of several fiction texts with multiple episodes connected to a single plot
- Read about and understand characters that are increasingly more complex
- Able to process a great deal of dialogue within a story
- Challenged to read stories based on concepts that are distant in time and space and reflect diverse cultures
- Have a large, expanding sight-word vocabulary
- Able to quickly apply word-solving strategies for complex spelling patterns, multisyllable words, and words with inflectional endings, plurals, contractions, and possessives
- Read silently during independent reading
- Oral reading fully demonstrates all aspects of fluent reading

<p><b>Characteristics of Texts at Level L</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informational texts, simple fantasy, realistic fiction, traditional literature (folktales), simple biographies, simple mysteries</li> <li>• Underlying organizational structures (description, compare and contrast, problem and solution)</li> <li>• Some technical content that is challenging and not typically known</li> <li>• Some texts with plots, settings, and situations outside typical experience</li> <li>• Multisyllable words that are challenging to take apart or decode</li> <li>• Some new vocabulary and content-specific words in nonfiction text introduced, explained, and illustrated in the text</li> <li>• New vocabulary in fiction texts (largely unexplained)</li> <li>• Chapter books (sixty to one hundred pages of print)</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Characteristics of Developing Readers (Reading at Level L):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to process easy chapter books, including some series books, with more sophisticated plots and few illustrations, as well as shorter informational texts</li> <li>• Adjust reading to process a variety of genres</li> <li>• Understand that chapter books have multiple episodes connected to a single plot</li> <li>• Bring background knowledge to new reading in order to process and learn new information</li> <li>• Begin to recognize themes across texts (friendship, courage)</li> <li>• Able to understand some abstract ideas</li> <li>• Able to see multiple perspectives of characters through description</li> <li>• Able to flexibly apply word-solving strategies for complex spelling patterns, multisyllable words, and words with inflectional endings, plurals, contractions, and possessives</li> <li>• Read silently during independent reading</li> <li>• Oral reading fully demonstrates all aspects of fluent reading</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Characteristics of Texts at Level M:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informational texts, simple fantasy, realistic fiction, traditional literature (folktales), simple biographies, simple mysteries</li> <li>• Most of the content carried by print, rather than pictures</li> <li>• Some abstract themes requiring inferential thinking to derive</li> <li>• Texts with multiple points of view revealed through characters' behaviors</li> <li>• Complex plots with numerous episodes and time passing</li> <li>• Multiple characters to understand and notice how they develop and change</li> <li>• Multisyllable words that are challenging to take apart or decode</li> <li>• Some new vocabulary and content-specific words introduced, explained, and illustrated in the text</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Characteristics of Developing Readers (Reading at Level M):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know the characteristics of a range of genres</li> <li>• Developing preferences for specific forms of reading (mysteries, biographies)</li> <li>• Can understand and process narratives with more elaborate plots and multiple characters that develop and change over time</li> <li>• Able to identify and use underlying organizational structures (description, compare and contrast, problem and solution, cause and effect) to help navigate through text</li> <li>• Word solving is smooth and automatic with both oral and silent reading</li> <li>• Can read and understand descriptive words, some complex content-specific words, and some technical words</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Characteristics of Texts at Level N</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informational texts, simple fantasy, realistic fiction, traditional literature (folktales), simple biographies, simple mysteries</li> <li>• Presentation of multiple topics that represent subtopic of a larger topic or theme</li> <li>• Various ways of showing characters' attributes (description, dialogue, thoughts, others' perspectives)</li> <li>• Complex plots with numerous episodes and time passing</li> <li>• Multiple characters to understand and notice how they develop and change</li> <li>• Variety in sentence length and complexity</li> <li>• Many two-to-three-syllable words; some words with more than three syllables</li> <li>• Multisyllable words that are challenging to take apart or decode</li> <li>• Words with prefixes and suffixes</li> <li>• Some new vocabulary and content-specific words introduced, explained, and illustrated in the text</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Characteristics of Early Independent Readers (Reading at Level N)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know the characteristics of and can process the full range of genres</li> <li>• Developing preferences for specific forms of reading (mysteries, biographies)</li> <li>• Can understand and process narratives with more elaborate plots and multiple characters that develop and change over time</li> <li>• Able to identify and use underlying organizational structures (description, compare and contrast, problem and solution, cause and effect) to help navigate through text</li> <li>• Word solving is smooth and automatic with both oral and silent reading</li> <li>• Reader will slow down to problem solve or search for information, then resume normal reading pace</li> </ul>
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- Most word solving is unconscious and automatic; little overt problem solving needed