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GUIDED READING TUTORIALS WITH ENGLISH LEARNERS

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Elementary Education

San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Masters of Arts

by

Anna L. Miller

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ABSTRACT

GUIDED READING TUTORIALS WITH ENGLISH LEARNERS

by Anna L. Miller

The researcher conducted after school tutorials with third grade English Learners who read at the kindergarten or first grade level. In these tutorials, the students were placed in guided reading groups and paired this instruction with strategies to meet their needs as English Learners. Marie Clay's Observation Survey was used to assess the students' reading levels. The students' progress was documented over a twelve-week period and was analyzed to see what happened to their reading levels. The researcher described and analyzed the instruction that she provided. The researcher found that students' reading levels increased. She considered implications for classroom instruction.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to investigate what happens to the reading levels of

students identified as English Learners (ELs) when they participate in a guided reading

group modified to meet their language needs. Although there is a significant amount of

research and literature regarding guided reading, how guided reading addresses the

language needs of English Learners has not been addressed in depth. In addition, there is

a considerable amount of research and literature on strategies to support English

Learners' reading development, but very little that specifically refers to guided reading.

Consequently, I chose to use the strategies EL researchers and authors supported as

successful scaffolds in developing reading and incorporated them into my guided reading

program.

Theoretical Framework

Guided reading is designed as a part of a balanced literacy approach. It is based

on the apprenticeship model of learning. The teacher within the apprenticeship model

"… uses language to build bridges that enable children to use what they already know to

acquire new and unknown information" (Dorn, French, & Jones, 1998, p. 16). The

apprenticeship model of learning suggests that successful learning occurs following

specific steps: modeling, coaching, scaffolding, articulation and reflection. Modeling is

the first step in the apprenticeship model and, with r1'egards to literacy, entails a teacher

conducting a read-aloud. Coaching is the second step in the apprenticeship model. In a

literacy context, coaching refers to sharing the literacy task. Shared reading is when the teacher reads aloud a big book and the students help by using a pointer or reading words they know. Also, choral reading, when everyone reads together, is considered shared reading (Dorn, French, & Jones, 1998; Tompkins, 2006). Scaffolding is the third step in the apprenticeship model, where students are assisted with a task in their zone of proximal development (ZPD). Guided reading has been designed to be the scaffolding portion of a balanced literacy approach. The scaffolding portion of the apprenticeship model coincides with Vygotsky's zone of proximal development. The zone of proximal development is a developmental thought process which addresses the tasks between one's actual development level and one's potential development. These tasks cannot be performed independently, but with guidance one may reach their potential. Guided reading meets the reader just above his actual development at his instructional level and guides him in his ZPD (Antonacci, 2000). Guided reading successfully scaffolds reading of texts the student would not otherwise be able to read through a rich and meaningful introductory conversation, coaching during reading, and followed with a powerful grand conversation (Dorn, French, & Jones, 1998). Guided reading prepares the reader to independently read a text he would not otherwise be able to read. Articulation, the fourth step in the apprenticeship model, focuses on making the child meta-cognitive by having him articulate his cognitive processes. Articulation finds its place in literacy within guided reading, reading workshop, and any other possible situation where the reader explains his thought process. Within guided reading, articulation manifests itself during the teaching point at the end of the lesson, when the teacher and the students discuss

particular problem solving situations and strategy use. The last stage of the apprenticeship model of learning is reflection, where students become reflective learners analyzing their own performance and progress. This reflection within literacy can be initiated simply by a teacher's thoughtful questions during guided reading or more formally through reflective journals and self editing (Dorn, French, & Jones, 1998). In essence, guided reading was designed as an approach to teaching reading in the scaffolding stage of the apprenticeship model, while incorporating portions of the articulation and reflective stages. Guided reading allows the teacher to meet each student at his ZPD and guide such students as they become independent readers. Guided reading should be one part of a balanced literacy approach (Tompkins, 2006).

Background and Problem Statement

I teach third grade at Fields Elementary School (all names are pseudonyms) in the Sky School District located in California. Our school is a Title I school, meaning that a significant amount of our students receive free and reduced lunch, which is determined based on the economic needs of each family. The population at Fields is very diverse with a majority of students' ethnic background being Hispanic, Filipino, or Vietnamese. In my classroom, we have one Caucasian student, nine Hispanic students, seven Filipino students, and one Chinese student. I job-share with Kate Morison, who has been teaching at Fields for twenty-three years. Kate, my partner-teacher, teaches Monday through Thursday and I teach on Friday. This is my first year as a credentialed teacher.

I began to be interested in guided reading as an instructional strategy to teach early readers during my full-time student teaching in the spring of 2007. "Guided

reading is a context in which a teacher supports each reader's development of effective strategies for processing novel texts at increasingly challenging levels of difficulty" (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, p. 2). My cooperating teacher, Miss Olson, conducted guided reading groups in her kindergarten class. However, the implementation of guided reading in her classroom differed from the implementation I was being taught in my credentialing program. To deepen my understanding of the purpose and implementation of guided reading, I decided to read Fountas and Pinnell's (1996) *Guided Reading: Good First Teaching for All Children* over the summer. As I reflected on my Miss Olson's guided reading, I realized that she was using, what Fountas and Pinnell describe as, choral reading, when everyone reads together. Guided reading is an entirely different and a much more student involved process. The more I read about guided reading, the more I wanted to implement it in my classroom this year and use it as part of my thesis research.

Over the summer, I grappled with how I could incorporate guided reading into my third grade classroom when I taught one day a week and my partner, Kate Morison, made it clear she would not incorporate it into her reading instruction. Mrs. Morison preferred to strictly follow our literacy curriculum rather than supplementing our curriculum with best practices in literacy such as guided reading. Guided reading should be done between three to five times a week, which seemed impossible given my situation (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). In addition, the demographics of my classroom demanded strategic teaching to meet my students' language needs. Our classroom had seventeen English Learners. English Learners are "children and adults who are learning English as a second or additional language; this term may apply to learners across various levels of

proficiency in English" (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2004, p. 222). In this paper, the terms English Learners, Second Language Learners and Limited English Proficient students are used interchangeably. After many conversations with my partner teacher, my principal, and my advisor, I decided I would work with students after school in a guided reading group designed to meet their language needs. I decided to work with my guided reading group for an hour and fifteen minutes three times a week.

However, I still needed to decide which students I would select. Many of my students participated in an after school program. The after school program only took a certain amount of students and preferred to take those students who were "bubble students" or just about to become proficient. Therefore, my low students who needed the most help were not invited to attend the after school reading program. This made my decision easy. I had five third grade English Learner students that were reading at either a kindergarten or first grade level. These students were very far behind in reading and desperately needed some extra small group reading instruction at their level. Consequently, I chose to work with Sarah, Clementine, Yvonne, Elizabeth, and Rachael. I conducted guided reading tutorials supported with strategies to meet their language needs three times a week and analyzed what happened to those students' reading levels.

Participating Students

Sarah was a very vocal and energetic eight year old who was eager to learn. Her primary language was Spanish, but she has developed strong basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) in English. BICS is a student's ability to communicate fluently in conversation. Typically, it takes students two years to develop conversational

fluency in their second language (Cummins, 2001). In contrast, cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) describes a student's fluency with grade-appropriate academic language, which tends to take at least five years to develop (Cummins, 2001). Although Sarah was conversationally fluent in English, she had not developed fluency in English at a third grade academic level. During academic discussions, she seemed lost and was constantly trying to catch up with the class. Sarah scored a three on the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) which the district used to assess students English Language Proficiency. CELDT scores range from one through five, one being little to no English, three meaning a student has developed BICS but not CALP, and five meaning a student is fluent in English including grade-appropriate academic language. Sarah struggled in our third grade classroom having difficulty reading third grade text, producing neat, clear writing, and processing the content within the lessons. Sarah had a Student Study Team (SST) develop an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and was considered a resource student with an unspecified learning disability. Alana Thomas, our resource specialist, pulled her from class for about an hour a day to work with her as part of her IEP. Sarah was verbally bright, eager to learn, and willing to work hard. Sarah began my guided reading program reading at a level four.

Clementine entered our classroom in early October speaking little to no English. Clementine's primary language was Spanish. She read fluently in Spanish, but did not have the language to communicate or read successfully in English. Clementine had developed significantly within the last few months before I began the after-school guided reading program, showing signs she was beginning to understand English and produce

short sentences and one-word commands. She scored a one on the CELDT when she entered our class, but she was showing signs she was moving toward a level two. Clementine was very eager to learn and was willing to work hard to develop as an English speaker and reader. She began my guided reading program reading at a level four.

Yvonne entered our classroom in late October. Yvonne's primary language was Spanish, and she scored a three on the CELDT, but from time to time she seemed as though she might not be completely conversationally fluent. When I analyzed her writing, I noticed common EL mistakes. She substituted /d/ for /th/, /v/ for /b/, and she was definitely using and confusing her vowels. These common substitutions may have been because she was writing how she says it; she was in the pronunciation stage of her literacy development. When I spoke with her, she often stopped to translate a word in her head before she finished her sentence. Yvonne was a bright, excited young student who was enthusiastic to learn. Yvonne entered my guided reading program reading at a level eight.

Elizabeth was a very sweet and outgoing third grader. Elizabeth's primary language was Spanish, but she scored a four on the CELDT and had developed strong basic interpersonal communicative skills. In my communications with Elizabeth, she showed signs of developing understanding of academic language, but she often got distracted or lost focus during class resulting in unfinished work or poorly done work. Elizabeth seemed to have the strongest language of the students selected to be in my guided reading program. She was very sweet and bright, yet easily distracted. She

entered my guided reading program reading at a level eight. Elizabeth was my challenge when it came to classroom management.

Rachael was a very bright, focused, and confident eight-year-old. She entered first grade at Fields with hardly any English and developed enough language to become conversationally fluent and score a three on the CELDT. She showed signs of developing her understanding of academic language. Rachael did not struggle in class. She was consistently on task and frequently eager to share her knowledge with her classmates. Rachael entered my after school program reading at a level fourteen.

In addition to the five students participating in my study, Christopher participated in my after school program. Christopher entered our classroom in the middle of November with no English. Christopher was tri-lingual speaking Cantonese, Mandarin, and an unnamed home dialect. He had not taken the CELDT yet, but he would definitely score a one considering he was still silent and he used hand signals to ask to go the bathroom. He had an outgoing personality and was eager to participate quickly responding to hand motions, modeling, and demonstrations. Christopher was not included in the study because he couldn't read independently in English. A major part of guided reading is the independent reading of text at the readers' level. Christopher couldn't identify letters much less sounds or words. Christopher was participating in the after school program to develop his language and knowledge of how print works. During the independent reading time, Christopher listened to a book on tape or I read to him.

Table 1. *Summary Table of Student Characteristics*

Name	Gender	Native Language	Other Languages	Language Proficiency	Reading Level
Sarah	Girl	Spanish	English	CELDT 3	4
Clementine	Girl	Spanish	English	CELDT 1	4
Yvonne	Girl	Spanish	English	CELDT 3	8
Elizabeth	Girl	Spanish	English	CELDT 4	8
Rachael	Girl	Spanish	English	CELDT 3	14
Christopher	Boy	Chinese Home Dialect	Mandarin Cantonese	CELDT 1	1

In essence, Sarah, Clementine, Yvonne, Elizabeth, Rachael, and Christopher

participated in my after school guided reading program modified to meet their language

needs. We met three times a week for one hour and fifteen minutes a day. All students

in my reading group were students in my third grade class at Fields Elementary School.

During this time I investigated what occurred with regards to my students' reading levels

when they participated in my twelve week guided reading after school program

specifically designed to meet their language needs. I conducted a pre and post

assessment of their literacy knowledge and continuously conducted reading assessments

to ensure they were reading at their level. I hoped to see an increase in their reading

levels.

Question and Purpose of Study

The research question I investigated was "What happens to the reading levels of

my students identified as English Learners when they participate in a guided reading

group that is paired with instruction to meet their language needs?" The purpose of the

study was to investigate the change in participants' reading levels after participating in a

guided reading after school program supported with English Learner strategies.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Introduction

Literacy continues to be a pivotal part of successful achievement in school.

Increasingly, more and more teachers have begun incorporating guided reading into their

literacy program to support readers as they learn to independently read challenging text.

Grounded in New Zealand, guided reading is a balanced literacy approach which has now

spread across the United States as a best practice approach to teaching literacy (Fawson

& Reutzel, 2000). Guided reading is an inquiry-based approach to teaching reading in a

homogenous group where the teacher designs lesson for processing and understanding

text. This personalized inquiry-based approach is designed to meet students at their

instructional level and scaffold the reading process as students become independent

readers. The goal of guided reading is to develop students as strategic, independent

readers (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

In addition, the demographics of the classroom are changing. Classroom teachers

are encountering an increasing number of English Learners (ELs) who are students that

do not speak English as their first language and are learning English as their second or

third, etc. language (Gibbons, 2002). Consequently, as teachers begin to incorporate

guided reading into their classrooms, the necessity of incorporating EL strategies within

their instruction is becoming increasingly apparent (Gibbons, 2002). Therefore, this

literature review will address two bodies of literature: research on guided reading as a

practice and research on strategies to help ELs gain access to curriculum in English.

My research on guided reading as a practice will include literature on the definition of guided reading, the process of guided reading, guided reading beyond the primary years, grouping with guided reading, assessing with guided reading, and managing guided reading within a balanced literacy program. The research I have gathered on strategies to increase English Learners' access within the classroom will include literature on ELs within the classroom, literacy instruction and ELs, and specific strategies and activities to support ELs. With this literature as my foundation, I designed my research project and methods, organized and planned my data collection and data analysis, and developed my findings and implications.

Methods

The research reviewed was found using the EBSCO Host research database, Wilson Web Research database, or the ERIC research database. In the databases, several publications were explored including Reading Teacher, American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology, Educational Leadership, Multicultural Education, Theory into Practice, Reading Research Quarterly, Early Childhood Educational Journal, Language Learners in the Mainstream Classroom, Reading Horizons, and Reading Literacy and Language. The key words used as search parameters include: guided reading, English Language Learners, English Learners, reading, literacy, language arts, Observation Survey, Second Language Learners, best practice literacy instruction, best practice EL instruction, and English as a Second Language. Research regarding guided reading as a practice, the process of guided reading, assessing guided reading, balanced literacy instruction, and English Learners in connection with literacy was chosen. In addition, a

search for specific articles was conducted using reference lists from research studies and articles that had already been chosen. Through these searches, a few authors consistently appeared including Fountas and Pinnell, Clay, Mooney, and Cunningham. A search was conducted using theses names specifically to obtain the last few pieces of research. The research obtained from these searches was sorted through and 43 pieces of research were chosen to be included in the literature review and reference list. The pieces of research chosen discussed guided reading, balanced literacy instruction, the Observation Survey, literacy instruction with English Learners, and best practice in literacy instruction or EL instruction. Research pertaining specifically to secondary education or research pertaining specifically to literacy instruction other than guided reading was excluded because it was not relevant to my research study.

What is Guided Reading?

Often, guided reading is classified as any form of small group reading, in which the teacher and students work together to understand the text. This could include anything from explicitly teaching decoding of a specific text to allowing students to read a book independently when they have time and the re-grouping to discuss ideas (Mooney, 1995b). However, these classifications are misrepresentations of guided reading at its truest form. There are specific and important parts of the process that differentiate group reading, choral reading, and/or shared reading from guided reading.

Guided reading is a scaffolded inquiry-based approach to reading, where the teacher introduces a leveled-book to a small group of students, the students read the book simultaneously and independently while the teacher coaches them, and then reading is

followed with a powerful discussion and thoughtful teaching point. As students read they are making connections and making meaning. They are naming their world as they make connections. Freire (1983) states "Learning to read and write means creating and assembling a written expression for what can be said orally. The teacher cannot put it together for the student; that is the student's creative task" (p. 10). Guided reading is the medium where the students' creative task is reading, which is why students read independently and teachers coach. According to Villaume and Barbham (2001), it is imperative to put students in the driver's seat during guided reading sessions. Villaume and Barbham suggest that by equipping students with strategies to attack difficult text, teachers enable students to be in the driver's seat during guided reading or enable students to successfully attack, decode, and analyze text independently. The purpose of guided reading is to meet the needs of individual students within a diverse group by scaffolding reading to make them successful independent readers at their level (Villaume & Barbham, 2001). Furthermore, it is imperative that the book the students are reading is at their instructional level (90-94% accuracy assessed by the use of Running Records), which will be explained further in the assessment section (Tompkins, 2006).

The process of introducing the book, coaching independent reading, and following the lesson with a grand conversation and a specific teaching point is strategically designed to assist students in their transition from shared reading to independent reading of challenging text. Through guided reading, teachers design inquiry-based lessons which prompt mental action as children read independently problem solving words they don't know. Guided reading's goal is to develop

independent readers and is at the core of a balanced approach to teaching literacy (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

A guided reading lesson is separated into specific parts: before reading, during reading, and after reading. Before reading, the teacher introduces the book attempting to activate prior knowledge, build background knowledge, and engage the students. During reading, students read independently and the teacher coaches students when necessary. In addition, the teacher analyzes students' use of strategies to inform future lessons. After reading, the teacher engages students in a post-reading discussion and personalized teaching point (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

Research Supporting Guided Reading

Guided reading is a highly researched topic that is becoming an exceedingly supported form of teaching reading within a balanced literacy program. Anita Iaquinta (2006) author of "Guided Reading: A Research-Based Response to the Challenges of Early Reading Instruction" discusses the manifestation of guided reading as a best practice in literacy instruction. Iaquinta emphasizes that guided reading provides teachers with the opportunity to coach reading strategy use and guide students as they learn to apply such strategies. Additionally, Kimberly Kimbell-Lopez (2003), author of "Just Think of the Possibilities: Formats for Reading Instruction in the Elementary Classroom," recognizes guided reading as one of six components which most successfully meets the needs of our readers. Both authors reference the International Reading Association's (IRA)(2002) summary of the National Reading Panel Report (NRPR) and discuss their determination that effective reading instruction includes

teaching phonemic awareness and phonics, incorporating guided oral reading within literacy instruction, and teaching students to apply strategies to improve comprehension. The NRPR found that guided oral reading has a profound positive influence on fluency, word recognition, and comprehension. Reading aloud was found to have a greater impact than guided silent reading. Additionally, when students are provided with the opportunity to apply cognitive strategies, comprehension increases significantly. Guided reading provides teachers with a practicum which can incorporate the practices the NRPR found to significantly influence literacy instruction (International Reading Association, 2002). Consequently, guided reading as part of a balanced literacy approach is becoming widely researched and supported as a best practice in literacy instruction.

The Process of Guided Reading

Preparing the Lesson

One of the most crucial and difficult parts of preparing the lesson is selecting the book. The text must be at the student's instructional level by challenging the student with one or two new things while offering enough support to allow the student to be successful. The teacher must determine what strategies or problem solving actions are required to read the book. The majority of the language in the text must be accessible to students with their present strategies while presenting some new challenging features which will initiate inquiry (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). In addition, the teacher must consider the appealing nature of the book. If the book is delightful and pleasing to the students, then they will be more likely to engage in reading and develop their desire to comprehend. This implies that the teacher must know her students' experiences and

interests in order to pick a book that is appealing to them. This is why Fountas and

Pinnell (1996) refer to guided reading as a personalized approach to teaching reading.

The teacher must also focus on the features of the text and consider whether the difficult

and/or challenging features can be made accessible by the introduction (Fountas &

Pinnell, 1996).

Once the book has been selected, the teacher will read the book, develop an

introduction for the book, decide on the focus strategy for which to prompt during

reading, and plan possible post-reading discussion topics and teaching points. Guided

reading lessons should be roughly thirty minutes long including the introduction, reading,

and post-reading discussions and should occur approximately 3-5 times a week (Fountas

& Pinnell, 1996).

Introducing the Book

A rich introductory conversation to a storybook will facilitate independent reading

of a challenging text. Through an expressive and skillful introductory conversation,

teachers can make a demanding text accessible to the reader. Rich, expressive storybook

introductions are the first step in a guided reading lesson (Clay, 1991b). In a skillful,

deep introduction, the teacher accesses background knowledge, strategically introduces

novel knowledge, and rehearses and models some responses to the text. A successful

introduction will spark the students' interest and create a desire to find meaning in the

text (Clay, 1991b). In addition, it is important to provide students with the opportunity to

reflect on the lesson, generate their own questions, and actively participate in thoughtful

ways (Villaume & Barbham, 2001). In the introduction, teachers might call students'

attention to specific words, their features, and the context of the words. The teacher is not pre-teaching the word, but providing enough support for the student to be able to read the text independently. Introducing the book sets the stage for reading and prepares students to read text at their instructional level.

During Reading

During reading students engage in meaning making and problem solving skills. Supported by a vivid introductory conversation, students read independently relying on their prior knowledge and developing skills to assist them in problem solving the complex text (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Periodically, for beginning readers, teachers read aloud the first few pages to help the students start reading. After that, students read independently; young readers typically read aloud quietly, allowing teachers to monitor the students' reading and coach them to use problem solving strategies and decoding tools if they make any errors. Often, teachers have one student read aloud to them while the other students read quietly and independently during this time in order to focus on special needs or to assess student progress (Tompkins, 2006).

During reading, the teacher observes specific students' reading tendencies looking for evidence of problem solving. If necessary, the teacher will coach students through a difficult part in the text. Coaching students during reading refers to prompting students with questions or comments specifically designed to enable the students to apply their problem solving strategies. When prompting students to control early reading behaviors, teachers can coach by using the following questions or comments: Did you have enough (or too many) words? Did you run out of words? Did it match? When prompting

students to use all sources of information, teachers can ask the following questions: Does that sound right? Does that look right? What's wrong with this? Why did you stop? Does that make sense? Does it look right and sound right to you? When prompting student to self-monitor, teachers can coach by using the following questions and/or comments: Do you know something about that word that can help you? Were you right? Are you thinking about your story? What can you do to help your self there? Try that again. Read it again and see if you can figure out what is wrong here. What else can you do? What did you notice? What's wrong? When prompting to support self-corrections, teachers can use the following comments: I liked the way you worked that out. Try that again. You made a mistake. Can you find it? Finally, when coaching for fluency, the teacher can prompt with either "Can you read this quickly?" or "Put your words together so it sounds like talking." Notice that all questions and comments prompt the reader to mental action. With readers in the driver's seat and teachers on the outskirts prompting only when necessary, guided reading as an inquiry-based approach allows readers to attack words and apply their problem solving strategies (Dorn, French, & Jones, 1998; Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). The during reading time also allows the teacher to observe and record miscues, needs, and strategies that she could use as a teaching point after reading or in future guided reading sessions (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

Determining when to respond to student miscues during reading is the art of guided reading. It is important to ensure understanding of the text as well as fluency and accuracy of reading. Robert M. Schwartz (2005) recommends using complex theory when responding to miscues during reading rather than using meaning based theories or

accuracy based theories. Meaning based theories recommend that teachers only respond to a miscue if the student's miscue distorts the meaning in the story. Accuracy based theories support striving for accuracy requiring teachers to respond to every miscue regardless of how it affects the meaning of the story. Schwartz uses an example of a student's substitution of *home* for *house*. He states that if a teacher using a meaning based approach was coaching the student, then the teacher would most definitely ignore the miscue (Schwartz, 2005). If that same teacher was operating using the accuracy based approach, then the teacher would most definitely prompt the student to re-read. However, Schwartz recommends using a complex approach. A complex approach to responding to miscues requires the teacher to consider student assessment, student development, previous observations, and the purpose set during the introduction when she determines whether she should prompt the student to re-read (Schwartz, 2005). The response to miscues is the "coaching" the teacher does when the students are reading independently. In addition, Schwartz (2005) recommends, that teachers should plan more opportunities to discuss their experiences and insights from their work with developing readers. Although the contexts may vary, discussion of coaching decisions when teaching reading can help teachers better develop their understanding of literacy instruction. Because responding to student reading should be kept minimal as we encourage students to become independent readers, it is important that teachers consider all possible resources to inform their responses or coaching and choose the most powerful moments for their responses (Schwartz, 2005; Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

Consequently, during reading students read independently using their problem solving strategies while teachers observe evidence of problem solving and coach students to use the strategies and tools they have developed. In addition, it is important for teachers to take into consideration all aspects of student learning when deciding to prompt students to reread a miscue. Furthermore, collaboration between colleagues is recommended for teachers to build decision making strategies during reading.

Responding to Reading

After reading, the teacher guides students through a grand conversation. As the teacher guides the grand conversation, he or she attempts to move students from thinking literally about the text to thinking at a more inferential and critical level. The goal of the grand conversation is to help students make connections to themselves and previous reading while articulating their individual responses and making meaning of the text (Tompkins, 2006).

According to Skidmore, Perez-Parent, and Arnfield (2003), who studied teacher-pupil dialogue in guided reading sessions, there are two types of potential dialogue following guided reading: pedagogical dialogue, in which the knower of the truth (the teacher) instructs the ignorant (the students) on their errors, and internally persuasive discourse, in which the students engage in dialogue retelling the story using their own words. Internally persuasive discourse supports higher level thinking and a deeper understanding of text while pedagogical dialogue is more teacher-directed which leaves less time for students to develop their understanding. Unfortunately, Skidmore and colleagues found pedagogical dialogue to be the most prominent among their sample

guided reading groups. However, Skidmore and colleagues state that internally persuasive discourse allows for students to develop and articulate their own ideas and form their own meaning retelling the story in their own words.

Skidmore, Perez-Parent, and Arnfield's internally persuasive discourse coincides with critical theorists Freire (1983), Shor (1992), Bowers and Flinders (1990), and Burbules' (1993), thoughts on dialogue. According to the aforementioned critical theorists, learning occurs through dialogue. Knowledge is a shared process developed through meaningful dialogue in which both the teacher and the students participate. Learning is achieved when students create meaning relevant to their own lives. For this reason, learning is part of the dialogical process. The grand conversation following the guided reading, in which the student and the teacher enter into dialogue about the text, their connections, and the meaning they are making connects to critical theorists' discussion of dialogue and Skidmore and colleagues' discussion of internal persuasive discourse. In guided reading, the teacher and the students enter into two types of dialogue: dialogue as conversation and dialogue as inquiry (Burbules, 1993). The grand conversation would be the dialogue as conversation as the students and the teacher work toward mutually understanding the text and the meaning each had made from it. The dialogue as inquiry comes into the discussion during the teaching point at the end of the lesson when the teacher picks a specific teaching point and then discusses with the students how they figured out/used a problem solving strategy. The dialogue as inquiry encourages students to reflect on and articulate their cognitive processes. Consequently, it is important for the teacher to strive to engage in dialogue where students are

encouraged to make their own meaning and respond in their own words. The responding portion of guided reading is not a question/answer session assessing comprehension, but a student interactive response to the story in which students are reading the word as they are naming their world (Bowers & Flinders, 1990; Burbules, 1993; Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; Freire, 1983; Shor, 1992; Skidmore, Perez-Parent, & Arnfield, 2003).

Following the grand conversation, the teacher designs a specific personalized teaching point. The teaching point is planned based on observations of strategy use during reading and is intended to prompt students to reflect on and articulate their strategy use. The teacher can suggest going back to a part of the book and discussing how students problem solved a specific word; the teacher can pose a general question about problem solving strategies; or the teacher can ask the students for examples of when they figured out a difficult word. The goal of the teaching point is to discuss and reflect on strategy use which will hopefully enable students to use and re-use such strategies independently in the future (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; Dorn, French, & Jones, 1998).

Analysis of the Process

Although the process of guided reading has been clearly defined and specifically organized, it is important not to forget the purpose of guided reading. The purpose of guided reading is to assist students in their quest to become independent readers by meeting their diverse and individual needs (Villaume & Barbham, 2001). Villaume and Barbham (2001) respond to teachers' questions about specific features of the guided reading process, stating that the purpose of guided reading should be kept in mind at all

times and should be the pivotal factor when making decisions. Consequently, teachers are encouraged to use the guided reading process to meet the needs of their students and to modify the process as necessary in the best interest of the students.

Should Guided Reading Go Beyond the Primary Years?

Mooney (1995a) states that although guided reading in the early years focuses on explicitly teaching reading strategies and developing independent reading, independent readers can still benefit from guided reading. Beyond the primary years, guided reading can be used to develop higher-level thinking and assist students in comprehending challenging academic text. Teachers modify their book introductions to prompt students to consider more challenging and thought provoking concepts and scaffold higher-level cognition. During reading, teacher's questions should require students to think more deeply about the text. After reading, activities should be more challenging and thought provoking, requiring students to consider aspects of the text that they might not otherwise consider (Mooney, 1995a).

For the more advanced readers, the teacher's focus should be on guiding them toward making knowledgeable decisions as they grapple with the text and move beyond the text. David Whitehead (2002) developed thinking strategies that can be used in guided reading lessons with more advanced readers. The strategies Whitehead developed are intended to deepen comprehension by providing students with the tool for negotiating, interpreting, and manipulating meaning.

Whitehead (2002) discusses two of his thinking strategies, perspective and imagery, in his article, " 'The Story Means More to Me Now': Teaching Thinking though

Guided Reading. " Perspective thinking strategies facilitate readers' comprehension as they use many social and physical perspectives. "Social and physical perspective thinking strategies involve readers in identifying an author's use of perspective thinking to evaluate texts critically and construct meaning" (Whitehead, 2002, p. 34). An example of a teacher drawing social perspective thinking from students would be a question like, "Who discovered America?" A textbook response would be "Columbus," but students using social perspective thinking might respond something like "it depends on who you ask" (Whitehead, 2002).

Imagery thinking strategies allow readers to understand texts and to problem-solve during reading in ways that language might not typically facilitate. "Imagery thinking strategies involve readers in identifying texts that evoke visual imagery. Typically, these texts include figurative, descriptive and concrete language" (Whitehead, 2002, p. 36). In addition, imagery thinking strategies encourage readers to use visualization to enhance comprehension. Perspective and imagery strategies are only two of Whitehead's higher leveled thinking strategies. Whitehead's strategies provide teachers with specific strategies teachers can teach good readers to use when developing and manipulating meaning and negotiating text (Whitehead, 2002).

In summarizing the literature related to guided reading beyond the primary years, it is apparent that guided reading is still a beneficial form of literacy instruction. Guided reading in this context allows the teacher to facilitate higher-level thinking and provide the students with thinking strategies which enable students to manipulate, interpret, and negotiate the meaning of the text. The goal for guided reading beyond the primary years

is to assist fluent readers as they grapple with increasingly challenging text. Guided reading beyond the primary years is considered a beneficial addition to the literacy instruction of fluent readers.

Grouping within Guided Reading

Grouping within the classroom is always a controversial practice that teachers continually struggle with. Most teachers are confronted with a wide range of levels within the classroom that make it difficult to teach whole-class lessons or heterogeneous groups, but ability grouping students within the classroom can have an adverse effect on students. Many researchers argue that ability grouping doesn't enhance achievement (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). These researchers argue that most students assigned to a group never move to a higher group, the high- and low-grouped students often receive different instruction, and the low-grouped students' self-confidence and self-esteem are impaired. Additionally, many students benefit from heterogeneous grouping as they learn from each other. Consequently, teachers are challenged with the need for readers to read text at their level and the negative implications of homogenous grouping (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

However, research shows that substituting smaller focus groups for heterogeneous groups in some instances may actually add to achievement (Dorn & Soffos, 2001). Thus, Fountas and Pinnell (1996) present an interesting compromise between heterogeneous grouping and homogenous grouping called dynamic grouping. Dynamic grouping was developed based on three main characteristics of a typical classroom: students will demonstrate a wide range of prior knowledge, experience, skills, and intellectual ability,

students will differ in their knowledge and skills, and children will learn at different rates. Dynamic grouping allows teachers to effectively group students for efficient and meaningful teaching. Dynamic grouping is the process of combining flexible ability-grouping with a wide range of heterogeneous grouping in the classroom (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). This process will allow teachers to conduct guided reading in a small group atmosphere where students are reading at their level. The groups will be flexible because students will move within the groups as abilities change and grow. However, all other literacy groups are heterogeneous groups (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Dynamic grouping allows teachers to teach readers at their level while avoiding many of the negative implications typical ability-grouping presents.

Although Fountas and Pinnell (1996) provide an appealing strategy to teaching guided reading in small leveled groups while attempting to avoid the negative implications of ability grouping, there are still educators and researchers who completely disagree with any form of ability grouping. Cunningham, Hall, and Defee (1998) are three researchers who believe that all literacy should be taught through non-ability-grouped, multi-level instruction. Their approach is based on the idea that low-ability grouped students stay in the low-ability groups throughout their educational experience and encounter difficulty ever meeting grade-level standards. Cunningham and co-researchers believe that all literacy teaching including guided reading should be taught in heterogeneous groups. When making guided reading groups heterogeneous, Cunningham and Hall (2001) suggest modifying guided reading from leveled groups to a book club. Here, teachers provide students with three or four books tied together by

topic, theme, author or genre. The teacher introduces each book and then allows students to pick their first, second, and third choice. Then, the teacher separates students into groups keeping in mind students' reading levels, but ensuring the groups remain heterogeneous. Basically, most students end up reading close to their level while believing the groups are separated by student choice. This approach is designed to avoid tracking students and damaging their self-esteem while maximizing students' heterogeneous interaction (Cunningham, Hall, & Defee, 1998).

Although Cunningham, Hall, and Defee present a practical alternative to ability grouping within guided reading, a pivotal aspect of guided reading is students reading at their level. The book club idea may not ensure that students are reading at their level. Thus, dynamic grouping remains the most practiced way to incorporate ability grouping within the classroom while avoiding its negative implications.

Assessing within Guided Reading

According to Linda Dorn and Carla Soffos (2001), authors of *Shaping Literate Minds: Developing Self-Regulated Learners,* students' literacy development should be studied along a literacy continuum. A literacy continuum permits us to analyze literacy behavior as it changes over time rather than narrowly focusing on specific grade level standards. As children learn, they move from awareness to automaticity or self-regulation. A successful literacy assessment shows how students' literacy learning changes over time on a literacy continuum (Dorn & Soffos, 2001).

Marie M. Clay (2005) authored *An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement* and has developed standardized assessments on a literacy continuum that

show progress over time. Clay's Observation Survey is a group of tasks that provide

teachers with a systematic observation method that can be repeated. The tasks are based

on Clay's research in New Zealand and supported by 20-plus years of implementation in

New Zealand. These observation tasks provide the teacher with knowledge about a

young reader's oral language usage, knowledge of how printed language works, ability to

read continuous text, knowledge of letters, reading and Writing Vocabulary, and ability

to hear and record sounds in words. Clay's Observation Survey allows teachers to

systematically pre-assess students at the beginning of the year or before guided reading,

assess students continuously during the year or guided reading program, and post-assess

at the end of the year or culmination of the guided reading program (Clay, 2005). Thus,

teachers have qualitative and quantitative data that show a reader's progress over time.

The Observation Survey is commonly used as a tool to systematically assess early

reading and writing behaviors. Reading Recovery, a nationally based short term reading

intervention program, designed to dramatically reduce the number of extremely low first-

grade readers, has used Clay's observation survey as a systematic, reliable, and

repeatable form of assessment (Reading Recovery of North America, 2008). According

to Reading Recovery the observation survey is a valid and reliable assessment tool

supported by national norms to aid in interpreting scores. However, Reading Recovery

cites Denton, Ciancio, and Fletcher (2006) as their source in supporting the validity and

reliability of the observation survey. When reading this validity, reliability, and utility

test, it is apparent that the researchers found limitations to the assessment noting the

floors and ceilings were inadequate, benchmarks needed development, and they

suggested caution with the utility of progress monitoring. Despite these limitations, Denton, Ciancio, and Fletcher concluded that "overall, with some limitations, the Observation Survey can be validly implemented to assess components of early reading development" (Denton, Ciancio, & Fletcher, 2006, p. 8). With the validity test supporting it, the observation survey has been used in countless studies as the reading assessment tool providing a systematic, replicable way to assess early readers.

Clay's observation tasks include Concepts About Print, Running Records, Letter Identification, Word Reading, Writing Vocabulary, and Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words. The observation task, Concepts About Print, allows teachers to observe what readers have gained knowledge of about how printed language works (Clay, 2005). There is a tremendous amount of information to learn about written code and how it works. Eventually, readers need to know all the rules of printed language. This task provides the teacher with an accurate, systematic assessment of a reader's concepts about how printed language works (Clay, 2005).

During administration of Concepts About Print, the teacher seems to be reading a story to the students while the student helps the teacher as she asks a few questions on each page. The questions are strategically organized to show what the child knows about print and get progressively more difficult as the book goes on (Clay, 2005). The questions require the reader to identify the front of the book, that print contains a message, the direction of print, words in print, letters in words, upper and lower case letters, punctuation, and many more things. The teacher has four books to choose from: *Sand, Stones, Follow Me, Moon, and No Shoes* (Clay, 2005). All of these books are

authored by Marie Clay and designed with mistakes that require a good readers' attention. The teacher follows a script asking questions as she reads and taking notes of the students' response. A mature reader will automatically notice the mistakes in the text and successfully complete the observation task, but a developing reader will begin missing the mistakes as the text and print become more challenging. When a reader has completed Concepts About Print, the teacher has an accurate view of that reader's concepts about printed language (Clay, 2005).

Running Records allow the teacher to observe and assess a reader's reading of continuous text. The teacher's goal during the administration of a Running Record is to determine the text difficulty and pinpoint a reader's instructional reading level. If a reader reads a text with 90-94% accuracy, than the reader is reading at her instructional level. The Running Record also allows the teacher to observe and analyze what strategies the student is using to problem solve unfamiliar words and what information the reader is attending to when problem solving. To determine a reader's accuracy during reading, to analyze and observe strategy use, and to assess what the reader attends to during reading, Clay provides teachers with the Running Record.

During the administration of a Running Record, the student reads aloud to the teacher a text estimated to be at the reader's instructional level. The teacher follows Clay's conventions for recording on a Running Record sheet. The conventions for recording require the teacher to record a check for every correct word and then a different mark for various errors and self-corrections. When the student is done reading, the teacher assesses the student's errors, self-corrections, and strategy use. Additionally, the

teacher notices and records what the student attends to during reading: visual, meaning, or syntax. If the reader completely omits a word, then he didn't attend to any of the sources of information. If the reader sounds out the word phonetically, but the word still results in an error, then the reader only attended to visual information. If the reader looked at the picture and substituted chicken for duck, then the reader was only attending to meaning. If the reader substituted a completely different word, but it made sense in written language, than the reader only attended to syntax. The teacher records all sources of information the reader attends to. This systematic and strategic observation of a reader's reading of continuous text provides the teacher with the reader's instructional level and an analysis of the reading strategies used (Clay, 2005).

The next observation task, Letter Identification, provides the teacher with knowledge of which alphabetic symbols the child is noticing and identifying, how well the student knows letters, and which features are perceived and which are confused. The child is required to identify each symbol or letter. The administrator accepts the name, the sound, or a word beginning with the letter as valid proof that the reader is identifying the letter. Clay believes that once the reader can correctly identify the symbol with any label attaching a second or third label will be much easier. Consequently, the administrator provides the reader with the letter sheet, which contains all 26 lower case letters, all 26 upper case letters, and the computer generated g and a, 54 symbols in all. The reader identifies each letter and the administrator records exactly what the reader says. After the administration, the teacher analyzes the letters noticing what the reader is attending to and what the reader is using and confusing (Clay, 2005). For example, if the

reader identified but confused these symbols, P, p, b, d, q, then the teacher can determine that the reader is attending to the letter's shape but not its orientation on the page. Therefore, the Letter Identification task provides the teacher with a systematic representation of a readers' knowledge of letter symbols.

Reading Words supplies the teacher with a standardized procedure for sampling from a reader's reading vocabulary and assessing what a reader uses to problem solve words. This task is only reliable if the reader has acquired a sufficient vocabulary to sample from. For readers without adequate vocabulary, a different method is needed. Administration of the reading words observation task is simple. The teacher helps the reader with the sample word, which is never scored, and then asks the reader to read each of the following 15 words. The proctor does not assist the reader with any of the following words. Each correctly read word is scored as one point. "The score will indicate the extent to which a child is accumulating a reading vocabulary of the most frequently used words in the Ready to Read series during his first year at school" (Clay, 2005, p. 91). A student should gradually move from a low score to a high score over their first year. The proctor is provided with three separate lists and should use a different one every time this task is assessed (Clay, 2005).

The next observation task, Writing Vocabulary, allows the teacher to observe students' writing behaviors and ability to construct words. This task "… is like a screen upon which the child can project what he knows – not only what we have taught him but what he as learned anywhere in his various worlds" (Clay, 2005, p. 102). This task asks the student to write down all the words she knows beginning with her name and followed

by an individual list she has been able to learn. As the writer constructs her list, the teacher observes all aspects of writing including directionality, letter formation, features used, categories of words, demonstration of alphabetic principle, and correctly spelled words (Clay, 2005). The proctor provides the writer with ten minutes to complete the task, and scores each correctly spelt word as one point. The student's Writing Vocabulary score is then compared with the averages provided in Clay's book to classify the writer (Clay, 2005). This task provides the teacher with a basis of the students' writing abilities from which to plan instruction.

Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words is the final systematic observation task Clay provides. This observation task instrument demonstrates the reader's ability to record phonemes (sounds) in the form of graphemes (letters). The reader's ability to hear the sounds in words dictated to her and record those sounds correctly with letters demonstrates a deep understanding of phonemic awareness and graphophonics. The proctor of this task reads one of five sentences through completely. Then, the proctor asks the student to record what she hears as the proctor reads the same sentence again slowly. The student is given credit for correctly recording each phoneme with the corresponding symbol or symbols. The student is not docked for silent letters or misspelled words because the task is assessing the ability to connect sounds to letters not the ability to spell correctly. This task focuses on the student's ability to record sounds. There are 37 potential phonemes. Each time this task is administered the proctor should use a different sentence. This task provides the teacher with a standardized

representation of each student's ability to represent his phonemic awareness through letter-sound relationships (Clay, 2005).

Clay's observation tasks provide teachers with a standardized, systematic, and replicable way to evaluate young readers' literacy knowledge. These tasks provide numerical data that can be analyzed and interpreted quantitatively as well as anecdotal data that can be analyzed and interpreted qualitatively. Consequently, the observation tasks provide reliable data for both educators and researchers.

Managing Guided Reading within a Balanced Literacy Program

One of the most challenging aspects of guided reading discussed by educators and researchers is the practical implementation within the classroom. Teachers are continually challenged as they attempt to engage the rest of the class during guided reading time. In addition, all developers and researchers of guided reading agree that guided reading is one part of a balanced literacy program. Therefore, the literature presented here will address how to practically implement guided reading within a balanced literacy program (Dorn and Soffos, 2001; Ford & Opitz, 2002; Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; Guastello & Lenz, 2005).

Guided reading is one component within a balanced literacy approach. It is the step before independent reading that guides students as they become independent readers. However, a balanced literacy program needs to include all aspects of literacy: reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Dorn and Soffos, 2001; Ford & Opitz, 2002; Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; Guastello & Lenz, 2005). Additionally, balanced literacy programs should present all forms of literacy along the apprenticeship continuum of modeled, shared,

guided, and independent work. Guided reading should not serve as students' lone opportunity to interact with text, but one portion of the literacy instruction. Teachers can implement read alouds, shared reading, poems, literature circles and interactive writing, among other practices to incorporate modeled and shared work within their literacy program. Furthermore, teachers can implement guided reading with literacy corners or kidstations to practically incorporate guided practice and independent work (Dorn and Soffos, 2001; Ford & Opitz, 2002; Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; Guastello & Lenz, 2005).

Guided reading focuses on teaching problem solving strategies and providing students with the opportunity to apply those skills in guided lessons. However, teaching problem solving strategies, reading strategies, and word recognition is only one part to a balanced literacy approach. In addition to the explicit teaching of skills and strategies of reading, problem solving, decoding, and word recognition, students need to be exposed to rich literature and authentic reading and writing. As researchers Pressley, Roehrig, Bogner, Raphael, and Dolezal (2002) so graciously put it, "Excellent literacy teachers do it all!" The aforementioned researchers conducted a study analyzing the literacy instruction of 150 primary teachers highly recommended by reading supervisors, administrators, teachers, and parents as excellent literacy teachers. What they found was a common balance within their literacy instruction. Students were exposed to explicit teaching of skills and strategies as well as numerous encounters with authentic reading and writing. Therefore, students should have the opportunity to read and discuss rich literature, experience writing authentically, and learn the skills and strategies necessary to become a good reader (Pressley et al., 2002).

One major concern voiced by Kathy Short (1999) regarding balance in literacy instruction is the over-reliance on guided reading within literacy instruction. Short argues that although guided reading is pivotal in teaching readers about language, strategies to attack language, and providing learners with the opportunity to apply such strategies, guided reading should not take the place of literature circles. Short emphasizes that literature circles provide students with an invaluable opportunity to engage in meaningful dialogue about thought-provoking literature (Short, 1999). Fountas and Pinnell (1996), Clay (1991a), Dorn and Soffos (2001), and Short (1999) are all in agreement that guided reading, although a powerful form of literacy instruction, should remain one portion within balanced literacy instruction.

Dorn and Soffos (2001) suggest that although literacy corners successfully engage students during guided reading time, engagement is not the purpose of literacy corners. Literacy corner activities should give students an opportunity to independently demonstrate or transfer the knowledge they have gained from teacher-directed activities; they are the final stage of apprenticeship learning. Literacy corners provide students with opportunities to learn how to use their skills and knowledge to resolve comparable problems in different situations. Furthermore, as children participate in independent work they begin to generalize and internalize their knowledge. Consequently, literacy corners should be designed to require students to independently apply what they already know (Dorn & Soffos, 2001).

Although literacy corners are supported by many researches as both a successful tool to instill independent work and a practical way to engage students during guided

reading, many educators are still challenged and frustrated with the implementation process of literacy corners during guided reading.

Guastello and Lenz (2005) provide some appealing suggestions to successful implementation of this process in their model of guided reading kidstations. First, they suggest that literacy centers or literacy corners should be transformed into kidstations. Kidstations are portable centers allowing the teacher to move the centers for successful implementation. Second, they suggest lengthening the rotation time from 15-20 minutes to 30-35 minutes only meeting with each guided reading group once a week with a maximum of two meetings per week. The purpose of this would be to allow the teacher time at the end of the rotation to observe the kidstations and provide assistance to struggling students while the guided reading group was responding to the story independently (Guastello and Lenz, 2005). Next, Guastello and Lenz suggest taking five to seven weeks to demonstrate and incorporate various activities into the kidstations. First, the teacher models the activities. Next, the whole class works on similar activities. Then, the activity is incorporated into a kidstation (Guastello and Lenz, 2005). Finally, they recommend that teachers conduct a fishbowl during guided reading, where one group participates while all other students take notes. The teacher and students discuss what is necessary for guided reading sessions to be successfully completed. Together, students and the teacher develop class norms regarding behavior in kidstations during guided reading. This process provides the students with ownership of the process, which hopefully will increase accountability and good behavior during kidstations. Guastello

and Lenz provide teachers with a practical way to implement guided reading using literacy corners (2005).

It is important to point out one major discrepancy between Guastello and Lenz's kidstation model and Clay's guided reading. Guided reading is designed to be implemented a minimum of three times a week with a goal of five times a week. Guastello and Lenz's kidstations model only allows for one or two sessions a week. Consequently, it is left up to the teacher to decide how to juggle the practical implementation of guided reading with the need to follow the guided reading structure highly supported by research.

Summary of Guided Reading Literature

In summary, guided reading is an inquiry-based approach to teaching literacy where teachers activate background knowledge in a rich introductory conversation. Then, students read independently while teachers coach, and finally, the teacher and students engage in a dialogic conversation and thoughtful teaching point. Guided reading is one part of a balanced literacy program and can be managed within a classroom through literacy centers. Literacy centers provide students with the opportunity to apply and transfer their knowledge through independent work and teachers with a management system while they meet with small guided reading groups. When grouping students, teachers can rely on dynamic grouping where they group heterogeneously for all literacy stations, but homogeneously for guided reading. However, the homogeneous guided reading groups should be flexible as students' knowledge and reading abilities change.

Finally, teachers may use Clay's Observation Survey as a systematic, replicable assessment in determining students' literacy knowledge.

Incorporating English Learner Strategies in Guided Reading

> Schools must acknowledge that they are required to adapt to changing demographic and social circumstances if they are to carry out their mission effectively. In particular, schools must learn how to teach a diverse student body that is dramatically different from the "generic" white, middle-class, monolingual, monocultural students for whom curriculum was developed in the past (Cummins, 2001, p. 123).

In this quote, Jim Cummins addresses English Learners (ELs), a group of students growing rapidly within the California public schools. According to the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition (NCELA), the enrollment of Limited English Proficient (LEP) or English Learners (ELs), students who are not proficient in the English language, in California public schools increased by 40.2% between the years of 1992 and 2002. In 2006-2007, the most recent available data, 25% of students in the California public schools were considered LEP (California Department of Education, 2008). With these staggering numbers in mind, educators' challenge of the future is reaching the growing number of students entering U.S. classrooms with primary languages other than English. Although it is widely accepted that it takes four to seven years for an individual to acquire academic proficiency in a language, our education system isn't designed to provide ELs with that time (Mohr, 2004). ELs are increasingly thrown into general education classrooms with little support. Additionally, most English Learners are pulled out of the classroom for English as a Second Language instruction, which typically focuses on basic English instruction, causing them to miss the academic content being taught in the classroom (Mohr, 2004). Therefore, ELs are not getting the

instruction they need to accelerate their language acquisition and reach grade-level literacy standards.

Many researchers propose that the key to accelerating language acquisition and brining ELs up to grade level literacy standards begins in the classroom with literacy instruction. Research suggests that the most qualified individual to support the English Learner student may be the classroom teacher, who has a strong background in literacy instruction and understands its complex nature. Mohr (2004) states that the classroom teacher is the most equipped individual to accelerate instruction by providing students with instruction that is "fast passed, integrated, engaging, and enriching rather than remedial, linear, passive, or inordinately patient" (p. 19). Consequently, schools and teachers need to analyze their present EL programs and develop accelerated instruction for ELs.

Among researchers focusing on making content accessible to English Learners, I have identified commonalities in their recommendations of literacy practices. These commonly recommended practices include activating prior knowledge, building background, explicit teaching of phonemic awareness and the alphabetic principle, teaching vocabulary through meaningful content, teaching reading strategies, engaging in guided dialogue and shared reading, and using culturally relevant text and text students can relate to. When activating prior knowledge, it is important to draw upon students' own experiences, life and knowledge. As Freire (1983) states, "... words used in organizing a literacy program come from the word universe of the people who are learning , expressing their actual language, their anxieties, fears, demands, dreams.

Words should be laden with the meaning of the people's existential experience..." (p. 10). If students connect their previous experience and knowledge to novel experiences and knowledge, it will be easier for them to understand and remember the novelty. If students have no knowledge of the content in the text, then it is necessary to build their background knowledge. Furthermore, building students' phonemic awareness and explicitly teaching ELs letter sound correspondence will enable students to develop decoding skills and an understanding of how English works as a language. Additionally, if teachers teach vocabulary through rich text and context, then students can use the text or context to help them visualize and comprehend the meaning of the word. Finally, when engaging in guided dialogue, teachers guide student responses eliciting higher level, more complex thought. Consequently, if classroom teachers use these practices in their instruction, they will be more effective in their teaching of English Learners (Hickman, Pollard-Durodola, & Vaughn, 2004; Suits, 2003; Avalos, Plasencia, Chavez, and Rascon, 2007; Manyak, 2007; Lenters, 2004).

Fortunately, Echevarria, Vogt, and Short (2004) provide classroom teachers with an empirically validated model of teaching English Learners, the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP). The SIOP model is a research-based approach to teaching English Learners and making content comprehensible for all ELs. The SIOP model connects and organizes many of the aforementioned research-based practices into eight components: lesson preparation, building background, comprehensible input, strategies, interaction, practice/application, lesson delivery, and review/assessment. The SIOP

model is designed to make content accessible for all students through teacher preparation and lesson modifications (Echevarria et al., 2004).

Lesson preparation focuses on developing concrete content and language objectives, identifying content concepts, providing supplementary materials and adapting content to make it more accessible. Content objectives identify what students ought to know or be able to do after successfully completing the lesson. Language objectives address the goals for students' language development including vocabulary development, reading comprehension skills, writing skills, development of functional language, and oral language development. Content concepts focus on appropriate grade level standards. When ELs seem to have little or no prior knowledge about the content, teachers can activate prior knowledge by facilitating connections and build background knowledge with supplemental materials. Supplementary materials scaffold learning to make grade-level material more accessible. Supplementary materials include manipulatives, visuals, realia, pictures, and demonstrations. Additionally, content adaptations may be useful in making the content more accessible. Such adaptations as graphic organizers, outlines, leveled study guides and taped texts can provide sufficient scaffolding to make the lesson accessible for ELs. Consequently, when preparing a SIOP lesson plan, including the aforementioned features may ensure the content's accessibility for your English Learners (Echevarria et al., 2004).

Building background knowledge, the second component of the SIOP model, was the most common practice supported by research when analyzing EL instruction. When reading, students form meaning by connecting their prior experiences to the current

content. If prior knowledge is limited, the SIOP model recommends three instructional interventions to build background knowledge: teach vocabulary prior to reading text, provide experiences, and introduce a way for students to build their own background knowledge. By intervening when background knowledge is limited, teachers will make content more accessible for ELs (Echevarria et al., 2004).

Comprehensible input, the third component of the SIOP model, focuses on making communication more understandable for English Learner. Teachers should slow their speech, repeat directions and important content of the lesson, and enunciate clearly. Additionally, teachers should avoid slang and idiomatic speech. Furthermore, hand motions, visuals, and realia can make speech more understandable. By adjusting their speech and incorporating visual techniques, teachers can make content more understandable (Echevarria et al., 2004).

Explicit instruction of a variety of effective learning strategies enhances student learning and reading. Learning strategies are "the special thoughts or behaviors that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn, or retain new information" (Echevarria et al., 2004). Although many different strategies are considered effective, it is widely accepted that strategies be taught explicitly, through modeling and scaffolding. Effective strategies include graphic organizers, comprehension strategies, rehearsal strategies, cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies, and social/affective strategies (Echevarria et al., 2004; Manyak, 2007; Avalos, 2007).

The fifth component of the SIOP model, interaction, focuses on balancing the linguistic opportunities in the classroom. The classroom should provide the students with

numerous opportunities to interact with their peers and the teacher. By increasing interaction and encouraging students to elaborate on their responses, teachers facilitate language development. This component connects with Lenter's (2004) and Suit's (2003) encouragement to increase oral communication within the classroom. It seems researchers agree that increased oral communication or linguistic opportunities develops vocabulary and increases learning (Echevarria et al., 2004).

When students are provided with numerous opportunities to practice and apply what they have learned, their chances of mastering the content increase. Students should have ample opportunity to practice or apply what they have learned through "hands-on" meaningful experiences. Some examples of "hands-on" meaningful learning include: projects, use of manipulatives, and concrete experiences. By making learning meaningful, students are more likely to master the skill or content (Echevarria et al., 2004).

Lesson delivery is an imperative feature of a successfully taught lesson. Although a lesson can be thoroughly planned, if it is not successfully delivered, then the lesson will be less accessible for English Learners. In order to successfully deliver a SIOP lesson, content and language objectives must be clearly supported, students must be engaged, and the pacing of the lesson must be appropriate for the students' abilities. If a lesson meets the aforementioned features, then the lesson delivery was done well (Echevarria et al., 2004).

Finally, the eighth component of the SIOP model is review and assessment. Review of key vocabulary and key content concepts throughout the lesson and at the end

of the lesson is crucial for English Learners. Additionally, working assessments throughout the lesson will provide teachers with multiple indicators of students understanding. Assessments can be informal observations, conversations or quick-writes, authentic applications, and/or formal assessments such as portfolios, journals, or projects. By providing multiple opportunities for review and assessments, English Learners are provided with multiple opportunities to master the content and teachers are provided with multiple opportunities to assess understanding (Echevarria et al., 2004).

The SIOP model provides teachers with an empirically-based organized format to design lessons that are comprehensible for English Learners. The eight components of the model connect with research on effective EL instruction. Key features such as building background, developing vocabulary, increasing oral interactions, and providing opportunities to apply knowledge are commonly acknowledged as successful instructional strategies for teaching English Learners.

Gibbons (2002), author of *Scaffolding Language Scaffolding Learning: Teaching Second Language Learners in the Mainstream Classroom,* provides educators with practical and realistic activities that scaffold learning for English Learners and develop their comprehension of the content being taught to make teaching more effective for English Learners. Before reading a text, Gibbons suggests activities that will activate prior knowledge and define difficult text. Some before reading activities that scaffold English Learning include: predicting from words and discussing the meaning, predicting based on the front cover or first sentence of a text, predicting based on an important illustration, and generating questions based on the cover of the book. These activities

connect with the SIOP model's building background component. Some during reading activities that scaffold learning include: providing opportunities to apply reading strategies, re-read text searching for details, and shadow reading, where the teacher records her voice and the student listens and reads along. These activities connect with the SIOP model's strategies component and lesson preparation component. Some after reading activities that scaffold learning include: creating a new ending, creating a new text using the story as a skeleton, creating a visual representation of the text through a graphic organizer, and making a time line of the text. The previous activities connect with the strategies component of the SIOP model, and when used effectively can make content accessible for ELs (Gibbons, 2002; Echevarria et al., 2004).

Recently, English Learner researchers have begun to suggest strategies and modification specifically directed towards making guided reading more accessible. Authors Avalos, Plasencia, Chavez, and Rascon (2007) of "Modified Guided Reading: Gateway to English as a Second Language and Literacy Learning" and Author Betsy Suits (2003) of "Guided Reading and Second-Language Learners" address specific strategies and activities to make guided reading more effective for English Learners. Both articles address the importance of building background knowledge, developing vocabulary and increasing communication, three major components of the SIOP model. However, they offer more specific strategies to modify, adapt, and scaffold the guided reading process. Such modifications include: choral reading prior to independent reading, pre-teaching and discussing vocabulary, reading-aloud softly during independent reading, teaching phonemic awareness and phonics, discussing text in primary language,

using non-fiction texts to develop vocabulary, building on prior knowledge, shared reading prior to independent reading, and providing a safe environment to interact and converse in English. These specific strategies are designed to make guided reading more accessible for English Learners (Avalos, 2007; Suits, 2003).

As detailed above, researchers and educators have presented classroom teachers with practices, strategies, and activities which will enable teachers to provide English Learners access to the content being taught in the classroom and scaffold learning in the classroom to accelerate their development of language and literacy.

Connecting Guided Reading and English Learners

Many components of guided reading connect directly to effective English Learner instruction. However, some modifications recommended by EL researchers conflict with basic guided reading components. Common components of guided reading instruction and effective EL instruction include: building background knowledge, activating prior knowledge, and guided comprehension discussions. However, EL researchers suggest modifying the guided reading format of story introduction followed directly by independent reading to incorporate choral reading or shared reading prior to independent reading. The insertion of choral or shared reading in the guided reading format allows more extensive modeling/guiding of reading fluency and word recognition in addition to the ability to stop and discuss the text and check for understanding. Additionally, English Learner researchers strongly support pre-teaching vocabulary, a practice guided reading researchers strongly oppose. Guided reading researchers oppose pre-teaching vocabulary because it interferes with the inquiry process upon which guided reading is based

(Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). However, English Learner researchers promote pre-teaching vocabulary to expand the ELs language bank and make it possible for them to connect their background knowledge of the concept to the English word (Avalos, 2007; Suits, 2003). If the English Learner has background knowledge of the concept, but not of the English word for which to describe that concept, then pre-teaching vocabulary would be powerful and would not interfere with the inquiry process. If the EL does not have any background knowledge of the concept, then it would be necessary to build background not pre-teach vocabulary. Moreover, EL researchers emphasize the importance of explicit instruction of phonemic awareness and phonics, which is not normally incorporated into guided reading lessons. Therefore, it becomes the teacher's challenge to meet the needs of her students and make guided reading an effective literacy component for English Learners.

With this research, theory, and literature at the core of my purpose, I designed my program, planned my methods, organized my data collection and data analysis, and considered my findings and implications. This literature was the heart of my study.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Restated Research Question

What happens to the reading levels of students identified as English Learners when they participate in a guided reading group that is paired with instruction to meet their language needs?

Methods

I met with my six students on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 2:53 - 4:15 pm. Before we began meeting, I assessed each student's literacy level using Marie Clay's Observation Survey. For a detailed description of each task please see the assessment portion of my literature review. Clay's Observation Survey was my pre-assessment of my students' literacy levels, and it helped me determine my grouping of students within the reading group. In addition, the Running Record and Writing Vocabulary tasks and a teacher journal were used as ongoing assessments during the weekly meetings. Finally, I repeated Clay's Observation Survey for my post-assessment.

The Study Context

Our guided reading group met at the kidney shaped table in the back corner of the library at Fields Elementary School. I chose this location because the shape of the table and the quiet nature of the library. In my classroom, we did not have a kidney shaped table. Kidney shaped tables allow the teacher to sit in the center of the table and the students circle halfway around the teacher. This arrangement allows the teacher to rotate her chair and address any student at the table. This table was ideal for my guided reading

group. In addition, the table was located in the library creating a calming, quiet atmosphere essential for reading. In my classroom, my partner was working with many teachers and students who were constantly causing commotion. My classroom was full of noise and distractions. Consequently, I chose a special spot in the back of the library to conduct my guided reading tutorials.

In our reading tutorials, I had separated the six students into flexible groups following Fountas and Pinnell's (1996) recommendations for grouping guided reading. Sarah, Clementine, and Christopher began in one group reading level four books. Elizabeth and Yvonne began in group two reading level eight books. And, Rachael was in a group alone reading level fourteen books at the start of the guided reading tutorials. Students learn at different rates and the flexible groups adjusted as the students' reading levels changed.

I picked the six students up from class at 2:53 PM and walked them over to our table. At this time, the students had the opportunity to use the bathroom and eat their snack, a healthy choice I provided for them. At 3:00 PM, we began our reading session. Together, we worked until 4:00 PM. If students needed help beginning their homework, then I stayed with them until 4:15 PM. All students left by 4:15 PM.

As the classroom teacher and teacher of the guided reading tutorials, I was embedded within the classroom context. Consequently, this study could not be conducted, examined, or analyzed objectively. My study was examined considering its reflexivity, which is the acknowledgment of the researcher that, being part of the social world we study, it is essentially impossible to be objective. Instead, the researcher's goal

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is to recognize and understand her influence on the context of the study including the participants (Hammersley, 1983). When I conducted my analysis and considered the implications, they were analyzed and considered subjectively through my perceptions, interactions, and knowledge. My data was gathered, analyzed, and reported subjectively attempting to understand the reflexive nature of the study.

Program Design

One crucial part of conducting successful guided reading lessons was the book selection. At Fields, we had a large selection of guided reading books leveled by numbers. The students' reading levels were determined based on their performance on the six Observation Survey tasks. After book level was determined, a book was chosen that the students could relate to, that appealed to the students, and that offered something to be learned. The most important part of the book selection was choosing a book the students could relate to. Although the connections could be facilitated by the teacher's book introduction, the book needed to connect somehow to their background knowledge to make the guided reading successful. Once a book was chosen that was at their level, appealed to the reading group, and connected to their experiences, a guided reading lesson modified to meet their language needs was designed.

Each tutorial began with a Making Words lesson designed by Patricia M. Cunningham and Dorothy P. Hall. "Making Words is a multilevel, developmental activity because, within one instructional format, there are endless possibilities for discovering how our alphabetic system works" (Cunningham & Hall, 1994, p.1). Making Words activities were included in the guided reading group because a highly supported

feature of EL literacy instruction was teaching phonemic awareness and the alphabetic principal. In the third grade classroom, phonemic awareness and letter sound correspondence were not a priority, and students were rarely exposed to this form of instruction. Thus, incorporating Making Words into the guided reading tutorials was done specifically to modify the program design to meet my students' needs as English Learners. Making Words lessons were designed to explicitly teach sound-letter correspondence while deepening students' understanding of how letters are manipulated within words, how words are spelled, and what words mean. Consequently, each guided reading lesson began with 15 minutes of Making Words. The format designed by Cunningham and Hall in *Making Words: Multilevel, Hands-On, Developmentally Appropriate Spelling and Phonics Activities* was followed.

Following the fifteen minutes of making words, a whole-group five- seven minute mini-lesson on a specific reading strategy was taught. Explicitly teaching learning strategies is highly supported in both ELL literacy instruction and the guided reading format. The mini-lesson was designed based on the books chosen for them to read and the students' strategy use or lack thereof that identified during previous reading sessions. The mini-lesson began by stating the reading tool being taught and having students record the name of the tool in their blue folder. The tool was also identified on their good readers' tools page stapled to the inside to their blue folder. Following introducing the reading tool, I modeled how to use it when reading. After I modeled using the tool, the students helped me use the tool for shared practice. Then, the students were reminded that good readers use the tool when reading hoping they would then use the strategy

during the independent reading time. During reading, I observed their strategy use

making a note whether I needed to re-teach a strategy or move on to a new one. The

following is an example of a mini-lesson on using pictures to figure out an unknown

word, which I used as one of the first lessons in my tutorials.

Mini-Lesson - Use Pictures

Teacher – Today we are going to learn a new tool to figure out a word
when we get stuck. Good readers use pictures to help them
figure out words they don't know when they are reading. Can
any of you find this tool on your good readers' tools page?

Students – Identify Use Pictures on good readers' tools page.

Teacher – Good, let's all write Use Pictures under our Reading Tools in
our blue folder.

Students – Write Use Pictures under Reading Tools in individual blue
folders.

Teacher – Okay, I am going to show you how I would use pictures when I
get stuck. Then, after I show you, I will ask you to help me.
Are you going to help me the first time I read or the second?

Students – The second.

Teacher – (Teacher reads aloud text from a copied page from a book.
The page will have a picture on it. Teacher stops at a word
pretending to be stuck). Hmm, I don't know what this word is.
I am going to look at the picture. (Teacher looks at the picture
and then the word and then discovers the word.) The word
must be cat because the picture is of a cat. I am going to re-
read using cat and make sure it makes sense. (Teacher re-
reads).

Teacher/Students – Teacher repeats process with a new page from a book
reading aloud and getting stuck. This time the students look at
the picture and help the teacher figure out the word. Together,
teacher and students re-read the text making sure the word
makes sense.

Teacher – Now, when I get to a word and I get stuck. I just can't figure it
out. What can I do everyone?

All Students – (Choral response.) Use the pictures –

Following the fifteen minutes of making words and seven minutes of a mini-

lesson, the students separated into their reading groups. Two groups began pre-reading

activities while I introduced a book to the third group. During the introduction, I attempted to access the readers' background knowledge by asking them to predict what the book was about based on the title or a word I pulled from the text. Students made their predictions accessing their background knowledge. As they made their predictions, we entered into a conversation about the story, what it could be about, and any connections they had to the title or pictures. Students were often asked to reflect on their life or another text to initiate connections. Once I felt the group was ready to begin reading, I handed them the books and they began. I repeated this process two more times with the following two groups.

The pre-reading activities that the other two groups were doing while I introduced the book were designed to activate the students' prior knowledge, allow them to practice a new strategy, or familiarize themselves with the text. Such activities included: generating questions from an important illustration, predicting from an important illustration, taking a picture walk, searching for words in the book and looking at the pictures to define the word, practicing sight words, and working or manipulating words from the text. I designed these activities based on the book they were reading and the time they needed to be working before I introduced their book. These activities were independent and students were encouraged to ask each other before they ask me any questions.

After I introduced the book to the third group, I began my during-reading routine. During reading, I listened in on one or two students reading while all students read the texts independently. Christopher listened to a book on tape because he hadn't begun to

read independently. I took notes on the students' strategy use that I observed, and I coached them if they got stuck by asking them what reading tools they could use. Hopefully, this reminded them of our mini-lessons and they used a reading strategy to figure out the word. I only told them the word if they were completely stuck and wouldn't move on. During this time, I planned to take a Running Record with one of the two students I was observing. The during-reading time was my time to observe while the students independently read the text.

After reading, I discussed the book with the group prompting them with higher-level thinking questions. We discussed what they liked, any connections they made, any questions they had, and if they had a chance to use any reading tools. This, again, was meant to be a conversation between the students and me discussing the book and reflecting on the nature of the story. In literacy terms, I conducted a grand conversation. After our grand conversation, the group engaged in an after-reading activity I had designed for them, keeping in mind the students' academic level, language needs, and the nature of the book. After-reading activities included: creating a new ending, creating a new text using the story as a skeleton, creating a visual representation of the text through a graphic organizer, and making a time line of the text. After I started the first group on their after-reading activity, I moved to the next group, initiated a grand conversation and started them on a different after-reading activity. I repeated this process with the third group. If any group finished reading before I was ready, they were expected to reread the book for deeper understanding. The after-reading activity concluded the guided reading lesson.

The process of choosing a book, designing the mini-lesson, designing the before

reading and after reading activities, and conducting the guided reading hour was repeated

every time we met. We met three times a week for twelve weeks. Consequently, I

planned and designed one-hundred and eight separate guided reading lessons.

Redesigning My Management System

For the first two weeks of my guided reading tutorials, I relied purely on intrinsic

motivation to manage my small group of readers. I didn't anticipate any behavior issues

because I was working with such a small group. However, after about two weeks I was

overwhelmed with behavior problems. Although the Making Words portion of my after

school program was operating flawlessly, the guided reading portion was not. After

sitting through a 10-15 minute Making Words lesson, my students were restless during

the mini-lesson, constantly asking when they could go to read. Then, I started one group

with a book, but the other two groups would interrupt my book introduction with

questions on the pre-reading activities. When I finally finished the first book

introduction, I moved on to the next group to introduce the book. Then, both the third

group and the first group interrupted me. The third group interrupted me with questions

on the pre-reading activities, and the first group interrupted me because they were done

reading and wanted to discuss the book. I could never get around fast enough to

introduce all the books and be back in time before the first group finished reading much

less listen to them read or complete a Running Record. Consequently, I continuously had

students sitting around the table asking "What do I do now Miss Miller?" Students were

distracted and restless during the mini-lesson, interrupting me during guided reading, and often acting silly rather than completing their independent work.

Frustrated, I decided I needed to redesign my management system and rely on extrinsic motivation rather than intrinsic motivation. Consequently, we had a group discussion on behavior during reading and developed reading group rules. Students earned stars by following the reading group rules or by successfully completing the reading group tasks. Once the group earned twenty stars, we had a popcorn party. Once the group earned one hundred stars, we had a pizza party. The goal of the reading group rules and stars was to keep students focused and on task after a long day at school.

Redesigning my Teaching

After about two more weeks of instruction following the previous modification of my management system, I didn't notice significant improvement in my guided reading program. Now, my students were quietly restless during the mini-lesson, quietly confused during independent work, and I still couldn't get to all my students in a timely fashion. Perturbed, I presented my research progress to my class and was pleasantly surprised by their informed suggestions. One classmate suggested I use literacy centers as a new format making one station guided reading. Although much of my research in my literature review is on literacy centers, I never considered using the format for my after school program. With that suggestion, I redesigned my after school guided reading format.

After my frustrating first four weeks and dreary presentation, I was relieved to have had a new format suggested to me. Starting week five all the way through week

twelve, my guided reading group was set up as literacy centers based on Dorn and

Soffos's (2001) literacy corners. We still began with Making Words as a whole group,

but then we broke up into 3 centers: guided reading, listening center, and word sorting/re-

reading center. Each center lasted twenty minutes allowing all students to see me in

guided reading every day. The centers had clear jobs and students were able to work

independently unless they were in the guided reading group. After a clear explanation of

each center, my after school guided reading program began to run flawlessly.

In the listening center, students listened quietly to the book on tape. After they

were done listening, they choose their favorite part of the book, drew a picture of that

part, and wrote an explanation of why it was their favorite part. According to their levels,

explanations varied from one sentence to a paragraph. The listening center soon became

a favorite station.

In the word sorting and re-reading center, students sorted words from our Making

Words lesson. Students got a list of all the words used in the lesson and a paper with

categories for sorting on it. Then students either cut and glued the words below the

appropriate category or wrote the words below the appropriate category. The sorting

categories included beginning sound, ending sound, middle vowel sound, rhyming words,

short vowel sounds, long vowel sounds, and plural words. The word sorts were

explained, modeled, and discussed after the Making Words lesson, ensuring that students

could work independently when at that station. Following the completion of the word

sort, students re-read familiar books in their book folders. Students usually completed

their word sorting within ten minutes and had the remaining ten minutes to re-read books from previous guided reading lessons.

In the guided reading center, I began with rich introductory conversation accessing background knowledge and discussing connections. Then, we took a picture walk and discussed vocabulary words. If the vocabulary words in the text were not in the language bank of the reader, then I pre-taught some vocabulary using picture cards. After that, students read the book independently while I coached. After reading, we would have a grand conversation discussing the main idea of the book, key vocabulary, and any reading strategies used. Following our discussion and if time permitted, students re-read their book with a buddy. After twenty minutes, students finished what they were working on and rotated to the next center.

Although the guided reading center was designed to follow the typical guided reading format, I modified specific parts of the process for specific groups. The modifications were designed to meet my students' language needs and varied depending on the book, the students, and their language levels. Modifications included: choral reading of text before independent reading (primarily used for my lowest group), pre-teaching vocabulary using pictures and word/picture searches in books, using graphic organizers to visually represent the text, building background knowledge, activating prior knowledge, discussing the story using primary language, quietly reading aloud during independent reading, and using non-fiction texts to develop vocabulary. Additionally, I explicitly taught phonemic awareness and the alphabetic principle in Making Words lessons. By modifying my guided reading lessons to meet my students' language needs,

they were better able to access the content within the books and deepen their understanding.

Amazingly, the new design worked wonderfully for the remaining eight weeks. The students in the after school program became very independent in the literacy station and sorting center while always looking forward to reading with me. This allowed me to focus on the one group I was working with, permitting me to listen to students read, coach them to use their reading strategies, and take Running Records. Consequently, this new design of my after school guided reading group made my instruction more effective and my data collection more manageable.

Reflecting on My Decision to Redesign

As I reflect on my choice to redesign my management system and then my program, I realized that my behavior problems were a direct result of my teaching problems not my management system. My first inclination was to blame the students and try to control their behavior with extrinsic motivation, when what I needed to do was reflect on my teaching and make it more accessible to the students.

One major misconception I held through the course of my program was that a mini-lesson explicitly teaching cognitive strategies was part of the guided reading process. I held this misconception because Tompkins (2006), a textbook author, states that a mini-lesson is a part of the guided reading process. However, Fountas & Pinnell (1996) and Clay (1991a), two dominant authors/researchers in the guided reading field, clearly state that guided reading is an inquiry based approach where the reader is in the driver's seat and the teacher coaches. The inquiry base from which guided reading is

designed would be interfered with by an explicitly taught mini-lesson. Additionally, mini-lessons are intended for reading workshop, where a heterogeneous group of students participate in the explicitly taught lesson discussing the cognitive strategy and scaffolding the academic language for those students who may not have access to the abstract language. In guided reading, students are grouped homogeneously eliminating the language scaffolding needed to participate in an abstract mini-lesson. When reflecting on my mini-lessons during the first four weeks of my program, I realized my students' restlessness and silly behavior was telling me the mini-lesson was developmentally inappropriate for my homogeneous guided reading group.

When I redesigned my program, I dropped the mini-lesson. At that point in time, I didn't know I misunderstood the guided reading format, but I felt that the mini-lesson wasn't natural. It was more natural to discuss the students' background knowledge, connections, and predictions during the introduction and follow the introductory conversation with independent reading. After reading, we discussed the main ideas of the book, further connections, and any strategies they found helpful when reading. The teaching point at the end of the lesson naturally replaced the mini-lesson at the beginning of the lesson. Although I didn't immediately realize the power of my new format, I found that my students' participation increased and I rarely had to re-direct them.

Additionally, after redesigning the format of my guided reading program by implementing literacy centers, students were able to work independently at their stations rarely interrupting our guided reading group. When reflecting on this drastic improvement, I came to realize that the tasks I was asking my reading group to complete

during the first four weeks were abstract, unclear, pre-reading activities. On the other hand, my literacy centers were clearly modeled, review tasks that encouraged students to apply and transfer their knowledge. According to Dorn and Soffos (2001), literacy corners should be designed for automaticity and transfer of knowledge. Consequently, once my literacy centers were designed with developmentally appropriate tasks, my reading group's engagement and productivity increased. Once I eliminated the abstract mini-lesson from my guided reading format and my students were able to successfully complete tasks independently in the literacy centers, I found I often forgot about my extrinsic rewards and considered them more of an inconvenience rather than a management tool.

When thinking back to my choice to redesign my management system before rethinking my teaching, I realized that I tried to control my students' behaviors with extrinsic rewards rather than using their behavior as a communication that my teaching was inappropriate and inaccessible. Additionally, after researching different theorists' thoughts on extrinsic rewards, I found that they stifle creativity, erode intrinsic motivation, and damage student interest (Brandt, 1995). When reflecting on how I could have relied on intrinsic motivation rather than extrinsic motivation, I feel I could have discussed the larger issue of attending the after school program: a desire to read, a love for reading, or a need to be a literate adult. Then, I could have relied on the book introduction and appealing nature of the book to intrinsically motivate students during guided reading. Also, I could have relied on interesting tasks in the literacy centers to maintain intrinsic motivation and engagement. If there were moments when I needed to

redirect students, I could have used their behavior as a communication tool and a gateway to reflect on our larger issue of attending the program. Although I didn't rely on intrinsic motivation to maintain engagement, I found that once the tasks were interesting and developmentally appropriate, students were naturally engaged; and my extrinsic rewards became an inconvenient afterthought. In the future, as a foundation for my management system, I will use my students' natural desire to find out as a management tool; I will view my students' behavior as a communication device rather than a problem; and I will rethink my teaching and task design rather than rethink my management system.

Data Collection

As stated previously, I chose to use Marie Clay's Observation Survey for my pre-assessment, post-assessment, and ongoing assessments. Marie Clay's Observation Survey includes six tasks which are thoroughly explained in the literature review. The Observation Survey tasks include: Letter Identification, Running Record, Writing Vocabulary, Word Reading, Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words, and Concepts About Print. I pulled students from class during the day to assess them using the observation tasks. During this time, I worked with one student at a time and she completed all six tasks before returning to the classroom. I used a translator when assessing Clementine to ensure she understood the task. Once all six students were assessed, I completed my pre-assessments. These assessments helped me determine their instructional reading level for guided reading, their concepts about print, their phonemic awareness, their understanding of the alphabetic principle, and what they were using and confusing within the written English language. All of this information assisted me when

I formed leveled groups, and it set the beginning point to which I compared the post-assessment.

During the twelve week guided reading program, I used two observation tasks as ongoing assessments: Running Records and the Writing Vocabulary. I took Running Records during my guided reading lessons as I listened to a student read. If that student read at 95% accuracy or higher, then the book was too easy and the student needed to move up a level. If the student's accuracy rate was between 90% - 94%, then the student was reading at her instructional level and should continue reading at that level until her accuracy rate increased. Finally, if a student's accuracy rate was below 90%, then the book was too hard. Running Records allowed me to group and regroup my students according to their reading levels as well as increase their reading level ensuring they were always reading at their instructional level. The Writing Vocabulary was administered approximately once every four weeks in a whole group setting. Students were given ten minutes to write down as many words as they could. If they got stuck, I suggested categories of words and prompted them to keep writing. This task provided me with a baseline of each student's writing abilities. These two observations tasks served as my ongoing assessments.

In addition to the two observation tasks used as ongoing assessments, I collected my thoughts in a teacher journal. I used this journal during guided reading sessions. I dated the top of the journal and then labeled each entry with the student's name as I jotted down what I noticed. I took notes on the readers' problem solving strategies, fluency, and ability to demonstrate their comprehension during the grand conversation. When

planning for the upcoming lesson, I always referred back to the journal and used it as a guide to inform my practice. For example, I began to notice Elizabeth's fluency was choppy and she often re-read sentences and words many times. In grad conversations, it was clear that her choppy fluency didn't hinder her comprehension, but it did cause her to read much slower than her group-mates. After noticing several entries in my teacher journal about Elizabeth's choppy fluency, I began directing my teaching to address her struggle. The teacher journal was an ongoing assessment where I recorded what I noticed including students' strategy use, fluency, and comprehension.

Following the completion of the guided reading program, I conducted a post-assessment using the same six observation tasks I used in the pre-assessment. Again, I pulled students from class to individually complete all six tasks. When one student was done, I pulled the next student. I continued pulling students until all six completed the observation tasks. Once I finished the post-assessment, I had collected all the data necessary for my data analysis.

Data Analysis

Following the completion of the twelve-week guided reading program and all assessments that accompanied the program, I chose to use T-charts and graphs to show student gains and assist me in analyzing my quantitative data, while I summarized common themes when analyzing my qualitative data, my teacher journal. The T-charts were used to compare the students' pre-assessments with their post-assessment. Two T-charts were used to represent student gains for each task; one using raw data from the pre and post assessments, and one using Marie Clay's stanine group scores. A stanine group

is a table created by Marie Clay to allow teachers to compare a child's performance with the normed scores of other children in that same age group (Clay, 2005). If a child scores at stanine group 5, he or she is scoring with the norm. If the child scores higher than stanine group 5, he or she is scoring above average; and if the child scores lower than stanine group 5, he or she is scoring below average. A line graph was used to demonstrate the change in their reading levels over time and the change in their Writing Vocabulary over time. Additionally, a bar graph was used to summarize student gains. The T-charts and graphs were separated by observation task and labeled with each student's name. Each T-chart also includes average scores, which were calculated using the mean of all students' scores. Finally, I summarized my teacher journal noting common themes and gains over time. I looked for common entries among students and then analyzed the entry for possible growth. The aforementioned charts, graphs, and summaries assisted me in analyzing the possible gains in the participating students' reading levels, literacy levels, problem solving strategies, and, essentially, the possible influence the program had on such levels.

When analyzing the data from tasks 1 - 4, Concepts About Print, Letter Identification, Word Reading, and Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words, I recorded the pre-assessment raw score, the post-assessment raw score, and then the change in scores. The change in scores was obtained by subtracting the higher score from the lower score. If the higher score was the post-assessment score, then I recorded a positive change. If the higher score was the pre-assessment score, then I recorded a negative change. For example, if a student scored a 10 on a pre-assessment and a 15 on a post-

assessment, then the change in score would be recorded as +5. If that same student

scored a 30 on a different pre-assessment and a 28 on the post-assessment for that same

task, then the change in score would be -2. Then, I looked at the change in score to see if

there was a positive change, which would demonstrate growth. In addition, I averaged

the pre-assessment scores and the post-assessment scores of tasks 1-4 and then found the

average change of the group. The average was determined using the mean and the

change in score was determined the same way each individual change in score was

determined. This same process was repeated for the stanine group scores of each task.

By including a change in score column with each T-chart, I was better able to see how

scores increased or decreased over the course of the program. Additionally, by including

the stanine group scores, I was better able to see how my participants' scores compared to

national norms.

When analyzing the data from task 5, Writing Vocabulary, I entered the scores

into an Excel spreadsheet and used Excel's chart wizard to produce a line graph of the

students' scores. I chose a line graph because it is typically used to show change over

time and I wanted to show my students' Writing Vocabulary scores and how they

changed over the twelve week program. If the line makes a continuous incline from left

to right, then the student's scores continually increased. If the line makes a continuous

decline from left to right, then the student's scores continually decreased. Basically, any

incline from left to right shows and increase in scores, growth, and any decline from left

to right shows a decrease in scores, regression. The line graph provides a visual

representation of the students' Writing Vocabulary scores and how they changed over the twelve week program.

When analyzing the data from task 6, Running Records, I, again, entered the data into an Excel spreadsheet and used Excel's chart wizard to produce a line graph of the students' reading levels and how they changed over time. I followed the same analysis of the line that I did for the Writing Vocabulary, but for this graph there were also horizontal lines. A horizontal line shows no change, or students were reading at the same level that they had the week before. If the line showed an incline from left to right, then students' reading levels increased, and if the line shows a decline from left to right, then students' reading levels decreased. The Running Record line graph provided me with a visual representation of the students' reading levels and how they changed over time.

Additionally, I compared the students' reading levels with what a normal reader is expected to gain over the course of the year according to the Developmental Reading Assessment, DRA. The DRA provides the assessor with benchmark levels, meaning what level a student should be reading at the end of the year. Kindergartners begin reading at Level A and their benchmark book level is level 6. First grade levels range from 6-16, second grade levels range from 16-24, and third grade levels range from 24-30. First graders are expected to make the most growth in reading levels and then as the levels get higher, the expectation to increase levels decreases. The lower levels are easier to go through, and as the levels get higher, it gets more difficult to move from one level to the next. Consequently, a normal third grader is only expected to increase his reading level by six levels during his third grade year, while a normal first graders is expected to

increase her reading level by ten during her first grade year. When I analyzed my participants' reading level growth over the twelve week period, I compared their growth to that of a normal reader beginning at the same level. For example, if a reader began reading a level 6 book and then over the course of the twelve week intervention increased her reading level to a level twenty, then her growth was greater than that expected of a normal reader during one year. If a different child started the intervention at a level 7 and increased his level to a level 10, then that would be less than what a normal reader would be expected to do over the course of a year. The reading level benchmarks allowed me to compare how much a normal reader is expected to grow in one year with how much my participants grew.

Additionally, I used a bar graph to show an average of overall literacy growth. I entered the average pre-assessment and post-assessment scores of each task into an Excel spreadsheet, and use Excel's chart wizard to produce a bar graph. The bar graph provides me with a visual representation of the overall literacy growth on average by those participating in the reading group. If the bars increased from pre-assessment to post-assessment, then they represented growth. If the bars decreased from pre-assessment to post-assessment, then they demonstrated regression. The observation survey bar graph demonstrates the general literacy development on average of the participants from pre-assessment to post-assessment.

Finally, I analyzed my teacher journal by searching for common themes, categorizing the themes, and looking for growth within the themes. I read through each entry and highlighted parts that specifically assessed each student's literacy knowledge. I

used a different color highlighter for each student. Then, I organized each student's comments by common themes. I created five literacy categories based on the commonalities I found in my note taking. The five common themes include: problem solving words, fluency, prompts responded to, making connections, and comprehension. After that, I analyzed each student's comments looking for areas of struggle and areas of growth. I highlighted powerful entries and then paraphrased my observations and summarized my findings. I wrote summaries paraphrasing each student's struggles and growth over the course of the twelve week program. Each summary addressed all five common themes, analyzing where they started in week one, how they progressed over the course of the twelve week program, and what they were doing in week twelve. My teacher journal was my qualitative data that would demonstrate growth over time.

When looking for entries that demonstrated growth, I followed the following criteria in analyzing each category. For problem solving a word, there are three things a reader can attend to: meaning, syntax, and visual. Meaning pertains to the story making sense, syntax pertains to the way the words are put together and if it makes sense in the English language, and visual pertains to any visual information the reader can be attending to including letters, words, and pictures. If a reader is attending to all three sources, then the reader is likely to problem solve the word. If the reader only attends to one or two sources of information, then she may not be able to accurately read the story (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). I looked through my entries to see what each reader was attending to in a given week. Fluency refers to the reader's ability to read the text fluently. If the reader is reading aloud and it sounds like he is talking, the reader is

reading fluently. If the reader continually has to stop to problem solve, re-read, or just reads choppily, the reader is not reading fluently. I looked for entries that referred to how the student's reading sounded aloud. The third category, prompts responded to, refers to the prompts I made that the student responded to when she got stuck during reading. When a student got stuck and I prompted her, did she successfully solve the word? If she did, she was developing her problem solving strategies and would hopefully be able to apply that strategy without a prompt in the future. I looked through my entries to see what prompts students were responding to. The fourth category, making connections, refers to when the book reminds the reader of something. The easiest connection a reader can make is a text to self connection, when something in the book reminds the reader of something in his life. A text to world connection is when something in the text reminds the reader of something in the world and is the next step in making connections. The most sophisticated connection is the text to text connection, when something from the current text reminds the reader of something from a previous text. If a reader is making all three connections, then he is thinking at a higher level than the reader who only makes the text to self connections or text to world connections. Finally, the comprehension category refers to any notes taken on student comprehension including ability to retell the story, discuss the story, and demonstrate understanding of the story. I organized my entries by highlighting the ones that pertained to assessing, sorted them by student and common theme, and then paraphrased and summarized each student's entries. The summaries provide a clear and short analysis of the students' strategy use, fluency,

prompts responded to, connections, and comprehension as they developed over the course of the twelve-week program.

In conclusion, for my quantitative data, the observation survey, I depended on t-charts, line graphs, and bar graphs to demonstrate growth and regression during the twelve week period. Additionally, I relied on the average scores and the calculation of the change in scores to assist in determining how much growth occurred. I also used the DRA benchmark levels to determine how much a normal reader should grow during a given year to provide a norm that I could compare the participants' growth in reading levels to. Finally, for my qualitative research, my teacher journal, I paraphrased and summarized my entries focusing on five literacy categories and searching for common entries and areas of growth within my teacher journal.

CHAPTER 4

Findings

Results and Discussion

The results of my study are represented below either by a T-chart, graph, or summary. Each chart or graph is then followed by a discussion directly addressing the results of the task. The summaries serve as the results and discussion of the teacher journal. Following the summary of the teacher journal discussion, there is an overall discussion which considers the overall results of the study.

Task 1: Concepts About Print Scores - Results

Table 2. *Concepts About Print Raw Scores*

Name	Pre-Assessment	Post-Assessment	Change in Score
Yvonne	21/24	23/24	+2
Elizabeth	24/24	24/24	0
Clementine	19/24	23/24	+4
Sarah	20/24	21/24	+1
Rachael	22/24	24/24	+2
Average (Mean)	21. 2/24	23/24	+1. 8

Table 3. *Concepts About Print Stanine Group Scores*

Name	Pre-Assessment	Post-Assessment	Change in Group
Yvonne	6	7	+1
Elizabeth	8-9	8-9	0
Clementine	5	7	+2
Sarah	5	6	+1
Rachael	7	8-9	+1
Average (Mean)	6	7	+1

Discussion. The Concepts About Print task shows the teacher how much each

student understands how printed language works in the English language (Clay, 2005).

When looking at the table of scores, it is apparent that most of the students in my reading

group already had a strong sense of how printed language works in the English language.

This could possibly be because I was working with third graders, who had been around

printed language, books, and school for at least three years. After working in the group

for 12 weeks, all students' scores that could increase did. Elizabeth's scored perfect in

the pre-assessment leaving no room for growth in the post-assessment. Although there

weren't large increases in scores, the last few items are the toughest concepts making any

small increase important. These increases showed that the students' understanding of

how printed language works did grow over the program period.

Task 2: Letter I.D. (Letter Names)- Results

The Letter Identification observation task provides the assessor with knowledge of student's preferred way of identifying letters, which letters the student is using and confusing, which letters the student doesn't know, and how the student responds to the task. Marie Clay suggests scoring the Letter Identification by giving one point to each Letter Identified whether given a name, sound, or word beginning in that letter (Clay, 2005). However, I found that nearly all the students in my reading group knew the letter names and identified the letters by their names. I felt it was important for me to assess their letter-sound correspondence as well given that all the students in my group were ELs and most likely would confuse letter sounds before they would confuse letter names. In both the pre-assessment and post-assessment, I asked all students to identify the letter by the name and sound. For the Letter Identification name portion, I had students identify all 54 characters including 26 lower case letters, 26 upper case letters, and the typed form of a and g. However, once nearly all students successfully identified all 54 characters by name, I only asked them to identify the 26 lower case by sound. I felt having them identify all 54 letters by sound would be redundant. I found the scores very interesting.

Table 4. *Letter Identification (Names) Raw Scores*

Name	Pre-Assessment	Post-Assessment	Change in Score
Yvonne	53/54	54/54	+1
Elizabeth	54/54	54/54	0
Clementine	54/54	54/54	0
Sarah	54/54	54/54	0
Rachael	54/54	54/54	0
Average (Mean)	54	54	+.2

Table 5. *Letter Identification (Names) Stanine Group Scores*

Name	Pre-Assessment	Post-Assessment	Change in Score
Yvonne	5	6-9	+1
Elizabeth	6-9	6-9	0
Clementine	6-9	6-9	0
Sarah	6-9	6-9	0
Rachael	6-9	6-9	0
Average (Mean)	6-9	6-9	+.2

Table 6. *Letter Identification (Sounds) Raw Scores*

Name	Pre-Assessment	Post-Assessment	Change in Score
Yvonne	16/26	24/26	+8
Elizabeth	21/26	26/26	+5
Clementine	11/26	21/26	+10
Sarah	26/26	26/26	0
Rachael	22/26	26/26	+4
Average (Mean)	19	25	+5.4

Note. Given that Marie Clay does not recommend scoring letter sounds, she does not offer any stanine group tables to compare data. I did notice letter sound knowledge gains in every student who had the possibility to increase her score.

Discussion. In the Letter Identification (names) portion of the task, all but one student knew the names of the letters in the alphabet. In the post-assessment, all students knew the letter names. This portion of the task didn't really provide me with very much information. As third graders, it would be expected that they know all the letter names. What I found most valuable about this task is the letter sound portion. I asked each student to identify a sound that belonged to the letter. If they provided me with any sound the letter made, then I marked the sound correct. At the pre-assessment, only Sarah could match a sound to each letter. Yvonne, Elizabeth, Clementine, and Rachael all struggled with vowel sounds and less regular consonant sounds. After listening to their pre-assessment with sounds, I determined that many were using and confusing vowel sounds. This pre-assessment was a major factor in my implementation of Making Words during the program. Most notable is the increase in number of sounds known at

the end of the program. Now, three of the five students can match a sound to each letter, Yvonne was almost there, and Clementine knew ten more sounds than she did at the beginning of the guided reading group. Overall, it is apparent that all students who could increase their letter-sound knowledge drastically increased their knowledge of letters.

Task 3: Word Reading Score Sheet - Results

Table 7. *Word Reading Raw Scores*

Name	Pre-Assessment	Post-Assessment	Change in Score
Yvonne	15/15	15/15	0
Elizabeth	14/15	15/15	+1
Clementine	5/15	15/15	+10
Sarah	7/15	14/15	+7
Rachael	14/15	15/15	+1
Average (Mean)	11/15	15/15	+3.8

Table 8. *Word Reading Stanine Group Scores*

Name	Pre-Assessment	Post-Assessment	Change in Score
Yvonne	6-9	6-9	0
Elizabeth	5	6-9	+1
Clementine	2	6-9	+4
Sarah	2	5	+3
Rachael	5	6-9	+1
Average (Mean)	4	6-9	+1.8

Discussion. The Reading Words observation task is a standardized word test

designed to quantify a student's reading success based on the principle of sampling as a

measurement strategy (Clay, 2005). In pre-assessments, Yvonne correctly read all fifteen

words, making no room for gains. Both Rachael and Elizabeth were able to increase their

score by one to record a perfect score which moved them from stanine group 5, average

when compared with the norm, to an above average score grouping them in stanine

groups 6-9. Most remarkable is Clementine's and Sarah's increases in words read

correctly. Clementine read ten more words than she had previously and Sarah read seven

more words than she had previously moving both girls' scores from below average, when

compared with the norm, to average or above average. Overall, it is evident that the

students' reading vocabulary increased over the course of the program.

Task 4: Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words – Results

Table 9. Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words Raw Scores

Name	Pre-Assessment	Post-Assessment	Change in Score
Yvonne	37/37	36/37	-1
Elizabeth	35/37	37/37	+2
Clementine	26/37	36/37	+10
Sarah	23/37	34/37	+11
Rachael	36/37	37/37	+1
Average (Mean)	31	36	+4.6

Table 10. *Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words Stanine Group Scores*

Name	Pre-Assessment	Post-Assessment	Change in Score
Yvonne	6-9	5	-1
Elizabeth	4	6-9	+2
Clementine	2	5	+3
Sarah	2	4	+2
Rachael	5	6-9	+1
Average (Mean)	4	5	+1.4

Discussion. Hearing Sounds in Words is designed to show teachers the students' level of phonemic awareness and understanding of the alphabetic principal. All students except for Yvonne recorded gains in their phonemic awareness and alphabetic principle. When analyzing Yvonne's assessment, she recorded him as "hem" causing her to miss one point and drop a stanine group. It seems as though Yvonne is using and confusing her e's and i's making it hard for her to differentiate the sounds. Those two sounds are some of the last sounds children can differentiate (Cunningham & Hall, 1994). Both Sarah and Clementine increased their scores notably, moving from below average scores to average and nearly average scores when compared with the norm. Both girls used and confused their vowels when writing as well. This will definitely be a next step when working with Yvonne, Sarah, and Clementine. Apparently, Elizabeth and Rachael were able to correct their few mistakes from their pre-assessment scoring perfectly on their post-assessment putting them in the above average stanine group. Generally, the scores

from this task show an increase in phonemic awareness and alphabetic principle possibly influenced by the guided reading tutorials.
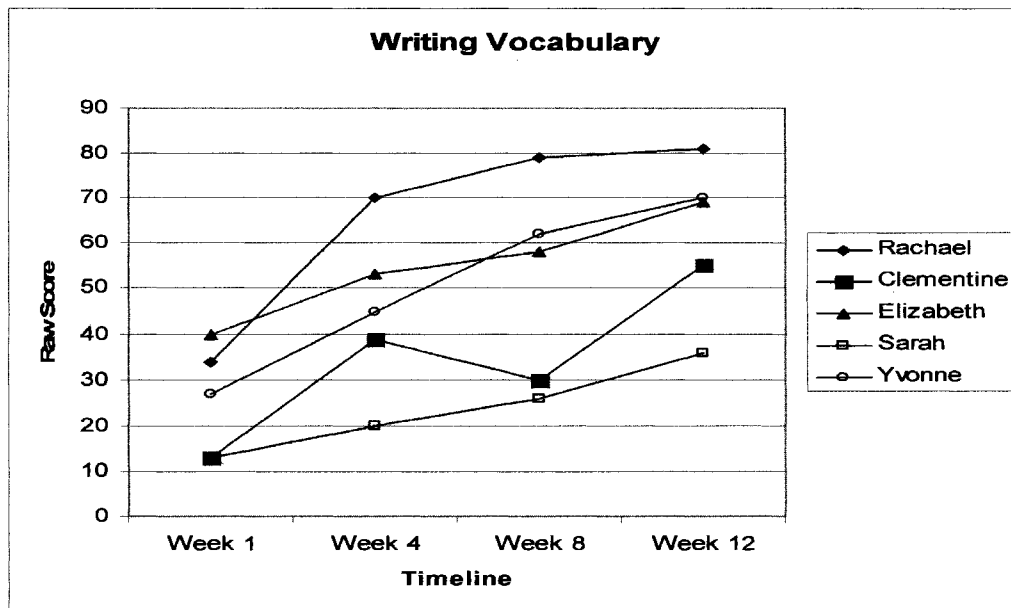
Task 5: Writing Vocabulary – Results
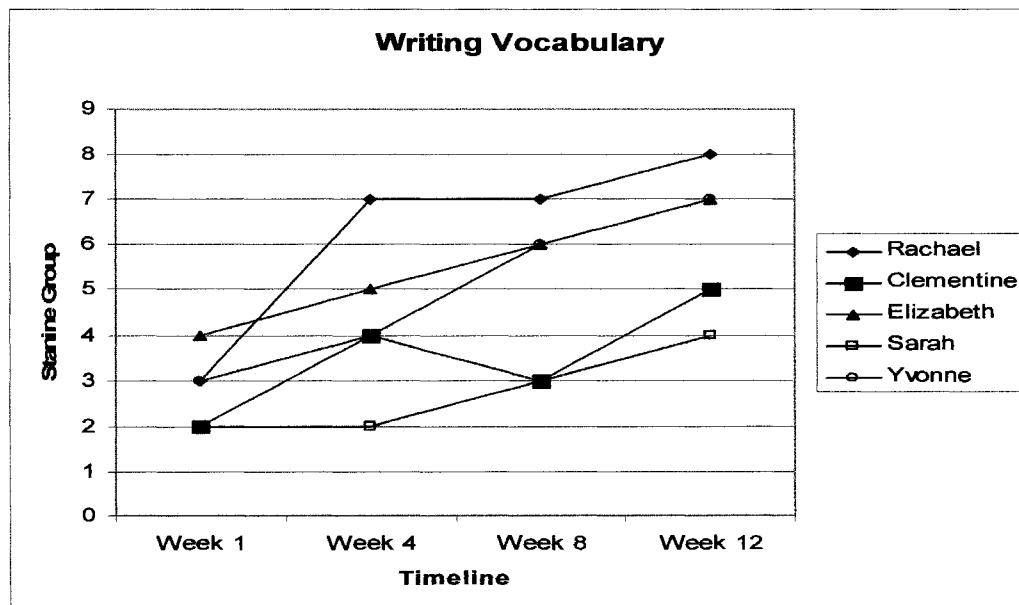

Figure 1. Writing Vocabulary Raw Scores

Figure 2. Writing Vocabulary Stanine Group Scores

Discussion. The Writing Vocabulary task is designed to provide the teacher with a picture of what the student knows. This is a sample of their knowledge of the universe written down on paper (Clay, 2005). All students except Clementine showed steady growth in the correctly spelled words recorded on their Writing Vocabularies over time. Clementine showed growth from the pre-assessment to the post-assessment, but scored lower in week eight than she did in week four. This decrease in productivity could possibly be from the stress on time she felt during week eight. Unlike the previous assessments, in week eight I set the timer on the table by where the students were writing. I thought this might encourage some students to write more words. I didn't consider the stress this might cause until after I had done it. Clementine frequently looked up at the timer and it seemed to slow her down. I didn't set the timer on the table in week twelve and all students' scores increased. Over the course of the guided reading program, students' writing scores drastically increased, demonstrating their expanding knowledge of their universe. Rachael, Yvonne, and Elizabeth went from below average Writing Vocabulary scores, to above average scores increasing between three and five stanine groups. Clementine increased her score from a stanine group 2 score, far below average, to a stanine group 5 score, average. And, Sarah increased her score from a stanine group 2 score, fare below average, to a stanine group 4 score, almost average. These notable increases in Writing Vocabulary scores demonstrate the students' expanding knowledge of their universe and ability to accurately record that knowledge.
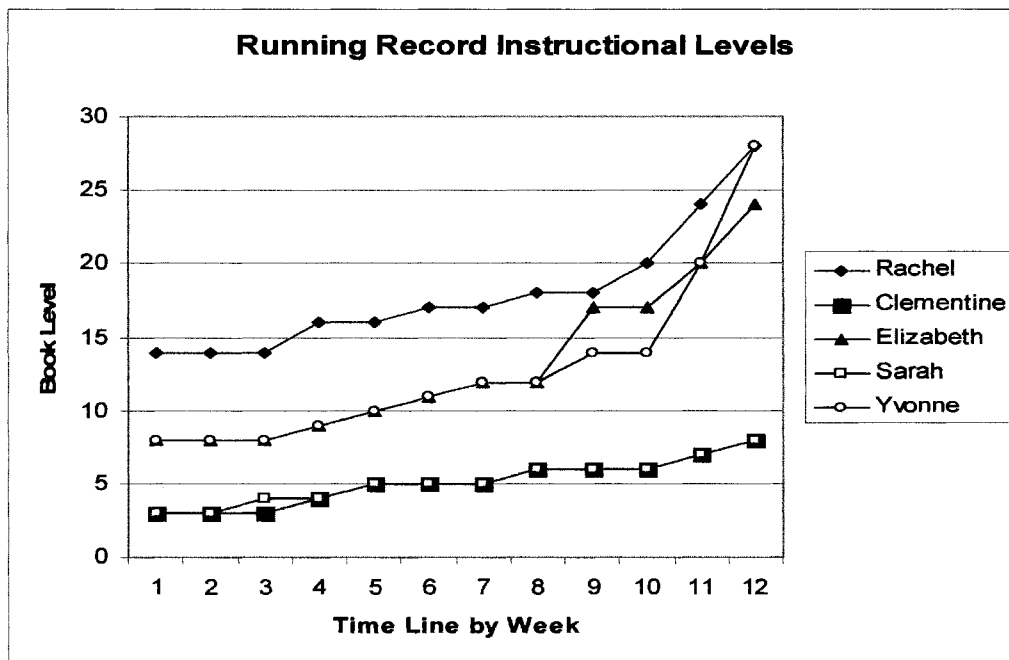
Task 6: Running Records- Results

Running Record Instructional Levels

Book Level

Time Line by Week

Legend:
- Rachel
- Clementine
- Elizabeth
- Sarah
- Yvonne

Figure 3. Running Record Instructional Levels Over Time

Discussion. The Running Record is the final observation task I used when assessing my students' literacy knowledge. The Running Record provided me with the instructional reading level of the student, as well as the problem solving strategies the student was using and the information the reader was attending to. This graph only represents the students increase in instructional reading levels over time because the problem solving strategies and information the reader was attending to were recorded in my teacher journal and are discussed in the summaries of my journal. The instructional reading level is the at level which students are able to read at when provided with some support. Their independent reading level is usually one to two levels below their instructional reading level (Clay, 2005). As the program progressed, all students' reading levels increased. Over the course of a school year, a normal third grader goes from level

24-28, a normal second grader goes from level 16-24, a normal first grader goes from level 6-16, and a normal kindergartner goes from level A-6. Considering the normal growth of a student over the course of a school year, I looked at each student's reading gains.

Sarah began reading at a level 3 and by the end of the program she was reading a level 8. Sarah increased 5 levels in twelve week, which is more than a normal third grader would over the course of a year, but less than a normal kindergarten, first, or second grader would over the course of a year. One thing to keep in mind with Sarah is that she is in the Resource Specialist Program, which is a form of special education. In Sarah's IEP, her goal reading level was first grade text. When she started my program, she was reading kindergartengarten-level texts. Now, she is reading first grade texts. Sarah has met her IEP goal, but she still has a long way to go to meet grade-level standards.

Clementine increased 5 levels as well, which again is more than a normal third grader, but less than a normal kindergartner, first, or second grader. Clementine began reading at a level 3 and twelve weeks later, at the post-assessment she successfully read a level 8. Clementine came to our classroom speaking only Spanish. For Clementine to increase her reading level by 5 is incredible considering her language background.

Elizabeth began my reading program reading a level 8 text, but by post-assessments she was reading successfully at a level 24. Between weeks eight and weeks eleven, she made noteworthy increases in her reading levels making me wonder if I had started her too low or if she had performed below her potential during pre-assessments.

Considering Elizabeth doesn't have any appropriate books at her house, she may have just been a little rusty reading at the beginning of the year. Either way, Elizabeth increased her reading level by 16 in twelve weeks, an astounding accomplishment way above what a normal student would achieve in the course of the year. Elizabeth went from reading at the beginning of first grade to reading at the beginning of third grade in twelve weeks!

Yvonne began my guided reading group reading at a level 8 as well, and by week twelve she was reading a level 28. Yvonne made steady increases in her reading levels from week one through week ten. Then, in week eleven and week twelve, she made drastic increases successfully reading at level 28 during post-assessments. One obvious observation I made during the course of working with Yvonne was that her vocabulary was developing. I believe that vocabulary development in class, after school, and at home may have assisted in her reading gains. Consequently, Yvonne's reading levels increased by 20 over the course of the twelve week guided reading program surpassing any normal reading gains expected of students during the course of a year. Yvonne went from reading at the beginning of first grade to the reading at the middle of third grade in twelve weeks!

Rachael began my after-school program reading at a level 14, the highest level in the group. Over the course of the twelve week program she increased her reading level by 14, successfully reading a level 28 during post assessments. With Rachael, I focused on vocabulary development and comprehension. By week 12, Rachael was able to retell to me any story she read and successfully discuss the main ideas of the story, the

characters, and the overall lesson. Rachael went from reading near the end of first grade

to reading at the middle of third grade in twelve weeks. Rachael's reading level increase

surpassed any normal reading increase expected of a reader over the course of a year.

Furthermore, both Yvonne and Rachael met mid-year grade level standards by reading at

level 28, which is the mid-year benchmark book for third graders. Over the course of the

twelve week reading program, all students made noteworthy gains.
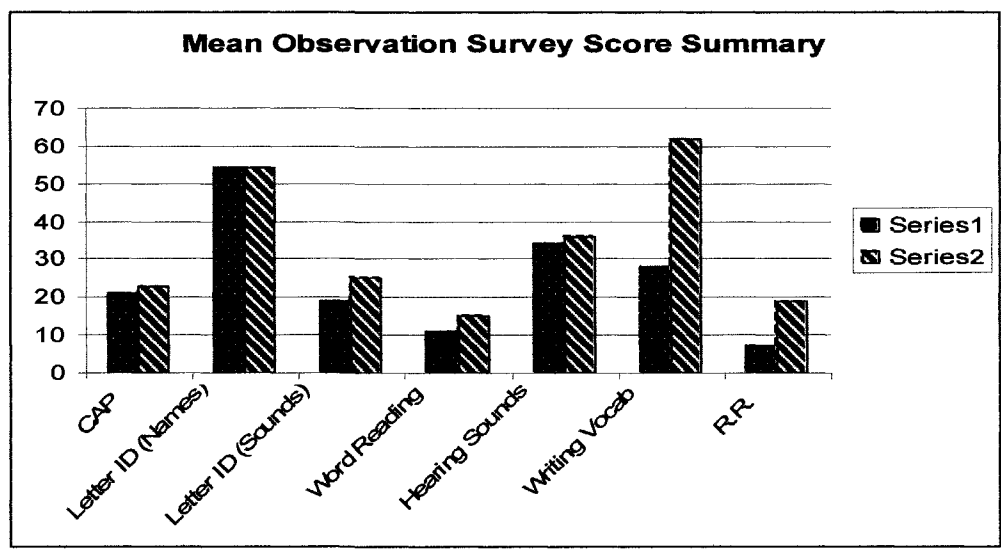
Summary of Observation Tasks – Results

Mean Observation Survey Score Summary

Figure 4. Mean Observation Survey Score Summary

Discussion. The Observation Survey Average Score Summary provides a clear

view of the average increase of the students' literacy knowledge. This bar graph provides

a visual representation of the mean pre- and post-assessment scores. Series 1 shows the

pre-assessment scores and Series 2 shows the post-assessment scores. The graph

illustrates that all students' task scores increased over the course of the twelve-week

guided reading program except for the Letter Identification (Names) task, where the

students hit the ceiling in the pre-assessment. The most notable gains were in the Writing

Vocabulary and Running Record scores. Over the course of the twelve-week program, on average, students increased their scores by thirty-four. As Clay (2005) states, the Writing Vocabulary provides the teacher with a window into a student's knowledge of their universe. Students in the after school program more than doubled the ability to record their knowledge of their universe. Additionally, on average, students in the twelve-week program increased their Running Record level from a seven to a nineteen. Students went from reading at the beginning of first grade to reading at the middle of second grade, more than a year's expected increase in twelve weeks. Thus, the Observation Survey Average Sore Summary graph illustrates the remarkable gains the participants made over the short, twelve-week program.

Overall, the Observation Survey provided me with a clear view on each student's literacy knowledge. All students' literacy knowledge increased over the course of the twelve-week guided reading program. Some students made notable gains in their reading levels while other students made noteworthy gains in their phonemic awareness, letter-sound correspondence, or vocabulary development. Consequently, although we cannot state that these improvements were directly linked to my guided reading program, it is possible that this program influenced their literacy knowledge.

Teacher Journal Summaries

Sarah

Sarah began the after school tutorials reading at a level 4. When reading, Sarah often got stuck when she came to a word she couldn't decode. The only problem solving strategy Sarah had access to was decoding, but she wasn't very successful decoding.

Sarah knew all the letter sounds, but she couldn't decode blends or diagraphs and she didn't know what to do with silent Es. She seemed to think that she should be able to decode anything phonetically and she would stop and appeal if she couldn't. When I would prompt her with "Does that make sense?" she would try to decode again and the appeal again. If I prompted her to look at the picture, then she would substitute a word that made sense completely disregarding the letters used to form the word. For example, when Sarah was reading Sally and the Daisy, she got stuck on daisy. She tried to sound it out, "d – a – i – s – y," but couldn't figure the word out. When I asked her if it made sense, she shook her head and tried to decode it again, unsuccessfully. Then, I prompted her to look at the picture. She immediately decided that it had to be flower because it made sense and it was in the picture and she kept on reading. During this time in Sarah's reading, she struggled with fluency because she continually stopped to decode, appeal, and decode again. She would get stuck and not want to move on until she figured out the word. Amazingly, this struggle didn't seem to hinder her comprehension. Before reading, she frequently made many text-to-self connections and always seemed to have lots of background knowledge to support her. At the end of the story, she was consistently successful in discussing the story with me, demonstrating her understanding. Often, I made notes that intellectually the books were too easy for her. Sarah was struggling with the reading process; she was struggling to attend to all sources of information when problem solving a word. But, reading at a level 4, she was not struggling to comprehend.

As Sarah continued through the program, she began to attend to more information. She soon began to be able to decode blends and recognize silent Es. Additionally, when I prompted her with "Does that make sense?" or "What would make sense?" I often noted that she was attending to both the picture and the letters. Sarah was adding to her problem solving strategies as she moved through the levels. Sarah was still making many text-to-self connections and was now sometimes making text-to-text connections. By the end of the twelve weeks, Sarah was reading a level eight, which she found to be much more stimulating with real plot lines instead of repeated phrases. Sarah was attending to most visual information and meaning and she was better able to monitor herself. Additionally, she was less likely to appeal to me both because she was making fewer errors, and because she had acquired some problem solving strategies. Sarah's fluency was much better and she was getting stuck on fewer and fewer words. Overall, Sarah still had a long way to go to reach grade level, but with the problem solving strategies she developed, the confidence she strengthened, and the connections she was making, she was definitely moving in the right direction.

Clementine

Clementine began the guided reading tutorials reading at a level 4 in English, but was fluent in Spanish. When reading, she was often able to decode most of the words but seemed to understand very little. If she got stuck on a word, she would decode the word and then appeal, whether she decoded it successfully or unsuccessfully. She didn't have enough language to connect the written word to her knowledge of the world. Without the language to support her, she struggled to problem solve words. When she would get

stuck, I would prompt her with "What do you think it is?" She would often point to the picture and often she was correct. When I'd ask her what it was, she would shrug demonstrating she didn't know the word. If I asked her what it was in Spanish, she would immediately reply. For example, when Clementine was reading Kitty and the Bird she got stuck on bird. She sounded it out /b/ /E/ /r/ /d/ and then appealed. She was confusing the i sound in English with the i sound in Spanish. I prompted her, "What do you think it is?" She pointed to the bird in the picture. I asked her what it was and she shrugged. "What is it in Spanish," I asked. She replied, "pájaro." Then, I showed her how to sound it out in English and told her it was bird. Often, during this time in Clementine's language development, I used picture cards to pre-teach vocabulary words before she read. Clementine's fluency was choppy and slow during this time, but her background knowledge was strong. When I introduced a book, I would speak in English and she would respond in Spanish. She made lots of text-to-self connections and after reading she was able to discuss parts of the story. She used the pictures to build her English vocabulary which helped her comprehend.

As the weeks went by, Clementine's language began to develop, which gave her more access when reading. Supported by the Making Words lessons, Clementine was beginning to differentiate English vowel sounds and Spanish vowel sounds, which allowed her to be more successful when decoding. As her language knowledge expanded, she began attending to the meaning of the text, looking at the pictures to make sure what she was reading made sense. Often I noted when she glanced at a picture before attempting a word. By week twelve, she was reading a level eight book,

articulating connections before reading, attending to both visual information and meaning, but still hadn't begun to attend to syntax consistently. Additionally, when discussing the story after reading, she was speaking in short English phrases. As Clementine's language developed, she was able to connect more English words to her knowledge of the universe, which provided her with more access to the written word. Although Clementine had a long way to go before she was reading at grade level, she had made definite progress and would continue to as she developed her language.

Elizabeth

Elizabeth began the after school tutorials reading at a level eight. Although Elizabeth's language was stronger than most other's in the group, she had less confidence when reading. When reading, Elizabeth often stopped, decoded, and then re-read, which made her fluency extremely choppy. She was constantly monitoring her reading, but she didn't trust herself when reading. I frequently noted that she would stop, decode, and then appeal whether she had decoded the word correctly or incorrectly. She seemed to think that I was supposed to tell her whether she was right or wrong. This misconception was supported by my encouraging facial expressions and comments for the first couple weeks. Then, I realized that she was using my responses as conformation that she was reading accurately; I was monitoring for her. After this realization, I began to respond to her appeals with "What do you think?" or "Does that make sense to you?" When I first responded to her with these prompts, she tried to guess what I was thinking. For example, when reading Polar Bears, she got stuck on seal. She sounded it out correctly and then appealed. I responded, "What do you think? Does that make sense?" She

replied, "Yes!" I responded, "Does that make sense?" She replied, "No!" She was trying to read my mind instead of thinking for herself, which I had encouraged with my facial expressions and responses for the previous couple weeks. So, I replied, "Don't try and guess what I'm thinking. You decide. You're smart; if it makes sense, then keep reading. If it doesn't, then read it again." She re-read the word, seal, looked at the picture, decided it made sense, and then kept reading. As I slowly changed my behavior by consistently prompting her to think and containing my encouraging responses, she slowly began to think for herself. Additionally, Elizabeth had strong background knowledge and made many connections to herself, her world, and sometimes to other texts. Although her fluency was choppy, with her strong background knowledge and abundant connections, Elizabeth's comprehension was strong. Elizabeth eagerly discussed the text continuously demonstrating her deep understanding.

As the program continued, Elizabeth began to rely on herself to problem solve words attending to visual information, the meaning of the text, and to syntax. She rapidly moved through levels consistently reading the text accurately and demonstrating deep comprehension through our grand conversations. By the end of the twelve weeks, Elizabeth's instructional reading level was 24 and her comprehension was strong. However, Elizabeth was still struggling with her fluency. Although she was now depending on herself when problem solving, she was problem solving words, decoding, and re-reading so much that her fluency was choppy and her reading was slow. Often, I noted that Yvonne and Rachael read a book twice in the time it took Elizabeth to read it once. Elizabeth concluded the program nearly reading and comprehending at grade level.

Although Elizabeth's fluency still needed development, she made impressive gains in her reading level and problem solving strategies.

Yvonne

Yvonne began the guided reading tutorials reading at a level eight. Before reading, she seemed to have some background knowledge and make connections, but she struggled to articulate her thoughts. Often, I noted that she asked Elizabeth to translate a word before articulating her thoughts. When reading, she rarely appealed, consistently decoding, re-reading, and problem solving words she didn't immediately recognize by sight. But, after reading, she seemed to struggle with comprehension. While discussing the book, sometimes she misunderstood a concept or portion of the story. I began to note that although she seemed to be problem solving successfully, often she didn't actually connect the written word to her knowledge of the world. For example, in Baby Bear's Present, father bear wanted a train and baby bear wanted the blue car. Yvonne read the entire book accurately decoding father bear and baby bear, but then, during the grand conversation, Yvonne seemed to think that baby bear wanted both the train and the blue car. She had read the book thinking that father bear and baby bear were the same character. When we went back through the book to see who had wanted the train, she realized the difference between the two characters, immediately connecting the word father to her knowledge of the world. She then seemed to understand the story line and was eager to continue our discussion. Yvonne was attending to visual information and syntax, but was struggling with meaning.

As the tutorials continued, Yvonne's oral language developed, expanding her language bank and her ability to connect the written word to her knowledge of the world. She began articulating her connections more frequently, monitoring her understanding of the text, and demonstrating her understanding through our grand conversations. Towards the later part of the program, I frequently noted that she stopped and re-read a portion of the text, referred to the picture, and then continued reading. She was monitoring her understanding of the text by re-reading and referencing the picture. Yvonne's developing strategy use strengthened her comprehension which allowed her to then move rapidly through reading levels. Yvonne went from reading a level eight to reading a level twenty-eight in the course of the guided reading program. This drastic jump in reading levels moved Yvonne from reading far below grade level to reading at grade level, with deep comprehension and strong fluency.

Rachael

Rachael began the guided reading program with an instructional reading level of fourteen. Although her instructional level was the highest in the group, her English language development was somewhere between Yvonne's and Elizabeth's. Rachael's background knowledge fluctuated depending on the text, but when prompted, she often made connections to herself. Although Rachael's instructional level was higher than Yvonne's, her reading struggles mirrored Yvonne's. Rachael often read a text accurately decoding and problem solving words she didn't recognize by sight. But, when discussing the story during our grand conversations, I repeatedly noted that she seemed to misunderstand the story line or major concepts of the text. For example, in the story The

Sick Rooster, the rooster isn't waking up the farmer in the morning. The farmer takes the

rooster to the doctor and nothing works. At the end of the story, the doctor tells the

farmer that she should just get a new rooster. The rooster hears the doctor's

recommendation and miraculously recovers, the point being that the rooster was being

lazy and wasn't actually sick. Rachael read the entire story stopping to decode a few

words and re-reading a few portions of the text. But, during the grand conversation she

seemed to think that the rooster got better because of the medicine the doctor gave it.

When I asked her to show me where the book stated that, she went back through re-

reading parts of the text and discussing the story with me. She concluded that the rooster

was actually lazy and decided to get better when the doctor suggested that the farmer

replace the rooster. I noticed that Rachael was depending too much on the visual

information from the pictures and syntax but wasn't attending to the meaning of the text.

As the program continued, Rachael became less dependent on the pictures and

more dependent on a sampling of all visual information. I frequently noted that when she

got stuck, she referenced the picture and then re-read the passage making sure she

understood the meaning of the text. During our grand conversations, she was more able

to reference the text and seemed to be making more connections, demonstrating her deep

understanding of the story. By the end of the program, Rachael was reading a level

twenty-eight with strong fluency and deep comprehension.

Discussion Conclusion

Over the course of the guided reading program, it became apparent that all

students were making learning gains. While each student made notable gains in different

areas of literacy knowledge, all students increased their reading levels, problem-solving strategy use, phonemic awareness, letter-sound correspondence, and vocabulary. Three out of the five participants made reading-level gains in twelve-weeks that were larger than a normal student would make in the course of the year. One student met her IEP goal for her reading level for the first time in her career at Fields, and one student went from only speaking and reading in Spanish to reading in English at a level 8. The students' remarkable gains could be attributed to many different circumstances, including their classroom teacher, their reading teacher, their experiences outside of school, my after-school guided reading program, and various combinations of these factors. Although we cannot prove that my guided reading program, which I modified to meet their language needs, directly affected my participants' reading levels, I can say that there is a distinct possibility that this program had an influence on their literacy knowledge. Consequently, guided reading modified to meet the language needs of English Learners can possibly influence reading levels within a classroom.

Limitations

The most notable limitation in my study was that the participation of human subjects made it impossible to prove or disprove anything. Since I cannot ethically control all aspects of my participants' literacy education, I cannot prove or disprove my findings. In order to prove the effectiveness of my program, I would have needed to conduct an experimental study, where I had two randomly assigned groups, one designated as the control group and the other as the experimental group. Only the experimental group would have participated in my program, and everything else about

the two groups would need to have been the same. However, it would have been extremely challenging to create two randomly assigned groups in an educational context already facing numerous demands related to students' learning needs and assessment. Furthermore, it is unethical to withhold a teaching intervention from one group while administering the intervention with the other. Therefore, I can only note the gains and state that it is possible that these gains might have been influenced by the implementation of my program. Additionally, I attempted to include boys and girls in my study, but my classroom dynamics only provided me the opportunity to work with and collect data on five girls. Moreover, as a first-year teacher, I found that my limited teaching experience might have restricted the influence my guided reading program had on my participants. Had a veteran teacher taught the same program after school, would the students have seen higher gains? Although these questions will never be answered, it is a possibility that my experience served as a limiting factor. Consequently, although these limitations may have made my study less valid, they were unavoidable and have been identified as limiting factors.

Implications

The successful completion of this research study implies that when teachers incorporate language modifications with guided reading, English Learners might make noteworthy gains in their literacy knowledge including but not limited to: phonemic awareness, the alphabetic principle, vocabulary development, and reading levels. These gains seem to be of such importance that it is possible if all classroom teachers provide this form of teaching, then they too may see notable increases in their English Learners'

literacy knowledge. As an educator, I find that guided reading modified to meet each individual student's language needs will provide students with the strong reading instruction they may need to accelerate their reading growth.

For teachers to successfully implement the kind of intervention I conducted with my small group within their classroom, their literacy instruction block would most likely need to be open for creative, best practices not included in their curriculum. If a school was devoting the vast majority of its literacy instruction to scripted programs and test preparation, then they would most likely not be able to implement my intervention. Unfortunately, schools that devote their literacy blocks to scripted programs and test preparation tend to be Title I and Program Improvement schools. Additionally, these schools tend to have the largest population of English Learners, the students for whom this intervention was designed and the population which would benefit most from the intervention.

In addition, when making modifications to meet English Learners needs, teachers should consider both conceptual background and language background. Building background tends to refer to building conceptual knowledge while building language knowledge may be just as important. If a child does not have the English word in her language bank, she may not be able to successfully read the text. Similarly, if a child does not have the concept in her background knowledge, she may not be able to successfully read the text. Consequently, it is important for teachers to consider both language knowledge and conceptual knowledge when building background knowledge.

Moreover, teachers who have the flexibility within their literacy block to incorporate this type of intervention may benefit from professional development on guided reading, best practices in EL instruction, and the administration of the Observation Survey. From my personal misconception of the process of guided reading, I feel that there may be more misinterpretations regarding the purpose of guided reading and the implementations of guided reading. Furthermore, I believe that many educators would benefit from explicit instruction and concrete examples of EL strategies which can support guided reading. Finally, Clay is very extensive when explaining the administration of the Observation Survey. I feel teachers would benefit from a workshop on the administration of the tasks where they could watch and practice administering the tasks. With sufficient professional development, I believe this type of intervention could support our English Learners in their quest to become literate.

Additionally, for teachers who have the desire to implement this type of intervention, they would need access to a leveled book library ranging from level one through level thirty or higher. In this library, there would need to be a sufficient amount of books in each level for the teacher to conduct multiple guided reading lessons within the same level with the same students. Furthermore, teachers would need access to Marie Clay's Observation Survey task templates in order to assess student and determine their literacy levels. Thus, for teachers to implement this type of intervention, they would need access to the necessary materials.

Finally, the intervention I conducted was implemented after school. Further research could be done on the possible influence of such an intervention with in the

school day. Or, it could be possible to extend the school day for struggling students so that they could receive this type of intervention services within an extended school day. In conclusion, the results of my intervention demonstrate the profound influence guided modified to meet English Learners language needs can have on their literacy knowledge. Although this type of intervention may require professional development for educators, flexibility within teachers' literacy blocks, and access to sufficient material, the possible influence the intervention may have on English Learners literacy knowledge surely outweighs the steps needed to make it possible.

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