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Scaffolding English Language Learners' Reading Performance

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COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

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Lolita McKenzie

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Walden University
2011

Abstract

The Impact of a Scaffolding Strategy on Elementary English Language Leaners' Reading

Performance

by

Lolita D. McKenzie

Doctoral Study Submitted in Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Teacher Leadership

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Abstract

English language learners (ELLs) spend a majority of their instructional time in mainstream classrooms with mainstream teachers. Reading is an area with which many ELLs are challenged when placed within mainstream classrooms. Scaffolding has been identified as one of the best teaching practices for helping students read. ELL students in a local elementary school were struggling, and school personnel implemented scaffolding in an effort to address student needs. The purpose of this mixed methods study was to examine how personnel in one diversely populated school employed scaffolding to accommodate ELLs. Vygotsky's social constructivist theory informed the study. Research questions were designed to elicit the teachers' perceptions related to the use of scaffolding for ELLs and to examine the impact scaffolding had on ELLs reading performance. The perceptions of 14 out of 15 participating teachers were investigated via focus group interviews that were transcribed. Observation data were gathered to determine teachers' use of particular strategies. Hatch's method for coding and categorical analysis was used. Emerging themes included *background knowledge, comprehension* and *evaluation*. Participating teachers felt scaffolding strategies were crucial for building a solid foundation for ELL academic success. Pre and posttest scores in reading of 105 ELLs were analyzed using a paired samples *t* test. There were statistically significant gains in 13 of 15 performance indicators over the 3-month cycle of instruction. Implications for social change include strategies for classroom teachers and their administrators concerning scaffolding reading instruction with ELLs in order to help these students increase their reading performance levels.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate my study to my sons, Justin and Kenny, who have been my motivation and joy throughout my dissertation studies. I would also like to dedicate this study to my late mother and grandmother who inspired me to always continue to have high expectations in fulfilling life's dreams.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my committee Drs. Peter Kiriakidis and Tina Dawson for their continuous support. I thank my son, Justin, for being so patient and understanding and who inspired me to continue my studies during times of adversities. I would also like to thank my friends and family for supporting me and urging me to continue to move forward when situations were tough.

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Section 1: Introduction to the Study

According to Reed and Railsback (2003), the population of English language
learners (ELLs) attending schools in the United States, prekindergarten through
Grade 12 was 4.6 million between 2000 and 2001. Echevarria, Vogt, and Short
(2004) noted, "Each year, the United States becomes more ethnically and
linguistically diverse with more than 90 percent of recent immigrants coming from
non-English speaking countries" (p. 3). Many of the children who come to the United
States are struggling to learn the English language. The students who are categorized
as ELLs are placed in mainstream classrooms where they may feel intimidated
because a majority of their classmates are fluent English speakers. (Cloud, Genesee,
and Hamayan, 2009) The students who are labeled as ELLs are also referred to as
Limited English Proficiency (LEP). The first term is the most common term used
today for second language learners.

Most schools in the United States have mandatory programs for non-English
speaking students to attend during class hours for a short period; however, the time
spent in these programs is not sufficient time for ELLs to develop the English
language to take back to normal classrooms. As Bae (2002) stated.

> The education of those students are now no longer the concern of just a
> few ESL teachers but of all teachers. Under such circumstances, LEP students are
> usually at a disadvantage due to the failure to understand academic, social, and
> linguistic standards at school. (p. 2)

Schools need strategies that will promote more effective results with mainstream teachers' instruction to show improvement in the academic performance of ELLs. The U. S. federal legislation, No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2002) requires that all students in public schools achieve at or near grade level on standardized tests in reading and math (Abedi and Dietel, 2004) who reported:

> By 2014 all children including English language learners must reach high standards by demonstrating proficiency in English language arts and mathematics. Schools and districts must help English language learners, among other subgroups, make continuous progress toward this goal, as measured by performance tests, or risk serious consequences. (p. 782)

The No Child Left Behind Act presents several dilemmas for educators. First, just from my experience as a classroom teacher, the curriculum and expectations in the regular classroom are typically designed for English-speaking students. Secondly, the regular classroom teacher generally has limited training and support with ELLs. Lastly, needs of the ELLs have not been considered; consequently, the impact on the school's academic performance is effected because these needs have been neglected. Cloud, Genesee, and Hamayan (2009) pointed out how students should not have to suffer academic consequences, especially during testing, because they have not learned the English language. Cappellini (2005) stated:

> We have the challenge of figuring out how to teach them effectively and of setting up an environment where all of them can succeed. We need to show them that we

value both their primary languages and cultures and their learning of English reading and language skills. (p. 1)

Educators need to set a goal on seeking and implementing strategies that are more conducive to ELLs learning. Although similar approaches exist on the cognitive development of ELLs, theorists have concluded numerous ways ELLs can learn to master the English language, which is essential before learning to read and to comprehend what has been read. Many strategies have been used to instruct students who are new to the language, and researchers have reported that some teaching strategies are more effective than others. More evidence of the strategies used in classrooms with ELLs will follow in the literature review in section 2 of this study.

Scaffolding instruction has been used by many mainstream classroom teachers with ELLs to help promote learning of content subject areas. According to Fitzgerald and Graves (2005), "Scaffolding is a temporary and supportive structure that helps a student or group of students accomplish a task they could not accomplish-or accomplish as well-without the scaffold" (p. 6). Teachers have implemented scaffolding strategies using the sheltered instruction observation protocol model (SIOP) and cooperative learning groups. Some schools have chosen to provide special training for teachers who are not accustomed to dealing with the challenge of educating ELLs in mainstream classrooms.

The purpose of this research was to explore scaffolding when applied to ELLs' reading skills by mainstream classroom teachers. I examined how mainstream classroom teachers felt about teaching ELLs reading during inclusive instruction.

Scaffolding has been reported as one of the most effective strategies for enhancing reading achievement in ELLs by teachers who have employed it in mainstream classrooms with ELLs during reading instruction. (Reed & Railsback, 2003). According to Lessow-Hurley (2003), "Every teacher in the United States must work toward the special understandings, skills, and dispositions needed to facilitate the language and academic development of students for whom English is a new language" (p. 2). In order for teachers to present progression and achievement, they need to become educated on effective strategies and methods to achieve the goal of increasing reading performance levels with ELLs. Teachers who are accustomed to the traditional teaching styles are more likely to accept teaching contemporary styles once they are exposed. However, exposure is the keyword. Exposure includes strategies conducive to ELLs learning styles, theory of language learning, and cultural background. As Lieberman and Miller (2001) reported:

Teacher learning can be characterized as problem solving or inquiry that starts with teachers' particular goals for their students; theories about their particular goals; and theories about what conditions are necessary for the students to achieve the particular goals. (p. 75)

Teachers need to extend their learning beyond the classroom. They have to put forth extra effort into making sure the students are learning the curriculum. Genuine teacher leaders will insure the learning of students, not only within their spectrum, but outside the spectrum as well. In other words, teachers have to expand their knowledge on useful strategies that have been used in mainstream classrooms with ELLs. According to

Fitzgerald and Graves (2004), "One powerful tool that teachers of English language learners can use to enable "maximal" reading and learning experiences is instructional scaffolding" (p. 5). Based on this research, the following questions guided my study: (a) What perceptions do teachers have on instructing ELLs during mainstream classroom reading instruction? (b) In what ways do mainstream teachers implement scaffolding as a strategy into their classrooms to assist with improving the reading achievement of ELLs? and (c) How are reading performance levels influenced? These questions will be addressed following an examination of how ELLs build and develop language and reading skills.

Problem Statement

The population of ELLs have grown tremendously throughout the years. According to Cobb (2004), "ELLs represent a growing subgroup population in schools across the United States, and the total enrollment of elementary and secondary students in the United States has grown by nearly 12 percent in the past decade" (p. 2). The students who are also categorized as ELLs are being pressured to master standardized tests in critical subject areas such as reading. Due to the NCLB (2002), Lissitz and Huynh (2003) stated, "The students are required to meet or exceed proficiency levels on the state's assessments each year" (p. 1). Whether the students have been in the United States for 2 months or 2 years federal mandates states that they must be assessed in reading. However, many ELLs are placed into classrooms where mainstream teachers teach content areas in English. Most likely teachers who are not properly trained to teach ELLs are still eager to seek effective techniques and strategies to use during reading with

students whose first language is not English. Vacca (as cited in Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2004) stressed the following:

> In the classrooms, teachers scaffold instruction when they provide substantial support and assistance in the earliest states of teaching a new concept or strategy, and then decrease the amount of support as the learners acquire experience through multiple practice opportunities. (p. 86)

In other words, teachers begin with building a foundation for learning and slowly pull away as the students display signs of mastering the concept.

Nature of the Study

I used a mixed-methods research design to investigate scaffolding as implemented by mainstream classroom teachers and the possible influence this has on ELLs reading performance levels. I included observations and focus group interviews over a 3-month cycle and data were collected from academic tests. The participants included 105 students and three classroom teachers each in K-5 in a public elementary school. I collected data from teacher participants in the form of focus group interviews and observational notes and students' results from pre and posttests. Creswell (2009) described how using mixed methods as a research method provides a combination of data to explore (p. 14). The mixed methods study was designed to acquire information on how ELLs learn best when placed in mainstream classrooms amongst mainstream classroom teachers. The most resourceful way to gain knowledge was to collect a mixture of data using tangible and visual resources. This gave me an in-depth look at how mainstream classroom teachers approach teaching with ELLs and how well the approach affects the students' learning.

Research Questions

The research questions that guided this study were:

1. What were mainstream classroom teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of scaffolding when applied to English language learners' reading skills?

2. In what ways did mainstream teachers implement scaffolding as a strategy into their classrooms to assist with improving the reading achievement of English language learners?

3. How were reading performance levels influenced?

Hypotheses

H_{01}: There was no statistically significant change in reading performance levels of English language learners when mainstream classroom teachers applied scaffolding as a learning strategy in reading.

Ha_1: There was a statistically significant change in reading performance levels of English language learners when mainstream classroom teachers applied scaffolding as a learning strategy in reading.

Theoretical Framework

ELLs in mainstream classrooms usually exhibit a great deal of frustration because teachers, who are usually not accustomed to teaching ELLs, set high expectations for them in academic subjects. Theorists have offered several rationales on how language is developed for ELLs. According to Vygotsky's (1978) *social constructivist theory*, "As soon as speech and the use of signs are incorporated into any action, the action becomes transformed" (p. 24). Children are more susceptible to absorbing information when they

are observing others model activities. Vygotsky stated, "Prior to mastering his own behavior, the child begins to master his surroundings with the help of speech" (p. 25). Therefore, social interaction is a necessity in a child's life who is attempting to learn an additional language. If a child is observing others speak on a daily basis, they are sure to grasp language concept. Cooperative grouping of students is an example of how students can learn from one another.

Best practices when teaching ELLs can provide a good foundation for learning English. Yang and Wilson (2006) discussed the foundation for social constructivism as a means to "provide a psycholinguistic explanation for how learning can be fostered effectively through interactive pedagogical practices" (p. 1). Consequently, "we learn not as isolated individuals, but as active members of society, what we learn and how we make sense of knowledge depends on where and when, such as in what social context, we are learning" (Yang & Wilson, 2006, p. 1).

Children are exposed to words from the time they are born. According to Vygotsky (1978), "Children's learning begins long before they attend school" (p. 84). Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) explained how it is important to know how a child processes information in order to connect how they learn. Children learn initial language by corresponding and talking to adults around them. Vygotsky's (ZPD) also has a connection to the concept of scaffolding. For example, Vygotsky discussed how a child has to be exposed to a scaffolding strategy that fits his or her needs in order to retain what being taught. On the other hand, Krashen (2003) expanded on how second-language development originates in five hypotheses:

(1) Acquisition-Learning Process-students have to be exposed to several strategies used to help develop the language in order to learn effectively. (2) natural order-students learn in different ways, they cannot be exposed to the same type of strategies. some students do not learn English grammar in the same order. (3) monitor-Students are observed continuously to see if they are understanding what is being presented to them (4) input comprehension-students display that they are learning and retaining what has been taught and (5) affective filter-students will have a desire to participate in class activities because they feel secure about what they know.

Cummin's (1981) theory has another approach on the development of language acquisition. Cummins theorized two learning approaches. The first stage is basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS), which involves students learning from interacting with others who speak the native language and the second stage is cognitive academic learning proficiency (CALP) is a stage where students can take up to seven years to process the academic language (Cummins, 1981). Shoebottom (2003) suggested, if this theory is very beneficial to mainstream classroom teachers who desire to become experts with teaching ELLs in mainstream classroom. However, yet another theorist that focused on how ELLs develop language concluded that even when students appear to have a normal conversation, as if they can speak the language, they have to be able to transfer what have been taught, seen, or heard (Gibbons, 2002). According to Gibbons (2002), there are two kinds of context to determining language and context of ESL learners (p. 2): (a) a context of culture-Students know how to speak enough to survive

around others and (b) context of situation-What is being discussed, the relationship between the two parties, and what matter the language is being presented, spoken or written.

In order to produce effective teaching results from ELLs, teachers need to become more educated on the language needs of their students. In order to reach the ELLs, teachers need to become knowledgeable on the theories developed around the learning of their students. If so, teachers will provide an enhanced comfort zone for ELLs during inclusive content learning

Definition of Terms

English language learners (ELLs): ELLs are referred to as students who do not speak English as a first language at home (Slavin & Cheung, 2004). These learners are also labeled as English as a second language (ESL) students. *Scaffolding:* This term is described by Gibbons (2002) as a means of helping students learn new information by modeling the concept to help build a solid foundation of learning.

Assumptions, Scope, Limitations, and Delimitations

My assumptions were that mainstream classroom teachers were not experienced or trained to provide the proper reading instruction ELLs needed to perform well on assessments. I also assumed that ELLs placed in mainstream classrooms during reading instruction, amongst mainstream students, would cause a lack of motivation to perform well in reading.

The scope of the study was focused only on ELLs placed in mainstream classrooms during reading instruction. The population sample include ELL students from one local school where the study was conducted over a 3-month timeframe.

The limitations of the study included the fact that I incorporated only one school's results out of the entire school district. The study included mainstream classroom teachers only and not teachers who were trained to teach ELLs. The study also occurred over a short time period, which limited my ability to obtain conclusive results.

Some researchers have shown that the selected strategy (scaffolding) has proven to work effectively with ELLs placed into mainstream classrooms. According to Fitzgerald and Graves (2004), because so many mainstream teachers without any type of formal education are facing a challenge with teaching ESL learners, scaffolding can facilitate their teaching instruction. Due to the circumstances surrounding the study, the results are inclined to some discrepancies. For example, a small sample participated in the study (teachers and students); therefore, this could cause the outcome of the study to be inconclusive. However, the length of time spent in the classrooms provided adequate data for the study analysis.

On the other hand, The study was conducted over a 3-month time frame, which provided some indication of what takes place in mainstream classrooms with ELLs, and a brief overview of how fundamental these strategies are to mainstream classroom teachers and ELLs. Another aspect to consider is that I was not able to conduct classroom observations as scheduled because of other commitments or scheduled events such as

mandatory meetings or school events. The focus group interviews included all but one of the teacher participants' perceptions on teaching ELLs.

Significance of Study

This study on the possible influence of scaffolding, when applied to ELLs reading performance levels in mainstream classrooms by mainstream classroom teachers is important for many reasons. Fry, Ruiz de Velasco and Fix (as cited in Walqui, 2006) noted how ELLs are receiving education in the U.S. for quite some time, however, they are still not producing passing grades, and they are not staying in high school until graduation. Walqui (2006) suggested that there needs to be some type of intervention for this problem. Mainstream classroom teachers, who are accustomed to teaching only mainstream students, need to adjust to a new and ongoing situation by becoming exposed to strategies that work. Secondly, because of the NCLB (2002) act, mainstream teachers are held accountable for all students' reading achievement. ELLs performance is not excluded. Mainstream classroom teachers will benefit by becoming more knowledgeable on some of the most effective strategies designed to facilitate ELLs reading performance in mainstream classrooms. The dilemma behind ensuring student achievement rests in the hands of our educators, parents, and reformers. Lifelong learners are produced by aspiring teams through collaborative efforts.

Methodological Insights

According to Cloud, Genesee, and Hamayan (2009) "ELLs are resourceful, they use whatever language, cultural, and other background resources they have in order to do well in school", (p. 9). Creswell (2009) described how using mixed methods as a research

method provides a combination of data to explore (p 14). The mixed methods study was designed to acquire information on how ELLs learn best when placed in mainstream classrooms amongst mainstream classroom teachers. The most resourceful way to gain knowledge on this inquiry was to collect a mixture of data as described my Creswell (2009, p. 207).

Summary

The purpose of this mixed-methods sequential transformative study was to determine how the selected strategy (scaffolding) was used by mainstream classroom teachers with ELLs during reading instruction. A change in reading performance scores was also investigated. The quantitative data taken from the paired samples *t* test indicated that there were gains in most of the mainstream classroom teacher participants' classroom scores; however, due to the length of time that the study was conducted, the scores cannot be viewed as conclusive information.

As Reeves (2006) expressed how even though teachers are very concerned, ELLs are continuously placed in mainstream classrooms in several schools. This applies to many schools in the United States, and this is a thought in the minds of many mainstream classroom teachers who struggle to put ELLs on their expected reading levels. Theorists have presented information that relays how ELLs obtain a second language. Teachers must become more educated on how to improve ELLs achievement level, especially in reading. However, teachers need to have more support in order to approach getting ELLs on the appropriate reading level. Many strategies are at hand for teachers to exercise with

ELLs; however, mainstream teachers are not trained to deliver the intense instruction that is necessary to meet the learners' needs.

Researchers have shown that teachers can implement scaffolding into mainstream classrooms to facilitate teaching content subject areas such as reading to help ease the learning process of ELLs. The use of scaffolding does not imply success, but it can be used as a useful teaching tool with students for linguistic and academic enhancement. Mainstream classroom teachers who are not comfortable teaching ELLs because of the lack of training are faced with difficulties when instructing content classes to ELLs.

In this section, I elaborated on how academic achievement in reading is a main component in determining the promotion of students in U.S. schools, and this stipulation does not exclude ELLs. I utilized a mixed-methods study to investigate scaffolding used as a strategy by mainstream classroom teachers and the effect the strategy has on ELLs reading performance levels. Language learning theorists have determined that learning for children takes place in various forms and stages. Definition of terms, significance of study, and limitations of the study were also discussed in this section.

In section 2, I describe suggested ways teachers can apply scaffolding in classrooms with ELLs. I also describe how teachers have become involved in research-based instructional programs designed to help lift some of the frustration in mainstream classrooms amongst teachers and students. Some strategies that are very useful with ELLs will be described by other researchers.

Section 2: Literature Review

In the literature review it was revealed that mainstream classroom teachers can apply scaffolding to teach ELLs during reading instruction. Because limited studies have been conducted on the use of scaffolding with ELLs during reading instruction in mainstream classrooms, the review of literature was focused on suggested paths teachers should follow when applying the strategy with students. Therefore, teaching pedagogies such as scaffolding elements and techniques, scaffolding integrated with cooperative learning and instructional programs such as sheltered instruction observation protocol (SIOP) and cross cultural language academic development (CLAD) will be discussed in this section. Instructional textbooks and electronic databases were used to explore background information on the research topic.

Strategies for Searching the Literature

The research databases used to collect the information in the review of literature were retrieved through the Walden library and reference center. The primary sources of information included the Dissertations and Thesis, Academic Search Premier, ProQuest, and Eric-Educational Resource Information Center. An exhaustive review of the literature between 2005 and 2010 was conducted in these databases using the keywords *scaffolding ELLs reading, ELLs reading instruction and mainstream classrooms, and ELLs limited research studies on scaffolding reading instruction for English language learners*. The database searches revealed no scholarly articles on the influence of scaffolding on ELLs reading skills when taught in mainstream classrooms.

Elements of Scaffolding

Bradley and Bradley (2004) stated that scaffolding is an effective strategy for teaching content to ELLs in inclusive classrooms if teachers acknowledge the three types of strategies discovered the most effective for working with ELLs: (a) language should be simplified so that the students can understand; (b) teachers must make sure students complete assignments and do not accept incomplete work; and (c) make sure an abundance of visuals are used with ELLs. For example, work should be modified to fit the needs of the ELLs and use pictures to help them understand what is being taught. On the other hand Kriteman (2006) believed that scaffolding for ELLs fall into five sections (p. 2): (a) peer to peer interaction – students should be required to assemble into cooperative groups; (b) use hands on activities – students are motivated to learn; (c) incorporate prior knowledge – inquire about background of students on specific lessons that are taught in the classroom; (d) make sure texts are accessible – Use graphic organizers with pictures to introduce students to text; and (e) keep a focus on language – Model language that will be used in topic discussions for ELLs. The objective of the teachers should be to devise an appropriate lesson plan designed to alleviate some of the stress of teaching content to ELLs and to provide a comfortable learning environment for the learners.

Scaffolding Techniques

According to Herrell and Jordan (2004), there are two ways for teachers to scaffold instruction with ELLs. Teachers can use visual scaffolding which "is an approach in which the language used in instruction is made more understandable by the display of drawings or photographs that allow students to hear English words and connect them to

the visual images being displayed" (p. 19) and second, academic language scaffolding increases students interest in learning in content areas (Herrell & Jordan, 2004).

Gibbons (2002) suggested that sometimes ELLs are not as comfortable using English at school or with unfamiliar people when they feel they have not mastered the language (p. 1). Gibbons described strategies and activities that mainstream teachers can incorporate into the classroom to help enhance reading skills through scaffolding. Gibbons stressed that the activities used should serve two purposes: (a) to make sure the readers understand what they are reading and (b) to the readers should know what ongoing strategies should be used with other books.

According to Walqui (2006), scaffolding instruction is good for helping ELLs get to where they should be academically. Fitzgerald and Graves (2004) described scaffolding as another way to teach ELLs using texts which makes learning to read easier because modeling is involved in teaching. Walqui (2006) explained how scaffolding revolves around the ZPD development because scaffolding involves students interacting with others to learn rather than working autonomously (p. 163). Some of the strategies that can be used to teach ELLs to read through scaffolding pertain to lessons being taught before, during, and after reading a book (Gibbons, 2002).

In order to introduce before reading to students, Gibbons (2002) suggest several strategies such as, use word predictions by doing a web of words in story. Convince students to predict what the story is about by introducing the title or first sentence and allow them to work in groups to look at photos taken from book to predict what the story might be discussing. Provide students with pictures and ask them to put them in

sequential order in, which they think the story might happen. Gibbons (2002) also suggested after introducing the book to students, instruct them to provide questions that they would like to know about the story and conduct a storytelling by using pictures from book. Lastly, allow another person to tell the story in the student's native language and ask the students to share in groups what they already know about the topic of the book (p. 85).

During reading, (Gibbons, 2002) model the story by reading aloud and instruct the students to skim the book before reading. Instruct the students to reread after they have read at least once. Shared reading can be used by including Big Books as materials for instruction. Use word masking by pulling various words from the story to allow the children to guess what they are. Pause and predict by stopping in the middle of a story to ask students what they thing might happen next. Use shadow reading activities by recording teacher's model of storytelling and allow students to follow along using book. Allow student to summarize what has been read. Jigsaw Reading can be used in cooperative reading groups. Read aloud can be done by an experienced reader in cooperative groups (p. 87).

The after reading activities are to be used after the students have become comfortable with reading the book. Gibbons (2002) described how story innovation can be led by the teacher by using words from the story to develop a different story. The students can work in groups to write a new ending to the story. Create cartoon strips by using dialogue from the original story. Perform a play by using dialogue from the story. Do a wanted poster by using characters in the story. Students should illustrate a character from the story and

write whatever they can about the character. Instruct the students to do a story map. Model and have the students to complete time lines about the story. Text reconstruction will allow the students to take paragraphs from the story to put into the correct order of story. Form consonant groups and ask students to put objects such as pencils, paper, pictures and other objects in groups according to their sounds. Create jumbled sentences by writing sentences from the story on to sentence strips and then cut them up. Finally, instruct the students to put the sentences in the correct order (p. 91).

Fitzgerald and Graves (2004) described how scaffolding should take place before, during and after reading to assist with ELLs performance levels in reading. According to Fitzgerald and Graves (2004), the goal is for the teacher to scaffolding reading instruction based on student needs, and the level of reading expected from your students. Some of the alternatives Fitzgerald and Graves (2004) suggested for teachers to implement using scaffolding during reading instruction follows:

Prereading Activities

Motivating - ask students questions or make statements to interest students in a reading selection. Relate the reading to students' lives - provide examples of nonfiction materials to students. Build or activate background knowledge - provide examples of scenarios. Introduced in the text in which students are not familiar. Use students' native language - provide text in Spanish for students to read (p. 16).

During-Reading Activities

ELLs need to be provided with some independence as well. Fitzgerald and Graves (2004) suggested that teachers multi-task and monitor students' reading as well as use

desired scaffolding strategy. Silent reading - students should independently. This during-reading activity was suggested to be critical for ELLs (Fitzgerald & Graves, 2004, p. 21). Another activity suggested by Fitzgerald and Graves (2004) includes reading to students which can provide a good model for oral reading. Supported reading can include many activities to focus on specific parts in the text. For example, main idea, or different parts of speech in the text. Allow students orally to read text - this is helpful for teachers when trying to assist ELLs with proficiency. Modify Text - the teacher can rewrite parts of a book to meet the needs of the English language learner (p. 16). Fitzgerald and Graves (2004) also discussed the need for postreading activities when scaffolding ELLs reading instruction to provide an outlet for students to put together everything they have read.

Postreading Activities

It is important that teachers used questioning when instruction ELLs during reading. For example, according to Fitzgerald and Graves (2004) teachers need to ask questions verbally or write questions down for students to answer. Discussions can provide teachers with an insight on where students are with reading achievement level. Writing will facilitate ELLs understanding of concept. Teachers should involve ELLs in hands-on learning such as plays or skits. Fitzgerald and Graves (2004) noted how hands-on activities increases learning capacity because ELLs need visuals.

Teachers should make sure the students are understanding what is being taught, if not teachers should evaluate to come up with a better teaching practice (Fitzgerald & Graves, 2004)). Fitzgerald and Graves (2004) stressed, scaffolding is not a resolution for

increasing reading performance levels in ELLs, it does help them understand the concept more.

Although most strategies can be used with any content area, reading is a major component of learning for ELLs. Once students have acquired reading skills, they can apply this skill to all subject areas and most likely perform well. However, just as ELLs have to start from the bottom to develop the language, they have to develop reading skills in parts. Luke and Freebody (as cited in Gibbons, 2002) suggested that ELLs have to follow four roles as they learn to read: (a) code breaker where the reader must be able to understand what is written and how the words are written; (b) text participant where the reader will be able to connect what was read using background knowledge; (c) text user where the reader will be able to participate in any activities associated with what was read in a book, and (d) text analysts where the reader will be able to apply critical thinking skills with what was read in text (p. 81). It is essential to know what the student knows already in order to present new information before him or her. These four roles will give the teacher an insight on where the student is and where the teacher needs to build from to get them on the right level or reading.

Gibbons (2002) elaborated on how ELLs should follow the four steps in order to become effective readers. Gibbons (2002) also stressed how teachers should not expect the learner to develop in this sequence but to just be aware that they should develop with all four roles involved in the learning process.

Cappellini (2005) noted how ELLs are always in the dark when they are first exposed to English and they do not understand what is being read to them or what they read. Reading, in other words, does not just involve knowing how to pronounce words in a book. Mainstream teachers can sometimes be confused when observing ELLs as they read from a text. For example, students may say the words fluently as they read, but if they are not challenged with inquiries about what they have read, teachers are not aware of the learners' comprehension abilities.

According to Walqui (2006), scaffolding comes in three separate stages (p. 164). For example, scaffolding 1 includes providing a support structure for students, scaffolding 2 includes implementing activities in the classroom and scaffolding 3 involves collaboration (p. 164). Walqui (2006) noted, "As the students are able to do more and gradually come to be more in charge of their own learning, the upper-level scaffolds are changed, transformed, restructured, and dismantled" (p.164). Walqui (2006) elaborated on six types of instructional scaffolding for ELLs (p. 170): (a) modeling where teachers provide examples of what is taught; (b) bridging where teachers should build up skills by inquiring about students' prior knowledge; (c) contextualizing where teachers should facilitate language learning by including many visuals; (d) schema building where teachers should introduce lesson by discussing general points first before introducing the main lesson. For example, the student should preview a book before reading; (e) re-presenting text where teachers should have students revisit a book by participating in a play; and (f) develop metacognition where teachers should model strategies such as think-alouds before reading assignments.

Marlow (2002) elaborated on how there are high expectations from both the student and teacher when reading performance levels need to exemplify achievement. Marlow (2002) suggested that teachers use read alouds, cassette tapes or CD ROMs as part of the scaffolding process. As the students are listening to tapes or CD ROMs they are learning to identify new words as well as enhance their comprehension skills (Marlow, 2004, p. 3).

Scaffolding can be presented in many ways with ELLs; however, the fate of the academic performance of the students lies with the teachers. Once teachers are exposed on effective strategies that can be applied in mainstream classrooms, teachers have to be willing to conform and maintain self- confidence of transpiring to "best practices" in teaching.

Scaffolding and Cooperative Learning Approach

Cooperative learning has been noted as one of the most viable strategies used to integrate scaffolding when mainstream classroom teachers are eager to develop good reading skills in ELLs. Lessow-Hurley (2003) described cooperative learning as "a particularly useful strategy for promoting interaction, increasing and upgrading the amount of student-initiated talk in the classroom" (p. 45). Lessow-Hurley (2003) suggested that cooperative learning is good because ELLs are talking to their peers in groups, and it helps to build up language and content learning (p. 45). As stated by Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec (as cited in Johnson & Johnson, 1998), cooperative learning is evident when students are in groups working as a whole.

Herrell and Jordan (2004) elaborated on the importance of using scaffolding during cooperative learning groups. According to Herrell and Jordan (2004), Cooperative learning has several purposes such as giving students the opportunity to talk to each other about the activity and present the final results as a group. ELLs learn from other students but they also learn how to work together when participating in cooperative groups (Herrell & Jordan, 2004).

Studies conducted by Robert E. Slavin (as cited in Reed & Railsback, 2003), presented positive results on cooperative learning as a teaching method for students on every grade level, but considered to be very beneficial for students who are second language learners. As observed during my study, many times ELLs are uncomfortable when the teacher is observing and monitoring their actions. When they are working with peers, they tend to feel at ease about expressing themselves. Gibbons (2002) suggested that group work, when used effectively, exposes ELLs to different languages and they are able to absorb more information. She also elaborated on how this eliminates feelings of fear about participating in cooperative groups versus whole class instruction. Gibbons (2002) also stated that working in groups present ELLs with an opportunity to listen and learn what is heard in context. This strategy has been described by Ghaith (2003) as way to help ELLs learn English.

Lutz, Guthrie, and Davis (2006) concluded that scaffolding instruction is more effective when students are engaged with one another in classrooms. The study involved three fourth grades classes in which one class received traditional instruction in a reading-science integrated class, which included whole group instruction and the other

two classes were engaged in groups where teachers applied scaffolding during

instruction. The classes that worked cooperatively exhibited higher scores in reading than

the group who received traditional instruction (Lutz, Guthrie, & Davis, 2006).

Fitzgerald and Graves (2004) emphasized how putting ELLs in cooperative groups

can help with social skills and expose them to other cultures. ELLs are able to acquire

and understand more about the English language from classmates who they are

socializing and completing class activities with more so than they will in a whole group

setting. Walqui (2006) elaborated on how it has been shown in research that ELLs show

academic improvement when working in cooperative groups verses working

independently. Yang and Wilson (2006) noted how cooperative grouping for students is

more traditional than in the past, and teachers are using this strategy to promote language

learning amongst ELLs.

Scaffolding and the Sheltered Instruction Approach

Research showed that scaffolding can be used as a model for assisting teachers with

building language and comprehension skills with ELLs during reading instruction.

Echevarria, Vogt, and Short (2004) discussed a research-based approach described as the

sheltered instruction approach (SIOP) in which teachers have been successful using

scaffolding as a strategy to teach ELLs in various content subject areas.

Scaffolding is used by many special area teachers, such as ESL teachers, with ELLs

during pull-outs; however, sheltered instruction is becoming more prevalent in

mainstream classrooms with teachers. According to Echevarria, Vogt, and Short (2004)

the SIOP model works for increasing performance levels in ELLs. Echevarria, Vogt, and

Short (2004) also noted that SIOP is good for building a foundation in all content subject areas. Since scaffolding begins with teachers assisting students through content areas, such as reading, this model could be used to monitor the success of reading performance in ELLs. However, because ELLs are learning a new language, incorporating the correct tools needed to initiate an effective learning process is essential for teachers. For example, Echevarria, Vogt, and Short (2004) pointed out the importance for teachers to look into students background and find out what is needed to scaffolding them into meeting the standards.

Wallace (2004) described sheltered instruction as instruction teachers use in classrooms to help facilitate learning of ELLs. Reed and Railsback (2003) discussed a professional development model that occurred in Fairbanks, Alaska. According to Reed and Railsback (2003) SIOP is a plan of instruction that is used with ELLs to instruct content on their levels. According to Echevarria and Short (as cited in Reed and Railsback, 2003), Students excelled higher in content areas where teachers used the SIOP model versus classrooms where teachers did not include the SIOP model. In sheltered instruction classrooms, teachers are able to model and teach ELLs how to interpret and construe subject area content without feeling the pressure of focusing on a majority of mainstream classroom students.

Reed and Railsback (2003) interviewed three teachers during a study of the SIOP model, and they suggested that teachers include nine points when using the sheltered instruction approach (p. 31):

- Students have to interact during cooperative groups by participating in conversations.

- Teachers have to work with students individually and check for understanding by taking slowly and repeating what is said.

- Teachers should spend a great deal of time on vocabulary development.

- Teachers should have students practice conversational skills daily.

- Teachers should have a daily routine for the students to follow in cooperative groups.

- Teachers should include active learning projects such as poetry reading.

- Teachers should keep a daily journal of student progression.

- Teachers should possess high expectations of students.

- Teachers should keep student portfolios.

- Modify assignments for English language learners, but make sure they are receiving the same assignments as their mainstream peers.

The SIOP model was deemed to be successful with ELLs when teachers implemented it in classrooms using appropriate strategies such as scaffolding. According to Reed and Railsback (2003), ELLs showed improvement of seven points when SIOP was used in classrooms in a year. Echevarria, Vogt, and Short (2004) described how using SIOP with ELLs helps them ease into a mainstream classroom with mainstream students with ease.

Echevarria, Vogt, and Short (2004) concluded that the SIOP model is an effective means of teaching content instruction to ELLs based on a study conducted by the Center

for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence (CREDE). A study was conducted

using teachers trained on how to apply scaffolding under the SIOP model compared to

teachers without the training (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2004). Although the experiment

was conducted using the writing scores of the students, the research study showed that

students who were instructed by teachers who were trained using the SIOP model scored

significantly higher than those who were used in the control group (Echevarria et al.,

2004, p. 217). Teachers have inquiring minds on how to approach "best practices" in

teaching whenever they are instructing ELLs; however, teachers have to be willing to

adjust to the flexibility of today's classrooms. Flexibility is sure to bring forth more

positive and fulfilling learning results for the ELLs.

Cultural Aspect

Gandara, Maxwell-Jolly, and Driscoll (2005) noted how teachers are accountable

for students' learning and the more prepared they are for teaching the better the outcome

with student performance. For example, an approach taken in California schools with a

high enrollment of ELLs proved that teachers were more confident using strategies in

mainstream classrooms (Gandara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2005). Schools have to

provide models for teachers to follow and use in mainstream classrooms with ELLs. If

educators work together to condone these tactics, schools all over the country should

develop a gain in the achievement of the ELLs population.

Fitzgerald and Graves (2004) revealed some of the main foundations for

scaffolding reading with English language learners. One aspect discussed is how ELLs

provide a difference in language, background, and culture when they enter U. S.

classrooms (Fitzgerald & Graves, 2004). Teachers are responsible for making learning fun for students and to make sure the activities are connected to their culture. Another reason behind the importance of discovering effective means of teaching ELLs is because ELLs are eager to learn and always put forth effort to grasp new concepts (Fitzgerald & Graves, 2004,). Because of this, teachers need to welcome the challenge of transferring knowledge to children who are determined and excited to learn, but at the same time, they feel they aren't understood. Consequently, teachers are accountable for achieving academic success in their students despite other challenges involved. On the other hand students too are held accountable for their learning despite the many challenges that they encounter in the classrooms.

Montgomery, Roberts, and Growe (2003) described teacher training programs designed for new teachers in participating universities. One such program CLAD, or cross cultural language academic development certification program, educates future teachers on differences in student cultures, awareness of theoretical views, and teaching practices (Montgomery, Roberts, & Growe, 2003). The program's purpose is to provide teachers with methods of instruction that will teach content to ELLs as well as teach language development simultaneously. Fitzgerald and Graves (2005) suggested that teachers include cultural studies as part of lessons in order to familiarize ELLs with the difference in meanings of words. According to Fitzgerald and Graves (2005), when English language learners are introduced to content in English they are faced with learning a new language as well as a new culture.

Ernst-Slavit, Moore, and Maloney (2002) suggested implementation of a curriculum with various cultural diversity. This will show that all students and their culture are important enough to be included in classrooms where all students can learn about and appreciate different backgrounds. Ernst-Slavit, Moore, and Maloney (2002) also noted that having a curriculum of this sort depends on the flexibility of the schools.

The statement represents many of U. S. schools that fail to meet the needs of the diverse group of students who are accruing at a drastic rate. Teachers are struggling to climb the ladder of achievement with the English language learners, yet they are not familiarizing themselves with the critical aspect of the students' lives.

A study was conducted in India in an elementary school (Piller & Skillings, 2005) and showed evidence of effective instruction when teachers were observed using scaffolding as a strategy to teach reading in English. Teachers were interviewed on strategies conducted during reading with their students to determine viewpoints and effective application of these strategies during instruction (Appendix B). Montgomery, Roberts and Growe (2003) pointed out how hard it is for teachers to instruct ELLs without receiving formal training. Schools that are lacking in educating the ELLs population have to join in to fight for a cause that depends on these children's future. Schools need to make sure the most effective strategies are incorporated into mainstream classrooms suitable for producing the academic achievement expected of ELLs.

According to Hawley and Rollie (2002), Teachers are accustomed, in successful schools, to teaching students with different backgrounds. Hawley and Rollie (2002) explained the two approaches associated with effective teaching are first, students should

be required to excel according to the standards on the same level despite cultural backgrounds. Secondly, become familiar with students' cultural background and create a curriculum to fit their needs as well. (Hawley & Rollie, 2002). In other words, teachers must be knowledgeable on what works best in promoting academic achievement for ELLs. One way to explore this theory is to examine and analyze strategies implemented in classrooms with ELLs learning and teachers' teaching. Marlow (2002) expressed how scaffolding facilitates teachers with teaching reading but to reach the desired level of achievement, teachers have to have high expectations and standards for the students.

Best practices are essential in U. S. schools to help accommodate and educate diverse learners such as ELLs. Cappellini (2005) discussed how backgrounds and needs of all students should be taken into account in the classroom in order to be successful with achieving academic standards.

For this study, these elements were included: (a) focus group interviews with teachers 1-5, (b) teacher observations and (c) reading placement test scores of 1-5 students at the study site. Data included reading placement tests scores for 3 months . The scores were analyzed using a paired samples *t*-test to assess the relationship of the study variables.

Echevarria, Vogt, and Short (2008) described how ELLs face difficulties when schools do not include a curriculum that fits their needs and a schools achievement depends on how well students understand how to read. The study results determined if mainstream classroom teachers without formal training were effective when scaffolding English language learners reading instruction.

Summary

I discussed how teachers can use scaffolding in many ways to transfer content knowledge to ELLs. However, studies have shown that teachers who are provided with the appropriate training, such as CLAD, to teach ELLs in mainstream classrooms is more rewarding. I examined research studies conducted in classrooms using scaffolding to teach subject areas to ELLs. A discussion of some of the useful ways for teachers to use scaffolding as a teaching practice can include every aspect of teaching for teachers and learning for ELLs. Although limited studies using scaffolding as a strategy with ELLs reading skills have been conducted, scaffolding instruction for ELLs can build the foundation to a concrete method of teaching and learning content areas in all subjects in mainstream classrooms. In section 3, I discuss the research design and approach, participants' roles, and data collection and analysis details.

Section 3: Research Method

Because reading is such a critical area for all students, the researcher investigated how reading is taught in mainstream classrooms with ELLs. I used a mixed-methods approach to determine how scaffolding is used during reading with ELLs in elementary classrooms by mainstream teachers and its effectiveness on ELLs reading performance levels. The researcher also looked at mainstream classroom teachers' perspectives on providing reading instruction to ELLs in mainstream classrooms. According to Creswell (2003), a mixed-methods study includes a study where comparing data before and after provides an explanation of research complications (p. 18). Creswell (2003) also noted that a mixed-methods study will employ numbers and written information (p. 20). The data was collected using the sequential transformative strategy as described by Creswell (2009, p. 212). According to Creswell (2009) "the purpose sequential transformative strategy is to best serve the theoretical perspective of the researcher" (p, 212).

The qualitative data were collected using open-ended questions in focus group interviews and observations of classrooms during reading instruction. The teacher participants used Scott Foresman Placement tests as tools to determine, which students display signs of progress during the study while using the selected strategy (i.e., scaffolding). The participating students were given a pretest to determine reading level before the study. The participants were administered a posttest at the conclusion of the study. I observed teachers as they applied the selected strategy (scaffolding) with ELLs in mainstream classrooms. I collected observational notes during the classroom observations. I met with participants on a weekly basis to discuss observational notes and

once during the course of the study to discuss interview questions/responses of the strategies applied during reading instruction with ELLs. At the conclusion of the study, I analyzed observational notes and responses taken from interview questions to finalize a conclusion on the selected strategy. The data taken from the pre and posttests were collected and analyzed to compare progress in reading performance levels of the ELLs. The quantitative data included pre and posttests from seven students in each teacher participant's classroom. Although one teacher participant was unable to participate in the focus group interview, his students' pre and posttests were collected for quantitative analyses.

The quantitative data were collected from pre-post tests administered to the students during reading instruction. The focus group interview tapes were transcribed and coded and themes emerged. However, one of the teacher participants was absent due to illness and did not participate in the focus group interview. The transcriptions from the remaining 14 participants provided sufficient information for researcher to analyze.

Classroom observations were conducted once per week to perceive how the teachers interacted with students during reading. A teacher from each grade level was observed each week during reading and the observation notes were recorded on an observation form for analysis. Fifteen teacher participants' classrooms were visited to observe teaching strategies used with ELLs.

<center>**Research Design and Approach**</center>

The study was conducted following the sequential transformative strategy as the format to collect data (Creswell, 2003, p. 216). Creswell (2003) explained, "In this

design, either method may be used first, and the priority can be given to either the quantitative or the qualitative phase, or even to both if sufficient resources are available" (p. 216). Data collection started with my collection of quantitative data, qualitative data, and at the conclusion of the study, quantitative data again (Creswell, 2003).

The teachers administered two tests using Scott Foresman Placement Test. The quantitative data were collected from preassessments administered to students prior to the study and scores were analyzed again after the proceeding assessment was given in the 3 month period of the study. According to Hatch (2002), collecting unobtrusive data provides the researcher with information independently without interrupting participants. (p. 119). I observed teachers and collected observational notes. My goal was to acquire collective data without interruptions of teaching and learning. Three participating teachers from each grade level participated in focus group interviews conducted in the teacher/parent room, which is a vacant classroom used for special meetings with parents, after school once per week. One fifth grade participating teacher was unavailable due to illness. However, the teacher's students' pre-post test results were included in the quantitative analysis.

The study was conducted over a 3-month period in an elementary setting with teachers who instructed ELLs reading in mainstream classrooms. Data were triangulated using observations, interviews, and results from formal assessments. Reliability was based on the test-retest approach described by Trochim (2006). According to Trochim (2006) the outcome of the pre-post test could possibly produce different numbers. (p. 2).

The study included a pretest administered to the students prior to the study and a posttest administered three months at the conclusion of the study.

Population and Sample

The population of the research study included 105 elementary students who were classified as ELLs and 15 teachers who were classified as mainstream classroom teachers. The purpose of the study was to determine the possible influence of scaffolding on ELLs reading performance levels when applied by mainstream classroom teachers and to collect data on mainstream classroom teachers' perceptions of teaching ELLs reading. Convenience sample was used as the sampling procedure. The student participants had to be classified as ELLs and teacher participants who were considered mainstream classroom teachers.

The ELLs were selected from three first, three second, three third, three fourth and three fifth grade classes. The students participating in the study received additional language support from trained ESOL teachers; however, they receive reading instruction from homeroom teachers who were considered mainstream classroom teachers. Teachers from five grade levels were chosen because those who are considered mainstream teachers were responsible for teaching ELLs during regular classroom reading instruction. I also chose these grade levels because I was previously an instructor in fourth grade for one year and a fifth grade for 14 years; therefore, I acquired hands-on experience with ELLs during inclusive reading instruction. The 15 teachers selected for the study participated in focus group interviews and observations in which I acquired qualitative data for analysis. One teacher did not participate in the focus group interview,

however, I did collect observational data on this participant. Six of the teacher

participants were ESOL endorsed but acted as mainstream classroom teachers. Seven of

the teachers were veteran teachers and had long-term experience teaching English

language learners in mainstream classrooms.

The investigation was conducted to gather data displaying the results of

scaffolding when applied in mainstream classrooms during reading with ELLs reading

performance levels and mainstream teachers' opinions on teaching English language

learners. The research questions that the researcher attempted to answer over the three

month cycle of the investigation were:

1. What perceptions do teachers have of instructing ELLs during mainstream

classroom reading instruction?

2. In what ways do mainstream teachers implement scaffolding as a strategy into

their classrooms to assist with improving the reading achievement of ELLs?

3. What is the effect of the strategy when it is applied to ELLs

reading skills?

Qualitative Aspect

The qualitative phase of the study was conducted following the case study strategy

described by Creswell (2009). According to Creswell (2009) case studies allow the

researcher to look at programs or other aspects including one or more individuals (p.13).

My investigation was to determine how teachers apply the selected strategy (scaffolding)

during reading with ELLs who receive instruction in mainstream classrooms and to

investigate the teachers' perceptions on teaching ELLs reading instruction.

I am employed in the elementary school where the investigation took place; therefore, obtaining access to participants required submitting a proposal of study to the county office for review. Upon approval, I was required to get approval from the principal of the school to conduct research over the 3 month anticipated time. Creswell (2003) described some of the characteristics of conducting a qualitative study as one where participants are in a natural environment, triangulation is present, a relationship has been established with participants, data is interpreted, and researcher is sure about his or her role (p. 181).

Since I was an instructor in the elementary school where the investigation took place, access to classrooms was not a dilemma during the research. However, I explained carefully the terms of how and when the observations were to take place in the participants (teachers) classrooms during the course of the study.

Hatch (2002) explained that researchers need to communicate expectations with participants before the initial research starts (p. 51). Once the selected teachers agreed to participate in the study, I provided details surrounding the proposed study. Hatch (2002) suggested the researcher relay why the study is taking place, their role, and the length of time the study will take place. (p. 52).

Because I have worked in the setting with fourth grade for one year as a teacher and 14 years as a teacher with fifth grade, I developed a good, close working relationship with all participants. Therefore, a researcher-participant working relationship had been established in the classrooms. This gave the participants comfort with participating in

focus group interviews and allowing me to enter classrooms to observe their teaching practices.

The data collected were collected by analyzing responses from teacher interviews and observations. According to Hatch (2002), focus groups are people who are use being present in the same type of environment (p. 24). I conducted focus group interviews as a form of qualitative data collection, and conducted classroom observations as part of data triangulation. Creswell (2003) explained to triangulate data the researcher has to use an abundant source of data taken from participants and developing categories that make sense and coincide with one another (p. 196). I chose to use focus group interviews along with observational data as sources to analyze the impact of scaffolding on ELLs reading performance levels in mainstream classrooms. I included seven open-ended questions in a questionnaire prior to focus group meetings on teaching strategies used during reading instruction with ELLs. The focus group interviews were conducted once per week with each grade level. The interview data was put into themes and coded. The themes were arranged according to interview responses. The themes identified and coded were Background Knowledge (KNOW), Comprehension Strategies (STRAT) and Evaluation (EVAL). These themes emerged according to the most common strategies participating teachers utilized during reading instruction with ELLs.

I conducted classroom observations to get a feel for background of classroom students, environment and how the participants monitored their students instruction. (Hatch, 2002, p. 72). The observations were conducted in each classroom on a weekly basis during the 3-month timeframe. The observations provided the me with

interpretations of the participants' use of scaffolding when applied during reading instruction with ELLs. For example, did the teachers truly understand how to apply scaffolding? Are the students exposed to the strategy in a sufficient amount of time? These are some questions that helped me understand how scaffolding impacts the reading performance levels of ELLs as well as how mainstream teachers viewed their role when teaching reading to ELLs.

Quantitative Aspect

The quantitative segment of the research study test involved only one group of students' scores obtained from pretests and posttests. There was no control group participating in the study. The purpose of the study was to look at the results of scaffolding on ELLs reading performance levels when applied by mainstream classroom teachers.

The study began with the collection of scores taken from a county mandated reading test. The Scott Foresman Placement Test was administered in two sessions before an analysis of the quantitative data took place. One test was administered at the initial formation of reading classes, and the other test was administered 3 months later. The reading groups were formed based on the outcome of the levels from the results of the Scott Foresman Placement tests; therefore, the teachers had an opportunity to work with the ELLs in groups. The purpose of the pre-assessment was to determine the ELLs reading levels before using the selected strategy (scaffolding) during reading instruction. The collection of scores over 3 months determined if the strategy presented an impact on increasing the reading performance levels of ELLs.

I compared the pre-and post test scores using the paired samples *t* test. The analysis of the scores, before and after the selected strategy was applied, was intended to determine whether or not scaffolding had a statistically significant role in increasing ELLs reading performance levels during reading in mainstream classrooms.

The 15 teacher participants examined the progress of ELLs reading performance levels by using appropriate assessment materials designed for monitoring reading performance levels. The paired samples *t* test determined if the teachers' use of scaffolding during reading instruction with ELLs exhibited an increase in reading levels. Triangulating data substantiated validity of the study. Internal consistency reliability, average inter-item correlation, was chosen to address the study because the use of observations was included as forms of data collection. The data taken from the pre and posttests had been included in a table displaying comparisons of each students' progress before the statistical results were computed. I anticipated results would display a significant change in ELLs reading performance levels once data were analyzed.

Evidence of Quality

I conducted a mixed-methods study to explore scaffolding when applied to ELLs reading skills by mainstream classroom teachers. I looked at how mainstream classroom teachers feel about teaching ELLs reading during inclusive instruction. The qualitative data included focus group interviews and observations. The weekly interviews were conducted using pre-assigned questions on a questionnaire (Appendix B). The instrument used (Appendix B) was used in a study conducted in India in an elementary school. The teacher participants were asked the seven questions taken from the questionnaire

(Appendix B) during focus group interviews with three participating teachers in Grade

Levels 1 through 5. However due to an illness, one fifth grade teacher did not participate

in a scheduled focus group interview.

The focus groups were conducted in order to allow teachers with common

interests to expand on their feelings and opinions about specific strategies with ELLs

during reading instruction in mainstream classrooms. The purpose was to determine if

any of the participating teachers implement scaffolding as a strategy with ELLs during

their reading instruction. The teachers were interviewed in clusters per grade level. For

example, the three teachers participating in each grade level were interviewed in focus

groups beginning with the three first grade teachers and continued on to two participating

fifth grade teachers.

The observations were conducted in classrooms where I collected raw field notes

and analyzed at the conclusion of the study. Observations were done weekly to obtain an

overview of strategies teacher participants viewed as the most effective for scaffolding

reading instruction with ELLs. The observations provided me with a point of view on

how teachers apply the selected strategy (scaffolding) with ELLs during reading

instruction.

The quantitative data included pre and post tests results taken from reading

placement tests. The statistical paired samples t test provided me with an accurate

outcome of how much improvement ELLs displayed in reading performance levels over

3 months. The teacher participants provided test scores of students prior to scaffolding

reading strategies with ELLs and students were tested at the end of the 3 month

timeframe. The scores were compared using the paired samples *t* test to determine if the scaffolding strategies teachers employed influenced ELLs reading performance levels. The results established an understanding of how well scaffolding works with ELLs reading skills when implemented in mainstream classrooms. Cappellini (2005) suggested that teachers use a formal assessment at least two times per year (p. 22). According to Cappellini (2005) an observation of an increase in reading and language and how they connect should occur (p. 22). The results taken from the assessments provided insight on how teachers should use scaffolding to enhance reading performance levels with ELLs.

Participants' Protections

The participants were informed on several important aspects of conducting the research study using formal interviews, observations, and tests results prior to their involvement. I submitted a proposal of research to Walden University's Institutional Review Board before proceeding with further involvement in the study. I also presented a form of voluntary participation, including stipulations on withdrawing from the study, to participants for signature. According to Creswell (2003), several important factors surrounding ethical issues should be included before conducting a research study. Creswell (2003) noted that participants should be told that they do not have to participate if they do not want to participate, all procedures should be explained prior to the study, an explanation of why the study is being conducted, and how it is beneficial to others, and the participants should know that they are entitled to look at any data collected during the study, and access the final results (p. 64).

The participants were presented with a consent form that included the terms involved in the research study (Appendix A). The participants signed the form agreeing to take part in the study. Assuring the participants their rights before becoming involved in the research study established a trustworthy relationship amongst participants and the researcher was able to make the study a more successful journey.

Summary

In this section, I described the research design and approach, population and sample, sample size, data analysis and validation procedures, and how I protected the participants involved in the study. In section 4, I present the results of the research study taken from the data collected by the researcher. In section 5, I discuss implications of social change, and discuss recommendations for further study.

Section 4: Findings

Overview

The findings of the study are presented in this section. The participants background, data collection process, and analysis are included. An explanation of data results and analysis of the mixed-methods study have been presented to show evidence of how the research questions were answered.

Introduction

The study was conducted in an elementary school in a County School System in the United States. The purpose of the study was to examine strategies mainstream classroom teachers implement with ELLs during reading instruction and how the strategies influence ELLs reading skills. In this section, I present the results of a mixed-methods study conducted using the sequential transformative strategy in an elementary setting with 15 mainstream classroom teachers who instructed students who were labeled as ELLs in mainstream classrooms. Interviews, classroom observations, and pre-post tests were used to collect data analysis. The purpose of this research study was to examine the results of scaffolding when applied to ELLs reading skills by mainstream classroom teachers.

The participants were asked to respond to seven questions surrounding their perceptions on teaching ELLs (Appendix B). The interviews were conducted over a 2-week time period because of various conflicts with scheduling for each grade level. Consequently, one of the 15 participating teachers could not attend the grade level focus

group interview. The data have been saved on my computer, and files with copies of students' tests and scores will remain in my file cabinet for a period of 5 years.

Research Question 1

The first research question asked: What are mainstream classroom teachers' perceptions on the effectiveness of scaffolding when applied to ELLs reading skills? The focus group interview began with the three participating first grade teachers. The first question was explored by each teacher as it was read by the me (Appendix B). After carefully reviewing the transcribed tapes it was evident that prior knowledge was the guiding principle for teaching ELLs reading during the initial stage of teaching (Appendix C).

The participants were identified using T for teacher and assigned numbers 1-3 for each grade level participant. First grade teacher participants: T1 has been a mainstream classroom teacher for 5 years, T2 has been a mainstream classroom teacher for 7 years, and T3 has been a mainstream classroom for 19 years. The participants were adamant that scaffolding instruction is most effective once it has been determined what the students' needs are to build a foundation for reading.

T1 reported, "I think working with English language learners requires more than one hour of reading, I think English language learners need to have extended reading time to help develop language skills." "English language learners do need an extended reading block to assess prior and background knowledge about subjects they already know" T1 stressed how crucial she feels it is for ELLs to acquire that small group one-on-one instruction for a duration of time during reading instruction.

T2 reported, "Working with English language learners is challenging, and a teacher needs to focus on getting the student comfortable with learning a new language by first digging into what they have prior experience knowing." T2 believed that just including ELLs in a mainstream setting with mainstream students during reading instruction is very challenging, yet, requires taking the time to get to know the students and what they might be familiar with in their language.

Second grade teacher participants advocated building on what the students know as well. T1 has been a mainstream classroom teacher for 25 years, T2 has been a mainstream classroom teacher for almost 30 years, and T3 has been a mainstream classroom teacher for 25 years. T1 reported, "It is imperative that I know where to begin my approach with the student and that starts with developing a feeling of what the student already knows". T2 reported, "I feel that English language learners are the fastest growing segment of school-age population. Their background knowledge is essential in helping the student transfer what they learned in their first language."

T3 reported, "I think conversation is the main key, it's allowing kids to speak to one another, and gives you the knowledge they have from their cultural background." T3 suggested ELLs be assigned peer tutors in order to gain more knowledge on prior learning experience.

Third grade participants consisted of T1 who has been a mainstream classroom teacher for 10 years, T2 has taught in a mainstream classroom for 15 years, and T3 has instructed ELLs in a mainstream classroom for almost 30 years. T1 reported, "You need to find out where they are. Don't take for granted what they know already. You need to

model and create prior knowledge." T2 reported, "Since vocabulary is the biggest stumbling block, it is important to assess prior knowledge." T3 reported, "Assess the student to see what he or she has learned and then start modeling the basics, such as pictures, vocabulary and letter sounds."

The responses for the fourth grade teacher participants included similar thoughts as the other grade levels. T1 has been a mainstream classroom teacher for 5 years, T2 has been a mainstream classroom teacher for 10 years, and T3 has been in a mainstream classroom for almost 20 years. T1 reported, "Conversation is the main key. Students can take risks to speak, and feel safe to practice their language." T2 reported, "It is important to recognize the knowledge they have, and acknowledge their cultural backgrounds." T3 reported, "My belief is to find out where they are at first, in order to build on background knowledge." In other words, teachers have to communicate with ELLs in order to get a feel of how to approach scaffolding strategies.

Fifth grade teacher participants also stressed the importance of acquiring prior knowledge of students. Only two teacher participants were able to attend the interview session. The third participant was unavailable to sit in on the focus group interview. T1 has taught ELLs in a mainstream classroom for 20 years. T2 has been in a mainstream classroom for almost 25 years. T1 felt that students should be given the opportunity to share cultural background information; however, T1 believed guiding principles for teaching ELLs is to "start instruction at a slower pace, and extend all reading time". T2 stated, "Teachers need to find out prior knowledge because they need that key information to begin scaffolding instruction." These teacher participants felt strongly

about approaching ELLs initial reading skills with prior knowledge. According to

Echevarria, Vogt, and Short (2008), "Reflect on the amount of background experience

needed to learn and apply the content concepts and include ways to activate students'

prior knowledge related to them." (p. 3). The teacher participants expressed how

important it is to look into a students' background knowledge before presenting a

curriculum for them to learn in the classroom.

Research Question 2

The second research question asked: In what ways do mainstream teachers

implement scaffolding as a strategy into their classrooms to assist with improving the

reading achievement of ELLs? The interview results determined that all teacher

participants place an abundance of energy into discovering the most effective

comprehension strategies for scaffolding instruction with ELLs. Four out of seven of the

interview questions touched on instructional strategies and comprehension appeared to be

the most integral part of teaching students reading. The three first grade teacher

participants expressed how they felt strongly about modeling read alouds and picture

books when instructing ELLs reading.

First grade participant T1 stated, "I know that it's cumbersome for students

learning to speak and read in English, read alouds usually facilitate their learning process

using various pictures that sometimes they can identify with using their prior

knowledge". Second grade teacher participants' responses were identical to responses

given by the first grade teacher participants. Second grade teacher participant T3

expressed how "modeling literature using picture walks, labeling pictures, using

vocabulary development activities, and modeling words into syllables are excellent strategies to use with developing and scaffolding reading with English language learners."

Third grade teacher participants described various comprehension strategies used in the classroom to scaffold reading instruction as more hands-on. Third grade teacher participant T2 noted, "I usually start with pantomiming when reading literature, and then to make sure the students understand words." T2 reported, "I pair them with a student to look up vocabulary in the dictionary, the paired student is usually one that has less difficulty with understanding the English language." T2 reported, "Once the students look up the word in the dictionary, they have to create a sentence using the vocabulary word from the story". T2 reported, "Comprehension has a lot to do with what they already know in their head. If the students are really struggling, I usually read a page, display pictures, and discuss each page as we read."

Fourth grade teacher participants didn't focus a lot on spelling as with the lower grades. Their main objective was to teach vocabulary and use best practices to teach reading comprehension. Fourth grade teacher participant T1 stated, "I usually encourage my English language learners to go back to reread and discuss." T3 expressed, "It is important that I model how students can look at graphics and pay attention to what they are reading."

Fifth grade teacher participants discussed how since their grade level was critical for all students to progress to the next grade level, they consistently explore various strategies during reading with ELLs. The participants noted how scaffolding instruction

for older students is definitely a critical stage in fifth grade. Teacher participant T1

reported, "You have to ask a lot of questions as students read literature, implement many

read alouds, develop small grouping , use peer teaching and have the students stop and

ask each other questions." T1 reported, "I usually model how I want the students to

implement these strategies during the lessons." The responses from all the participants

demonstrated how best practices are used to ensure the highest achievement of learner for

ELLs. Thus, the teacher participants used assessment to determine how scaffolding and

modeling in the classroom assisted with learning and retaining reading skills.

Research Question 3

The third research question asked how are reading performance levels influenced?

A majority of the teacher participants expressed how observation is the ideal assessment

to gain a sense of where the student is and still warrants a need. First grade teacher

participants used end of unit assessments, benchmark, and teacher observation as forms

of teacher assessment. T1 stated, "End of unit tests usually helps me determine if what

has been taught needs to be revisited. I use the benchmark test to help me plan how I

should group my students during reading instruction." Second grade teacher participants

discussed how the assessments are an integral part of helping teachers plan daily lessons.

Teacher participant T1 stated, "It determines the student performance level, and I usually

use both formal and informal assessments to monitor my students." Third grade teacher

participants found that teacher observation, unit and benchmark tests help guide the

progress of students in reading. Teacher participant T2 concluded, "Self-made tests, and

teacher observations guide your instruction and allow you to differentiate your reading

groups to the appropriate levels." Fourth grade teacher participants mentioned teacher observations as being an effective method of discovering what students have learned. Teacher participant T2 stated, "I have always used teacher observation as a form of assessment for my ELLs; however, teacher-made tests, as well as benchmark always serves as the main assessment for seeing where my students are and where they need to be." Fifth grade teacher participants were also in agreement as the other teacher participants. The participants had a concern that the pacing chart does not allow very much time for teacher-made testing. The participants reported that a lot of teacher observation, oral assessment, benchmark, and unit assessment are utilized to assess students.

The focus group interviews provided valuable information on what the participants employed in mainstream classrooms during reading instruction with ELLs. Observations were conducted to obtain a visual of how the participants use scaffolding to teach reading instruction.

The mainstream classroom teachers elaborated on strategies they deemed the most effective when teaching reading skills to ELLs in mainstream classrooms. For example, most of the teachers talked about the importance of background knowledge when introducing reading skills to ELLs. Read alouds were also mentioned as one of the most "best practices" for teaching ELLs successful reading skills. Overall, the mainstream classroom teachers agreed on similar strategies necessary for producing success with ELLs reading ability.

Class Observations

A class observation form was used to determine if some of the strategies were being employed in the teacher participant's room during instruction with ELLs. The focus was on strategies the teacher participants' used with students who were identified as ELLs. In the first grade teacher participants' classrooms I noted how the teacher participants used cooperative grouping but traveled from group to group to provide special attention to the needs of the ELLs. For example, in one first grade classroom the teacher participant read a story about pumpkins. The teacher participant instructed the students to complete an independent activity using the story. The teacher went to each group to model and make sure the student understood how to begin the activity. One first grade teacher participant read a story about U.S. states. As the teacher participant read the story, she explained vocabulary words to the students as they read along. This strategy was to ensure that the ELLs would be able to demonstrate and apply effective measures when an assignment was given. The teacher participant also asked questions using text to make self-connections. Again, I only focused on how the teacher used scaffolding to instruct the students who were ELLs.

Another teacher participant read a story about American folktales. The teacher participant used visuals and asked questions using many of the Bloom's taxonomy model for questioning. The teacher participant discussed and modeled how to locate facts from the story and gave examples of facts from the story before asking the students to assemble in groups to complete an assignment. Some of the students were confused about the assignment and the teacher participant sat with those students who experienced

difficulties understanding the assignment. The teacher participant in this lesson used visuals for those students who were identified as ELLs.

According to Echevarria, Vogt, and Short (2008), every student gains some benefit when using manipulatives, but it facilitates ELLs learning progress in content subjects when they use continuous hands-on instruction (p. 139). The first grade teacher participants followed this lead of using hands-on approach. During observation of second grade classroom teacher participants, one of the teacher participants read a story on how the state of Georgia changes.

The second grade teacher participant modeled some of the vocabulary words as she read the story, and she drew visuals on a flip chart to accommodate the ELLs. One teacher participant read a book on phases of the moon to students. The teacher participant used scaffolding in cooperative groups to assist students who were identified as ELLs. The teacher participant assigned a peer buddy to the students as they read the story. The teacher participant used a globe as a visual with this lesson on moon phases. The teacher participant also traveled amongst cooperative groups to check for understanding.

The third grade teacher participants followed suit when scaffolding instruction for ELLs in mainstream classrooms. One third grade teacher administered a read aloud on wetlands. The teacher participant in this third grade classroom, began by asking the question "what is a wetland?". The teacher participant then proceeded to give the definition of a wetland to students. The teacher participant also had pictures on hand for the students to observe. The teacher participant used a significant amount of questioning

as she read the story. The students were assembled in cooperative groups when the teacher participant finished the read aloud.

The third grade teacher participant was also indulged in a read aloud with the students. The third grade participant did a break-down of the vocabulary in the story before reading. As the teacher participant read the story, questions were asked after each page. The students were asked to use context clues to identify meaning of vocabulary. The students who were identified as ELLs were partnered with another student to discuss story content. The students who spoke no or minimal English were allowed to draw an illustration of something in the story. Another third grade teacher participant read a story and asked students to identify vocabulary highlighted in the story and use each word in a sentence. The ELLs were asked to identify the highlighted vocabulary words but only asked to write definitions in a journal.

Fourth grade teacher participants used scaffolding to teach students about explorers. The fourth grade teacher participant had students seated in cooperative groups with leveled books on explorers. The teacher participant traveled to each group to model how to read the story and look at graphics as the students read the stories for better understanding. Yet one fourth grade teacher participant assemble students in cooperative groups and provided each student with fiction or nonfiction reading passages. The students had to read aloud after the teacher participant read aloud first. The teacher participant also discussed unfamiliar vocabulary as the passages were read aloud.

Fifth grade teacher participants used a variety of strategies to scaffold ELLs reading instruction. One fifth grade teacher participant color-coded reading groups and

assigned nonfiction leveled books to each student. The teacher participant modeled how the reading activity should be completed before students became engaged in the lesson. ELLs were paired with a student who spoke fluent English, who interpreted vocabulary and teacher-made questions as they read. The teacher participant traveled to each group to ask questions to assure student understanding. Furthermore, one fifth grade teacher participant used fiction leveled readers with students. The students who were identified as ELLs were asked to write a text-to-self response once they completed reading the story. The teacher participant used an example of text-to-self using one of the story selections before students began the assignment. The teacher also traveled amongst groups to demonstrate proper application of strategy.

The observations were conducted in mainstream classrooms with ELLs amongst mainstream students. Furthermore, the teacher participants used scaffolding to facilitate reading skills with ELLs. Although whole group lessons were observed in some mainstream classrooms as part of a mini-lesson, the teacher participants always demonstrated deep concern and desire to assist those students who were not considered mainstream students. Once they were participating in cooperative groups, teacher participants dedicated themselves to modeling instruction assignments for students identified as ELLs. For example, the teacher participant traveled to groups to observe and ask questions, to include visuals, and to make sure the students could incorporate connections.

Themes

The following are the themes that emerged from the interview transcripts: (a) beliefs and guiding principles for teaching ELLs, KNOW, (b) effective instructional strategies, STRAT, and (c) methods of assessment, EVAL. The first theme was about the most effective principles for teaching reading to ELLs. Fifteen participants were originally scheduled for the focus group interviews; however, one participant was ill and could not participate. Out of 14 interviews, all 14 teacher participants expressed how important it is to focus on student background knowledge when instructing ELLs in mainstream classrooms. A majority of the teacher participants expressed how important it is to develop a sense of where ELLs are based on what they have learned in their native language.

The second theme was about the strategies teachers implement in the classroom when teaching ELLs reading skills. The third theme was about how teachers assessed what they taught the students. The three categorical themes that were deemed more important for scaffolding ELLs reading instruction are shown in Table 1. The categories show the number of participants and the percentage of participants who agreed with implementing the identified scaffolding techniques, as well as, assessments during reading instruction.

Table 1

Scaffolding Strategies

Theme	Teacher Participant	Percentage
Background knowledge (KNOW)	14	100
Comprehension (STRAT)	14	100
Evaluation (EVAL)	14	100

Quantitative Findings

The study was concluded with comparing the reading placement pre and post tests results to determine if any progress was shown in ELLs reading performance levels after teacher participants employed scaffolding during instruction. The teachers provided me with pretests results prior to the focus group interviews and observations. The teacher participants then provided me with post tests at the conclusion of the research study. Seven students' scores were analyzed from each participant's classroom

The data analysis was conducted using the one-group pretest-posttest design as described by Creswell (2003, p. 168). The results of the study showed that there was a statistically significant change in scores over a 3-month cycle of instruction in most of the mainstream classrooms. The pre-post tests were compared using the paired samples *t* test. After a careful review of pre-post tests results, the statistical data using the paired samples *t* test displayed a slight increase in students' test scores in most of the ELLs test scores. The test was administered to the participants. In Grade 1, $p < .050$ resulted in rejecting the null hypothesis. The tables reflect paired samples *t* test results from Grade 1 using pre and posttest scores conducted before and after the study.

The results for T1 first grade indicated a statistically significant difference in the pre and posttest scores students' scores: pretest ($M = 87$, $S = 6.03$, $n = 7$, SE $= 2.28$,) and posttest ($M = 94$, $S = 4.83$, $n = 7$, SE $= 1.83$). The pre-post test analysis results: (M = -7.00000, S = 5.6, and p = .017) indicated there was a significant difference in the pre and posttest scores (Table 2).

Table 2

Grade 1 T1 Paired Samples t Test Analysis

Paired Samples Statistics

Grade 1	Mean	Std. Deviation	*n*	Std. Error Mean
Pretest	87	6.03	7	2.28
Posttest	94	4.83	7	1.83

Paired Samples *t* Test

Grade 1 T1	Mean	Std. Deviation	*Sig.* (2-tailed)
Pre and Post Test	-7.00	5.6	.017

The results for T2 first grade indicated a statistically significant difference in the pre and posttest scores students' scores. The pretest scores analysis was ($M = 79$, $S = 5.81$, $n = 7$, $SE = 2.20$) and posttest analysis was ($M = 89$, $S = 10.32$, $n = 7$, $SE = 3.90$). The pre and post test results ($M = -10.43$, $S = 6.68$, $p = .006$) The null hypothesis was rejected.

Table 3

Grade 1 T2 Paired Samples T- Test Analysis

Paired Samples Statistics

Grade 1	Mean	Std. Deviation	n	Std. Error Mean
Pretest	79	5.81	7	2.20
Posttest	89	10.32	7	3.90

Paired Samples Test

Grade 1 T2	Mean	Std. Deviation	*Sig.* (2-tailed)
Pre and Post Test	-10.43	6.68	.006

The results for the T3 first grade indicated significant difference in the pre and posttest scores students' scores. The pretest scores analysis was ($M = 84$, $S = 7.95$, $n = 7$, $SE = 3.01$) and posttest analysis was ($M = 92$, $S = 9.41$, $n = 7$, $SE = 3.56$). Pre and post test results ($M = -8.43$, $S = 5.16$, $p = .005$) The null hypothesis was rejected (Table 4).

Table 4

Grade 1 T3 Paired Samples t Test Analysis

Paired Samples Statistics

Grade 1	Mean	Std. Deviation	n	Std. Error Mean
Pretest	84	7.95	7	3.01
Posttest	92	9.41	7	3.06

Paired Samples *t* Test

Grade 1 T3	Mean	Std. Deviation	*Sig.* (2-tailed)
Pre and Post Test	-8.43	5.16	.005

After analyzing results of the paired samples *t* test results in second grade it was determined that $p > .05$ for T1 results. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted. The pretest scores indicated ($M = 89$, $S = 8.99$, $n = 7$, $SE = 3.40$). The posttest scores indicated ($M = 94$, $S = 5.35$, $n = 7$, $SE = 2.02$). Pre and post test results ($M = -5.71$, $S = 11.34$, $p = .231$). The two-tailed significance determined that there was no difference in pre-post test results and the null was accepted based on this statistical information (Table 5).

Table 5

Grade 2 T1 Paired Samples t *Test Analysis*

Paired Samples Statistics

Grade 2	Mean	Std. Deviation	*n*	Std. Error Mean
Pretest	89	8.99	7	3.40
Posttest	94	5.35	7	2.02

Paired Samples Test

Grade 2 T1	Mean	Std. Deviation	*Sig.* (2-tailed)
Pre and Post Test	-5.71	11.34	.231

The results from T2 second grade indicated ($M = 80$, $S = 7.87$, $n = 7$, $SE = 2.97$), posttest results indicated ($M = 91$, $S = 7.76$, $n = 7$, $SE = 2.93$), Pre and post test results ($M = -10.43$, $S = 4.08$, $p = .001$) the significance two-tailed result rejected the null.

Table 6

Grade 2 T2 Paired Samples t Test Analysis

Paired Samples Statistics

Grade 2	Mean	Std. Deviation	n	Std. Error Mean
Pretest	80	7.87	7	2.97
Posttest	91	7.76	7	2.93

Paired Samples Test

Grade 2 T2	Mean	Std. Deviation	*Sig.* (2-tailed)
Pre and Post Test	-10.43	4.08	.001

Careful review of T3 second grade results displayed ($M = 89$, $S = 6.36$, $n = 7$, *SE* $= 2.40$), posttest displayed ($M = 95$, $S = 3.42$, $n = 7$, $SE = 1.29$), Pre and post test ($M = -5.86$, $S = 4.22$, $p = .010$) the two-tailed significance level rejected the null for this paired samples *t* test as well.

Table 7

Grade 2 T3 Paired Samples T-Test Analysis

Paired Samples Statistics

Grade 2	Mean	Std. Deviation	*n*	Std. Error Mean
Pretest	89	6.36	7	2.40
Posttest	95	3.42	7	3.42

Paired Samples Test

Grade 2 T3	Mean	Std. Deviation	*Sig.* (2-tailed)
Pre and Post Test	-5.86	4.22	.010

After analyzing data for third grade, results showed that all classes resulted in an increase in post tests results.

Table 8

Grade 3 T1 Paired Samples t Test Analysis

Paired Samples Statistics

Grade 3	Mean	Std. Deviation	n	Std. Error Mean
Pretest	82	6.82	7	2.58
Posttest	92	6.30	7	2.38

Paired Samples Test

Grade 3 T1	Mean	Std. Deviation	*Sig.* (2-tailed)
Pre and Post Test	-9.71	4.23	.001

T1 third grade results showed ($M = 82$, $S = 6.82$, $n = 7$, $SE = 2.58$) on pretest and the posttest results displayed ($M = 92$, $S = 6.30$, $n = 7$, $SE = 2.38$) resulting in a difference in scores on pre-post tests. Pre and post test results ($M = -9.71$, $S = 4.23$, $p = .001$) Therefore, the two-tailed significance level rejected the null since $p < .05$.

Table 9

Grade 3 T2 Paired Samples T-Test Analysis

Paired Samples Statistics

Grade 3	Mean	Std. Deviation	*n*	Std. Error Mean
Pretest	86	7.35	7	2.78
Posttest	91	5.57	7	2.10

Paired Samples Test

Grade 3 T2	Mean	Std. Deviation	*Sig.* (2-tailed)
Pre and Post Test	-5.43	3.15	.004

T2 third grade results displayed statistical data ($M = 86$, $S = 7.35$, $n = 7$, $SE = 2.78$) whereas posttest results indicated ($M = 91$, $S = 5.57$, $n = 7$, $SE = 2.10$). Pre and post test ($M = -5.43$, $S = 3.15$, $p = .004$) The two-tailed significance level resulted in the null being rejected since $p < .05$.

Table 10

Grade 3 T3 Paired Samples t *Test Analysis*

Paired Samples Statistics

Grade 3	Mean	Std. Deviation	*n*	Std. Error Mean
Pretest	89	7.72	7	2.92
Posttest	95	5.29	7	2.00

Paired Samples Test

Grade 3 T3	Mean	Std. Deviation	*Sig.* (2-tailed)
Pre and Post Test	-6.00	5.42	.026

T2 third grade results indicated ($M = 89$, $S = 7.72$, $n = 7$, $SE = 2.92$) on the pretest results, on the other hand, posttest results showed ($M = 95$, $S = 5.29$, $n = 7$, $SE = 2.00$). Pre and post test ($M = -6.00$, $S = 5.42$, $p = .026$) The two-tailed significance level indicated $p < .05$ concluding that there is a significant difference in pre-post test results before and after the experimental design. After analyzing fourth grade results, it was determined that there was a significant difference in pre-post test scores.

Table 11

Grade 4 T1 Paired Samples T-Test Analysis

Paired Samples Statistics

Grade 4	Mean	Std. Deviation	n	Std. Error Mean
Pretest	47	13.35	7	5.05
Posttest	81	6.82	7	2.58

Paired Samples Test

Grade 4 T1	Mean	Std. Deviation	*Sig.* (2-tailed)
Pre and Post Test	-33.71	9.20	.000

T1 fourth grade results indicated (*M* = 47, *S* = 13.35, *n* = 7, *SE* = 5.05), posttest results showed (*M* = 81, S = 6.82, *n* = 7, *SE* = 2.58). The result for pre and post test (*M* = -33.71, *S* = 9.20, *p* = .000) The difference in scores showed that the null should be rejected since *p* < .05.

Table 12

Grade 4 T2 Paired Samples t Test Analysis

Paired Samples Statistics

Grade 4	Mean	Std. Deviation	n	Std. Error Mean
Pretest	47	13.35	7	5.47
Posttest	81	6.82	7	2.58

Paired Samples Test

Grade 4 T2	Mean	Std. Deviation	*Sig.* (2-tailed)
Pre and Post Test	-33.71	9.20	.000

T2 fourth grade scores resembled T1 scores ($M = 47$, $S = 13.35$, $n = 7$, $SE = 5.05$), posttest results ($M = 81$, $S = 6.82$, $n = 7$, $SE = 2.58$). Pre and post test ($M = -33.71$, $S = 9.20$, $p = .002$). The significance level displayed $p < .05$ resulting in the null being rejected indicating that there is a significant change in scores of prepost tests during the experiment.

Table 13

Grade 4 T3 Paired Samples t *Test Analysis*

Paired Samples Statistics

Grade 4	Mean	Std. Deviation	n	Std. Error Mean
Pretest	50	7.61	7	2.88
Posttest	79	9.44	7	3.57

Paired Samples Test

Grade 4 T3	Mean	Std. Deviation	*Sig.* (2-tailed)
Pre and Post Test	-29.14	8.23	.000

T3 fourth grade scores ($M = 50$, $S = 7.61$, $n = 7$, $SE = 2.88$), were lower than posttest results ($M = 79$, $S = 9.44$, $n = 7$, $SE = 3.57$). Pre and posttest ($M = -29.14$, $S = 8.23$, $p = .001$) The significance level $p < .05$ rejected the null. Fifth grade prepost test results indicated that all but one class scored significantly higher on the post test during the mixed-methods study.

Table 14

Grade 5 T1 Paired Sample t Test Analysis

Paired Samples Statistics

Grade 5	Mean	Std. Deviation	*n*	Std. Error Mean
Pretest	78	19.58	7	7.40
Posttest	89	14.64	7	5.53

Paired Samples Test

Grade 5 T1	Mean	Std. Deviation	*Sig.* (2-tailed)
Pre and Post Test	-10.43	12.27	.066

T1 fifth grade scores (*M* = 78, *S* = 19.58, *n* = 7, *SE* = 7.40), show that there was a significant difference in scores on posttest (*M* = 89, *S* = 14.64, *n* = 7, *SE* = 5.53). Pre and posttest (*M* = -10.43, *S* = 12.27, *p* = .066). Therefore, the null was accepted since *p* > .05.

Table 15

Grade 5 T2 Paired Samples t *Test Analysis*

Paired Samples Statistics

Grade 5	Mean	Std. Deviation	n	Std. Error Mean
Pretest	82	19.61	7	7.41
Posttest	97	7.56	7	2.86

Paired Samples Test

Grade 5 T2	Mean	Std. Deviation	*Sig.* (2-tailed)
Pre and Post Test	-14.71	12.61	.021

T2 fifth grade scores indicated ($M = 82$, $S = 19.61$, $n = 7$, $SE = 7.41$), there was no difference in scores on posttest ($M = 97$, $S = 7.56$, $n = 7$, $SE = 2.86$). The pre and posttest results ($M = -14.71$, $S = 12.61$, $p = .021$) The null was rejected since $p < .05$ at the conclusion of the statistical test.

Table 16

Grade 5 T3 Paired Samples t *Test Analysis*

Paired Samples Statistics

Grade 5	Mean	Std. Deviation	*n*	Std. Error Mean
Pretest	57	24.15	7	9.13
Posttest	84	9.07	7	3.43

Paired Samples Test

Grade 5 T3	Mean	Std. Deviation	*Sig.* (2-tailed)
Pre and Post Test	-26.43	21.17	.016

T3 fifth grade score (*M* = 57, *S* = 24.15, *n* = 7, *SE* = 9.13) showed there was a significant difference in pre-post test results (*M* = 84, *S* = 9.07, *n* = 7, *SE* = 3.43). The statistics for pre and post test (*M* = -26.43, *S* = 21.17, *p* = .016), therefore the null was rejected in this case also since *p* < .05.

Summary

The results of the mixed-methods study indicated strategies used when applying scaffold instruction in mainstream classrooms with ELLs do have an impact on increasing reading scores with a majority of ELLs. Responses from focus group interviews with 14 of the 15 teacher participants displayed teachers in harmony with practices essential for producing success in reading with ELLs. Observations concluded with teachers using similar scaffolding techniques during reading with ELLs. These

scaffolding techniques observed permeated in each teacher participants' classroom during

reading instruction with ELLs. The prepost tests results provided a determination that

"best practices" used when scaffolding ELLs reading are effective when applied

consistently. However, a more in-depth discussion about the findings and

recommendations will follow in section 5.

Section 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

Mainstream classroom teachers have struggled to teach ELLs effective reading skills. However, mainstream classroom teachers have united and collaborated on means to scaffold reading instruction with ELLs in regular classroom settings. The requirements for meeting the (NCLB) 2001 have become more rigorous over the years. Mainstream classroom teachers are, nevertheless; accountable for producing achieving test scores in all students. The accountability presents pressure on mainstream classroom teachers who instruct English learners to meet the required standards in reading.

The purpose of this research study was to explore how mainstream classroom teachers perceive and implement strategies using scaffold instruction with ELLs during reading instruction. I explored what effect scaffold instruction had on student reading performance when scaffolding instruction during reading content. This mix-methods study using focus group interviews, observations, and pre-post tests was conducted to answer the research questions:

1. What were mainstream classroom teachers' perceptions on the effectiveness of scaffolding when applied to ELLs reading skills?

2. In what ways did mainstream teachers implement scaffolding as a strategy into their classrooms to assist with improving the reading achievement of ELLs?

3. How were reading performance levels influenced?

The results of the qualitative data provided an outlook on the most effective strategies mainstream classroom teacher participants appeared to direct focus on for scaffolding instruction with ELLs during reading instruction. The focus group interviews, conducted with 14 of the 15 mainstream classroom teacher participants, and classroom observations taken from 15 participating mainstream classroom teacher participants provided an explanation of their choices of the most effective strategies implemented with ELLs during reading instruction. The classroom observations clarified how teachers employed the strategies, discussed in the focus group interviews, during reading instruction with ELLs and how these strategies affected the students' learning environment.

The mainstream classroom teacher participants were in accordance with their choices of strategies needed for scaffolding ELLs reading instruction. For example, a majority of the mainstream classroom teacher participants believed in looking into ELLs background knowledge in order to obtain a foundation for teaching reading instruction in English. Comprehension strategies originated with vocabulary as the main method of introducing literature to ELLs. Continuous assessment of students' progress was also found to be an aspect for mainstream classroom teacher participants. Classroom observations provided evidence of mainstream classroom teacher participants' perceptions on scaffolding instruction for ELLs.

The quantitative data produced evidence of progress for ELLs' reading instruction scaffolded by mainstream classroom teachers. The pre-post test showed there was an influence in reading performance levels on most of the ELLs' reading scores based on strategies scaffolded during reading instruction. For example, first grade pre-post test

show a difference in statistical scores across the board. In second grade, there was not a significant statistical difference in test scores across the board.

Some theorists have concluded that scaffolding ELLs instruction is the most effective means of learning for content information. Although, some ELLs require more time to adapt to learning content in English than others, it is possible for teachers to fulfill the requirements and expectations of education.

Interpretations of Findings

The interpretations of the findings were determined according to focus group interviews, observations, and test results. The interview findings led to a conclusion that participating teachers were in collaboration with each other on essential strategies needed to instruct ELLs during reading instruction. The teacher participants felt ELLs should not be forced to come into classrooms and expect to learn without teachers getting a feel of prior knowledge to build on. The participating teachers also felt scaffolding strategies are crucial for building a solid foundation for ELLs. According to Kim (2010) "While the growth rate of ELL population in U. S. schools seems high, the number of trained teachers in ELL instruction seems relatively small, among various aspects of effective instruction, scaffolding is an important concept that helps us consider the context of learning language" (p. 110). The observations provided evidence of scaffolding as a natural process for participating teachers during reading instruction with ELLs. During observations, modeling of lessons in classrooms was evident throughout. The test scores provided an outlook on how well teachers' strategies affect learning with ELLs during reading.

Two of the participating teachers felt there were time constraints that prohibited them from scaffolding more instruction with ELLs. However, overall 14 out of 14 participating teachers during the focus group interviews were in agreement with how instruction should be scaffolded for ELLs. For example, the responses from the interview questions showed similarities in strategies participating teachers thought were most effective for ELLs reading instruction.

Bounded by Evidence

The data collected through focus group interviews, observations, and test scores confirmed findings that scaffolding instruction with ELLs does have a positive impact on reading performance levels. The 14 participating teachers during the focus group interviews communicated strategies that work best for them during reading instruction, and observations and tests results supported the perceptions of these teachers, however the one teacher who did not participate in the focus group interview did display signs of workable strategies during classroom observations, which produced evidence in pre and post test results.

Findings and Relationship to Literature

The literature reported in section 2 touched on the importance of scaffolding instruction with ELLs in content classes. The literature information suggested that mainstream classroom teachers use visuals, look into prior knowledge, use hands-on activities, peer tutoring, read alouds, and so on. For example, Bradley and Bradley (2004) discussed the effectiveness of scaffolding if visuals are included during instruction. The participating teachers' responses for scaffolding reading included the consistent use of

visuals. Kriteman (2006) stressed the importance of prior knowledge for scaffolding instruction for ELLs. Fourteen of the participating teachers felt prior knowledge is definitely the key to help support ELLs with reading instruction. Vygotsky (1978) suggested that ELLs learn best from scaffolding. Out of fourteen participating teachers, all agreed instructional strategies for scaffolding comprehension was to include read alouds, reread, partner reading, and create guided reading groups. Lessow-Hurley (2003) reported cooperative grouping as a scaffolding strategy for increasing ELLs comprehension skills.

Finally, participating teachers indicated how they monitored ELLs' reading progress through various methods of assessments such as teacher observation and questioning. Fitzgerald and Graves (2004) discussed questioning as a form of evaluation to use to assess ELLs' comprehension. According to Kim (2010), "Teacher questions positively affected student participation in classroom activities and language learning" (p. 109). According to the participating teachers, scaffolding instruction during reading and other content classes, is the only way to reach ELLs successfully.

According to Kiriakidis (2011a/2011b), educators need to be mentored in order for student achievement to increase. Kiriakidis (2011b) asserted that the perceptions of elementary school teachers of emerging learning technologies are positive when teachers are supported. Kiriakidis and Brewer (2011) stated that reading intervention programs are helpful as early as Grades 1 and 2. Kiriakidis and Schwardt (2011) asserted that even Senge's learning organization model can apply to K-12 schools where administrators use team learning for the distribution of school resources. Kiriakidis and Barber (2011)

reported very positive perceptions of high school honor students on the academic skills needed to succeed in college science classes.

Implications for Social Change

The implications for social change in this study of strategies implemented in mainstream classrooms with ELLs includes that while many of the teacher participants are accustomed to providing reading instruction to ELLs, only three of the teachers held ESOL endorsements to teach ELLs. Echevarria, Vogt, and Short (2008) discussed how several ELLs receive instruction from mainstream classroom teachers who have yet had any training on how to teach meaningful instruction for developing a second language (p. 123). The mainstream classroom teachers used experience not training to build a foundation for ELLs reading skills. The study could provide an insight to administrators on which scaffolding strategies are most effective with producing higher reading performance levels in reading with ELLs.

This study could also encourage educational policy holders to suggest school systems to offer training programs for mainstream classroom teachers on scaffolding strategies to teach ELLs, and they could require school systems with highly populated ELL enrollments to implement a school-based Spanish class for mainstream classroom teacher who speak English only. However, since the research study was conducted, one pro to consider is that the research school has recently introduced SIOP to mainstream classroom teachers as part of a training session to help with teaching ELLs content. This shows that the level of expectation is high for instructing ELLs and whatever steps

necessary to take will be implemented as an intervention plan for improving achievement in reading.

Recommendations for Action

Recommendations for action could include more teachers acquiring certification for teaching ELLs. Administrators could arrange schedules for ESOL certified teachers to work with ELLs during reading instruction and other content subject areas at least for the first year of enrollment. Mainstream classrooms have become accustomed to strategies needed to teach ELLs, however, more training and education could ease some of the stress and pressure that was transparent during the focus group interviews.

Recommendations for Further Study

ELLs instruction in mainstream classrooms with mainstream classroom teachers is a crucial area of research. One possible recommendation is a 9-month study, which can be conducted in two or more schools in a more extended time frame to obtain more conclusive data. The study could include a comparison of teachers' perceptions and students' test data taken from schools that have a high population of ELLs in mainstream classrooms. Since the study was conducted in one elementary school, a study could be done in two elementary schools to compare the findings of ELLs' reading performance levels after scaffolding strategies have been utilized over an extended period of time. Another suggestion would be to conduct a research study with teachers who teach in mainstream classrooms, but are certified to teach ELLs. The method of strategies used with ELLs from teachers who have been trained might possibly have a different time-effect on reading skills, however, mainstream classroom teachers are using "best practices" as well.

Researcher's Reflection

The study was conducted to explore if scaffolding strategies with ELLs reading instruction display a significant change in reading performance levels. The results were indicative of what the participating teachers have worked hard to learn with experience and patience. The participating teachers displayed some signs of frustration, yet they vowed to keep collaborating on the most effective strategies warranted for ELLs successful achievement in reading. The results were evident of what was observed in classrooms during the 3-month investigation. I have always had inquiries on how

mainstream classroom teachers in adjacent grade levels support the needs of their ELLs during reading instruction. I have worked as a mainstream classroom teacher for 14 years with no formal training, however, collaboration and experience have produced success with scaffolding reading instruction with several ELLs over the years.

After analyzing data from this study, the teachers who have no professional training continue to seek out techniques that will help ELLs grow and develop into emergent readers. Scaffolding have proven to be an effective guiding tool for ELLs content instruction.

Summary

Since I have worked as a mainstream classroom teacher instructing reading to ELLs for 14 years, she has always had inquiries on how teachers in adjoining classrooms and grade levels strategized ELLs reading instruction. Hard work and dedication was demonstrated throughout all grade level classrooms, despite, no formal training with ELLs. It was not only the accountability that reminded teachers all students have to excel in some aspect of reading, but it was also the notion that all students are capable of learning to read, although on different levels, if hard work, patience, and determination is put forth into planning strategies that work well.

All mainstream classroom teacher participants expressed their passion for scaffolding ELLs reading instruction, although some frustrations were expressed at the same time. The mainstream classroom teachers were all agreeable about the most effect strategies needed for scaffolding ELLs reading instruction. Despite not having certification to teach ELLs, this is evidence that mainstream classroom teachers are

accustomed to collaborating as a whole when the fate of educating students is in their

hands. There are no exceptions to providing a foundation of learning and accepting ELLs

in mainstream classroom. It is prevalent, yet challenging for both ELLs and mainstream

classroom teachers, but without a doubt a great and beneficial learning experience for

both sides.

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Appendix A

Consent Form

You are being asked to take part in a research study conducted by Lolita McKenzie, who is a doctoral student at Walden University. The research study will take place over three months beginning September 1, 2008 through November 1, 2008. Your participation is voluntary. Please read the information below and ask any questions about anything you do not understand, before deciding whether or not to participate.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to explore what influence scaffolding has on English language learners' reading performance levels when applied by mainstream classroom teachers.

Procedure:

If you agree to participate in an experiment of scaffolding used in mainstream classrooms during reading instruction with English language learners, you will be asked to:

- Participate in a twenty-minute focus group interview

   Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

   The study has the following risks:
   There are no risks if you choose to participate in this study. If you choose to participate in this study, you will obtain valuable information on the effect and application of the selected strategy used in the study.

   Confidentiality:
   All information provided will be kept anonymous. Interview responses will be coded so that your name will not be displayed on any forms used for data analysis.

   Voluntary Nature of the Study:
   Participating in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate, the researcher will respect your decision. If you choose to participate and decide to have second thoughts, you may withdraw at any time.

   Contacts and Questions
   The researcher's name is Lolita McKenzie. The researcher's faculty advisor is Dr. Kiriakidis. You may direct any questions now or later. You may contact me at 770-717-8201 and mcke8770@bellsouth.net..

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature_____   Date _____

Signature of Investigator or Person Obtaining Consent _____

Date _____

Appendix B

Research Topic: Elements of scaffolding as it is applied to reading with English language learners in mainstream classrooms.

Research Question: What Is The Impact of Scaffolding On English Language Learners' Reading Performance Levels?

Time of interview:
Date:
Place:
Interviewer:
Interviewee:
Position of interviewee:

Interview Questions

1. What are your beliefs and guiding principles about teaching English language learners?

2. What instructional strategies do you use to teach the youngest children?

3. What instructional strategies do you use to teach phonics?

4. What instructional strategies do you use to teach spelling?

5. What instructional strategies do you use to teach comprehension?

6. What instructional strategies do you use to teach vocabulary?

7. How is assessment conducted and used in your classroom?

Piller, B. & Skillings, M. J. (2005). English language learners teaching strategies used by primary teachers in One New Delhi, India School. Retrieved July 5, 2007 from http://tesl-ej.org/ej35/cf.html

Appendix C

<u>Interview Transcript Codes</u>

Background Knowledge (KNOW)

Comprehension Strategies (STRAT)

Evaluation (EVAL)

Question 1: What are your beliefs and guiding principles about teaching English language learners? The responses from participating teachers indicated the most important factor in determining how to scaffold English language learners instruction is to first look into their background knowledge . First grade teachers were in accordance with how to scaffold English language learners' reading instruction. T1 stated, "I think working with English language learners requires more than one hour of reading, I think English language learners need to have extended reading time to help develop language skills". "English language learners do need an extended reading block to assess prior and background knowledge about subjects they already know". **KNOW** T2 followed with "Working with English language learners is challenging, and a teacher needs to focus on getting the student comfortable with learning a new language by first digging into what they have prior experience knowing". **KNOW** When T3 was asked how she feels, she said "Prior knowledge will give me a heads up on what I need to teach and what the student knows already". **KNOW** Second grade responses were similar. T1 said, "It is imperative that I know where to begin my approach with the student and that starts with developing a feeling of what the student already knows". **KNOW** T2 stated, "I feel that English language learners are the fastest growing segment of school-age population.

Their background knowledge is essential in helping the student transfer what they learned in their first language". **KNOW** T3 went on to say, "I think conversation is the main key, it's allowing kids to speak to one another, and gives you the knowledge they have from their cultural background". **KNOW** Grade three participants continued with the exact pattern. T1 said, "You need to find out where they are. Don't take for granted what they know already. You need to model and create prior knowledge". **KNOW** T2 stated, "Since vocabulary is the biggest stumbling block, it is important to assess prior knowledge". **KNOW** T3 responded by saying, "Assess the student to see what he or she has learned and then start modeling the basics, such as pictures, vocabulary and sounds". **KNOW** Fourth grade participating teachers' principles also stressed on background knowledge. T1 said, "Conversation is the main key, Students can take risks to speak, and feel safe to practice their language". **KNOW** T2 stated, "It is important to recognize the knowledge they have, and acknowledge their cultural backgrounds". **KNOW** T3 said, "My belief is to find out where they are first, in order to build on background knowledge". **KNOW** The two participating fifth grade teachers agreed as well. T1 said, "English language learners should start instruction at a slower pace, and extend all reading time". She stated, "I agree with learning where they come from, but time allotment should also be a consideration". **KNOW** T2 stated, "Teachers need to find out prior knowledge because they need that key information to begin scaffolding instruction". **KNOW**

Interview Questions 2-6 were all related to instructional strategies that mainstream teachers practice with English language learners during reading instruction.

Question 2 is directed for lower grades 1-3 participants since it stressed youngest children. What instructional strategies do you use to teach the youngest children? T1 first grade responded by saying "It depends on the lower-leveled skills targeted". **STRAT** T2 said, "I use visuals and graphic organizers". **STRAT** T3 stated, "I just ask essential questions and use visuals". **STRAT** Second grade participants responded with similar answers. T1 stated, "I use language masters, and hands-on activities". **STRAT EVAL** T2 said, "I use graphic organizers, and pictures". **STRAT**, **EVAL** T3 said, "I communicate with meaningful words like asking "what is your favorite color". **STRAT, KNOW** Third grade participants included visuals as one way to teach younger students as well. T1 said, "I use visuals, low level-high interest books, and I find books that interest the students". **STRAT, KNOW** T2 stated, "I use abc books, language masters, and picture books". **STRAT** T3 said, "I introduce my English language learners to picture dictionaries and picture books". **STRAT** Although, this question didn't apply to grades 4-5, their responses were based on students who are considered learning English as a second language. Grade four participants all use visuals and picture books to introduce to Ells. T1 said, "I do read alouds, and use visuals with my ELL students". **STRAT, EVAL** T2 stated, "I use partnering with English speaking students, and picture books". **STRAT, EVAL** T3 said, "I use language masters, peer tutoring, and pictures". **STRAT, EVAL** Fifth grade participating teachers followed suit. T1 said, "I use running records with my Ells, and graphic organizers". **STRAT, EVAL** T2 said, "I use graphic organizers, picture books, and pair my students with fluent English speakers**." STRAT, EVAL**

Question 3: What instructional strategies do you use to teach phonics? First grade

T1 said "I teach rhyming words, but I spend most of my instruction on teaching

comprehension". **STRAT, EVAL** T2 said, "I begin with teaching the alphabet, letter

sounds, and blends". **EVAL** T3 said, "I teach blends, letter sounds, and use big books".

Second grade felt starting off with the alphabet was also a good strategy for teaching

phonics. T1 said, "English language learners are coming to us with no knowledge of the

English language, I usually start off with teaching ABC's, and blending sounds". **EVAL**

T2 said, "I use picture cards, I teach vowel and consonant sounds, and use big books."

STRAT, EVAL T3 said, "I too use big books, and teach vowel, and consonant sounds,

but I sometimes have my students choose words from stories and write them down and

practice saying them". **STRAT, EVAL** Third grade responses touched on the same

strategies. T1 said, "I help students combine phonics cues with other cues, I teach

phonics only to those who need it. I teach in small groups focusing on rhyming words

and sound symbol relationships". **KNOW, EVAL** T2 stated, "I start with showing the

basics, like picture cards with the alphabet". **KNOW, EVAL** T3 stated, "I teach phonics

by introducing letter sounds and picture books." **KNOW, STRAT, EVAL** Grades four

and five participants elaborated on how they didn't feel phonics was important for

children of the age range in which they instruct. However, fourth grade T2 participant

said "I expose my students to visuals and big books a lot, but my focus is to teach

comprehension". **STRAT, EVAL** Grade five participants only responded with they don't

focus on phonics. T1 said, "My goal is to get my students to understand how to read so I

just use visuals as a means of teaching words". **STRAT, EVAL**

Question 4: What instructional strategies do you use to teach spelling? Most of the grade levels do not concentrate on spelling during reading instruction. Grade 1 participants, Grade 2 participants, and Grade 3 participants appear to use the same strategy for introducing spelling to Ells during reading instruction. T1 grade 1 said, "I break down words into small parts to introduce to students." Students practice writing words too." **EVAL** T2 said, "I have students practice writing words and then discuss their meanings, use them in sentences, and play spelling games". **EVAL** T3 stated, "My students write each word three times, and use in a sentence, I discuss each word with my students". **EVAL** Grade 2 teacher participants answered with similar responses. T1 said, "I focus on sight words, and I have my students practice writing them down on paper". **EVAL** T2 stated, "I go over spelling words every week and make sure they understand and talk about the word". **EVAL** T3 said, "Phonics and spelling are so closely related, the strategies used are basically the same." **EVAL** Grade three participants focus on spelling but comprehension is their priority. T1 said, "I focus on vocabulary words, and my students use pictionaries to help." **EVAL** T2 and T3 said their main focus was vocabulary words. T3 said, "I choose words from stories and discuss with my students after they write them down". **KNOW, EVAL** Grades four and five had similar views on teaching spelling during reading. Grade four T1 said, "We primarily look at vocabulary every week before reading a story". **KNOW** "My students have to look the vocabulary words up in the glossary and then we talk about them". **EVAL** Grade five T1 said, "We don't teach spelling. We introduce vocabulary every week by saying the words aloud and having the students find the definitions". **KNOW, EVAL**

Question 5: What instructional strategies do you use to teach comprehension? All 14 of the participating teachers felt strongly about using read alouds to as a scaffolding technique for reading comprehension. First grade T1 said "I know that it's cumbersome for students learning to speak and read in English, read alouds usually facilitate their learning process using various pictures that sometimes they can identify with using their prior knowledge". **KNOW, STRAT** T2 stated, "I tell my students to go back and reread, and look at pictures". **STRAT** T3 said, "I begin with read alouds and ask questions as we read to assess their understanding". **KNOW, STRAT, EVAL** Second grade responses touched on using visuals as a scaffolding technique. T1 said "I set up guided reading groups where I enforce main idea, generalization, and visualization as we read". **KNOW, STRAT, EVAL** T2 said, "English language learners need visuals to understand the concept of reading" "I use pictures from books, magazines, etc. to model reading comprehension with ELLs". **KNOW, STRAT, EVAL** T3 stated, "Modeling literature using picture walks, labeling pictures, using vocabulary development activities, and modeling works into syllables are excellent strategies to use with developing and scaffolding reading with English language learners'. **KNOW, STRAT, EVAL** Third grade believed in including a more hands-on approach when scaffolding reading comprehension. T1 said, "I have my students read the passages and go back to highlight key information using highlighters. "I guide them through it by modeling first, and then I have them do independent practice". **KNOW, STRAT, EVAL** T2 stated, "I usually start with pantomiming when reading literature, and then to make sure the students understand the words", "I pair them up to look up vocabulary in the dictionary, the paired student is

usually one that has less difficulty with understanding the English language Once the students look up the word in the dictionary, they have to create a sentence using the vocabulary word from the story". "Comprehension has a lot to do with what they already know in their head, if they students are really struggling, I usually read a page, display pictures, and discuss each page as we read". **KNOW, STRAT, EVAL** T3 said, "I create guided reading groups where I read to my students and have the lower group draw pictures about what they read". **KNOW, STRAT, EVAL** Fourth grade desired rereading as an approach to understanding a story. T1 said, "I usually encourage my English language learners to go back to reread and we discuss". **STRAT, EVAL** T2 said, "ELLs have to engage in partner reading as part of scaffolding reading instruction". **STRAT** T3 expressed how "It is important that I model how students can look at graphics and pay attention to what they are reading". **KNOW, STRAT** The two fifth grade participants views were exact. T1 said, "You have to ask a lot of questions as students read literature, implement read alouds, develop small groups, use peer teaching and have the students stop and ask each other questions". "I usually model how I want the students to implement these strategies during my lessons". **KNOW, STRAT, EVAL**

Question 6: What instructional strategies do you use to teach vocabulary? First grade participants thought vocabulary should be stressed as much as possible. T1 said, "Vocabulary is taught to my English language learners by using context clues in stories". **STRAT** T2 stated, "I have CRCT (Criterion Referenced Competency Test) centers where the students have to plug words into reading passages", preparing them for the test". **STRAT, EVAL** T3 said, "I have my students copy the vocabulary words down in a story

and draw pictures of each word". **KNOW, EVAL** Second grade used visuals to teach

vocabulary. T1 said, "I use a word chart and picture books to teach vocabulary to my

English language learners". **KNOW, STRAT, EVAL** T2 said, "I use language masters

and I have my students write the meaning of the word and use it in a sentence". **KNOW,**

EVAL T3 stated, "I take a picture walk as we read the story, and to understand the

meaning of a word, I tell my students to look at words around the word they don't know".

KNOW, STRAT, EVAL Third grade's viewpoint was more hands-on for teaching

vocabulary. T1, T2, and T3 uses vocabulary games and read alouds to teach vocabulary.

T3 said, "Vocabulary games make learning fun for ELLs." **KNOW, EVAL** Fourth grade

emphasized read alouds as an effective strategy to teach vocabulary. T1 said, "First you

have to find out what words students are familiar with". "You have to find a variety of

ways to teach vocabulary to ELLs". "I have them write definitions, illustrate to show

understanding and sometimes I call out the definition and have the student write the word

on the board". **KNOW, EVAL** T2 said, "I use read alouds daily". "I choose some of the

vocabulary words from the stories and write them on the board". **KNOW, STRAT,**

EVAL T3 stated, "Read alouds are good sources for teaching English language learners

vocabulary and comprehension". "I sometimes have them make picture cards with the

vocabulary words". **KNOW, EVAL** Fifth grade's strategy for teaching vocabulary was

comparable to what fourth grade teachers employ. T1 said, "Read alouds work for my

ELLs vocabulary development". **KNOW, STRAT, EVAL** T2 said, "I teach vocabulary

in all content area classes, not just reading." "In science, I teach vocabulary by having the

students copy words and draw pictures". Read alouds are done in all my content area classes with my ELL students." **KNOW, STRAT, EVAL**

Question # 7: How is assessment conducted and used in your classroom? The grade levels' assessments are the same throughout. First grade T1 said, "End of unit tests usually helps me determine if what has been taught needs to be revisited. I use the benchmark test to help me plan how I should group my students during reading instruction". **STRAT, EVAL** T2 said, "Placement tests are good for identifying what guided reading groups the students should be placed in", "I have conferences with my students on a weekly basis as a form of assessment." **STRAT, EVAL** T3 said, "Just like my colleagues, I use bench mark, placement tests, and end of unit tests for my assessments". **EVAL** Second grade participants used similar assessments. T1 said "It determines the student performance level, and I usually use both formal and informal assessments to monitor my students". **EVAL** T2 stated, "I use placement tests for reading group placement, and benchmark and end of unit tests to compare gains". **STRAT, EVAL** T3 said, "I give weekly tests and benchmark as assessments". "I use teacher observation to analyze where my students are". **EVAL** Third grade had similar thoughts about evaluating their students. T1 stated, "DRA is most helpful because it shows you a lot more because you sit down one-on-one with each student". **STRAT, EVAL** (DRA stands for Developmental Reading Assessment) T2 said, "Benchmark, placement tests, and teacher observations are best when the student doesn't speak English". **EVAL** T3 said, "Self-made tests, and teacher observations guide your instruction and allow you to differentiate your reading groups to the appropriate levels". **STRAT, EVAL** Fourth

grade thought teacher observations as a way to discover what the students have learned. T1 said, "On-going assessment is done in my classroom by looking at classroom assignments". "I give vocabulary tests, placement tests, and end of unit tests to see progress in reading". **STRAT, EVAL** T2 said, "I have always used teacher observation as a form of assessment for ELLs, however, teacher-made tests, as well as, benchmark always serve as the main assessment for seeing where my students are and where they need to be". **STRAT, EVAL** T3 said, "I use teacher-made tests because the story tests from the book are usually hard for the student understand". "I use placement tests, benchmark, and end of unit tests to look at how well the students are understanding content". **STRAT, EVAL** Fifth grade teachers were more concerned about time that is needed to administer continuous assessments. T1 said "The pacing schedule doesn't allow much time to do teacher-made testing". "I do a lot of teacher observation, oral assessment, benchmark, and unit assessment when I want to know were my students are". **STRAT, EVAL** T2 said, "I do teacher-made tests in other content area classes". "In reading, I give my students placement tests for grouping, benchmark, and unit assessment". **STRAT, EVAL**

Curriculum Vitae

<u>Education</u>

Master of Science/Urban Studies-Georgia State University, 1999
Bachelor of Science/Education-Brenau University, 1995
Ed. D./Walden University, 2004-Present

<u>Summary</u>

Over 14 years experience in an educational, a managerial and training role teaching pre-adolescent students using my communicative, professional, and educational expertise; conscientious, highly motivated and capable of working both independently and as a member of an integrated team.

<u>Experience</u>

Educator   October 1996-Present

- Implement classroom management strategies
- Design daily instruction for multilingual group
- Create varied methods of student assessment
- Evaluate and complete reports on students
- Facilitate student/parent conferences
- Coordinate grade level meetings as grade level chair
- Serve as cooperative teacher for local university
- Assist with development of strategies and goals for committees

Human Resources/Audit Assistant   July 1992-August 1996

- Designed schedules and charts for Human Resources Director
- Screened resumes and scheduled appointments
- Updated and maintained salary database
- Assisted with new hire orientation
- Designed new hire correspondences
- Investigated fraudulent activities within Section 8 housing and presented findings to Audit Manager
- Assisted with year-end audit
- Communicated with tenants and landlords on housing related issues
- Supervised and trained temporary employees

Executive Assistant   March 1989-July 1992

- Assured completeness, consistency, and accuracy of new business applications
- Updated and maintained client database
- Corresponded with clients on insurance issues
- Assisted Medical Director with various administrative tasks
- Supervised and trained department clerks