ADAPTING READER’S WORKSHOP
FOR UPPER ELEMENTARY
LANGUAGE ACADEMY STUDENTS

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To Brad, Brenna, and Brooke
For encouraging me the whole time
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

For the last twelve years, I have been working in an elementary school setting with English Language Learners (ELLs). I have been teaching in the same building for the last nine years, working collaboratively with a number of mainstream teachers. This collaboration process has provided me with the means to observe the teaching and learning process during the literacy instruction block in a number of different classrooms and at a number of intermediate grade levels. This unique experience afforded me the opportunity to reflect on a regular basis on how to address the needs of language learners.

Currently, our literacy instruction is delivered through a model called Reader’s Workshop (RW). RW is a method that does not use a traditional curriculum with a basal reading series, but rather, adjusts to meet the students at their current ability level while maintaining rigorous standards. RW is the model we have evolved to during my tenure in the district. But, while the instructional model has changed gradually, the problems the ELLs experience have remained relatively constant.

My study is the result of analyzing the needs of ELLs who have challenges that are consistent from year to year. In my work with these students, I came to the realization that trying to fit students into a one-size curriculum that is designed primarily for native English speakers was not meeting the needs for a significant portion of our
student population. In the current reality of high stakes performance testing, it is imperative that all our students have the opportunity to access the curriculum.

In this chapter, I explain the history of how I arrived at my central question. My outline begins with a summary of a federal mandate and the effects it has on our educational community. I then explain the demographics and the educational climate in my building. Finally, I discuss the pedagogical practices that are an integral part of RW, which is the curriculum we are required to use and adjust to meet the needs of LAs.

No Child Left Behind

In January 2002, new legislation was signed into law. Championed by the late Senator Edward Kennedy and signed into law by President G.W. Bush, this legislation is having a dramatic impact on educational practices across the nation. States must set high standards for all students and establish measurable goals to improve the quality of education. Compliance with this law means that states will continue to receive federal funding for schools. Results are reported according to subgroups, and incentives or penalties are applied depending on performance. This carrot and stick approach makes tracking demographics very important, as I will explain.

The No Child Left Behind Act (2002) (NCLB) is a reform that encompasses many aspects of education. It links state academic standards with student outcomes. It lays a foundation for schools and districts to use data to drive decisions on instruction. It requires schools to implement research-based practices in the classroom in order to improve the quality of instruction. It establishes accountability measures in public schools and it targets efforts towards closing the achievement gap.
Closing the achievement gap is a difficult task (SPPS Board of Education, 2008). NCLB forced schools and districts to focus their attention on improving the academic achievement of groups of students that are traditionally underserved. These groups usually include low-income students, students with disabilities, students of racial and ethnic subgroups, and English Language Learners. States define their major racial and ethnic subgroups and each of these groups’ achievement is measured separately.

Using federally mandated standardized testing, student achievement in the areas of math and reading is measured annually in grades three through eight, and at least once in high school. (SPPS Board of Education, 2008). The results of these tests are enormously important for schools. Penalties will be imposed on schools that fail to meet the NCLB goals for improving student achievements, and incentives are awarded for meeting the academic growth goals.

To avoid sanctions, NCLB requires that schools must demonstrate all students in all subgroups are meeting the achievement goals. The goals are referred to as Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), and AYP is not a stationary target. The goals increase each year, thus, what is adequate progress for fourth graders this year will not be considered sufficient progress for next year’s fourth grade students.

Ultimately, NCLB decrees that by the year 2014, 100% of students will be 100% proficient in math and reading as measured by the annual standardized tests. Students, who were in kindergarten when the act was signed, will be graduating from high school in that year.
While the purpose underpinning the act is to improve the quality of education in our nation, NCLB is not without its criticisms. Under the law, states are allowed to establish their own standards. States also develop their own tests to measure how well students achieve these benchmarks.

One criticism concerns how states choose to set standards. In order to meet the strict requirements of proficiency, some states have been accused of lowering their standards and writing tests that make it easier to increase scores. In these states, data show that while as many as 75% of students score as proficient on state tests, only 29% of these same students score in the proficient range on a test using federal standards (Associated Press, 2007).

Measuring and reporting on how well students meet the standards opens the door to another criticism. Historically, minority populations have higher dropout rates (Dobbs, 2003). Critics of NCLB accuse some schools of adopting creative methods to account for students who leave school before graduating. This new accounting inflates the school’s performance, which benefits the school, but not the students. If reported truly as dropouts, these numbers negatively impact a school’s ratings. However, if the numbers dip too low, sanctions could be imposed upon the school and thus we can see the reason why some schools may resort to inventive accounting practices.

NCLB critics also point to teaching practices. One of the dangers, they claim, is that teachers are teaching to the test (Wiggins, G. & McTighe, J., 2005). This implies that teachers who think they know what skills will be evaluated on the test will teach this to the exclusion of other key concepts. While it is desirable to be prepared to take an
important test, teaching to the test, at the exclusion of other curriculum, can have undesirable outcomes. One such outcome is that students are not taught the full depth and breadth of a curriculum. While the short-term goal of improved performance on the standardized test may be realized, the long-term goal of preparing students for the future is likely to be harmed.

Additionally, teachers who teach to the test may, in fact, render their students less ready to do well on the tests than if they had followed a more robust curriculum. Indeed, in several states, students performed poorly on tests because their teachers had misinterpreted how concepts would be assessed (Wiggins, G. & McTighe, J., 2005).

Critics point to other problems with a one-size-fits-all test. Under the law, allowable adaptations for the students who require exceptions are few (2007-2008 NCLB Results). For students with disabilities, certain parts of certain tests, typically the math sections, may be read aloud. Alternatively, arrangements may be made in advance of ordering the tests for certain students to take the test in a different setting.

ELLs may experience similarly related problems with taking the standardized tests. Students who have been in the United States for twelve months or less are exempt from the reading section of the test. They are not exempt from the math section, however. The text for the math tests may be read aloud as long as the proper documents have been ordered in advance of the testing date. Then, like the blind students in the previous example, ELLs in their second year of English instruction must complete the reading segments on their own. Their scores will be counted in the testing results (SPPS Board of Education, 2008).
After the tests have been administered to students, educators across the state wait for the results with a touch of anxiety. Meeting the targets is cause for celebration. Missing the targets is worrisome.

Federally mandated test results are reported by category, and each category must meet the targets for the school to meet AYP. The school district where I teach reports results for nine different categories and a single student may be counted in up to five different categories. This means that under-performing students have the potential to negatively impact school results exponentially. In my state for the results of a subgroup to be reported, there must be a minimum of twenty students (SPPS Board of Education, 2008).

Here is an example of how a student’s performance might be counted for NCLB. First, students who have been identified as ELLs are reported in this category. Next, the student must declare an ethnic affiliation. There are five ethnic categories. A student must choose just one ethnic affiliation, even if the student considers himself to be multi-racial. For the sake of my example, I will say, for the purposes of this example, that this student is Asian and has also been identified as an ELL. The other choices are White, American Indian, Black, or Hispanic (SPPS Board of Education, 2008). Thus, now the student has been counted twice in two separate categories for the school.

Then, NCLB reporting considers family resources. While this category is not limited to ELLs, typically families who are newly immigrated to the United States have a household income that is at or below the poverty line, thus qualifying their children for
the government subsidized Free and Reduced Lunch Program (FRP). If the student in my example had a qualifying application, she is counted a third time in this category.

After a long list of protocols has been met, some children qualify for special education services. This is a lengthy process. Unless there is a clear disability, such as a profound hearing loss, my district does not consider screening ELLs for this category until they have had ample time to acquire language skills. Thus, newcomers are rarely considered for this service but low performing ELLs could be part of this group. In this way, a student could be counted a fourth time.

Finally, this student will be counted a fifth time in the overall results for the entire school. This category aggregates the results from all the subgroups. For a school to achieve AYP as a whole, it is necessary that all the subgroups meet their targets. If just one subgroup fails, then, under the NCLB accounting, the entire school is deemed to have failed (Pub. L. 107-110, 115 Stat. 1425, enacted January 8, 2002).

Because one student can negatively impact a number of categories, there is mounting pressure to improve student performance. Each reporting category has an individual performance target to meet to be considered proficient. Across the district and the state there is only one category that consistently meets or exceeds the state (and federal) standards for academic proficiency; that is the ethnic group of white students. It must be noted here that white students might also be counted in more than one category as well (SPPS Board of Education, 2008).

These tests are high-stakes for the students as well as the state. For their compliance in setting high standards and administering the annual standardized
assessments, the state receives federal funds to meet education expenses. For students, achieving a score equivalent to or greater than proficient on the reading segment is one of the hurdles they must accomplish in order to be eligible to receive their high school diploma.

District and School Demographics

My school is located in an urban setting. It is one of the three largest school districts in the state. Total enrollment in the district is close to forty thousand students. Approximately forty percent, roughly sixteen thousand students, are ELLs. This group of students represents a significant portion of our student body and, as a group, they are not meeting the NCLB targets for proficiency. This information is cause for alarm.

However, even knowing that there is much teaching and learning to be done with the ELL population, there is good news for this group. The Council of Great City Schools (CGCS), based in Washington D.C., represents sixty-six large public school districts from across the nation. According to a CGCS report in 2006, the ELL population in the district stands out among the other districts. ELLs were praised for making gains to close the achievement gap better than the ELLs in any other of the large districts in the consortium (ELL Students, 2009; Great City Council of Schools, 2006).

The ELLs in our district speak more than one hundred different languages and dialects and we have the largest Hmong community in the nation (ELL Students, 2009). Across the district, seventy percent of the student body qualifies for FRP, the free and reduced lunch program funded by the Federal government and mentioned previously under the discussion of NCLB (ELL Students, 2009). That such a large percentage of our
students qualify for FRP is an indicator of the low socioeconomic status of the families in our schools. This is important to note because, according to the test data, this is another category of students who are not meeting the standards and thus are at-risk of failing to qualify for graduation.

In my building, the statistics are slightly higher. Of the nearly six hundred students in kindergarten through sixth grade, 74% are ELLs. This is nearly three-fourths of our student body and 87% of the students in the building qualify for FRP. According to the test data, 90% of our student body is from racial and ethnic groups, which are considered to be minority populations. These subgroups are also under-performing groups on the NCLB tests (2007-2008 NCLB Results). These numbers are significant because they represent a population with increased needs. The students in elementary school still have time before they reach their graduation date to meet the targets for proficiency. But, without some type of intervention, these tests are a predictor of likely future performance and they indicate dire news for the district, the school, and the students (Blankstein, 2004).

In addition to the consequences of low performance, these demographics are important to consider as a place to begin looking critically at what students already know and what they do not. Using the data to enhance instruction allows teachers to provide instruction that is balanced and well rounded. Specific skills and strategies that students need to know in order to perform with grade-level competence can be pinpointed. Using this information to build background knowledge and design interventions to boost student achievement will benefit all involved (Hirsch, 2006).
Culture of the Building

William Grabe (1991) states “…reading is probably the most important skill for second language learners in academic contexts.” Indeed, reading is an important skill for all students to achieve academic success. When analyzing this idea with the current demographics and performance of the students in my district, top-level administrators looked carefully at the literacy curriculum and established new norms for instruction (2007-2008 NCLB Results).

Schools in the district are implementing a rigorous literacy block with instruction that is specific to students’ needs embedded in the curriculum. In the elementary grades, this consists of Reader’s Workshop, Writer’s Workshop, and a Skills Block. My building has a number of measures and resources in place to assist teachers and students as they strive to improve academic achievement scores.

Teachers are strongly encouraged to attend staff development training sessions, especially those workshops with a focus in the areas of literacy skills. Recently, the district has begun tracking who has taken the trainings and who has not, and my principal takes note of which teachers follow through. Additionally, resources in the building are available to facilitate teaching and learning in the area of literacy.

My building houses a large number of physical resources that are available to students and staff. We have a relatively large library collection that has books for everyone to utilize. For students, the non-fiction book choices are extensive, while the collection of picture books – termed “everybody books” in our building – rivals the collection in my own local public library. The chapter books also offer a wide variety of
reading opportunities. Many of the books throughout the library collection are leveled so that students can easily identify choices that fit within their reading capabilities. Classrooms visit regularly, and this encourages student engagement with both improving literacy and comfort with libraries in general (Sherman, 2006). Our library is a busy and welcoming place.

There is a separate section of the library for teacher checkout. Here, staff finds numerous teaching texts and reference books to guide and inform best teaching practices. There are also hundreds of literary book sets. These sets are leveled for readers and range from books suitable for pre-emergent readers, to books that are appropriate for accomplished, fluent readers. Finally, mainstream classrooms also have extensive book collections. Teachers use their classroom libraries in many different ways, but all of them are designed to get children engaged in the business of learning to read.

We are fortunate to have two staff members dedicated solely to coaching teachers on literacy practices in the classroom. Their coaching talents are split between primary and intermediate grades with each coach focusing on one group. The literacy coaches work collaboratively with teams of teachers to help analyze data and coordinate benchmark assessments. They model lessons, and help launch units. They provide advice and give suggestions so that teachers may thoughtfully implement curriculum, and they are the link that provides teaching consistency between classrooms and across grade levels. They offer their support, and their time is a sought-after commodity in the race to impart the knowledge and the skills our students need in order to meet the learning
standards. Our literacy coaches are a vital part of the culture in my building that strives to meet the dictates of NCLB.

Our students come with a range of abilities, background knowledge, experience, and needs. They are culturally, economically, linguistically, academically, and socially diverse. The on-going collaboration process in my school between mainstream teachers, support teachers, and coaches seeks to provide thoughtful, meaningful instruction that will guide students to improved achievement. Staff confers regularly to discuss how to provide optimum learning opportunities for students.

Differentiation

Differentiated instruction is tailored according to individual student differences. It does not change what is taught; rather, it changes how instruction is delivered (Tomlinson, 2000, 2003). Our building is full of diverse learners who are not at the same point on the learning curve. Differentiated instruction seeks to engage students where they are. If this happens to coincide with where they are expected to be according the standards and the curriculum, then few modifications are needed. But if, as is so often the case in our building, students are not meeting the standards, then differentiation with an emphasis on accelerated learning is desirable (Miller, 2002).

Our ELs have complicated needs. They have a wide variety of first languages and a wide range of academic experiences. Their lack of proficiency in English hinders their academic proficiency. Gaps in background knowledge, which are often large, prevent the kind of reading comprehension that truly deepens understanding (Hirsch, 2006).
Additionally, this group often has cultural adjustments that require significant emotional energy.

Some sort of adaptation for LAs is necessary. The mainstream practices of differentiation are concerned primarily with content and do not appear to address the gaps in academic experiences or language acquisition needs of ELLs. The research that informs practices for students who are native English speakers informs the practices for teaching ELLs, but it does not account for the lack of cultural knowledge that creates additional gaps in learning (Grabe, 1991; Avalos, 2007). This is a problem that I have been thinking about as I have worked with ELLs over the last decade.

Using a variety of instructional strategies, differentiation allows teachers to make adjustments to the cycle of teaching and learning so that students can achieve their full potential. Introduced by Ward (1960), the concept was initially reserved exclusively to respond to the needs of gifted and talented students (Hall, n.d.)

With differentiated instruction, the emphasis is on clear learning objectives with a focus on delivering the curriculum. Strategies are customized to challenge and engage students at their current ability level and move them forward. It is imperative that the students’ needs be matched carefully to the strategy. For this to happen, teachers need to know their students.

According to Tomlinson (2000), differentiation can be approached from two directions. Through modifications to the curriculum and to the instructional process, teachers can create a personalized learning approach. Varying the level of task
complexity helps to build the background knowledge and skills students need to achieve proficiency in the curriculum.

When adapting the curriculum, care should be given to ensure standards are not compromised. Curriculum adaptations consider three areas, the content, the required skills, and the learning outcomes that students need to produce. Modifications are carefully structured to engage students in learning that is challenging but at the same time, at a level they can manage to comprehend. Tapping into students’ existing knowledge with benchmark assessments builds a skills inventory. Gathering this data is a critical step as it helps teachers understand the needs and abilities of each individual in their class (Avalos, 2007).

Tomlinson (2000) also tells us that when adapting the process, teachers may provide alternative performance tasks. This might entail creating tiered assignments whereby all students are working towards the same standard, but the complexity of the tasks varies. Establishing centers is one way to accomplish process adaptations. Students may be grouped according to their needs or according to their interests in order to facilitate tailored learning experiences. Flexibility is one of the hallmarks of this type of grouping. Process adaptations call for frequent assessments to ensure that students are not locked into a particular group.

Adapting the product is the final consideration for adapting the curriculum. Sometimes referred to as show-what-you-know, adapting the product gives students a choice in how they will demonstrate mastery of the concepts. Presentations, written
reports, plays, songs, or tests are examples of alternative ways to assess whether or not students have mastered the material.

Differentiation can also be addressed by adapting the instructional process. Grabe (1991) suggests that students should be familiar with a variety of instructional strategies such as skim and scan, summarizing, and being familiar with a wide range of text features for both fiction and non-fiction books. The pace of delivering instruction may be adjusted according to the students’ needs. A teacher may accelerate or decelerate the speed at which students progress through the curriculum. Other options for adapting the instructional process include using a combination of direct instruction, cooperative learning, discovery and inquiry-based instructional strategies. Through thoughtful adaptations of curriculum and process, teachers can tailor instruction to target the individual needs of the students (Tomlinson, 2000).

Differentiated education was originally developed to support the learning of gifted and talented students (Hall, n. d.), but because it is intended to individualize instruction for students, it is easily extended to mainstream classroom practices. However, the research in this area is clear about its focus on matching the strengths and abilities of the students to the essential qualities of the curricula. Differentiation is concerned with helping students to meet standards and as a general rule, students benefit from clear goals, challenging and motivating practices. When instruction is appropriately paced and rich with opportunities for active engagement, students will benefit (Tomlinson, 2003).
Zone of Proximal Development

Differentiated instruction is designed to meet students at their current level of skill and provide scaffolded support to enhance the learning process. The idea of establishing what a learner can do independently and providing support to build the knowledge base is not new. In *Mind and Society* (1978), Russian psychologist, Lev Vygotsky, presented an idea that has become widely accepted by educators. He called his idea “The Zone of Proximal Development” (ZPD). Vygotsky’s ZPD maintains that learners experience bigger growth when they have the help and support of another more experienced person.

To achieve this heightened learning, educators must know their students’ capabilities and construct a situation that not only teaches the material, but also teaches about how to learn the material. Support is light; students are doing the work of learning intensively and productively. Guided by a teacher, discussion and social interaction between peers further enhances and deepens the learning experience (Hoyt, 2005).

In my work with ELLs over the last eleven years, I have observed that their needs often exceed what is supported in a mainstream classroom. Differentiation is not specific enough to provide a comfortable ZPD and many ELLs, especially newcomers, are bewildered and frustrated because they are not able to make sense of the curriculum.

Language Academy Students

NCLB has magnified the attention on student performance. Achieving proficiency in order to meet increasingly rigorous standards has forced educators to examine their teaching philosophies. In my district, there is a growing focus on using data from standardized tests, benchmark assessments, and regular teacher observations to
differentiate instruction that meets the needs of students. However, the emphasis is on content and skills; rarely is there a focus on language acquisition needs, and ELLs with rudimentary levels of language competency continue to struggle in an academic setting. This observation makes me wonder about how to make adaptations that target both language and academic needs.

The question of what kinds of adaptations will help ELLs to fully access the curriculum is intriguing to me. The achievement gap widens as students progress through school. If a first grader falls behind in first grade and does not close the gap by the end of the academic year, second grade will likely be more difficult for that child. As his peers make normal AYP in second grade and beyond, the lagging student falls further and further behind, and the gap begins to widen exponentially. What kinds of interventions can bridge the needs of the language learners? Are there strategies that are effective for accelerating both language and content acquisition? Is there an optimal combination of differentiation and focused English language instruction that will propel ELLs to a place where they have a chance of meeting the NCLB targets?

Limitations in the areas of language, culture, academic experience, and background knowledge prevent ELLs from fully participating in mainstream instruction in English (Goldenberg, 2008; Willingham, 2006). This group of students has a double burden. Their challenge is to learn what everyone else is learning in addition to learning English (Crandall, 1998; Molfese, et al, 2006; Hoecherl-Alden, 2006; Robb, 2003). ELLs are always striving to bridge many areas of deficit in the academic setting.
The district ranks ELLs’ language acquisition on a scale of one to five, with one being little to no English and five being native-like fluency. The students who rate a one or a two are usually the newcomers. For these students, especially as they arrive in the intermediate and upper grades, the hurdles are many.

The district officially identifies newcomer students as those who have been in the United States for two years or less (ELL Students, 2009). These newcomers, also called Language Academy students (LAs), face a number of adjustments during this initial period: they are learning a new language, trying to understand a different culture, and attempting to embrace different academic customs. These students are bombarded as they work hard to make sense of their new surroundings while being taught a full academic curriculum.

Our building has between twelve and eighteen LAs per grade level, typically distributed among the mainstream classrooms. This group of students can present some of the most difficult teaching challenges as well as some of the greatest rewards. Many have limited educational experience and are overwhelmed with being thrust into a mainstream classroom setting. We target these students for intensive instruction through a variety of ELL approaches and provide bilingual support from educational assistants (EAs).

Additionally, there are a number of low-proficiency ELLs distributed in each of the mainstream classrooms. For these students it is as much their lack of English skills as it is a struggle with reading that hinders their success. These students are typically well acquainted with our educational system. Some children in this category were born in the
United States but began kindergarten with no English. Still other children in the low-proficiency category may be those who began as LAs but have been here long enough that they no longer qualify for that label (Slavin, 2004, 2005).

In the last few years, I have been asked to work with both the LAs and low-proficiency ELLs. I find that many of the same strategies work well with both groups of students. From this point forward, I will refer to both these groups as LAs unless there is a specific need to differentiate between them.

During my first year in this school, I worked collaboratively with a team of upper elementary teachers exclusively within the mainstream setting. It was during this year that I began to realize the LAs needed more specific differentiated instruction in order to make the kind of gains necessary to close the gap with their age-group peers.

The inclusion model provides ELLs opportunities for genuine, meaningful communication, and research suggests this is beneficial for English development (Blachowicz & Fisher, 2000). Inclusion is the model that is currently endorsed by my district (ELL Students, 2009). Students have daily interaction with their English-speaking peers and are sometimes clustered in classrooms to allow teachers to target instruction and maximize resources. With the current atmosphere that focuses on performance results, there is not much time for language instruction. However, some experts have always believed that ELLs also need explicit language instruction to efficiently learn features such as syntax, grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation (Goldenberg, 2008; Blachowicz & Fisher, 2000).
There is also evidence that ELLs benefit from some sheltered instruction during the course of their academic day (Echevarria, Vogt & Short, 2004). Sheltered instruction can have several forms. It may be that lessons, which are coordinated with the mainstream teachers, take place in a separate space or it may mean that students’ language and cultural needs are being met within the mainstream classroom. Using this time to develop English language acquisition and broaden background knowledge can provide the means to access content areas, boost self-esteem, and launch learners on an accelerated path to academic growth (Slavin, 2004; Johns, 1994). Hastening growth is necessary if these students are to close the achievement gap with their peers (Collier, 1989). Additionally, this environment provides language learners, especially newcomers, with a safe place to ask questions and ease into participation in a new academic world (Akhavan, 2008).

Ideas to Consider

It is this question of balance between sheltered instruction and mainstream inclusion that continues to intrigue me. Differentiated instruction takes some time to plan and implement, and requires energy to maintain in the mainstream classroom. Often when class sizes are large, it is important to establish routines and sometimes these routines become entrenched. Adaptations such as the use of graphic organizers, and extended time on tasks are effective for many students, including ELLs, but they rarely address the specific language needs of ELLs (Goldenberg, 2008).

I would like to examine this problem further. What kinds of adaptations will facilitate learning for LAs? The structure of our literacy block lends itself to examining
the question of how to differentiate instruction so that LAs have an opportunity to close the achievement gap. Literacy competence is crucial for academic success. The purpose of reading instruction is to help children acquire the skills to comprehend text, to acquire knowledge from print, and to enjoy reading in general (Torgesen, 1998). I would like to know more about what kinds of adaptations will facilitate literacy success for LAs.

In *Tell Me: Children, Reading, and Talk*, (Chambers 1993), the author states, “In any group of children, no matter what their supposed cleverness (or lack) we find that if they begin by sharing their most obvious observations, they soon accumulate a body of understanding that reveals the heart of a text and its meanings for all of them.” This is one of the driving principles of our literacy block.

The Fountas and Pinnell model of Reader’s Workshop, (RW), provides the template for structuring my school’s literacy block (Fountas and Pinnell, 2001). The four main components of RW are:

1) Guided reading,
2) Independent reading,
3) Language and word study, and
4) Literature study.

These four components embed a level of flexibility that allows for differentiation and a focus on both content and direct language instruction.

I wish to examine the model as it pertains to language learners and explore the four aspects in terms of differentiated instruction that addresses both the content needs and language acquisition needs of ELLs. The research question I pose is: What
adaptations to RW will permit upper elementary LAs to make accelerated gains in reading?

LAs have a big learning gap to overcome (Hirsch, 2006; Thomas & Collier, 1999; Collier, 1989). For them, making one year’s reading gains in one academic year is not enough. In order to close this gap, they must make more than one year’s growth and they must continue to do so for several successive years. To accomplish this, these students must overcome many hurdles. They understand that they lag behind their peers in academic skills, usually in every subject. Without intervention, this can easily become a demotivating spiral. Low achievement leads to low self-esteem, which leads to low motivation, and thus the spiral continues (Goldenberg, 2008). As I consider the idea of how to adapt RW of LAs, there are peripheral questions that are connected to this theme. What are the attributes of successful literacy development? What strategies best suit low-proficiency, under-schooled students to help them make accelerated reading gains? Are these strategies more effective within a mainstream classroom or in a small-group setting? Is there an optimal combination of settings, instructional models, and differentiated strategies?

This study has potential benefits as educators continue to reflect on what are the best practices for supporting the academic growth of our newest immigrants. I plan to highlight one way of addressing the individual needs of LAs. These strategies may ultimately be useful to other educators in their work with struggling readers. The limitations I experienced with mainstream instruction that does not address the language
needs of newcomers are what induced me to think about how to improve the learning opportunities for the LAs.

The frustrations I experienced in my early years at this school are what compelled me to think about this problem. In the full inclusion model in which I participated, the majority of the native English speakers and the ELLs were engaged in the daily curriculum. The LAs, however, were struggling. Given their background knowledge, life experiences, and comprehension level of English, meaningful interactions were few. Nearly every aspect of their academic day was a challenge. As I thought about how I could best support these students, I came to believe that progress for students in RW would also provide success throughout their entire day. Reading skills are an important foundation for all academic areas (Fountas and Pinnell, 2001).

Reader’s Workshop

The upper elementary classroom teachers follow the model provided by Fountas and Pinnell in their book *Guiding Readers and Writers Grades 3 – 6*, (2001). In this model, RW is composed of four main segments - guided reading, independent reading, word study, and literature study. In this section, I will describe the application of RW during my early years in my building. This section illustrates a number of the problems LAs face when trying to fit within a mold intended for students who are more fluent in English.

Guided Reading

Guided reading provides explicit instruction on processing a variety of texts. Classroom teachers structured this piece of the curriculum much as Fountas and Pinnell
suggest in their book. Students worked with other readers at generally the same reading level and they all had individual copies of the same text. The lesson was introduced, followed by a brief vocabulary discussion. Students were then asked to read, usually silently by themselves. At the conclusion of the selection, students were instructed to respond to the literature, and then to be ready to discuss the material with each other at the end of the book or reading section.

In a mainstream whole group setting, direct instruction is focused on the largest number of students. LAs fall outside this target and so their specific needs were not being met as they struggled with comprehending the lesson, following directions, and internalizing material. LAs needed additional time to learn concepts, and guided reading activities that are already familiar to the non-LAs. Generally, it took LAs longer to complete tasks than it did for their non-LA peers. The language limitations can also affect the other students in the classroom. The mix of students can also be a source of frustration for the stronger English speakers, too.

Although I was careful to choose materials at their reading levels, often LAs’ language and literacy levels were not strong enough to sustain reading on their own, support writing a response, and discussions with a peer. Furthermore, the talk about books was hindered by shyness or perhaps embarrassment. Just being in the mainstream setting with students who are more fluent with English and academics causes LAs to be hesitant to speak out. The LAs, even though they were in a homogenous group, often did not have the confidence to try out their verbal skills in a mainstream setting. Answers would be whispered, or be one word. Worse yet, students would just sit in silence
waiting for someone else to speak. They were reluctant to participate in discussions as much because of a lack of English skills as lack of confidence in their academic abilities. The outcome of this situation leaves LAs continuously feeling behind and inadequate.

Independent Reading

According to experts, free, voluntary reading experiences are an essential factor in language acquisition. In *The Power of Reading: Insights From the Research* (2004), Krashen advocates for students to read for pure enjoyment – no book report, no questions to answer, no checking vocabulary words, and the option to abandon a book that is no longer engaging. Free, voluntary reading (FVR), sometimes called silent, sustained reading, is simply that - no instruction, no discussion, and little guidance on how to choose an engaging book. For students who already are engaged readers, FVR is a treat in the school day. For the number of students for whom reading is not enjoyable, FVR becomes thirty minutes to avoid (Braxton, 2006).

McGlinn (2002) suggests that success in FVR requires reading competence. They assert that successful readers feel good about their reading. They read more, they acquire a larger vocabulary, they have a better comprehension of sentence structures, and they have improved verbal skills. The outcome of this upward spiral is the ability to read increasingly more complex material (McGlinn, 2002; Krashen 1989). McGlinn discusses the competent reader. The key to FVR is that it works for readers who are already engaged and successful.

What of the less successful reader? There are many struggling readers for whom FVR by itself is ineffective. Hasbrouck (2006) suggests that independent reading without
focus does little to improve reading skills. Yet, research does support success when students learn to read independently. Fountas and Pinnell (2001) take the concept of FVR a step further and provide a way to scaffold the experience. They promote reading practice with the right kind of reading materials in a way that nurtures and supports a reader. The RW model provides an opportunity for students to practice this skill.

In RW, the goal of independent reading time is to grow reading stamina, improve reading competence through instruction and reflection, and to teach students to manage and keep records of their reading (Palinscar & Brown, 1986). The Fountas and Pinnell model suggests that all students should receive instruction and practice on how to choose a book they can enjoy and comprehend on their own. Students read, and then reflect on their reading. Reflection may be a written response or a verbal interaction with adults or peers (Tam, Howard, and Heng 2006).

Different from FVR, independent reading time in RW has an interactive nature between the student and the teacher. Teachers give regular mini-lessons on skills and strategies for students to practice while they read. Teachers confer regularly with students on their reading habits and together they set goals for the student. Teachers reinforce and extend students’ learning through group sharing, and teachers make observations to inform teaching of reading lessons during all portions of the workshop time.

Students are taught strategies for choosing a just-right book. This is a book that is neither too easy, nor too challenging and will allow them to practice a variety of reading skills and strategies. Similar to FVR, independent reading time in RW is also thirty
minutes and students are expected to read on their own. RW, however, provides structure and support for students that is absent in FVR.

During independent reading time, LAs had some positive experiences. The LAs embraced the idea of choosing books to read on their own. They were usually enthusiastic about this activity and would diligently choose appropriate books, get settled, and begin reading. During this time, LAs would sit near each other, whisper the words from their text aloud, help each other with difficult words (ultimately appealing to an adult for help when necessary), share books among themselves, and cooperate in a very social manner even though the activity was called independent reading. Ten or fifteen minutes into the reading time, and having exhausted their supply of books or their ability to focus (or both), these students would proudly announce, “I done!”

There were two main problems that I observed during this time. First, I noticed that the majority of LAs are unable to sustain independent reading on their own for a full thirty minutes. They do not have sufficient fluency, reading skills, vocabulary, or language abilities to participate successfully for the duration of this activity (Hasbrouck, 2006; Thomas, 2000).

LAs usually read at very beginning levels. The books they choose are short, with larger print and lots of picture support. These books didn’t take any student very long to read from start to finish, even with repeated readings. Sometimes it is simply because of the easier nature of the texts. Sometimes it is the intensity of concentration required to focus on both text and language that causes LAs to tire more quickly than their more fluent peers. Reading is hard work. So is learning a new language. LAs are often
learning literacy skills in a language that is not their first language, compounding the issues.

The second problem I observed with independent reading time centered on awareness of peers and self-esteem. As upper elementary students mature, they become more aware of what their peers are doing both academically and socially. Occasionally, I had students who recognized that the books at their reading level are designed for much younger students. These more mature students are self-conscious of their reading level and deliberately chose books more on a par with what their English-speaking peers were reading (Thomas, 2000; Franzak, 2006). They would then spend their time pretending to read: scanning print, looking at pictures, remembering to turn pages once in a while, glancing at students who really were reading, drawing pictures behind the pages of the open book, constantly readjusting their body, whispering to a neighbor, staring off into space, or even sleeping. Going through the motions of reading in this manner gives these students a short-term boost in self-esteem but in the long run it causes them to fall further behind.

Regardless of what the problem was, however, it soon became apparent to me that this structure for independent reading did not meet the needs of the LAs. Newcomers and low-performing ELLs lack the reading skills and general knowledge of English necessary to accomplish the demands of this task in the same manner as their English-speaking peers. Thus for a variety of reasons, LAs eventually began to approach independent reading time with some trepidation. As the year progressed, the “failures” the LAs experienced compounded, creating a situation in which some of the LAs became
independent-reading avoiders. They did not feel successful in this endeavor nor did they perceive themselves as readers. They became increasingly less invested in learning to read and less confident in their ability to be successful readers. None of this was conducive to helping the LAs close the learning gap with their peers. It did not help students learn to acquire knowledge from print nor did it work to promote reading fluency.

**Language and Word Study**

Language and word study is the third component of RW. This segment seemed better suited to meeting the language acquisition needs of LAs within the mainstream setting. Expanding vocabularies is an important part of becoming a proficient language user (Baumann, Ware, & Edwards, 2007).

Helping students become competent word learners connects them to speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills (Fillmore, & Snow, 2002). Vocabulary is learned in many different ways. It can be acquired from speaking with and listening to others. It can be absorbed from reading of rich texts and noticing new words. It can be explicitly taught with an emphasis on categorizing words on the basis of syntax, structures, morphemes, or meanings. Vocabulary instruction that is integrated into the curricular day helps all students become more proficient in language arts (Blachowicz & Fisher, 2000; Williams & Lundstrom, 2007; Sobut & Bogen, 1993).

It was relatively efficient to use a variety of lessons, activities, and games that emphasized specific word strategies while at the same time differentiating instruction for twenty-five to thirty students. One of the mainstream teachers and I worked
collaboratively for thirty minutes daily on vocabulary instruction in an inclusive setting.

A sampling of lessons throughout the year shows that we reinforced strategies for phonics, sight words, high frequency words, spelling patterns, analogies, words in context, idioms, synonyms and antonyms, homophones and homographs, compound words and contractions, parts of speech, affixes and roots, as well as other skills and strategies (Cunningham & Hall, 1998). In my research, I want to analyze the components that made this a relatively successful learning experience for LAs. Was it the interaction with each other within the mainstream class that worked well? Was it the variety of lessons and opportunities to practice with hands-on materials at their level? Or was it the time spent on vocabulary skills that are connected to learning across the curriculum that made this a productive activity for the LAs?

**Literature Study**

Literature study is the last element of RW. The goals of this segment are to expand reading comprehension strategies, build critical thinking skills, enjoy and respond to rich literature, develop communication skills, and extend writing skills (Fountas and Pinnell 2001). In a literature study, a group of students might all be reading copies of the same text or the study might be organized around a theme, such as electricity, or family.

Literature study was the most difficult part of RW to integrate and LAs often floundered without teacher intervention to guide them through the process. Literature study with the LAs in the mainstream class ended up looking more like a guided reading group with loose teacher support than the largely self-functioning book club depicted in the model.
A large number of our LAs come from cultures in which adults are to be obeyed and teachers highly respected, sometimes even feared (SPPS KaRen/Somali Culture Workshops). The option to make their own decisions about the direction of their learning is not in their previous realm of experience. These students expect such decisions to be teacher driven. This is in direct contrast to the structure of a literature study (Fountas & Pinnell 2001). One of the essential elements of a literature study is that students are responsible for the roles that lead the group in choosing a text, reading in an organized manner, engaging in rich discussions, and responding to literature. Besides the difficulty in processing the language elements, there is a certain amount of self-sufficiency necessary in a true literature study that makes our newest students feel uncomfortable with this setting.

Research Question

As I reflect on the RW experiences that led me to formulate my research question, there is no doubt that the inclusive setting during “Word Work” time was beneficial for the LAs. Even though these students were at a place developmentally where they were acquiring concept vocabularies (such as colors and numbers) and labeling and sorting words (such as families, foods, animals, other nouns, and simple verbs), the interaction with their peers spurred them toward greater language learning.

I did find, however, that again the LA students did not get all their language acquisition needs met within the mainstream classroom. They could benefit from regular, more frequent opportunities to solidify a base vocabulary and, especially at the
intermediate grades, still need basic sight word and phonics practice that their peers had already mastered (Echevarria, 2004).

My research question is: What are the adaptations to RW that will permit upper elementary LAs to accelerate their gains in reading? This is an area that bears some scrutiny. What aspects of word study can be adjusted to better meet the language needs of newcomer students? These questions are all a part of what I plan to address. I am optimistic that my work will find a way to support LAs as they strive to participate in a literature study, as there are many benefits, both in terms of language and knowledge acquisition.

Summary

This year I am working as an ESL teacher serving three fourth-grade classrooms. I work collaboratively with the four classroom teachers (two teachers share one full-time job in one of the classrooms), and there are a number of LA students who have some very specific language needs. Two-thirds of the LAs attended my school last year. The remaining one-third is new to my building and my district.

With the mandates of NCLB looming for these students, I want to articulate what kinds of differentiation strategies in RW can best address the multiple needs of LAs. Is there a process to help them access the curriculum and make accelerated reading gains?

In the next chapter, I present the literature surrounding literacy within the context of the reader’s workshop model. Using the RW model, I explain the components of the literacy block. I will discuss several instructional models for LAs with the benefits and limitations for language learners.
In chapter three, I will discuss the methods for my research. My research is a descriptive research project that will lay the groundwork for presenting the adaptations to RW that I wish to study and it will examine the theory behind why I believe they are relevant. In chapter four, I will present the results of my data, as well as lesson plans, observations, and student work. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of the results and how these results are associated with my research question. Chapter five will be a summary review of my research and will contemplate possible biases as well as propose how this study might be put to further use.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of my presentation is to determine what adaptations can be made to the Reader’s Workshop (RW) model in order to enable upper elementary LA students to accelerate their gains in reading. My review of the research begins with a broad outline of how to use the literacy time. Next I describe the developmental stages of literacy development and provide an overview of curriculum models designed for ELLs. I conclude this chapter with an examination of how the literacy needs of language learners require additional, more structured scaffolding.

Literacy Time

Recognizing that students bring different strengths and needs to the classroom, my district has shifted away from the use of a basal reading series to a more flexible curriculum that can support students where they are on the learning continuum.

Basal readers are an anthology of fiction, non-fiction, and poetry works that are loosely organized around several central themes. The textbooks are written for grade level readers. Teachers are given a manual with a scope and sequence guide. In classrooms that use a basal, it is a one-size-fits-all curriculum. Everybody reads the same grade level story, regardless of whether students are reading at, above, or below grade level. In order to appeal to a large number of students and their reading interests, the anthologies contain a wide range of stories. So if the story this week is uninteresting to a
student or two, next week’s story may spark their imagination. However, there is little room for differentiation with a basal program. Teachers follow the manual, and the entire class reads along in their textbook.

Reader’s Workshop seeks to remedy the shortcomings of a traditional basal series. RW recognizes that students in any given classroom are likely to be at different reading levels and it provides a structure for meeting the individual needs of learners (Towle, 2000). The overarching goal of RW is to help students construct meaning from the texts they read (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001, 2006), and RW works by a delivery process that employs the foundations of differentiated instruction (Tomlinson, 2000).

Utilizing cooperative learning settings where students feel significant and respected, RW calls upon teachers to establish norms and routines that will engage students in the reading process (Thomas, 2000). What follows is the very basic outline for allocating precious minutes in the literacy block. For RW to be effective, the experts are clear on this: there can be no skimping on the time allocated to RW (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001). Figure 2.1 provides a graphic of the allocation of time for RW rituals, instruction, and activities.

Literacy time opens with a mini-lesson. During this time, the teacher addresses the entire class and brings their attention to a specific topic. The focus might be a literary element, such as the features and components of a realistic fiction story, or it might be a reading strategy such as clarifying or predicting. The mini-lesson could also cover a record keeping aspect or RW such as how to record and keep track of books read.
Whatever the focus of the day might be, keeping it short is both difficult and desired.

Fountas and Pinnell recommend that this part of the workshop is ten minutes or less.

Figure 2.1
*Reader’s Workshop Delivery Systems*

**WHOLE GROUP**  5 – 10 minutes

  Focus Lesson

**WORK TIME**  45 minutes

  Independent Reading

  Guided Reading

  Word Study

  Literacy Activities

  Confer With Students

**SHARING**  5 – 10 Minutes
Work-time follows the mini-lesson and is approximately forty-five minutes long. Work-time is when teachers may engage in direct instruction with guided reading groups, or put strategic coaching into practice as they confer individually with learners about their reading. Students are engaged in the reading process in small groups, partnerships, or individually. Cooperative reading groups are differentiated based on students’ readiness to learn, interests, needs, or experiences (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001). Work-time is the heart of the RW process. Work-time is when students learn how to make meaning from text, acquire the metacognitive strategies that allow them to transfer skills to other academic areas, and expand their knowledge base (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001). Because RW is flexible and structured to allow students to work in small groups, it is not possible for the teacher to provide direct instruction all the time. Thus, it is imperative that the time students spend away from direct instruction be as powerful and enriching as the time spent directly with a teacher (Ford & Opitz, 2002).

The workshop closes with five to ten minutes of sharing time. Students share about the reading experiences they have processed that day. Sharing can be done with the entire class, within the small reading group, or with a partner. Sharing might be about a reading success or might be a request for input on a how to manage a difficult concept. Sharing time helps to strengthen the culture of a reading community and provides closure for the workshop time (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001; Ford & Opitz, 2002).

In RW, the sixty minutes described above are uninterrupted and focus on making meaning from text. But for RW teaching to be complete, students need an additional thirty minutes of instruction that focuses on language and word study. This is the
opportunity for talking and learning about the way words are formed, how to take them apart and put them back together and how they are combined into sentences and paragraphs (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001). Orthographic studies are a part of this period and students work on decoding skills, and building their knowledge of how words work.

Literacy Development

While the experts apply different labels to the stages of literacy development, they do agree that children progress along a fairly predictable path of literacy acquisition (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001, 2006; Bear, et al., 2004; Bryne & Fielding-Barnsley, 1989; Oakhill & Cain, 2006).

After decades of research, Bear, et al. (2004), have identified five stages of development. The first stage is named emergent. Students in this stage are at the very inception of literacy development and are learning alphabetic characteristics. This is the ability to recognize and identify letters and their sounds. Generally, these students are either very young and just entering the educational system, or they have had very little formal literacy instruction. LAs in the intermediate grades who fall into this initial stage often are recently arrived from refugee camps where educational opportunities are out of reach for many families.

The second stage that Bear et al. (2004) identify is the letter-name stage and is the beginning of phonological processing. These learners are developing strategies to sound out words and may recognize beginning, middle, and ending sounds in a word. These students often have difficulty with vowel sounds and may confuse certain consonant sounds such as /f/ and /v/. Their reading is constrained by the number of words they
know. Learners in this stage usually need to track the text with their finger, and they often read aloud when reading to themselves. They understand that words are separated by spaces, and often recognize common punctuation. However, when reading familiar or predictable text, they can easily lose track of where they are and are not yet adept at synchronizing what they see with what they say. In my experience, when LAs in the intermediate grades arrive already processing text at this stage, it generally means they have some previous educational experience with the English alphabet and are likely familiar with literacy concepts in their first language.

Bear, et al. (2004) call their third stage within-word patterns. At this stage, students focus on word recognition. They can read in phrases, they observe punctuation, and can read with increased expression. They are now able to read silently to themselves, but are easily frustrated. Students at this stage are working on mastering words with multiple vowel patterns and can read most one-syllable words accurately. If the contextual support is sufficient, these readers can manage two and three syllable words with increasing fluency. Students at this stage can read independently, enjoy reading with partners, can sustain their reading with less teacher support, and are beginning to discuss and share in greater detail.

Readers may spend a long time working at this level and it is best not to rush through this stage. Competence at this stage will be the backbone for building a solid foundation in the complexities of English and thus will support students in the work that comes in later stages (Hoecherl-Alden, 2006). An analogy can be made at this stage to learning math concepts. Knowledge of addition and subtraction facts prepares students
for multiplication and division. In like manner, knowledge at the within-word pattern stage is preparation for comprehending the more complicated literacy that will be encountered in the next stages.

Work in the first three stages identified by Bear and his colleagues, generally occupies newcomers for several years. Once they move on to the next stage, they have become more fluent and capable readers. Often after the first three stages, intermediate students are close to reading at grade level.

The fourth stage is the syllables and affixes stage. Students know a lot about text at this stage and one of the teaching goals here is to help them to articulate what they know. Lessons take a critical look at how syllables are joined together and how morphemes can carry meaning. Knowing about prefixes, suffixes, base words and inflectional endings and how they combine helps students build efficient decoding and comprehension strategies.

Bear and his colleagues identify the fifth stage as derivational relations. This stage is characterized by exploring the connections between spelling and meaning. Students focus on the relatedness of words and their origins from primarily Greek and Latin roots. This stage is for students who are advanced in their language acquisition and development and usually beyond the scope of what LAs or early ELLs are ready for.

ESL Methods

Fountas & Pinnell are respected and knowledgeable in the field of literacy education. However, their research and their ensuing workshop process are predicated on the basis that literacy learners are already fluent speakers of English. In their manual,
Guiding Readers and Writers, they have a feature at the end of each section that
acknowledges struggling students. There are six sections that receive two to three pages
of interventional suggestions for students who need additional service. But in the
descriptions of the kinds of students that might need extra support in literacy instruction,
Fountas & Pinnell do not once mention what kinds of modifications would be appropriate
for language learners. ELLs are noticeably absent from the manual.

Goldenberg (2008) suggests that what is known about good instruction and good
curriculum can generally be applied to ELLs although he says that, “instructional
modifications and enhancements are almost certainly necessary.” Reader’s Workshop is
a nationally accepted program that would fall into the category of good teaching but the
lack of adaptations for language learners is glaring.

Good instruction has clear goals and learning objectives. It provides meaningful
and challenging work for students; has rich, structured curriculum that is delivered at an
appropriate pace. Good instruction engages students, and gives them feedback on
responses – both correct and incorrect responses. Good instruction also has regular
review and practice as well as frequent assessments that pinpoint progress. Finally, good
teaching promotes social interaction and cooperative learning opportunities that help to
build a positive classroom community. And when instructing English learners in English,
good instruction also makes modifications to take into account the language limitations of
ELLs (Goldenberg, 2008).

To provide a framework for making instructional modifications, Dr. Ann Charmot
(2005) developed the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach, (CALLA), as a
methods to combine content, academic language, and learning strategies in order for
glanguage learners to maximize their proficiencies.

In *Making Content Comprehensible For English Learners*, Echevarria, Vogt, &
Short (2004), adapt the CALLA research and suggest one way to accommodate ELL
needs. They present a model called the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol
(SIOP). This is a model for planning and implementing lessons for ELLs. It provides
ELLs access to grade-level content material and includes a carefully considered language
objective as an integral part of the lesson planning. The sheltered instruction approach
borrows from and complements methods and strategies in the mainstream classroom to
give ELLs extended time for language support as well as a jump-start on the content
standards.

A prerequisite to academic success is a working knowledge of English. Students
who lack adequate skills in speaking, listening, reading, and writing will find it difficult
to show what they know. For these students, the task of acquiring academic literacy is
huge. Not only are they embarking on learning a new language, but they are also
expected to digest knowledge in content areas and figure out how to complete the tasks
that are assigned. All the while, they must navigate the social and cultural expectations
of school. The whole matter can be daunting (Goldenberg, 2008; Hirsch, 2006).

The SIOP model is a way to connect language and content objectives and to
incorporate social and cultural expectations. With careful scaffolding and meaningful
interaction, SIOP enhances language acquisition and eases the ELLs’ transition to the
mainstream classroom. Echevarria, Vogt, & Short (2004) posit that there are specific steps teachers can follow to develop ELLs’ academic language proficiency.

First, teachers practicing the SIOP method can modulate the level of English used. This may mean adjusting the speed of speech and using language that is within the students’ capacity to manipulate. Using a variety of supplementary teaching techniques that might include graphic organizers, vocabulary previews, cooperative learning, and adapted texts, teachers have the very important job of making content comprehensible. They focus on expanding the students’ vocabulary knowledge base while facilitating connections between the content being taught and the personal experiences and background knowledge students bring to class. Increasing factual and procedural knowledge, promoting study skills, and learning strategies such as visualizing, questioning, and summarizing are also key components of SIOP.

A hallmark of SIOP is a non-threatening environment. Often language learners feel more comfortable trying out their fledging skills in a new language in a sheltered environment. This, in turn, promotes a high level of engagement and interaction with peers and adults which leads to additional discussion and higher levels of critical thinking (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2004).

SIOP follows a lesson planning protocol that steps teachers through planning for strategies and techniques to integrate content and language objectives. Lesson planning comes first. The SIOP model has two parallel strands that require planning. Content objectives that are aligned to standards are the first consideration. Identifying language objectives that are connected to the content goals is the additional piece that makes this
model ideally suited for ELLs. Lesson planning includes adapting or supplementing the materials in a way that maintains the rigor of the standards but allows the language learners access to the concepts. There are many tools for this process. Modifications to the text and the use of graphic organizers each have a number of variations suitable for ELL use.

Building background is a necessary part of scaffolding instruction for all students, but ELLs are generally much further behind their peers in this area (Goldenberg, 2008). By tapping into what the students already know about a topic, the SIOP method seeks to fill the gaps between a student’s past knowledge and the necessary background knowledge for academic comprehension. Students who are knowledgeable about a topic improve their recall and participate better in discussions about the ideas. By teaching vocabulary, providing experiences, and building a knowledge framework, students increase their opportunities for success (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2004).

Comprehensible input is what distinguishes between effective sheltered instruction and high-quality, non-sheltered instruction (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2004). Effective teachers utilize several techniques to make the content readily accessible for LAs. Just as text materials must be modified for comprehension, so too must speech be modified to a level that is appropriate for a student’s proficiency. In sheltered instruction, teachers monitor their rate of speech carefully for pace and enunciation. They adjust the complexity of vocabulary and sentence structure, and may paraphrase or repeat more often. Gestures, body language, modeling, and visual aids also facilitate comprehension for LAs.
Sheltered instruction is one method to address the needs of language learners who are working to achieve grade-level competence. When teachers can keep students engaged and on task, there is less likelihood of time-wasting behaviors, and students have a better chance of learning the material. Sheltered instruction is a teaching cycle that strives to teach content and build language skills. As students advance through the intermediate and upper grades, the sense of urgency grows. English learners need systematic, high-quality literacy instruction right from the beginning. They need to be immersed in print and have the opportunity to read, write about, and discuss text. Sheltered instruction is a model that provides scaffolded instruction that makes content accessible to students.

Role of Language in Learning

Language development is a task that plays an important role for all students. Few children arrive at school with the language skills necessary to interpret text, and this is especially true for LAs (Fillmore & Snow, 2005; Ellis, 2006). The most effective way for language learners to acquire the target language is through explicit instruction of language structures and uses. A focus on language is crucial in all subject matters (Fillmore & Snow, 2005). In order for LAs to become academically proficient, teachers must engage students in discussions that are progressively more sophisticated in form and content.

For ELLs, it takes frequent, regular exposure and practice to become proficient in English. From the work of Jim Cummins (1979, 2005), we know that Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills, or BICS, are generally acquired first by immigrant children. This
is the language necessary to interact with other people. For ELLs, this may be on the playground, in the cafeteria, or on the school bus. This language takes from between six months to two years to develop (Cummins, 1979). Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency, or CALP (Cummins, 1979, 2005), is the language students must know to succeed in school. This is the cognitively demanding process of interpreting and analyzing text and understanding content. For ELLs who have some prior academic experience, this process takes from five to seven years. Thomas & Collier, (1999), have shown that this process can take longer, from seven to ten years, for students who have no prior schooling.

For children to advance in both English and academic proficiency, they must interact directly with people who are able to reveal how the language works and how it can be used. ELLs must have language interactions at a level that is in an appropriate register for them. The input they receive must be at a level such that the listener can comprehend the message being sent. Comprehensible input is a theory proposed by Stephen Krashen (2004).

Krashen’s hypothesis argues language is acquired by hearing and understanding messages at a level slightly higher than the current level of fluency in the target language. Krashen calls this “comprehensible input plus one.” If the input is too far above the level of competent comprehension, learners are likely to be confused and in many cases they may shut down entirely. Instruction at this level prevents learners from progressing at their optimal rate. And yet in many mainstream classrooms, this is what we demand of our new language learners.
The parallel concept that has long been accepted by mainstream educators is the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) mentioned in my previous chapter. In the early part of the twentieth century, Vygotsky (1978) suggested that there are two levels of cognitive development, an actual level and the potential level. The actual level is what a student is able to do independently, while the potential level, as the name states, is what a child is likely capable of with help from someone who has already mastered the skill being taught, usually a teacher. It is the gap, or space, between these two concepts that Vygotsky calls the Zone of Proximal Development. This theory proposes that optimal growth is achieved when students are working in the ZPD. Instruction that is too far above the ZPD becomes unintelligible to the learner and thus is not conducive to learning and is likely to end in frustration. The opposite is often true when instruction is below the ZPD. At this level, a learner may have already achieved mastery and no significant new learning is happening. This is likely to result in boredom. Frustration and boredom are the companions to disruptive behavior (Crandall, Bernache, & Prager, 1998).

The parallel between the two theories is that they both posit a student has two levels of learning. One is an independent level, or what the student can do on his or her own. The other is what the student is capable of with instruction at a level that is slightly higher than their independent ability. This describes Krashen’s “comprehensible input plus one” and Vygotsky’s ZPD. The concept of high expectations notwithstanding, both Krashen and Vygotsky say that if the instructional level is too far above the learner’s capability, the student will not be able to accomplish their optimal learning. This, then, is tantamount to setting students up for failure.
If instruction can be arranged for LAs so that there is comprehensible input plus one and that the student and teacher are working in the ZPD, it seems a logical conclusion that learners will benefit. This ensures the student is getting his or her learning and language needs met and that both academic and language growth is targeted for maximum growth.

Scaffolding ELLs

Goldenberg’s findings (2008) support the idea that ELLs need scaffolding but he states that conventional teaching is sorely lacking in this area. High-quality instructional programs, such as Readers Workshop, are a starting point for language learners to close the gap, but by themselves are not enough. By its nature, RW provides children with the aspects of good teaching that Goldenberg calls, “generic.” The key features include established and consistent classroom routines, the use of graphic organizers, and allowing students additional time and opportunities to practice their craft. Repeating key information, highlighting and clarifying important text features, and helping students to summarize text information are additional ways that teachers support all students. However, without modifications designed to specifically support the needs of ELLs, high-quality instruction alone is insufficient to enable equal academic success for this diverse group of students. Goldenberg’s report says that support in the first language is a modification that is highly desirable but not always feasible. Sometimes this can be accomplished when there is another student who speaks the first language, but care must be taken neither to impinge on the learning of the supporter nor to stifle the learning of the student requiring support. Other modifications, according to Goldenberg, include
frontloading new material, with ample review after the lesson has been taught, explicit language and content objectives, and providing language production tasks that are both meaningful but not beyond what the language learner is capable of producing.

In Goldenberg’s view, modifications that help ELLs develop English proficiency are critical. There is little research available, however, to answer the questions of how and what to adapt. Goldman suggests that modifications will likely be fluid and will change as learners develop English proficiency. Depending on the individual children themselves, it is also likely that some students will need more modifications in certain contexts.

This is the heart of my study. The Readers Workshop model is flexible in a way that allows for differentiated instruction for all students. It uses the teaching practices that constitute good teaching, engages students where they are and moves them toward full proficiency as readers. RW maintains rigorous standards, as the mandates of NCLB require. Yet, it does not go far enough when it comes to meeting the needs of LAs. I want to ascertain how to adapt RW to permit upper elementary LAs to make accelerated reading gains.

Summary

In this chapter I reviewed the structure of how to use the RW literacy time. Numerous researchers have studied the stages of literacy development and while they may label the stages differently, they agree that learners do progress through identifiable stages. There are five that I reviewed in this chapter. I provided background information on curriculum models that are designed for ELLs and completed my review with a
discussion on the importance of modifications in literacy instruction for ELLs. There is a large body of research on what is good literacy teaching for most students but few studies have been done to identify the kinds of adaptations and modifications that can provide equal access to the curriculum for ELLs. My study will address this issue.

In my next chapter, I will describe the methods for the modifications and procedures I have applied to RW to accommodate the LAs.
CHAPTER THREE: METHOD

Reading instruction is delivered through the Reader’s Workshop model. While this pedagogical approach incorporates differentiation, the beginning language learners require a larger scale of focused instruction. My study seeks to address the shortcomings of the RW model by asking the question: What are the adaptations to RW that will permit upper elementary LAs to accelerate their gains in reading?

Descriptive Research: Definition and Framework

The research method I chose for this thesis is descriptive research. According to Gay (1987), descriptive research entails making detailed observations, which are recorded in order to report the way things are, extend what is known, and discover new meanings. Through a complete, literal, and thorough examination of the existing situation, the problem becomes apparent. Investigation of the issue often proceeds with the intent of finding possible solutions.

Merriam (2009) suggests descriptive research is ideally designed for practical problems and puzzling occurrences that arise from everyday practices. This type of research is particularly useful for analyzing educational procedures. It involves many techniques already familiar to educators: observation, discussion, reflection, and a willingness to problem-solve. The data can be applied to a given model and used to evaluate situations over time (McMillan & Schumacher, 1989, 2006).
Descriptive research has several strengths. One strength is that the observer may also be a participant in the study, which provides an in-depth knowledge of the history and often empowers an increase in participation. Another strength lies in the hypothesis design. Descriptive research may be used to test a hypothesis, or to derive a hypothesis, or both. The studies that focus on testing a hypothesis tend to rely on behavioral data and may seek to identify variables that differentiate children in terms of developmental stages of learning or growth. Knowledge of the stages of child development and the patterns associated with typical behavior patterns at a given age may be applied in order to make the curriculum and instruction for various student populations more appropriate and relevant (Gay, 1987).

The studies that seek to generate a hypothesis often use data collected from content analysis. Careful, systematic observation and description of objects in the study can produce a hypothesis. Typical objects that are analyzed under this heading include books, documents, and creative productions. Content analysis frequently examines texts for features, which may include readability level, and appropriateness for a particular grade level.

The descriptive research method is ideally suited to my study. The theoretical framework of this research method supports the observations, which I detailed in chapter one, of the way things are. The detailed description of what is currently happening as RW is delivered in the classroom, gives us a view of the everyday practices that are effective for a large number of students. Additionally, as McMillian & Schuster (1989) recommend, I have collected observations over an extended period of time, allowing me
to recognize an important problem.

However, as is the case with descriptive research, the discussion of what is, leads to the realization of what is not (Gay, 1987). For our students with limited ability to understand English, the current pedagogical model is not enough. They need something more, something targeted to their needs, something that will accelerate their learning. Descriptive research can be used to provide insight on an issue and to reform what is the accepted method (Merriam, 2009).

The experts on descriptive research method, particularly in an educational setting, suggest it is appropriate to examine student behavior patterns and materials being used, and to apply these resources with knowledge of child development and growth. These components comprise the theoretical framework of my study. By considering my question from multiple perspectives, the current practices in RW may be changed to accelerate the learning curve for the LAs.

Collecting Data

In a research method that ensures rich, detailed description of a situation, a hypothesis may be offered for testing or it may be generated for consideration (Gay, 1987). As the description of the existing situation unfolds and highlights the problem, the research question is designed to encapsulate the issue. In the situation that I describe, the pressure on students, teachers, administration, buildings, and districts to perform well on high-stakes tests means that we are constantly striving to find more efficient ways to help students achieve.

The LAs in the intermediate grades are significantly behind their more proficient
peers, often by three years, four years, or more. The reality for intermediate LAs is that in order for them to reach grade level, they must make accelerated gains each year. My research question targets this problem by asking what adaptations, and modifications can be made to the RW model in order to facilitate accelerated reading growth for our newcomers.

In this type of research, collecting data involves some complexities that are not always readily apparent. In order to collect and analyze information objectively and reliably, it is often necessary to establish a structure and create forms on which to record data. If the observer is simultaneously a participant in the study, it can sometimes prove to be difficult to draw conclusions that are defendable. Conversely, in this situation, it is often the case that participant observation yields large quantities of potentially useful data (Gay, 1987).

In this methods section, the adaptations to RW are described with a particular student profile in mind. The profile describes a typical student but is offered with a caveat. Teachers rarely have the luxury of working one-on-one with students. RW is designed so that teachers work with small groups of students with similar levels of skill. Thus, the adaptations I describe are modeled for work with a group of four to eight students, all of them with a similar profile. I make this distinction to point out that the emphasis in my study is not on the students, but rather on the adaptations. It is important to make this distinction because this sets my descriptive study apart from the format of a case study.

Each mainstream classroom has approximately four to ten LAs, all with similar
profiles. My typical LA student is approximately nine years old, has been in this country for a month or less, and has been placed in 4th grade. While literacy skills in the first language are at an emergent stage, in English, the student is still working to master letter names and their corresponding sounds. The student likely comes from a family of at least four children. The parents have some literacy skills in their native language and are taking classes to learn English as well. As I describe further the adaptations that are applied to RW, it is well to keep in mind the profile of the single student is a general description that can be applied to the entire group of students in this category.

Assessments

To analyze the process of how to adapt RW for LAs, it is useful to look at the data in terms of three broad categories: assessment, structure, and materials. These categories are intertwined, at once seemingly simple and yet intricately complex.

Reader’s Workshop is predicated on the precept that all children have instructional and independent reading levels. I focus my adaptations for assessments in three areas. First, accurate assessments will help to determine where the teaching and learning cycle should begin. The independent reading level is one of the first data points to be collected. Second, because LAs often come with limited or no reading experience, it may be necessary to also ascertain a pre-reading readiness level, which entails checking for knowledge of the alphabet, phonics skills, and the acquisition of high-frequency words. Third, I discuss the assessment frequency.

Assessment Tools

Determining a student’s independent literacy level can be done with a number of
assessment tools that are available in our building. To assess reading levels, I have used Rigby, Jerry Johns, DRA, QRI, and MONDO assessment methods. Each method has its advantages and each method has a slightly different leveling system and with the experience of a decade of assessing, I have learned which assessments I can trust to match with the materials in our library. Table 3.1 displays the text level correlation chart, which can be used to compare a number of different systems. This chart is important because we use it to correlate and verify that assessments are accurate, we use it to measure annual academic progress, and we use it to cross-reference leveled materials in our building.

Many of the books in our library are leveled using the Fountas and Pinnell system while some of the instructional materials are leveled with the MONDO system. If the Rigby and DRA systems are used as assessment tool for students, then it is useful to know how to choose appropriate materials that are leveled using a different system.

For LAs who have some literacy skills, I prefer to use the Rigby method to determine the independent reading level because it measures reading skills in small, incremental steps which allows careful and precise assessment of a student’s independent abilities. Rigby provides picture-supported text for the student and a text page with word counts for the assessor. The text page can be copied for assessment purposes and used to take a running record (Clay, 1999). Comprehension questions about the reading passage are provided with the Rigby system.

Measuring independent and instructional reading levels with students who have acquired some literacy skills can be done accurately with a number of measuring scales,
however these scales are not equipped to assess pre-reading readiness. While assessing pre-literate levels is a regular part of the process in the primary grades, it is rarely used in the intermediate grades.

Table 3.1.

Text Correlation Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>MONDO</th>
<th>Rigby</th>
<th>F &amp; P</th>
<th>DRA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beg K</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid K</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End K</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>3 - 4</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beg 1</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>5 - 6</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>3 - 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid 1</td>
<td>E, F, G</td>
<td>12 - 13</td>
<td>E, F, G</td>
<td>12 - 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End 1</td>
<td>H, I</td>
<td>13 – 16</td>
<td>H, I</td>
<td>14 - 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beg 2</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>17 – 18</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid 2</td>
<td>K, L</td>
<td>19 – 21</td>
<td>K, L</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End 2</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>N, O, P</td>
<td>23 – 25</td>
<td>N, O, P</td>
<td>30 - 38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>Q, R, S</td>
<td>26 – 28</td>
<td>Q, R, S, T</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>T, U, V, W</td>
<td>29 – 30</td>
<td>T, U, V, W</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 6</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>X, Y</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reading Readiness

At the intermediate grade levels, it is often the case that classroom teachers, and thus the assessment tools they utilize, presuppose students have already developed a foundation for literacy skills. However many newcomers are still at the stage where they are learning to manipulate the alphabet and none of the assessment tools mentioned above can adequately pinpoint what the student does or doesn’t know about English. For these students, using any of the literacy measurement scales will indicate they are at the very beginning reading level. What these assessment tools don’t measure, however, is their reading readiness. Thus, if literacy scale alone assesses a student who is not yet
ready to read, a category into which LAs often fall, their true knowledge about English may be misinterpreted. Adapting the assessment tools to fine tune measurement of skill is a significant step.

Gathering this baseline data also provides a starting point from which to set goals and measure reading progress. At the elementary level, standard growth expectations are that a student will improve one grade level for every academic year they are in school. However, if newcomers in intermediate grades begin at the very lowest reading levels, they must show more than one year’s growth in one academic year. LAs need to show between one-and-a-half to two year’s growth each academic year in order to close the achievement gap. Thus, using Table 3.1, we can see that the LAs who are assessed at a pre-K or beginning K level will ideally reach a level H, I or even J by the end of the year as measured on the Fountas and Pinnell scale.

As part of the data collection process to adapt RW, I use a checklist to determine a newcomer’s knowledge of the alphabet and how it functions. This checklist is shown in Table 3.2. It measures several skills. First, can the child say (not sing) the letters in order? Being able to produce this skill suggests the child has a more complex knowledge of the alphabet. I pay particular attention to the “l-m-n-o-p” string as new language learners often say this as if it were one letter. Next, I want to know if the child can say the sound of the letters as they appear in a random order. Known items are checked. Unknown items are left blank and will be used to drive future instruction.
If a child indicates they can identify a majority of the letters, there are a number of other reading-readiness checks to do. Nonsense words measure a child’s ability to decode (Crevola & Vineis, 2008). A sight-word checklist, shown in Table 3.3, indicates whether or not the student has knowledge of the high frequency words encountered on a
regular basis in the beginning level reading books. Oral language ability is measured by the student’s ability to repeat back a series of increasingly complex sentences.

Table 3.3  
*Sight-Word Checklist*

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<tr>
<td>the</td>
<td>had</td>
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<td>than</td>
<td>what</td>
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<tr>
<td>and</td>
<td>by</td>
<td>then</td>
<td>first</td>
<td>you</td>
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<tr>
<td>to</td>
<td>at</td>
<td>in</td>
<td>is</td>
<td>if</td>
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<td>that</td>
<td>we</td>
<td>would</td>
<td>find</td>
<td>was</td>
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<tr>
<td>for</td>
<td>said</td>
<td>there</td>
<td>each</td>
<td>make</td>
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<tr>
<td>her</td>
<td>of</td>
<td>can</td>
<td>with</td>
<td>they</td>
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<tr>
<td>from</td>
<td>have</td>
<td>their</td>
<td>will</td>
<td>look</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>two</td>
<td>see</td>
<td>go</td>
<td>way</td>
<td>people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>my</td>
<td>who</td>
<td>now</td>
<td>long</td>
<td>down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>come</td>
<td>made</td>
<td>out</td>
<td>go</td>
<td>like</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These measures of reading readiness are important data points that help to analyze what a student already knows. The assessment process also provides information on the gaps in a student’s knowledge and it is this data which drives the differentiated
instruction for the LAs.

**Assessment Frequency**

In my building, these formal assessments are done at least three times a year. In September, they provide both a benchmark against which to measure growth, and a starting point for RW instruction. The mid-year and end of the year measures give an indication of progress and, presumably, growth. Advancement can be accurately tracked if the assessment tools for LAs are modified, when necessary, to measure precise levels. The final assessment is done at year-end and is used to measure the annual academic growth. The data is then passed to next year’s teachers to use as a starting point in the coming year.

Although the formal assessments are done three times a year, this is not enough. To assure LAs are making progress, assessment needs to be done much more frequently. The structure and materials of RW that are also adapted are designed to provide ongoing assessment. There are provisions for daily, weekly, and monthly informal assessments.

**RW Structure**

Merriam (2009) reminds us that descriptive research provides data that can help educators take a fresh look at an issue. Observation and reflection can create a change in the accepted method. Once the children are evaluated, it is time to consider the structure of the learning environment and the materials that facilitate learning.

Gay (1987) says descriptive research often necessitates establishing a structure, which then becomes an integral part of the method. In chapter one, I gave a description of RW as it is currently practiced. Fountas and Pinnell (2001) provide an organizational
structure for RW by segmenting the workshop in order to address the aspects of literacy instruction. Echevarria, Vogt, and Short (2004) document the benefits of sheltered instruction. The structure which I use to adapt RW for LAs, draws from the research from these important works, yet it is flexible enough that it can be changed or adapted in order to target instruction for a very specific set of student needs.

There are six major structural areas for adaptations. First, is to create a sheltered instructional space so that LAs can work on the intense learning they must do. Next, independent reading has four areas to adapt. Third, guided reading is infused with adaptations to set LAs on a path to accelerated gains. Fourth, word study routines are adapted to differentiate instruction. Fifth, shared reading routines are adapted, and finally, I mention literacy activities. The intent of literacy activities is that LAs will be able to work independently in this area. Because there are a variety of materials associated with this last aspect of structure, I will cover the literacy activities in depth under the materials section.

Sheltered Instruction

In the intermediate grades, there are typically six to ten LA students per year in each grade. They spend the majority of their academic day with their mainstream peers but I have been able to provide sheltered support for a small portion of their day, typically about fifty minutes and during the literacy block. Each of the LAs loosely fits the generic profile offered earlier in this chapter and thus I am adapting the RW curriculum to meet the needs of a group of LAs.

Establishing the rituals and routines of this sheltered block requires patience and
repetition at the beginning of the school year but once the habits are established, the adapted structure helps to scaffold and nurture LAs as they work to make sense of the new language and the new content they are learning.

**Independent Reading**

There are four modifications to this important RW structure. First is guiding LAs so they can, and do, make appropriate book choices. Second is simplifying, coaching, and modeling the record keeping process. Third is the actual procedure of reading the texts, and finally, the frequency with which new books are chosen round out the adaptations for independent reading.

Although mainstream students are given a wide range of reading choices and loose guidance on personal choices, I ask LAs to be much more focused in their choice of independent reading materials. Based on the data acquired from the assessments, I encourage LAs to choose independent reading materials within a narrow range of reading levels. Our library is a wonderful resource but with so many books to choose from, often LAs don’t know how to find appropriate texts. Lessons and lots of hands-on practice facilitate this adaptation.

Record keeping is a lengthy and often confusing time for LAs. The mainstream students keep a number of lists, some of which contain duplicated information. Fountas and Pinnell (2001) provide a wide array of black line masters that can be photocopied for students’ use to record their data. These pages are kept loose in a folder. Some pages are to list books read. Some pages include a response. Sometimes mainstream students are asked to respond in a Reader’s Notebook. Other, separate, folders may be used for
guided reading lessons and book clubs. It’s a lot for any nine-year-old to keep track of and the LAs can’t make sense of it without adaptations. For new language learners who are trying to make sense of their environment on a number of levels, all this paperwork to keep track of reading is cumbersome and confusing.

To alleviate the multiple steps and streamline the record keeping process, I encourage LAs to put all the information in just two places. Keeping track of books read successfully is a district expectation. All students are expected to read a minimum of twenty-five books every academic year. This list is the documentation of that accomplishment. Since fourth graders also use a planner in our building, I have the LAs record the books read in the planner. All other work for RW is done in the Reader’s Notebook.

The process of reading independently must also be different for LAs than it is for other students. Because the books LAs are capable of reading are short and simplistic, reading them is quick. Re-reading text is an adaptation that mimics the work of Day Two in the guided reading lesson plan. Students who re-read may also read with a new focus or purpose.

Choosing books frequently is an essential adaptation to RW. Sheer volume of appropriate reading material helps students make accelerated academic gains. Changing books daily is ideal. Mainstream intermediate students are generally reading chapter books and so don’t need to change books as often. Classroom teachers schedule a weekly visit to the library where students are allowed to check out two books. LAs need more than this. I set up a daily schedule for the LAs. The first month visits are fifteen minutes
daily and include short, five-minute lessons that target how to find an appropriate book. Many, but not all, books in our library are leveled and marked according to the Fountas and Pinnell system. Students need to know how to read the chart, how to know which levels are appropriate for them, and how to locate these books on the library shelves.

Finally, instead of the usual two books checked out at a time, LAs are encouraged to check out three books daily. This ensures that LAs will have enough reading material to allow sufficient daily reading practice.

**Guided Reading**

Guided reading for the LAs involves daily instruction. Establishing rituals and routines in this structure requires some time to teach at the beginning of the year but pays dividends once the routines are in place. Students thrive on these routines and after only a short time will remind me if I skip or forget a step. The steps incorporate features of work from experts such as Echevarria, Vogt, and Short (2004), Cunningham and Hall (1998), and Goldenberg (2008).

Table 3.4 provides an outline of the lesson plan format I use with LAs. This format features a number of adapted methods. I use the same text for at least three days to incorporate discussion and build background, increase vocabulary and language skills, improve fluency, and practice reading and reading strategies. Additionally, this three-day format facilitates and strengthens speaking, listening, reading and writing skills, and is designed to ensure both content and language objectives are delivered in a guided reading structure.
Table 3.4
Lesson Plan Format

DAY ONE
Discuss Text Covers
  • Fiction or non-fiction
  • Identify reading strategy
Picture Walk
  • Preview text
  • Discuss; build background
Word Walk
  • Point out vocabulary words
  • List
Shared Reading
  • Choral read
  • Teacher-supported read
Re-read
  • Partner read
  • Independent read

DAY TWO
Reading Practice
  • Partner read
  • Independent read
Response
  • Utilize a reading strategy
  • Verbalize the strategy
Fluency Practice
  • Take text home to practice
  • Prepare for one-minute read

DAY THREE
Language Lesson
  • Language focus
  • Re-read text
  • Making words
Share Response
  • Whole group
  • Turn and talk
Fluency
  • Timed read (once or twice a month
  • Chart
Record Keeping
  • Reading List
  • Organize materials
Day One of the adapted format is designed to introduce a text through observation, discussion, and guided support with the text. Students preview important vocabulary words and work through a text multiple times with support that gradually diminishes.

Day two of the adapted format is designed to scaffold students as they learn to work independently. Work time is organized so that independent learning time is just as valuable as guided learning. As students become more capable at these tasks in the sheltered classroom environment, they are gradually able to transfer the skills to other aspects of RW.

Day three of the lesson outline has three goals. The first is to hold students accountable for their work. When students know that they will be expected to share and discuss what they have learned with their peers, they are much more likely to complete assignments. The second goal is the opportunity to conduct frequent informal assessments of students’ progress and to reflect on whether or not the lessons achieved their intended outcomes. The final goal is another opportunity to build language acquisition skills by encouraging students to listen and speak to each other in English.

Content objectives for guided reading include reading strategies, which are listed in Table 3.5. We are charged with the task of diligently providing students repeated opportunities to practice these skills during the academic year. The lesson plan format in Table 3.4 indicates several places where strategies are introduced, discussed, practiced, and used to respond to literature. To make it clear to students which strategy is the focus
of each lesson, I write the reading strategy on the board every day and refer to it as the reading focus.

Table 3.5
*Reading Strategies For Reader’s Workshop*

Making connections to the text with self, other texts, or to the world

Activate and connect to prior knowledge

Elements of a story map

Identify main idea and supporting details

Cause and effect

Compare and contrast

Fact and opinion

Sequence of events

Skim and scan the text

Reciprocal teaching - summarize, question, clarify, and predict

Re-read

Personal response to text

Similes, metaphors, personification, descriptive phrases

Making inferences

Text features of fiction, non-fiction, and plays

Read accurately with phrasing and expression

Poetic devices – repetition, imagery, rhythm, pattern, white space

Author’s purpose, message, or bias

Note-taking
The structure of guided reading spills over to the other aspects of RW so it is important to be deliberate about the steps. The adapted format for guided reading I outline in Table 3.4 incorporates the features mandated by the district as well as the good teaching practices of Fountas and Pinnell (2001) and Echevarria, Vogt, and Short (2004)

Table 3.6
Actual Lesson Plan
Birds Begin As Eggs
DAY ONE
   I. Discuss text cover – this is a magazine article
      a. Fiction or non-fiction, identify features that indicate genre
      b. Reading focus: Sequence of events
   II. Picture walk
      a. Page through the text and invite discussion on illustrations, diagrams, or photographs to build background knowledge
      b. This discussion also builds listening and speaking skills
   III. Word Walk
      a. Vocabulary: emu, robin, blue jay, hatch, warm
   IV. Shared reading
   V. Students re-read with a partner
DAY TWO
   I. Students whisper read independently, asking for help when necessary, and teacher monitoring
   II. Response – practice a reading strategy
      a. Summarize mother robin’s job
   VI. Take the text home to practice for fluency
DAY THREE

I. Re-read the text together

II. Language lesson
   a. Consonant blends: fl, gr, pl, nt

III. Share response

IV. Making words activity: feather
   a) a e e f h r t
      fat, hat, rat, eat, feat, heat, her, here, there, the, feather

V. Record keeping – record story in reading log

Table 3.4 is the skeleton outline of a three-day lesson guide that ensures both content and language objectives are delivered in a guided reading structure. Table 3.6 is an actual application of the adaptation to this structure. In Table 3.6 we can see the instructional features that take into account the adapted rituals and routines, the adapted strategies, and the adapted practice. At the end of this chapter, Figures 3.1 and 3.2 are the student work that resulted from this particular lesson plan. This data gives a snapshot of how to implement adaptations to RW so that intermediate students can achieve accelerated reading gains.

Word Study

Just as the structure of guided reading is adapted to include multiple aspects of literacy instruction, adapting the word study segment of RW must be carefully planned. Fountas and Pinnell (2001) and Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton, & Johnston, (2004) promote a comprehensive process of sorting words with similar spelling patterns as part of word
study. Other facets of word work from the Fountas and Pinnell guide include an interactive read-loud, test taking skills, shared reading, reader’s theater, and strategies to build vocabulary. I examine these aspects to develop adaptations suited to LAs both in this section of chapter three and also in the following section about materials in chapter three.

New language learners can benefit from these strategies if the appropriate adaptations can be applied. Word sorts from the *Words Their Way* (Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton, & Johnston, 2004) program are differentiated to meet the needs of students from the very beginning literacy levels to very advanced literacy levels. LAs are easily grouped together and can do this literacy activity with their peers in the mainstream classroom. Additional reinforcement in the sheltered environment encourages more talk and interaction between students and text.

**Shared Reading**

Shared reading is a structure that can have many different looks. As a teaching tool, it lends itself easily to differentiation. To adapt RW for LAs, I use this component to introduce short poems, songs, and chants. I have experimented with a few different methods for managing this piece but I found I had the best success when I use a three-ring binder. Each student receives a binder of their own that we set up together. I cut the tab side of a manila file folder to fit the binder and three-hole punch it. Each tabbed section has its own table of contents page that students complete as we add text pieces to the binder. Songs from the public domain such as *Make New Friends*, poems such as *Five Little Monkeys*, and chants such as *Who Stole the Cookies From the Cookie Jar?* are
inherently appealing to nine-year olds.

I like to go slowly when introducing this modification to RW. I allow fifteen minutes at least three times week for the first few weeks for this process. Even though this activity is technically a shared reading method, I incorporate many of the aspects of guided reading instruction into the process. I am also careful to introduce no more than one shared reading per week, as well, because I want to be sure students have had sufficient exposure and practice with each piece before we move on. We’ll practice together as a whole group and later students will have an additional opportunity to practice when they go to the literacy activities. When there are about eight or ten pieces in the binder, I record a small group of students and myself reading them aloud and burn this onto a CD. The CD then becomes a part of the materials for literacy activities, which I will discuss later.

A variation of shared reading and building vocabulary can also be incorporated into the guided reading lesson. Tables 3.5 and 3.6 indicate where it might be beneficial to use this process as well as how to do it.

**Literacy Activities**

To round out the changes in the structure of RW, I have students rotate through a variety of literacy activities during their work time. It is here that LAs will get exposure to other word-making knowledge. They’ll have an opportunity to work on phonics, grammar, and the decoding skills, which form a basis for future language growth. As a structure, literacy activities provide differentiated instruction for LAs that they can manage independently after they are familiar with the procedures. It is this important
adaptation that provides independent learning situations that are designed to support the guided instruction. As this segment is primarily concerned with materials, I will cover these in depth in the next section of this chapter. Table 3.7 introduces the literacy activities. There are four headings highlighted and each heading lists five or six activities adapted to support LAs.

Table 3.7

*Literacy Activities*

**READING PRACTICE**
- Songs and poems
- Phonics readers
- Sight-word readers
- Reader’s theater
- Test-taking skills
- Time yourself

**WORD RECOGNITION**
- Word wall
- Word sorts
- Making words
- Rhyming words

**LISTENING**
- Books on tape
- Songs and Poems
- Self-recordings

**GAMES**
- Alphabet practice
- ‘No’ words
- Vocabulary matching
- BINGO
- Word sorts

From the perspective of the teacher, fitting in all the components of the forty-five minutes of work time can feel overwhelming. To manage the components of RW, setting
up a rotating schedule helps to streamline the process and enables LAs to experience the fullness and richness of complete literacy instruction that has been differentiated to meet their needs. Independent reading, guided reading, word study, and literacy activities are organized so that students have structured independent work time balanced with daily instructional time.

Materials

Merriam (2009) says descriptive research by its very nature is a reflective process that creates new structures to improve upon the data being collected. In my first chapter, I made observations about the LAs that indicated they are unprepared to fully participate in the mainstream RW. There may be a number of reasons for this behavior but undoubtedly a limited proficiency in English is a significant contributor. After collecting data from assessments and establishing rituals and routines, the last instructional component to scrutinize for change is materials.

To make materials comprehensible to LAs, this vital component requires care and thoughtful planning. And as McMillan & Schumacher (1989) suggest, for people to fully engage and participate in an educational process, differentiation needs to be specifically and thoughtfully applied.

Materials and supplies for RW are numerous. Texts, documents, content related objects, supplies for literacy activities, word sorts, and notebooks are but a few of the materials that can be modified for LAs to use.
Reader’s Notebook

The reader’s notebook is an indispensable part of RW. Mainstream teachers vary in their use of this tool, some use it often, and some use it sporadically. I have adapted the notebook to give LAs an opportunity to practice a variety of reading responses and record their thinking as evidence of their literary endeavors. Appendix A provides an example of student work that exemplifies one way to utilize the reader’s notebook as a differentiated tool. Responses are modeled with the larger group and then practiced until they are secure. Work, such as the making-words activity or the time-yourself graphs, is kept in the reader’s notebook. The record keeping that is done on loose pages in the mainstream classroom is also catalogued in the notebook.

Literacy Activities

Literacy activities are a part of the work time tasks. There are four blocks that contain a number of adaptations to RW. These adaptations, which are based on the research presented in chapter two, are an important aspect of my study. I will explain the adaptations one by one. Table 3.7 has a summary of the activities.

Reading practice is the first block. It contains six adaptations that are designed to foster fluency and promote independent reading stamina. The second block is word recognition. It too contains six adaptations that target decoding skills and identifying how words are put together. Third, the listening block, with five adaptations, helps with pronunciation and language acquisition practice. This block supports the word study part of RW. Finally, the games block covers a variety of grammar, vocabulary, and word skills.
Initial preparation for rotating students through the four literacy activity blocks detailed in Table 3.7 can take a little time and some planning, but once the basic materials and expectations have been introduced, students can function independently at each of these areas. A typical size for a LA group is six students per mainstream classroom. Keeping in mind the profile of a typical LA student, this is an ideal size group to work with in the sheltered environment. Work can happen with the whole group, several small groups, or individually.

**Reading Practice**

As can been seen at a glance at Table 3.7, the first block contains six activities. I will briefly describe these practices. Materials for the literacy activities come from a number of sources.

Songs and poems are introduced as whole group shared read during the first ten minutes or so of the workshop. I am deliberate in planning so that there is an opportunity for practice on four or five consecutive days. Once the piece becomes familiar, we can add it to the repertoire. Some days we choose one or two pieces to read together from the repertoire. Once there are eight to ten pieces in the binder, I record the group reciting or singing the pieces and burn a CD to add to our listening activities.

For materials to use in the songs and poems, I rely on our library and the Internet to supply public domain materials that can be reproduced for the binder. Appendix B shares an example of the Shared Reading Binder with a few materials that are always student favorites.
Phonics and sight-word readers are the second activity on the list under the reading practice block. Phonics and sight-word readers are downloadable books from websites that are available through a subscription. Our literacy coaches purchase a subscription and make it available to teachers in our building. I make two to three copies of each book so that students may work with partners. Books are placed in a self-closing plastic bag with an instruction card and sometimes an activity.

These booklets are simple but are designed so that students can manipulate the letters and key words in the texts. Here is an example. In a story that could be titled *Jill and Bill Look for a Grill*, the students are practicing onset and rime. Onset is the initial sound of a word and the rime is the word family at the end of the word. Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton, and Johnston (2004) identify this as best practice for readers to move towards recognizing larger chunks of letter-sound units. In the plastic bag will be three copies of the text, and index cards prepared with the rime “-ill” and a number of onsets, some of which are in the text, some of which are not in the text. I make sure that at least two of the onsets are in there twice. Also, I print the onsets in one color and the rimes in another color to highlight the morphemes as students manipulate the cards. Students take turns adding the onset letter to the rime pattern and saying the word. Then they must decide whether or not the word is part of the text. When they have completed the activity, they will write the words in their notebooks. One column will have the words in the text and the other column will have the words not in the text. Students take home a copy of the book to practice for fluency and a timed read the next day. One popular feature of these simple texts is that students are encouraged to color the black and white pictures on these
easily printed and assembled books. I send home a few crayons or markers and the artwork comes back along with the art supplies.

Reader’s theater is the next activity in the reading practice block. This popular literacy activity requires some supplies. I like to save this activity for later in the school year when students have a little more confidence in English. There are several websites that provide short scripts for stories but I find that students enjoy turning a story into a play. Appendix C offers an example of a student created script of *Iktomi and the Boulder* by Paul Goble.

There is much discussion as we look at the book and the illustrations and work to ferret out the action on each page. Who says what, how to explain the actions of each character, and how to ensure the sequence is correct is a process that can take several days. Rehearsing the script, creating props, and staging a production can be as simple as the students lining up and reading from a script, to the more complicated process of memorizing the entire script and acting out the words.

Appendix C is an example of one story that moved through this process. Using simple stories with definable action works well. Some examples of stories that fit this description are *The True Story of the Big, Bad Wolf* by Jon Scieszka, *The Seven Chinese Brothers* by Margaret Mahy, and *Tacky the Penguin* by Helen Lester. These stories can easily move from a teacher read-aloud to a shared reading to a readers’ theater. By the time this process is complete, most of the LAs can hardly wait to perform for their peers in the mainstream classroom. Often these students who are normally silent in the larger
classroom, are surprisingly and delightfully entertaining, which helps their mainstream peers to see them in a new light.

Test taking skills is the fifth activity in the reading practice block. I approach test taking as a separate genre, but it is one that students will need to be familiar with for the rest of their academic career. Students are aware they will be required to take the important MCA-II standardized test soon. This significant fact seems scary at first to LAs but I feel it is important to expose them to test-like material with which they can be successful. I introduce the genre in the fall and am diligent about providing weekly practice.

For the LAs who will be required to take the test, this is quite often a source of stress. However with instruction that helps them to recognize testing strategies and pushes them to attempt material closer and closer to grade level, I am always amazed in the spring. By March, often this group of students is earnestly working to manage the grade level practice tests. During the actual MCA-II test the more advanced LAs can be seen carefully applying their knowledge and trying their best.

The testing genre is sometimes introduced during the shared reading and sometimes during the guided reading time. Students are coached so that they are able to manage the literacy activity as an independent activity. Surprisingly to me, students love this activity. They derive a sense of satisfaction when they do well on choosing correct answers and proudly ask for practice that is slightly more challenging. When they don’t do as well, they are philosophical and try to figure out how to improve.
To create material to practice test-taking skills, I went to a local bookstore and looked through the educational section. The bookstore has a large section devoted to helping students prepare for tests. I bought several books that were at an appropriate level for beginning LAs and then set about making them reusable. To do this, I take the books apart page by page and insert each page into a plastic sleeve protector. The sleeves are kept organized in a large three-ring binder. I slide the cover of the book into the binder front pocket and label the spine of the binder for easy identification on a shelf. Using a dry erase marker is a favorite student activity and with this design, students can write directly on the plastic sleeve to answer the questions. I keep the answers nearby and provide them so students can self-check. Erasing answers off the plastic sheet protectors is easy with an old, clean athletic sock.

Time yourself is the last activity in the reading practice block. For this activity, students practice reading a text passage multiple times. When they feel they are ready, they set a timer for a minute and read as far as they can in that time. Then they count the number of words and record the data in a section of their notebooks along with the date and the title of the book. Day two of the guided reading lesson also incorporates this practice. Approximately every two weeks students know that I will be timing them, recording the data, and comparing to the data in their notebooks. This builds accountability into the reading practice activity. It also provides a modeled experience so that students can see how to do this activity independently. The goal is to increase words per minute by about five words each time.
Word Recognition

Reading practice is geared toward building stamina, repetitive reading to improve fluency, and scaffolding independent learning. Word recognition is focused on building automaticity, making sense of morphemes, and learning about letters, their patterns and their sounds. Word recognition has four activities that comprise the block. I will briefly explain each one.

There is a multitude of research explaining how to organize and categorize words. Cunningham and Hall (1998) provide a list of ninety high-frequency words that might be troublesome to spell or are words that intermediate students just need to know. Dolch lists, which are sometimes referred to as sight-words, can be downloaded from the Internet and consist of two hundred twenty of the most frequently used words. Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton, & Johnston, (2004) have so many words to sort and organize, it can be overwhelming to know where to begin.

The first of the four word recognition activities involves word wall words. Word walls are useful teaching tools but before words go on the wall, students need time to practice with them. I have students make a ‘Stop and Go” folder to sort, organize, and practice these words. Make sure to keep the practice short and the pace very quick or this activity can quickly become drudgery. Appendix D provides an example of what this folder looks like.

Making the folder can be an elaborate art project or a quick and simple job of taping and stapling. Each student will need:

- a manila file folder
- two small letter envelopes
- one five by seven envelope
- word pages, and
- word cards.

Word pages have the sight-words printed twenty words to a page and are distributed one page at a time, with each page numbered consecutively. Students must demonstrate mastery of the majority of the words, which I will explain presently, on the current page before moving to the next page. Word cards are cut from card stock. I cut four vertical columns and six horizontal rows to create the word cards and I use a different color of card stock for each student. When the word cards get mingled during game time, the colors make identification easy.

To assemble the ‘Stop and Go’ folder, have students place the folder in front of them like a book. The title, their name, and optional decorations go on the front, like a cover. Open the folder and on the inside left page, have students glue or tape the two small letter envelopes. Label the one on top “STOP” and the one on the bottom “GO”. I like to have the students use red and green markers for this step, too. On the facing right-hand side, staple the word page at the top. The last step in the assembly is to label the five by seven envelope “WORD BANK” and tape or glue it to the back of the folder.

Next, give students twenty blank word cards in the appropriate color and instruct them to write one sight word per card using their best handwriting. On the back of the word card, students should write the word page number. Now students use these cards like flash cards. Words they know and can say immediately are placed into the “GO”
envelope. Words that cause a hesitation or are completely unknown are placed in the “STOP” pile. These are the words for further study. Words that cause hesitation need practice. Words that are unknown need coaching, either from a peer or from a teacher.

Students should always begin using the flash cards with the words in the “GO” envelope. Once these words have been identified correctly four or five times, they can be moved to the “WORD BANK” envelope on the back of the folder. Moving words to this envelope is a visual demonstration of mastery. As the collection of mastered words grows, students feel a wonderful sense of accomplishment and pride.

As the “STOP” words become familiar, they are then moved to the “GO” envelope. Occasional review of the “WORD BANK” envelope is recommended. If students hesitate during review of these words, they can move back to the “GO” envelope for additional reinforcement practice.

Using the word cards as flash cards is a straightforward application. For variety, students can work with a partner and challenge each other with games like Concentration or Gotcha. For Concentration, students place their cards word-side down, making sure that the numbers on the back of the cards are the same. This will ensure that the words each student contributes to the game will be the same set of words. Since each student has different color cards, a player’s turn consists of turning over one card of each color and reading each word aloud. If the words are a match, that player may keep the two cards and take another turn. This game is good for practicing the words in any of the envelopes. It is especially good for reviewing the word bank words.
Gotcha is a never-ending game so I usually set a time limit of approximately fifteen minutes. To play, students can use words from the same word page or simply pull out the words in their “STOP” envelope. The words each student contributes can be different or the same depending on the skill being developed at that time. Students should each contribute about ten words to the game. They randomly choose three word cards from their set of words and on the word side, write a “G” in the corner. These cards are the “Gotcha” cards. Then place all twenty cards in a container. The first student reaches into the container without looking, draws out a card, and reads the word aloud to the other student. There are several options for what action the second student can do. Be sure to establish this before the game begins. Students can either spell the word, use it correctly in a sentence, or both. If the second student successfully completes the action, they may keep the card. As the piles of kept cards grow larger, it is inevitable that one of the six “Gotcha” cards will be drawn. Once the action for that card is completed, either successfully or unsuccessfully, the student performing the action must return all his or her word cards to the container.

Sorting words into various categories is the second word recognition activity. Concept sorts, spelling sorts, vowel sound sorts, and alphabet sorts are but a few of the possibilities for this adaptation. Students also work on improving phonics and decoding skills when working in this realm. Sorting words easily lends itself to partner work as well as games. In *Words Their Way* by Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton,, and Johnston (2004), sorting is perfected to a fine art. The text provides templates for game boards and suggestions for many variations on sorting to focus on specific skills. Game boards can
be customized for play and then glued inside a manila file folder. I glue the game title and the directions on the cover of the folder and an envelope on the back to store the game pieces.

Making words is the third activity in the word recognition block. Making words is a word scramble activity. I prepare a page with one big word but the letters are arranged so that the vowels are in alphabetical order followed by the consonants, also in alphabetical order. Each letter is printed in a numbered box that the students cut apart and line up on the table in front of them. In their notebooks, they make columns labeled: 1-Letter, 2-Letter, 3-Letter, 4-Letter, 5-Letter. By manipulating the cut letters, students make as many new words as they can and write them in the appropriate column. As this activity is also part of the adapted guided reading lesson on Day Three, students quickly become accustomed to the procedure and can usually create a few words independently. An example can be seen in Appendix A under Reader’s Notebook entries.

The fourth and last activity in the word recognition block is rhyming words. In this activity, children work with word families to become familiar with rimes that appear frequently. Manipulating the rhymes reinforces the concepts in the phonics, and sight-word readers in the reading practice block. In fact, often students will make the connection themselves based on the similarities between the two adaptations.

I put out sets of color-coded cards printed with onsets and rimes. Again, the colors allow students to easily sort the sets and put them away after use. To color code, choose two colors, say red and blue. Then cut four or five blue cards from cardstock and use a red marker to print the rimes. This set might include the rimes –at, -it, -og, and –ut.
Now cut a number of cards from red cardstock and use a blue marker to print the onsets that will complete the word families. Note that if there are any pronunciation deviations, such as ‘put’, in the word families, it is well to point them out first and emphasize the difference.

I also include a few onsets that don’t work with the rimes. This measures two skills. First can students follow the pattern and pronounce a nonsense word, and second, can they recognize the nonsense word. As students are exposed to this activity, they become more adept at culling the onsets that don’t match.

The beauty of this activity is its versatility. Individually, students can stack the onsets to match the rimes and then flip through them quickly at the end. Occasionally I have students choose a word family and write it in their notebooks. Doing this too often, however, becomes tedious and defeats the purpose. Better to pair children and turn it into a game. Have students take turns flipping the onset cards while the other student pronounces each new word. Remove the onsets of missed words and the student who can correctly read the most words wins at the end.

I keep a large supply of rhyming sets on hand. Some of the sets are duplicates for both color and word families. In this case, I mark each card in a set with a ‘1’ or a ‘2’ to distinguish them. The sets of rhyming words reinforce the word recognition skills needed for sight words, phonics, decoding, and letter patterns.

**Listening**

Setting up a listening station requires careful preparation. It seems like it should be an easy thing but I have seen it done poorly. When this happens, it can affect more
than just the students in the listening station. Teachers are interrupted with pleas for assistance, which in turn affects the students receiving guided instruction. It is better to provide instruction and practice before turning students over to work independently in this area.

There are three areas of focus in our listening block. First, students learn about recorded books. Second, students have an opportunity to practice the songs and poems from the reading practice block. Third, students record and listen to themselves. Finally, students work on rhyming words, which reinforces the concepts in the phonics, and sight-word readers in the reading practice block.

Listening to books on tape is a favorite activity. Our library has a large collection of listening books. I keep about eight or nine listening books at a time in my room and rotate them as students finish with them. Sometimes the books come in sets of two or four with one tape but most often it is a single book and tape in a bag. Students must have the book in their hand and follow along with the text being read. I do not allow them to share a book because it is inevitable that one student will be unable to fully see or follow along with the text.

This activity needs some practice in order for students to be successful independently. They need to know how to locate, operate, and put away the equipment. Some books are on tape, some are on CD, and the equipment configurations vary according to what is needed for different texts. They also need to know what to do if they lose their place in the text as they are listening to the story. And they need to know that the expectation is they will listen to the same story at least three times before going
to another text. This can be the hardest expectation to enforce because students are often very excited about hearing all the stories. But, as we read stories multiple times in other work areas, students quickly come to the realization that this practice is a good one.

The songs and poems from our shared reading binder are the second listening activity. As we collect about eight to ten pieces in the binder, I record the large group reciting or singing the pieces and then burn a CD to put at the listening area. Students love to read or sing along with themselves.

Self-recording is the third activity to fall into the listening block and, like listening books, requires some instruction to launch. I put a blank cassette tape, labeled “BLANK” on both sides, into a tape recorder and show the children how to record their voices and how to find their spot on the tape by using the numbers on the machine. Then they record themselves reading a short piece into the tape. Now they are ready to listen and read along with themselves. This is usually accompanied with giggling as they listen to the sound of their own voice the first few times. Listening to their own voices can help students adjust their pronunciation of English. When students have finished this activity, they leave the tape at the end of their work so the next students can simply continue to record and listen.

I introduce four or five new activities each month and the children help to keep track by writing the new literacy activity on a chart we keep in the room. I make four boxes on the chart and label each section. Adding the activities little by little allows the children ample time to practice and master each new activity, while also providing a variety of activities that focus on multiple skills.
The final adaptation under the category of literacy activities is the games section. Table 3.7, Literacy Activities, lists five games but nearly all of the preceding activities can be made to feel game-like for LAs. Alphabet practice was described earlier in the assessment adaptations. ‘No’ words were described in the word recognition practices. BINGO is a popular activity that can be adapted to practice a wide variety of skills. Sorting words is yet another process that has many variations. Creativity in making games from skills practice will keep LAs engaged and their learning on track.

The literacy activities are adaptations, which provide scaffolded independent work that targets the specific needs of LAs. Many of the activities engage students in practice that is deliberately repetitive, and designed to elicit language production as well as language input. The literacy activities can be noisy but they work in conjunction with the additional adaptations introduced during guided reading instruction. The appendix section offers examples of the Shared Reading Binder, a Reader’s Theater, and a Stop and Go folder.

Guided Reading

Since I work with the LAs from each classroom separately, I am able to have small groups of approximately six LAs at a time. Then, to facilitate the use of the materials adaptations described in this chapter, I often have students work in groups of two or three. Guided reading instruction is no different.

The adaptations to the structure of guided reading were outlined in Table 3.4 and discussed earlier in this chapter. With the guided reading materials, it is my own personal preference to have each of the smaller groups using different texts. Even if
eventually I intend all the students to have an opportunity to read the same materials, it is easier for me to keep track of each group’s progress when they are working from different books. As the three-day cycle of guided reading lessons is completed, I can usually rotate the texts to the next group of students. Additionally, preparing several texts at once for guided reading groups frees up time to plan and create materials for the literacy activities. Once the guided reading lessons are complete, the texts can be moved to the literacy activities and used to strengthen students’ skills.

Gay (1987) and Merriam (2009) explain that descriptive research is a method of rich, extensive observation that can gradually change an accepted protocol. Through close examination and reflective practice, modifications to RW create an environment to support the needs of LAs. Assessments, the structure of rituals and routines, and materials are areas for further study.

Summary
In a descriptive research inquiry, the data consists of the rich description of the situation, as it exists. Descriptive research reports data in a manner that is factual, accurate, and systematic. It is useful for providing a general overview of the topic. The ensuing documentation often leads to an awareness of a problem, and in turn can point to possibilities for reform in the methods that are generally accepted as normal. In my first chapter, I described several situations whereby the LAs were often unprepared to participate in RW as a direct result of their lack of language skills. Sheltered instruction was minimal and there were few strategic language lessons. The result is that the LAs, who enter our educational system in the intermediate grades, are making minimal academic gains. This places them significantly below grade level.
This method fits my study well. RW procedures are well documented by prominent researchers and the curriculum is flexible enough to allow for, and even encourage, differentiated instruction. Fountas & Pinnell (2001) offer suggestions for struggling readers that can potentially be applied to LAs, but their work assumes English proficiency and focuses on the strengths and weaknesses of students who already have acquired language competence. They do not offer specific suggestions as to the additional needs of LAs or ELLs. Goldenberg (2008) reiterates the scarcity of information pertaining to LAs in his article that reviews the findings of two major reviews of the research on educating ELLs.

In this chapter, I examined data that falls into three broad categories: assessments, structures, and materials. Describing the parts separately highlights the important aspects of the study and simultaneously illuminates the relationship between the parts. The purpose of my study is to identify ways to adapt RW to permit upper elementary LAs to make accelerated reading gains. In my next chapter, I will evaluate the data that has been collected and analyze the features that make it suitable for meeting the purpose of this study.
Mother robin's Job

Lays the eggs.

Keep the eggs warm.

What do the babies need after they hatch?

Foods, warm, water, mother.

Egg chart

Blue Jay

Emu
Figure 3.2
Language Lesson

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CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

In chapter three, I explained the descriptive research method. This technique, which is well suited for educational application, consists of observations that have breadth, depth, and longevity. According to Gay (1987), the discussion of current practices often leads to the realization that something is missing. The current model of RW in our building is fashioned after the research of Fountas and Pinnell (2001) and while it is well suited for differentiated instruction, current practices do not adequately support our newcomers. This fact has led me to my research question: What are the adaptations to RW that will permit upper elementary LAs to accelerate their gains in reading?

LAs at the intermediate grade levels are significantly behind their peers and my goal is to prepare this group of students to join their mainstream peers as soon as possible. With that end in mind, my study seeks to find ways to adapt RW to permit upper elementary LAs to make accelerated reading gains. In this chapter I highlight modifications I made to RW and explain the work I got from students as a result of the changes. These changes, in turn, create the setting for improvements in student performance, which is measured by both formal and informal assessments.

The LAs I work with are nine years old and are in fourth grade. They typically have three or four siblings and may have some literacy in their first language although it is just as likely they will not. Usually they speak little to no English. The majority of
these newcomers are from various areas in Southeast Asia and Africa where, for a variety of reasons, educational opportunities were limited. Mainstream classrooms each contain between four and seven LAs and each of the LAs loosely fits this profile. A group this size is ideal to work with and allows for fine tuned differentiation.

In chapter one, I gave a lengthy description of the mainstream RW process and highlighted ways in which it was not suited for LAs. In this chapter, I explain the results in terms of the standard application of RW. In other words, in the mainstream classroom, RW opens with a whole group lesson, is followed by work time, and closes with sharing of the learning that happened that day during the literacy block. In the intermediate grades, it is presumed that students are familiar with many of the rituals and routines of RW. Mainstream students who have been in the district for any length of time will have this advantage. Newcomers to the country, on the other hand, do not. In this chapter, I present the ways in which I adapted RW to meet the needs of LAs.

Reading Readiness

Chapter three described the process of initial assessments to determine a beginning reading level. This conversation discussed both the procedure followed for the majority of fourth grade students and then described the adaptations for assessing LAs in order to accurately identify their beginning literacy levels. The initial formal assessments provide a place to begin instruction for LAs, while the ongoing, often daily, informal assessments allow for differentiated instruction to accelerate learning. Many LAs are pre-literate and need time to learn the alphabet and hone reading readiness skills.
At the beginning of the school year, there are a few weeks worth of lessons that launch RW for the year in the mainstream classroom, but for students who don’t know the alphabet and have virtually no comprehension in English, this is valuable time that can be used to build pre-literacy skills. Initially, in a sheltered space, I use the whole group time to read aloud alphabet books. There are copious quantities of these, from very simple to very sophisticated. Students sit close to me and say the letter name and sound with me. After a few days, I just point and they respond in a choral manner. After the first week of alphabet books, I begin to intersperse very easy big books. Favorites are traditional stories such as *The Little Red Hen*, or stories that are songs. A favorite example of this is *Five Little Ducks*.

**Alphabet Chart**

During work time, I introduce several very simple alphabet activities and teach LAs how to manipulate several literacy activities. In this way, I am preparing the students to work independently. An alphabet chart is easy to create on a piece of tagboard. Make a grid of six columns and five rows and in each box write an upper case and lower case letter both printed and in cursive script. This helps students to meet the standard that expects intermediate students to identify both sets of written letters. The extra boxes can either be left blank or used to sort for very basic sight words such as *and*, *the*, *to*, and *was*.

To use the chart, give students a bag of letters that have been attached to the same color card stock. Using different colors of card stock creates several sets of letters and simplifies cleanup. Students can easily identify the sets and sort them for storage. Each
letter and sight word is represented four to six times and is printed in a variety of fonts, sizes, styles, and cases. As the students sort the letters into the appropriate boxes on the tagboard, they say the letter name and the sound it makes. Two students can comfortably use this board, taking turns, and helping each other when they get stuck.

**Alphabet Games**

Another adaptation for reading readiness is using alphabet games. I also teach all the children several simple games that provide alphabet practice. I have alphabet ‘Go Fish’, alphabet dominoes, alphabet BINGO, and alphabet concentration. Alphabet concentration utilizes a set of upper case and a set of lower case letters each printed on different colored paper, but kept in the same baggie. To play, students spread the cards printed side down on the table. They take turns turning over one card of each color and saying the letter name and the sound it makes. If the upper and lower cases match, the student keeps the two cards and takes another turn. Play continues until all the cards have been matched. The player with the most sets is declared the winner of the round.

For alphabet BINGO, students make a five-by-five grid in their notebook, and write ‘free’ in the center box. Partners have a bag with the alphabet in either upper or lower case. To fill the remaining boxes in the grid, students can randomly pull letters from the bag and write the letters drawn anywhere in the grid. To play, partners take turns drawing letters from the bag. As the caller, the students must name the letter and say the sound it makes. Players cover the letter on the grid until they have a BINGO.

**Alphabet Chant**
Teaching the children to use all these materials takes several days, but once students can manage these literacy activities independently, they are ready for guided practice. Working with one or two students at a time allows for individualized instruction as well as the means to informally assess progress. At a small table we learn to chant the alphabet letter names and sounds while looking at a page with upper case letters, lower case letters and a picture of an object with the initial sound, and the word of the object printed next to the object. Adding a little rhythm and beat to the chant helps to make it stick. Finger snapping, and foot tapping reinforces this activity. Students are given a copy of the page to practice at home.

So that reading readiness activities don’t become stale and so that students have an opportunity to practice multiple skills on a daily basis, I keep the alphabet practice activity times short, rotating students in ten to fifteen minute intervals. With just a bit of training, students can be given the responsibility of timekeeper. They love to be in charge of the timer.

In a work period that is approximately forty to fifty minutes long, I plan for three to four rotations daily. There is always one guided activity as well as a number of independent activities that are differentiated to meet the needs of LAs and keep them engaged. To get students learning, I pair them, put them in threes, or have them work individually on the alphabet skills. If they finish an activity before the timer goes off, the read aloud books are available to re-read. Generally, students are ready to move forward after two weeks of intense alphabet study.
Because of the variety of activities and the repetitive nature of the process, students are engaged and I rarely have had anyone take more than two weeks to solidify the basic names and sounds of the English alphabet, however we do practice intermittently in order to maintain mastery. Work time is enthusiastic, noisy, and productive. Students partner willingly with each other, follow directions, ask questions when necessary, and love the feeling of being in charge with independent work and being the timekeeper.

To measure their progress in mastering the alphabet, I use several informal measures. The alphabet chart chant is a pretty good indicator of mastery. Students practice this at home as homework and then do it daily with me. I also use one of the alphabet sorts as flash cards. Students must identify the letter name and sound in a random order. Both of these assessments are oral. I do a formal check to put in my student file using the assessment that was displayed in Table 3.2 on page 60.

Table 4.1 outlines the adaptations for the students who are at a reading readiness stage. When the students are present at the beginning of the school year, they can work together and progress together in these adaptations. If students arrive mid-year, there will be other independent activities in place so that I can easily spend a few days acclimating a new student to the routines. Then, because the more seasoned students know the routines, I can pair them one by one to work with the newcomer.

In the adapted model of RW, the interactive read-aloud choices follow the mainstream model of RW but are gauged to meet the needs of language learners. The reading focus keeps tasks narrow and specific, while the guided reading lesson with the
alphabet chant provides an opportunity for conferring and assessing progress, both formally and informally. Week two is similar to week one with new alphabet games introduced. Alphabet BINGO and alphabet domino build the repertoire of independent work, which in turn helps to keep the activities fresh as we add them to the rotations.

Table 4.1
*Alphabet Adaptations*

**Monday:**
- **Reading focus:** Learning letter names and sounds.
- **Whole group:** Shared read of an alphabet book.
- **Work time:** Teach and play alphabet ‘*Go Fish.*’
  - Practice clean up.
- **Sharing:** Sing the alphabet song.
  - Turn and talk: Same/different letters in first names.

**Tuesday:**
- **Reading focus:** Re-read.
- **Whole group:** Shared read of the alphabet book. Notice details.
- **Work time:** Teach / play alphabet ‘*Concentration.*’
  - Practice clean up.
  - Teach / practice letter sort chart.
  - Practice clean up.
- **Share:** Alphabet flash cards with partners.

**Wednesday:**
- **Reading focus:** Text to text Connections.
- **Whole Group:** Shared read of a new alphabet book.
- **Work time:** Teach and play BINGO.
  - Practice clean up.
  - Teach / practice alphabet chart chant.
  - Practice clean up.
- **Share:** Discuss reading focus.
  - Sing the alphabet song.

**Thursday:**
- **Reading focus:** Compare and contrast.
- **Whole group:** Read a third alphabet book.
- **Work time:** Split into two groups, use timer to indicate rotation.
  - **Group 1** Alphabet chart chant.
  - **Group 2** Alphabet ‘*Concentration.*’
  - 2-minute clean up and transition time.
  - Switch activities for the remaining time.
- **Share:** How did the game go? Explain.

**Friday:**
Reading focus: Learning letter names and sounds.
Whole group: Re-read previous books.
Work time: Split into two groups, use timer to indicate rotation.
  Group 1 Alphabet chart chant.
  Group 2 Alphabet ‘Go Fish.’
2-minute clean up and transition time.
Switch activities for the remaining time.
Share: Alphabet flash cards, whole group.

It is imperative that LAs have a firm grasp of letter names and their corresponding sounds and two weeks of intense study is the right start. Our collection of alphabet books is growing and we have added a few easy stories in big books. These books are in a prominent location in the room and are available for students to re-read when they have completed their work.

Independent Reading

Structurally, adapting the instructional space so that LAs can work in a sheltered environment as soon as possible and for as much of the literacy block that is feasible is an important adaptation to make. LAs currently spend the majority of their day with their peers; so fifty to sixty minutes of daily sheltered instruction in the literacy block can help to jumpstart their success. This provides an opportunity to interact with material at a level they can manipulate and it is an environment that feels safer for practicing fledging language skills.

In the previous chapter I introduced the method of adapting independent reading. Adaptations are made for how to choose appropriate books, how to manage the reading process, writing reading responses, and record keeping. Now it is time to integrate the use of the library and explain the record keeping process.

Library
Mainstream classrooms visit the library once a week. Daily visits, however, is the adaptation that is the norm for the LAs. I arrange with the librarian for the LAs to visit the library daily for ten or fifteen minutes to exchange books. Further, whereas the normal check out policy for the students in our building is two books at a time, my LAs are allowed to check out three books each time. The reason for this is because the library books are used for the at-home reading requirement of RW, which is twenty to thirty minutes each day. In chapter one I described one of the issues with RW as being that the texts, which are at an appropriate level for LAs, are simple and short. As such, LAs, even with their low levels of literacy, have a hard time meeting the at-home requirements without adaptation with just two books. Three books are better and as students learn about the benefit of reading books multiple times, they begin to incorporate this habit at home, too. We frequent the library for this adaptation, because as I also described in chapter one, it has a large enough collection to support emergent readers. Classroom libraries, while also a wonderful resource, are geared toward readers who are closer to grade level and thus have fewer resources to support intermediate students reading at beginning levels.

**Book Talks**

During the initial week when we first visit the library, we use the sharing time at the end of the RW period to begin book talks. While book talks are also a part of the mainstream RW, they are much more formal and are introduced later in the year. By starting right away, not only do LAs become acclimated to the idea of sharing about
books, they are learning about this process in small, incremental steps to prepare them for joining their peers later in the year.

Students tell their peers about the library books they have checked out and read at home, sharing simple phrases about what they liked or didn’t like about the book. Discussions can be in the style of turn and talk, or sharing in a circle with the whole group. This promotes speaking confidence, listening aptitude, and as an added bonus, sharing this way causes students to become interested in each other’s books and take turns checking out the same books. This provides a common base of books to draw upon for future discussions and making text—to-text comparisons. Sharing this way can take more than the allotted time allowed at the end of RW so it is important to plan for adequate time. Instead of the usual five to ten minutes, this important adaptation can take fifteen or twenty minutes.

**Just-Right Books**

Introducing students to the nuances of the library is important because, for many of the LAs, a library is a relatively new concept. Some students are awed by the idea that the books in the library are available for them to take home. From experience, I have learned it is important to impress upon the new LAs the books are not to keep, but must be returned to the library.

Choosing appropriate books is an adaptation that is described in chapter three. Students learn to use the leveling system in our library so they can choose books they can read independently. RW refers to these books as Just-Right books and all students are encouraged to choose books at their reading level. All students are encouraged to choose
appropriate books but the assumption is that mainstream students have been exposed to
the application in previous years. Adapting this process for LAs involves very explicit
instruction and guided, ongoing practice locating and selecting appropriate books.

At the beginning of the year, our librarian makes a collection of the very easiest
readers on one shelf for my LAs to choose from. As they become more familiar with the
library, this is no longer necessary. They are able to use the leveling labels on the book
spines and eventually can look at books that have not been formally leveled and decide
whether or not it is appropriate. By the end of the school year, the LAs can navigate the
library without assistance or even adult supervision.

Reading At Home

The books the LAs check out of the library are used for reading at home. That
students read daily at home for twenty to thirty minutes is an expectation for all
intermediate students. Our students are required to keep a reading log but the record
keeping procedure used in the mainstream is confusing and many mainstream students
struggle to figure out what to do. The process involves recording information in multiple
places, some of which are loose pages in a folder. There are a number of versions of the
reading log and mainstream teachers each have their favorite.

The adaptation to simplify this process is to record the information in the daily
planner. Our fourth graders use this organizational tool every day, both at school and at
home, and it becomes a routine extension of managing information to log books here.
I model how to write the titles and authors of the books, stressing when to use upper and
lower case letters. During the share time, students have their planners open and the
books in front of them. Before we share, I encourage students to compare the words from
the texts to what they have written in their planner / book log. Are the uppercase letters
in the correct place? Are all the words spelled properly? Taking the time now to
emphasize the proper way to record this data will pay dividends in the future.

The independent reading process is a vital part of RW and adapting it so that LAs
can experience success involves adaptations in choosing materials, recording data, and
sharing about texts. Guided reading is another important aspect of RW that can be
adapted to accommodate the needs of the LAs.

Guided Reading

Oral sharing about the at-home reading experience is the prelude to written
responses, which are an expectation in both independent work and guided reading.
Guided instruction for LAs begins with oral responses and discussion to literature.
Reading literature multiple times was discussed in the previous chapter. In this chapter, I
will describe a variety of the adaptations for practicing reading strategies. The reading
strategies that we are required to incorporate into RW were listed in the previous chapter
in Table 3.5 on page 69. In teaching the strategies, the goal is for each additional reading
strategy to build upon the previous strategy. The responses are recorded in the reader’s
notebook, which, as the school year progresses, serves as a reference tool as well.

Reading Strategies

There are nineteen reading strategies detailed in Table 3.5 on page 69. The
strategies are taken from the standards. Teaching the strategies is a spiraling process,
where one strategy provides the foundation for the next, and as the year progresses, the
strategies are revisited. The guided reading time provides a vehicle for adapting the teaching and learning cycle for reading strategies.

**Sequence of Events**

Because it is a fairly concrete concept, a logical reading strategy to begin with is sequence of events. Adapting for this reading strategy starts with discussion. Using a text that everyone has had the opportunity to read, we identify the important events in the story. Oral discussions continue on different texts over several days. We work to orally identify the four main events. After several days of discussions, a written model is introduced for students to imitate. On chart paper, I make four squares and label them “First, Next, Then, Last” and then from the discussion, we work to write accurate sentences in each box. We will complete several of these shared writing models to ensure students feel comfortable with this adaptation before LAs are invited to try independently.

The four-step response of “First, Next, Then, Last” is a relatively easy strategy to apply to beginning level books. Student work is presented in Figures 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3. These three work samples represent work from students who successfully used this adaptation to demonstrate learning to apply this strategy. In the butterfly work sample shown in Figure 4.1, the sequencing prompts are listed down the side of the page. The drawings are neat, with labels applied from the vocabulary in the text. Upper case and lower case letters are used randomly and there is no punctuation. Sentence structure is strong, however, as evidenced by the use of the correct verb tense describing the illustrations and the concluding sentence at the bottom of the page. In assessing this
piece, it appears the student has been successful at identifying the sequence of this non-fiction piece. An LA student who had arrived in the country the previous May produced this work sample in mid-September.

Figure 4.2 is a work sample from the same student. This work was produced three months later at the beginning of December and again demonstrates a successful application of the strategy to a fiction text. In this work sample, note the correct use of upper and lower case letters in the heading at the top of the page. Sentences are lengthy, describe the action in the story, and include several details in each segment. Each sequence box concludes with punctuation.

The third work sample is found in Figure 4.3 and comes from another student who arrived in the country at approximately the same time as the student in the previous two work samples. This sample is another variation on the sequencing strategy. Folding and cutting a twelve by eighteen piece of construction paper to create an eight-panel flipbook, this student explained and illustrated the process of making maple syrup. This work sample was created in March of the same school year as the previous two samples. Evidence of specific unit vocabulary can be observed, as well as complex sentences with many details. Upper case letters are still used in random places and punctuation is evident but not consistent. The illustrations support the concepts the student is explaining and clearly demonstrate a grasp of the process.

Problem and Solution

Practicing the sequencing strategy a number of times in a variety of ways provides the foundation for practicing other reading strategies that are listed in Table 3.5.
Intermediate students need to be familiar with the text features of a fiction story. One of these features is identifying the problem and the solution in a story. As students become comfortable identifying the sequence of events in a story, it is time to introduce the concept of problem and solution. Oral discussion precedes written statements and the text and illustrations help to highlight the concepts.
Figure 4.1
Sequencing Work Sample

draw a picture of caterpillar
turn into a butterfly

first is egg

caterpillar
cell

then is the chrysalis

then is butterfly

and they flying to Mexico know
Figure 4.2
Sequence Work Sample

Reading Response

**Beginning - End**

*Title: The Rain Came Down*

*Author: Judy Blume*

<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>First</strong></th>
<th><strong>Next</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>there was rain and then another police man drove his car and he heard yelling and the chicken squawked. the sheep to see what was wrong.</td>
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<tr>
<td>then</td>
<td>lost</td>
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<tr>
<td>and then the boy and the girl and the street were wet so they heard the honking and the car could not drive and he turned there so they pumped up the music on his van.</td>
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</table>
Figure 4.3
Sequencing Work Samples

First you tap a spile in a maple tree and put the bucket on the spile and the bucket. Hang in the spile and the maple sap come to the bucket.

Next you collect and the boil the sap and the sap with the water. The water evaporator and have a lot of steam and the only sap boiling in the pot or in the evaporator.
Figure 4.3 (Continued)
Sequence Work Samples

Then you cook the sap until 214 degrees and the water evaporates and make into maple syrup.

Then you taste the maple syrup and it's yummy and you go get more sap and collect more.
Guided practice follows from the discussions. We use chart paper that is divided into thirds. The thirds can be vertical or horizontal. The first third identifies the character experiencing the problem. Usually this is the main character. Students who like to draw are candidates to invite to the chart to draw a picture of the main character. Then, together we brainstorm some attributes of this character. What does he or she look like? What are two things the character did in the story? Is this character someone you want as a friend? Why or Why not? Not only do discussions such as these build budding English skills and literacy skills, they contribute towards building a positive classroom community as students explore what kinds of behaviors are desirable in others.

The second section on the chart is for the problem. We discuss, illustrate and write about the problem. The last section on the chart covers the solution. Again we discuss, illustrate, and write. This process helps children see that the problem and solution are connected. Surprisingly, this can be a difficult concept to grasp and initially requires some leading questions from me to identify the relationship. Figures 4.4 and 4.5 are from students who arrived in the country just a few weeks before the beginning of the school year. These work samples were produced in November and are the final copies of reading responses that were started in the reader’s notebooks. The first drafts were edited, because the final works were included in a bulletin board display. The story is about a girl named Fiona who loves to listen to loud music and sing along. The phone rings in the house but Fiona can’t hear it because the music is too loud. Mother is busy and can’t answer the phone, either. Eventually the phone stops ringing. As readers, we are left to speculate about who the caller might have been.
Figure 4.4
Problem / Solution Work Sample

Fiona could not answer the phone because she was singing loud.

Fiona has to turn down the music so she can listen to the phone.
Figure 4.5
Problem / Solution Work Sample
The first section in Figure 4.4 clearly identifies the main character by name and while the illustration depicts the action from the text, it does not include a written description of the character’s attributes. The second section clearly states the problem and the third panel has a solution that is concise, logical, and connected to the problem. Based on these observations, it appears this student has grasped the concept.

Figure 4.5 displays a work sample from the same story but is done by a different student. In the first panel, the speech bubble of an unseen person implies the character’s name. The second panel tells one of the events from the story and hints at the problem but doesn’t clearly define the issue. We don’t see a telephone in the illustration, although the words “ring, ring, ring” are associated with the sound a telephone makes. In this panel, the viewer could interpret the sound as coming from the radio at the character’s feet. In the last frame, we see a rather sophisticated use of punctuation where the student used quotation marks, but the solution is not clear, nor is it linked logically to the problem stated in panel two. This work sample demonstrates the complexity of the seemingly simple task of identifying problem and solution. Evaluating this work sample, it appears that this student struggled to convey the concepts of problem and solution from this story.

**Story Map**

Mainstream intermediate students are expected to be able to complete a story map. This skill is concerned with identifying the main character, the setting of the story, the problem and solution, and the sequence of events. For LAs, it is necessary to break the story mapping skill into smaller steps. Once students have had practice with
sequencing and problem/solution, completing the rest of the story map components becomes relatively easy. Knowing how to complete a story map is important for students because it builds the knowledge of the text features of the broad genre of fiction stories. Understanding text features helps students to access texts more deeply. They can make predictions based on background knowledge, they can make comparisons about stories, and they are better able to make connections.

**Making Connections**

Making connections is an important part of becoming readers who are engaged with the text. In guided reading, we practice this skill often. Students learn to make connections to personal experiences, to other texts, and to the world outside of them. Making connections requires critical thinking skills from students. Students need to think about the text, think about what they know regarding texts in general or information specific to a topic, and combine these two knowledge bases into an abstract idea that may not be stated directly in the text. Figure 4.6 is a work sample from a student who arrived in the country the in the spring, enrolled and attended our school for the end of third grade, and then returned to our school the following fall. This sample was produced at the beginning of October. Here the student has read a story about being safe at home and made a connection to a personal experience of events that happened at home. Evaluating the work sample, it appears the text has triggered a connection to a personal experience that happened with the student’s family. Text-to-self connections such as these are an indication the student comprehends the story and is evidence of thinking about reading.
Figure 4.6
Making Connections Work Samples

Response

Title: Our house is a safe house
Author: Annette Smith

This book remember
me when my dad we saw one
house that are good and

them when we went inside

the house look a little
afraid because the house

was so dark.
**Making Inferences**

A closely related skill to making connections is making inferences. Students must analyze a text and reason a logical conclusion. Figure 4.7 is a work sample where a student was asked to make inferences about a story. The work sample was produced in mid-September and is from a student who had been in the country for a few months. The story of the five little ducks who go out to play but don’t come home is a favorite. We read and sing the words, marvel about the pictures in the big book, and identify with each of the ducklings. Ultimately, I ask the children to speculate about the fate of the ducklings. The ducklings vanish one by one, but always return in the end. Where did they go? What did they do? Wondering about where the ducklings went and what they were doing develops evaluative skills, and leads students to think not only about what the text says, but also what it doesn’t say. To produce a written response of this kind first requires much discussion and brainstorming.

The response is elicited first through discussion that attempts to make personal connections to the ducklings. Have students ever been away from home overnight? Where did they go and for how long? How did that feel? What did they do while away from home? Have the students ever been outside and not heard someone calling loudly for them to come in? What happened?

LAs are likely to have an animated discussion in both their first language and in English. As a child tries to tell the story in English, they will not have adequate vocabulary and will switch to the first language. Then, with much prompting and help, the story emerges as a group effort in English. This kind of group interaction makes it
possible to brainstorm solutions regarding the ducklings’ adventures. The answers all reflect things these students like to do when not being supervised by adults. Humorously, hiding, from siblings, from parents, from friends, and from teachers, is truly a favorite activity of nine- and ten-year-old children.

In Figure 4.7, the student accurately copied the question from the board and wrote it at the top of the page using punctuation and upper and lower case letters appropriately. The work has a simple sentence structure that repeats in much the same way as the independent texts being read at this time. Sentences are grammatically correct and show a variety of possibilities that can answer the question. Punctuation graces the end of each sentence, and each sentence begins with an upper case letter. There is however, one random upper case letter contained within one of the sentences. An illustration of two ducklings wandering without an adult provides evidence that the student understood the story and was capable of giving several possibilities to answer the question. This work sample shows the student is developing their inferential skills.

**Written Responses**

Students show they are internalizing reading strategies by producing written responses to literature. Scaffolding the written responses is a necessary part of adapting RW. In the mainstream classroom, students are expected to respond to literature daily, with guided reading responses written in the reader’s notebook and independent reading responses recorded on loose pages and kept in a folder. Because it is assumed that intermediate students have had exposure to the rituals and routines of RW, scaffolding of responses is not as intense as what I provide to the LAs.
Figure 4.7  
Making Inferences Work Sample

Where did the ducks go? 
They eat corn.  

The ducks swim.  
The ducks hide.  
The ducks sleep.  
The ducks play soccer.  
The ducks quack.
As the LAs are acquiring both language and content knowledge, adaptations involve extended time for discussion, more modeled practice, more guided practice, and more independent practice. Additionally, tasks are broken down into incremental steps that are gradually reassembled. As one intermediate mainstream teacher remarked to me, “So often the LAs are just lost.”

Adapting RW for LAs involves streamlining the response process by eliminating the loose papers and writing all responses in the reader’s notebook. Responses are introduced and modeled one at a time during guided reading, and guided practice is provided before students are released to try independently. And while LAs are working with the same reading strategies as the mainstream students, their response format may also be adapted. This process of adapted responses is designed to provide students ample opportunity to internalize the reading strategies.

Non-Fiction Features

Teaching the reading strategies helps to build background knowledge for LAs. As students become familiar with the text features of different genres of literature, they begin to build an awareness of what to expect from different types of literature. Not only does this knowledge help LAs to manipulate a wide variety of texts, but also knowing about literature in this way helps to deepen and improve comprehension. Many of the reading strategies can be applied to both fiction and non-fiction texts, however, it is helpful to provide practice that allows LAs to delineate between these two genres.
The features of fiction are well defined using a story map. Students can make predictions based on understanding the relationship between problem and solution, and character, setting, and main events. Knowing the structure of a story contributes to a student’s background knowledge and conducts students towards a deeper understanding of text. Because of the nature of reading strategies, they apply to multiple genres of text; thus, the features that apply to fiction may also apply to non-fiction text. There are a number of text features, however, that are most often associated with non-fiction texts, and because they are highly visible, they tend to be straightforward to teach.

Non-fiction text features include table of contents, glossary, index, titles and headings, photographs, drawings, maps, and captions. A book walk is a quick way to bring attention to several important non-fiction text features, and while all students need exposure to this practice, for LAs it can set the stage for comprehension. With LAs, a book walk triggers background knowledge, promotes discussion, generates questions, improves speaking and listening, and can actually be as important, if not more important, than the actual reading of the text. Done consistently during guided reading instruction, students soon internalize this adaptation and can be seen practicing this step when working independently. We look at titles and headings, and spend time verbalizing how these words both set sections of text apart from each other and how these words give us a preview of what the text sections will be about. Photographs, drawings and maps are accompanied by a caption to explain them. We discuss how these features help us deepen comprehension of the text.
Figure 4.8
Non-fiction Features Work Sample

1. The turtle has feet.
2. It has two eyes.
3. It has claws.
4. It has shell.
We compare different kinds of visual aids as well. Some visuals are magnified, some have labels, some are cut-away, and some are maps. Figure 4.8 is one work sample that an LA produced in a reader’s notebook. This student arrived in the country at the very beginning of the school year and was struggling to make sense of school. Everything had been very difficult. Then, in January, we read a series of science books downloaded from the Internet. Each book was concerned with just one animal and employed the non-fiction text feature of diagrams and labels.

To supplement these books and practice vocabulary, I used some photographs of animals from old calendars and made vocabulary cards with words such as fur, feathers, fins, scales, claws, beak, and shell. First, students had to match the vocabulary word to the picture. There was much laughter as we recognized some of the mistakes. Then we tried to mimic the information contained in the science books. For this particular student, this adaptation seemed to solve the problems of not knowing what to do or how to respond to text. Where the other students responded by creating one or two diagrams with labels in their notebooks, this student took home the reader’s notebook every day that week and eventually made twenty-three diagrams with labels. The diagrams were not just limited to animals, either. One diagram is of a snowman, another of a car, and yet another of a person. This is clear evidence of an adaptation that works.

**Main Idea and Supporting Details**

Using graphic organizers to scaffold learning of reading strategies is good practice for both mainstream students and LAs. During the guided reading lessons that are adapted for LAs, the reading strategies are introduced, discussed, modeled, and
practiced following the adapted lesson plan presented in Table 3.4 on page 67. For LAs, the adaptation is not in the use of graphic organizers per se, but in the structure of how they are guided to produce the thinking that shows evidence they understand the reading strategy. Using the same kinds of graphic organizers being used with the mainstream students is reassuring to LAs as they can visually compare that the work they are doing is relatively the same as the work their peers are doing.

Identifying main idea and supporting details is a reading strategy that is difficult for LAs to grasp. We practice this all year both within the context of guided reading and with literacy activities for independent practice. Non-fiction text lends itself well for practicing this strategy as many of the text features such as titles and headings help to identify the main idea. Figure 4.9 is from a student who had been in the country about nine months and was produced in December. This work sample is evidence that this student is demonstrating an understanding of this difficult concept.

To organize the information from the story, the student used a “T” chart. This simple graphic organizer can also be applied to other content areas, which makes it a useful tool. This work sample is in response to a story about owls and how they hunt. The main idea of the story concerns the adaptations that owls have to help them hunt their prey, while the supporting details explain how each adaptation supports the owls’ search for food. In the work sample, we observe that the title at the top of the page has appropriate use of upper and lower case letters. Each adaptation is clearly identified on the left side of the chart and the supporting details are matched on the right side of the chart.
Figure 4.9  
Main Idea Work Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adaptation</th>
<th>How they use it</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) sharp claws</td>
<td>catch food.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) curved beak</td>
<td>use to bit bird.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) strong eyes</td>
<td>use to see at night and look around.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) good hearing</td>
<td>use to listen for food and use ears.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) quiet flying</td>
<td>use to catch food.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 4.10
Compare and Contrast Work Sample

- The cheetah's spots look like ovals and the leopard's spots look like the flowers.
- They are both cats.

Cheetahs  Leopard
The modifications I make for LAs during the RW time are numerous and fluid. It is important to remember that the goal of these modifications is to prepare this group of students to successfully join their mainstream peers as soon as possible. Ongoing

**Compare and Contrast**

The final work sample is one that highlights the reading strategy of compare and contrast. The work sample is evidence of the adaptations made to guided reading to scaffold LAs as they work to accelerate learning. To practice compare and contrast, a Venn diagram provides a graphic organizer that can also be used across subjects. Figure 4.10 is a work sample from a student who has been in the country for approximately six months. The student moved to our district just after the start of the school year. This work sample was produced in December in response to a magazine article about big cats. The overlapping sections of the two circles in a Venn diagram are used to list the similarities of the two concepts, while the separate sections are used to identify the differences of the two concepts. In these spaces, students are taught to compare ideas that are related.

Examining the work sample, we see that the student has applied labels to the two Venn circles. In the center overlapping sections, there are three details listing the characteristics that are the same. In the two outside, separate spaces of the Venn, the student has listed contrasting details that are related to each other. Here we see that the student is describing the spots of two large cats. In assessing the work sample, it appears the student has successfully applied the reading strategy.

**Summary**

The modifications I make for LAs during the RW time are numerous and fluid. It is important to remember that the goal of these modifications is to prepare this group of students to successfully join their mainstream peers as soon as possible.
assessments, both formal and informal, are vital to measure progress and the data results drive the adaptations. I keep the pace of learning quick, with many opportunities to practice skills both old and new. Adapting both the materials and the structure of RW allows for differentiation that is tailored to the needs of LAs. Often at the end of a sheltered instruction time, students are surprised at how fast the time seemed to pass. They often tell me they think there is something wrong with the clock in my room.

In this chapter I presented the results of the adaptations that I have used with LAs. These adaptations cover a broad spectrum of materials and structure. The materials are used for the opening lesson, the work time, and the sharing time, with the bulk of the adaptations designed to fit during the work time. Adaptations to guided reading and literacy activities comprise the major changes, but the opening lesson and sharing times are also adapted to reflect the progress LAs are making.

The adaptations to RW structure are such that the components of RW are often blended. Shared reading blends into both guided reading and reading practice in the literacy activities. Independent reading and literacy activities mingle together. Record keeping is streamlined and the reader’s notebook is not only a source of practice for new skills, but also becomes a reference for future learning.

A key ingredient in the adaptation process is to think of the components of RW in terms of a cycle. The assumption in the mainstream classroom is that intermediate students have already acquired the language foundation to manage the complexities of RW. Thus the cycle begins with independent reading, flows into guided reading, and has the language and word study piece as an extra dose of literacy development.
For LAs however, the language base is absent and so beginning the cycle in the same place presents problems and barriers. Instead, I find that using the language and word study component as a starting point provides intermediate LAs with the scaffolding that enables them to participate successfully in the other components of RW literacy instruction.

The student work presented in this chapter is a reflection of the adaptations implemented in a sheltered environment. The work samples provided in chapter four show evidence of students successfully manipulating text and applying reading strategies to improve comprehension. This confirmation suggests the adaptations were effective. Further, as some LAs move from the sheltered space back into the mainstream classroom in mid-March, they produce work that is comparable to some of the lower performing students in that environment.

Formal assessments provide a final measure of progress. Recall that most newcomers are assessed at reading readiness levels when they first arrive. Also, from the *Text Correlation Chart* in Table 3.1, LAs need to make more than one academic year’s progress. By this measure, a student who begins the year reading at or below a Fountas and Pinnell level ‘A’ should be assessed at a mid-first to end of first grade level by the end of one year in school. Students moving back to the mainstream setting are generally assessed at Fountas and Pinnell levels G – J which correlates to mid-first grade to beginning second grade reading levels.
In my next chapter, I will discuss importance of adaptations for LAs as well as acknowledge some of the limitations of my study. Finally, I will offer some implications for future study.
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

In chapter three, I discussed adaptations to RW in three broad categories. First, I explained the vital role of assessments and how this data is used to drive instruction. Second, I explained the structure of the RW block, and third I accounted for adaptations in materials used with the LAs. In chapter four, student work produced by LAs as a result of the adaptations to RW was presented and evaluated. Effectiveness of the adaptations can be measured three different ways. First, students were actively and enthusiastically engaged in the lessons. Second, students were able to successfully complete assignments to demonstrate a grasp of the both the content and the language objectives. Third, the effectiveness can be measured through ongoing formal and informal assessments that indicate accelerated progress for LAs.

Descriptive research relies on in-depth observations that are thorough and complete. In this style of research, a current situation is described in such a way as to focus attention on a problem that isn’t immediately apparent. In my study, describing the everyday procedures in Reader’s Workshop in the mainstream classroom identified a problem for LAs. This description identified my research question: What are the adaptations to RW that will permit upper elementary LAs to accelerate their gains in reading?
In this chapter I have three purposes. First, I will interpret the results presented in chapter four. Second, I will acknowledge some of the limitations of my study, and third, I will discuss some of the implications for future studies.

Findings

Chapter three presents a number of adaptations to RW so that LAs can experience success with the curriculum and chapter four presents the results of the adaptations. This group of students is working hard to simultaneously acquire language skills as they also study subject matter. Accommodating the needs of LAs matters. It can mean the difference between being successful and failing to reach the grade level standards at all. The ultimate consequence of failure of this magnitude is huge.

I have four findings from my research. First, Reader’s Workshop is a good place to start for literacy instruction, but it doesn’t go far enough to address the specific needs of LAs at the intermediate grade levels. Second, I find that it is necessary for instruction to move on a different timetable. LAs at first need a slower pace that solidifies language skills in order to eventually go fast and catch up with their peers. Third, skills must be deconstructed to be taught and learned, then reconstructed in such a way so that LAs are given access to grade level expectations. Fourth, and finally, I found that LAs are able to make accelerated gains with adaptations to RW.

A Good Place to Start

Goldenberg (2008) says, “Although many aspects of effective instruction apply across the board for learners in general, for English learners, instructional modifications are almost certainly necessary.” Indeed, this is the case. Reader’s Workshop is designed
to be flexible to meet the needs of students, however, RW also assumes that intermediate
students arrive in the classroom with a certain baseline of literacy skills.

The majority of LAs that come to our building come from countries that have
seen many years of social conflict that very often prevents the acquisition of academic
skills in a first language. This compounds the difficulties of an intermediate LA student.
Assessing literacy levels accurately, building background knowledge, and increasing
language proficiency are necessary steps to adapt RW for LAs.

Timetable

The NCLB Act is a heavy weight for teachers. Our district has pacing guides for
teaching skills in content areas and while RW is designed for differentiation, teachers at
the intermediate grades need to press forward. Thus, LAs in the regular classroom often
are lost without explicit adaptations.

LAs need additional time to acquire the foundational skills they are lacking. At
the intermediate levels, RW assumes students already have the literacy skills in place. It
also assumes that students have had previous experience with RW and so are familiar
with the many rituals and routines, expectations, and record keeping procedures. LAs
need time to build this knowledge but because they are older than the primary students, it
is a process that can be expedited.

Step By Step

My third finding is built upon Vygotsky’s theory of the Zone of Proximal
Development (1978). This is a theory to scaffold learning so that students gradually
develop the ability to manage tasks without adult assistance. The content areas of RW
include explicit instruction on reading strategies. In fourth grade there are nineteen reading strategies that students are expected to know by the end of the year. For LAs, it is necessary to deconstruct the reading strategies and teach them step-by-step. Then as LAs gradually demonstrate comprehension of the tasks, the strategies can be reconstructed to work towards grade level goals.

Adaptations are made to address phonemic awareness with multiple exposures to phonics practice. Explicit instruction is adapted to expand vocabulary and connect new learning to prior knowledge. Skills practices to improve fluency and deepen comprehension are also adapted.

**Progress**

My final finding is that adaptations to RW work and can be measured. Table 3.1 on page 57 is the text correlation chart from which to calculate academic growth. The typical LA at our school arrives with little to no English and limited to no literacy skills. This fact generally places them at a point near the bottom of the chart. Often their lack of skills and English leave them at a place where they are not yet even on the chart. These students need to make accelerated academic gains in order to have a chance to meet the demands of NCLB and the graduation standards set out by our state. Formal benchmark assessments that we do three times a year show that LAs can attain actual academic growth equivalent to two years as measured by the Fountas and Pinnell scale in Table 3.1. This growth can be accomplished in one academic year when instructional practices are adapted to differentiate accurately for these students. Additional formative
assessments are conducted with much greater frequency and include such measures as work sampling, student engagement, and running records.

Limitations

The Reader’s Workshop program is a nationally accepted program that promotes good instructional practices. While differentiated instruction is an integral part of the program, one of the primary limitations is that it is geared towards native English speakers. Fountas and Pinnell give a nod to language learners in their tome that we use as a guide, and from their words it is clear that more study is necessary.

Goldenberg (2008) advocates for modifications and enhancements to RW so that LAs can experience high-quality instruction. Further, he suggests that the adaptations will be fluid and inspired by the needs of the students. This is one of the limitations of this study. Determining what modifications will be best suited to a group of LAs takes careful planning. Having a variety of modifications is helpful but it is important that the changes don’t become generic. To avoid this, I collaborate carefully with classroom teachers, provide a wide variety of adaptations, and keep the pace lively so that the skills are reinforced regularly.

Planning for adaptations takes time. It requires thoughtful consideration and evaluation of student needs as well as collaboration with mainstream teachers. Planning for adaptations also requires materials. I feel fortunate to teach in a building with a large library collection. Reader’s Workshop is about literacy and without appropriate materials, it is difficult to do. While a few of the modifications presented in chapter four
are accomplished with materials created by teacher and students, most of them require a
text of some sort from which to begin.

Space is also a consideration. It is possible to create a sheltered feeling within a
mainstream classroom but it is not ideal. Having a separate space in which to conduct
RW for LAs has an almost magical effect. LAs who are silent in the big classroom are
suddenly talking.

Student population is another limiting factor. The profile of and LA remains
relatively the same even as families move in and out. As a LA building, however, this is
a population that is fairly stable for us. Literacy level in the first language has an impact
on LAs, as does length of time in the country. The first language as well, can provide an
advantage for an LA. Hispanic students may already be familiar with most of the English
alphabet, for example, because it is so similar to the Spanish alphabet. Somali, KaRen, or
Hmong students, on the other hand, may have no knowledge of the English alphabet and
thus need to begin there.

Future Possibilities

Adapting RW for newcomers is an intensive process that requires careful thought
and planning. Appropriate adaptations for LAs include the use of graphic organizers,
additional time, repeating and highlighting information, front-loading information, and
language tasks that focus on and support content area learning. Indeed, many of these
strategies are incorporated in my study, but there is a need for further inquiry into this
matter. Searching the literature reveals that much of the work published to date focuses
on native English speakers. As native speakers comprise the bulk of the student
population in many districts, this fact is not surprising. However, in our large, urban school district the demographics of our student body are significantly different. More research is necessary to find the key to serving our language learners as best we can.

Journey

This process was a very difficult personal journey. From the beginning, I knew I wanted to examine the process of how RW is applied to LAs but I struggled with how to frame my observations. I experienced many frustrations in the mainstream classrooms as I observed newcomers being pegged into a curriculum that didn’t fit their needs.

As I researched the literature to find possible solutions, I realized that adjusting the curriculum to meet the needs of LAs would be necessary. With this realization, every article I read was evaluated for how to best implement adaptations for LAs. Every workshop I attended was with an eye towards how to apply it for the benefit of LAs. I reflected on teaching experiences with the intent of improving the situation for the LAs.

After more than a decade of experience with LAs, I have a number of established adaptations that were created to supplement an existing need.

Writing this paper has provided me a growth experience. I was required to examine the practices of RW and to organize the changes in a logical and incremental manner. The task of writing this report has solidified the process for me and I hope it has contributed in a small way to the body of knowledge about language learners.
### APPENDIX A
#### Reader's Notebook

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Condury by Dan Freeman</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>First, Condury was in the toy department. The overall is missing a button. A little girl.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Next, Condury goes looking for his toy. He sees lots of furniture. He knocks over a lamp and then hides.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Then, the night watchman hears a noise. He finds Condury and takes him back to the toy department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Last, the girl comes back and buys Condury. She takes him home and fixes his button. They are best friends.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B
Shared Reading Binder

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>See You Later</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Make New Friends</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B

Shared Reading Binder

Five Little Monkeys

Five little monkeys
Sitting in a tree.

Teasing Mr. Crocodile -
"You can't catch me."
"You can't catch me."

Along comes Mr. Crocodile
As quiet as can be -
SNAP!!!

______ little monkeys
Sitting in a tree.

Teasing Mr. Crocodile -
"You can't catch me."
"You can't catch me."

Along comes Mr. Crocodile
As quiet as can be -
SNAP!!!

Away swims Mr. Crocodile
As full as he can be!
APPENDIX B

Shared Reading Binder

SEE YOU LATER

See you later, alligator.
After a while, crocodile.

In an hour, my sunflower.
Maybe two, kangaroo.

See you soon, you big baboon.
Better shake, rattlesnake.

Ciao, ciao, brown cow.
Chop, chop, lollipop.

In a blizzard, little lizard.
Gotta go, buffalo.

Let's scat, alley cat.
Time to squirm, wiggle worm.

Better swish, jelly fish.
Take care, teddy bear.

Give a hug, ladybug.
Adios hippoc.

Bye, bye, butterfly.
Out the door, dinosaur.

Goodbye.
APPENDIX B
Shared Reading Binder

Make New Friends

Make new friends, but keep the old.
One is silver, the other is gold.

A circle is round, it has no end.
That's how long, I want to be your friend.

A fire burns bright, it warms the heart.
We've been friends, from the very start.

You have a hand, I have another.
Put them together and we have each other.

You help me, and I'll help you
And together we will see it through.

Across the land, across the sea
Friends forever we will always be.
APPENDIX C
Reader’s Theater
Iktomi and the Boulder

Original Story by Paul Goble

Student Created Script

Characters:
Iktomi
Boulder
Antelope
Bear
Elk
Prairie Dog
Bats

Iktomi It’s a beautiful morning. I’m looking my best today. The dance tonight in the next village should be a blast. Everybody will admire my beautiful clothes. (Holds out items – ribbons, purse, necklaces, blanket – then looks in a mirror.) I’ll bet all the animals wish they had my lovely beads. I’m so beautiful! I look like a princess!

Animals (Laughing but Iktomi doesn’t notice.)

Antelope There goes Iktomi.

Bear Walking along.

Elk Iktomi is forever showing off.

Prairie Dog Then she gets into trouble.

Antelope She never learns.

Iktomi It’s getting hotter with every step I take. I need to rest. Look, there is a boulder. I can sit in the shade.

Boulder (Wiggles as if saying hello while Iktomi spreads her blanket and begins to remove parts of her costume.)

Antelope My antlers aren’t as heavy as Iktomi’s outfit.

Bear It will take her a long time to put that all back on.

Elk I bet Iktomi is about to do something silly.

Prairie Dog She’ll wish she had made a better decision.
Iktomi  I’ll never need this blanket. It’s too hot. Why did I bring it?

Antelope  Here it comes!

Bear  Watch this.

Elk  Look out.

Iktomi  Grandmother Boulder, I feel sorry for you. You are terribly sunburned from being in the sun for so many years. You have given me the gift of shade. I will give you my blanket as a gift. Take it. (Lays blanket over Boulder.)

Prairie Dog  Something’s wrong. She’s not usually this generous.

(Make thunder noise.)

Iktomi  (Finishes arranging blanket on Boulder then continues walking. Hears thunder.) What’s that noise? Thunder! Oh, no. It is starting to rain. The blanket will protect me. Rain will spoil my beautiful clothes. Boulder doesn’t need my blanket. I do. (Walks back to Boulder)

Antelope  She did give it.

Bear  A gift is a gift.

Elk  Still, it is raining.

Prairie Dog  Trouble’s coming!

Iktomi  (Snatches blanket off Boulder rudely.) You don’t need my blanket. You are only a rock. The sun can’t burn you. Besides, I was just lending my blanket to you.

Antelope  That’s not true.

Bear  A gift is a gift.

Elk  She shouldn’t take it back.

Prairie Dog  Something bad will happen now.

(Make rock bouncing noise.)

Iktomi  (Wraps herself in the blanket. Hears a noise and peeks out.) What’s that noise? That doesn’t sound like thunder.
Boulder (Angry!) Where’s my beautiful present. All these thousands of years I waited for a gift. You can’t have it back! (Boulder slowly begins to roll towards Iktomi.)

Iktomi (Drops blanket and begins to run.) I must run to the top of this hill. Rocks can’t roll uphill.

Antelope Iktomi’s in trouble again.

Bear She made a bad choice.

Elk That rock has a terrible temper.

Prairie Dog Iktomi never learns.

Iktomi I must cross the river. The boulder will get stuck in the mud.

Boulder I want my blanket back! (Boulder chases Iktomi, catches up with her and lands on her legs, pinning her to the ground.)

Antelope What is Iktomi going to do?

Bear Is this the end of the story?

Elk Not yet.

Prairie Dog How will Iktomi get out of this mess?

Iktomi (Yelling and screaming.) Help! Help! Get off me! What are you doing? That hurts. Please let me go.

Animals (All come over to Iktomi and speak with her.)

Antelope What’s the problem?

Bear Looks like you are in a tight spot.

Iktomi My younger brothers and sisters, please help me.

Elk Iktomi, you have no respect for others. You always call us younger brothers and sisters.

Iktomi I was just climbing on this boulder when it rolled over my legs. Please push it off me.

Prairie Dog That’s not exactly true. But let’s give her another chance.

Animals (Push together and try to move the boulder.)

Iktomi Push! What’s the matter with you animals? Push!
Antelope  It’s too much work.
Bear  We give up.
Elk  It’s too heavy.
Prairie Dog  We’re too little.  (Animals all leave.)

(Night falls and bats come out.)

Iktomi  My younger bat brothers and sisters.  This boulder has been saying rude things about you.

Bat 1  What have you heard?
Iktomi  Boulder says you are too ugly to come out during the day.

Bat 2  Why would she say that?
Iktomi  Boulder says you don’t know your up-side from your down-side.

Bat 3  What does that mean?
Iktomi  It’s because you sleep upside down.

Bat 4  Is that all?
Iktomi  No, Boulder thinks you don’t know whether you are birds or animals; two legged or four legged.  Furry Birds she called you!

Boulder  Lies!  Iktomi lies!

Bats  Attack!  Attack!

Iktomi  That’s right!  She called you Furry Birds!

Boulder  No!  That’s not true.  Stop!  Iktomi lies!

(Bats continue attacking Boulder smashing her into little pieces.)

Iktomi  (Gets up as Boulder is now in tiny pieces.)  That’s right younger brothers and sisters.  You taught that Boulder a lesson.
APPENDIX D
Stop and Go Sight Word Folder

STOP
and
GO
Sight Words
APPENDIX D

Stop and Go Sight Word Folder
### APPENDIX D

**Stop and Go Sight Word Folder**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>the</th>
<th>a</th>
<th>of</th>
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<tr>
<td>to</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>in</td>
<td>that</td>
<td>they</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>was</td>
<td>she</td>
<td>but</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he</td>
<td>it</td>
<td>said</td>
<td>for</td>
<td>hard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Writing Practice**

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 
6. 
7. 
8. 
9. 
10. 
11. 
12. 
13. 
14. 
15. 
16. 
17. 
18. 
19. 
20.
APPENDIX D
Stop and Go Sight Word Folder
REFERENCES


St. Paul Public Schools KaRen & Somali Culture Workshops, 2006


